

Transcription of Chris Mumma Interview with Herman Baker

Date: March 19, 2013
Location: Fayetteville, North Carolina

Key:

CM (Chris Mumma, NC Center on Actual Innocence)
CAS (Cheryl Sullivan, NC Center on Actual Innocence)
HB (Herman Baker, witness in Joseph Sledge trial)
JM (James McLean, a man that Herman Baker lives with)
AM (Anita McLean, a woman that Herman Baker lives with)

Prior to Recorder being turned on: Chris Mumma and Cheryl Sullivan knocked on the apartment door and the door was opened by Anita McLean. Chris and Cheryl told her they were there to see Herman and she invited them in. Herman walked out of his bedroom and said hello. Chris asked if it was a good time to talk and he said he was about to take a shower. Chris asked if they could wait to talk to him after his shower. Herman said something about needing a lawyer and started to walk back in his room. Chris asked him why he felt he needed a lawyer to talk to her. She thought, based on his response, that the SBI had already come back to talk to him. Chris and Cheryl were invited to have a seat by Anita and Chris asked Cheryl to turn the recorder on.

(Indecipherable)

CM: Did they come again?

HB: Who?

CM: The SBI.

HB: I don't want them.

CM: Do you have a lawyer?

HB: No, I'm going to get one.

CM: Do you want me to help you get one?

HB: Uh-uh (no).

CM: Why not?

HB: I can get one on my own. I have enough money to get em.

CM: Okay, Herman, can you just talk to me for one more minute, please? Please? This man has been in prison for 35 years.

HB: Yep.

Herman starts to open the outside door.

CM: Do you want to talk outside?

JM: Why don't you close the door? You all have a seat. Close the door.

CM: Do you want to talk outside instead?

HB: No, let's talk right here.

CM: You're not worried about talking in front of them, are you?

HB: Nah. Nothing to be worried about. (Laughs).

CM: Yesterday, you told me— Do you remember what you told me yesterday?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: What did you tell me yesterday?

HB: What?

CM: What did you tell me yesterday?

HB: About what?

CM: About Joseph Sledge.

HB: Hm. About what?

CM: Did he ever tell you he committed the murders?

HB: Uh-uh (no).

CM: No?

HB: No.

CM: And who came and got you?

HB: That prison guard.

CM: Do you remember what the prison guard's name was?

HB: No. I can't, I can't....(indecipherable).

CM: And did anybody talk to you after that?

HB: No.

CM: So, before you went to trial, did they prep you? Did they tell you what to say?

HB: Yeah.

CM: Who prepped you?

HB: I don't remember his name. (Indecipherable). FBI, SBI agent or something.

CM: SBI agent? What did he look like?

HB: I don't remember. (Laughs along with someone else).

CM: The time— it's really important.

HB: I'm tryin'. I can't. (nervous laugh)

CM: An SBI agent?

HB: Mm-hm.

CM: And was there a sheriff deputy there?

HB: No.

CM: Just the SBI agent.

HB: Mm-hm.

CM: And what did he tell you?

HB: They came to Pennsylvania. They left a note on the door with everything written on it. They sent me to Pennsylvania.

CM: Before...right before trial?

HB: Yeah.

CM: So, the SBI agent came to see you right before trial.

HB: I didn't see him. He left a note there.

CM: Okay, and did he— and what did the note say?

HB: Telling me something about...mentions about black pepper and stuff that....
(Indecipherable).

CM: So, there was a note on your door that told you what to say?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Did you keep that note?

HB: NOO. (Laughter). I lost that. (Indecipherable).

CM: Okay, so, the note told you about the pepper can?

HB: Yea, they mentioned it first at the prison.

CM: They told you about it at the prison first?

HB: Yes, Spark...,Sparkman, I think his name was.

CM: Sparkman?

HB: Yeah, he was the warden.

CM: Warden. And was there anybody with Sparkman?

HB: There was a sergeant.

CM: A sergeant from the prison?

HB: Yeah.

CM: But not somebody from the Sherriff's Department?

HB: Mm-mm (no).

CM: Um....And there was nobody from the SBI or the Sherriff's Department with the prison guards?

HB: No.

CM: So, the prison guards came to you...

HB: And they took me and put me in jail, downtown (Indecipherable).

CM: They put you down in the jail?

HB: Yep.

CM: And they talked to you there?

HB: Yes.

CM: And did they ever take you to a motel?

HB: No. During trial.

CM: During—

HB: They came and picked me up from Pennsylvania.

CM: And you stayed— okay.

HB: (Indecipherable).

CM: And did they talk to you in the car on the way back from Pennsylvania to North Carolina?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Did they tell you what to say when you were in the car?

HB: Yes.

CM: And did they promise you a reward?

HB: Yes, and uh, they got me out of prison early.

CM: And they got you out of prison early?

HB: Yup.

CM: Did, um, the prosecutor ever talk to you before you got on the stand?

HB: (Silence).

CM: You don't remember? (To CAS) Can I see the affidavit?

CAS: Yeah.

CM: So, I...I am trying to get to the truth, okay?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: And I know what kind of position you were put in.

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: I understand, okay? Um, the people who are required to follow the law—

HB: Mm.. hm.

CM: Are— the law enforcement, the lawyers, you know. They have an oath.

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: And we have to understand exactly what happened in this case.

HB: Yeah.

CM: Where did you meet Joseph?

HB: Um, in prison.

CM: In prison. Did you ever meet him in—

HB: In the streets, yea.

CM: Before prison?

HB: Hanging out at motel, I mean behind the truck stop downtown.

CM: The truck stop. Did you meet him in Fayetteville?

HB: Yeah, he stayed in Fayetteville.

CM: And you testified at trial that met him in 1969?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Did you meet— cause he wasn't in Fayetteville in 1969.

HB: I don't remember when it was. It was sometime in the 70s, 60s. Something like that.

CM: Okay, so you think you may have just gotten the year wrong or something?

HB: Yeah.

CM: Can you read at all? You want me— can I read this to you?

HB: I'll sit right here. I got some glasses.

CM: Okay, why don't you grab your glasses? How are you feeling today?

HB: Rough.

CM: I'm sorry. (To CAS) We might need to change that line about (indecipherable)...Do you have a good pen?

CAS: Yes.

CAS: My stamp's out in the car. I can do it after. Forgot to bring it in.

CM: Okay.

CM: Do you want to sit down, Herman?

HB: Nah.

CM: You really—you really — I want you to trust me, okay?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: I am only looking for the truth. This says—

HB: I can read it.

CM: You can read it. Okay. Can you read it out loud?

HB: For what?

CM: Just so that I know that you can read it.

HB: (Indecipherable).

CM: If there's anything that's wrong on there, you tell me. (Clanging sound). Is that your right birth date?

HB: I am disabled.

CM: You are disabled?

HB: Yes, I am.

CM: What's your disability?

JM: Y'all parked somebody in the driveway.

CM: I'm sorry?

JM: Y'all parked somebody in the driveway.

CM: Oh, yes.

JM: They just called.

CM: Okay, we'll move it.

JM: Yeah, they just called.

CAS: Do you want me to move it?

CM: Yeah, do you mind moving it?

CAS: Mm-hm (no).

CM: I'm sorry.

JM: Yeah, y'all parked— yeah, y'all parked there. Okay, they want—

CAS: Oh, oh, oh, I'm sorry.

JM: I'm sorry.

CAS: That's okay.

CM: So, what's your disability? I'll write that on there.

HB: Chronic pancreatitis.

CM: Chronic...pancreatitis?

HB: Yes.

CM: Pan-crea-titis. Do you feel better sitting down?

HB: I'm packing up and getting out of town today.

CM: And then if you just put your initials right there, because that's in my writing, and I don't want that in my writing. I want that in your writing...There you go.

CM: Have you had any alcohol this morning?

HB: Mm-mm (no).

(Silence)

CM: (To AM) Sorry to bother you, ma'am.

AM: Oh, you're alright.

(Silence)

CM: (To AM) I like the zebra print.

AM: (Laughs) Thank you.

CM: (Laughs). (To Baker) Anything that's wrong on that, you just let me know.

(Silence) (knock on the door and CM reenters)

CM: Thank you.

CM: So this says law enforcement. You want me to add on here "the prison guards?"

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Can you initial both of those changes for me?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Second page. There's not much more on that. Do you have a cold too?

HB: Yes.

CM: Sinuses?

HB: Mm-hm.

(Silence)

CM: (To CAS) Get her name. Witness in there...that he's reading it. Let her know that. (To Baker) Is that all accurate?

HB: Yea, almost.

CM: What else is wrong, hon?

HB: Take all this out.

CM: Alright, you want me to take that out?

HB: Yeah, they didn't....they let me out early...they let me out early.

CAS: You were pretty young back then, huh?

HB: Yeah.

CM: You were very young. How old were you?

HB: I don't know. (Laughter)

CM: Twenties?

CAS: Yeah.

CM: I think you were in your twenties.

CAS: Early to mid twenties, yeah.

HB: Mm-hm.

CAS: Younger than me.

HB: (Laughs)

CM: Okay, just initial that change there.

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Okay. And then if you can just sign your name right there.

CAS: Would you like a copy of it with the changes?

HB: Yeah.

CM: (to CAS): Okay, so we'll just add the changes

CAS: Okay.

CM: (To AM) Ma'am?

AM: Yes?

CM: I'm sorry. Could I talk to you for one minute?

HB: (Laughs, sniffs)

AM: Yes, ma'am.

CM: I'm just trying to— so, Herman just read this affidavit.

JM: (Indecipherable)

AM: Yes.

CM: Herman just read this affidavit. Herman, did you just read all this?

HB: Yes, I did.

CM: And then did you just sign this?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Okay, so I just want— we just need to have a witness that he read it and signed it.

AM: Come and sign this Martin, I don't want my John Hill on nothing.

(Laughter)

JM: What is this about then? What does this to say that Herman's — what he just said? What? What does it say?

CM: It says that— are you friends— how do you know Herman?

JM: Good friend.

CM: That's good. He's going to need some good friends to take care of him. Um, Herman was involved in a case about 35 years ago where they made offers to give him money and let him out of prison if he would testify against somebody. And that person's been in prison for almost 35 years and he's innocent. Um, so we're working on his case, and uh, so Herman's read that affidavit and signed it.

JM: Say you say he made....say this again, they made him an offer?

CM: They made him an offer.

JM: That if he testified against the guy?

CM: Yep.

JM: Well, did he?

CM: Did he testify?

JM: Yeah.

CM: Yes, he did.

JM: Well, what's that got to do with— what's that got—

CM: This is the newspaper article.

JM: What's that got to do with Herman now?

CM: Well, we're trying to get this man out of prison. He's still in prison. And the law enforcement's saying that he admitted to the murders to Herman, but Herman's says he didn't admit to it. They fed him all the facts.

JM: Herman say he didn't. So that don't mean he...Herman say the man didn't.

CM: That he didn't do it.

JM: Yeah.

CM: Right. So, that's what we're trying to say now. He didn't do it.

JM: Oh, cause Herman will testify the man didn't do it.

CM: That's great. And all I want you to do is witness that he signed that document.

JM: Oh.

CM: That's all—

JM: He didn't do no wrong, did he?

CM: He didn't do any wrong compared to what law enforcement did.

JM: Oh. (Indecipherable). So, Herman said that he didn't do it.

CM: Herman says Mr. Sledge did not commit the murders but the police wanted Herman to say he did—

AM: That he did.

CM: That he did commit the murders back then.

AM: Okay.

JM: Oh, okay.

CAS: In exchange for—

AM: For money.

CAS: For prison sentence and money.

CM: And reduced sentence.

AM: Yeah.

CM: Okay?

JM: Oh, they wanted Herman to lie.

CM: They wanted Herman to lie.

JM: Oh.

CM: They got Herman to lie when he was a young man.

AM: Here (indecipherable). (hands the newspaper article back)

CAS: You can keep that.

AM: Oh.

CM: That's your copy. You can have that.

HB: I don't want that.

CM: You don't want it?

HB: (Laughs)

AM: He don't need no reminders of that. (Laughs)

CM: And so, is this the copy with the changes?

CAS: Uh, yes. He needs to date that.

(Indecipherable)

CAS: I think so. To be safe.

JM: Herman said the man didn't do it, didn't he?

CM: On trial he said he did do it.

JM: On trial he said he did?

CM: Yep.

CAS: Right.

CM: Herman, can you put today's date there? What is today's date? Does anybody know?

HB: Nineteenth.

CAS: March 19th.

CM: Good job (to Herman). So just put 19— 19th. And then March. So, at trial 35 years ago, he said he did do it. And he got some money and he got reduced time. Um.

JM: So, now what's happening?

CM: Now we're trying to get the truth out.

CAS: There's also been some DNA evidence that does not connect.

CM: We had some physical evidence tested that shows he didn't do it. Um, Herman, um, where are you going to get a lawyer?

HB: Hm?

CM: Where are you going to get a lawyer?

HB: I don't know.

CM: Okay—

JM: He need a lawyer?

CM: He needs a lawyer.

HB: For what?

CM: I don't want them threatening you with perjury charges.

HB: (Laughs)

CM: Okay. Um, I mean...

AM: You should get a lawyer.

CM: The State Bureau of Investigation and the police— the DA's office are probably going to come talk to him again. Um, and, you know. If you want to.... go with the truth, I mean— as I told you yesterday, the truth will set you free. (Laughs).

HB: Mm.

CM: Go with the truth. Just stick with the truth. Um.

JM: So, where you say he's gonna need a lawyer cause.

AM: He gonna need a lawyer because he testified one thing and this is saying another now.

CAS: Yeah, yeah.

AM: And yeah, he gonna need a lawyer. And I'm sure when you're up against a lie, like you said, throw out some favors sometime (indecipherable) so we sometime make wrong decisions. So we're pressured into making wrong decisions.

CM: Do you want me to help you get a lawyer?

HB: Yeah.

CM: Okay.

JM: (Indecipherable)

CM: You still have my contact information I gave you yesterday?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: Okay, and is there a phone number that anybody has that we can call.

JM: Yes, ma'am. Okay, if we have to get a lawyer, will it be a paid lawyer?

CM: No, we'll get him a— we'll get him— I know what his financial situation is. We'll get him a lawyer.

JM: For free?

CM: Yeah.

JM: Okay, yeah. He need one.

CM: Yeah. Yeah.

CAS: But what is the phone number that we could reach?

JM: 910

CAS: Uh-huh.

JM: I'll give you two phones though. 224-6900. That's the cell phone. Home phone 910-920-3166. So, either one of those. Preferably home phone if you don't have to call cell.

CAS: And what's your name? In case you answer.

JM: James.

CAS: And your last name?

JM: McLean.

CM: McLean. And is this your—

JM: My mate.

CM: Your bait. (laughs).

JM: My mate.

CAS: My mate.

(Laughter)

JM: My mate.

CM: Your mate. And your name, ma'am?

AM: My name is Anita, but I don't want anybody to call me.

CM: Okay, that's right.

CAS: Okay.

CM: Um, so, what you could try to do that would be helpful, Herman, is if you could try to think back. Okay? Just try to spend some time thinking back on who talked to you and where they were.

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: How many people were in the car driving from Pennsylvania?

HB: Two.

CM: Two?

HB: Mm-hm (yes).

CM: And did they talk to you about the case while you were driving?

HB: Oh, yes.

JM: This case happen in Pennsylvania?

CM: No, it happened here.

JM: Oh.

CM: But he was living in Pennsylvania at the time of the trial.

JM: And the murders happened here?

CM: Yeah.

CAS: Mm-hm. They were just bringing him back to testify.

JM: Oh.

CAS: So, they drove him down here.

CM: And they talked to you about the case while they were driving?

HB: Mm-hm.

CM: And did they tell you what to say while they were driving? Yeah?

HB: I told you yes awhile ago.

CM: I know. I know. I'm not trying to pester you.

HB: (Laughs)

CM: But you gotta understand, this guy's been in prison for 35 years, so I'm a little intense about it. (Laughs).

JM: So, who do y'all work for?

CM: I work for the—

JM: You on some committee?

CM: The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence.

CAS: Uh-huh. We're a nonprofit. The inmates we work for don't pay us for our work.

CM: Are you interested in reading this?

JM: I'll look at it.

AM: Why did they say the man— why did they accuse the man of the murder?

CM: Well, uh.

AM: I'm just curious.

CM: Two white women who were murdered, and he was black, and he had escaped from prison. He was in for a larceny charge, and he escaped around that area. So, he was—he was a likely suspect, but...

AM: Okay. He was in prison for larceny?

CM: Yep

CAS: And he was also a young man back then.

AM: Back then.

CAS: Mm-hm (yes).

AM: Okay, I see what you're saying.

CM: You probably wish I had never come around, don't you, Herman?

HB: (Laughs).

JM: So, you're going to make sure he gets a lawyer?

CM: Yeah.

CAS: And I wrote all the changes that you had made.

CM: So, these are the changes. And then, you can have a copy.

CAS: You can keep that.

HB: Yeah.

CM: So you know what you signed, okay?

HB: Hmm. (Laughs/sobs).

CM: I'm sorry.

HB: (Indecipherable) shit.

CM: I know. I know. But you were a young man, and you had a lot of pressure on you, okay? And, you know, young men make mistakes. Uh, sworn law enforcement don't make mistakes. They do things on purpose.

AM: Mm-hm.

JM: Any of these people still on the force?

CM: What's that?

JM: Any of these people still working?

CM: Uh, they're not currently active, but they're still around.

AM: Still around, that's all that matters.

CAS: And only recently not active, so.

CM: Right. So, one thing we're gonna wanna know is what other cases they worked on.

JM: Oh, so there might be other people?

CM: Maybe.

JM: Oh.

CAS: You do it once—

JM: Yeah.

CM: It's a good— you know, you uh, you got something that works, you'll tend to do it again.

AM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah.

CAS: And the worst part is whoever did it is still out there. And it was a horrible crime.

JM: (Indecipherable)

AM: Why did he kill the women?

CAS: We don't know.

AM: Here you go, Herman. (hands him a plate of food)

CM: Aw, that's nice. (Laughter). What do you say?

HB: Thank you. I was gonna.

(Laughter)

AM: He's a great cook. We cook for each other.

CM: I'm glad that you guys have—

HB: (Indecipherable)

CM: I'm glad you found somebody to be with— to live with and be friends with again, Herman.

AM: Oh, yes. He's a great man. He's a great man, you know?

JM: We all done made mistakes years ago and I can understand sometime, you know, they can pressure you into saying things you don't really mean, you know.

CM: Mm-hm (yes).

JM: (Indecipherable)

CM: Right. Alright, well you have my number, and I'll be back in touch with somebody about uh, somebody you can call, okay?

JM: About the lawyer?

CM: Yes.

HB: Okay. I guess I'll be here.

CM: Don't go anywhere. That would be a bad mistake.

HB: I don't care.

CM: No. Seriously.

HB: I'm about dead anyway.

(Laughter)

CM: That would be a bad mistake to run away from this. Okay? You guys need to explain that to him.

HB: I wanna know who told you where I was. They they gonna make a bad mistake if I find out.

CM: No, nobody told us who you were, where you were.

JM: Yea they did.

CAS: We saw you walking down the street.

CM: We saw you walking down the street.

JM: In this area? (laughs)

CM: Nobody, yeah, I mean, there's somebody—

JM: You don't have no— you don't have no charge or nothing, do you?

CM: Any charges on him?

JM: Yeah.

CM: No.

AM: They don't, but they could.

CM: No. But he doesn't want to run. That would look bad. Um, and you know, I always believe there's another force helping us find the information we need to get these people out, Herman. So, I'm sorry, but nobody told us where to find you.

HB: Yeah, they did.

CM: And you'll have to blame somebody upstairs for that.

HB: Yea they did. If they call me snitch now...all these people running around the area looking for me. Leaving cards and shit.

CM: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

HB: Can't even go around my friends.

JM: (To Baker) Who knew about this besides us and you? Nobody.

AM: What he's saying is they be talking about this

CM: Hey, Herman. When we left you cards, we never told anybody anything about this.

HB: You're lying.

CM: No, we didn't Herman. We told them that you might be able to help us with the case we were working on.

HB: Mm-hm.

CM: That's all we said.

HB: Yep.

CM: Now, the newspaper article is out there.

CAS: But it's also in Raleigh.

CM: It's also in Raleigh.

CAS: It's not a Fayetteville article.

HB: I know.

AM: But then you need to look at it— you need to understand what he's saying too, you know? You know, being out here. You know, people around him thinking he talking. You know, it's pressure.

CM: I understand.

AM: Yeah, and there's pressure on me too, because, you know what I'm saying? Because we got to stay here. I don't even know what's going on. But I understand both sides.

CM: And I feel for that, and I'm sorry for that.

AM: Yea. We don't want no trouble coming here, I know. You know what I'm saying?

CM: But this man's still in prison.

AM: I understand what you're saying, but when you bring all this to the plate and then, like I said, and then you bring it to our plates— you see what I'm saying?

CM: I understand.

CAS: It's just a difficult situation all around for everyone. Absolutely.

CM: So, what's important is to do the best—

AM: I don't want nobody coming to this house. You know what I'm saying?

CM: What's important is to do the best thing in a bad situation. And the best thing—

AM: The best thing by everybody. You know, to try to.

CM: The best thing in this bad situation is for you to tell the truth and follow through on it at this point. Cause that's where you can hold you head up high.

HB: sobbing

CM: I'm sorry. Alright. Okay. Thank you.

AM: You're welcome.

CAS: Thank you.

CM: Herman, I will help you in any way I can, okay?

HB: Nice meeting ya. Goodbye. (Indecipherable).

AM: Y'all have a blessed day.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)

AFFIDAVIT

COUNTY OF _____)

I, WALLACE R DANNER, being competent to testify, having first-hand knowledge of the facts stated below, and being first duly sworn, depose and say:

I KNOW PETITIONER JOSEPH SLEDGE JR SINCE 1973. SINCE IVE KNOWN MR. SLEDGE I NEVER SEEN HIM WITH HAIR ON HIS HEAD OVER A EIGHTEN OF A INCH LONG. I ALSO KNOWN HERMAN BAKER JR. SINCE 1973 WE SHOT HERMAN A FEW TIMES TOGETHER UNTIL WE HAD A FALLEN OUT ABOUT HERMAN BAKER JR STEALING FROM ME. I WAS IN JAIL WITH HERMAN BAKER JR. IN 1976. IN 1978 I HAD A CONVERSATION WITH HERMAN BAKER JR. WHILE AT MCCAIN PRISON. I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT MR. BAKER SAID THEY (MENNING POLICE DEPARTMENT) WAS TRYING TO PENDING THE 2 MURDERS IN BLADEN COUNTY ON HIM BECAUSE HE WERE TO GO FISHING WHILE AT WHITE LAKE PRISON UNIT NEAR THE HOUSE WHERE THE 2 LADIES WERE KILLED. MR. BAKER ALSO STATED HE KNEW THE LADIES OR HAD SPOKE TO THEM. I ASKED HIM SINCE HE KNOW JOE (WHICH IS JOSEPH SLEDGE) DID HE THINK MR. SLEDGE DID THE KILLINGS, HE SAID NO. HE SAID THE POLICE SAID JOSEPH SLEDGE HAD BLOOD ON HIS CLOTHES AND CONFESS TO THE KILLINGS. MR. HERMAN BAKER JR. ALSO SAID THE POLICE WAS TRYING TO CUT A DEAL WITH HIM ABOUT THE MURDERS. IF HE KNOW ANY THING ABOUT THE KILLINGS. AT THAT TIME HE SAID HE DIDNT KNOW ANY THING. SINCE IVE KNOWN HERMAN BAKER JR. HE ALWAYS BEEN A BIG LIEB AND WOULD DO ANY THING TO GET DRUGS.

There are _____ additional pages attached and made a part of this, my affidavit. (Sign at the bottom of each page.)

Signature: Wallace R Danner

Address: _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
20 day of May 1997:

Rachel Ann Stroud

Notary Public.

My commission expires: 7-12-99

003238

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
No. 78 CRS 2415-2416

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)

v.)

JOSEPH SLEDGE, JR.,)
Defendant.)

AFFIDAVIT

NOW COMES the Affiant, Herman Lee Baker, Jr., who attests to the following:

1. My name is Herman Lee Baker, Jr. My birth date is 5/24/1950. I currently reside on Lawrence Avenue in Fayetteville, North Carolina.
2. I am under no disability, or undue, or improper influence of any kind. Nor am I under any duress of any kind.
3. I am not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
4. I am giving this affidavit of my own free will and fully understand what I am doing. No one has promised me anything or threatened me in any way in order for me to sign this affidavit.
5. In August 1978, I testified in the above-captioned criminal matter. I testified that Joseph Sledge had confessed to me that he had murdered two women in Bladen County.
6. My testimony was not truthful. Joseph Sledge never told me he murdered anyone.
7. Although Joseph Sledge did not admit to committing any such crimes, I testified that he did because of promises of financial reward made to me by law enforcement.
8. I was in "the hole" at the prison and I was moved to a county jail where law enforcement spoke to me. I was never taken to a motel to be interviewed.
9. I did not have any personal knowledge of any information relating to the murders of the two women in Bladen County. Law enforcement fed me all the details of the crime to which I testified.
10. Law enforcement told me about the pepper can at the crime scene.
11. Law enforcement told me about the victim's broken jaw.

003145

12. Law enforcement told me about the reward money in this case.

13. ^{of prison} ~~I was not offered any help with my prison sentence.~~ ^{They told me they would let me out early.} I was ~~only~~ promised reward money.

14. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information included in this affidavit is true, complete, and is made in good faith.

15. I read this affidavit before I signed it, and I have been offered a copy of this affidavit.

Further, Affiant says not.

This the 19th day of March, 2013

Herman Lee Baker, Jr.
Herman Lee Baker, Jr.

Witness: James M. Baker

Sworn to and subscribed before me this the 19th day of March, 2013.

Cheryl A. Sullivan
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: 4/19/2017





NORTH CAROLINA INNOCENCE INQUIRY COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

State of North Carolina vs. Joseph Sledge (78 CRS 2415-2416)

TO: District Attorney Jon David
Sheriff Prentis Benston
SBI Special Agent Chad Barefoot
Commission Case File

FROM: Sharon Stellato, Commission Associate Director
Lindsey Guice Smith, Commission Associate Counsel

DATE: September 5, 2013

SUBJECT: Search of Bladen County Sheriff's Office Evidence Facilities

From August 26 - 29, 2013, Associate Director Sharon Stellato (Stellato) and Associate Counsel Lindsey Guice Smith (Smith) searched the Bladen County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) facilities for evidence or files related to the Joseph Sledge case.

Prior to this search, Stellato and Smith met with Lt. Singletary and Sheriff Benston of the BCSO and were informed that a diligent search had previously been conducted to locate files and evidence.

The Commission was searching for physical evidence collected during the initial investigation of the Joseph Sledge case, as well as case files associated with the case. This evidence included, but was not limited to, a package of evidence that BCSO had received from LabCorp in 2010. Although the package was addressed to Lt. Singletary and signed for by Lt. Bridgers, the BCSO had been unable to determine what happened to the package after it was signed for.

The Commission provided evidence search procedures to BCSO and Sheriff Benston agreed to allow the Commission staff to search all BCSO evidence facilities. This report

documents evidence located in the Joseph Sledge case, as well as evidence storage issues noted during the Commission search.

The following is a list of all areas searched by Stellato and Smith:

- Evidence Room inside BCSO
- Secured Gun Vault inside BCSO
- Personal Lockers of Investigators
- Braxton Building
- Narcotics Evidence Room
- Conex Storage Containers 1-13
- Storage Room in basement of BC Courthouse
- Evidence Locker inside of office in BC Courthouse
- Historical Society in basement of BC Courthouse

Evidence Room Inside BCSO

This room contains three large evidence lockers. These lockers are short term storage for Lt. Singletary and Det. Morgan Johnson, as well as former BCSO officers. Lt. Singletary stated that short term storage meant that the cases were either pending or recently tried. In addition to the three lockers, there is evidence stored on top of the lockers and on top of a refrigerator located in the room. This room is also used as a storage room for miscellaneous equipment. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located.

It is unclear how the room is secured or who has access to the room. There is no inventory of the evidence stored in this room.

Secured Gun Room Inside BCSO

This room requires two keys and therefore two BCSO employees in order to enter. Lt. Singletary and Sgt. Greg Bullard provided access to the gun room and Sgt. Bullard remained inside the room during the entire search. The room has guns along a wall and along both sides of a shelf in the middle of the room. There is also evidence stored in between the shelf with guns and evidence stored on the floor. Additionally, there is a barrel filled with guns that is used for evidence scheduled for destruction. Along the back wall are 12 lockers, seven of which had locks.

There are four boxes on the top of the set of lockers. One of the boxes was labeled "Phillip Little drug cases." This box was searched and Stellato located a small file labeled Joseph Sledge in the box.

The Commission requested that the locks be removed from the lockers and, after some discussion, the locks were cut off five of the lockers. The remaining two locks were removed by Lt. Singletary and Sgt. Jeffery Tyler who had keys/combinations to those locks. Sgt. Bullard then began removing evidence from each locker. He began with

locker #4. Stellato looked in the locker and observed that it was full of evidence. Sgt. Bullard then placed the evidence from locker #4 in a box. The box was brought to the conference room table (just outside the gun room) where Smith began going through it. Smith immediately noted a package labeled "Sledge" and notified Stellato. Upon further examination, a second package labeled "Sledge" was noted. The packages were envelopes which were returned from the SBI. Upon review of the lab reports attached to the outside of the packages, it was noted that one contains the empty Ziploc bag and canister sent to the SBI in 2008. The second contains all of the latent lifts returned from the SBI in 2007.

In looking through additional evidence in the box, Stellato located another envelope addressed to Phillip Little. The envelope contains a letter from Adrian Sellers to Phillip Little and two small handwritten notebooks related to the Sledge investigation.

Smith provided a letter outlining the Commission's official request to take custody of the evidence. After discussion between Stellato, S/A Barefoot and Lt. Singletary, it was agreed that the Commission would take of custody of the evidence pursuant to N.C.G.S. 15A-1471.

Stellato continued going through the contents of each locker. No additional Sledge evidence was located. The remaining lockers are still used by officers in active investigations. Stellato looked in each locker and determined that guns and a small amount of evidence is stored in them.

The majority of the evidence located in the locked lockers was narcotics and money. The BCSO indicated that they were not aware of any of this evidence, including the narcotics and money, inside the lockers. Sgt. James Hufham was tasked with collecting the narcotics and money found inside the lockers.

Although this room was secured with two keys, the contents of the room were unknown to BCSO personnel. There is no inventory of the evidence stored in this room.

Personal Lockers of Investigators

The Commission searched the personal evidence lockers of Sgt. Tyler, Det. Marlowe and Det. Kelley. Each individual locker is maintained in their office and each is secured with a lock. The Commission was informed that these evidence lockers are used for short term storage. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located. There is no inventory of the evidence stored in the personal evidence lockers.

Braxton Building

On August 13, 2013 and August 14, 2013, in anticipation of the Commission's pending search request, officers from the BCSO located two BCSO files related to the Sledge case. Smith and Stellato went through every file located in the building. Smith and

Stellato noted several items of evidence intermingled with files. Smith discovered a bullet loose in a box of files and Det. Marlowe seized this item as evidence. Other evidence included fingerprints, DNA extracts, blood samples and other unknown physical evidence. Det. Marlowe stated that BCSO would have to go through each box and pull out any evidence that should be stored in the evidence room and not with the files. He further indicated that this would be done at a later date.

In addition to physical evidence located in case files, Stellato and Smith located a drawer in a file cabinet that contained brown paper bags of evidence. Lt. Singletary indicated that this was evidence from 1980's cases. This evidence was not secured. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located. There is no inventory of the evidence stored in this room.

Narcotics Evidence Room

The Narcotics Evidence Room is located inside the Braxton Building and maintained separately by the Narcotics Unit. This room is secured and Sgt. Hufham escorted Smith and Stellato into the room. This room contained lockers and evidence vaults that require combinations/keys in order to be opened. Sgt. Hufham opened each locker within the room and showed Smith and Stellato each item of evidence. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located.

Conex Storage Containers 1-13

Smith and Stellato were accompanied by Sgt. Hufham and Det. Marlowe to the offsite evidence storage facilities for BCSO. This facility contains several Conex units which were previously shown to Smith and Stellato by Lt. Singletary on August 15, 2013. On August 15, 2013, Lt. Singletary told Stellato and Smith that only Conex's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 belonged to the BCSO and that the remaining Conex's on the site did not contain any evidence (there are thirteen Conexes on the site).

This offsite facility is gated and located behind the Public Works Dept. The gated facility also contains several vehicles and storage for other county agencies. The Conexes are large steel containers (similar in appearance to train cars). They are not climate controlled and are estimated to reach temperatures of 120 degrees or higher during the summer months.

The Conexes were searched in an order decided by the Commission based on information they received prior to this search, and later during the search. Because of this, the Conex numbers will appear out of order below.

Most of the Conexes have a combination lock and a key lock although some of the Conexes were unlocked. According to Chief Deputy Dunn, the combinations on each Conex should be the same. According to Det. Marlowe, there are keys to the Conexes that can be checked out in order for officers to deposit and retrieve evidence.

Conex 5

Upon entering Conex 5, Stellato noted that there was a new notebook with a sign-in sheet located inside. Det. Marlowe indicated that each Conex now has a sign-in sheet located inside to track who comes in and out. The sign-in sheets are new and only contained one signature line prior to this date.

Conex 5 was previously described to Smith and Stellato by Lt. Singletary as the blood drying chamber which also contained evidence from older cases from the 1970's and 1980's. Smith and Stellato went through the evidence in Conex 5 and did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case. Smith and Stellato noted that there were several bags marked "UNKNOWN." Smith and Stellato made the decision not to open these packages as Lt. Singletary previously stated that these items were recently hanging in Conex 5. When Lt. Singletary was preparing for the Commission's search, he made the decision to package the items so that they would not be in the Commission's way during the search. Lt. Singletary stated that the items were from unknown suicides and homicides. The packages that Smith and Stellato saw that were marked "UNKNOWN" were clearly newly packaged and were therefore not opened. Conex 5 contains biological evidence and there is no inventory for items in the Conex.

Conex 8

Conex 8 was previously described to Smith and Stellato by Lt. Singletary as containing no physical evidence. Smith and Stellato searched Conex 8 and noted that it did not contain any physical evidence, but instead contains equipment and supplies for disaster relief.

Conex 7

Conex 7 was previously described by Lt. Singletary as containing evidence from current and former officers at BCSO. Smith and Stellato noted that Conex 7 contains evidence stored by Det. Marlowe and Det. Johnson as well as former officers. Smith and Stellato searched the Conex and noted that several items of evidence were not sealed. Upon notification that items were not sealed, Sgt. Hufham and Det. Marlowe sealed the items. Additionally, Stellato noted that rape kits, DNA extracts and other unsealed biological evidence is being stored in the Conex. Stellato notified Sgt. Hufham and Det. Marlowe of this. Further, Stellato and Smith located four packages that were identified only by SBI Lab number. Because there were no additional markings to indicate what case the items were associated with, Smith and Stellato requested that the items be opened. Two of the packages were identified as belonging to other cases. The other two packages could not be identified and Det. Marlowe stated that BCSO would have to contact the SBI to determine to which cases the evidence belonged. Smith and Stellato did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case in this Conex. Conex 7 contains biological evidence, unsealed and unlabeled items of evidence and there is no inventory for items in the Conex.

Conex 6

Conex 6 was previously described by Lt. Singletary as containing evidence from current and former officers at BCSO. Smith and Stellato noted that Conex 6 contains mostly evidence from Lt. Singletary and former officers. Smith and Stellato searched Conex 6 and did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case. Smith and Stellato informed Sgt. Hufham and Det. Marlowe about additional biological evidence, including rape kits, located in Conex 6 as well as unsealed items of evidence. At this time Sgt. Hufham and Det. Marlowe made the decision that the individual officers responsible for evidence in each Conex would need to come and seal the evidence for which they were responsible. Conex 6 contains biological evidence, unsealed and unlabeled items of evidence and there is no inventory for items in the Conex.

Conex 4

Smith and Stellato had previously been in Conex 4 on August 15, 2013 with Lt. Singletary. Lt. Singletary showed Smith and Stellato Conex 4 on August 15th as it is the Conex containing evidence in his cases. Immediately upon entering Conex 4 on August 27th, Smith and Stellato noted that Conex 4 contained approximately three times the amount of evidence it contained on August 15th. On August 15th, Smith and Stellato noted that Conex 4 contained a small amount of evidence that was neatly stored, most of which was from recent cases. On August 27th, Smith and Stellato noted that Conex 4 was full of evidence that was not neatly stored. This Conex was previously described by Lt. Singletary as containing evidence from current and former officers at BCSO. Smith and Stellato noted evidence from Lt. Singletary and Sgt. Tyler, as well as former officers. During the search of Conex 4, Smith and Stellato had Det. Marlowe and Sgt. Hufham call BCSO to look up several case names as many of the packages in this Conex were only labeled with the OCA#. All of these cases were identified and none were related to the Sledge case.

During the search of Conex 4, Stellato opened a gray interlocking tote. Upon opening the tote, Stellato noted a box with a FedEx shipping label. The shipping label stated that the package was from Shaun Weiss of LabCorp and addressed to Lt. Singletary on 10/11/2010. Stellato removed the package from the tote and asked Smith to look at the package. Upon examining the package, Smith noted that the SBI stickers on the outside of the package contained the SBI Lab number (R200828689) that is associated with the Sledge case. Stellato and Smith determined that this was the package that had been declared missing by BCSO since its return to BCSO in October 2010. It was agreed that the Commission would take of custody of the evidence pursuant to N.C.G.S. 15A-1471.

No additional evidence related to the Sledge case was located in Conex 4. Conex 4 contains biological evidence and there is no inventory for items in the Conex. In addition, several propane tanks are stored in Conex 4.

Conexes 9-13

Upon arriving at BCSO on the third day of the search, Stellato was approached by Chief Deputy H.W. Dunn. Chief Deputy Dunn informed Stellato that he had evidence stored in a Conex at the outdoor storage facility. Chief Deputy Dunn stated that it was unlikely that Smith and Stellato would have been informed about this storage area as only evidence from two counterfeit goods cases were stored there. Smith and Stellato informed Chief Deputy Dunn that they would still need to search the Conex.

Stellato and Smith searched Chief Deputy Dunn's Conex (noted as Conex 13 for reporting purposes but not labeled as such). No evidence for the Sledge case was located. Conex 13 only contains counterfeit goods and no physical evidence was noted.

Smith and Stellato inquired about the remaining Conexes on the property. Smith and Stellato entered an unlocked Conex. This Conex is not labeled with a number but is Conex 12 for reporting purposes. Conex 12 contains mostly equipment and no physical evidence was noted. Smith and Stellato did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case.

Smith and Stellato were also able to enter a second unlocked Conex (yellow) which was not labeled with a number but is Conex 11 for reporting purposes. Conex 11 contains some bicycles with evidence tags, but other than those, no additional evidence was noted. Smith and Stellato did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case.

Chief Deputy Dunn was able to open Conex 10 (green Conex). Conex 10 contains aircraft parts. Stellato did not locate any evidence in Conex 10.

Chief Deputy Dunn cut the lock off of Conex 9 (orange). Conex 9 contains filing cabinets, equipment and some evidence. Smith and Stellato searched Conex 9 and although they noted physical evidence, they did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case. There is no inventory for the evidence stored in Conex 9.

Conex 3

Conex 3 had previously been described by Lt. Singletary as the Conex used for drugs, though he indicated he did not think there was anything currently in it. Earlier in the week, Sgt. Hufham had informed Smith and Stellato that Conex 3 is used for storage of alcohol. He further stated that drugs used to be stored in Conex 3, but that they had all been moved to the Narcotics Evidence Room at the Braxton Building and no narcotics were stored in Conexes. However, Stellato and Smith located narcotics in Conexes 4 and 6 and informed Sgt. Hufham, who indicated he would address the issue. Upon entering Conex 3, Smith and Stellato noted that the Conex is used for storage of alcohol as well as files. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located in Conex 3.

Conex 2

Conex 2 is divided into two sections. Conex 2B is labeled "DARE" and all of the materials in the Conex appear to be DARE training materials. Conex 2A contains BCSO uniforms. No evidence or files related to the Sledge case were located in Conex 2.

Conex 1

Conex 1 is divided into three sections. Conex 1A contains files and police car equipment. Conex 1B has evidence and miscellaneous items. Conex 1C has a large amount of evidence, MREs and other disaster relief equipment. Smith and Stellato searched Conexes 1A, B and C and did not locate any files or evidence associated with the Sledge case. There is no inventory for evidence stored in Conexes 1B and 1C.

Storage Room in Basement of BC Courthouse

The storage room in the basement of the Bladen County Courthouse was viewed by Stellato and Smith on August 15, 2013 during a meeting with Investigator Pait of the Bladen County District Attorney's Office. On that date, Smith and Stellato noted that there was physical evidence stored in the room, along with what was described as jail records, and number 10 cans of food for inmates at the jail. Smith and Stellato looked through the evidence that they could access on August 15th and did not locate any evidence related to the Sledge case. On that date, Jail Administrator, Benny Lennon, stated that he would be cleaning up the room that afternoon or the following day. In light of this, Smith and Stellato decided to search the room when they returned on August 26th.

Upon entering the room on August 26th, Smith and Stellato noted that it appeared to contain additional items and be less organized than it was on August 15th. Therefore, on August 29th, Smith and Stellato conducted a search of this location.

Det. Marlowe and Sgt. Hufham brought each box of files to a table in the hallway where Smith and Stellato went through them. These files are primarily related to jail activities. Stellato and Smith examined the contents of each file or box.

Stellato and Smith did not locate any files or evidence related to the Sledge case in this room. At the completion of the search, Stellato and Smith assisted Det. Marlowe in repackaging the evidence that was located in the storage room. There was evidence from at least three cases in the 1980's. Det. Marlowe stated that he was taking custody of the evidence and would store it in his office until such time as BCSO could properly inventory the items and place them in a suitable storage location.

Evidence Locker Inside of Office in BC Courthouse

Smith and Stellato were taken to an evidence locker located inside an office in the Bladen County Courthouse. Although this locker is located in the Bladen County Courthouse, Lt. Singletary has the key and the locker is maintained by BCSO. Smith and Stellato

looked through the evidence in the locker. The locker contains evidence for one case, State v. Ernest Wright. No files evidence related to the Sledge case were located.

Historical Society In Basement of BC Courthouse

On August 29th, S/A Barefoot called Stellato and informed of her another room that he had previously searched with Lt. Singletary. S/A Barefoot came to the Bladen County Courthouse and showed Stellato and Smith the room he previously searched with Lt. Singletary. The room was locked, but S/A Barefoot informed Stellato, Smith and Sgt. Hufham that Lt. Singletary had informed and shown him that the only way to unlock the door was to use a knife. S/A Barefoot then used a knife to unlock the door. S/A Barefoot showed the area to Stellato and Smith. The area contains four rooms. It appears to be maintained by the historical society and contains many old items. Stellato and Smith searched the location and did not locate any files or evidence related to the Sledge case. This location does contain newspaper from the time of the Sledge case.

Summary

Although not specifically listed above, Stellato and Smith noted several items of biological evidence that were improperly stored during their search. This includes, but is not limited to, unsealed items of evidence (rape kits, underwear from sexual assaults, bloody clothing, etc), sealed items that were unaccounted for (drugs and money) and items of biological evidence stored in extreme temperatures and high humidity. Further, throughout the search, the BCSO was unable to provide an inventory of items stored in each location and was unaware of several items of evidence being stored at various locations (i.e. evidence found in the basement storage facility, evidence located in files in the Braxton Bldg, etc).

Stellato and Smith met with Sheriff Benston and Chief Deputy Dunn and briefly informed them of the results of the search. Stellato and Smith agreed to provide Sheriff Benston and DA David with a report detailing their search and the evidence storage issues that they noted during their search. Stellato and Smith also offered to assist with recommendations in the future at the request Sheriff Benston.

Although the Commission feels confident in the areas that Stellato and Smith searched, it is not confident that all locations which may contain evidence or files have been searched. Nor does the Commission feel confident that the items collected from the crime scene, and not introduced at trial, have been destroyed. As such, the Commission plans to continue efforts to determine other locations where evidence may be stored.

Attachments

- Files (2) containing all video and photographs taken by the Commission during the search of BCSO.
- Spreadsheet detailing items of evidence that were opened during the search.
- Commission Evidence search procedures.

Curriculum Vitae
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Forensic Evidence Examiner: Latent Fingerprint and Footwear Impression Analysis

2001-present

Forensic Press / Wake Forest, North Carolina

Latent print and footwear evidence defense expert: North Carolina Indigent Defense Services.
Evidence examination for defense cases: pretrial and cases on appeal.
Submit case examination reports and testify as defense witness.
Pro bono casework and Duke Law School Innocence Project consultant.
Multimedia video production and instructional fingerprint tutorial development.

1982-2001

City/County Bureau of Identification / Raleigh, North Carolina

Latent fingerprint, automated fingerprint identification and footwear evidence examiner, retired 2001.
Primary duties consisted of fulltime casework analysis in latent print and footwear evidence.
Testified in state and federal courts in approximately 350 cases as an expert in the comparative analysis of latent print and footwear evidence. Retired in 2001.

1975-1982

North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory

Special Agent, latent print and footwear evidence examiner, assistant latent evidence section supervisor.
Testified in approximately 50 cases as an expert in the comparative analysis of latent print and footwear evidence.

1972-1975

Federal Bureau of Investigation / Washington D.C.

Fingerprint technician assigned to the Technical Section of the Identification Division.
Searched arrest fingerprint cards in FBI database utilizing the Henry Classification System.

Specialized Training, Professional Affiliations and Certifications

- 1972: FBI Science of Fingerprints Course: 540 hours
- 1979: SBI Latent Evidence Section Latent Print Apprenticeship Training, 18 months
- 1981: Awarded the North Carolina Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate
- 1993-present: Member of the International Association of Identification (IAI)
- 1994-2007: International Association for Identification Certified Latent Print Examiner (CLPE)
- 1996-2010: International Association for Identification Certified Footwear Examiner (CFWE)
- 1983-2002: North Carolina Basic Law Enforcement Certified Instructor (BLET)

Education

1972 Graduate of Carmel High School for Boys / Mundelein, Illinois
1977 Wake Technical Community College: Associate in Arts, Police Science Technology
1981 North Carolina Wesleyan College: Bachelor of Science Criminal Justice, cum laude and departmental honors

Academic Curricula Development and Evidence Publications

2013-present

- Authored the Friction Ridge Examiner Competency Training Initiative certified by International Association for Identification for professional training certification and re-certification training credits.
- Authored and Published ***Fingerprint Practitioner Workbook***, ISBN 0-9650202-3-1

2010-2012

Awarded Department of Justice earmark grant from Wake Tech for the *Friction Ridge Examiner Competency Training Initiative*. Designed digital classroom, latent print workstations, video-based tutorial lesson plans and PrintScore™ operative assignments and training exercises.

2007-2010

Developed and instructed fingerprint curriculum for the Wake Tech Criminal Justice Program: *Friction Ridge Analysis CJC 245 Introduction and CJC 246 Advanced*.

2004-2008

Developed forensic curriculum with operative exercises for college-level instruction and professional crime lab training. Publications with lesson plans:

- The Illustrated Lecture of Fingerprint Identification
- Fingerprint Comparison
- Latent Print Development with Magnetic Powder
- Latent Print Processing with Ninhydrin
- Cyanoacrylate Fuming
- Footwear Identification
- Mock Crime Scene Investigation

2004-present

Developed forensic evidence curriculum for Law Tech Custom Publishing, San Clemente, Ca. and Corinthian Colleges. Publication with lesson plans: ***Fingerprint and Impression Analysis Workbook***, ISBN: 978-1-889315-95-9

2004-2007

Developed forensic evidence curricula for Holt, Rinehart & Winston science textbooks, Austin, Texas. Classroom Forensics™ & Scientific Inquiry

1996-2007

Joint publication, training and product development with John Carrington at Sirchie Finger Print Labs, Inc. Youngsville, NC. Publications, lesson plans and operative assignments

- The AFIS Curriculum (Three day instructional workshop) 2000-2003
- The Science at Your Fingertips Educational Series
- PrintScore™ 100-300 Fingerprint Comparison Exercises
- TrakScore™ Footwear Comparison Exercises

1996

Established Forensic Press / Raleigh, NC.

Authored Classroom Forensics™ publications, lesson plans and operative assignments.

- **Fingerprint Discoveries: The Illustrated Textbook of Fingerprint Identification**. ISBN 0-9650202-0-7
- **Fingerprint Discoveries Workbook: Assignments, Projects and Tests**. ISBN 0-9605202-2-03

North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission Forensic Testing

State v. Joseph Sledge – 78 CRS 2415-2416 (Columbus)

Item Tested	Results
Dress – Aileen Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed to reveal chemical indications for the presence of semen Tested by SBI, LabCorp and Cellmark No lab was able to obtain a male DNA profile
Slip – Aileen Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed to reveal chemical indications for the presence of semen Tested by SBI, LabCorp and Cellmark Partial male DNA profile obtained by SBI Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Dress – Josephine Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed to reveal chemical indications for the presence of semen Tested by SBI, LabCorp and Cellmark Partial male DNA profile obtained by SBI Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington Profile does not match the male profile from the Slip of Aileen Davis obtained by SBI (see above)
Slip – Josephine Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed to reveal chemical indications for the presence of semen Tested by SBI, LabCorp and Cellmark Partial male DNA profile obtained by LabCorp Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Washington Profile is consistent with profile from Dress of Josephine Davis obtained by SBI (see above)
Pepper Can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no identifiable latent prints noted or developed Tested by SBI and Cellmark No DNA profiles were developed (male or female) from testing on the pepper can Pepper remaining inside of can and pepper remaining inside of evidence bag containing pepper can were weighed. Weight of pepper is ~30.5 grams (~1.076 ounces). Pepper can is a 2.0 ounce can. Approximately ½ of pepper remained in pepper can
Linoleum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested by Cellmark The partial male profile obtained is a mixture of at least two males Billy Ray Hales cannot be excluded as a contributor to this mixture (Note: Hales is the grandson/nephew of the Victims; he and his family lived next door to the Victims; he and his family had been in the Victims' home) Excludes Joseph Sledge and Johnny Ray Benton Due to the partial mixture profile and the possibility of allelic dropout, no determination can be made regarding Herman Baker, Samuel Smith, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington as contributors to this mixture

Item Tested	Results
White Paper Bag : "The Medicine Shop"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • Mixture profile obtained • Major profile within mixture is consistent with Josephine Davis • Aileen Davis cannot be excluded from the minor profile within the mixture • No male DNA profile obtained
Tape lift from floor of living room (Print 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Tape lifts from floor of living room (Prints 2/3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • The profile is a possible mixture • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton and Elisha Robinson • Due to the partial mixture profile and the possibility of allelic dropout, no determination can be made regarding Daniel Slater Haire III, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington as contributors to this sample
Tape lift from floor of living Room (Print 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Tape lift from "Zenith" Radio (Print 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Tape lift from right side bottom door of refrigerator (Print 32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Tape lift from side of refrigerator towards door (Prints 40/40dup)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested by Cellmark • A partial male profile was obtained • Excludes Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Billy Ray Hales, Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire and Robert Washington
Hairs from Victim's Body (9 hairs total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two hairs tested at Cellmark • All nine hairs tested at Mitotyping • Seven hairs revealed the same profile • Two hairs revealed a mixture. Mixture is most likely due to degraded DNA. Underlying profile within the mixture is the same profile being seen in the other seven hairs • All nine hairs Exclude Joseph Sledge, Herman Baker, Katherine Brown (maternal relative of Victims), Samuel Smith, Johnny Ray Benton, Daniel Slater Haire III, Elisha Robinson, William Thomas Haire, and Robert Washington • The mtDNA DNA profile seen in all nine hairs is recognizably African/African American

Item Tested	Item Tested
Hairs from Sledge's Pants (6 hairs total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing conducted at Mitotyping • Four hairs tested • One hair belongs to Sledge and excludes all other reference standards submitted • One hair is a cat hair • Two hairs revealed no DNA (human or animal) • Remaining two hairs were not tested because they were similar in color/type to the hair determined to be a cat hair and the two hairs that revealed no DNA

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 7/1/12-present Laboratory Director, Mitotyping Technologies, a division of AI Biotech, LLC
- 9/98-6/12 Founder/President, CEO, and Director, Mitotyping Technologies, LLC
- 9/97-9/98 Senior Research Assistant, Dept. of Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University
- 9/96-7/97 Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher, Cellular Genetics, Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK
- 5/94-10/94 Research Assistant, Dept. of Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University
- 1/93-5/93 Research Assistant, Intercollege Graduate Program in Genetics, The Pennsylvania State University
- 8/92-12/92 Teaching Assistant, Introductory Biological Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University
- 10/78-8/81 Physician Assistant, Department of Pediatrics, University of Virginia Medical Center
- 7/77-4/78 Physician Assistant, Blue Ridge General Practice, Lynchburg, VA

SERVICE

- 2007-present Reviewer, Office of Justice Programs (National Institute of Justice)
- 2006-2010 Member, Technical Working Group, DNA Forensics (National Institute of Justice)
- 2000-present Editorial Board, Journal of Forensic Sciences
- 9/03-6/06 Member, Working Group, Forensic DNA for Officers of the Court Project, National Forensic Science Technology Center
- 9/04-2/08 Member, Advisory Council, National Clearinghouse for Science, Technology, and the Law at Stetson University College of Law

EDUCATION

- 8/91-3/96 PhD, Genetics, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA,
Adviser, Dr. Mark Stoneking, Department of Anthropology
- 1/89-8/91 MS, Genetics, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, Adviser,
Dr. Robert B. Eckhardt, Department of Anthropology
- 8/75-8/77 Physician Assistant Program, Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest
University, Winston-Salem, NC
- 8/72-8/77 BS, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Forensic Sciences (Fellow)
American Association for the Advancement of Science
Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society
Society for Wildlife Forensic Science
International Society for Forensic Genetics

AWARDS

Vidocq Society Medal of Honor, October 24, 2010, Bensalem, PA, for work in the 1957 "Boulder Jane Doe" identification case.

REVIEWER

Forensic Science International Genetics
Journal of Forensic Sciences
American Journal of Human Genetics
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Croatian Medical Journal
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Mitochondrion
BioMed Central

PUBLICATIONS

Sykes BC, Mullis RA, Hagenmuller C, Melton TW, and Sartori M. (2014) Genetic analysis of hair samples attributed to yeti, bigfoot and other anomalous primates. Proceedings of the Royal Society B 281:20140161.

Owsley DW, Bruwelheide KS, Cashion Lugo MA, Melton T, and Spradley MK. (2014) Identification of Ramon Power Y Giralt: Puerto Rico's Diplomat to the 1812 Spanish Constitutional Court. CENTRO Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (in press).

Melton, T. (2013) Digging deep: next generation sequencing for mitochondrial DNA forensics. Forensic Magazine 10:12-14.

Salas A., Coble M., Desmyter S., Grzybowski T., Gusmao L., Hohoff C., Holland M., Irwin J., Kupiec T., Lee H-Y., Ludes B., Lutz-Bonengel S., Melton T., Parsons T., Pfeiffer H., Prieto L., Tagliabracci A., Parson W. (2012) Letter to the Editor: A cautionary note on switching mitochondrial DNA reference sequences in forensic genetics. Forensic Science International Genetics 6(6):e182-4.

Melton T., Holland C., and Holland M. (2012) Forensic Mitochondrial DNA: Current Practice and Future Potential. Forensic Science Review 24(2):110-122.

Melton T., Dimick G., Higgins B., Yon M., and Holland C. (2012) Mitochondrial DNA Analysis of 114 Hairs Measuring Less Than One Centimeter from a 19-Year-Old Homicide. Investigative Genetics 3:12.

Melton, T. (2011) Easy species DNA identification for the forensic laboratory using 12S mitochondrial DNA. Forensic Magazine, July 2011.

Melton, T. and Isenberg, A. (2009) Comment on: Foran DR, Gehring ME, Stallworth SE. The recovery and analysis of mitochondrial DNA from exploded pipe bombs. Journal of Forensic Sciences 54:90-94.

Melton, T. (2009) Mitochondrial DNA examination of cold case crime scene hairs. Forensic Magazine April 2009.

Melton, T. (2009) Mitochondrial DNA: Profiling, in: Wiley Encyclopedia of Forensic Science, Allan Jamieson, A, Moenssens, A. (eds.), John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. Chichester, UK, pp.1833-1837.

Melton, T. and Holland, C. (2007) Routine Forensic Use of the Mitochondrial 12S Ribosomal RNA Gene for Species Identification. Journal of Forensic Sciences 52:1305-1307.

Melton T. and Nelson, K. (2007) Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis of 116 casework skeletal samples. Journal of Forensic Sciences 52:557-562.

Melton, T., Holland, C.A., and Nelson, K. (2006) Comment on: Divne A-M, Nilsson M, Calloway C, Reynolds R, Erlich H, Allen M. Forensic casework analysis using the HVI/HVII mtDNA linear array assay. Journal of Forensic Sciences 50:548-554.

Owsley, D., Ellwood, B., and Melton, T. (2006) Search for the grave of William Preston Longley, hanged Texas gunfighter. Historical Archaeology 40:50-63.

Melton, T. (2006) Mitochondrial DNA examination of cold case crime scene hairs. In Cold Case Homicide Investigation, ed. Richard Walton, Geberth Practical Homicide Investigation Series, Taylor and Francis, Boca Raton, FL.

Melton, T. and Weedn, V. (2005) Forensic DNA sequencing. In: Analytic Techniques of DNA Sequencing, Brian Nunnally (ed.), Taylor and Francis, Boca Raton, FL.

Melton T., Dimick, G., Higgins, B., Lindstrom, L., and Nelson, K. (2005) Forensic mitochondrial DNA casework experience on 691 hairs. Journal of Forensic Sciences 50:73-80.

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA heteroplasmy. (2004) Forensic Science Reviews 16:1-20. (FBI invited paper).

Melton, T.(2003) Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis. In: McGraw-Hill Annual Review of Science and Technology. McGraw Hill, New York, p.140-143.

Melton, T. (2003) Mitochondrial DNA: Solving the mystery of Anna Anderson. D.W. Steadman (ed.). In: Hard Evidence: Case studies in forensic anthropology, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, p. 205-211.

Melton, T. and Nelson, K. (2001) Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis: two years of commercial casework experience in the United States. Croatian Medical Journal 42:298-303.

Melton, T., Clifford, S., Kaiser, M., Nasidze, I., and Stoneking, M. (2001) Diversity and heterogeneity of mtDNA in North American populations. Journal of Forensic Sciences 46:46-52.

Melton, T. and Sensabaugh, G. (2000) Mitochondrial Deoxyribonucleic Acid. In: Encyclopedia of Forensic Science, Academic Press Limited, London.

Melton, T. and Stoneking, M. (1999) SSO-probe hybridization analysis of mtDNA. In Mitochondrial DNA analysis in forensic science, A. Sajantila (ed.).

Melton, T., Batzer, M., Clifford, S., Martinson, J., and Stoneking, M. (1998) Evidence for the proto-Austronesian homeland in Asia: mitochondrial and nuclear DNA variation in Taiwanese aboriginal tribes. American Journal of Human Genetics 63:1807-1823.

Melton, T., Ginther, C., Sensabaugh, G., Soodyall, H., and Stoneking, M. (1997) The extent of heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA of sub-Saharan African populations. Journal of Forensic Sciences 42:580-590

Melton, T., Wilson, M., Batzer, M., and Stoneking, M. (1997) Extent of heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA of European populations. Journal of Forensic Sciences 42:437-446

Melton, T. and Stoneking, M. (1996) The extent of heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA of ethnic Asian populations. Journal of Forensic Sciences 41:587-598

Melton, T. (1996) The influence of mitochondrial DNA variation on forensic DNA typing. PhD thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Melton, T., Peterson, R., Redd, A., Saha, N., Sofro, A.S.M., Martinson, J., and Stoneking, M. (1995) Polynesian genetic affinities with Southeast Asian populations as identified by mitochondrial DNA analysis. American Journal of Human Genetics 57:403-414

Gill, P., Kimpton, C., Aliston-Greiner, R., and Sullivan, K., Stoneking, M., Melton, T., Nott, J., Barritt, S., Roby, R., Holland, M., Weedn, V. (1995) Establishing the identity of Anna Anderson Manahan. Nature Genetics 9: 9-10

Eckhardt, R. B. and Melton, T. W., eds. (1992) Population Studies on Human Adaptation and Evolution in the Peruvian Andes, Number 14, Occasional Papers in Anthropology, Matson Museum of Anthropology, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA., 268 pages

Melton, T. W. (1991) Comparison of Growth and Development in Two Peruvian Populations of High Altitude Ancestry. MS thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Wilson, T. A., Melton, T. W., and Clarke, W. L. (1983) The effect of fenfluramine and caloric restriction on carbohydrate homeostasis in patients with lipodystrophy. Diabetes Care 6:160

Clarke, W. L., Melton, T. W., and Bright, G. M. (1983). The effect of hyperglucagonemia on blood glucose concentrations and on insulin requirements during fasting in insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. Acta Endocrinologica 102: 557

Clarke, W., Melton, T., Sachse, M., Schneider, J., Schneider, K., and Yarbrough, M. (1980). Evaluation of a new reflectance photometer for use in home blood glucose monitoring. Diabetes Care 4: 547

Bright, G., Melton, T., Rogol, A., and Clarke, W. (1980). Failure of cortisol to inhibit early morning increases in basal insulin requirements in fasting insulin-dependent diabetics. Diabetes 29: 680

PRESENTATIONS

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Toolkit for Lawyers. Arkansas Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Little Rock, AR, June 5-7, 2014 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA: A Highly Useful Tool, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Making Sense of Science VII, Las Vegas, NV, May 15-18, 2014.

Melton, T. Microscopical and DNA Examination of Very Small Crime Scene Hairs: Possibilities and Challenges (with Amy Michaud, ATF), The Evidence Conference, Washington DC, October 2, 2012.

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA 101 and 102. Actual Innocence Program, Center for American and International Law, Plano, TX, February 11, 2012 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Forensics for the Legal Practitioner: Critical Knowledge from Crime Scene to Courtroom. American Academy of Forensic Science Annual Meeting, Chicago, February 21-26, 2011 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Workshop: I. Hairs and Skeletal Remains, II. Heteroplasmy, III. Species Identification, IV. Population Statistics. Philadelphia Crime Laboratory, Philadelphia, PA, December 6, 2010 (invited, 4 hours teaching).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Mixture Interpretation. 21st International Symposium on Human Identification, San Antonio, TX, October 14, 2010 (invited).

Melton, T., Sikora, J., Fernandes, V., and Pereira, L. FidoTyping and FidoSearch: Validation of a forensic canine mitochondrial DNA protocol and a new on-line canid mitochondrial hypervariable region database. American Academy of Forensic Science Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, February 22-27, 2010

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA: Updates and Challenges. Pennsylvania Bar Institute, Philadelphia, PA, September 11, 2008 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA: Updates and Challenges. Office of Forensic Services, New York Division of Criminal Justice Services, Albany, NY, June 18, 2008 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Workshop: I. Heteroplasmy, II. Population Statistics. Pennsylvania State University, Forensic Science Program, State College, PA, Nov. 1, 2007 (invited, 4 hours teaching).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA workshop: I. Hairs and Skeletal Remains, II. Heteroplasmy, III. Species Identification, IV. Population Statistics. California Department of Justice, Richmond, CA, April 30, 2007. (invited; 8 hours teaching)

Melton, T. Easy breezy species ID for the forensic lab using a method that works for even the most challenging samples. Forensic e-Symposium, April 24, 2007, sponsored by The Forensic Institute, Glasgow, Scotland (invited).

Melton, T. What investigators need to know about mitochondrial DNA analysis. Pennsylvania Association of Licensed Investigators conference, State College, PA, September 28, 2006 (invited).

Melton, T. What criminal attorneys need to know about mitochondrial DNA analysis. Pennsylvania Bar Institute, Harrisburg, PA, June 8-9, 2006 (invited).

Melton, T. What homicide investigators need to know about mitochondrial DNA. Pennsylvania Homicide Investigators Annual Conference, State College, PA, April 26, 2006 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Screening: Issues and Alternatives. American Academy of Forensic Science Annual Meeting, Seattle, February 21-25, 2006.

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA: How the smallest genome helps exonerate and convict. Pennsylvania Homicide Investigators Annual Conference, State College, PA, June 22, 2005 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA and hair analysis. DePaul College of Law Forensic Hair Conference, Chicago, March 18, 2005 (invited).

Melton, T. A human mitochondrial DNA database derived from casework at Mitotyping Technologies. American Academy of Forensic Science Annual Meeting, New Orleans, February 21-26, 2005.

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA: How the smallest genome helps exonerate and convict. California Association of Criminal Justice/California Defense Attorneys Association Annual Meeting, Monterey, California, February 19-21, 2005 (invited).

Melton, T. By a hair: How the smallest genome helps convict and exonerate. Henry Lee Institute: Cracking Cold Cases, Foxwoods Casino, April 5, 2004 (invited).

Melton, T. Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis. Seminar for Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii, Hickam Air Force Base, Oahu, February 9, 2004 (invited).

Melton, T. Casework experience: Reaching 600+ hairs. Forensic Human Mitochondrial DNA Workshop, American Academy of Forensic Science Annual Meeting, Dallas, February 16-21, 2004 (FBI invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA Forensic Analysis: How the Smallest Genome Convicts and Exonerates. 2003 Benedum Lecture Series, West Virginia University, October 16, 2003 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA typing. DNA Seminar, Ontario Provincial Police, Collingwood, Ontario, September 8-13, 2003 (invited).

Melton, T. Human hair mtDNA analysis: success, size, and site heteroplasmy. The Third European-American School in Forensic Genetics and Mayo Clinic Course in Advanced Molecular and Cellular Medicine September 1-5, 2003, Zagreb, Croatia (invited).

Melton, T. Scientific developments and future applications of mitochondrial DNA analysis. Pennsylvania Supreme Court DNA Programs, State College, PA, March 19, 2003, and Plymouth Meeting, PA, March 26, 2003 (invited).

Melton, T. Hair. Panel Discussion, National Conference on Science and the Law, U.S. Department of Justice, Miami, FL, October 3-5, 2002 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA typing. DNA Seminar, Ontario Provincial Police, Muskoka Sands, Ontario, September 8-13, 2002 (invited).

Melton, T. Ancient mtDNA analysis in forensic casework. Human Forensic Mitochondrial DNA Analysis Workshop, American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, February 11, 2001 (invited).

Melton, T. Scientific developments and future expectation in mtDNA analysis. DNA Conference, Institute of Forensic Science and the Law, Duquesne University, November 30-December 1, 2001 (invited).

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA typing. DNA Seminar, Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Altamonte Springs, FL, August 23-24, 2001 (invited).

Melton, T. Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis: two years of commercial casework experience in the United States. Second European-American Intensive Course in PCR-Based Clinical and Forensic Testing, September 3-14, 2001, Dubrovnik, Croatia (invited).

Melton, T. Working the toughest mitochondrial DNA case in the world: getting good data out of difficult evidence. American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 19-24, 2001, Seattle, WA.

Melton, T. What mitochondrial DNA analysis can and cannot do in parentage testing. Eleventh International Symposium on Human Identification, October 10-13, 2000, Biloxi, MI (invited).

Melton, T. Diversity and heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA of North American populations. Cambridge Healthtech Institute's Fourth Annual DNA Forensics, May 31-June 2, 2000, Springfield, VA (invited).

Melton, T. Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis: 2000 status. Fifth Annual Conference of the Future of DNA: Implications for the Criminal Justice System, May 8-9, 2000, New York (invited).

Melton, T. and Nelson, K. Beyond simple substitutions: Length variation and heteroplasmy in mtDNA forensic casework. American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 21-26, 2000, Reno, NV.

Melton, T. Subpopulation heterogeneity in mtDNA variation. First International Conference on Forensic Human Identification in the Millenium, Mitochondrial Analysis Workshop, October 27-28, 1999, London (invited)

Melton, T. Forensic use of mitochondrial DNA 1998. California Association of Criminalists DNA Workshop, October 14, 1998, San Diego, CA (invited)

Melton, T. Forensic use of mitochondrial DNA 1998. IBC's International Conference on DNA Forensic Analysis, July 30-31, 1998, Annapolis, MD (invited)

Melton, T. Forensic use of mitochondrial DNA 1998. The Annual Conference on Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation: Viewing Crime and Justice from a Collaborative Perspective, July 26-29, 1998, Washington, D.C. (invited)

Melton, T. Forensic use of mitochondrial DNA 1998. Third Annual Conference on the Future of DNA: Implications for the Criminal Justice System, May 21-22, 1998, Chicago, IL (invited)

Melton, T., Martinson, J., and Stoneking, M. Mitochondrial DNA variation in aboriginal peoples of Taiwan and comparison with Southeast Asian populations, Cultural and Genetic Affinities of Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan, Academia Sinica, May 21-23, 1996, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC (invited)

Melton, T., Ginther, C., Wilson, M., and Stoneking, M. The extent of subpopulation heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA types of African and European populations. American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 19-24, 1996, Nashville, TN

Melton, T. Mitochondrial DNA variation in the Mukogodo. American Anthropological Association, November 15-19, 1995, Washington, DC

Melton, T. and Stoneking, M. Subpopulation heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA evaluated with analysis of molecular variance of sequence-specific oligonucleotide typing of worldwide populations. Sixth International Symposium on Human Identification, October 12-14, 1995, Scottsdale, AZ

Melton, T., Martinson, J., Saha, Sofro A., N., and Stoneking, M. The extent of subpopulation heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA types in ethnic Asian populations. American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 14-18, 1995, Seattle, WA

Melton, T. Subpopulation heterogeneity in mitochondrial DNA for ethnic Asian populations. Technical Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods, July 26, 1993, and July 25, 1994, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

ABSTRACTS/POSTERS

Danielson, P.B., Kristinsson, R., and Melton, T. (2006) Forensic mtDNA mixture fractionation by denaturing high-performance liquid chromatography. 85th Annual Meeting of the German Society of Legal Medicine-DNA in Forensics 2006, September 27-29, 2006. Innsbruck, Austria. (Abstract)

Melton, T., Nelson K., Sturk, K., and Irwin, J. (2006) Base-numbering challenges of insertion/deletion variation in the human mitochondrial DNA control region and relevance to database searches. 85th Annual Meeting of the German Society of Legal Medicine-DNA in Forensics 2006, September 27-29, 2006. Innsbruck, Austria. (Abstract)

Nelson, K. and Melton, T. (2005) Forensic mitochondrial DNA analysis of 116 casework skeletal samples. Sixteenth International Symposium on Human Identification, October 26-29, 2005, Grapevine, TX. (Abstract)

Nelson, K and Melton, T. (2004) High diversity in mtDNA from casework samples at Mitotyping Technologies. Southwest Association of Forensic Scientists, October 11-15, 2004, Oklahoma City, OK. (Abstract)

Nelson, K. and Melton, T. (2000) The case of degraded mtDNA: mtDNA ancient analysis to the rescue. Eleventh International Symposium on Human Identification, October 10-13, 2000, Biloxi, MS. (Poster)

Nelson, K. and Melton, T. (1999) Forensic applications of human mitochondrial DNA variation. Symposium on Diversity and Evolution, American Genetic Association, June 12-13, 1999, State College, PA. (Poster)

Melton, T. and Nelson, K. (1999) Diversity of casework, heteroplasmy, and population variation: mtDNA analysis in the private sector. First International Conference and Exhibition on Forensic Human Identification, The Forensic Science Service, October 24-26, 1999, London. (Poster)

Nelson, K. and Melton, T. (1999) Mitochondrial DNA testing: casework in the private sector, heteroplasmy, and genetic diversity within the United States. Tenth International Symposium on Human Identification, September 29-October 2, 1999, Orlando, FL (Poster)

Nelson, K. and Melton, T. (1999) Forensic applications of human mitochondrial DNA variation. Symposium on Human Diversity and Evolution, American Genetic Association, June 11-13, 1999 State College, PA (Poster)

Melton, T., Clifford, S., Stoneking, M., (1998) Variation and geographic subpopulation heterogeneity in the mitochondrial DNA control region of North Americans. American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 9-14, San Francisco, CA (Abstract)

Stoneking, M., and Melton, T. (1996) Forensic applications of mitochondrial DNA analysis. Cambridge Symposium on DNA Forensics, April 21-27, Santa Fe, NM (Abstract)

Melton, T., Peterson, R., Redd, A., Sofro, A., Soodyall, H., and Stoneking, M. (1994) Polynesian origins: The mitochondrial DNA 9-bp deletion marker and associated control region haplotypes in southeast Asian populations. Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution, June 15-19, 1994, Athens, GA. (Poster)

Kumar, S. and Melton, T. Phylogenetic trees from molecular data: construction and applications. Graduate Research Exhibition, The Pennsylvania State University, March 20-21, 1992, University Park, PA (Poster)

Melton, T.W., and Eckhardt, R.B., Thoracic development at high and low altitude provides confirmatory evidence for the existence of genetic factors influencing adaptation to high altitude in South America. Human Biology Council, April 2-6, 1991, Milwaukee, WI. (Poster)

Melton, T. Genetic adaptation in the Andes. Graduate Research Exhibition, The Pennsylvania State University, March 22-23, 1991, University Park, PA (Poster)

Clarke, W., Melton, T., Sachse, M., Schneider, J., Schneider M., and Yarbrough, M. (1981) Evaluation of a new reflectance photometer for use in home blood glucose monitoring. Diabetes 30 (Suppl. 1): 92 (Abstract)

Wilson, T., Melton, T., and Clarke, W. (1980) The effect of fenfluramine on glucose homeostasis in lipodystrophy. Diabetes 29 (Suppl. 2): 498 (Abstract)

Bright, G., Melton, T., Rogol, A., and Clarke, W. (1980) The effect of exogenous human growth hormone on blood glucose concentrations and insulin requirements during closed-loop (Biostator R-GCIIS) control of diabetes mellitus. Diabetes 29 (Suppl. 2): 483 (Abstract)

Clarke, W., White, N., Melton, T., and Santiago, J. (1979). Diurnal variation in closed-loop insulin requirements in fasting insulin dependent diabetics: probable role of the adrenal pituitary axis. Workshop on Artificial Beta Cell, Budapest-Heviz, Hungary (Abstract)

TRIAL AND TESTIMONY EXPERIENCE (ALL MITOCHONDRIAL DNA)

11/97 Frye hearing: Washington v. Dennis Keith Smith
3/98 Frye hearing: Washington v. Dennis Keith Smith
5/98 Trial: Washington v. Dennis Keith Smith
5/98 Frye hearing: Florida v. James Edward Crow
11/98 Frye hearing: Michigan v. Kevin Holtzer
5/99 Frye hearing: Michigan v. Kevin Holtzer
10/99 Trial: Michigan v. Kevin Holtzer
11/99 Hearing: North Carolina v. Robin Martin [Def.]
1/00 Trial: Kansas v. John Taylor [Def.]
1/00 Frye hearing: U.S. v. Noah Beverly

1/00 Trial: U.S. v. Noah Beverly
2/00 Trial: U.S. v. Noah Beverly (rebuttal)
6/00 Frye hearing: New York v. Raymond Klinger
8/00 Trial: Iowa v. Monte Seager
3/01 Trial: South Carolina v. Wesley Myers
4/01 Frye hearing: Colorado v. Cong Van Than
5/01 Trial: Iowa v. Donald Piper

10/01 Frye hearing: Illinois v. Cecil Sutherland
 12/01 Frye hearing, Trial: Florida v. Jeremy Alan Smith
 12/01 Trial: Colorado v. Juan Sierra-Omini

 1/02 Trial: Iowa v. Donald Piper
 2/02 Frye hearing: Missouri v. Kenneth Coleman
 2/02 Trial: Missouri v. Kenneth Coleman
 2/02 Frye hearing: Minnesota v. Harold Zanter
 2/02 Trial: New York v. Ali Bessaha
 4/02 Trial: Washington v. Scott Fischer
 5/02 Trial: Connecticut v. Michael Skakel
 6/02 Trial: Iowa v. Donald Piper
 7/02 Grand Jury: Queens, New York (Samiya Haqiqi homicide)
 8/02 Trial: Colorado v. Michael Joe Muniz (by telephone)

 8/02 Deposition: Utah: Johnson v. Harris (civil)
 8/02 Trial: Washington v. Robert L. Yates, Jr.
 8/02 Trial: Michigan v. Tom Roberts
 10/02 Trial: Kansas v. Jonathan Carr and Reginald Carr
 10/02 Trial: New York v. Kelvin Mahoney
 11/02 Trial: California v. Hugo Alcazar
 1/03 Hearing: Connecticut v. Mark Reid [Def.]
 4/03 Trial: Michigan v. Tony Berry
 4/03 Trial: Washington v. Brian Keith Lord
 4/03 Trial: New Mexico v. Roy Foote

 7/03 Trial: Michigan v. Garron Leon Mason
 9/03 Trial: Florida v. Carl Simmons
 9/03 Hearing (CA): Redding Rancheria Native Council/Foreman family matter (civil)
 1/04 Trial: Tennessee v. Pat Bondurant
 3/04 Hearing: New York v. Kelvin Mahoney
 3/04 Trial: New York v. Louis Telese
 4/04 Trial: Tennessee v. Sabrina Lewis
 5/04 Trial: Illinois v. Cecil Sutherland
 7/04 Hearing: Delaware v. John Woods
 7/04 Frye hearing: U.S. v. Ida Chase

 7/04 Frye hearing: New Jersey v. Porfirio Jiminez
 8/04 Hearing: Paul v. Good (civil matter, Waycross, Georgia)
 1/05 Trial: Illinois v. Billy Lee Warren
 1/05 Hearing: Georgia v. Robert Vaughn
 3/05: Trial: U.S. v. Henry Tobias
 6/05 Trial: U.S. Robert Smith
 6/05 Trial: Florida v. Charles Peterson
 8/05 Trial: Georgia v. Robert Vaughn
 9/05 Trial: New York v. Jude Byron
 10/05 Trial: New York v. John Kogut

2/06 Trial: Washington v. Brian Frawley
 3/06 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Hugo Selenski
 3/06 Trial: New York v. John Popal
 4/06 Trial: New Jersey v. Daniel Gatson
 6/06 Trial: Indiana v. Jenny Gibbs
 7/06 Trial: New York v. Christopher Porco
 9/06 Frye Hearing: New Hampshire v. Collanzo
 9/06 Trial: New Jersey v. Sterling
 11/06 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Davis
 2/07 Hearing: Norfolk Island v. Glenn McNeil

 5/07 Rimmasch Hearing: Utah v. Glen Howard Griffin
 5/07 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Brian Catalano
 6/07 Trial: New York v. Christopher Gifford
 7/07 Trial: New Jersey v. Gerald Daniels
 9/07 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Vincent Cascardo
 9/07 Trial: Pennsylvania v. William Rohland
 10/07 Trial: New Hampshire v. Kenneth Carpenter
 11/07 Trial: Regina v. Clare Spiers
 12/07 Trial: Florida v. Aurelio Ibarra
 3/08 Trial: Florida v. William Hodges

 3/08 Hearing: California v. Ray Dell Sims
 3/08 Trial: Florida v. Bryan Curry
 3/08 Hearing: Diaz v. Guthrie (civil)
 6/08 Trial: New York v. David Sanchez
 6/08 Trial: Florida v. Brett Bogle
 8/08 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Emerson Macauley
 10/08 Trial: New Jersey v. Porfirio Jiminez
 11/08 Trial: Utah v. Glen Howard Griffin
 2/09 Hearing: Pennsylvania v. David Chmiel
 2/09 Trial: Michigan v. Walter Hardeman

 2/09 Trial: Kansas v. Justin Thurber
 5/09 Hearing: Pennsylvania v. John Minch
 5/09 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Sylvester Nelms
 10/09 Trial: Michigan v. Walter Hardeman
 1/10 Trial: U.S. v. Stephen Harrison
 5/10 Trial: Maryland v. Charles Brandon Martin
 5/10 Hearing: Connecticut v. Richard LaPointe [Def.]
 6/10 Trial: Utah v. Wade Garrett Maughn
 8/10 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Jeffrey Plishka
 11/10 Trial: Texas v. Kenneth Hernandez

 10/10 Frye Hearing: California v. Marcus Oliver
 1/11 Trial: Colorado v. Alejandro Perez

4/11 Trial: California v. Alejandro Villa
6/11 Trial: Wisconsin v. Chad Lurvey [canine mtDNA]
8/11 Trial: Michigan v. David Easley
11/11 Trial: California v. Marcus Oliver
12/11 Trial: Iowa v. Ricky Putman
7/12 Trial: Pennsylvania v. Gary Gerber [Def.]
8/12 Trial: Florida v. Raydel Alvarez [Def.]
9/12 Hearing: Pennsylvania v. John Minch

10/12 Trial: Florida v. Michael Rivera
11/12 Trial: Michigan v. Jeffrey Pyne
3/13 Trial: Texas v. Mark Alan Norwood
9/13 Hearing: Florida v. Adam Lloyd Shepard
10/13 Civil Trial: Bradford Construction v. Jim Centeno
11/13 Trial: Pennsylvania v. John Minch
4/14 Trial: Florida v. Alan Shepherd

Curriculum Vitae

Meghan E. Clement, MS, F-ABC

Education

- 1985 **Master of Science, Forensic Science**
University of New Haven, West Haven, Connecticut
Honors: Graduate Fellow, 1984
- 1983 **Bachelor of Science, Biology**
Westfield State College, Westfield, Massachusetts
Graduated Cum Laude

Professional Experience

SENIOR DIRECTOR July 2012- Present

Cellmark Forensics, LabCorp Specialty Testing Group
Dallas, TX

Responsibilities: Manage the daily responsibilities of laboratory personnel and flow of both contract and independent casework, manage implementation of new tests, participate in analysis of casework and interpretation of results of STR, Y-STR and mtDNA analysis, perform technical reviews and administrative reviews, provide expert testimony, participate in marketing and sales functions.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, FORENSIC IDENTITY May 2000- July 2012

Laboratory Corporation of America
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Responsibilities: Manage the daily responsibilities of laboratory personnel and flow of casework, as well as implementation of new tests, participate in analysis of casework and interpret results of DNA analysis, prepare reports, provide expert testimony, direct and coordinate marketing and sales functions.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, FORENSIC IDENTITY Aug. 1998- May 2000

Laboratory Corporation of America
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Responsibilities: Direct and participate in the DNA analysis of samples submitted to the laboratory, prepare reports of results and provide expert testimony, supervise and direct laboratory technologists and lab clerk positions, direct and coordinate marketing and sales functions.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FORENSIC IDENTITY Nov. 1994- Aug. 1998

Laboratory Corporation of America (formerly Roche Biomedical Laboratories)
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

Responsibilities: Conduct forensic DNA analysis on biological samples using both RFLP and PCR techniques, oversee and direct the laboratory technologists in the production of forensic DNA casework, prepare reports of results and provide expert testimony, assist in laboratory operations to ensure timely handling of cases and QA/QC measures, assist in the marketing and sales aspects of the Forensic Identity department.

FORENSIC BIOLOGIST March 1991 - Nov. 1994

Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office
Fort Worth, Texas

Responsibilities: Forensic analysis of biological samples using traditional serological techniques as well as RFLP DNA profiling, conduct research and validation of new techniques in the forensic biology field, provide expert testimony, provide training to officer's in various law enforcement agencies concerning the collection and preservation of evidence, crime scene investigation.

SENIOR CRIMINALIST March 1985 - March 1991

City of Albuquerque, Police Department, Criminalistics
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Responsibilities: Assisted in implementing a DNA section including setting up quality control measures and population data bases, as well as performing validation studies, traditional serological analysis, blood/breath alcohol concentration analysis, provide expert testimony, crime scene investigation, train new personnel, officers and detectives.

TEACHING ASSISTANT, FORENSIC SCIENCE Sept. 1984- Mar. 1985

University of New Haven, West Haven, Connecticut

Responsibilities: Assist in teaching serological techniques to graduate students in the Criminalistics laboratories, assist in research projects being conducted.

TEACHING ASSISTANT, BIOLOGY Sept. 1983 - Sept. 1984

University of New Haven, West Haven, Connecticut

Responsibilities: Set up and assist in teaching various biology laboratories to undergraduate students.

FORENSIC SCIENCE INTERNSHIP August 1984

New Mexico State Police Crime Laboratory,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Observed and participated in case analysis under the supervision of New Mexico State Police forensic analysts in the serology, trace, drugs and firearms sections.

Affiliations

American Academy of Forensic Sciences, Member

Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists, Member

Appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors-Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) –October 2014

Expert Testimony and Depositions

Testified 350+ times in 32 states

Testified in local, state, military and federal courts

Forensic Laboratory Experience

Qualified

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| • RFLP | 1989 |
| • PCR Analysis and Interpretation | 1990 |
| • DQ Alpha + Polymarker Testing | 1995 |
| • Paternity Testing | 1995 |
| • Mitochondrial DNA Analysis | 1997 |
| • Commercial Kit STR Analysis | 2002 |
| • Y-STR Analysis | 2003 |

Certifications

Molecular Biology Fellow - American Board of Criminalistics (ABC)

Publications and Oral Presentations

Budowle, B., Monson, K., Anoe, K.S., Baechtel, S., Bergman, D.L., Buel, E., Campbell, P.A., Clement, M.E. et al (1991) A Preliminary Report on Binned

General Population Data on Six VNTR Loci in Caucasians, Blacks and Hispanics from the United States. Crime Lab Digest 18:9-26.

Validation of Multiplex STR Profiling Systems for Forensic Casework Specimens

American Academy of Forensic Sciences, Feb. 1998

Developing a DNA Laboratory on a Shoestring Budget

Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists, Spring Meeting 1991

Continuing Education

Sept 2014	<i>Emerging Forensic Genomic Applications-Genome ID Forum</i> , Greenville, NC
Feb 2014	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , Seattle, WA
Oct 2013	<i>International Symposium on Human Identification</i> , Atlanta, GA
Feb 2013	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , Washington, DC
June 2012	<i>2012 NIJ Meeting</i> , Arlington, VA
Feb 2012	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , Atlanta, GA
Oct 2011	<i>Mixture Interpretation Workshop-Promega International Symposium on Human Identification</i> , National Harbor, DC
Nov 2011	<i>CODIS Meeting</i> , Jasonville, FL
Feb 2010	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , Seattle, WA
Aug 2009	<i>HID Future Trends in DNA Technology</i> , Applied Biosystems, Richmond, VA
Ape 2009	<i>FBI DNA Auditor's Refresher Training</i> , Raleigh, NC
Feb 2009	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , Denver, CO
July 2008	<i>NIJ Meeting</i> , Arlington, VA
Feb 2007	<i>AAFS Annual Meeting</i> , San Antonio, TX
Aug 2006	<i>AFDAA Summer Meeting</i> , Austin, TX
May 2006	<i>ABI Human Identity University</i> , Research Triangle Park, NC

Feb 2006 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, Seattle, WA

Jun 2005 *6th Annual DNA Grantees Workshop*, Arlington, VA

Apr 2004 *FBI DNA Auditor's Training*, Quantico, VA

Feb 2004 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, Dallas, TX
Forensic Human mtDNA Analysis Workshop

Oct 2003 *International Symposium on Human Identification*, Phoenix, AZ
Making Sense of Popstats Workshop

Apr 2003 *ASCLD/LAB-Laboratory Inspector Training Course*, Raleigh, NC

Feb 2003 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL
Low Copy Number DNA Analysis Workshop

Jun 2002 *DNA Grantees Workshop*, Arlington, VA

Oct 2001 *7th Annual CODIS User's Conference*, Arlington, VA

Feb 2001 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, Seattle, WA

Feb 2000 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, Reno, NV

Oct 1999 *NIJ Meeting*, Arlington, VA

Apr 1998 *Mitochondrial DNA Analysis and Data Basing*, presented by Mark Wilson and Clint Stauffer

Feb 1998 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA

Sept 1997 *International Symposium on Human Identification*, Phoenix, AZ

Feb 1997 *AAFS Annual Meeting*, NYC, NY

Oct 1996 *English Speaking Working Group International Society for Forensic Haemogenetics*

Sept 1996 *International Symposium on Human Identification*, Phoenix, AZ

Specialized Schools and Training

Dec 2011 *ASCLD/LAB TECHNICAL ASSESSOR REFRESHER TRAINING*
(June 2011 revision-on line training)

Apr 2009 ***DNA AUDITOR REFRESHER TRAINING***, Presented by the FBI,
Research Triangle Park, NC

Jan 2006 ***ASCLD/LAB-International ASSESSOR TRAINING COURSE***,
Houston, TX

Apr 2004 ***DNA AUDITOR TRAINING***, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

Apr 2003 ***ASCLD-LAB INSPECTOR TRAINING***, Raleigh, NC

Mar 1995 ***FORENSIC AMPLI TYPE PM + HLA DQA1 PCR WORKSHOP***,
Perkin-Elmer Training Dept., Foster City, CA

June 1991 ***ADVANCED FORENSIC DNA TYPING SCHOOL***, FBI Academy,
Quantico, Virginia

Mar-Jun1990 ***VISITING SCIENTIST PROGRAM***, FBI Academy, Quantico,
Virginia

Assisted in numerous DNA research projects being conducted by the
FBI Research and Training Center including data base compilation,
ethidium bromide use in DNA analysis, quantitation of human DNA
using slot blot techniques, effect of glycerol concentration on DNA,
studies on possible ladders for amplified RFLP's (Amp-FLP's), and
population data base compilation of Amp-Flp MCT118.

Dec 1989 ***FORENSIC APPLICATIONS OF DNA TYPING***, FBI Academy,
Quantico, Virginia

Fall 1988 ***MOLECULAR GENETICS AND FORENSIC SCIENCE***, University
of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

May 1998 DNA ***POLYMORPHISM AND DNA TYPING***
COURSE/WORKSHOP, University of New Haven, West Haven,
Connecticut

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COLUMBUS COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

v.

JOSEPH SLEDGE, JR.,
Defendant.

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)

AFFIDAVIT

NOW COMES the Affiant, Reuben L. Moore, Jr., who attests to the following:

1. My name is Reuben L. Moore. I was licensed to practice law in the State of North Carolina in 1965. I am currently retired and my North Carolina State Bar license is inactive.
2. I am under no disability, or undue, or improper influence of any kind.
3. I am giving this affidavit of my own free will and understanding. No one has promised me anything or pressured me in any way to sign this affidavit.
4. In 1978, I represented Joseph Sledge, Jr., the defendant in the above-captioned case. I represented Mr. Sledge in both of his trials for the murders of Josephine and Aileen Davis. I also represented Mr. Sledge for his direct appeal.
5. Mr. Sledge always maintained his innocence in this case, including during discussions with me where his statements were protected by attorney-client privilege.
6. Christine Mumma, Mr. Sledge's current attorney, has shown me some of the discovery relating to this case that was recently provided to her. The exculpatory evidence included in that discovery was never provided to me by the State prior to Mr. Sledge's trial.
7. Had the exculpatory information been provided to me by the State, my trial strategy would have included challenges to the physical evidence found at the crime scene that did not match my client. This includes the shoe tread prints found in blood in the home and in the dirt outside the home that were consistent with each other and with the shoes of an African-American man who lived nearby, but not with Mr. Sledge's shoes; bloody palm prints recovered from either side of the head of one of the victims that did not match Mr. Sledge; evidence that the perpetrator was right-handed, which Mr. Sledge is not; and a description of the blood in the home that could have been used to challenge the time of death.
8. Additionally, had I been provided with Donnie Sutton's pre-trial interviews with law enforcement, I would have used those statements to impeach him on the stand.

9. It is my strong belief that had this information been available to me in 1978, the outcome of Mr. Sledge's second trial would have been different.

10. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information included in this affidavit is true, complete, and is made in good faith.

11. If called to testify at a hearing in this matter, my testimony will be consistent with the above statements.

Further, Affiant says not.

This the 24 day of October, 2013.

Reuben L. Moore, Jr.

Reuben L. Moore, Jr.
N.C. State Bar No. 3091,

inactive

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Brunswick

Sworn to and subscribed before me this the 24 day of October, 2013.

Carole W. Long
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: 5-13-2018

CAROLE W. LONG
NOTARY PUBLIC
Brunswick County
North Carolina
My Commission Expires 5-13-2018



North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence

Identify, Investigate, and Advance Toward Justice

P.O. Box 52446 Shannon Plaza Station, Durham, NC 27717-2446
admin@nccai.org (919) 489-3268 (Phone) (919) 489-3285 (Fax)

March 26, 2012

Mr. Joseph Sledge, #0372992
Nash Correctional
P.O. Box 600
Nashville, NC 27856

Dear Joseph,

I hope you are well. Thank you for your many letters that remind me of the many issues in your case.

My staff attorney and I plan to make a trip to see Mr. Sutton in the next few weeks. I will let you know if he has anything helpful to say, although I don't anticipate that he will.

I understand that you believe that I should pursue Mr. Baker further with the hope that he will change his statement or can be "tricked" into changing his statement. I'm sorry that I cannot agree to lie to a witness to try to induce them into changing sworn testimony. A recantation obtained in that way would not be considered credible by a court. Although that technique is used by law enforcement during investigations, the post-conviction standards in proving innocence are different.

We have conducted a search for Deputy Sheriff Rome Martin, who you indicated warned you that the murder was being "pinned" on you. I have also made several attempts to contact Mr. Rex Gore, who is in private practice now, but he has not returned my calls. I will continue to try to reach him. With regard to Mr. Raymond Savage, based on your trial transcript, he did not testify at your trial. Finally, with regard to Mr. Taub, he testified that there were some positive indications for the presence of blood found in the automobile. I did not find his testimony particularly compelling and I am confident he would not have anything to add or even remember the case now.

We have also drafted affidavits for the sheriff's department and clerk's office to sign regarding the physical evidence in your case, but I do not plan to send those until after we attempt to talk to Mr. Sutton. At that time, I will also determine whether we will attempt to obtain discovery of police and prosecution files in your case, whether we will pursue the signed affidavits, or if it might be time to refer your case to the Innocence Inquiry Commission so they can obtain full

NOTE: The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence (including all its affiliated Innocence Projects® and individuals) reviews cases for the sole purpose of investigating claims of actual innocence. The Center does not act as legal counsel to any person whose case is being investigated, until and unless the Center, through its legal counsel or her designees, specifically agrees in writing to take on such representation. The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence is a separate entity from the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission.

discovery of all police and prosecutorial files. The Commission can also confirm, through their own search, that there is no additional physical evidence in your case.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will be in touch to let you know how it goes with Mr. Sutton.

Best,

Chris Mumma
Executive Director

NOTE: The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence (including all its affiliated Innocence Projects® and individuals) reviews cases for the sole purpose of investigating claims of actual innocence. The Center does not act as legal counsel to any person whose case is being investigated, until and unless the Center, through its legal counsel or her designees, specifically agrees in writing to take on such representation. The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence is a separate entity from the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission.

Joseph Sledge #
Nash Cor. Inst.
PO Box 600
Nashville, NC 27856
3-29-12

Dear Mr. Mumma

Did the Lab Corp complete there search on the evidence with the DNA. You mention in your last letter about pillow case found under a bridge, that had been over looked by Mr. Fore.

The Baker matter I was hoping a bug could be planted and he was to converseate and let out the truth. With this modern day technology and all.

If Sutton refuse to cooperate it maybe because Herman refused ask him this question why he and Baker gave two different testimonies. The same testimony would have been more convincing.

I hope with prayers that the evidence of the rape is in those files. Evidence the pubic and head hair originated from the perpetrator, Evidence the State telling the FBI forensic expert the younger woman was raped. Photos of the bodies with their clothing exposing their nakedness. The younger woman virginity had a tear in it.

Bloody shoe tracks were found which had proven negative to the defendant shoe size and the all star sneakers he was wearing.

Finger prints all negatives. Prosecutors Lee Aaron last argument to the jury he said although there is no evidence to prove the case they must believe the testimony of the two inmate witnesses.

Joseph Shaw is the party that was in the Cumberland County jail when Donald Sutton moved in. John Cross is deceased.

You may want to converse with Mr. Shaw to see what he knows about the case after all these years.

Please make sure don't forget to include Wallace Danner. I believe he could get Danner to sing the blues. Danner could lead you in the right direction. Danner and Baker were drug users together.

When you visit Sutton please remind him the Lord is looking down upon him. If it don't make a difference, it's the devil. He had more to offer at that time. But did he get his soul back? A good question. Look at it from Godly perspectives you'll see.

You may not know whether the SBI kept custody of a pair of those hair samples during their investigation into this case. Who knows how the feds operate?

Please find Mr. Rex Gore if you will, he's the man you want to talk to.

When you decide to take this case to the innocent inquiry commission please make it known that Rex Gore found the hair samples. But there was a dispute as to who was to deliver the evidence to the SBI for DNA testing. The Bladen Authorities delivered the evidence bag. The containers inside the bag empty.

Someone had removed the hair samples in the containers and put the containers back inside the bag and then reseal the evidence bag. No further investigation was done to verify those hairs was in the containers before the bag left the Columbus Clerk's office.

That should make a issue at the Bladen County Courthouse.

I hope I'm making enough sense. This will be my last and
final hope to prove that I'm actually innocent in the sight
of humanity. Hope to hear from soon.
Please excuse my verbatim imitation.

Sincerely
Joseph Dodge # 0372992

DPS RECORDS

JOSEPH SLEDGE

The DPS Records for Joseph Sledge were reviewed by NCIIC Staff. The following areas were noted and are described below: Education, IQ, Diagnosis, and Literacy/Functioning.

The following are abbreviated: Combined Records (CR) and Medical Records (MR).

EDUCATION:

- CR 000043 – 12/28/2012: “Inmate Sledge claims to have a twelfth grade education. There is no documentation of a GED or high school diploma.”
- CR 000060 - 04/13/2000: “Inmate Sledge stated that he has a high school diploma from 1964.”
- CR 000061 – 03/26/1999: “Joseph claims he completed high school in Georgia.”
- CR 000260 – 09/15/1977: “Achievement at only a 6.2 grade level as compared with his claimed high school education.”
- CR 000356 – 10/09/1977: “Mr. Sledge reports that he completed high school before going into the military...”
- CR 000289 – 01/14/1978: “Says he completed H.S. in Savannah, GA.”
- MR 000291 – 04/06/1979: “Admission test results indicate an inmate with average intelligence, Beta 98, with a 6th grade achievement level compared to a 12th grade claim.”
- MR 000307 – 05/18/1977: “High school graduate – no prior training school record. Fair student. Good relationship with all teachers.”

IQ:

- CR 000260 – 09/15/1977: Beta 98
- CR 000357 – 10/09/1997: Beta IQ 98, “which is in the normal range of intelligence.”
- CR 000361 – 06/20/1995: Beta IQ 98
- MR 000291 – 04/06/1979: Beta IQ 98

DIAGNOSIS:

- CR 000259 – 03/01/1978: “Record reveals that there has been some psychological intervention.”
- CR 000260 – 09/15/1977: “His personality profile had some 4 scales above normal.”
- CR 000356 – 10/09/1997: “Characteristic of those contacts was the April 1979 interview by Psychiatrist Dr. Mahorney who concluded that the diagnosis was most probably characterological in nature.”
- CR 000357 – 10/09/1997: “The MMPI-2 results are valid and indicate no psychometric risk factors. The Violent Recidivism Worksheet identified 3 factors suggesting a low to

moderate probability of arrest... a Sexual Offenders Risk Factor Summary was completed. This form suggests that there is some level of risk in dealing with this man.”

- CR 000360 – 06/20/1995: “In 1978 he was diagnosed with mild anxiety. In 1979 as a result of difficulty sleeping and his complaints of auditory and visual hallucinations, a psychiatrist at Central Prison felt he was manipulating for legal gain. He was diagnosed as character disordered.”
- CR 000367 – 8/17/1977: “Joseph notes he was seen by psychiatrist (sic) when incarcerated in Lorton Reformatory. He notes that in 1973 he was seen by a North Carolina Prison Psychiatrist because ‘I wasn’t feeling too well.’ He denies any other mental treatment.”
- MR 000290 – 04/12/1979: “While the patient presents a number of characteristics usually associated with mental disorders he basically seems to be manipulating personnel here to attempt to appear to have some sort of psychotic disorder apparently for the purpose of use in a legal trial. Diagnosis here is characterological disturbance. I doubt any psychotic process at this time.”
- MR 000293 – 04/19/1982: “Joseph Sledge is a retarded black male seen by this psychologist informally a number of times.”
- MR 000294 – 05/16/1977: “Inmate Sledge denies mental health intervention with the Department of Correction and no previous reports could be located. The Inmate admits hospitalization for psychological evaluation following an auto accident in 1973. According to his description of events he may have experienced hallucinations at that time... Affect was appropriate and there is no present evidence of thought disorder. Inmate Sledge currently does not manifest a need for either medication or psychiatric treatment.”
- MR 000304 – 05/24/1995: Adult Male Report Sheet indicates “27 T Possessed by evil spirits, 33 T Strange or peculiar experiences, 179 T Worry over sex matters.”
- MR 000307 – 05/18/1977: “Had no mental problems” in formative years.

LITERACY/FUNCTIONING:

- CR 000259 – 03/01/1978: “Joseph talked very intelligently; his manner, though, seemed to indicate that he was somewhat disturbed mentally.”
- CR 000260 – 09/15/1977: “Achievement at only a 6.2 grade level... Joseph seems to be somewhat confused at times, and fails to accpet (sic) the seriousness of his actions. He babbles on and off about his religion...”
- CR 000262 – 05/13/1977: “He appears prone toward an antisocial lifestyle, which may be characterized by unreliability and disrespect for the consequences of his behavior.”
- CR 000357 – 10/09/1997: “He was well oriented and his thoughts were clear and relevant. There was no circumstantiality nor loose associations. His verbal skills were somewhat better than average for the inmate population. He denied problems that would be indicative of an affective illness or psychosis.”
- CR 000361 – 06/20/1995: “... achievement scores on a 6th grade level.”
- CR 000365 – N/A: “Inmate appears to function at a normal level of intelligence.”

- MR 000293 – 04/19/1982: “Some time was spent evaluating the inmate in his work site and his adjustment to cell location. Indications are that he is functioning adequately.”
- MR 000307 – 05/18/1977: “The inmate appears to function at a normal level of intelligence.”

NAME: SLEDGE JOSEPH NCDOC#: 20644-OS TEST DATE: 05-24-95

CRITICAL ITEMS (Paraphrased From The Original):

27 T Possessed by evil spirits
33 T Strange or peculiar experiences
179 T Worry over sex matters

000304

Summary of Media Coverage

PRE-TRIAL

Date	Source	Headline
9/6/76	Southeastern Times	Two Bladen Women Found Murdered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities looking for Sledge • Community shocked, can't imagine a motive to kill the Davises
9/7/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Bladen Woman, Daughter Found Murdered in Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says bodies discovered by Omega Hales (rather than Wanda) • Medical Examiner: no sign of molestation • Living room bore signs of struggle, but money was left • No murder weapon found
9/7/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Man Sought in Murders in Bladen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LE looking for Sledge
9/8/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Escapee Search Continues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still looking for Sledge after his close encounter with police in Fayetteville • Includes photo of Victims' house with "Keep Out Sheriff" sign.
9/8/76	The Robesonian	Murder Suspect Eludes Police <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police looking for Sledge
9/9/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Violence ends Two Quiet Lives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Examiner says there was a sexual assault on Aileen Davis, despite preliminary examination indicating otherwise
9/9/76	The Bladen Journal	Escapee Sought in Killings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison official s say bloodhounds traced Sledge's scent towards Davis home • Medical Examiner (Meinhardt) said no evidence of sexual molestation • Sheriff Allen said nothing looked out of place in victims' house
9/10/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Escapee Questioned in Slayings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sledge caught in Dillon, SC
9/11/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Sledge Charged in Armed Theft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sledge charged with hold up of man at a rest area off I-95 where he allegedly took 400 dollars from Johnny Ray Stone • Sledge held in Cumberland Co. Jail, but taken to Elizabethtown for a few hours

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pistol was confiscated from one of the victims' family members headed toward the courthouse
9/13/76	Southeastern Times	<p>Sledge Returned to Cumberland County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge arrested in Dillon, SC, but released on bond Authorities went out to recatch him after finding out he was wanted in NC Sledge apprehended and brought to Cumberland County Jail
9/14/76	The Fayetteville Observer	<p>Stabbing Death Probe Continues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge questioned, but not charged in murders Sheriff won't comment on results of fingerprint analyses
9/16/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Inmates Lodge Complaints on Prison Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 escapes in June, July August; 3 so far in September No link between Sledge to killings Sparkman says unit is short on personnel
9/16/76	The Bladen Journal	(photo of victims' funeral procession)
9/16/76	The Bladen Journal	(photo of Sledge in handcuffs)
9/16/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Tighter Security Sought at White Lake Prison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge was present at 1:00 pm roll call, but not at 4:00 Alleged link of Sledge to murders sparked call for better security 500 signature son petition) Sledge still not connected to murders
9/20/76	Southeastern Times	<p>Reward Sought In Murder Case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheriff requested, expected to receive, reward offer from Governor's office
9/20/76	Southeastern Times	<p>Tighter White Lake Security Petition Aim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500 people sign petition asking for better security at White Lake Prison
9/21/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Bladen Sheriff Offers Reward
9/22/76	Southeastern Times	Reward Offered in Case
9/23/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Reward Offered in Double Slayings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheriff personally offered \$1000 reward for information "Sexual assault was apparent" Sledge prime suspect, but no evidence
9/28/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Bladen Slayer Said Non-White

Summary of Media Coverage

9/28/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Sheriff Says Non-White Killed Two Women
9/29/76	Southeastern Times	<p>Sheriff Issues Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To quell speculation, sheriff says evidence found eliminates any Caucasian person as a suspect
9/30/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Bladen's Real Friend and Public Forum (letters to the editor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 letters praising sheriff Allen for offering his own money as a reward; one of the letters is form victims' family
9/30/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>County Asks for Tighter Prison Security and Sheriff Says Murderer Not White</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Commissioners suggest residents were concerned about prison security even prior to the Davis murders Sheriff Allen says killer could not be white Based on physical evidence form scene of crime; wants to dispel rumors Sledge in Cumberland County Jail on charges of auto larceny and (armed?) robbery
10/7/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Reward Posted in Deaths
10/7/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Unsigned Letter Claims Knowledge of Murder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymous letter claims to know identity of killer Writer afraid of being murdered if he identifies killer, wants protection Sheriff's dept. not sure if it is a hoax, but promises to protect writer and asks him to call
10/11/76	Southeastern Times	Reward Raised to \$3500 for Murders
10/14/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Reward Increased</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gov. Holshouser offers reward of \$2500 Aileen was sexually assaulted according to autopsy Murderer not white Mystery letter writer has not contacted Sheriff
10/18/76	Southeastern Times	<p>Prison Officials Coming to Board Meeting Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prison official to meet with county Board of Commissioners Petition for better security has 1200 signatures
10/21/76	The Bladen Journal	<p>Lack of Funds Blamed for Escapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of prison system attended meeting of Bladen County Commissioners; says escapes at White Lake no greater than other units Approval of hiring new dispatchers

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lonnie Davis asks for community notification when an inmate is loose
10/21/76	The Bladen Journal	Reward Still Up
10/27/76	Southeastern Times	Prisoner Escapes is Soon Captured <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another escape form White Lake
10/28/76	The Bladen Journal	Escapee Caught <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White male inmate caught hours after escaping
11/8/76	Times-News of Hendersonville	Murder Victims Exhumed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The women's prints were not obtained prior to burial."
11/10/76	Southeastern Times	Murder victims' Bodies Exhumed
UNK	UNK	More Tests Made in 2 Slayings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims' bodies exhumed to determine exact cause of death and to take proper finger and palm prints of the victims.
11/11/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Autopsy Uncovers New Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims' bodies exhumed to get finger and palm prints
11/11/76	The Fayetteville Observer	Reasons Offered for Exhumations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inked impressions were made during first autopsy, but they were not "identifiable" and new prints were needed for comparison with latents form crime scene
11/11/76	The Bladen Journal	Davis Bodies Exhumed Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodies exhumed and taken to Chapel Hill for further tests; specific reason not stated • States that both women were molested
11/11/76	The Robesonian	Bodies of 2 Bladen Women Exhumed for More Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for victims' finger and palm prints
11/17/76	Southeastern Times	Prisoner Escapes Monday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melvin Watts, white male, escaped White Lake (not recaptured)
11/22/76	The Bladen Journal	Escape Reported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black male inmates serving armed robbery sentence escapes White Lake
11/24/76	Southeastern Times	Reward Hiked
12/16/76	The Bladen Journal	Davis Reward to Expire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2000 of \$4500 reward to be withdrawn 12/22/76 • Aileen was sexually assaulted

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge chased in direction of Davis home after his escape
12/19/76	Southeastern Times	Three Prisoners Escape White Lake Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recaptured
12/20/76	Southeastern Times	\$2000 Reward to be Rescinded Wednesday
1/2/77	The Robesonian	Death, Politics, Progress Top Bladen News <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "No important evidence has turned up in the case and the killer has not been brought to trial"
1/3/77	The Bladen Journal	Year Ends with Double Slayings Still Unsolved
1/3/77	Southeastern Times	Sledge Transferred to Minimum Security Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still a suspect, but not enough evidence to arrest/indict SBI agent: "nothing of any consequence has developed in this case in the last few weeks."
1/10/77	Southeastern Times	Inmate Escapes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black male escapes from White Lake; not recaptured
2/23/77	Southeastern Times	Reps Ask for Quick Action on Security
4/4/77	The Bladen Journal	Sledge Waives Hearing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge waives probable cause hearing for larceny and escape Sheriff says Sledge is suspect despite no evidence
4/26/77	The Fayetteville Observer	Escapee Guilty of Theft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge pleaded guilty to stealing a car in Cumberland County; still faces charge of armed robbery
8/11/77	The Fayetteville Observer	Escapee Sentenced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four years for auto theft
8/27/77	The Fayetteville Observer	Unit to Probe Bladen Deaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBI homicide squad led by Max Bryan to investigate Davis murders
8/29/77	The Bladen Journal	Homicide Squad Reopens Davis Case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBI to reopen Davis case; Max Bryan to lead investigation (?) Sheriff Allen says his dept. exhausted all leads Sledge back in prison after trial for auto larceny and escape
8/29/77	Southeastern Times	Special SBI Team Will Aid Locals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AG asked for SBI homicide squad to get involved in investigation
9/5/77	Southeastern Times	Many Bladen Crimes Unsolved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six Bladen County murders in 1976 and no arrests by Bladen officials

Summary of Media Coverage

9/12/77	Southeastern Times	<p>Sheriff Allen Says State Report Wrong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says there were only 4 murders in 1976; 2 cleared by arrests, and the other two are the Davises
11/7/77	The Fayetteville Times	<p>Sheriff and SBI Still Seeking Clues in Davis Murders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says Omega found bodies Sledge prime suspect, but investigators are looking at all leads
1/23/78	The Bladen Journal	<p>Deaths Plague County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were 8 mysterious deaths in Bladen County; 4 since the Davis investigation was reopened 400 dollars and two rifles were in the room with Davis victims, undisturbed The guards chasing Sledge gave up at 9:30 pm and opted to resume in the morning Sledge still prime suspect, despite lack of evidence
1/30/78	Southeastern Times	Allen Will Not Seek New Sheriff Term
2/1/78	Southeastern Times	Candidates Lining Up for Bladen's Political Races
2/18/78	The Fayetteville Times	<p>SBI Expects Arrest Soon in Bladen Murders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New evidence makes arrest possible within a few weeks
2/20/78	The Bladen Journal	<p>Arrest Pending in Davis Case Say SBI Agents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max Bryan, SBI, says arrest coming within a few weeks Poole says he and Little interviewed over 250 people, and sometimes even if they know who committed a crime, they can't prove it
2/22/78	The Fayetteville Observer	<p>Grand Jury in Bladen to Meet on Slayings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge moved from Central Prison to Bladen County Jail; Judge signed order to convene grand jury; SBI "confident we have our man."
2/22/78	Southeastern Times	<p>Sledge Returned to Bladen County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upcoming Grand Jury hearing
2/23/78	The Bladen Journal	(photo of Sledge and Little)
2/24/78	The Fayetteville Observer	<p>Prisoner Indicted in Bladen Slayings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge indicted for two counts of first degree murder; law enforcement won't comment on what new evidence led to indictment
2/24/78	The Fayetteville Times	Man Indicted in 76 Bladen Slayings
2/27/78	The Bladen Journal	<p>Sledge Charged with Davis Murders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes that Aileen had been sexually assaulted

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge mugshot from 9-13-76 shows he had no hair or facial hair
2/27/78	Southeastern Times	Sledge Indicted in Davis Murders
3/21/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Judge Moves Sledge Trial
3/21/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Sledge Granted Venue Change
3/23/78	The Bladen Journal	Sledge Trial Moved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the change of venue; also notes sexual assault of Aileen
3/22/78	Southeastern Times	Venue Change for Sledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much prejudicial pre-trial publicity

Summary of Media Coverage

FIRST TRIAL

Date	Source	Headline
5/1/78	Southeastern Times	Sledge Trial Opening Set for Today
5/2/78	The Bladen Journal	Trial Begins in Columbus County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little testifies that Sledge told him a white man killed the Davis Women
5/2/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Trial Opens in Bladen Slayings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little says Sledge revealed information about the killings before police mentioned anything • Omega said she found the bodies?
5/2/78	The Fayetteville Times	Testimony Begins in Trial of Sledge for Bladen Deaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little testifies about Sledge saying a black man wouldn't cut victims up • Sledge described as having shaved head and bearded chin, muscular • SBI wouldn't reveal what new evidence led to indictment that wasn't found during initial investigation
5/3/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Witness – Slain Victims She Devils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References Baker's testimony (hard to read); Baker says Sledge confessed to him and sprinkled black pepper
5/3/78	The Fayetteville Times	Witnesses say Sledge Admitted Killing Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains quotes from Baker's testimony; Baker said Sledge confessed, thought house was empty, hit and stabbed the victims, called them she-devils and expected fire instead of blood, sprinkled pepper so spirits could not follow him
5/3/78	Southeastern Times	Two Fellow Inmates Testify in Trial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References Baker's testimony; consistent with 2/15/78 interview with law enforcement
5/4/78	The Bladen Journal	Storms, J. Kelly in Sheriff Runoff
5/4/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Sledge Awaits Verdict in Trial in Whiteville <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DA Greer admits all evidence against Sledge is circumstantial • Defense Attorney Moore questions why none of the 97 sets of finger prints nor the plaster casts of shoe prints were presented at trial
5/4/78	The Fayetteville Times	Fate of Sledge in Jury's Hands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutton testifies that Sledge admitted to killings on 9/17/76 (*but elsewhere I've seen that Sutton wasn't recaptured until 9/21/76)

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moore did not put on a defense
5/5/78	The Fayetteville Observer	<p>Sledge Mistrial Ruled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadlock, 11-1 in favor of conviction "Bladen County Detective Phillip Little testified that the pepper can was the only object found on the kitchen floor of the Davis house after the murder. Little said he found no fingerprints on it so he returned the can to its original position on the floor. Little testified the pepper can remained on the floor from Sept. 6, 1976, until Feb. 17, 1978, when it was retrieved as 'new evidence.'"
5/5/78	The Fayetteville Times	<p>Mistrial Ruled in Sledge Case</p>
5/8/78	The Bladen Journal	<p>Mistrial Declared for Sledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutton and Baker testified against Sledge; when mistrial was declared, he began mumbling and smiling
5/8/78	Southeastern Times	<p>Mistrial Ordered in Sledge Case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jury originally reported deadlock of 10-2, but Judge sent them back for more deliberations After more than 8 hours of deliberations, jury hung at 11-1
5/29/78	Times-News	<p>Black Candidate Wins in Wake Sheriff Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrelevant to trial; mentions Earl Storms winning Bladen Sheriff race

Summary of Media Coverage

SECOND TRIAL

Date	Source	Headline
8/10/78	The Bladen Journal	Sledge Trial Set August 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DA doesn't believe he could seek death penalty "State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten re-opened the case Aug. 26, 1977, and turned it over to the SBI with Henry Poole of the Homicide Squad and Bladen County Detective Phillip Little in charge."
8/28/78	The Bladen Journal	Sledge Trial Started at Whiteville Monday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> References Sledge's testimony (he didn't testify in first trial) about stealing a car and clothes and heading to Fayetteville
8/29/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Sledge Trial Opens in Whiteville <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DA Lee Greer said the prosecution will call a number of out-of-state witnesses and present new evidence that wasn't in first trial
8/30/78	The Fayetteville Times	Inmate – Sledge Admitted Killings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutton on Sledge: "We were eating breakfast and he said (the victims) would never eat breakfast again."
8/30/78	The Fayetteville Times	Jury Hears report of Statement by Sledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jury of ten white people and two black people "As photographs of the bloodsoaked murder scene were passed to the jury, Sledge, who spent most of his time slumped down in a chair, broke into a smile that turned down at the corners of his mouth. At other times, he closed his eyes and seemed to doze."
8/30/78	Wilmington Morning Star	Inmate Says Sledge Talked of Killings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First day of testimony was a near repeat of testimony given during the first trial. No new evidence was presented and no new witnesses were called. Donald Sutton told the jury that Sledge confessed to him while the two were having a conversation at the Fayetteville County Jail a few days after the murder.
8/31/78	The Fayetteville Times	Sledge Denies Killing Two Bladen County Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledge testifies that he didn't go near the victims' house and that he found out about the murders from a newspaper in Fayetteville
8/31/78	The Fayetteville Observer	Sledge Denies Slayings

Summary of Media Coverage

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sledges testifies that after escaping he was trying to find "a man" who would give him money and legal advice and help him turn himself in after he found out he was wanted in the murders He wouldn't say who the man was, only that he was "on another part of the earth" Article focuses a lot on Baker's testimony
8/31/78	The Bladen Journal	<p>Inmate Says Sledge Admitted Slayings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New jury is all white Sutton says Sledge confessed to him in Cumberland Co. Jail "a few days after the murders were discovered" (Again, when was Sutton recaptured?)
9/1/78	The Fayetteville Observer	<p>Sledge Gets Sentences in Two Bladen Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jury was made up of 10 white people and two black people (other article says all white?) Sledge maintains innocence Defense called two other inmates from same cell block in Cumberland County Jail who say Sledge never confessed to Sutton and that they were with him
9/1/78	The Fayetteville Times	Sledge Convicted in Bladen Slayings
9/4/78	The Bladen Journal	Sledge Gets Two Life Sentences



000220

Murder Suspect, Eludes Police

FAYETTEVILLE — An escapee from the Bladen County Prison Camp sought in connection for the murder of two women near Elizabethtown Monday eluded police here Tuesday in a high-speed chase.

The Fayetteville man, 32-year old Joseph Sledge Jr., was seen on Pamalee Drive in a car said to be stolen from Elizabethtown after the double murder Monday.

Stabbed and beaten to death in their wood-frame house north of Elizabethtown were Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53.

Sledge allegedly abandoned the car in the Bonnie-Doone area of town and fled on foot. Law enforcement officers searched the area during the night, but lost the trail of the suspect in the wooded area.

The deaths of the two Bladen women are thought to have occurred between midnight and 4 p.m. Monday.

Though their dresses had been pulled up to their necks, Medical Examiner Ralph Meinhardt said a preliminary examination indicated no sign of sexual assault.

Bodies Of 2 Bladen Women Exhumed For More Study

ELIZABETHTOWN, N.C.
(AP) — The bodies of two women who were murdered in their Bladen County home Sept. 6 were exhumed for further studies and reburied this week, officials reported.

Superior Court Judge Giles Clark signed the authorization for Josephine Davis and her daughter Aileen Davis to be exhumed Tuesday. The authorization was sought by Dist. Atty.,

Lee J. Greer who said in an affidavit that fingerprints and palmprints were found in the victims' home. The women's prints were not obtained prior to burial, he said.

Also requested in the affidavit was a determination of the cause of death. The bodies were examined by Dr. R. Page Hudson, the state's chief medical examiner, before they were reburied. Results were not made public.

Death, Politics, Progress

By DAVIDSHELLEY
Rebeseian Staff Writer

Sudden deaths, politics and acquisition of needed public facilities topped the news of Bladen County in 1976.

An elderly Bladen woman and her daughter had their throats slit and bodies mutilated beyond recognition by an as yet unknown assailant Sept. 6.

Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Allene Davis, 54, were found dead in their wood frame home two miles north of Elizabethtown about twelve hours after the incident was thought to have occurred.

"This is the most brutal murder I've seen since I have been sheriff in Bladen County," said John Allen, "and I've been sheriff for 30 years."

The women were not robbed, and though their dresses were pulled up around their necks, they had not been sexually assaulted.

An escapee from the Bladen

County Prison Camp, Joseph Sledge Jr. of Fayetteville, was arrested later, but was not tried in the case. He had escaped from the prison camp at White Lake just before the murders.

An award was offered but no important information has turned up in the case and the killer has not been brought to trial.

Later, Ralph Edwards, state prisons director, told Bladen residents concerned about prison camp security that there were no funds for more guards at the camp.

OFFICER RESIGNS

At 1:15 a.m. on March 15, Dewey Charles Dowless of Bladenboro was shot to death with the service revolver of Bladenboro Asst. Police Chief Charles Williams, who was loading the weapon at the time. Dowless and other members of the local rescue squad dropped by the station when their shift was over.

The dead man was said to be one of Williams' best friends. The town Board of Commissioners voted to put Williams on restricted duty during the investigation of the case. On June 28, the same board accepted Williams' resignation.

RIEGLWOOD DISASTER

Two Bladenboro men were injured, one fatally, when a million-gallon tank of hot liquid ruptured at Federal Paper Board Co. in Riegelwood on Dec. 8.

Killed was James R. Lennon of Bladenboro. George C. Davis, also of Bladenboro, was admitted to the burn center at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.

A burns center physician said Thursday that Davis, though in serious condition, is doing "pretty good" now and his chance of recovery is about 70 per cent, up from an earlier 50-50 chance. Davis is now off the respirator he was using before, and an an oxygen mask

In Elizabethtown, expansion of the county hospital is planned.

Funds for a new county public library in Elizabethtown were announced unofficially Dec. 22. The \$550,000 Economic Development Administration funding will provide a new facility to replace the cramped quarters now used in the court house basement. Also approved from the EDA was \$683,230 for four vocational education facilities in the county.

On Dec. 20, Bladen County commissioners okayed funding part of a county park, to be located south of Elizabethtown.

On Dec. 7, the commissioners approved seven fire districts for the county, a move long sought by firemen.



Violence Ends

12 Quiet Lives

SEP 9 1976

By DENNIS PATTERSON
Of The Times Staff

ELIZABETHTOWN — The worn, weathered old house is classic rural Southern — rusty tin roof, brown plank walls, a few old chairs set on a sagging front porch.

A short, dusty lane leads through bushes to a small patch of clipped grass in front of the house, and the remains of this year's garden are at the side.

Dried bean bushes, cabbage plants, onions mingle with a patch of watermelons and cantaloupes.

Across the road is a white cinder block Church of God, and a cluster of new and old homes beside the

See VIOLENCE, Page 2-B

highway mark a community that never needed to make itself a town.

A few yards up the road from the weathered old house workmen Wednesday were digging two graves in a small family burial yard.

The graves were for Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53, who were brutally slain in the old weathered house between midnight and 4 a.m. Monday.

Police were still seeking Joseph Sledge Jr., an escapee from the White Lake prison unit, for questioning in connection with the murders. Sledge escaped from the prison unit Sunday afternoon.

Sledge eluded Fayetteville police Tuesday after high-speed chase that forced him to abandon a car that was reported stolen Monday in Elizabethtown, police said.

Although authorities Wednesday reported a steady stream of tips on Sledge's whereabouts, he was not located.

The two murder victims had been slashed and bludgeoned almost beyond recognition, police officials said. Bladen County sheriff John B. Allen called it the most brutal murder he had seen in 30 years as sheriff.

Medical Examiner Ralph Meinhardt said Wednesday that autopsies of the women revealed that Miss Davis had been sexually assaulted.

Meinhardt's preliminary examination of the women's body Monday have revealed no evidence of sexual assault.

Mrs. Davis and her daughter, according to area residents, lived quietly, by themselves, and were hardly known outside their small community two miles north of here.



JOSEPH SLEDGE JR.
Suspect

"I reckon they been living there around 50 years," said J. Edgar Davis, a cousin who operates a small gas and grocery store up the road from the house.

"They never bothered nobody, just lived there by themselves," Davis said. "I can't understand it."

Davis said a family member had urged him to leave the tiny Bladen County community, and move to Fayetteville, where it supposedly would be safer.

"I told him it's already over now," Davis said. "This is just a quiet little place, and something like this isn't bound to happen more than once, and now it's over."

Davis spit another stream of tobacco juice, adjusted his glasses and shook his head.

"You know we'd hear about this sorta thing happening, but it was always far off somewheres," Davis said with a grim, solemn tone. "Now it's right here amongst us."

the man
with a plan...

Tuesday, Sept. 14th, Vote

LARRY
THOMPSON
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Paid for by Larry Thompson



Escapee

An escapee from the White Lake prison unit in Bladen County is being held in the Cumberland County jail for questioning in the slayings of two Bladen County women earlier this week.

Joseph Sledge Jr., 32, a former Fayetteville resident, was arrested Thursday in Dillon, S.C., and was returned here after he waived extradition on an escape charge.

Sledge, who escaped Sunday, had been sought in connection with the slayings of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 57, who were found dead in their farmhouse on Monday.

Bladen County deputies were in Fayetteville this morning to question Sledge

Questioned In Slayings

SEP 10 1976

about the killings and were unavailable for comment.

According to reports, Sledge was picked up about 8:20 a.m. Thursday by a South Carolina highway patrolman who stopped him for speeding 85 miles per hour in a 55 zone.

Sledge was jailed until late Thursday afternoon when he posted bond by pledging the car he was driving as collateral. Dillon County Sheriff Roy J. Lee said the car was allegedly stolen in Fayetteville.

After Sledge's release

from jail, Lee said his department received information that Sledge was wanted in North Carolina and began efforts to relocate him.

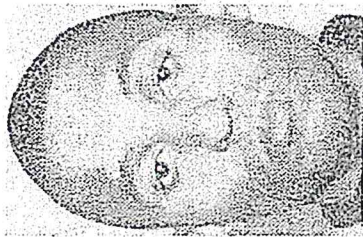
Sledge was arrested about 9:50 p.m. in the Dillon area, Lee said.

Following his escape last weekend, Sledge had been seen in the Fayetteville area but he eluded local officers who were searching for him.

In one case, a Fayetteville police officer spotted him Tuesday night in a car stolen on Monday in Elizabethtown and gave chase, but Sledge escaped on foot from a wooded area just outside the city.

Officers were not certain when Sledge left the Fayetteville area but they did not rule out the possibility that additional charges might be filed against him for alleged local crimes.

JOSEPH SLEDGE JR.



Sledge was serving a four-year term for theft charges at the time of his escape.

Bladen County authorities said the Davis women had been stabbed and beaten to death and that the younger woman had been sexually assaulted.

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Sledge Charged In Armed Theft

SEP 11 1976

A former Fayetteville man who escaped from the White Lake prison unit in Bladen County has been charged with the armed robbery of a Fayetteville man.

Joseph Sledge Jr., 32, is accused of stealing \$400 from Johnny Ray Stone of 119 John St. during a holdup early Tuesday at a rest stop on Interstate 95.

A warrant charging Sledge with the robbery was served on him Friday afternoon by Cumberland County deputies.

Meanwhile, Bladen County deputies continued their investigation of a double murder that occurred on Monday, shortly after Sledge escaped from the White Lake prison camp.

Sledge had been sought for questioning after the bodies of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 57, were found in their farm home near Elizabethtown.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen and two deputies came to Fayetteville Friday to question Sledge, along with an agent from the State Bureau of Investigation.

Sledge, who is being held in the Cumberland County jail for safekeeping, was taken to Elizabethtown for several hours Friday.

While he was being questioned there, Elizabethtown police reported that they confiscated a .38-caliber revolver from a relative of the slain woman after officers stopped him near the courthouse.

Sledge was arrested Thursday in Dillon, S.C., and returned to Fayetteville after he was stopped for speeding and jailed briefly there.

He had been the subject of a widespread search by North Carolina authorities following his escape. At one point, he eluded Fayetteville police who spotted him driving in a car reported stolen earlier this week in Elizabethtown.

Stabbing Death Probe Continues

SEP 14 1976

ELIZABETHTOWN — Bladen County authorities Monday continued questioning a prison escapee in connection with the Sept. 9 stabbing deaths of two women at their home near here but made no charges in the slayings.

John Sledge Jr., 32, formerly of Fayetteville, remained in the Cumberland County Jail Monday night following his capture Thursday in Dillon, S.C. He escaped Sept. 8 from the White Lake prison unit near here.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen was in Fayetteville Monday continuing

an investigation into the slayings of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53.

The sheriff refused to comment on the investigation or results of a fingerprint analysis of articles taken from the farmhouse of the two women to the State Bureau of Investigation lab in Raleigh.

Both women were found inside the home stabbed and bludgeoned to death. Sledge has been questioned repeatedly in the on-going investigation of the slayings and has been kept in Fayetteville for his own safety, deputies said.

Bladen Slayer Said Non-White

SEP 28 1976

ELIZABETHTOWN—Rumors about the murders of two Bladen County women have prompted Sheriff John B. Allen to issue the following statement:

"On Sept. 6, 1976, the bodies of Josephine and Ailene Davis were found in their residence. They were the victims of a brutal stabbing.

"Since that time, numerous rumors and speculations have been circulated as to who might be involved. To dispel further speculations and to avoid further suspicions for any innocent persons, the following information is being released.

"Physical evidence recovered at the scene of the crime, as examined by the SBI laboratory, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect."

Allen was vague about the rumors which promoted the statement and did not elaborate beyond his statement that the suspect or suspects were not white.

The bodies of the two women were found on Labor Day in the front room of their farm home near Elizabethtown.

Authorities have questioned a black inmate from the White Lake prison unit about the slayings but no charges have been filed.

Sledge escaped from the prison the day before the women were found. Over a week later, he was arrested in Dillon, S.C.

Sledge is now being held in the Cumberland County jail on charges of auto larceny and armed robbery.

BLADEN

SEP 28 1976

Sheriff Says Non-White Killed Two Women

ELIZABETHTOWN—Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen Monday released a prepared statement indicating that the person who killed two women near here Sept. 6 was not white.

The statement was apparently designed to quell rumors that a relative of the elderly, white women was a suspect in the slayings. Allen's assumption is based on male hair found at the death scene.

A White Lake prison escapee who was at large at the time of the slayings is still being questioned in connection with the murders, according to investigators. Joseph Sledge

Jr., a 32-year-old black, remains in custody at the Cumberland County Jail.

Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53, were found stabbed and beaten to death inside their farmhouse near here.

Allen's statement said that since the slayings, "numerous rumors and speculations have been circulated as to who might be involved.

"To dispel further speculations, and to avoid further suspicions toward innocent persons, the following is being released.

"Physical evidence recovered at the

scene of the crime, as examined by the State Bureau of Investigation lab, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect."

No charges have been placed in connection with the slayings.

Sledge, a Fayetteville native, escaped from the White Lake prison unit the day before the two women were attacked, according to investigators. He was captured in Dillon, S.C., Sept. 9.

During the investigation, detectives carried Sledge back to Elizabethtown where he retraced his activities after his escape, according to deputies.

Autopsy NOV 1 1976 Uncovers New Data

By GREG WHITFIELD

Special To The Times

ELIZABETHTOWN — A search for relatively unusual finger and palm prints led to the exhumation, autopsy and reburial Tuesday of two women slain near here Labor Day, authorities said Wednesday.

The effort was successful, said Dr. W.M. Reavis, assistant chief state medical examiner, who performed the autopsies in Chapel Hill. No one has been charged with the slayings.

The women, Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter Aileen, 58, were found bludgeoned and stabbed to death in their farmhouse north of here.

After a preliminary examination by Dr. Ralph J. Meinhardt, Bladen County medical examiner, the women's bodies were autopsied in Lumberton by Dr. Marvin W. Thompson and buried.

Following their burial, State Bureau of Investigation agents discovered identifiable finger and palm prints in the Davis home, according to a petition by Dist. Atty Lee Greer requesting the exhumation.

A sheriff's deputy Wednesday said that palm prints are not routinely collected and said the finger prints in question were from parts of the finger not routinely printed.

The deputy said that following discovery of the prints Sheriff John B. Allen conferred with Greer and the Davis family, and then asked Greer to seek the exhumation.

An order allowing the exhumation was signed by

See BLADEN, Page 2-B.

Bladen

From Page 1-B

Superior Court Judge Giles Clark last Thursday, but the exhumation did not take place until Tuesday and was not reported until Wednesday.

Clark, in his order, said the exhumation was allowed "to determine the cause of death and to obtain fingerprints and palm impressions to compare with the fingerprints and palm prints found in the home."

In his request, Greer had termed the finger and palm prints essential. "Without these, it would be well nigh impossible to solve the crime," he said.

Dr. Reavis, who performed the autopsies Tuesday, said that the original autopsies "determined the cause of death without any problems."

He said that the second

autopsies were in no way an indication that the autopsies performed in Lumberton were below standard.

"I'm sure that Dr. Thompson did the best job he could under the circumstances," Dr. Reavis said.

The first autopsies determined that the women died of multiple stab wounds and indicated that the younger woman had been sexually molested.

After the women were found slain, Bladen County authorities sought for questioning a Fayetteville man who escaped from the White Lake prison unit the day before the slayings.

The man — a black — was eventually apprehended and questioned, but was not charged in connection with the slayings.

Escapee Is Guilty Of Theft

APR 26 1977

A prison inmate who has been questioned in connection with the bludgeon slayings last September of two Bladen County women pleaded guilty Monday to stealing a car in Cumberland County hours after the women were killed.

Joseph Sledge, 32, was given a four-year sentence Monday by Judge A. Pilston Godwin after Sledge pleaded guilty in Cumberland County Superior Court to stealing a car Sept. 6 from Lesley Crocket, a Ft. Bragg soldier.

Sledge escaped Sept. 5 from the White Lake prison unit in Bladen County, hours before Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53, were stabbed and beaten to death at their home near the prison unit.

Authorities have said that the two women were killed either late Sept. 5 or early Sept. 6. Their bodies were not found until 4 p.m. Sept. 6.

Sledge was indicted by the Bladen County Grand Jury earlier this month on a charge of felonious escape from the prison unit and on a charge of stealing a car in Elizabethtown the morning of Sept. 6.

It was about 6 p.m. Sept. 6 that Crocket reported his car stolen in Cumberland County. That is the car which Sledge Monday pleaded guilty to stealing.

Sledge is also charged in Cumberland County with an armed robbery that was reported after his escape.

Following a widely publicized manhunt, Sledge was arrested Sept. 9 in Dillon, S.C., and questioned in connection with the women's deaths. However, no one has been charged in connection with their slayings.

In another case Monday, Godwin sentenced handed a four-year sentence to Charles E. Taylor, 23, of 100-P Layton Drive, after Taylor pleaded guilty to felonious larceny.

000171

Escapee

AUG 11 '77

Sentenced

By GREG WHITFIELD

Special To The Times

ELIZABETHTOWN — A former Fayetteville man was handed a six- to eight-year sentence Wednesday for escaping from the White Lake prison unit last year.

~~Joseph Sledge Jr.~~ Sledge Jr., 33, was handed the sentence by Superior Court Judge Fred T. Hasty of Charlotte after Sledge pleaded guilty.

Sledge escaped from the prison Sept. 5, the day before an elderly Bladen County woman and her daughter were stabbed and bludgeoned to death in their farmhouse.

Bladen County sheriff's deputies have questioned Sledge in connection with the slayings of Josephine Davis, 74, and Ailene Davis, 53.

Sledge also pleaded guilty Wednesday to stealing a car in Elizabethtown the day of the women's deaths.

Hasty gave Sledge a four-year sentence for car theft.

Unit To Probe Bladen Deaths

8-27-77

ELIZABETHTOWN—The State Bureau of Investigation's new homicide squad has been ordered into the investigation of the brutal slaying of two Bladen County women last Labor Day.

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten issued the order Friday afternoon that the special squad would help investigate the slayings of Josephine Davis and her daughter, Aileen Davis.

They were found beaten and stabbed to death in their small farm house just north of here. The younger woman had been sexually assaulted.

Edmisten said he had asked Max Bryan, chief of the homicide squad, to head the renewed investigation.

Edmisten said, "Local law enforcement agencies have worked very well with the SBI in this case, and I'm very optimistic of a successful investigation of the murders."

No one has ever been arrested in connection with the murders, although rewards have been posted in connection with the slayings.

An inmate who escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit the day before the murders, Joseph Sledge of Fayetteville, was a suspect in the slayings, but was never charged with them. He has been convicted of escape and has been returned to the prison system.

Sheriff John B. Allen said Friday after Edmisten's announcement, "This was the most brutal killing I've ever seen during my entire 31 years as sheriff."

Grand Jury In Bladen To Meet On Slayings

FEB 22 1978

By DEWEY BRUCE
Observer Correspondent

ELIZABETHTOWN — The Bladen County Grand Jury has been ordered to meet Thursday to consider new evidence in the Labor Day 1976 slayings of Josephine and Aileen Davis.

On Tuesday, Joseph Sledge of Fayetteville was moved from Central Prison where he is an inmate to Bladen County jail.

Law enforcement officers would not comment on the move, but it apparently means Sledge is again the prime suspect in the murders.

At the time of the murders, Sledge, who had escaped from the White Lake prison unit the day before the slayings, had been hunted as a suspect.

Sledge was later captured, but no charge was ever filed against him in regard to the Bladen murders. He was later convicted of auto theft and escape. He has

been in Central Prison in Raleigh for the past several months.

The murders were baffling to law enforcement officers who, despite an intensive investigation, were unable to get evidence necessary to charge a suspect.

Last August, State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten ordered the newly organized homicide unit of the State Bureau of Investigation into the case.

Last week Max Bryan, special operations supervisor for the SBI, announced that the unit had uncovered new evidence that would make an arrest possible within a short time.

"We are confident we have our man," Bryan said, "and we feel we can get a suspect indicted within a matter of weeks."

The order to convene the county's grand jury was signed Tuesday by Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring Jr. The time was set for Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

Prisoner Indicted In Bladen Slayings

FEB 24 1978

By DEWEY BRUCE
Observer Correspondent

ELIZABETHTOWN — Bladen County Grand Jury, after meeting in special session for less than two hours Thursday, returned two true bills of indictment for first degree murder against Joseph Sledge Jr., 34, from Fayetteville.

Sledge, long a suspect in the Labor Day 1976 murders of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, of Elizabethtown is being held in Bladen County jail without bond.

The jury returned the bills against Sledge after hearing evidence presented by Bladen County sheriff's detective Phillip Little and State Bureau of Investigation special agent Henry Poole.

Last week, SBI officers promised an arrest in connection with the murder case. State

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten ordered the SBI's special homicide squad to enter the case last August.

Shortly after the murders were discovered, Bladen Sheriff John B. Allen said Sledge was the prime suspect and that it was the worst slaying he had seen in over 30 years as sheriff.

Sledge had been serving a sentence for breaking and entering and receiving stolen property at the White Lake prison unit about five miles from the murder scene. He escaped from that unit about 4 p.m. the day before the killings and was apprehended in Dillon, S.C., three days later.

After his flight from Bladen County, Sledge was also convicted of auto larceny and escape.

Sledge was returned to Bladen County Tues-

(See BLADEN, Page 2A)

Bladen True Bills

(Continued from Page 1A)

day from Central Prison in Raleigh where he had been transferred from the Caledonia Unit for medical treatment.

The bodies of Mrs. Davis and her daughter were found on the floor in the front room of their home about a mile north of Elizabethtown Sept. 6, 1976, by a relative. Their throats had been cut and their bodies were severely beaten. The younger woman had been sexually assaulted.

Officers Thursday declined to reveal what new evidence led them to ask for the indictments.

Bill Will Affect Every American Massive Tax Measure Drawn

WASHINGTON (UPI) — After almost three years of effort, congressional tax writers have produced the final version of a major tax revision bill that will touch every American's pocketbook.

A conference committee completed the task of reconciling the differences between House and Senate versions of the massive bill Thursday night after a flurry of late-night decisions, including a surprise decision to include significant estate tax revisions.

The legislation, the first major tax bill since 1953, contains the current \$12.1 billion in tax cuts through 1977, while hundreds of pages of "technical" provisions will raise a net \$1.6 billion in new federal tax revenue.

In 1964 and later years, as estate tax changes came into play, the federal revenue gain will drop to about \$1.5 billion a year.

Changes of special interests, ranging from railroads to working people, will benefit from the bill

while dozens of others will lose, such as wealthy professionals who have used tax shelters to avoid taxation on their excess income.

Work began on the legislation in early 1971 under former House Ways and Means chairman Wilbur Mills. It died at the end of the 93rd Congress in late 1974 but the same bill was revived in 1975.

Despite the publicity the measure will receive, it is so complicated and contains so many provisions that taxpayers are likely to confront many surprises — some pleasant and some not so pleasant — as they calculate their taxes in the years to come.

Tax reform groups called for the legislation's death when it first cleared the Senate with so many special interest tax cuts that it lost \$90 million in its first year. Their anger dimmed, however, as the conference worked toward its \$1.6 billion gain.

With tax reform groups mollified

if not completely satisfied, the bill should have little problem in clearing the House and Senate in a week or two.

President Ford is expected to sign it despite bitter opposition to one provision denying certain foreign tax breaks to companies which cooperate in international boycotts such as the Arab boycott of Israel. The administration complained this would hamper Middle East peace efforts.

While technically no amendments will be allowed to the compromise bill, either House will have the opportunity to amend or kill the estate tax provisions because they will be brought up as an "amendment in disagreement" — a parliamentary technicality.

Changes in the estate tax had been demanded by farmers and others who said heirs were being forced to sell family property to pay the tax.

Estate and gift tax changes had been expected to be handled in a

separate bill, but were tacked on to this larger measure at the last minute when it became apparent the other legislation was in trouble as Congress rushed to adjourn.

The major estate tax change is to greatly increase the current 30% exemption — the amount of estate on which no tax must be paid. This would be changed to a tax credit that would be the equivalent of \$120,000 in 1977, gradually increasing over five years to a permanent \$175,000 in 1981 and later years.

Surviving spouses would get an additional exemption of either \$250,000 or one-half the gross estate.

Estate tax relief would be phased in over a five-year period after which the estimated \$7.6 billion now subject to the tax would be pared down to \$6.00 billion — an estimated 2 percent of all estates. Gifts also were put on "generation-skipping trusts" — used by the wealthy to avoid inheritance taxes for as long as a century.



Viktor Belenko
Arrives in U.S.

Red Pilot Hidden In California

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Russian air force officer Viktor Ivanovich Belenko, whose defection in a MIG-23 fighter almost certainly landed almost certainly landed American intelligence a close look at one of the most secret and sophisticated weapons in the Soviet arsenal, was apparently hidden somewhere in Southern California today.

It was believed he would be taken to Washington soon.

Belenko arrived in Los Angeles Thursday night, escorted in the club lounge of a Northwest Orient Airlines 747 on a flight from Tokyo.

Defense Department officials whisked him off the plane and out of sight.

"He was off the airport (See PILOT, Page 2A)

Escapee Questioned In Slayings

Two escapees from the White Lake prison unit in Bladen County is being held in the Cumberland County jail for questioning in the slayings of two Bladen County women earlier this week.

Joseph Sledge Jr., 31, a former Fayetteville resident, was arrested Thursday in Dillon, S.C., and was released here after he was held in custody on an escape charge.

Sledge was picked up Sunday and had been sought in connection with the slayings of two Bladen County women, 71, and her daughter, Aileen, 19, who were found dead in a wooded area near Fayetteville.

Bladen County deputies were in Fayetteville this morning to question Sledge

about the killings and were unavailable for comment.

According to reports, Sledge was picked up about 1:20 a.m. Thursday by a South Carolina highway patrolman who stopped him for speeding 85 miles per hour in a 55 zone.

Sledge was jailed until late Thursday afternoon when he posted bond by pledging the car he was driving as collateral. Dillon County Sheriff Roy J. Lee said the car was allegedly stolen in Fayetteville.

After Sledge's release

from jail, Lee said his department received information that Sledge was wanted in North Carolina and began efforts to relocate him.

Sledge was arrested about 9:30 p.m. in the Dillon area, Lee said.

Following his escape last weekend, Sledge had been seen in the Fayetteville area but he eluded local officers who were searching for him.

In one case, a Fayetteville police officer spotted him Tuesday night in a car stolen on Monday in Elizabethtown and gave chase, but Sledge escaped on foot.

From a wooded area just outside the city.

Officers were not certain when Sledge left the Fayetteville area but they did not rule out the possibility that additional charges might be filed against him for alleged local crimes.



JOSEPH SLEDGE JR.

Bladen County authorities said the Davis women had been stabbed and beaten to death and that the younger woman had been sexually assaulted.

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Planes Collide Killing 176 Persons

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — A British airliner and a Yugoslav charter jet collided, West German tourists killed at 35,000 feet near Zagreb today, officials said. All 176 persons on board the planes were killed, according to doctors at the scene.

A witness among the first to arrive at the crash site said the body of one plane was torn apart and the said bodies and luggage were scattered around the rubble. More than 20 ambulances and other vehicles went to the scene but found no one alive, he said.

The British plane, carrying 100 passengers and nine crew members, was a Boeing 747. A spokesman in New York said there were 10 American and 10 Canadian aboard the plane. However, British Airways officials in London said there were at least 14 Americans and some Turkish aboard the plane.

crew members aboard, company officials said. Sources said most or all of them were West German tourists returning from vacations on the Adriatic coast.

The planes collided at 6:15 a.m. EDT about 15 miles northeast of Zagreb, Yugoslavia's second largest city and 230 northwest of Belgrade.

The planes were in an established air corridor over Yugoslavia utilized by all civilian planes, officials said. The corridor is under the control of the Zagreb traffic center.

The cause of the collision was not immediately known. Officials said an investigation was begun.

British Airways officials in London said Flight 476 was on a direct flight from London to Istanbul. The officials said the plane was a Trident 3 jetliner.

Reports here said the Yugoslav charter plane was a DC-9 belonging to the Yugoslav charter company Inex Adria. The DC-9 was flying between Split, Yugoslavia and Cologne, West Germany.

In Cologne, West Germany, officials said the Yugoslav plane had been chartered by Kautz, a Cologne-based tourist agency.

The crash was the worst collision since July 1971 when an All-Nippon Airways Boeing 747-200 collided with a Japanese air force F-4E over Misaki, Japan, killing 81 persons aboard the planes and 71 on the ground.

Bladen Sheriff SEP 21 1976 Offers Reward

ELIZABETHTOWN—The Bladen County sheriff has offered a personal reward of \$1,000 for information in connection with the double slayings on Labor Day of an elderly woman and her daughter here.

Sheriff John B. Allen issued a statement Monday saying he would pay the sum for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons connected with the killings of Josephine and Alleen Davis.

The two women were found lying on their front room floor. They had been beaten and stabbed to death.

Allen said he had attempted to get the state to post a reward in connection with the killings but had not been able to do so; therefore, he was posting it personally.

The sheriff said a prime suspect in the slayings remains Joseph Sledge Jr., an inmate at White Lake Prison unit who escaped the day before the murders. Sledge is now in Fayetteville charged with auto larceny and robbery there, and is charged here with auto larceny and escape.

OCT 7 1976
**Reward
Posted
In Deaths**

Special To The Times

ELIZABETHTOWN — A total of \$3,500 has been posted for information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever stabbed and bludgeoned to death two women near here Sept. 6.

According to Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen, Gov. James E. Holsouser Jr. advised him late Wednesday afternoon that the state has posted a \$2,500 reward for information in the murders of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, 53.

Earlier, Sheriff Allen had posted a \$1,000 reward in the case.

The two women were found stabbed, beaten and bludgeoned to death inside their farmhouse, located about two miles north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242.

Allen said the double slaying was "the most brutal murder I've ever seen since I've been sheriff."

A Fayetteville man who escaped from the White Lake prison unit the day before the murders, Joseph Sledge Jr., 32, has been questioned in connection with the murders. He is being held in Cumberland County Jail for security reasons.

Reasons Offered For Exhumations

NOV 11 1976

ELIZABETHTOWN—Latent fingerprints and palmprints found in the home of two slain women were offered as the reason for exhuming their bodies for further tests and autopsies, according to an affidavit filed by District Attorney Lee J. Greer.

Greer said in the affidavit accompanying the order for requesting the exhumation of the bodies that in the course of a murder investigation the presence of identifiable latent fingerprints and palmprints were found in the home of Josephine and Aleen Davis.

District Attorney Greer and Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen requested that the bodies of Mrs. Davis and her daughter be exhumed. The order was signed Friday by resident Superior Court Judge Giles Clark and the exhumation took place Tuesday.

The two women were brutally slain in their home near here last Labor Day.

Identifiable finger and palmprints and fingernail scrapings and parings were not obtained from the bodies of the victims prior to burial, the affidavit said.

The affidavit states that the bodies were not X-rayed and the angle and depth of wounds suffered by the victims were not determined.

The affidavit says that "palmprints and

fingerprints of the victims are essential for comparison with the latent palm and fingerprints found at the crime scene and without these it would be nearly impossible to solve the crime."

The affidavit said that the bodies should be exhumed to determine the exact cause of death.

"Before burial," the affidavit states, "the values of the prints and scrapings were not foreseeable and while inked impressions (of the victims' palms and fingers) were made they were not identifiable."

The bodies were sent to Chapel Hill for autopsies by Dr. R. Page Hudson, the state's chief medical examiner.

The order also required that the FBI take proper finger and palmprints of the victims.

The bodies were returned to their graves immediately after the tests performed and the samples taken.

After the murders were discovered a Fayetteville man who had escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit was sought as a suspect in the slayings. He has been apprehended, but has not been charged with the deaths.

Rewards totaling \$3,500 have been posted for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the killers.

Fayetteville Observer

Established 1816

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1978

FINAL EDITION

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STOCKS

Today's complete noon prices on New York American Exchanges, other financial news, Pages 2-10B.

Ways For Pact

...identical to a tentative pact reached earlier this week in the Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Mining

...were hopeful the whole thing might be ready to give in to union's "bottom line" contract demands.

"I think it's in the death throes," said one official.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Robert D. Byrd and Jennings Randolph, Democrats from coal-rich West Virginia, said they were hopeful that agreement will be reached today or Monday.

Not by hit, the Carter administration has been sending the coal industry message in recent days: Give us a new contract demands or be prepared for presidential intervention in the bitter strike.

As new strike-related layoffs were announced Thursday, the White House stepped up the pressure on the BCOA to end the walkout.

Carter met with three coal-state governors, all of whom emerged from the White House urging the industry to accept the miners' latest offer — which one governor called "the only game in town."

The Senate, taking time out from its debate on the proposed Panama Canal treaties, set aside an hour today to discuss the strike.

And White House special trade negotiator Robert S. Strauss reportedly was meeting with major steel companies owning captive coal mines, trying to persuade them to break with the BCOA and accept a contract reached independently by the UMW and one company.

Electricities

Also, Electricities' officials said PWC should pay its \$55,000 by staying in Electricities would consider PWC not a member this fiscal year.

Fred Mills, an Electricities spokesman, called PWC's decision "outrageous."

"I'm sorry they decided to leave. But it's been pending for some time and really had no impact on that Fayetteville desired to remain a member," he said.

Because PWC is the largest member, their problems are different.

from those of some of the smaller members and "they are big enough to do what we've been doing on their own," Mills said.

As for the effect PWC's failure to pay the \$55,000 in dues would have on Electricities' budget, Mills said it would not be "very happy news to the budget, but we'll just have to fit things in as best we can."

Although Fayetteville has been a member of Electricities since its

(See PWC QUILTS, Page 2A)



INDICTED—Joseph Sledge, right, is escorted by detective Phil Little as he is returned to Bladen County. (Photo by Deway Bruce)

re Early

...M. Turner, CIA director, appears to have slipped in the race for chairmanship since he found himself out of step with administration officials who are in a state of alarm over warning and control plans to Iran.

This summer will bring the first extensive reshuffle of the five-member JCS since 1961.

Adm. James L. Brown, Jr., is being considered as a possible replacement for Gen. David Jones, who is leaving his term as chief of staff.

is B. Hayward, commander of the 1st Air Force, the leading candidate to become the new chief of staff.

Secretary Brown had in mind to keep up work when Brown was in the White House as a member of staff.



GEN. GEORGE H. BROWN

Prisoner Indicted In Bladen Slayings

By DEWEY BRUCE
Observer Correspondent

ELIZABETHTOWN — Bladen County Grand Jury, after meeting in special session for less than two hours Thursday, returned two true bills of indictment for first-degree murder against Joseph Sledge Jr., 34, from Fayetteville.

Sledge, long a suspect in the Labor Day 1976 murders of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, of Elizabethtown is being held in Bladen County Jail without bond.

The jury returned the bills against Sledge after hearing evidence presented by Bladen County sheriff's detective Phillip Little and State Bureau of Investigation special agent Henry Poole.

Last week, SBI officers promised an arrest

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten ordered the SBI's special homicide squad to enter the case last August.

Shortly after the murders were discovered, Bladen Sheriff John B. Aiken said Sledge was the prime suspect and that it was the worst slaying he had seen in over 30 years as sheriff.

Sledge had been serving a sentence for breaking and entering and receiving stolen property at the White Lake prison unit about five miles from the murder scene. He escaped from that unit about 4 p.m. the day before the killings and was apprehended in Dillon, S.C., three days later.

After his flight from Bladen County, Sledge was also convicted of auto larceny and escape.

Sledge was returned to Bladen County Tues-

000180

Judge Moves Sledge Trial

MAR 21 1978

By DEWEY BRUCE
Observer Correspondent

ELIZABETHTOWN — A change of venue was ordered Monday in the trial of Joseph Sledge Jr., charged with two counts of first-degree murder.

The trial, scheduled for May 1, has been moved from Bladen Superior Court to Columbus County Superior Court.

Sledge is charged with the Sept. 6, 1976, slaying of Josephine Davis, 75, and her

daughter, Aileen David Davis, 57.

Bladen Superior Court Judge Giles Clark of Elizabethtown issued the order moving the trial after defense attorney Rubin L. Moore Jr. argued that publicity surrounding the case would make it impossible for Sledge to get a fair trial here.

At the hearing Judge Clark agreed that the case had received extensive publicity and allowed the motion for change of venue. He ordered

the selection of a 35-member venire from Columbus County to hear the case.

Sledge, an escapee from White Lake prison unit at the time of the murders, was indicted Feb. 23 by the Bladen Grand Jury in connection with the slayings. He is now being held in Bladen County Jail without bond. Prior to his recent indictment he was serving an eight-year sentence for auto larceny, escape, receiving stolen goods and breaking and entering.

Sledge Granted Venue MAR 21 '78 Change

Special To The Times

ELIZABETHTOWN —

The trial of Joseph Sledge Jr., charged with the slaying of two Bladen County women, will be moved to Whiteville, according to an order signed by Bladen Superior Court Judge Giles Clark.

Judge Clark — in ordering the change of venue — acted after defense attorney Rubin L. Moore Jr. argued that publicity surrounding the case would make it impossible for Sledge to get a fair trial here.

At the Monday hearing, Clark agreed that the pre-trial publicity in Bladen County could present a problem, and ordered the change of venue.

An escapee from the White Lake prison unit at the time of the Sept. 6, 1976, murders, Sledge was indicted Feb. 23 by the Bladen County Grand Jury in connection with the slayings of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen David Davis, 57.

He is currently being held in Bladen County Jail without bond.

Sledge was serving an eight-year sentence for auto larceny, escape, receiving stolen goods and breaking and entering prior to the recent indictment.

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 9 1976 ★ THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ 3 Sections — 32 Pages PRICE 10¢

Escapee Sought In Killings

A 74 year old mother and her 17 year old daughter were found brutally murdered in their home just two miles north of Elizabethtown Monday afternoon.

Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Miss Aileen Davis, were reportedly found by another daughter, Mrs. Omega Hales, lying in the front room of the Davis home on N.C. 242 dead.

The home was quickly roped off by sheriff's deputies after arrival on the scene.

A prison inmate who escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit Sunday is being sought for questioning only in connection with the double murders.

The inmate, 32-year-old Joseph Sledge, Jr. of 865 Orange Street, Fayetteville was reportedly missing from the camp about 4 p.m. Sunday. Prison officials said that Sledge's trail was followed by bloodhounds in the direction of the Davis home until about 9:30 p. m. Sunday.

According to the sheriff's department, a 1969 Chevrolet was stolen in Elizabethtown

Monday morning.

The car reportedly belonged to Hazel Thompson Smith of Whitesville.

A man fitting Sledge's description was sighted driving

a car similar to the stolen car in Fayetteville early Tuesday morning.

Sledge's description was given as: 5 foot 7 inches, 150 pounds, reddish complexion. He was black.

The dead women were taken to Bladen County Hospital where they were examined for possible clues in their deaths. Later, they were taken to Southeastern General Hospital for autopsies.

Sheriff John B. Allen said the killings were the worst he'd ever seen in his entire 30 years as sheriff. He requested agents from the SBI to join the investigation late Monday night.

A son-in-law, Bill Hales, the dead women's closest neighbor, said Tuesday that Mrs. Davis was at his home as late as 10:30 p.m. Sunday. He said that his wife returned from church about that time and took her mother home.

Hales stated that his sister-in-law, Miss Aileen Davis, was at the Davis residence when



SLEDGE

SEE ESCAPEE ON PAGE TWO

Plans Okayed For New Library

Bladen County may on the right road to building its own county library building.

The county Board of Commissioners Tuesday approved a \$1,000 expenditure for architect fees to draw plans for a new county library building. That building will be constructed if federal funding of nearly one half million dollars is realized.

Selection of a site for the new building was not made Tuesday.

Several sites were considered by the county Library Board with the two most likely being the C. C. Clark home on Broad Street in Elizabethtown and a vacant lot behind the post office belonging to Mrs. Jewel Thomas.

The Clark home and properties would cost the county \$100,000 while the Thomas property would cost \$40,000 according to County Librarian Jay Chung.

Chung presented his plan for the new building to the commissioners Tuesday saying that Bladen was operating on about 1/10 of the national average of space for a county this size. He said that the new building would have at least 10,000 feet of space which is still short

of the national average of some 16,000 feet.

The present facility is located in the basement of the county courthouse.

Application for a \$450,000, EDA Grant to the federal gov-

SEE PLANS ON PAGE TWO

Bladenboro Man Charged With Rape

Danny "Ponkie" Skipper, 30, of Bladenboro has been charged with the second degree rape of Sandra Johnson West, according to Bladenboro Police Chief Eric Davis.

Davis said that the incident was reported September 3 and

allegedly occurred early that morning. He said that Skipper was arrested at 11:30 a. m. the same day and placed under a \$10,000 bond.

Skipper was still in Bladen County Jail late Tuesday.



THIS IS THE SCENE where two Bladen County women were found dead Monday. Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Aileen, 57, were both found bludgeoned to death and lying in the front room floor of their five-room home Monday. The brutal slayings launched a massive man-hunt for Joseph Sledge, Jr., 32, black

male, an escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit. Sledge is wanted for questioning only concerning the incident. He was reportedly missing from the unit between 1 p. m. and 4 p. m. Sunday. The home is located on N. C. 242, two miles north of Elizabethtown.

Escapee

from page one

her mother arrived home.

Dr. Ralph Meinhardt, medical examiner, set the death time at about 4 a.m. Monday.

Meinhardt, through preliminary tests, indicated that there was no evidence of sexual abuse or masturbation. However, the two women were half clothed when found.

No apparent motive was indicated through the sheriff's investigation since more than one body was found in the home at the killings.

Two rifles were also reported undisturbed by deputies at the home.

Sheriff Allen said that nothing seemed to be out of its place but, a murder weapon has yet to be found.

It is believed, however, that a kitchen knife would have been used in the slayings.

The car reportedly stolen in Elizabethtown Monday was found by Fayetteville police Tuesday night.

Funeral services will be held today, Thursday, at 4 p.m. at the Church of God at the Davis home on N.C. 100 with the Reverend Robert Jackson and R.M. Brown officiating. Burial will follow in the Davis Family Cemetery.

The deceased are survived by two sons, Lonnie Davis of Elizabethtown, Harvey Davis of Rt. 9, Fayetteville, 3 daughters, Lila Scott of Lumberton, Georgia, Elia Johnson of Rt. 2, Elizabethtown and Omega Hales of Elizabethtown. Mrs. Davis has 15 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Bladen Woman, Daughter Found Murdered In Home

SEP 7 1976

By GREG WHITFIELD
Special To The Times

ELIZABETHTOWN — An elderly Bladen County woman and her daughter were discovered stabbed and bludgeoned to death in the living room of their farmhouse near here Monday afternoon.

Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and Miss Ailene Davis, 53, had been slain about four in the morning but their bodies were not discovered until 4

p.m., according to Sheriff John B. Allen.

"This is the most brutal murder I've ever seen since I've been sheriff in Bladen County, and I've been sheriff for 30 years," Allen said.

An escapee from the White Lake prison unit was being sought late Monday night for questioning in connection with the slayings, a spokesman for Allen said.

He was identified as Joseph Sledge Jr., 32,

formerly of 865 Orange St., Fayetteville.

Sledge escaped from the prison unit at 4 p.m. Sunday, where he was imprisoned on three counts of escape, the spokesman said.

The escapee was described as black with a reddish complexion who stands 5-foot-7 and weighs about 150 pounds.

The discovery of the slayings was made by Mrs. Omega Hales, another of

See BLADEN, Page 2-A

Bladen

From Page 1A

Mrs. Davis' daughters who was the closest neighbor to the women's five-room house about two miles north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242, Allen said.

The throats of both women had been sliced by a large knife and their faces and bodies stabbed nearly beyond recognition, deputies said. They had also been bludgeoned, deputies said.

Their dresses had been pulled up to their necks, but

Medical Examiner Dr. Ralph F. Meinhardt said that a preliminary examination showed no evidence of sexual molestation.

Sheriff Allen, who late Monday called for State Bureau of Investigation assistance, said the living room bore signs of a fierce struggle. The body of one woman was blocking the front door when discovered, he said.

Allen said he had "no idea

as to what the motive for the slayings was. The sheriff discounted robbery, as both women's pocketbooks contained money and another cache of money was found in the house.

Weapons that could be linked to the slayings were not found at the women's house, Allen said.

The women's bodies were sent to Southeastern General Hospital in Lumberton for autopsy, deputies said.

Man Sought In Murders In Bladen

SEP 7 1976

By DEWEY DRUCE
County Correspondent

ELIZABETHTOWN—A Fayetteville man who escaped from the White Lake prison unit Sunday and is believed to be driving a stolen car is the object of a massive manhunt in connection with the brutal slaying of two Bladen County women.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen said his department is seeking Joseph Sledge Jr., 32, formerly of Fayetteville, who is believed to be driving a stolen car.

Sheriff Allen said his department had received reports Monday that Sledge was seen driving a car similar to one that was reported stolen in Elizabethtown Monday.

Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Aileen Davis, 23, were stabbed and bludgeoned to death in their farm home near here early Monday morning.

Their bodies were found about 4 p.m. Monday by another daughter of Mrs. Davis.

Sheriff Allen said, "This is the most brutal murder I've seen since I have been sheriff in Bladen County and I've been sheriff for 30 years."

Allen said the throats of the women had been cut and their bodies mutilated beyond recognition. Their dresses had been pulled up to their necks. Dr. Ralph K. Neighard, county medical examiner, ordered tests to determine if the victims had been raped. He said his preliminary examination showed no evidence of rape. The bodies were found by Mrs. Omega Hales, another daughter of Mrs. Davis, who was the closest

(See MAN, Page 2A)

Man Sought In Bladen Murders

(Continued from Page 1A)

neighbor to the women's five-room home about two miles north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242, Allen said.

Sheriff Allen called in the State Bureau of Investigation to help with the investigation.

Allen said no motive for the slayings could be established. He said money was found in the house.

Two rifles were also found in the house, apparently undisturbed.

No weapon used in the slayings was found, the sheriff said.

Sledge, who is wanted only for questioning, escaped from the White Lake prison unit Sunday afternoon. He was chased by bloodhounds in the direction of the

Davis' home, the sheriff said. The chase was abandoned about 9 p.m. Sunday.

Dr. Meinhardt said the deaths occurred between midnight Sunday and 4 a.m. Monday.

Monday morning Hazel Thompson of Whiteville who was visiting in Elizabethtown reported her 1969 green Chevrolet automobile stolen.

Sheriff Allen said that later it was reported that someone had seen a man who apparently was Sledge driving a similar car. Allen said also that Sledge had been reportedly seen in Fayetteville this morning.

Fayetteville police were alerted to pick him up but no apprehension had been made late this morning.

Sledge was serving a term for breaking, entering and larceny and four counts of escape.



THIS LITTLE YELLOW DOG whined and barked while sheriff's deputies conducted their investigation of the double slayings of Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Aileen Davis, Monday. The two women, who lived alone, were found bludgeoned

to death about 4 p. m. Monday in their home just two miles north of Elizabethtown on N. C. 242. The puppy was taken to a relative's home where he received care and food.

000098

Inmates Lodge Complaints On Prison Conditions

Complaints lodged by inmates at the White Lake Prison Unit were answered Tuesday by the unit's head, Captain C.L. Sparkman.

The complaints were issued Monday to The Bladen Journal in Elizabethtown.

The list of grievances was headed with a statement saying inmates there were in need of the general public's help.

The statement said that inmates at the unit could not get help from the administration and that the inmates were concerned over the great number of escapes.

Sparkman said late Tuesday that the unit had experienced 11 escapes during June, July and August of this year and that 3 had escaped during September thus far.

He blamed the mixed population of both felons and mis-

demeanors and the law for the number of escapes at the unit.

Sparkman said that the law required that no honor prisoner, whether felon or not, be allowed to serve time in a medium custody unit and when felons served their time in such units, they were shipped here to White Lake's unit, which is a minimum custody unit, he said.

The captain said that prisoners wore the same color clothing and guards could not distinguish between felons and misdemeanors. He said that a guard who fired upon and injured a misdemeanor prisoner was subjected to prosecution under the law.

The list, which described general conditions according to the inmates, apparently was prompted by the recent alledged belief that an escaped inmate was connected with two murders here in Bladen County.

However, no connection has been made between the escapee and the killings of Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 58, who were found dead in their home late Monday of last week.

Sparkman said that the unit's escape record was low according to other units of comparison. He said that the general public was not aware of the law and many are of the opinion that a guard is at liberty to stop a prisoner at will.

The list said that inmates had to wear used shoes which transferred foot diseases. To this, Sparkman replied that re-using shoes, especially those which were not, according to him, that old, was a tax savings. And, he said, the shoes were disinfected with chemicals.

The food at the unit was strongly criticized by the inmates saying that the food from previous meals was being reserved to the prisoners. Sparkman said that menus were well rounded with some having 5 to 7 types of food which also included milk and fresh fruit. He said that sometimes food from one meal was left over, but, that food was not thrown out. He said that the inmates were provided with the regular menu and the excess

leftovers, but, they did not have to eat the leftovers.

On administration, the grievance list, said that the captain came onto the prison yard only twice a year and that the shift sergeant was only there part of the time. It also said that the sergeant was not allowed to use his power.

Sparkman clearly recognized that the unit was short of personnel. He said that the whole state department of corrections was short of staff members and implied that funds also were scarce.

He said that he had only 3 officers per shift to guard, deliver inmates to their work release sites and control the unit. He said that during a normal shift of 8 hours, only two guards protected the unit during 4 of those hours with the third guard taking inmates to their work release sites.

Sanitation was listed in the
SEE INMATES ON PAGE TWO

Patrol Report

Trooper C.P. Lewis of the State Patrol reports that Van David Cain of Elizabethtown was attempting to make a left turn off rural road 1700 on the first of September when another car operated by John Albert Smith of Elizabeth, N. J. ran into him while pulling around the Cain car.

The Cain car was knocked, according to the trooper, some 47 feet into a tree while the Smith car traveled on for 121 feet.

No injuries were reported, however, damages came to \$2,500.

Smith was charged with DUI and a passing violation plus, an unsafe movement violation.

The accident occurred just south of Elizabethtown.

A pedestrian, Ripley McKay of Rt. 1, Clarkton, was struck by a car operated by Michael Shaw of Elizabethtown last Saturday night 4.7 miles east of

SEE PATROL ON PAGE TWO

Community Bulletin

NOT THE SAME

Clarence (Bill) Hall Jr. Reg. Land Surveyor of Elizabethtown is not the Clarence Hall Jr., listed in District Court News last week for larceny.

HOMECOMING SET AT CLARKTON METHODIST

The Clarkton United Methodist Church will have its homecoming services on Sunday, September 19. The District Superintendent, Rev. J. A. Auman will be the guest speaker for the day. He will conduct a special Sunday School hour at 10:00 a. m. including the use of film and discussions concerning the work of the church school.

The homecoming message will be delivered by Rev. Auman at the regular worship service after which a picnic lunch will be served on the grounds at 12:30.

At 3:00 p. m. the annual charge conference will be held with Rev. Auman presiding. The public is cordially invited.

SCHOOL BOOKS OK

In a report on the auditor's report of the condition of individuals schools' books for last year in The Bladen Journal of last week, it was inadvertently omitted that the books of the Elizabethtown Primary School were in excellent shape.

COVERED DISH SUPPER
Wine - United Methodist

District Governor Addresses Elizabethtown Rotary Club

000099

Inmates

--from page one

grievances as being a problem.

The list said that only one changing of clothing was allowed per week. Sparkman said that inmates were supposed to remove their work clothing as they returned from work and put on a clean set from their locker. He said that most would wear their clean set of uniforms back onto their job site the next day getting them dirty. He said that the inmates were supposed to wear their dirty clothes on their jobs and their clean clothes around the unit at night.

Prejudices in advancements were also listed. The unit's head said that if they treated

the inmates so badly, how can they account for all the programs now being administered.

Sparkman referred to work release, 6 hour passes and 72 hour home visits. He said that a man just arriving at the unit was put on the road squad before he earned a 6 hour pass. He said that the 6 hour pass was given only after a qualified person signed the inmate out. He said that work release was a great privilege and an inmate really earned such status.

Patrol

--from page one

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 1970 THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ 5 SECTIONS — 34 PAGES PRICE 10c



BLADEN COUNTY SHERIFF, John B. Allen, leading, agents of the State Bureau of Investigation and county deputies are shown here taking Joseph Sledge, Jr. (black man) into the Bladen County Jail Friday. Sledge was temporarily held here for questioning in the connection with the double slayings of Josephine and her daughter, Alleen Davis of Elizabethtown. Sledge was later, that day, taken to Fayetteville where he faced charges of robbery and auto larceny. No evidence, as of late Tuesday, linked Sledge to the killings. Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit sometime Sunday afternoon.

Tighter Security Sought At White Lake Prison

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The list of grievances was headed with a statement saying inmates there were in need of the general public's help.

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Sparkman said late Tuesday that the unit had experienced 11 escapes during June, July and August of this year and that 3 had escaped during September thus far.

He blamed the mixed population of both felons and misdemeanors, no connection has been made between the escapee and the killings of Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Alleen Davis, 58, who were found dead in their home late Monday of last week.

Sparkman said that the unit's escape record was low according to other units of the prison. He said that the general public was not aware of the law and many are of the opinion that a guard is at liberty to stop a prisoner at will.

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demeanors and the law for the number of escapes at the unit.

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The captain said that prisoners wore the same color clothing and guards could not distinguish between felons and misdemeanors. He said that a guard who fired upon and injured a misdemeanor prisoner was subjected to prosecution under the law.

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SEE INMATES

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Pa Re

Trooper State Patrol David Cain was attempting to turn off the first of several cars operating

sparked a furor over the county hopes of getting stiffer security

OUR SIXTY-NINTH YEAR

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1970 THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ 6 SECTIONS — 42 PAGES PRICE 10c

Commission Endorses Prison Security Petition

The Bladen County Board of Commissioners endorsed a petition calling for tighter security at the White Lake Prison Unit and gave their nod to the Board of Education for an expenditure of \$315,530 for a new gymnasium at East Bladen High School Monday evening.

The money is from the county's revenue sharing fund with portions being tentative until it is determined whether they can be used for such a project, according to D. L. Evans, Clerk to the Board.

Cost of the gym has been set at about \$700,000, according to Billy Hair, superintendent of schools. Hair made the request of the commissioners Monday saying that construction costs were rising so rapidly that the school system tell action should be taken now to head off additional expenses.

The gym plan has received preliminary approval from the state Board of Education. Hair said that the commissioners' allocation of the funds puts the school system in a better position. He said that bids could be let for the project, after proper advertisement, which would reveal to the county exactly how much the facility would cost.

The school system had asked for \$324,993 from the county's

revenue sharing fund, however, the county was unable to muster that amount. In fact, portions of the \$315,530 still have to be approved since it was not known whether they could be used for such a project.

Hair said if the entire amount was not finally approved, the plan would have to be altered. However, Hair expressed hope that funding of the project would run smoothly and

that groundbreaking would take place about the first of the year.

In reviewing the petition for tighter security at White Lake Prison Unit, the board dispensed of preliminary matters and heard Lennie H. Davis of Elizabethtown, son of Josephine Davis, one of two women found dead in their home on Labor Day near Elizabethtown.

Davis told the board that proper notification of escapes from

the unit was not being made by authorities and he suggested that the area be informed of escapes immediately so measures would be taken by citizens.

The board expressed its sympathy over the deaths and promised that state officials would hear from it.

Davis' sister, Allene Davis, was also found dead.

The board approved the continuation of two programs under Four County Community Services and The Robeson County Community and Church Center.

The center will continue operating the senior citizen program in Bladen and Four County will continue operating the in-out of school program.

Richard Green, local representative,

SEE COMMISSION ON PAGE 2

Reward Offered In Double Slayings

A personal reward of \$1,000 has been offered for information in the double slayings of two Bladen County women.

"Sheriff" John B. Allen Monday issued a statement saying he would pay the sum for information leading to the arrest or arrests of person or persons connected with the killings of Josephine and Allene Davis.

The two women were found on

Labor Day, September 6, lying in their front room floor with their throats cut. The killings apparently took place in the early hours of the morning of the sixth at the Davises' home a mile and a half north of Elizabethtown on N. C. 242.

Josephine, 32, a 32-year-old inmate from the White Lake Prison Unit is still the prime suspect in the case, according to Allen. However, Allen said that no concrete evidence has been turned up concerning Sledge with the killings.

He said that Sledge escaped from the unit the day before the women were found dead in their home. Sledge is now in Fayetteville charged with auto larceny and robbery. He is also charged here with auto larceny

and escape.

The women were found lying, half nude, in the floor of their five-room home with their throats cut and, according to the sheriff, they had been badly beaten. Sexual assault was apparent but preliminary testing showed only one of the two women had been assaulted in this manner.

Allen attempted to communicate with Governor Jim Holshouser on the 9th of September in hopes that the governor would set a reward for information in the case. However, Holshouser could not be reached by the sheriff. It was learned later that an official request from the State Bureau of Investigation was made to the governor for a reward. Late Monday,

the state reward had not been set, according to the governor's office.

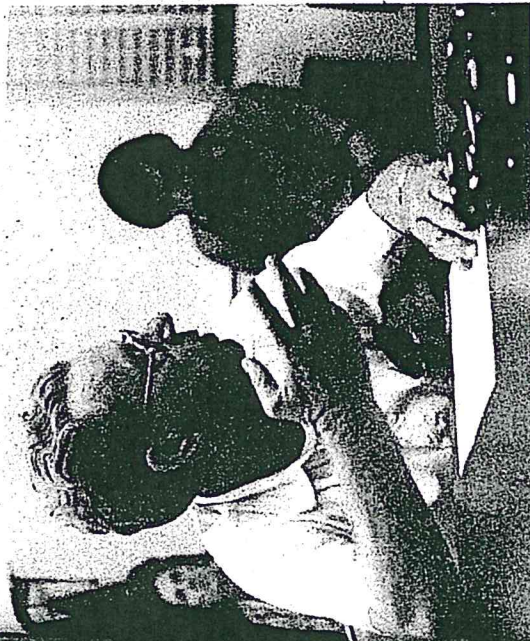
In fact, the governor was in Japan, according to the secretary, and would not be back all week.

Also on the 5th State Senator Edd Nye of Elizabethtown issued a statement to David Jones, Secretary of Corrections, to "strengthen security" at the White Lake Unit.

Nye told Jones that the people in the area were very concerned over the number of escapes from the unit and asked that security be strengthened so "Our people can live without fear".

In the aftermath of the killings and the alleged connection with

SEE REWARD ON PAGE TWO



the double murders of Davis' mother, Mrs. Josephine Davis, on his sister, Allene Davis. The two women were found brutally murdered in their home on Labor Day just a mile and a half from Elizabethtown. The board endorsed the petition.

Elizabethtown Church To Host Presbyterian Women

In the sanctuary at 10:00 for a business session. Informative workshops have been planned for all women and lunch

--from page one

Reward

Sledge, petitions were delayed throughout the court night. The petitions sought the same thing that the unit.

--from page one

Commission

representative of Four County, the board that the program designed to keep drop-outs in school and by subsidizing the students as employees.

Ruth Mundy, Bladen coordinator for the senior center program, asked the board to endorse the Robeson Community and Church Center as a sub-contracting agency under the Lumber River Council of Governments to conduct that program. The board endorsed the request.

Charles Barker of the Carolina Job Services Department gave the board a report on unemployment in Bladen.

He told the board that the rate of unemployment in the county was 10.6 per cent that he wanted to eliminate such a high rate.

Barker told the commissioners that nearly a half million dollars had been paid in employment compensation in Bladen County during the year and called this a drain on the local economy.

He asked that his office be granted the county CETA program operations which the board did. That program, which federal funds, places unemployed people in jobs.

The county has used the program extensively during the year and a half. An example of the program is the painting of the courthouse and several halls around the county.

Hair also requested from the board for aid in fees in the application of \$1,177,680 grant through the Public Works Capital Development Program under the U. S. Department of Commerce.

Hair said that drawings would be made for the construction of 13 home economics and vocational education shops in high schools throughout the county.

The board found \$5,000 and told him to see if he could find the remainder in the school budget.

The application requires this fee be produced by the applicant before construction. Hair said that each would cost about \$30,000 for construction alone.

The project application drawn up, will be submitted to the Southeastern Regional Office of the Department of Commerce in Atlanta, Ga.

The county okayed a pay raise up to \$2.50 per hour for Title 2 Manpower position in the Town of White Lake.

White Lake requested the county supply them with water superintendent with minimum pay. The board said \$2.50 per hour was the minimum it would go on the position. The town would have to pick up the rest.

The board authorized the purchase of the new IBM System 32 computer, now being sold for \$13,000. It cited the purchase as a savings measure.

The commissioners then given another request from Arcadia for a full-time request was not granted because the town was not a

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In the role as coordinator

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In fact, the governor said in Japan, according to his secretary, and would not be back all week.

Also on the 9th State Attorney Ed E. Nye of Elizabethtown issued a statement to David Davis, Secretary of Correction, to "strengthen security" at the White Lake Unit.

Nye told Jones that the people in the area were very concerned over the number of killings from the unit and asked that security be strengthened so that people can live without fear.

In the aftermath of the killings and the alleged connection with

SEE REWARD ON PAGE 1A

--from page one

Reward

Sledge, petitions were circulated throughout the county and presented to the County Board of Commissioners Monday night.

The petitions sought basically the same thing that Nye advocated, tighter security at the unit.

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

Vol. 69 No. 44 ★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N.C. 28337 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1970 ★ THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ 5 SECTIONS — 34 PAGES PRICE 10c

County Asks For Tighter Prison Security

Bladen County seeking tighter security for the White Lake Prison, as has been forwarded to the state by the Bladen County Board of Commissioners, by the Bladen County Board of Commissioners.

The resolution of the commissioners Monday, Sept. 20, 1970, and the commissioners own consideration of the matters raised in the petitions, the commissioners adopt the following resolution which we now propose for your urgent consideration:

"The commissioners join with the petitioners in expressing their concern and ask that immediate consideration be given to the department of corrections providing a greater degree of security at the White Lake corrections unit, to the end that the inmates therein kept all the more effectively and securely restrained from escape."

The resolution was signed by chairman C.E. Stevens, Jr., of the board of commissioners, and in addition to Jones was sent to Gov. Jim Hunt, Sen. Ed Rye, Reps. Richard W. Taylor, City, Mayor Speaker Jimmy Green and Lt. Gov. Jim Hunt.

The resolution called on the department of corrections to "give serious consideration to the proposition set forth above."

The resolution said, "it would be in error to assume that the concern expressed heretofore is wholly and largely the result of recent events in which two women were brutally slain near the White Lake correctional unit. We are satisfied that many of our residents have long been concerned about the probability that persons living in Bladen County and especially living in reasonably close proximity of the White Lake unit were exposed to special dangers, since felons are housed at the unit under circumstances where they are treated for all practical purposes the same as those serving sentences for minor infractions."

The commissioners' Sept. 20 meeting, they received petitions submitted by Leland Davis, son of Joseph Davis, one of the inmates found murdered in the living room of their live room house last month of Elizabeth Jones, laborer.

An inmate, Joseph Stedje, Jr., from the White Lake unit escaped there the day before the two women were found. He is still suspect in the case, but has not been charged.

Cliff Says

Murderer Not White

They shot the murders in Bladen County women assisted Sheriff John B. Stedje to issue the following statement:

On Sept. 6, 1970, the bodies of Leland Davis and Allen Davis were found in their residence, near the victim of a brutal slaying.

At that time, numerous FBI and state police officers and local law enforcement agencies were dispatched to the scene of the slaying. The following day, the bodies of the two women were found in their residence, near the victim of a brutal slaying.

The front room of their five room house just north of Elizabethtown.

Authorities have questioned a black inmate from the White Lake prison unit about the slayings but no charges have been filed.

The inmate, Joseph Stedje, Jr., occupied from the unit this day before the killings were discovered. Over a week later, he was apprehended in Dan, S.C.

Stedje is now in the Cumberland County Jail on charges of auto larceny and armed robbery.

A charge of auto larceny and escape is pending here in Bladen County.

Bridge To Close

The McGirt bridge at Elizabethtown will be closed for repairs Monday, October 4, for eight weeks.

It was announced Tuesday that the state bridge maintenance crew would repair the old bridge in wake of recent protests over its condition.

A petition bearing some 370 signatures of Bladen citizens was recently forwarded to Jim May Lee, head of the state bridge maintenance force, protesting the bridge's condition.

The petition, originally by Mrs. Joyce Marshall, 1000 S. 1st, Tomahawk, called to the bridge to be closed.

Mrs. Marshall attempted to contact state department of transportation officials Tuesday concerning the bridge, however, her effort was unsuccessful.

She said repair of the bridge was a waste of money and it should be closed permanently.

THE BRIDGE ON VACATION



SPECIAL RECOGNITION was given to blood donors who have given more than one gallon Tuesday evening at the Bladenboro Lions Club. Bladen County blood drive chairman, Dr. Bruce Phillips, from left, was present along with Jim Denver, club president, John Fink, who has given three gallons, Norman J. C. "Tater" Shaw, who has given six gallons, and Warren Lyall, Jr., who has given six gallons. This is the first time that such recognition has been given to donors in Bladen County since the new bloodmobile program began last year. Bladenboro held two drives this year where 222 units of blood were collected. Other donors not present for their award were: Eugene Heister, one gallon, Melody Lannon, one gallon, Daniel B. Carter, one gallon, Jim Dove, four gallons, and Louis Dilecco, Jr., six gallons. The Lions hosted the awards ceremony serving supper for their guests.

Powell Bill Funds Coming

Youth Succumb

There are some legal issues which have not been resolved by the Administration.

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Community Bulletin

TAR HEEL CENTER PLANS TO BE SHOWN

Plans for the multi-purpose community facility at Tar Heel will be shown for the first time to the public Tuesday, October 5 at 7:30 p.m. The public showing will be held at the Tar Heel High School media center and the public is urged to attend.

HOME COMING AT SWEET HOME CHURCH

Annual homecoming services will be held at Sweet Home Baptist Church on Sunday, October 3rd, beginning with Sunday school at 9:45. The Rev. Thurman Griffin of Georgia will be the guest evangelist at the 11 a.m. morning worship service. Dinner will be served on the church yard at 12:30 p.m. and the afternoon will be devoted to special singing. All members, former members, friends and friends of the church are given a hearty invitation to attend.

V. W. KOTZKE
MEETS MONDAY NIGHT
The Bladen County Board of Commissioners will meet Monday night, Sept. 28, 1970, at 7:30 p.m. in the Bladen County Courthouse.

THE BLADE

Vol. 89 No. 44

LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY

ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY, SEPT.

County Asks For T

A resolution seeking lighter security at the White Lake Prison unit has been forwarded to David L. Jones, secretary of corrections, by the Bladen County Board of Commissioners.

In the resolution the commissioners say, "In response to the petitioners of more than 1,200 Bladen County citizens which were received by the Bla-

den County Board of Commissioners Monday, Sept. 20, 1976, and the commissioners own consideration of the matters raised in the petitions, the commissioners adopt the following resolution which we now propose for your urgent consideration:

"The commissioners join with the petitioners in expressing their concern and ask that

immediate consideration be given to the department of corrections providing a greater degree of security at the White Lake corrections unit, to the end that the inmates therein kept shall be more effectively and securely restrained from escape."

The commissioners in the resolution strongly urged the department to consider separa-

ting felons from, or to them elsewhere other than such unwallied minimum security units as the White Lake unit, or that the felons be wise separately identified as by different clothing by misdemeanor inmates.

The resolution was signed by chairman C.E. Stevens, the board of commissi-

Sheriff Says

Murderer Not White

Rumors about the murders of two Bladen County women have prompted Sheriff John B. Allen to issue the following statement:

"On Sept. 6, 1976, the bodies of Josephine and Allene Davis were found in their residences. They were the victims of a brutal stabbing.

"Since that time, numerous rumors and speculations have been circulated as to who might be involved. To dispel further speculations and to avoid further suspicions for any innocent persons, the following information is being released.

"Physical evidence recovered at the scene of the crime, as examined by the FBI laboratory, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect."

Allen was vague about the rumors which promoted the statement and did not elaborate beyond his statement that the suspect or suspects were not white.

The bodies of the two women were found on Labor Day in

the front room of their five room house just north of Elizabethtown.

Authorities have questioned a black inmate from the White Lake prison unit about the slayings but no charges have been filed.

The inmate, Joseph Sledge, Jr., escaped from the unit five

day before the killings were discovered. Over a week later, he was apprehended in Dillon, S.C.

Sledge is now in the Cumberland County Jail on charges of auto larceny and armed robbery.

A charge of auto larceny and escape is pending here in Bladen County.

Bridge To Close

The McGirt Bridge at Elizabethtown will be closed for repairs Monday, October 4, for eight weeks.

It was announced Tuesday that the state bridge maintenance crew would resurface the old bridge in wake of recent protests over its condition.

A petition bearing some 378 signatures of Bladen citizens was recently forwarded to Jimmy Lee, head of the state bridge maintenance force, protesting

the bridge's condition.

The petition, originated by Mrs. Joyce Marshburn of Route 1, Tomahawk, called for the bridge to be closed.

Mrs. Marshburn attempted to contact state Department of Transportation officials Tuesday concerning the bridge, however, her effort was fruitless. She said repairing the bridge was a waste of money and it should be closed permanently.

SEE BRIDGE ON PAGE TWO

SPECIAL RECOGNITION
given more than one gallon of gas to the Lions Club. Bladen County Phillips, from left, was president, Jabe Frink, Jr., J. C. "Tater" Shaw, and Britt, one gallon, Bill P. Jr. who has given six gal-

Unsigned Letter Claims Knowledge Of Murderer

Authorities have received an unsigned letter from an individual claiming to know the killer of two Bladen County women. But the letter writer re-

fuses to come forward until promised confidentiality.

"I'm afraid he will kill me if my name is exposed," the letter read, according to a spokesman for the Bladen County Sheriff's Department.

The spokesman said authorities don't know whether the letter is a hoax or from someone with hard information about the Labor Day murders of Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 58, but added: "We have to check it out."

The letter writer offered information only on the basis that his name would not be made public.

SEE LETTER ON PAGE TWO

Clarkton, Victoria Lynn Elkins of Clarkton.

Lisa Register of Dublin, Audrey Dawn Barber of Clarkton, Karen Dianne Edge of Elizabethtown, Cindy Marie Pope of Elizabethtown, Donna Roundtree of Elizabethtown, Robin
SEE FESTIVAL ON PAGE TWO

Ed Board Eyes Night

Letter

"We couldn't act on this sooner because we didn't even receive the letter until today (Friday)," the spokesman said.

The spokesman guaranteed that the identity of the letter writer would be held in confidence when he comes forward and asked him to call the Bladen County Sheriff's Department at 862-3005.

"We just want to assure them that we'll keep their name confidential," the spokesman said.

The bodies of the two women were discovered September 6 in a farm house on N.C. 242, about two miles north of Elizabethtown. Both had had their throats cut, and the younger woman, Ailene Davis, had been sexually assaulted.

... is under the state labor department.

Reward Increased

Gov. James Holshouser, last Wednesday, Oct. 6, set a state reward of \$2,500 in the double slaying of Josephine and Aileen Davis.

The state reward, plus, a personal reward offered by Bladen Sheriff John B. Allen, brings the total to \$3,500.

Allen put up \$1,000 of his own money about three weeks ago for information in the Labor Day killings of the Davis women.

Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter Aileen, 53, were found dead in their five room home just north of Elizabethtown September 6, Labor Day.

Both women were brutally murdered. The younger woman was sexually assaulted, according to an autopsy report.

Hair recovered from the scene by investigators indicate

SEE REWARD ON PAGE TWO

from page one ----

Reward

that the murderer was not white.

An escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit, Joseph Sledge, 32, is still the prime suspect in the case, according to Allen. Sledge escaped from the unit on September 5 and was chased in the direction of the Davis home.

An unsigned letter was received by the sheriff two weeks ago claiming knowledge of the murder, however, the writer has not communicated with the sheriff since.

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

Tel. 69 No. 47 ★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1970 ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ 4 Sections — 30 Pages PRICE 10c

Lack Of Funds Blamed For Escapes

at least the lack of funds for the loose system at the white prison system, told the Bladen County citizenry last night that the state's corrections system had not enough funds for the administration of the prison system.

regular meeting of the county commissioners. He, along with several other prison officials, attended the meeting following the local petitions protesting the escape and alleged connection of an inmate with two brutal murders here on Labor Day.

David Jones, secretary of the state's corrections system, had been invited to the meeting, however, he declined.

Edwards said that during the past three years, prison population in the state had increased from 10,000 to 13,000 and he was having to continue his operations with the same number of personnel and with the same amount of funds. He said that the circumstances were beyond the system's control and urged

those present to seek help for the system through their legislators.

Edwards said that his division was balancing its budget the best it could and explained that the White Lake unit was a mixed population, minimum security unit. He said that most of the trouble came from inmates and after spending 25 per cent of their time, they

could be paroled. He included felons in this statement.

The furor came about a week after the deaths of Josephine and Allen Davis, mother and daughter, who were found with their throats cut in their living room frame house.

Commission chairman, C.E. Stevens, Jr. told Edwards that the people involved in the protest were quiet upset but, they

SEE LACK ON PAGE TWO

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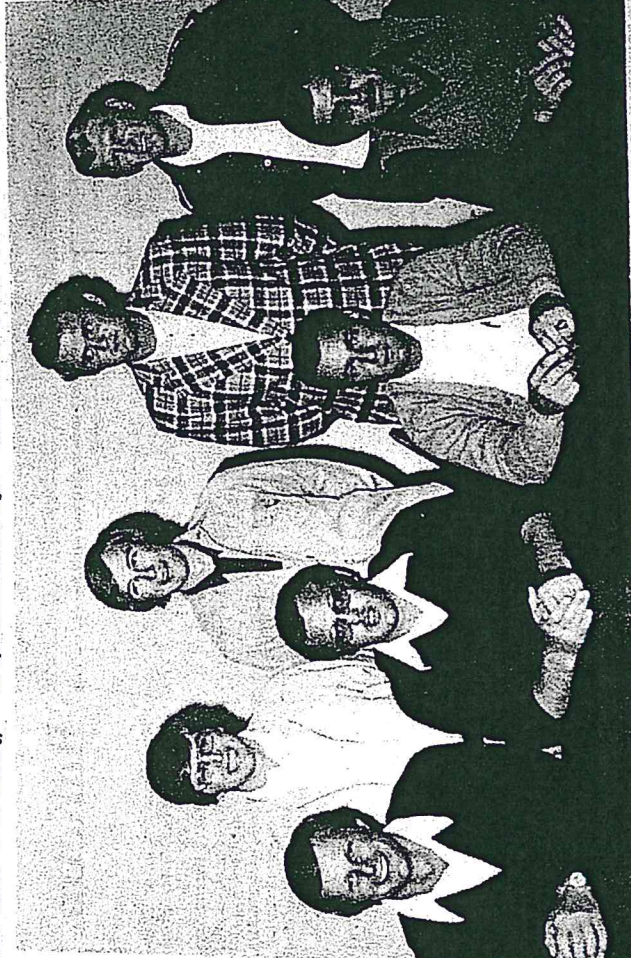
SEE LACK ON PAGE TWO

SEE LACK ON PAGE TWO

Community Bulletin

RECUR PLANNED
The REEL SCHOOL, a local staff from Tarboro, is planning a supper on November 1st, featuring Bedouin music. It will be held at the school cafeteria. Tickets will be sold before this is on a first-come-serve basis. Plates \$2.

WEST DAY AT PRESS CHECK
If Day will be held at Cypress Creek Baptist Church with Sunday school and other activities.



Hospital Worker Dismissed On Drug Larceny Charges

A worker at Bladen County Hospital has been dismissed on alleged drug possession and drug larceny charges.

Barbara Gillespie of Elizabethtown, was charged with the larceny of several types of prescription drugs and possession of those drugs Friday.

Reward Still Up

State reward of \$2,500 plus a personal reward of \$1,000 from Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen is still up in the murders of two Elizabethtown women.

Josephine Davis, 74, and Allen Davis, 53, her daughter, were both found dead in their five room frame house just a mile and half north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242 Labor Day, September 6.

SEE REWARD ON PAGE 3

Graham, Hunt To

Lack

--- from page one

mainly about tighter security there.

A grandson of Josephine Davis, the mother of Aileen Davis, Donald Hales, said it seemed to him, from what Edwards said, that the "Dollar was more important than human life."

Lonnie Davis, Josephine Davis' son, asked if some notification to the community couldn't be given when an escapee was loose from the unit.

Captain C.L. Sparkman, superintendent of the White Lake unit said all law enforcement agencies were notified when an escape occurred. Davis said that it was not fair to the community not to let them know also.

The commissioners moved the meeting to the courtroom of the courthouse because of attendance.

At long last, central communications will be established by the sheriff's department.

The board moved to hire two additional dispatchers and provide funds to re-locate all communications equipment in the sheriff's department into one limited access room.

On a motion by Commissioner Vance Clark, the board elected to allow the transfer of the equipment and hiring of the two dispatchers.

Sheriff's Deputy Phillip Little and Roy Adams, on behalf of Sheriff John B. Allen, made the request.

The center will house the Police Information Network's terminal plus the main communications console in the sheriff's office.

The commissioners turned down a similar request from firemen and rescue workers earlier this year.

A communications center was approved by the board in July or August of this year which was included in a county-wide fire districting study.

The commissioners rejected four bids for three sheriff cars.

Potter Motor Co. of Elizabethtown was the low bidder with a bid of \$4,498 each for the cars.

Potter's deposit check of five per cent of the total was not certified blocking legal acceptance of the bids.

The board elected to expend \$48,000 for a new bulldozer for the county's landfill.

000113

Reward

from page one -----

Allen said Monday that the reward was still available to anyone giving information leading to the arrest and conviction of anybody in the case. He said innocent parties would be protected under the law and held strictly confidential.

Information in the case may be given to the Sheriff's office at 862-3005 or to the SBI at 829-4311.

named to that unit's top post.
The town board, Monday

SEE CROSS ON PAGE TWO

Davis Bodies Exhumed Tuesday

The bodies of Josephine and Aileen Davis were exhumed Tuesday by order of Superior Court Judge Giles Clark of Elizabethtown.

Clark, according to Bladen Clerk of Court, Wanda S. Campbell, signed the order over the weekend.

Mrs. Campbell said that District Solicitor Lee Greer made the request for the order.

The bodies were taken to North Carolina Memorial Hos-

pital at Chapel Hill for further tests.

Josephine, 74, and her daughter, Aileen, 58, were brutally killed and molested at their home a mile and a half north of Elizabethtown on Labor Day, September 6.

State Bureau of Investigation, the FBI and the Bladen County Sheriff Department has been working full time on the case since the time of the killings.

Reason for digging up their bodies was not given by the sheriff's department early Wednesday morning other than more testing was desired.

An inmate who escaped from the nearby White Lake Prison Unit was prime suspect in the case.

Joseph Sledge escaped the day before the murders and was sought in connection with the killings, however, Sledge has not been charged with the murders.

A state reward of \$2,500 and a personal reward offered by Sheriff John B. Allen are still in effect.

Conduct Referendum

serves, at desired levels.

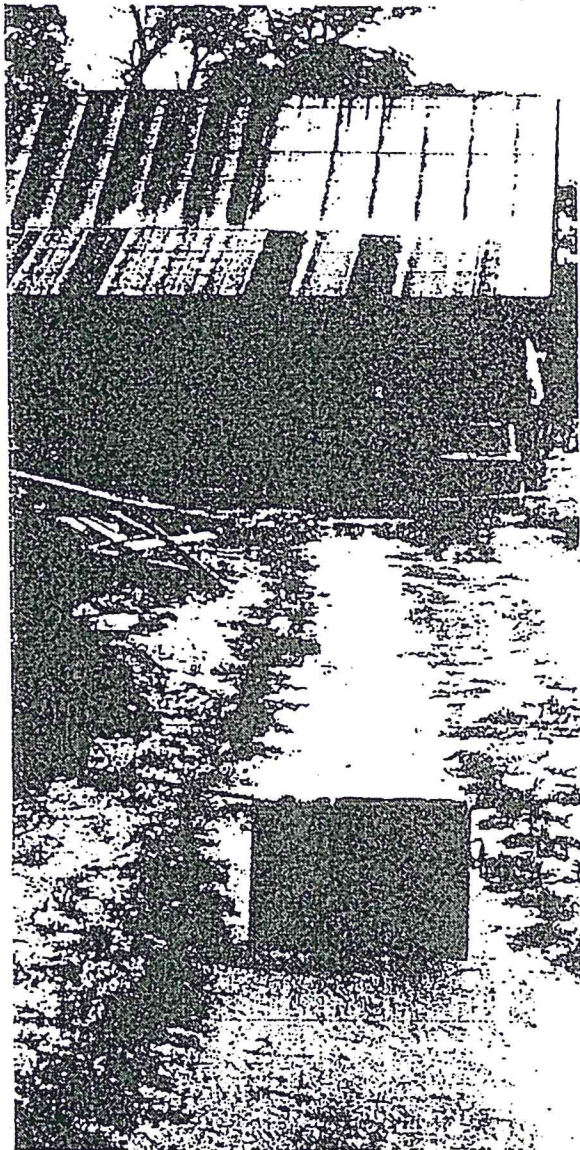
The last referendum was held in 1973 and 98.5 percent of the 100,466 flue-cured tobacco growers voted favoring marketing quotas for the 1974-1976 crop years. Flue-cured tobacco is grown in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Florida and Alabama.

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BLADEN JOURNAL

28337 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1976 THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY * ESTABLISHED 1908 * 3 SECTIONS — 32 PAGES PRICE 10c

Escapee Sought In Killings



A 34-year-old mother and her 17-year-old daughter were found brutally murdered in their home just two miles north of Elizabethtown Monday afternoon.

Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Miss Aileen Davis, were reportedly found by another daughter, Mrs. Omega Hales, lying in the front room of the Davis home on N.C. 242 dead.

The home was quickly roped off by sheriff's deputies after arrival on the scene.

A prison inmate who escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit Sunday is being sought for questioning only in connection with the double murders.

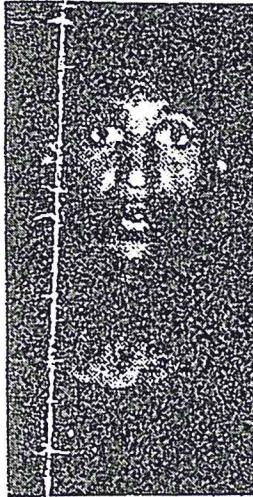
The inmate, 32-year-old Joseph Sledge, Jr. of 865 Orange Street, Fayetteville was reportedly missing from the camp about 4 p.m. Sunday. Prison officials said that Sledge's trail was followed by bloodhounds in the direction of the Davis home until about 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

According to the sheriff's department, a 1969 Chevrolet was stolen in Elizabethtown

Monday morning.

The car reportedly belonged to Hafee Thompson Smith of Whiteville.

A man fitting Sledge's description was sighted driving



SLEDGE

a car similar to the stolen car in Fayetteville early Tuesday morning.

Sledge's description was given as: 5 foot 7 inches, 150 pounds, reddish complexion. He was black.

The dead women were taken to Bladen County Hospital where they were examined for possible clues in their deaths. Later, they were taken to Southeastern General Hospital for autopsies.

Sheriff John B. Allen said the killings were the worst he'd ever seen in his entire 30 years as sheriff. He requested agents from the FBI to join the investigation late Monday night.

A state-in-law, Bill Hales, the dead women's closest neighbor, said Tuesday that Mrs. Davis was at his home as late as 10:30 p.m. Sunday. He said that his wife returned from church about that time and took her mother home.

Hales stated that his sister-in-law, Miss Aileen Davis, was at the Davis residence when

SEE ESCAPEE ON PAGE TWO

Plans Okayed For New Library

Bladen County may on the right road to building its own county library building.

The county Board of Commissioners Tuesday approved a \$1,000 expenditure for architect fees to draw plans for a new county library building. That building will be constructed if federal funding of nearly one-half million dollars is realized.

Selection of a site for the new building was not made Tuesday.

Several sites were considered by the county Library Board with the two most likely being the A. C. Clark home on Broad Street in Elizabethtown and a vacant lot behind the post office belonging to Mrs. Jewel Thomas.

The Clark home and properties would cost the county \$175,000 while the Thomas property would cost \$42,000 according to County Librarian, Jay Chung.

Chung presented his plan for the new building to the commissioners Tuesday, saying that Bladen was operating on about 1 1/2 of the national average of space for a county this size. He said that the new building would have at least 10,000 feet of space which is still short

of the national average of some 18,000 feet.

The present facility is located in the basement of the county courthouse.

Application for a \$450,000, EIA Grant to the federal gov-

SEE PLANS ON PAGE TWO

Bladenboro Man Charged With Rape

Danny "Ponkie" Skipper, 31, of Bladenboro has been charged with the second degree rape of Sandra Johnson West, according to Bladenboro Police Chief Eric Davis.

Davis said that the incident was reported September 3 and

allegedly occurred early that morning. He said that Skipper was arrested at 11:30 a.m. the same day and placed under a \$10,000 bond.

Skipper was still in Bladen County Jail late Tuesday.

Two Bladen lead Monday. Her daughter bludgeoned it room floor today. The active man, 32, black

male, an escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit. Sledge is wanted for questioning only concerning the incident. He was reportedly missing from the unit between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Sunday. The home is located on N.C. 242, two miles north of Elizabethtown.

non, was released from Duke Hospital on Thursday and he was able to join them after having a kidney transplant on August 17th.

Mr. Forris Barnhill of Hartford and daughter, Becky, of Burgaw; Mr. and Mrs. Chester Barnhill and children, Amanda and Kiah; Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Barnhill and daughters, Tammy and Jennifer; and Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Barnhill enjoyed a delicious seafood supper at Harold's Fish Camp in Leland on Friday night. The occasion was in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Barnhill's 43rd wedding anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Barnhill and daughter, Amanda; Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Horrell and daughter, Amy; Mr. and Mrs. Mike Squires and daughter, Julie; Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Kelly

Mr. and Mrs. Eazy Applewhite, Sr. of Currie.

Mr. and Mrs. Eazy Applewhite and their children, Lisa and Jeffrey and Benjie Applewhite spent the Labor Day weekend at Hickory Point near Hampstead.

Mr. and Mrs. Gregg English and son, Douglas and Mr. Brandy Russ of Charleston, S. C. were guests of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Russ, during the Labor Day weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Barnhill were Sunday afternoon guests of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Barnhill.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Norman Barnhill who celebrated their first wedding anniversary on September 6th.

Thought for today: "Knowledge gives you power."

Youth

from page one -----

county or the agency has budgeted the amount of money that the state monies will match. There must also be certification that the county will spend the money received for the program for which the money is granted.

According to Judge A. Lincoln Sherk, chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee on Delinquency Prevention and Youth Services, the programs to be funded may include foster care, non-residential treatment programs, group homes, shelter care and other juvenile delinquency prevention programs.

The \$250,000 is the first state funding that has been made available for community programs. The General Assembly is expected to make additional appropriations next year, Judge Sherk said.

Other funding for community programs is also available from the Law and Order Commission, which recently approved a plan which will allocate approximately \$2.2 million in LEAA funds for juvenile justice programs.

These programs may include community non-residential services, shelter care, group homes, and specialized foster care and other local programs.

Information about the funding formulas and procedures for these funds are available from the Criminal Justice Planners in the offices of the Lead Regional Organizations and from the Law and Order Commission in Raleigh.

Judge Sherk, who is chairman of the Juvenile Justice Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee, said that he hopes to be able to coordinate state and federal efforts

Bulletin

from page one -----

REVIVAL PLANNED

A four-day revival will begin Wednesday, September 8, at 7:30 p. m. at the Bethlehem Pentecostal Church, four miles north of Bladenboro on Highway 410.

Rev. Stanley Black, missionary, will be the evangelist. The church's pastor is the Rev. Maurice Milligan.

The public is invited to the nightly meetings, each of which will begin at 7:30.

Commissioner

from page one -----

his emotions over the situation before a large gathering in the town hall saying he loved his hometown and didn't intend to produce harm to anyone.

The commissioner scored Tax Collector Slater Hair for issuing beer and wine permits after hours when the ordinances say such permits would be issued during normal hours.

Hair said that he did pick up permits for a store after hours and allowed the store to have them.

On the audits, Smith said he only wanted to know where the town stood financially and said that he intends to propose guidelines in the future to establish ways and means of handling the town's business.

The teacher asked Junior for a collective noun and the youngster was smart enough to reply: "Taxes, Marm."

Wester of Bladenboro General appeared before the board and reported 22 indigent, expecting mothers went to Southeastern during the past two weeks. He and Dr. Wester were seeking help from the board in handling such cases.

Care during pregnancy was defined as a great need here by Dr. Wester. He suggested that Bladen arrange some sort of pre-natal care clinic. He emphasized that pre-natal care was very important to both mother and child.

Heads of Bladen's medical departments will be brought in to the situation. It was later decided by the board, to see what would be done locally about the problem.

They approved a request from Herb Hanna of the Elizabethtown Rescue Squad for an ambulance. The request will go to the Lumber River Council of Governments and then to Raleigh for state funding.

The request is similar to that of Kelly's. The county must match state funds. Kelly's unit cost \$19,000.

Escapee

from page one -----

her mother arrived home.

Dr. Ralph Meinhardt, medical examiner, set the deaths at about 4 a.m. Monday.

Meinhardt, through preliminary tests, indicated that there was no evidence of sexual molestation. However, the two dead women were half clothed when found.

No apparent motive was noted through the sheriff's investigation since more than \$400 was found in the home after the killings.

Two rifles were also reportedly undisturbed by deputies in the home.

Sheriff Allen said that nothing seemed to be out of its place, but, a murder weapon has yet to be found.

It is believed, however, that a kitchen knife would have been used in the slayings.

The car reportedly stolen in Elizabethtown Monday was found by Fayetteville police Tuesday night.

Funeral services will be held today, Thursday, at 4 p.m. at the Church of God near the Davis home on N.C. 242 with the Reverend Robert Jackson and R.M. Brown officiating. Burial will follow in the Davis Family Cemetery.

The deceased are survived by two sons, Lonnie Davis of Elizabethtown, Harvey Davis of Rt. 9, Fayetteville, 3 daughters, Lila Scott of Lumberton, Oph-

services.

Guest evangelist will be the Reverend Mitchell Britt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Britt of Dublin. Rev. Britt is a young minister, well-known throughout Bladen County where he began singing for the Lord at a very young age with his brother and sisters. His evangelistic crusades have taken him all over the world. Two years ago he spent more than a month in crusades that took him to most

REV. MITCHELL

of the countries Europe, the Scandinavian countries and Africa held a week-end

East Arcadia Community

By Josie Graham 655-4

Things brightened up in the Town of East Arcadia in November of '75, when Four County Electric Co. installed fifteen security lights along the main part of town.

The Town of East Arcadia received \$3,000 from a Bladen County Grant for recreation. Some of this money will be used to repair and equip our gym so our young folk will have a warm place for their indoor sports this winter.

Last week I talked about our girls' softball team, The E. A. Panthers. This week I will tell you, we have a very good baseball team, managed by Mr. Leon Graham and Mr. Archie Graham as coach. Their greatest event is when the Newark Red Sox of Newark, New Jersey visits us during the weekend of July 4th.

A group of people in the Community of East Arcadia got together and formed a food co-op, where members buy food by the bulk wholesale prices. This has helped tremendously in "stretching the dollar". Any E. A. resident can join. The joining fee is \$1.00 per year.

The East Arcadia Ladies Auxiliary was formed in March, 1976. They are asking all women in the community to come and join this organization and help your community.

Anyone 55 years of age and over is asked to come to the East Arcadia Community Center and join the Senior Citizen Club where a good time is had by all.

Other services offered at the center are buying food stamps

every second 21 in each month, baby clinic every day in each community meeting Tuesday and each month at Please attend.

New Miracle Holiness Church annual home September 5, guest speaker, Brown of New their weekly must 30-Sept

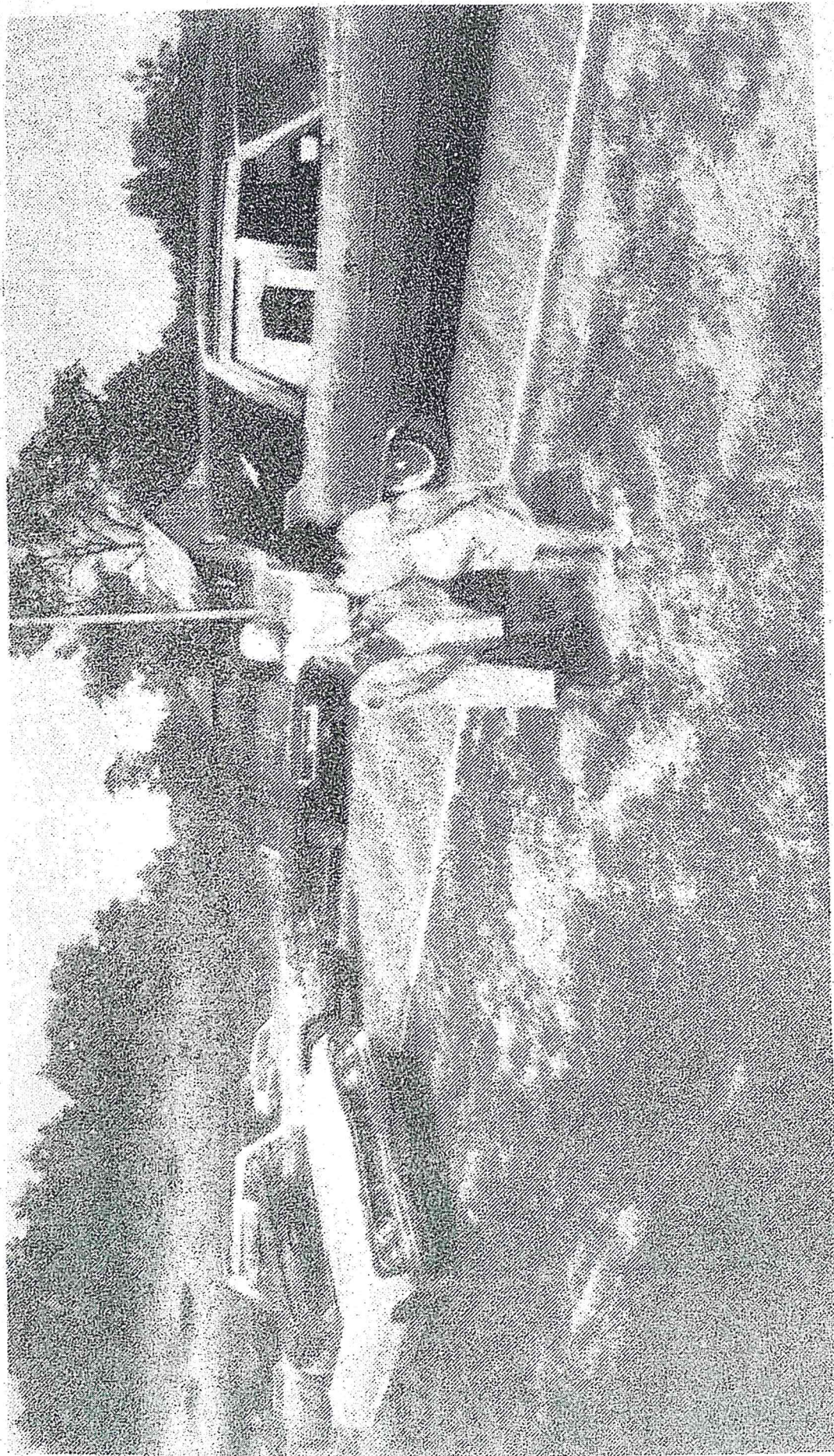
Pleasant Church will have a homecoming September 26, Rev. Fulton.

East Arcadia School opening. The school will be opening with an open day and we will have their "new" old classing this year. Brown -- Brown's Progress -- 7 -- Anderson -- Cherry Sim -- Mrs. Jessie Reading; Mr. Special Red Horton -- ploration.

An open planned for of the first will give a ty to come teachers child's pro

Pumpkin Pecan B
A Superb Autumn

000117



in their home pictured in the far background. The services were held last Thursday afternoon.

TWO FUNERAL HEARSES proceed to the cemetery with the bodies of Josephine and Aileen Davis. The two women, mother and daughter, were found bludgeoned to death Monday, Sept. 6,

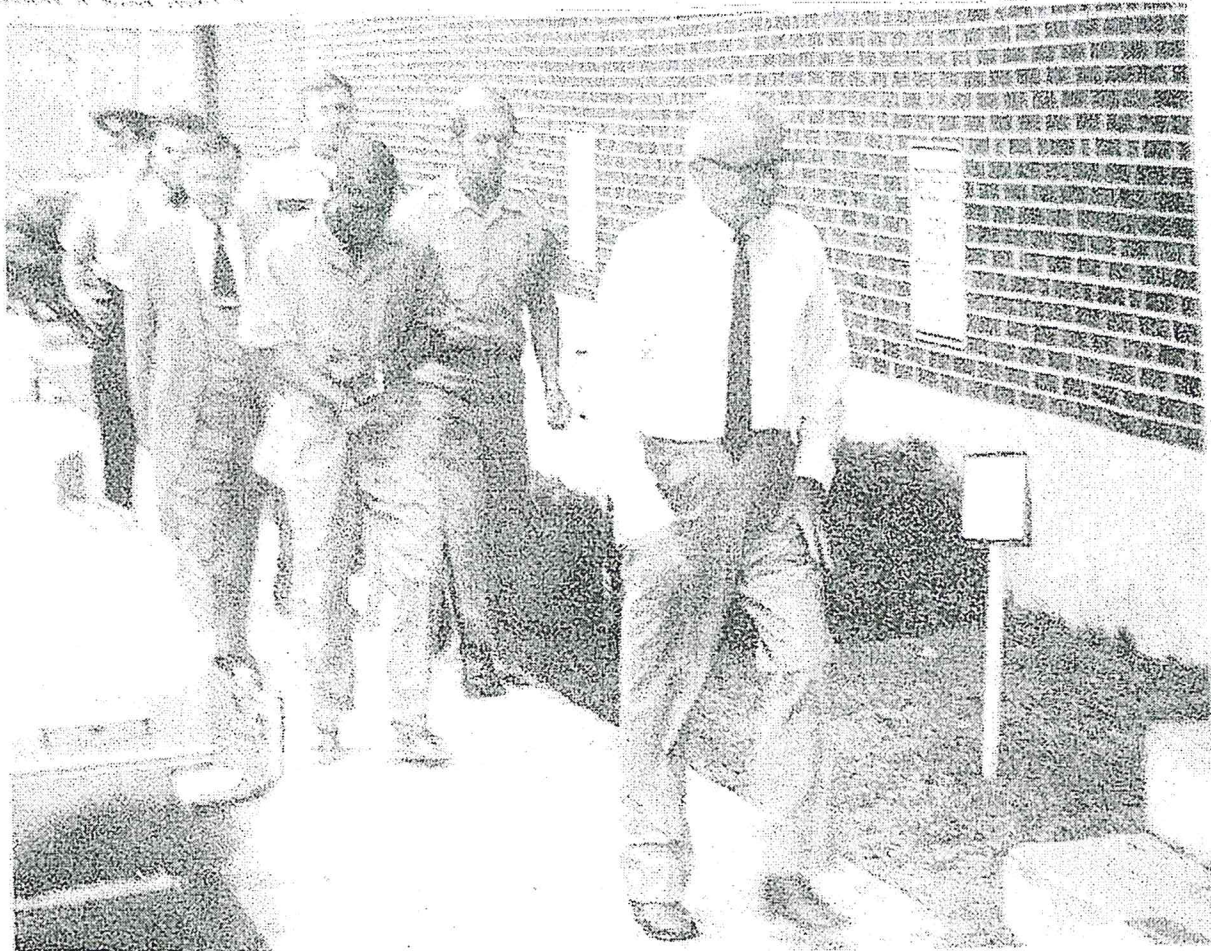
will begin a cake decorating eastern General Hospital since

Bliss Cook Community News



BLADEN COUNTY SHERIFF, JOHN B. ALLEN, (center), leading agents of the State Board of Investigation and county deputies are shown with the daughter, Alleen Davis, of Elizabethtown. Sledge was later shot.

000119



Agents of the State Bureau of Investigation and county deputies are shown here entering Bladen County Jail. Sledge was taken into the Bladen County Jail for questioning in the connection with the double killings of Josephine and her

daughter, Aileen Davis of Elizabethtown. Sledge was later taken to Fayetteville where he faced charges of robbery and auto larceny. No evidence as of late Tuesday linked Sledge to the killings. Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison last sometime Sunday afternoon.

Tighter Security Sought At White Lake Prison

Prisoners leaving their cells for signatories are seeking tighter security measures to be taken at the White Lake Prison.

The petition, following the escape of the inmate in the first two killings of a mother and daughter, both of Elizabethtown.

Josephine Davis, 34, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 17, were shot to death last Monday, September 8, at the home of the mother in the first of two killings.

The escape of Sledge, who had been in the prison since the

escape of Sledge, 37, 38, Black male, was reported missing from the unit Sunday, the 11th.

Captain C. L. Sparkman of the unit said that Sledge was present during the 7 p.m. master roll call, but was missing when the 8 p.m. master roll call was made.

Sparkman said that he believed Sledge left the unit during the 2 hour span which was missing hours for the prisoners, which he said, was a difficult time to keep track of the inmates.

The alleged connection between Sledge and the killings

Sparkman said that he believed Sledge left the unit during the 2 hour span which was missing hours for the prisoners, which he said, was a difficult time to keep track of the inmates.

The petition, which was presented at the Bladen County Jail last Monday called for the county commissioners to order a review of the state to strengthen the security at the prison. The petition, according to Doug Evans, clerk to the board of commissioners, will probably be presented this coming Monday night.

State Senator Ed Nye of Elizabethtown wrote David Jones, Secretary of the Department of Corrections, in

hope of getting tighter security measures pushed at the unit.

In light of the petitions and the general feeling of the people about the unit, Sparkman was asked Tuesday to respond.

He said the unit was understaffed with only 3 guards during a normal shift to handle 136 prisoners.

On his escape record for the unit, Sparkman reported the 11 inmates fled the unit during June, July and August. Three, he says, have escaped during

SEE SECURITY ON PAGE TWO

000120

Prisoner Dropped From Ticket

Security

--from page one

the first two weeks of this month.

The unit is a minimum custody prison and is over crowded.

The capacity is 100 inmates, says Sparkman.

What steps the county commissioners will take is not foreseen, however, chairman to the board, C. E. Stevens, Jr., said last week that this was probably the proper way of handling the situation and he would be interested in discussing the matter with the entire board at its next meeting.

Sledge was not connected with the killings as of late Tuesday.

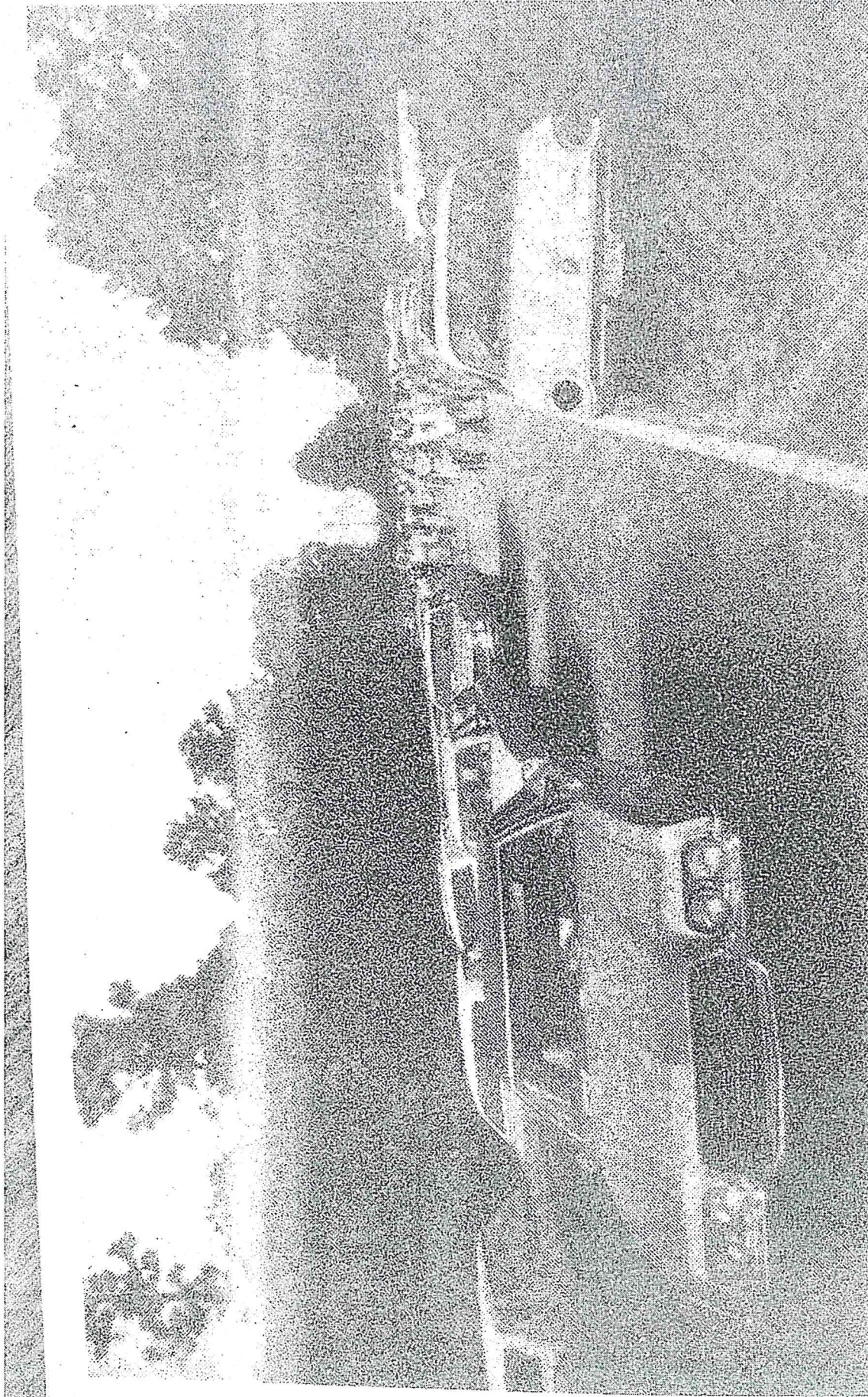
However, he has been charged with several other crimes

allegedly committed during his period of freedom.

Sheriff John B. Allen made an attempt to get a reward established for information concerning the killings.

Allen called the Governor's office last Thursday and the Governor, according to Allen's office, refused to discuss the matter with the Sheriff.

An official request from the State Bureau of Investigation was presented to the Governor Tuesday asking for a reward to be set for information on the case. A spokesman for the Governor said that the Governor would review the request Thursday.



THE HIGHWAY from the Church of God where funeral services for Josephine Davis and her daughter, Aileen Davis, was crowded with cars and people. The two were found cut and beaten to death late Monday, Sept. 6. A massive manhunt followed the killings for Joseph Sledge, Jr., an escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit. Sledge was arrested last Thursday in Dillon, S. C. and

charged there with no operator's license. He was released, but, was arrested again by the Dillon police. Sledge was transported to Fayetteville where questioned and then to Elizabethtown Friday. He was taken back to Fayetteville Friday afternoon where a warrant for robbery was served on him.

Thursday, September 30, 1976

Bladen's Real Friend

We are forever hearing about how public officials abuse and misuse public trust and their office, but something took place here in Bladen County last week which was highly unusual.

A public official set a precedent.

Sheriff John B. Allen, out of his own pocket and heart, offered \$1,000 reward for information in the double killings of Josephine and Aileen Davis.

The sheriff set the reward after his efforts were exhausted in getting the governor to establish a state reward in the case.

This was a classic example of Sheriff Allen's Christian Charity and concern for his fellowman for he is the kind of man that will offer his shirt to those in need.

We take this space to praise our good sheriff and say, if there was such a thing as "Bladen County Man of The Year," John B. Allen is well deserving of such a title. His actions are hard to top.

John Buren Allen is truly a friend of the people of Bladen County.

Public Forum

Dear Sir,

We would like to extend a special thanks to Sheriff John B. Allen and the Bladen County Sheriff's Department for the reward the sheriff took from his own pocket, to the Bladen County Commissioners and to the S. B. I. in the murder investigation of Josephine Davis and Aileen Davis, and a special thanks to the staff of

The Bladen Journal.

We are grateful for the flowers, food, cards and money so many people gave after our tragedy.

We hope the investigation will continue until the right person is caught.

Also, thanks to everyone that signed the petition.

Lonnie H. Davis and family

000123

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

Vol. 69 No. 45

★ UNITED COPIATION OF ART COUNTY ★

★ ELIZABETH TOWN, N. C. 28337 THE MONDAY OCTOBER 7, 1976 ★

★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★

★ 4 SECTIONS 34 1

For New Library

County To Pursue Land Deal

The board of county commissioners met Monday on the location of the new county library and to pursue the purchase of the property at \$40,000.

However, the board said that there could be no strings attached to the property.

Members of the library board sought 4 proposals to the commissioners Monday and the board that a one-acre behind the Elizabethtown post office was best suited for a new library building. That belongs to Mrs. Jimmy Thomas of Elizabethtown.

Mrs. Nathan Cox, chairman of the library board told the commissioners that Mrs. Thomas offered 1/3 of the total price as a gift. The board said that if there were any strings attached to the gift, such as, requiring the county

to build a library and not allow it not make the deal. Jay Chung, county librarian, told the board that library services could not be extended to the public as desired under the present circumstances. He

Bladenboro Sued For \$200,000

Mrs. Maxine Dowless, administratrix of the estate of Dewey Delane Dowless, her 21-year-old son, has filed a \$200,000 civil suit against the Town of Bladenboro and former Assistant Police Chief Charles Williams.

In the suit, Mrs. Dowless

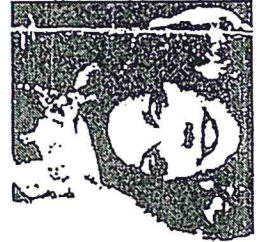
stated notice was given by registered letter to the Town of Bladenboro on June 20 that an action was pending "for the wrongful death of the deceased by the negligent acts on the part of the defendant, Charles Williams, and the Town of Bladenboro."

The suit also stated Williams unlawfully and negligently pulled his revolver from his holster and pointed it at Dowless and without cause pulled the trigger.

The suit also states the town was negligent in hiring Williams.

SEE SUED ON PAGE TWO

Festival Draws Stars



Clarkton's annual Tobacco Festival will include the usual beauty queens, dances, a parade and golf tournament this weekend and visits to the town by Miss North Carolina, Susie Proffitt and long-time baseball pitcher, Gaylord Perry.

Perry, formerly plucked for the Cleveland Indians is now with the Texas Rangers. He owns a farm near Williamsonton, N.C.

Community Bulletin

ELIZABETHTOWN GARDEN CLUB MEETS THURSDAY The Elizabethtown Garden Club will meet Thursday afternoon at 3:00 o'clock in the Station reception room. Mrs. Clyde R. Jordan will have a program. She will show slides of the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. All members are urged to attend.

REVIVAL PLANNED AT GRACE BAPTIST Church Baptist Church of Bladenboro will hold their Fall revival Oct. 11 - 17. Service will begin at 7:30 nightly. Sunday services will begin at 11 a.m. Singing speaker will be in. M. D. Thornton. Everyone welcome.

BLAIR BRANCH IS BECOMING SET Blair Branch Baptist Church Route 2, Elizabethtown plans to be homecoming for October beginning with the morning services held by Rev. Barry Sims, pastor. There will be a special singing following dinner.

dismissed as Bladen Hospital, head of nurses, rather this summer without, she says, proper reasoning.

She again asked that the county give her a written reason for her dismissal and asked for back pay.

Former Hospital Administrator, Ben Kilpatrick, told the board that Mrs. Garner was, "Very devoted to her job, and that he agreed with her on asking for a reason concerning her dismissal. He said that she had a right to know

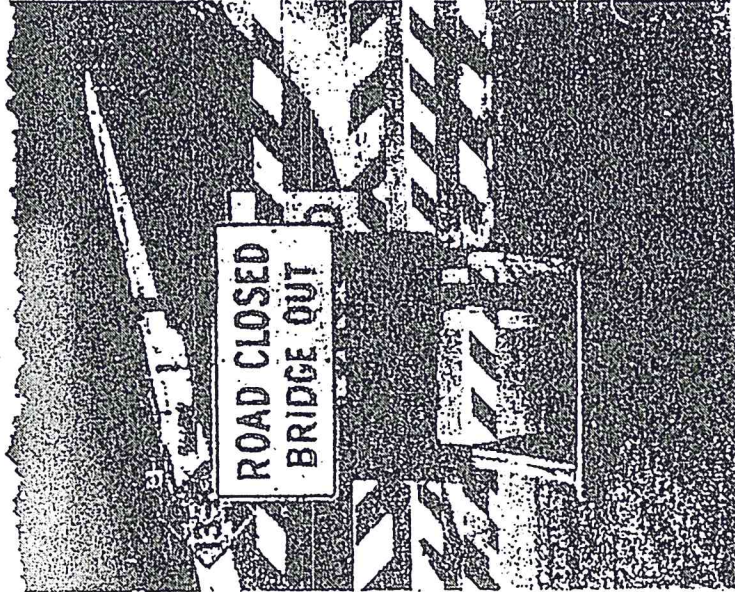
SEE DEAL ON PAGE THREE

Unsigned Letter Claims Knowledge Of Murderer

Authorities have received an unsigned letter from an individual claiming to know the killer of two Bladen County women. But the letter writer refuses to name forward until promised confidentiality.

The letter writer offered information only on the basis that his name would not be made public.

SEE LETTER ON PAGE TWO



THE BRIDGE IS NOW CLOSED. The old McGirt Bridge at Elizabethtown was closed Monday for resurfacing. Traffic flow has been diverted to U. S. 301 across the Cape Fear River. The Department of Transportation will be about eight weeks to complete the project.

Clarkton Plans Park Expansion

Clarkton is planning to spend some \$10,000 in federal funds on an expansion of the E.J. Park. The expansion is designed mainly for smaller children's playground equipment, a sand pit. Clarkton recently that the funds were part of a grant approved by the federal government to the town which are part of a \$400,000 block grant to the county. He said that one of the tennis courts at the park would be

Ed. Board Eyes Night Meetings

-- William Ru-
d, died Tuesday,

ices were held
Thursday at the
byterian Church
E. Link offic-
was in Clarkton

e his wife, Mrs.
Memory; two
of Kinston and
y of Elizabeth-
son, James E.
pau, Tenn.; two
s, Mrs. Norma
Chadbourn and
Kee Achilles of
ve sisters, Mrs.
and Mrs. Celia
of Clarkton, Mrs.
adenboro, Mrs.
of Dublin, Mrs.
ry of Hamlet;
Alex of White-
Bill of Newport
of Clarkton, Ga.; four
seven step-

ROGERS
-- Marie M.
Sunday.
ices were held
Wednesday at the
Methodist
Rev. Tom House
E. Link, Bur-
Clarkton Ceme-

lude a daughter,
rie Benfield of
sons, Julian F.
Angeles, William
Baldsboro, Fred
Columbia, S. C.
Rogers of Ra-
r, Robert James
Clarkton; 13
and one great-

HARGROVE
IC -- The fun-
for James A.
who died Fri-
at 3 p. m. Sun-
astial Free Will
Burial was in
F.
ire five sons,
and Albert of
B. of Fayette-
Hargrove of
wo daughters,
Usery of Eas-
Mrs. Francis
enville, S. C.;
red; 35 great-
and a great-
12.

grandchildren.

LOS SHAW WATTS
CLARKTON -- Lois Shaw
Watts, 77, died Monday.

Funeral services were held
at 4 p. m. Wednesday at the
Mount Zion Baptist Church con-
ducted by the Rev. Sidney Britt,
her pastor. Burial was in the
Mount Zion Church Cemetery.
Survivors include a daughter,
Mrs. Garvis Hood of Clarkton;
three sons, William Watts, Den-
nis Watts and Ernest Watts
of Clarkton; two brothers, Ruf-
lin Shaw of Whiteville and James
Shaw of Matthews; five grand-
children.

from page one --

Park

earmarked for sewer and wa-
ter expansion, he said.

The park was given to the
town by the Cox Family and
presently, according to the
commissioner, does not meet
the needs of the smaller kids
of the town.

from page one --

Bulletin

is presently pastor at Wood-
lawn Baptist Church Lowell.

There will be special music
and also a nursery for small
children. Homecoming services
will be on Sunday, October 17,
with all former members and
friends cordially invited to
come to Fellowship.

REVIVAL AT CYPRESS
CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

The Rev. Allen Williams from
Jackson, N.C., will begin a re-
vival at Cypress Creek Baptist
Church of Clarkton Sunday night
October 16 at 7 p. m. Services will
continue through the week with
special singing each night. Rev.
Davis, pastor, and con-
gregation extend to all an in-
vitation to attend.

WEST BLADENBORO
BAPTIST CHURCH

West Bladenboro Baptist
Church, Bladenboro, has announced its
annual homecoming festival.
Homecoming services will take
place on Sunday, October 16, at
7 p. m. The church is open

SEE BULLETIN ON PAGE 3

Leroy Register, Sr., on Sun-
day.

Mr. and Mrs. Keith Dowd
had dinner with Mr. Dowd's
parents, Mr. and Mrs. Buddy
Dowd, on Sunday.

Buddy McEmore from
Virginia visited his parents,
Mr. and Mrs. Elvin McLe-
more, on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Clark
spent a few days with Mr. and
Mrs. B. O. Deese in Monroe
last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Homer Tatum
spent the weekend with their

from page one --

Local

Bladenboro, University Coordi-
nator for Environmental Stud-
ies, N. C. State; Jean Eason,
Director of Continuing Edu-
cation, UNC-Greensboro; and
Bernadette Watts, home eco-
nomics extension agent, Dur-
ham.

Wednesday evening, awards
will be presented to 14 out-
standing Extension Homemak-
ers Club leaders. In addition,
Extension Homemakers mem-
bers will receive national hon-
ors for their programs in citi-
zenship, cultural arts, interna-
tional, public relations and
safety.

Sessions are being held at
the Jane S. McKimmen Ex-
tension Education Center.

from page one --

Letter

"We couldn't act on this soon-
er because we didn't even re-
ceive the letter until today (Fri-
day)," the spokesman said.

The spokesman guaranteed
that the identity of the letter
writer would be held in confi-
dence when he comes forward
and asked him to call the Blad-
en County Sheriff's Depart-
ment at 862-3005.

"We just want to assure them
that we'll keep their name con-
fidential," the spokesman said.

The bodies of the two women
were discovered September 6
in a farm house on N.C. 242,
about two miles north of Eliz-
abethtown. Both had had their
throats cut, and the younger
woman, Allene Davis, had been
sexually assaulted.

Becky and Joyd Crowe enter-
tained their mother, Mrs. Cor-
renia Wood, on her birthday,
also, at Mack and Sheila
Council's house last week. Ev-
eryone wished her many more
happy birthdays.

Everyone sends their sym-
pathy out to Mrs. Louise Council
after the death of her sister,
Mimmie Freeman Register, in
Shallotte two weeks ago.

Thought for the week: Con-
tempt is found not in having
everything, but in being satis-
fied with everything you have.

from page one --

Kelly

Lieutenant Bonnie Jordan and
members Eleanor Pridgen,
Thelma Benson and the Rev.
Kenneth Thornton.

Taking note of the number of
ladies present in the Kelly
squad, the Tar Heel visitors
said they intend to encourage
female membership in the new
squad. Rev. Thornton replied:
"If we didn't have lady mem-
bers at Kelly, we'd be out of
luck."

from page one --

Sued

llams. It also claims the town
failed to follow regulations in
the hiring of policemen, par-
ticularly Charles Williams and
that the town failed to train and
properly supervise Williams
and failed to take disciplinary
action against him.

Dowless, a member of the
Bladenboro Rescue Squad, went
to the Bladenboro police de-
partment with a group of friends
March 15 after returning from
an emergency call. Williams,
on duty at the time, was said
to have removed his service
revolver from the holster and
accidentally fired the weapon,
the bullet striking Dowless.

Dowless was pronounced dead
on arrival at Southeastern Gen-
eral Hospital in Lumberton.

A summons was served on the
Town of Bladenboro Thursday
by the sheriff's department.

Mrs. Dowless asked for a jury
trial.

Clerk of Court Wanda Camp-
bell said no date has been set
for the trial.

Mrs. Bill Batson of Hampstead.

Guests of Mrs. Catherine
Keith on Sunday were Mrs.
Doris Corbett of Middlesex and
Mrs. Edna Griffin of Wilson.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Cas-
sius Smith on Sunday were Mr.
and Mrs. Richard Smith and
daughters, Elizabeth and Jen-
nifer of Wilmington; Mr. and
Mrs. Bob Yales; and Mr. and
Mrs. Roger Lee Rogers, also
of Wilmington.

Guests last week of Mrs.
C. H. Owens were Mrs. Mar-
garet Jones and Mrs. Mary
Payton of Wilmington.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Jobe
Metts on Sunday were Mr. and
Mrs. C. J. Moore of Wilming-
ton and Miss Sharon Metts of
Wrightsville Beach.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. T. B.
Jordan on Sunday were Mr. and
Mrs. Sandy McEachern and
daughter, Mary Margaret, and
Miss Connie Jordan of Cedar
Island.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Char-
lie Mitchell on Sunday were:
Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Barnhill
and daughter, Sandra; Mr. and
Mrs. Jimmy Dawson and daugh-
ters, Margie and Dale, of Rie-
gelwood; Mr. and Mrs. Charles
Mitchell and son, Charles, III,
of Wrightsville Beach; Mr. and
Mrs. David Clark and daugh-
ters, Cindy and Hope, of Eliz-
abethtown; also Dr. and Mrs.
James Dawson of Riegelwood.

Guests of Mrs. Maude Smith
on Sunday were Mr. and Mrs.
Eldon Smith and family of Win-
nabow; Mr. and Mrs. David
Lee Smith of Wilmington; and
Mr. and Mrs. Leon Smith of
Elizabethtown.

Sunday guests of Mrs. Rodney
Smith were: Mr. and Mrs. Gene
Allen and family; Dr. and Mrs.
David Adams of Wilmington; al-
so Mrs. Smith's sisters, Mrs.
James W. Vann of Pabokee,
Florida and Mrs. Frank Hagne-
let of Portsmouth, Va.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. El-
liott Henry on Sunday were Mr.
and Mrs. Tommy Green and
children and Mr. and Mrs. Jack
Green of Carolina Beach.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. K.
Henry on Sunday were Mrs.
Pender, Burke and daughter,
Margaret, of Wilmington.

Guests of Rev. and Mrs. Ken-
neth Thornton on Sunday were:
Miss B. B. Thornton, home from
East Carolina, and a friend,
Miss Jo Jirva, also of East
Carolina at Greenville.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Oli-
ver Squires on Sunday were Mr.
and Mrs. Mike Corbett and son
of Burgaw and Mr. and Mrs.
Bully Corbett and sons, Bill and
David, also of Burgaw.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. L. W.
Porter on Sunday were Mr. and
Mrs. Larry Porter and family
of Wilmington.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs.
Joseph Pridgen on Sunday were
Mrs. Burdine Bell and Mrs.
Doris Ross of Elizabethtown.

Guests of Mrs. Dolly Norris
on Sunday were Mr. and Mrs.
Ricky Norris.

Special guest speaker at the
homecoming services at Cen-
terville on Sunday was Rev.
O. W. Vandenberg of Sundance
Wyoming. He stressed how each
of us should accept the chal-
lenge that Jesus commissions
to go into all the world and
preach the gospel.

Rev. and Mrs. Vandenberg
are guests of Mrs. C. W. Ow-
ens during our week of mis-
sions. This should be a very
inspiring week for everyone
that participates in our stud-
ies each night on missions at 7:30
and worship services at 8:00.

Guests of Mrs. Fannie Mae
Squires on Sunday were her
daughters, Mrs. Homer Hall
of Wilmington and Mr. and Mrs.
Lee Roy Johnson of Atkinson.
Mrs. Rachel Williamson of
Goldboro visited her sister
Mrs. James Porter, and family
last Friday.

from page one --

Festival

Ricks of Elizabethtown, Linda
Carol Howell of Clarkton, and
Laurie Warner of Elizabeth-
town.

In addition to Miss Nord
Carolina, the following beauty
queens will be present: Spw
Queen, Fourth of July Queen
Miss Aberdeen and Miss Dunn.

The parade will be at 11 a.m.
Saturday through downtown
Clarkton.

Games at E.J. Cox Park will
follow the parade, and a bar-
beque lunch will be served at
the Clarkton Lions Club.

The beauty pageant will be
at 7 p.m. Friday, followed by
a dance in the Bright Lea
Warehouse from 9 p.m. to
p.m.

A square dance will be held
at the warehouse Saturday from
8 p.m. until midnight.

Tickets for the beauty page-
ant are \$2 each and are av-
ailable from any of the spec-
tors or Clarkton Jaycees.

Dickie Dorsett is chairman
of the festival this year.

State reward of \$2,500 plus a personal reward of \$1,000 from Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen is still up in the murders of two Elizabethtown women.

Josephine Davis, 74, and Aileen Davis, 53, her daughter, were both found dead in their five room frame house just a mile and half north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242 Labor Day, September 6.

Governor Jim Holshouser, last week, officially announced the \$2,500 reward after an official request from Sheriff Allen and the State Bureau of Investigation was made.

Allen earmarked \$1,000 of his own personal money about two weeks after the killing was discovered for a reward in the case.

SEE REWARD ON PAGE 3

Reward

from page one -----

Allen said Monday that the reward was still available to anyone giving information leading to the arrest and conviction of anybody in the case. He said innocent parties would be protected under the law and held strictly confidential.

Information in the case may be given to the Sheriff's office at 862-3005 or to the SBI at 829-4311.

Escapee Caught

An escapee from the White Lake Prison unit was apprehended hours after he escaped from a road gang Tuesday.

Charles G. Harrell, 21, white male, weighing 170 pounds, 5 foot 11 inches with blue eyes and brown hair, also a full beard, escaped while working on a road gang on the old N.C. 211 east of Bladenboro Tuesday.

Prison officials said that Harrell, who was serving a one year term for larceny, left the gang about 10:30 that morning and fled into a nearby wooded area.

Dogs were dispatched to the area and the search began.

About 2 p.m. that day, Superintendent of the White Unit Captian C.L. Sparkman said Harrell had been returned to the unit.

Escape Reported

Another escape from White Lake Prison Unit has been reported.

Alfonza Davis, black male, 21 years of age, 5 foot 7 inches, weighing 145 pounds was reported missing from a work gang Thursday about 3 p.m.

Davis was a felon serving a 15 year term for armed robbery.

The escapee's home address was given as 909 South 5th Street, Wilmington.

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Davis

At least \$2,000 of a \$4,500 reward will be withdrawn on December 22 in the double slaying of two Bladen County women.

Sheriff John B. Allen said Monday no information had been received by his department and that the two \$1,000 rewards offered for information in the killings would expire Dec. 22.

A state reward of \$2,500 will remain in effect. That reward was established by Gov. Jim Holshouser after Allen offered, from his pocket, the first \$1,000 bounty. A second \$1,000 reward set in November upped the total to \$4,500.

After considerable effort in investigating the killings, Al-

len's department and the State Bureau of Investigation has not

JOURNAL CLOSING FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

The office of The Bladen Journal will close for regular business Tuesday, December 21, at 5 p.m. and will remain closed for the rest of the week for the holidays.

Normal business will resume Monday, December 27, at 8 a. m.

A special Christmas edition will be published Tuesday, December 21st.

revealed any clues in the murders. The two women, Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Aileen, 54, were both found lying dead in the floor of their five room farmhouse on September 6. Their throats had been cut. One of the women was reportedly sexually assaulted.

An escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit missing there the day before the discovery of the killings was sought in connection with the brutal slayings.

Joseph Sledge, Jr., 24, that inmate, was reportedly chased in the direction of the Davis home which is located on N. C. 242 just north of Elizabethtown. The chase was also reported stopped by prison guards about 9:30

p.m. on the evening of the escape, September 5.

A daughter living near the Davis home reportedly took her mother, Mrs. Davis, home about 10:30 p.m. on the 5th. Relatives said following the discovery of the bodies, nothing abnormal was noticed when Mrs. Davis arrived at her house that evening. They said that the daughter, Aileen, met her mother at the front door and let her in.

On Nov. 9, both Mrs. Davis and Aileen Davis were exhumed from their graves by order of Resident Superior Court Judge Giles Clark of Elizabethtown. District Attorney Lee Greer

SEE REWARD ON PAGE TWO

ital Expansion Proiect D-

Reward

-- from page one

had made the request for the exhumation of the bodies.

It was believed, at the time of the exhumation, that clues possibly could be found on the two women's bodies, however, nothing was reported by investigators.

Sledge was captured about a week later in Dillon, S. C. where he was cited for a traffic violation with a stolen car. A photo aired on a Wilmington television station taken from Sledge's prison ID card prompted the arresting Dillon policeman to check with Bladen officials. After calling Bladen County and verifying that the man he stopped was Sledge, the South Carolina officer apprehended

Sledge again. Sledge was released on bond following the traffic incident.

Sledge was brought to Bladen for questioning. However, he was quickly released to Fayetteville. He is now in the prison system.

Allen said the investigation at the present was about it was when his department started.

Not enough evidence has turned up to make any charges, according to Allen. He said charges could be made against Sledge prior to entering superior court, however, he still feels there is not enough evidence to stand in court.



THE BLADEN JOURNAL

Vol. 70 No. 1 * LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY * ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 MONDAY, JAN. 3, 1977 * THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND INFORMATION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY * ESTAB.

Year Ends With Double Slayings Still

The year 1976 came to an end Saturday morning leaving one of the most baffling crimes in Bladen County history unsolved. The Labor Day murders of Josephine and Aileen Davis, a mother and daughter has not been solved.

Investigations of the brutal slayings have ground to a silent halt. No further details of the killings have been issued by the Bladen County Sheriff's Department only that no more evidence has been found.

The two women were discovered by another daughter about 4 p. m. on the 6th of September lying in the floor of their live-room farmhouse just a mile and a half north of Elizabethtown. Their throats had been cut and one of the women had been sexually assaulted, according to a medical examiner.

The house was immediately closed to all outsiders other than the investigating team of Bladen deputies and SBI agents.

The team combed through the house, even through personal belongings of the two women, hoping to find something to build a case upon.

Meanwhile, a massive manhunt was underway for an escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit just five miles away from the house.

The inmate, Joseph Sledge, Jr., 24, a black of 805 Orange Street, Fayetteville, was reported missing from the unit about 4 p. m. on the fifth. Bloodhounds were used to trail the inmate in the direction of the house, however, the chase reportedly stopped at 9:30 p. m. on the fifth. The night of the killings.

In less than a week, however, Sledge was apprehended in Dillon, S. C. and turned to Fayetteville on the tenth. On that day Cumberland County authorities, working with Bladen Sheriff John B.

SEE YEAR ON PAGE TWO



THE GRAVES OF AILEEN DAVIS and her mother, Mrs. Josephine Davis lie in silent surroundings in their family cemetery.

Christmas flowers placed there by members of the family and friends adorn the site.

THE LONELY old farmhouse Davis women were found slain is

Year

--from page one

Allen, brought Sledge to Elizabethtown for questioning.

Due to high tension and possible actions from members of the Davis family, Sledge was quickly returned to Fayetteville for safe keeping.

No evidence has been found yet connecting Sledge with the killings.

At one point in the investigation, both bodies were exhumed by court order in hopes some evidence could be found, however, the effort was fruitless.

The coincidence of Sledge's escape with the murders of the two women sparked protests from inmates at the unit over conditions and grievances there. A list of complaints was sent to a local county newspaper, "The Bladen Journal", by the inmates.

In answering the complaints to the paper, Prison Unit Superintendent C. L. Sparkman blamed the high number of escapes from his unit on crowded conditions. Also, Sparkman told the paper that the mixed population of felons and misdemeanors contributed to the escape record of the unit.

Sparkman said that the law required felons to be transferred to minimum security units, such as White Lake, after they had served their prescribed time as an honor prisoner.

Sparkman said that the unit was short on guards and funds to provide adequate management of the inmates.

The pol was continually stirred by local residents over the possible connection between an inmate and the killings of Josephine and Aileen Davis.

A petition of more than 1,200 signatures was brought before the county's Board of Commissioners seeking a resolution asking the state to tighten security at the unit. The commissioners so endorsed the request and ordered that a letter be sent to the secretary of the state's Department of Corrections.

The letter urged the department to provide a greater degree of security at the unit to the end that inmates be more effectively and securely restrained from escape.

Several weeks after the letter was sent to the Department of Corrections, officials of that

ulation of felons and misdemeanors contributed to the escape record of the unit.

page one

Some members of Congress are now calling for an increase in target prices to equal the cost of production.

"While this approach may sound feasible, it contains several disadvantages," Mangum said. He cited three:

-- It would be difficult to determine cost of production, which varies widely by farm size, geographic area, type of farming and specific costs in-

strained from escape.

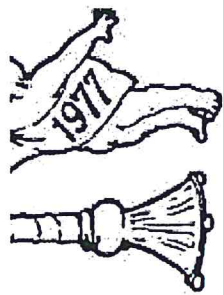
Several weeks after the letter was sent to the Department of Corrections, officials of that department attended a county commissioners meeting where questions were posed to them from local residents.

In the outcome, the department blamed the state legislature for not appropriating, what they called, not enough money to handle the situation.

The entire series of events now have virtually faded from daily life in Bladen.

On December 22, \$2,000 of the total reward of \$4,500 expired. The expiring funds were put up by Sheriff John B. Allen but there is still a \$2,500 state reward offered in the case.

OUR SEVENTIETH YEAR



BLADEN JOURNAL

TOWN, N. C. 28587 MONDAY, JAN. 9, 1977

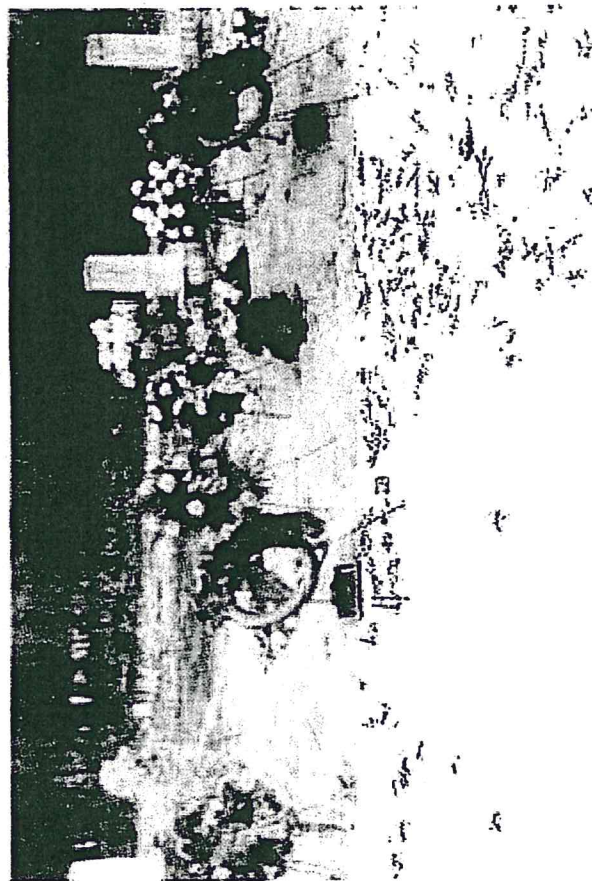
★ THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND
OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY

★ ESTABLISHED 1908

★

3 Sections—28 Pages PRICE 10c

ith Double Slayings Still Unsolved



GRAVES OF AILEEN DAVIS and her
Mrs. Josephine Davis lie in silent
slings in their family cemetery.

Christmas flowers placed there by members
of the family and friends adorn the site.



THE LONELY old farmhouse where the
Davis women were found slain is still roped

off. The setting remains the same as it
was on Labor Day, September 6.

Waives Hearing

Joseph Sledge, a suspect in the Labor Day murders of two Bladen County women, appeared in district court here Wednesday and waived probable cause hearing to charges of escape and larceny.

His case will come before the Bladen County grand jury April 18 for a finding. If the grand jury indicts him on the charges which involve theft of a 1969 model automobile in Elizabethtown on September 5 and escape from the White Lake state prison unit earlier in the day, he will be

tried in Bladen County Superior Court.

After the district court appearance before Judge Wilton Hunt of Whiteville, Sledge was returned to the state prison farm in Harnett County.

While Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen labels Sledge a suspect in the September 6 murder of Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Aileen Davis, no direct evidence linking him with the double slaying has been discovered.

Re-Opens Davis Case

The State Bureau of Investigation's homicide squad has been ordered into a year-old double slaying of two Bladen County women.

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten issued the order Friday afternoon.

The half-nude bodies of Josephine Davis and her daughter Aileen Davis were found Labor Day, September 8, 1975 in their five-room farm house just north of Elizabethtown. Their throats had been cut.

Max Bryan, chief of the homicide squad will head up the re-named investigation.

Edmisten said local law enforcement agencies had worked very well with the SBI in the case and he expressed optimism over a successful investigation of the murders.

The attorney general ordered the organization of the squad about two months ago for the special investigation of murders.

No one has been arrested or charged with the slayings though rewards from the state -- \$2,500 -- and from the family and sheriff's department have been offered.

The two women were described as mild-mannered people tending to their own lives and never bothering anyone. They lived in a small five-room house on N. C. 242, their homeplace for generations.

The sheriff's department and the State Bureau of Investigation have not turned up anything in the case which would link anyone to the murders.

The bodies were found by a

member of the immediate family about 4 p. m. on the 6th of September last year. Their throats had been cut. Both women were lying in a waller of blood on the front room floor.

Immediately Sheriff John B. Allen ordered the house and grounds sealed off from the public.

The day before the Davis women were found dead an inmate at the White Lake Prison Unit had escaped. A manhunt was launched by prison officials for the inmate, Joseph Sledge, a black.

Sledge reportedly had worked on a chain gang crew near the Davis home the week before. It was believed, at that time, he might have been a suspect of the murders, however, that belief was circumstantial.

The convict since has been

tried in Bladen Superior Court of auto-larceny and escape. Sledge was convicted on those charges and has been returned to the prison system.

"This was the most brutal killing I've seen in my entire 31 years as sheriff," says Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen.

Allen said he regretted the case has ground to a virtual halt but, he says, every effort of his department and the SBI has been exhausted during the investigation to turn up some kind of lead.

"We've traveled as far away as Florida and Virginia trying to link one suspect to the murders," said Allen, "but we have not been successful in our effort."

The old house now stands dark and grey in the morning mist. SEE DAVIS ON PAGE TWO



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Deaths Plague Cou

The eighth mysterious death within less than a year and a half has occurred in Bladen County.

Saturday morning, the body of Frankie D. Singletary, about 45, was found just 150 feet from his

home near Bryan's Millpond in Hollow Township.

Friday afternoon, the body of Neal Purdie, 67, a cab driver from Elizabethtown, was found 30 feet from his car in the yard of McMillan's Beauty Sa-

lon four miles southeast of Elizabethtown off N. C. 242 across from Baldwin Branch Church.

Purdie died, according to Sheriff John B. Allen, from a gunshot wound to his upper right side abdomen and from a

massive gash across the top of his head.

James Pone, 17, of Elizabethtown, has been arrested and charged with the first degree murder of Purdie. Sheriff deputies Rome Martin and Joe Kelly picked up Pone about 11:30 a. m. Saturday.

Sheriff Allen said Purdie was "brutally" murdered and no weapon(s) has been found. No motive for that killing has been revealed.

In the Singletary death, Allen said Tommy Melvin of the Tar Heel community found Singletary lying about 150 feet from his house. Allen said Singletary was a cousin of his and that he lived alone. He said the dead man had a rare blood disease for the past 20 years.

Both bodies have been sent to the State Medical Examiner's Office for studies.

On August 27, 1977, Rufus Edmistein, North Carolina Attorney General, issued an order re-opening the double murder case of Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Allen, both of Bladen County.

The Attorney General's order came almost a year to the day after the two Davis women, bludgeoned and with their throats cut, were found in their house about a mile from Elizabethtown. In the room with the mutilated women was over \$400.

A letter was mailed to the sheriff's department claiming to know who the real killer was, but the author has never revealed his identity because, the letter said, "I'm afraid he will kill me if my name is exposed."

Even more grisly and mysterious was an order from Superior Court Judge Giles

e Set On Leaf Proposals

Federal agency is considering issuance of a major regulation or major change in existing rules and regulations.

Comments on the tobacco proposal should be sent to Director, Price Support and Loan Division, ASCS, P. O. Box 2415, Washington, D. C. 20013. (ASCS is the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, which administers crop quota and price support programs.)

Agricultural extension specialists Charles R. Pugh, S. N. Hawks and W. K. Collins of North Carolina State University said that under the USDA Task Force proposal, a flue-cured tobacco grower who lets the four lower leaves on each stalk remain unharvested would be permitted to plant up to 120 per cent of his allotted acreage and receive price support.

Participation would be voluntary. However, a grower who did not agree to let the four lower leaves remain unharvested would be allowed to plant not more than 100 per cent of his allotted acreage to be eligible for price support.

"There is a substantial surplus of the lower stalk grades . . . Large portions of the lower stalk marketings of re-

SEE DEADLINE ON PAGE 2

Clark of Elizabethtown to dig up the victims two weeks after they were buried. Judge Clark said that District Solicitor Lee Greer had requested the order. Then, without public comment, the bodies were reinterred as quietly as they had been dug up. No official reason has ever been given for opening the two graves, nor any account of what, if anything, was found.

But since the Attorney General's order last August, several events of an even more disturbing nature have transpired. Not much is being said in public about these matters, except in the hushed whispers of small groups. A small reign of terror has ensued in the waning months of Indian summer and long, cold nights of winter.

Since the investigation of the Davis murders was re-opened, four more people have been killed in Bladen County, all under questionable or unexplainable circumstances. And people in Bladen County are getting worried. Because someone in our midst has been getting away with murder.

During the summer of 1976, inmates were escaping from the minimum security prison at White Lake at the rate of one a month. In the month of September alone, three more prisoners walked away from the prison camp.

But escapes had always been fairly common at the White Lake camp. People around the county were used to it.

Like other Sunday afternoons in the minimum security facility, September 9 was just another ho-hum of coming and going for prisoners and their visiting families. Small groups of inmates lolled against the fence in the warm sun. No one got very excited when Joseph Sledge, a 32-year-old black felon, was missed. Like so many other prisoners before him, he had just walked off when no one was looking.

Two or three guards leashed a bloodhound and picked up the Sledge trail just outside the camp. They followed the scent along U. S. 701 toward Elizabethtown. The trail began to

SEE DEATHS ON PAGE TWO

Deaths

--from page one

vere off through the woods towards White Oak. Rather than follow through the woods all night, it was decided to give up the chase at 9:30 that night and pick up the trail again in the morning.

About an hour later, a few miles away on highway 242, Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, was at the home of her son-in-law, Bill Hales. At 10:30, her daughter, Omega Hales, came home from the Church of God a stone's throw down the road, and said she would take her mother home, who lived immediately across the road from the church.

Mrs. Davis's other daughter, Aileen, was at the Davis home alone when Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Hales arrived. Aileen, 57, stepped out on the porch of the old wooden frame house when her mother and her sister pulled up in the yard. The elder Mrs. Davis got out of the car and Aileen helped her mother up the steps and into the house.

That was the last time anyone who loved the two Davis women saw them alive. When Mrs. Hales drove the 200 yards to her mother's house the next morning and knocked on the door, no one answered. When she opened the door and went in, she found her mother and her sister sprawled half-naked on the floor of the front room. Both had their throats cut and had been severely beaten. The younger of the two had been sexually assaulted. The large sum of money was untouched. Two rifles were leaning against the wall undisturbed.

Bladen county sheriff John B. Allen, who said the murders were the worst he had seen in his 30 years as sheriff, immediately called in the SBI. Dr. Ralph Meinhardt, a medical examiner who checked both bodies of the victims, said the two women died about 4 o'clock in the morning.

The only known witness to the

Little more than a month after this, the Grim Reaper stalked through Bladen County once more.

At 5:30 on the morning of November 16, 1977, neighbors of Ms. Elizabeth Riggin near Clarkton say they heard an explosion in her house. About a half hour later, the Riggin house was in flames. Found in the ashes with the bodies of Ms. Riggin and her 25-year-old nephew, Robert Bule, was a shotgun belonging to Riggin. Cause of the fire was attributed to the explosion of a gas stove, thought to be the noise heard by neighbors before the fire.

Two days later, however, 61-year-old Roland O. Campbell was arrested and charged with two counts of first degree murder and one count of first degree arson.

According to Dr. Page Hudson, the state's chief medical examiner, the two bodies found in the ashes of the Clarkton fire had died from shotgun wounds. It was decided that the blast heard in the morning had not been from an exploding stove, but was a blast from the Riggin shotgun, believed to be the murder weapon.

On November 21, 1977, Campbell was ordered to undergo psychiatric examination by District Court Judge Wilton Hunt. Just two weeks ago, Judge Hunt found probable cause from the report and Campbell was bound over to Superior Court for a grand jury investigation.

Mrs. Allie Smith Coble lived by herself in a frame house on state road 1002 about five miles from the Ammon crossroads. In that farflung corner of the county, neighbors are accustomed to helping one another when something goes wrong or has to be borrowed. That is why the 61-year-old lady didn't mind letting her next door neighbor, Willie Vause, in when he appeared at her door and wanted to use the telephone.

000140

the morning.

The only known witness to the crime was a small yellow dog belonging to the two slain women. The dog was taken next door to the Hales's house, but shortly after the murders, the dog disappeared.

As for Joseph Sledge, he was charged with stealing the 1969 Chevrolet belonging to Mrs. Hazel Thompson Smith of Whiteville while she was visiting in Elizabethtown the day after the murders. Sledge allegedly took the Smith car to Fayetteville, where he stole another car and fled to South Carolina and was captured. Sledge was, and still is, the prime suspect in the Davis murders. But there is not any evidence that would hold up in a court of law to connect him with the double murder. He is now in a Harnett county prison camp.

The Davis house sits boarded up, spooky and quiet. Everything inside is still as it was found the morning the murders were discovered.

Outside, on the front of the house, a reward poster nailed there flaps in the breeze, its advertised \$4,500 uncollected. As the ink on the poster fades with the weather and police are no closer to bringing to justice the killer or killers of two Christian women, somewhere a person who once wrote a letter saying they know the truth behind the awful matter, somewhere, that person is having to live with their conscience.

On the October 26 after the Davis double murder, another inmate escaped in Bladen county by walking away from a road gang on highway 211. He was caught within hours. Then about two weeks later White Lake inmate Melvin Watts escaped about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. He is believed to have fled the area by hitchhiking. Finally, four days before the year ended, two felons, Charles and James Locklear, walked away from the camp in the early morning hours. The two Fayetteville men left the area by hitchhiking.

During the fall of the next year, the week after Fire Prevention Week was declared in Bladen county, the Grief Brothers barrel and metal drum factory in Bladenboro turned to the ground, causing more than \$1 million in property damage.

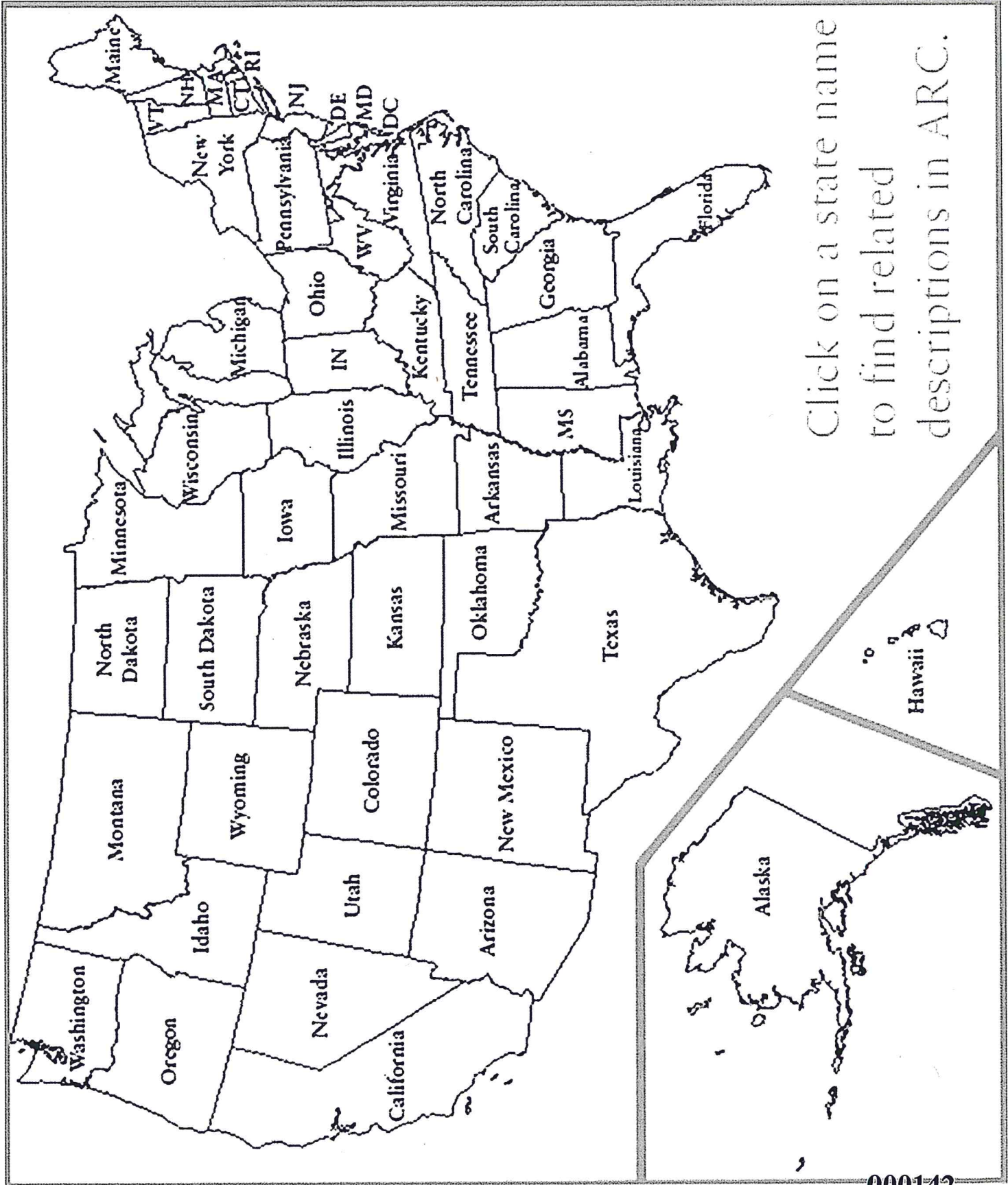
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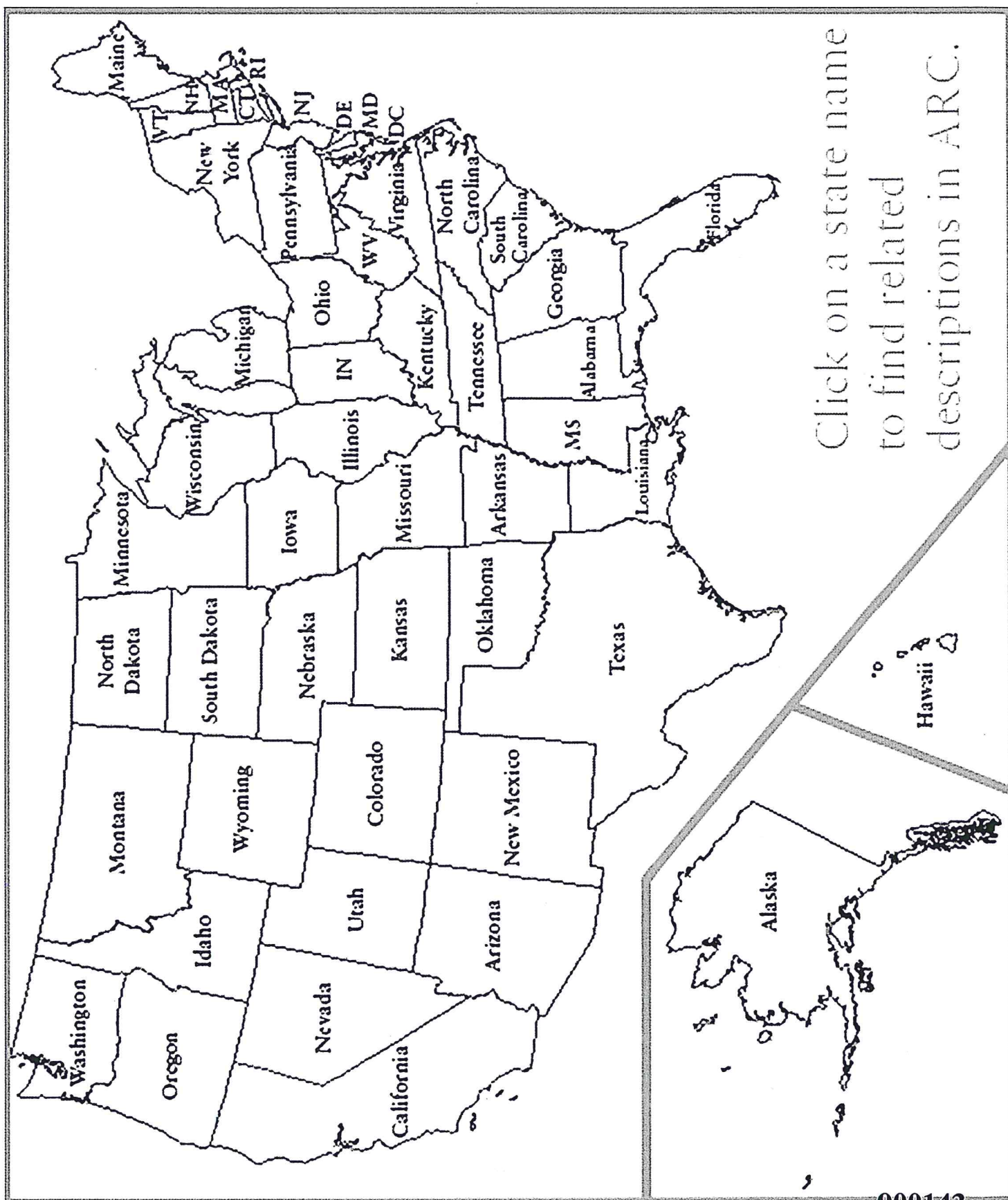
No one knows exactly what happened to enrage the 35-year-old Vause while he was there. After he couldn't get his call through he allegedly began to threaten Mrs. Coble, finally losing control of himself and slapping the elderly lady around. After he left, Mrs. Coble called the sheriff's department and took out a warrant on Vause for trespassing and assault.

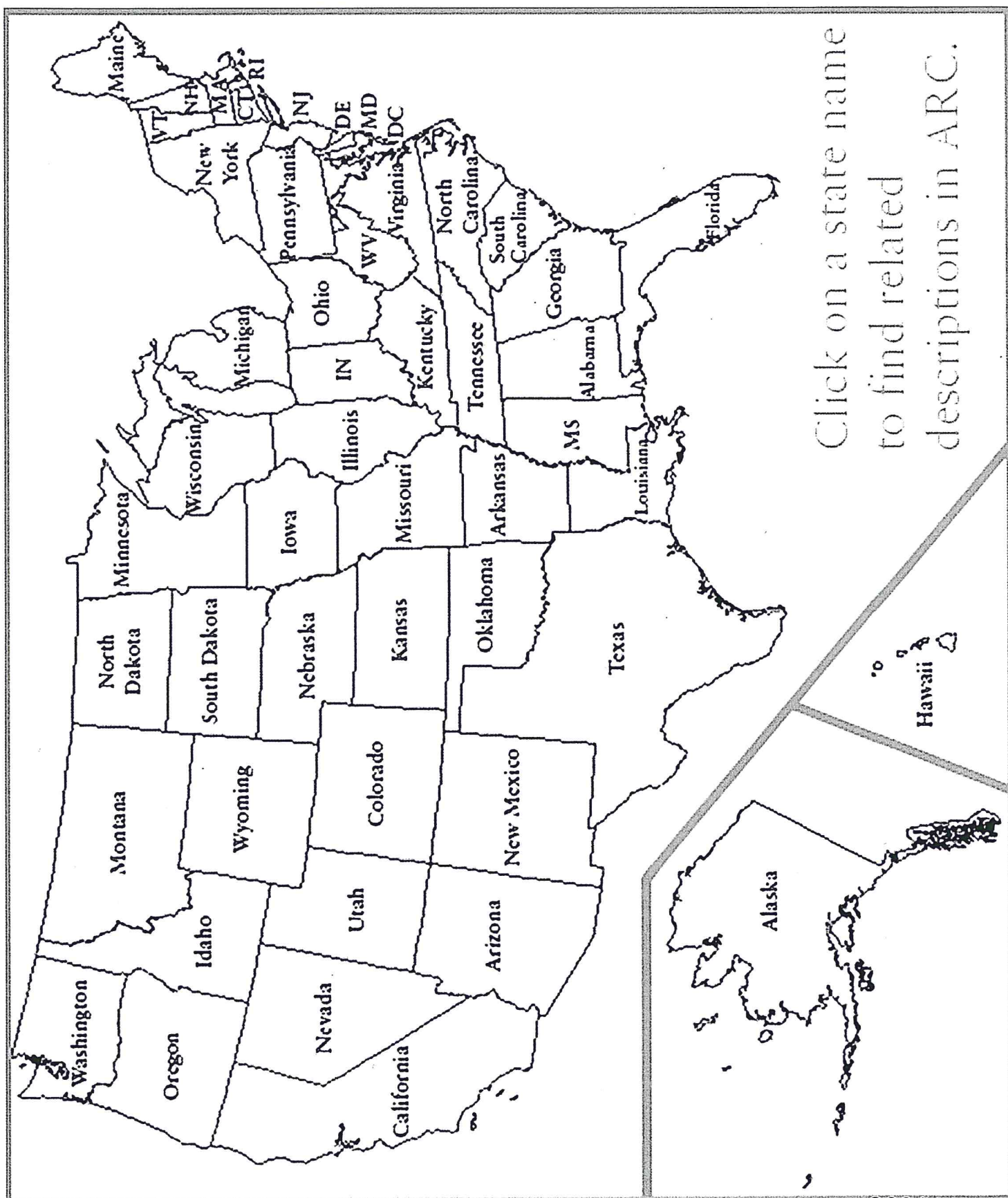
Vause became even madder when he learned why he was picked up and arrested. After Sheriff Allen left Vause with the jailer, a magistrate came down and released Vause under \$500 bond. After Vause was released, the Coble house was burning uncontrollably. There was nothing the Elizabethtown fire department could do when they arrived except keep it from spreading. County State Forester, Frank Sholar, called the Elizabethtown Fire Chief, Jack Cross, and requested his department go to the Coble home. Cross said Sholar wanted him to "cool down" the fire since it was believed Mrs. Coble was in the house. Mrs. Coble's body was found in what used to be her kitchen.

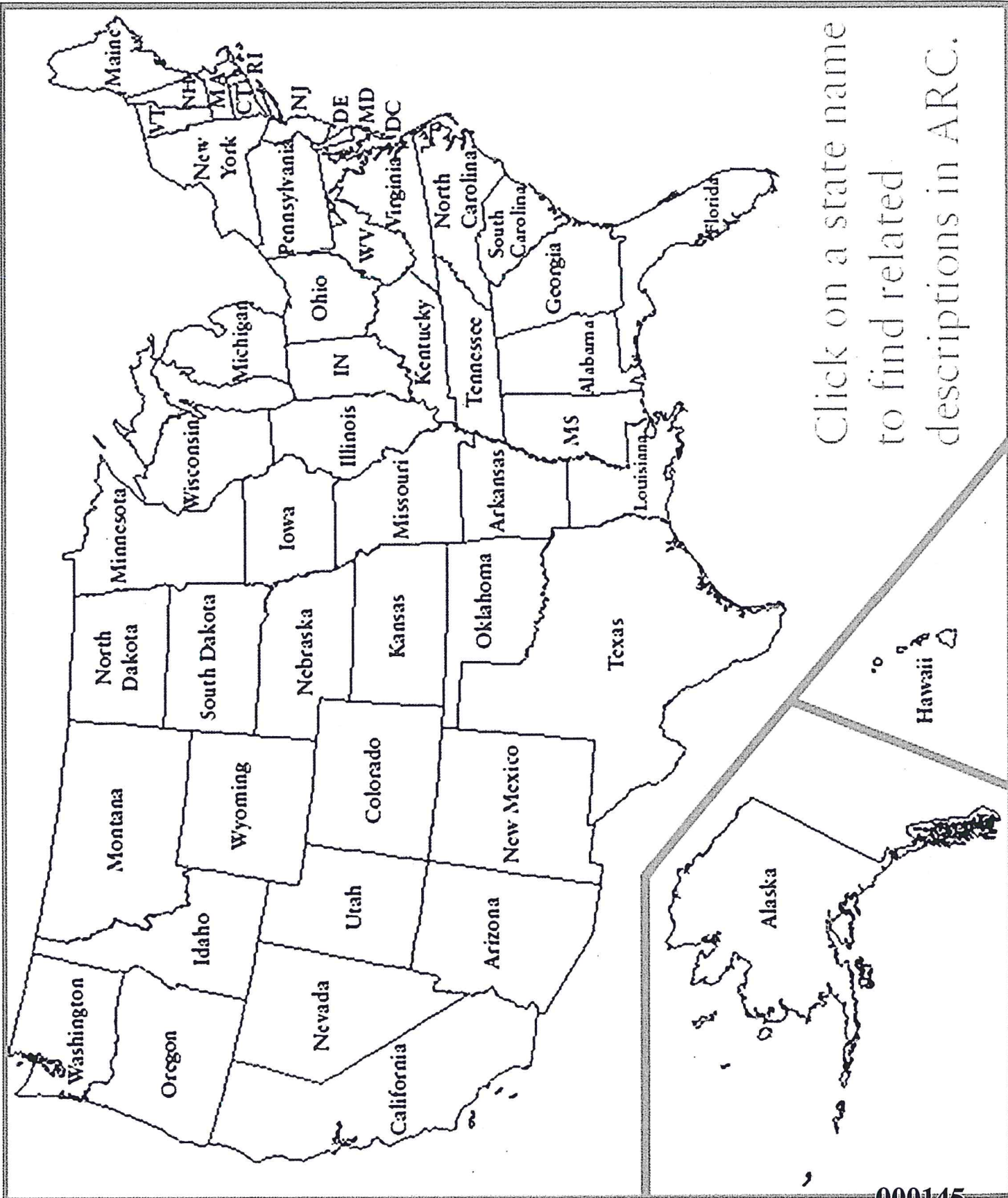
Members of the sheriff's department, the SBI and federal agents from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Treasury Department joined together in trying to determine the exact cause of the fire. Such a determination was never made and no criminal charges were ever filed in connection with the case.

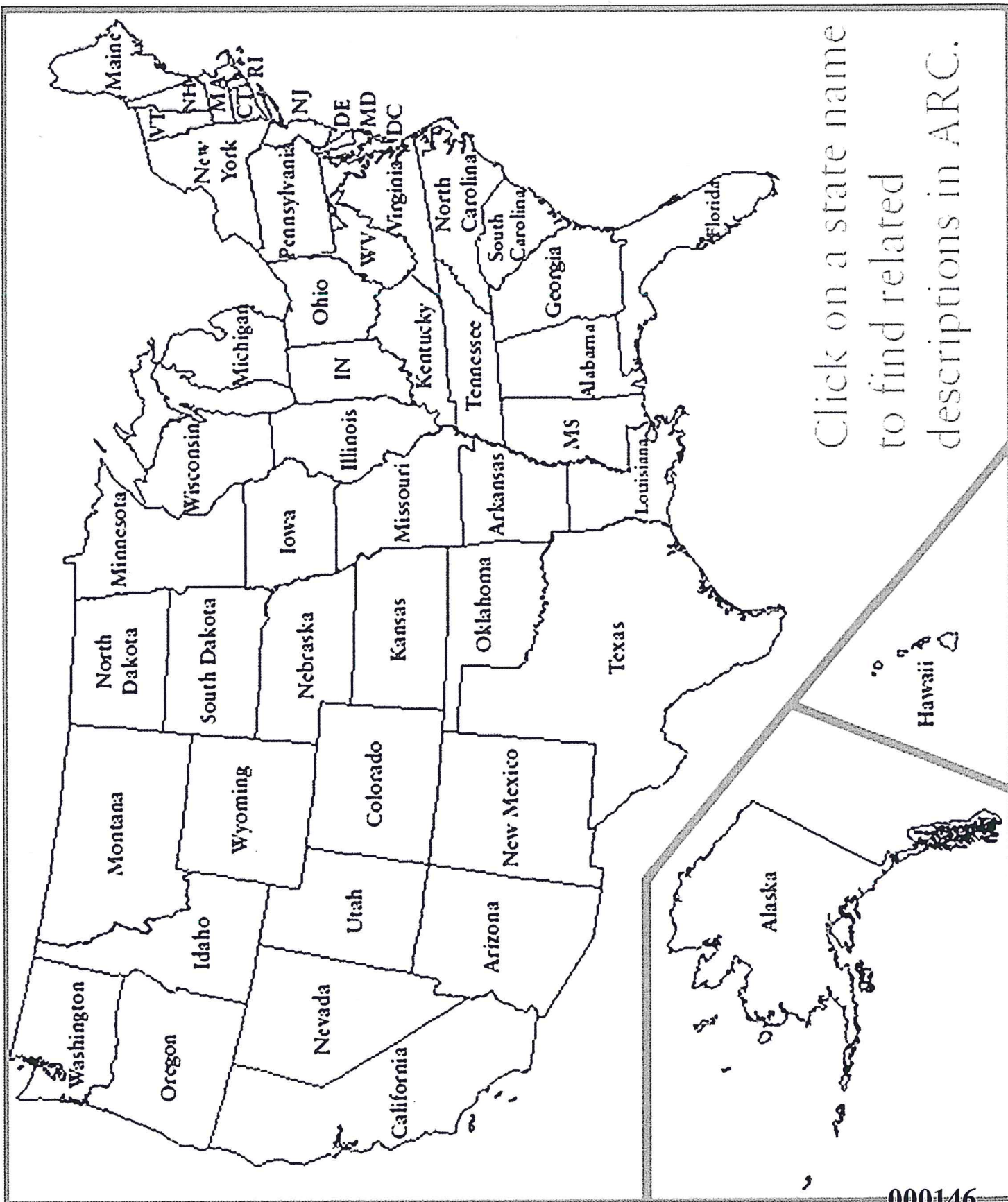
Mr. John S. Folk was shot in cold blood right outside his own store, about a mile from his home. The same bullet that grazed his wife killed him. Two persons were seen outside the store at the time of the murder, two people who taunted the terrified Mrs. Folk by throwing rocks at the car as she sat inside with her mortally wounded husband. This last murder is less than a month old. There is no known motive. No money was taken and nothing has been missed from the store. Just one more senseless killing. No arrests have been made in the Folk killing and Bladen county citizens are doing what they have learned to do so well -- wait quietly for the next one.

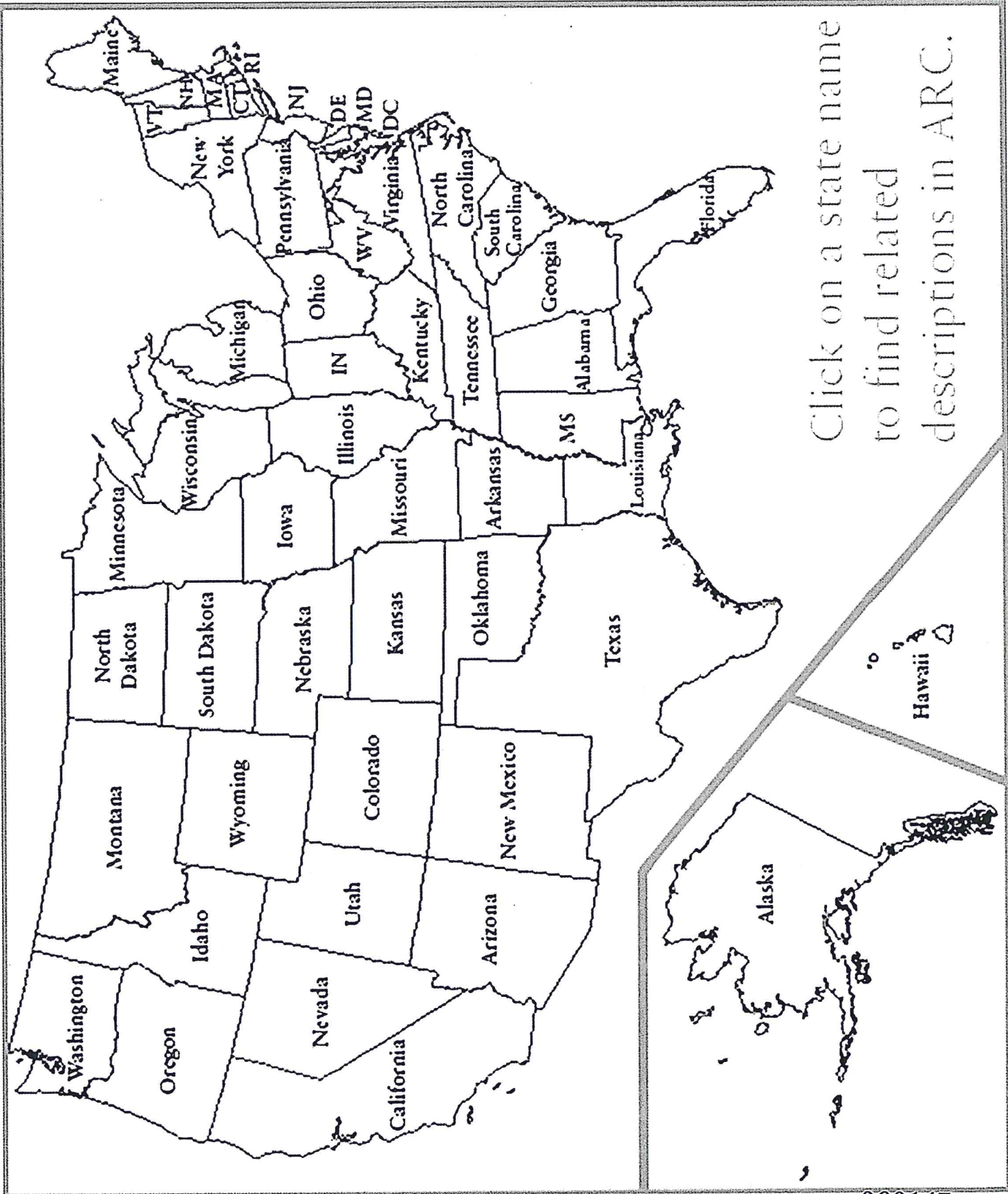


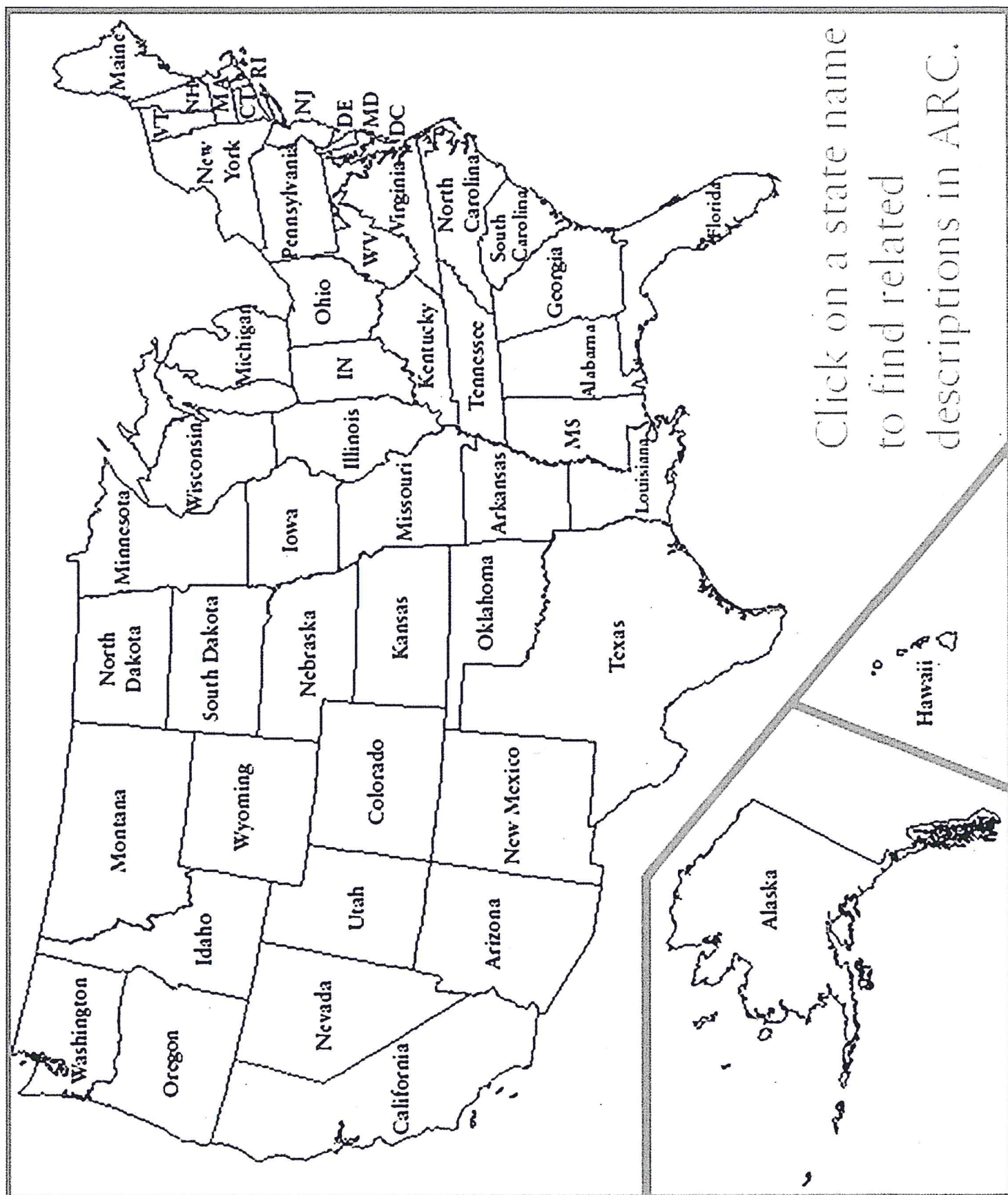


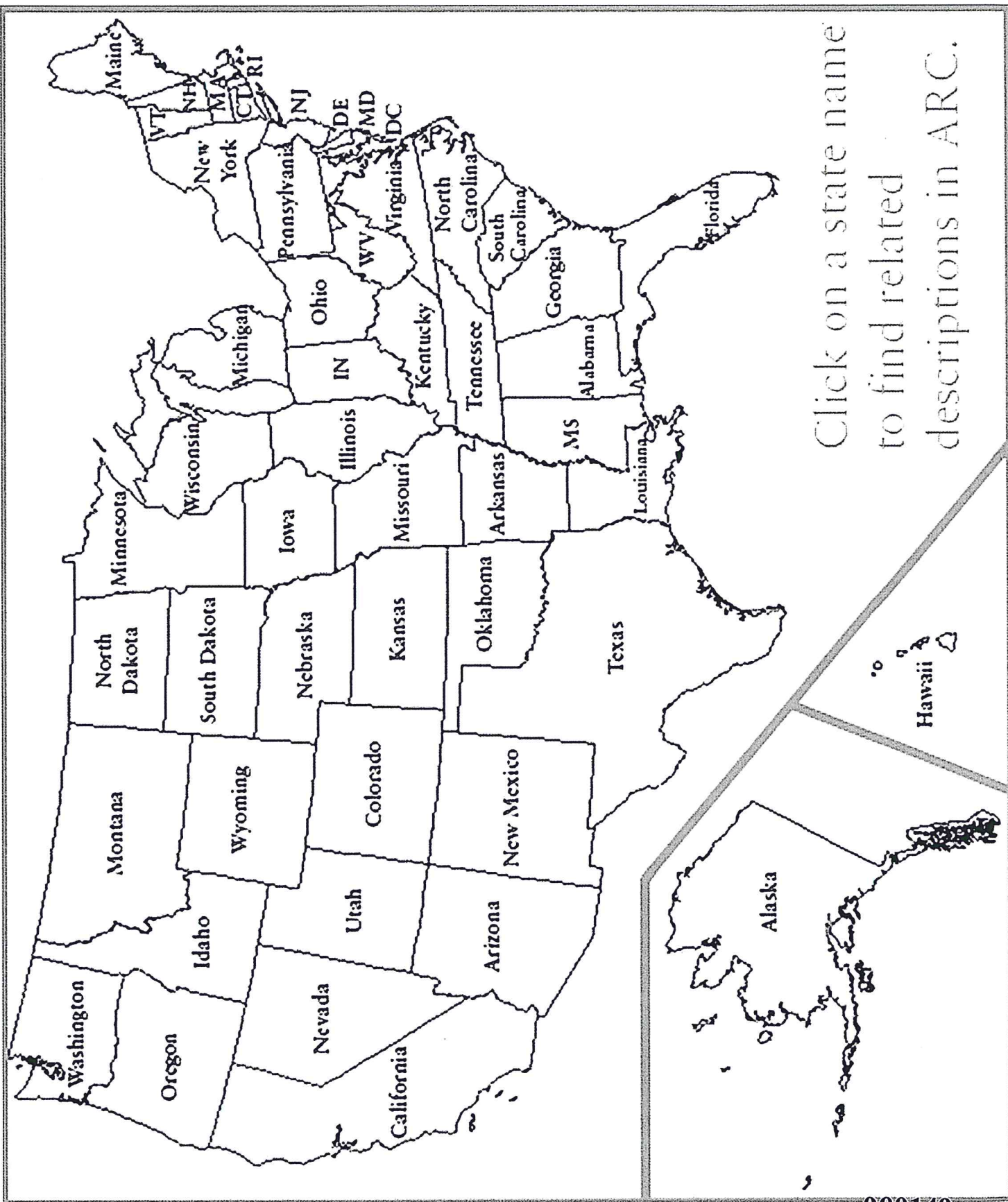


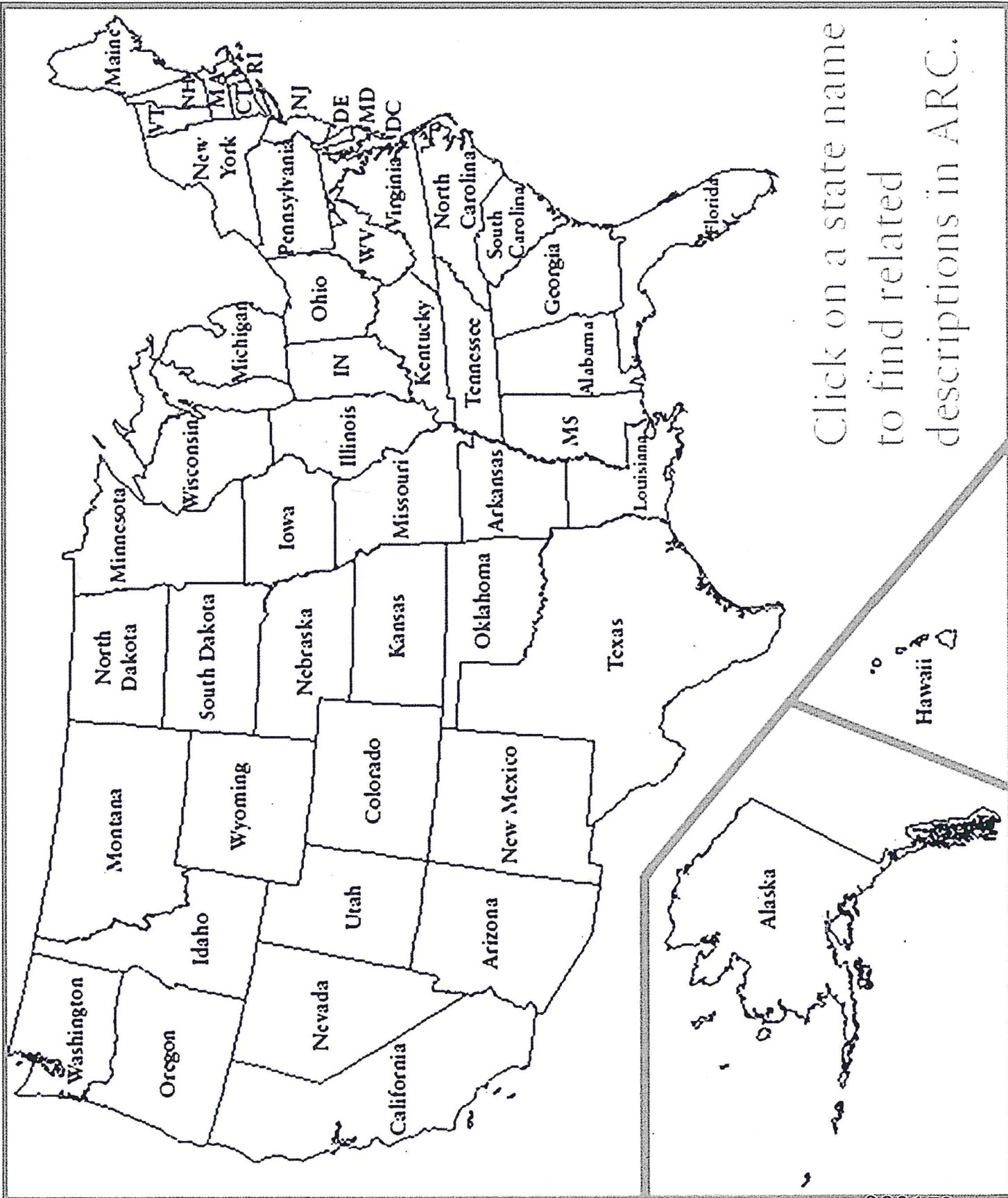


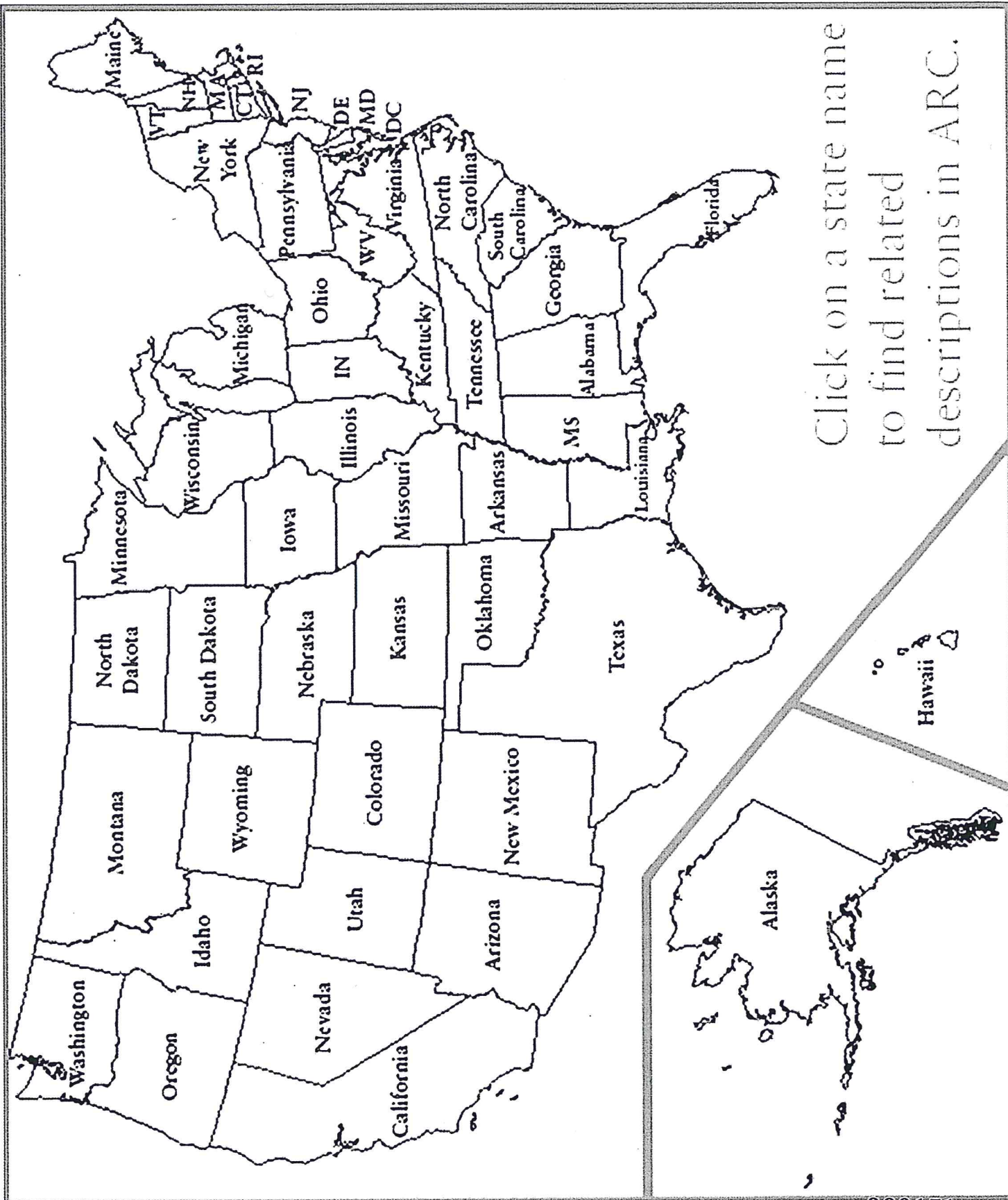












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SEE DEADLINE ON PAGE 2

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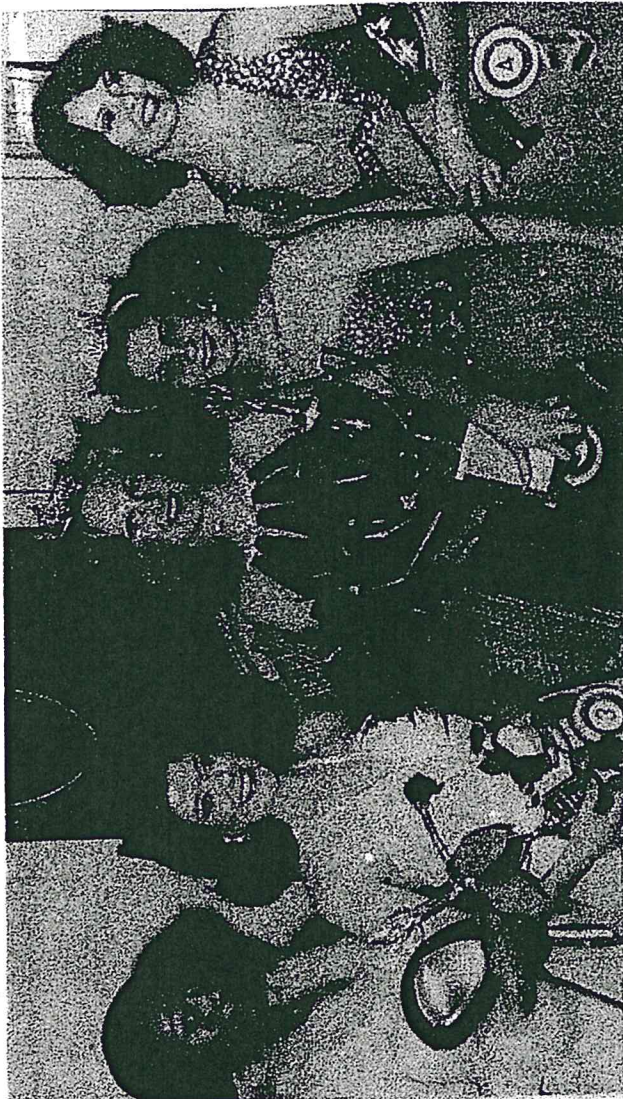
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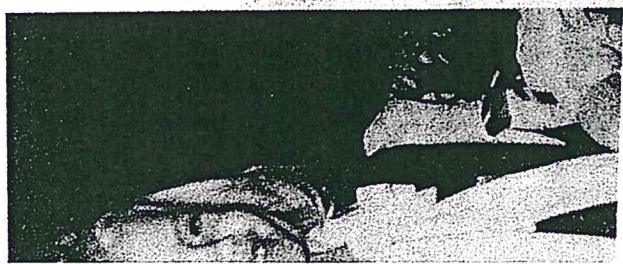
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SEE DEATHS ON PAGE TWO



DENISE KINLAW, center, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Kinlaw of Elizabethtown, was crowned Miss Bladen County Saturday night at the annual Miss Bladen County Pageant held at Bladen Technical Institute. Mary Ellen Heath, far right, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elvin Bay Heath was first runner-up in the pageant. Kathy Memory, second from left, daughter of Mr. and

Mrs. William Memory of Elizabethtown, was second runner-up. Former Miss Bladen County, Johanna Johnson, fourth from left, crowned Miss Kinlaw with her new title during the ceremonies which were sponsored by the Elizabethtown Jaycees and Jayettes. At left is Clara Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Johnson of Tar Heel. (Edward Nye Photos.)



NTY for the coming year is Tina and Mrs. Roger Dudley of Bladen. The 1978 Miss Bladen County coronation ceremony will be held at Bladen Technical Institute Saturday Night.



Mrs. Davis' Home

NUMBER ONE
IN BLADEN

THE BLADEN JOURNAL

MONDAY AND
THURSDAY

Vol 71 No. 13 ★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1978 ★ THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND ★ OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ ONE SECTION - EIGHT PAGES PRICE 10c

Say SBI Agents -----

Arrests Pending In Davis Case

An arrest or arrests within a few weeks in connection with the brutal slaying of two Bladen County women on Labor Day, September 6, 1976 was promised Thursday by officers of the State Bureau of Investigation.

Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, were found dead at their Rt. 2, Elizabethtown home at 4 p.m. September 6, 1976 with their throats cut and their bodies savagely beaten.

No arrests have since been made in the case. Max Bryan, chief of the special operations division of the State Bureau of Investigation said Thursday his homicide squad with the aid of the Bladen County Sheriff Department, has uncovered evidence in the case which he says will make an arrest or arrests possible within a few weeks.

"We are confident we have

the Davis women. Sledge was sought for questioning in the murders was an escapee from the White Lake Prison unit, Joseph Sledge, who had fled the unit the day prior to the discovery of the bodies of

which to base charges. Originally the prime suspect in the murders was an escapee from the White Lake Prison unit, Joseph Sledge, who had fled the unit the day prior to the discovery of the bodies of

ment stating the writer knew who committed the atrocities. The writer wrote, "I'm afraid he'll kill me if my name is exposed."

The letter was unsigned. Officials believe the letter was written by an inmate of the state correctional system. Two months after the killings District Attorney Lee Greer of Whiteville requested the Davis women's bodies be exhumed. Resident superior court

SEE ARRESTS ON PAGE TWO

SEE ARRESTS ON PAGE TWO



EVIDENCE RECENTLY uncovered in the double slayings of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, has brought the Bladen County Sheriff Department and the State Bureau of Investigation closer to individuals of suspect or possible involvement in the slayings. Both Davis women were found September 6, 1976, lying to the floor of their home a mile north of Elizabethtown on



CHECKING A WINDOW seal at the Davis home are, from left, sheriff's detective Phillip Little, SBI agent Henry Foote and Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen. Efforts of the sheriff department and the SBI over the past six months have uncovered additional evidence in the double slaying murder of Josephine and Aileen Davis. SBI special operations chief, Max Bryan, last Thursday predicted agents would file an indictment in the case within weeks.

N. C. 242. Their bodies had been out and their bodies had been savagely beaten. Here, from left, sheriff's detective Phillip Little, Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen, Max Bryan, chief of special operations for the SBI and SBI agent Henry Foote discuss the case at the Davis home.

Community Bulletin

BARBECUE SUPPER-DINNER PLANNED AT LIVE OAK

The Live Oak Buckle Club will sponsor a barbecue dinner and supper on Saturday, February 25, beginning at 11 a.m. and lasting until 7 p.m. Plates will be sold at \$2.50 each.

The event will take place at the Live Oak Community Center, 1000 N. 1st St., in Elizabethtown. Tickets are \$2.50 each. For more information, call 242-1111.

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People's Forum

What Daint Plans Extension

Arrests

--from page one

topsies and the state was not satisfied with the first tests.

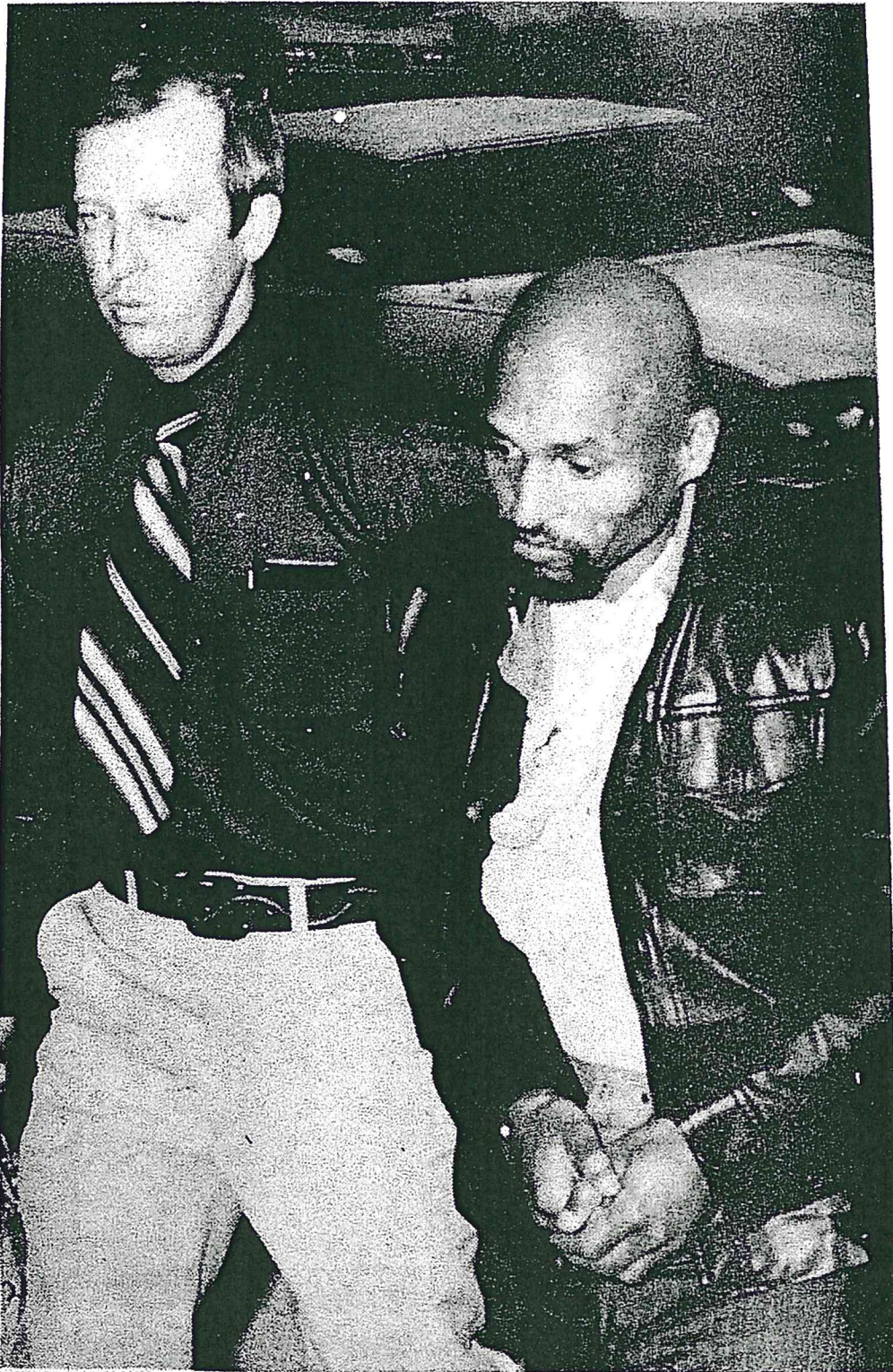
State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten ordered the newly formed homicide squad of the SBI to enter the case upon request of Sheriff John B. Allen.

Sheriff Allen assigned special detective Phillip Little fulltime to the case and he has been assisted by SBI agent Henry Poole of Raleigh since August of last year.

Poole said Thursday more than 250 people had been interviewed by he and Little and that figure was but a fifth of the total work put into the case.

Poole said even though we may know who committed a crime, some crimes will never be solved. "We may know who did it, but can't prove it," the agent said.

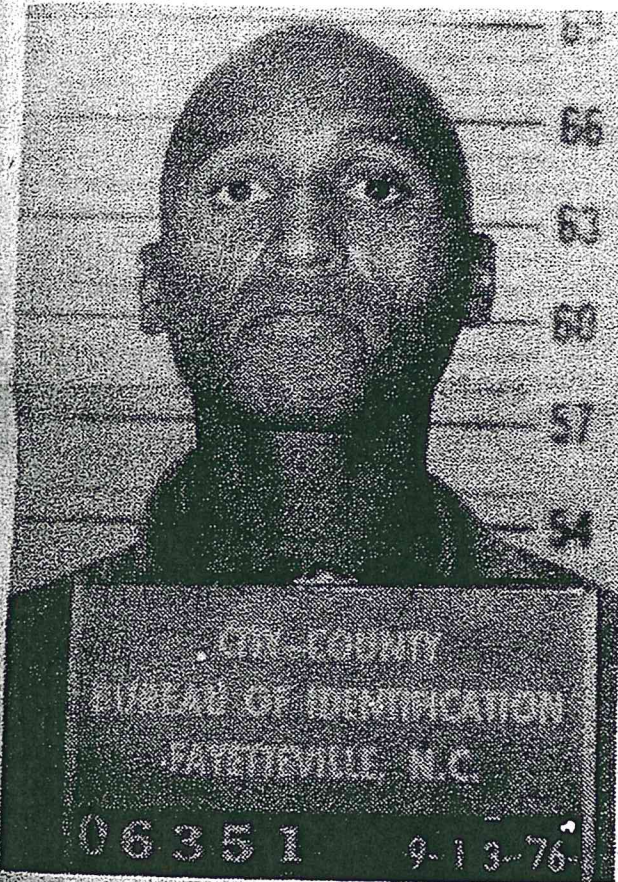
ation agent Billy Dunham presented the program for the evening.



from White Lake Prison unit September 5, 1976, the day before the two Davis women were found brutally slain in their home a mile north of Elizabethtown. Allen did not indicate whether Sledge's return here was prompted by the re-convening of the Grand Jury. At left, special detective for the sheriff department, Phillip Little escorts Sledge to jail.

000157

Sledge Charged With Davis Murders



Joseph Sledge

Bladen County Grand Jury, in a meeting in special session for less than two hours Thursday, has returned two bills of indictment for first degree murder against Joseph Sledge, Jr., 34, a prisoner, long a suspect in the 1976 murders of Aileen Davis, 75, and her

daughter Aileen Davis, 57, of Rt. 2, Elizabethtown, is being held in Bladen County jail without bond.

The jury returned the bills of indictment against Sledge after SBI special agent Henry Poole and sheriff deputy Phillip Little presented evidence in the case.

Last week, SBI officers pro-

mised an arrest or arrests in the case, but at that time, gave no indication who the suspect or suspects were.

On August 27, State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten ordered the SBI's homicide squad

into the case.

Mrs. Davis and her daughter, Aileen were found lying in the floor of their front room about 4 p.m. on September 5, 1976. Their throats had been

SEE SLEDGE ON PAGE TWO

DOT To Me

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) officials report that a meeting has been scheduled with Bladen County Board of Commissioners to discuss proposals and plans for the improvements to Bladen County secondary roads.

The meeting, open to the public, has been scheduled for 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 7, and will be held in the Bladen County Commissioner's room in Elizabethtown.

In developing local secondary road improvement priorities, county and NCDOT officials will consider a number of secondary road improvement needs. Among these are: (1) the need for paving unpaved roads; (2) the need to improve unpaved roads to "all weather" standards; (3) the need to widen narrow, heavily travelled paved roads; (4) the need to strengthen and resurface paved roads and thereby remove weight restrictions; (5) the need to improve and replace substandard bridges; (6) the need to continue to help local schools, rural fire and rescue squad facilities; and

(7) the need to continue safety projects through improvements of bad curves and proper alignment.

The March 7 meeting will balance local needs against

Stewart I.

North Carolina House of Representatives, Speaker Carl J. Stewart, Jr., will be the main speaker for the Elizabethtown Jaycee Distinguished Service Award (DSA) Banquet set for March 6.

Taylor To Yc

Rep. Ron Taylor of Elizabethtown has been named by Speaker of the House Carl Stewart as a member of the Governor's Advocacy Council on Children and Youth. He will take the oath of office at the

1 Sledge

--from page one

cut and their bodies savagely beaten. The young woman had been sexually assaulted according to medical reports.

Sledge had been serving a sentence in the White Lake Prison unit for breaking returning and receiving stolen goods. He escaped from the unit the day before the Davis women were found dead. He stole a car in Elizabethtown and fled into South Carolina where he was captured three days later.

Sledge was convicted for auto larceny and escape in Bladen District Court.

OUR SEVENTY-FIRST YEAR

BLADEN JOURNAL

MONDAY AND
THURSDAY

ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1978 ★ THE JOURNAL IS DEVOTED TO PUBLICATION OF NEWS AND OPINION AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF BLADEN COUNTY ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ 4 Sections—34 Pages

Sledge Trial Moved

A change of venue was issued Monday in the first degree murder trial of Joseph Sledge, Jr.

Sledge is charged with the slaying of Josephine Davis, 75, and Aileen Davis, 57, of Rt. 2, Elizabethtown.

Resident Superior Court Judge

Giles R. Clark issued the change of venue moving the trial of Sledge to Columbus County Superior Court at Whiteville. A trial date of May 1 has been set.

Sledge, an escapee from the White Lake Prison unit at the time of the murders, was indicted for the killings February 23 when the Bladen County Grand

Jury returned two true bills against him. He is now in the Bladen County jail without bond. He had been serving an 8 year term for auto larceny, escape, receiving stolen goods and breaking entering.

The Davis women were found September 6, 1976, lying in the

floor of their home on N.C. 242 about a mile north of Elizabethtown. Their throats had been cut. One of the women had been sexually assaulted.

Under present law, the maximum Sledge can be punished, if convicted of the crimes, is two

full life sentences since capital punishment, at the time of the crimes, was considered unconstitutional.

During a hearing held in Bladen County Superior Court Monday, Clark said from statements offered there had been much publicity on the cases and that the state had no objection to the removal of the cases to Columbus County. Thirty five jurors from Columbus County will be summoned for the trial.

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Prisoner Escapes; Is Soon Captured

A prisoner who escaped from a road detail of the White Lake Prison Unit Tuesday was recaptured within three hours.

According to Captain C. L. Sparkman of the White Lake Unit, Charles G. Harrell, who is serving a one year sentence for misdemeanor larceny, escaped from the work detail at about 10:30 Tuesday

morning. The group working on the highway between Bladenboro and Abbottsburg near the intersection of Business 211 by-pass 211.

Harrell, whose residence listed as Roseboro, was taken into custody at 1:15 p. m. 13 miles from Bladenboro on 131.

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Sheriff Allen Looks For Clues At Murder Scene

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2 Bladen Women Found Murdered

Law enforcement agencies throughout the state were still searching this morning for the two suspects in a double murder near Elizabethtown which Bladen Sheriff John B. Allen has described as "the most brutal" he has seen in 30 years of law enforcement work.

The bodies of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Aileen Davis, 54, were found about 4 p. m. Monday afternoon in their home. The wood frame dwelling is located about two miles north of Elizabethtown on NC 522.

The bodies of the victims were discovered by another daughter of Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Omega Hales, who was their closest neighbor in the rural area.

Wanted for questioning in the case is Joseph Sledge, Jr., 32, of Fayetteville. He reportedly escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit Sunday afternoon about 4 p. m. He was imprisoned there for breaking and entering and escape.

Fayetteville police said today that they spotted Sledge in Fayetteville Tuesday but he eluded them after a high speed chase.

According to the police report, he was spotted on Pamlico Drive in Fayetteville in a car reportedly stolen in Elizabethtown. Police say Sledge led them on a high speed chase from Pamlico Drive to Johnson Street in the Bonnie Home - Korn Bow area, where he abandoned the car and fled on foot. Police and Cumberland County sheriff's deputies searched the area into the night but lost Sledge's trail in the wooded area.

He has still not been apprehended as of this morning.

According to Sheriff Allen, the throats of the two women had been cut and their faces mutilated beyond recognition. When the bodies were discovered, the clothing worn by the two was pulled up towards the upper part of their bodies.

Dr. Ralph Meinhardt, county medical examiner, ordered an autopsy on both bodies. He issued a report of the autopsy findings this morning which indicated that the younger woman had apparently been sexually molested but it was not known if she was raped.

The murders were believed to have taken place about 4 a. m. Monday morning.

Law enforcement officials are puzzled as to motive. Huthery has been discounted, as both women's pocketbooks containing money were found in the house, as was another cache of money.

Weapons that could be linked to the slaying were not

found at the house or in the area.

According to Sheriff Allen, evidence indicates that a struggle took place in the five-room dwelling. One of the bodies, when found, was lying across the doorway.

The double murder caused some concern in the community. Requests for pistol permits were reported to have increased considerably. Not only was the community frightened by the episode, but it was also shocked.

"I can't understand it," said one resident who knew the Davis women. "They didn't bother anybody. It is hard to believe."

Double funeral services were scheduled for the victims Thursday afternoon.

Elizabethtown Board Criticized By Member

BY GREG WHITFIELD

The Elizabethtown Board of Commissioners heard a fellow Commissioner strongly criticize them Tuesday night for their failure to let him know about a special meeting held August 24 at which four beer permits were issued.

Commissioner Alfred Gene Smith, who had said earlier that he was considering legal action against the Board because he was not informed of the special meeting, told Commissioners Frank Baker and Russell Grimes and Mayor Cecil Edge that he was angered because he was not informed of the August 24 meeting.

Smith, in prepared remarks and in later discussions with his fellow Board members, also called attention to the fact that the Board is slow in receiving its annual audit.

In regards to the special meeting, Smith said he felt the Town Board violated an ordinance it had adopted earlier that specifies Commissioners are under no obligation to call a special meeting to take action on alcoholic beverage permits.

The Commissioner told the Board members he was not properly notified of the meeting.

Commissioner Frank Baker told the Board Smith stated four days before the special meeting that he wanted no part of such sessions by the Commissioners.

That was why Smith was not notified of the special meeting, Baker said.

Mayor Cecil Edge said the meeting was called because he and the Commissioners were waiting at the Town Hall to go to a meeting in Dublin. He stated there was no intention to leave Smith out of the meeting.

The mayor apologized to Smith and assured him he would be notified of any special meetings in the future.

In regards to the audit reports, Smith expressed his concern that the Board's 1974-

75 city audit, long overdue, was not yet complete.

In fact, he pointed out, the 1975-76 audit was yet to be done and is due Nov. 1. The audit must be completed before the Commissioners can draw money from a \$1,059 million grant and a \$581,000 loan from the Farmers Home Administration.

The money is earmarked for use in annexation and installations of water and sewer lines.

Smith also said the Board has not been receiving a monthly financial statement and said it should be a

requirement.

"I cannot be a member of a Board, and not know what's going on," Smith said.

He said he was going to draw up guidelines for the Board to follow and would present those ideas at a future meeting.

Mrs. Lillian Keith, the town clerk, told Smith and the other Board members that one reason for the tardiness of the audit reports is a lack of space and a lack of equipment. It was also pointed out that more personnel is needed in the town office.

New 4-H Agent Joins Staff Here

A new 4-H agent was introduced to the Bladen County Extension staff Tuesday. He will return to begin work next week.

Lee Matthews is a 1976 graduate of NC State University with a degree in Recreation and Parks Administration. He will replace Ray Williamson, who resigned the Bladen staff in June to enter the ministry.

Matthews is a native of Wilson and is a graduate of Fike High School. Since his graduation from State, he has worked as a pro's assistant at golf club near Wilson, where his father is the head professional. He worked as an intern last summer with the Kinston Recreation Department.

Matthews will marry Julia Lynne Leach, also of Wilson, October 24. She is a graduate of Atlantic Christian College and is presently working as a youth minister at a Methodist Church.



MATTHEWS

Sledge Returned To Cumberland County

The man wanted for participating in the murder of a Bladen County woman Thursday night in Dillon, S. C., of this morning, however, Joseph Sledge, Jr., had not been charged with the murder.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit yesterday afternoon. The bodies of two Bladen residents, Mrs. Aileen Davis, 74, and her daughter, Miss Ailene Davis, were found in their home yesterday afternoon.

The Davis home is located near the prison unit, and since the bodies were discovered, Sledge had been sought for questioning in the case.

According to sheriff's department officials, the women were stabbed and badly beaten. The younger man was assaulted fatally.

Law enforcement agencies say that Sledge first arrested near Dillon

by a highway patrolman about 1:20 a. m. and charged with speeding and driving without a license.

He was released about 4 p. m. after posting bond through a local bondsman. Sledge was driving a car allegedly stolen in Fayetteville and used the vehicle as collateral in posting bond, the Dillon County Sheriff Roy J. Lee said.

"He was released and then we had information he was wanted in North Carolina as an escapee," Lee said. "And so we immediately tried to relocate him."

The sheriff said Sledge was taken into custody a second time at 9:50 p. m. in the Dillon area. He signed a waiver of extradition on a charge of being an escapee and was immediately turned over to North Carolina authorities, Lee said.

North Carolina authorities went to Dillon earlier Thursday night after South Carolina deputies informed

them Sledge was in the area, the sheriff said.

In addition to the escape charge, Sledge has been charged in the theft of a car belonging to Hazel Smith of Elizabethtown. The car was stolen Monday morning and was recovered Tuesday just outside Fayetteville after a high-speed chase by police.

Sledge was allegedly seen running from the car into a wooded area where he was chased on foot by police and

deputies.

Sledge was brought to Cumberland County from Cumberland Friday and questioned by local authorities. Though he has not been charged here with murder, he has been charged with auto theft and escape.

He was returned to Cumberland County later Friday and he remains in jail there where he faces a charge of armed robbery, among possibly others.

Clarkton Activity,

Booster Club To Meet

The Clarkton School Activities and Booster Club will meet in the Booker T. Washington School media center Thursday night, September 16, at 7 p. m.

All interested parents and students are invited to attend. After the general meeting, the BTW teachers will be in their classrooms to talk with parents and students.

sports coverage, inside.

Reward Sought In Murder Case

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen has requested, and apparently will receive, the offer of a reward for information leading to the conviction of the killer or killers of two Bladen County women September 6.

According to State Senator Edd Nye of Elizabethtown, who has been in touch with the attorney general's office, the office has informed the governor's office of the need for the reward (likely \$2,500).

The reward was requested by letter to the governor's office by Sheriff Allen.

According to what Nye has been able to learn, the preliminary paper work for establishing such a reward has been completed and all that is needed now is the signature of Governor Jim Holshouser. The governor was expected to sign the reward authorization last week but he did not do so before he left for a trip to Japan.

It is expected that he will

return at the end of this week and should the case not be solved, is expected to authorize the reward upon his return.

The attorney general's office and the SBI both believe that rewards are often helpful in helping solve cases such as the double murder.

FmHA Office Closed Friday

The Bladen County Farmers Home Administration office in Elizabethtown will be closed Friday so that employees can attend a district meeting in Lumberton.

Persons who have business to conduct at the office this week are asked to do so before Friday. The office will re-open for regular business Monday.

Tighter White Lake

Prison Security Petition Aim

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It is expected that petitions will be presented to the Bladen County Board of Commissioners tonight (Monday) which call for tighter security measures at the White Lake Department of Corrections.

The petitions are reportedly signed by about 500 persons and will ask the commissioners to adopt a resolution asking the state to strengthen the security at the unit.

The petitions were circulated after two Bladen women, Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 54, were found murdered in their home on Labor Day. The home is located near the prison unit.

A prime suspect in the case has been Joseph Sledge, Jr., a 32-year-old convict who escaped from the prison unit the day before the murders.

The White Lake prison is a minimum security unit. Its

population is made up exclusively of misdemeanor violators and honor grade felons. both misdemeanor and felons at the unit wear the same type and color clothing, and he says it is impossible to distinguish between felons and misdemeanors when such a person is on the run at a distance. Any guard who fires on and injures a misdemeanor convict is subject to prosecution, according to

According to Capt. C. L. Sparkman, head of the unit, misdemeanors when such a state law.

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Reward Offered In Case

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen has offered a personal reward of \$1,000 for information in connection with the double murder of two Bladen County women on Labor Day.

Sheriff Allen issued a statement Monday saying he would pay the sum for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons connected with the killings of Josephine Davis and her daughter, Ailene Davis.

The bodies of the two women were found on the afternoon of Sept. 6 in their home two miles north of Elizabethtown. Both had been beaten and stabbed to death.

The sheriff reiterated that the prime suspect in the case remains Joseph Sledge, Jr., a 22-year-old escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit. Sledge escaped the unit on Sunday afternoon, Sept. 5, and he is in custody in Cumberland County.

So far, though, he has not been charged with the murders. Sledge faces charges of auto larceny and robbery in Fayetteville and with auto larceny and escape in Bladen County.

Sheriff Allen said Monday that he has attempted to get the governor's office to offer a reward for information on the slayings, but that office had not complied as yet. He, therefore, he said, was posting a reward personally.

Governor Jim Holshouser is in Japan and rewards offered by the state require his signature. It is not known whether or not he will sign for a state reward when he returns this weekend.

Persons with potential leads on the case should contact the sheriff's office.

Sheriff Issues Statement

In an apparent effort to quiet rumors which have circulated since the bodies of two badly beaten Bladen County women were discovered in their home Labor Day, Sheriff John B. Allen has issued the following statement:

"On Sept. 6, 1976, the bodies of Josephine and Ailene Davis were found in their residence. They were the victims of a brutal stabbing.

"Since that time, numerous rumors and speculations have been circulated as to who might be involved. To dispel further speculations and to avoid further suspicions for any innocent persons, the following information is being released.

"Physical evidence recovered at the scene of the crime, as examined by the SBI laboratory, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect."

Allen would not elaborate on the statement.

Reward Raised To \$3,500 For Murders

The Bladen County sheriff's office has no further information on an unsigned letter it received last week in which knowledge was claimed by the writer of the killer of two Bladen County women on Sept. 6.

The writer of the letter stated that he would not come forward until confidentiality was promised. The letter allegedly stated, "I'm afraid he will kill me if my name is exposed."

Sheriff's department officials did not know if the letter is valid or is a hoax.

The sheriff's department

has publicly offered the confidentiality but no one has come forward as of this morning.

In another development in the case last week, Governor Holshouser signed an authorization offering a reward from the state of \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for the deaths of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis.

The reward will be added to one of \$1,000 already offered by Sheriff John B. Allen, making a total of \$3,500.

To Board Meeting Tuesday

Prison Officials Coming

Ralph Edwards, North Carolina Director of Prisons, will meet with the Bladen County Board of commissioners Tuesday at 8 p. m. to discuss tighter security at the White Lake Prison Unit.

Edwards, attending the meeting in place of N. C. Secretary National Economic Resources Commissioner David Jones, will answer questions regarding security

at the White Lake unit.

The meeting was scheduled at the request of the Bladen County Commissioners following a petition calling for tighter security at the unit.

The petition bearing over 1200 signatures, began circulating in the county after the brutal murder of a mother and daughter in Bladen County. The prime suspect in the case, Joseph Sledge,

escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit hours prior to the murders.

Sledge has not been charged in the case.

The Bladen Board of commissioners requested tighter security for the unit in a resolution to David Jones, Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic

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The petition was presented to the Bladen Board of Commissioners Sept. 20 by Lonnie Davis, immediate relative of the two women. Along with the petition Davis suggested more guards at the unit and that prisoners wear different color clothing for the seriousness of the crime they were in for.

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Only three guards are on duty from 6 a. m. to 10 p. m. at the 137 prisoner unit and only two guards are on duty from 10 p. m. to 6 a. m. According to a spokesman at the unit, the majority of the prisoners are serving sentences for felony convictions.

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The resolution states that the board urges the department of corrections to house felons elsewhere other than in unwallled minimum security units; and also to identify felons and misdemeanors by clothing.

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Murder Victims'

Bodies

Exhumed

The bodies of two Bladen County women, found brutally murdered in their Rt. 2, Elizabethtown home on September 6, were exhumed Tuesday for further autopsy studies.

District Attorney Lee J. Greer requested that the bodies of Mrs. Josephine Davis and her daughter, Miss Aileen Davis, be exhumed, and the order was signed last Friday by Resident Superior Court Judge Giles Clark.

In the affidavit which accompanied the order, Greer cited several reasons for requesting the exhumation. The affidavit states that in the course of the murder investigation, the presence of identifiable latent finger prints and palm prints were found in the Davis home. Prior to the burial of the Davis women, identifiable finger and palm prints were not obtained from the bodies of the victims.

Also, according to the affidavit, prior to the burial of the bodies of the women, fingernail scrapings and parings were not obtained. The affidavit further states that the bodies were not X-rayed and the angle and depth of wounds suffered by the victims were not determined.

The Greer affidavit states that "palm prints and finger prints of the victims are

essential for comparison with the latent palm and finger-prints found at the crime scene and without these, it would be well nigh impossible to solve the crime."

Another reason for the exhumation and the autopsies that were to follow, according to the affidavit, is to determine the exact cause of death.

"Before burial," the affidavit states, "the values of the prints and scrapings were not foreseeable and that while inked impressions (of the victims' palms and fingers) were made, they were not identifiable."

The order signed by Judge Clark states that the bodies should be carried to Chapel Hill for autopsies by Dr. Page Hudson, chief medical officer of North Carolina. In addition to the autopsies, the order requires that the SBI take the proper finger and palm prints of the victims. The reports are to be sent to Greer, with copies to be mailed to Judge Clark.

A leading suspect in the double murder originally was Joseph Sledge, who escaped from the White Lake Department of Corrections on the afternoon of September 5. Sledge was apprehended on September 9 in South Carolina and returned to North Carolina, but no charges have been filed against him in the murder case.

Clarkton.

Serving hours will be 11:30

plates will be \$2.

Prisoner Escapes Monday

White Lake Department of Corrections officials were still searching this morning for a prisoner who escaped from the unit Monday afternoon.

The prisoner, identified as Melvin Watts, a white male who is serving a two to five year felony sentence for breaking, entering and lar-

ceny, escaped at about 5 p. m. Monday by reportedly climbing the fence of the minimum security unit.

Watts' home address is Rt. 1, Rowland. He is described as 6 feet tall, and weighs 235 pounds. He has blue eyes and brown hair.

Reward Hiked

The reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the slayer of two Bladen County women on Labor Day has been hiked to \$4,500.

Sheriff John B. Allen, who earlier had personally posted a \$1,000 reward, said Tuesday that he would give an additional \$1,000 for such information if it is received within the next 30 days.

The state has offered a reward totaling \$2,500 for information in regard to the deaths of Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 54.

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'2,000 Reward To Be Rescinded Wednesday

Two \$1,000 rewards offered information in the double ... of two Bladen County ... in early September ... expire December 22, ... Bladen County Sheriff John B. ... said Monday.

A \$2,500 reward offered by the State of North Carolina

will remain in effect after December 22, but the two \$1,000 rewards, offered by Allen, will expire.

No charges have been filed in the case following extensive investigation by the Bladen County Sheriff's Department

and the State Bureau of Investigation.

Allen said that at present, the investigation was about the same way it was when it was first started.

Not enough evidence has been turned up to make any

charges, according to Allen. He said that charges could be made and brought to the grand jury, a step prior to entering superior court. However, he still feels not enough evidence has been found to stand in court.

road as his two friends barely

instantly from a prison room.

Three Prisoners Escape White Lake Unit

Three prisoners escaped Monday from the minimum security White Lake Prison Unit on US 701 six miles north of Elizabethtown.

Two escapees, James Locklear, an Indian, 42 years old, of Fayetteville, and Charles Locklear, an Indian, 25 years old, also of Fayetteville (no known relation) left the unit by climbing the fence sometime Monday morning between 6:15 a. m. and 8:15 a. m., according to prison officials.

The third escapee, Phil Thomas Melvin, a 26 year old black man from Fayetteville, reportedly left the prison unit also by climbing the fence Monday afternoon between

4:30 p. m. and 6:30 p. m.

Prison officials believe both escapes were planned and that all three were picked up by waiting vehicles.

James Locklear was serving three years for larceny and Charles Locklear was serving five years for forgery and uttering and an additional five months for a prior escape. Phil Thomas Melvin was serving 5-10 years for breaking and entering. Neither James Locklear nor Phil Thomas Melvin had a prior escape on their records.

All three escapees were tracked with bloodhounds three-tenths of a mile from the unit to a highway.

Taxpayers Have

anticipating a better turnout this visit," said Frink.

The bloodmobile last visited Bladen County when it came

all over the state. In fact, only about 40 percent of Bladen blood used last year was used

The presence of the blood bank in Bladen County, then, does not mean completely

All persons who can help during the day should contact Mrs. Pait.

Sledge Transferred To Minimum Security Unit

The man who has been considered the "prime suspect" in the double murder of two Bladen County women was moved last week to a minimum security prison unit at Lillington, according to prison officials.

Joseph Sledge, Jr., 32, of Fayetteville, was moved to the unit in what prison officials indicated was a temporary move.

Sledge was the prime suspect in the days immediately following the Labor Day slayings of Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 57. Their bodies were found in their home near Elizabethtown Labor Day afternoon.

Sledge was serving time on larceny charges when he escaped from the White Lake prison unit near Elizabethtown the day before the bodies of the two women were found.

A massive manhunt ensued and four days after he escaped from prison he was arrested in Dillon, S. C., and returned to Bladen County authorities.

Sledge was subsequently transferred to Cumberland County jail for safekeeping after Elizabethtown police confiscated a pistol from a man near the courthouse.

Asked this week if Sledge remains a suspect in the case, a State Bureau of In-

vestigation official replied, "Well, yes, but he's one of several. He hasn't been eliminated, nor has sufficient evidence been found to charge

him or anyone else - he's in the twilight zone."

Another SBI agent said that "nothing of any consequence has developed on the case in

the last few weeks."

Asked what the last big development in the case was, the SBI agent responded, "I

(Continued to page two)

Elizabethtown Police Chief Taylor Featured In Mag

Elizabethtown's Chief of Police Charles Taylor was profiled in the winter edition of "North Carolina Police Officer", a quarterly law enforcement magazine.

The magazine's article on Taylor gave the police officer's background and experiences. It cited Taylor for his support of his police officers. The article said of Taylor, "He is a chief who stands up for his officers," also, "any time they need him, he is ready for action."

Taylor became chief at Elizabethtown when Chief Jimmie Bell was killed in a shoot-out in September 1972 while on duty. Taylor was then assistant chief.

Chief Taylor was the first president of the Bladen chapter of Fraternal Order of Police and is past president of the Bladen County Peace Officers Association.

Charles Taylor was born

December 20, 1931 in Robeson. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Taylor who now live in the Hickory Grove section (Rt. 2, Bladenboro) of Bladen County. He is a graduate of Selenia Commercial College at Lumberton and Shufards Institute in Durham.

Taylor has been in law

enforcement since August of 1958 and has attended several law enforcement schools from crime prevention to radar.

Gracie, Taylor's wife is owner and operator of City Cafe in Elizabethtown. They have two daughters, Linda, 12, and Lisa, 7, who attend public school in Elizabethtown.

Tar Heel Squad Elects Officers

The Tar Heel Rescue Squad, a newly formed group which is hoping to provide emergency ambulance and rescue service in the Tar Heel area, elected officers last week.

Jeff Mercer was elected chief. Other officers include Thomas Kinlaw, assistant

chief; James Fred Martin, Jr., and Jessie Anderson, Jr., Lieutenants; Jane Martin, secretary - treasurer; and Lewis Barnes, Marjorie Neff, Lynn Moore, Raymond Bedsole and Lynn Singletary, directors.

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Sledge Transferred

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don't know that we've had one. We just keep plugging away at it."

According to the SBI, Sledge has taken a lie detector test, but officials said they are "not at liberty" to divulge the results.

Sledge was transferred last week from Cumberland County jail to the state department of corrections' Warren County prison unit, then from there to the Triangle Correctional Center in Raleigh and from there to the Harnett County youth center in Lillington, prison officials said.

The Lillington prison unit is described as a minimum - security prison which provides close custody supervision for misdemeanors.

While prison officials called the security there "the tightest in the field" as far as

minimum - security supervision is concerned, Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen said he is not satisfied.

"Well, I don't think that a man who's dangerous - and do think he's dangerous - should be sent somewhere where he might get back in society," the sheriff was quoted as saying.

A prison official at the Lillington prison unit said, however, that Sledge was probably sent there because of space problems. It is expected that Sledge will be sent elsewhere, he said.

"He's still a suspect," Allen said. "He has not been ruled out, not by me, maybe by someone else, but not by me."

"Most everybody's a suspect," Allen continued. "We haven't got enough evidence on anybody, though, to indict. It's a bad murder case and we have not got it solved."

Police Search For Man With Knife

Elizabethtown Police and other law enforcement officers were continuing their search today for a young black male who accosted a woman in the Bladen County courthouse at knifepoint Friday afternoon.

According to Police Chief Charles Taylor, the man has not yet been identified. The incident occurred about 3 o'clock at the rear basement

door of the courthouse.

According to Taylor, Mrs. Ellen Merritt, 19, of Elizabethtown, was leaving the courthouse when she was stopped by a black male from behind just before she stepped outside the door. The man grabbed her wrist with one hand and held a knife in his other hand.

According to what Mrs. Merritt told police, the man asked if she were going to East Bladen High School. She replied that she was not, and offered the man her pocketbook. He refused to take it, and about that time, another woman entered the courthouse door.

The woman was told by Mrs. Merritt that the man had a knife and she continued down the courthouse hallway. The man at this point turned his attention from Mrs. Merritt to the other woman and caught up with her near the steps on the west side of the building. When he asked her to stop and showed her the knife, she ran and hollered for help.

The man, at this point, disappeared and has not been seen since by the authorities who are looking for him.

The man was described by Mrs. Merritt as being about 18 years of age, approximately

5'9", with a slender build. He was wearing a red toboggan, she said.

Inmate

Escapes

An inmate at the White Lake Department of Corrections escaped this morning as he was enroute with fellow prisoners to a work detail for the Department of Transportation in Whiteville.

According to officials at the White Lake unit, Ronnie McKoy jumped in Elizabethtown from the vehicle which was transporting him and other inmates to the work detail.

McKoy is serving 3-4 year sentence for larceny and receiving, a felony charge. He is described as black, 5'7", and 130 pounds. He has brown eyes and black hair. He is 24 years old and his address is listed as Elizabethtown.

The escape occurred about 8:15 this morning (Monday). Persons who see McKoy or hear of his whereabouts are asked to contact the White Lake Department of Corrections.

Board To

Protest

\$\$\$ Share

BY GREG WHITFIELD

The Bladenboro Town Board of Commissioners agreed Thursday night to renew its protest with the federal government over the amount of revenue sharing funds the town receives.

Dave Bartlett, town manager, said the town has not received it's full share of federal funds for two years in a row.

The town's protest last year over inaccurate population

At White Lake Prison Unit

Reps Ask For Quick Action On Security

The House of Representatives today passed a bill to improve security at the White Lake Prison Unit. The bill, which was introduced by Rep. [Name], aims to address concerns about the safety of the facility and the prisoners housed there.

The bill, known as the White Lake Prison Security Act, was passed by a vote of [Vote]. It includes provisions for increased staffing, improved fencing, and enhanced surveillance measures.

The bill also addresses the issue of inmate behavior and the potential for violence within the unit. It calls for stricter disciplinary measures and improved training for prison staff.

The White Lake Prison Unit, located in [Location], is one of the largest and most secure facilities in the state. It houses a large number of inmates, many of whom are serving long sentences for serious crimes.

Over the past several years, there have been several incidents of violence and escape attempts at the unit. These incidents have raised concerns among the public and lawmakers about the effectiveness of the current security measures.

The new bill is expected to take effect as soon as it is signed into law. It represents a significant step towards improving the security of the White Lake Prison Unit and ensuring the safety of both inmates and the public.

Rep. [Name] expressed his satisfaction with the passage of the bill, stating that it was a long-overdue measure to address the security concerns at the White Lake Prison Unit. He hopes that the bill will serve as a model for other correctional facilities.

The bill's passage is a testament to the commitment of the House of Representatives to public safety and the effective management of the state's correctional system.

and what is done at the White Lake minimum security unit. Reed added he felt that every unit in the state should have adequate security.

"We're wound up with prisoners that are really community centers that were set up for the misdemeanants and less serious offenders," Reed said during the meeting.

Reed said he would immediately check to see if a more secure fence could be erected around the unit. "I

believe in good security, and if we go to an open facility, it should be for the less violent prisoners," he said.

The 130 prisoners housed at the White Lake unit include both violent and non-violent criminals. State law prohibits guards from carrying weapons to prevent escape.

"The people down there are real alarmed," Taylor told Reed. "The Davis woman and her daughter that were murdered just brought it to a

head. It really created a whopping bunch of trouble for us."

Nye added, "Our folks are just concerned about an apparent lack of security there."

"There's no control at all there. There have been complaints for years and it's building up," Soles said. "People are tired of the hotel-type prisons we have, the lack of work and the lack of punishment."

(Continued to page four)

Miss Bladen Pageant On Tap Saturday Night

Bladen County will be crowned Saturday night for the first time since 1967.

The Elizabethtown Jaycees awarded several months ago to crown the pageant, which formerly was an annual event in the county. The pageant will be held under the guidelines of the Miss North Carolina and Miss America organizations, and the winner will represent the county in the Miss North Carolina Pageant in Winston-Salem later this year.

Seven young ladies, all Bladen County residents, will compete for the title.

In conjunction with the pageant, a Little Miss Bladen contest will be held featuring approximately 25 girls five to seven years of age. The Little Miss contest will be sponsored by the Elizabethtown Jaycees who will aid their husbands in the overall pageant program. The pageant will be held at

Denise Kiniaw of Elizabethtown, Donna Roundtree of Tar Heel, Teresa Strickland of White Lake and Debbie Strouse of Elizabethtown.

Judges will be Dick Reynolds of Winston-Salem, Lucy Hodge of Hendersonville, John Holley, Jr. of Hendersonville, Kathryn Zellers of Fayetteville and Oran Perry of Kinston.

A separate group of individuals will judge the Little Miss contest. They include Venus Wallace of Denton, Sheila Lee of Fayetteville, and Kenny Lewis of Wilmington.

Music for the pageant will be provided by Dorman Chandler of Elizabethtown on the organ and Alan Dossenhack of Laurinburg on the drums.

Firemen Seek Communications \$\$\$

Members of the Bladen County Fire Fighters Association Monday asked the county board of com-

fire station would then sound the siren and also trigger paging equipment for each fireman's home.

000208

Reps Seek Security

(Continued from page one)

Nye said later he was pleased with the legislators' reception by Reed and said he believed Reed would take "immediate" action to boost security at the White Lake unit.

The Senator and two Representatives also talked with Reed about erecting a fence around the Chapel presently under construction at the White Lake unit. Reed was not aware that the chapel was not to be enclosed with a fence but said it did not seem practical to have a better fence around the prison unit and have the prisoners go out of the unit to go to the chapel.

In a related matter, the

three talked with Reed about having the pews in the chapel fastened down to the floor so they could not be moved and the building lose its appearance as a chapel.

A number of area citizens have expressed concern that the pews in the chapel be made stationery, so the building will not become a "pool hall" and be used for other purposes other than worship.

According to the law erecting the chapel at the prison unit passed in 1975, the building is to be a "multi-purpose" building to be used for recreation and as a chapel.



On Davis Murder Case

Special SBI Team Will Aid Locals

"We are glad to have their help, and we welcome them," Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen said upon learning that the State Bureau of Investigation's new homicide squad has been ordered into the investigation of the slaying of two Bladen County women last Labor Day.

Attorney General Rufus Edmisten issued the order Friday afternoon that the special squad would help investigate the slayings of Josephine Davis, and her daughter, Aileen Davis. The two women were found beaten and stabbed to death in the small wood frame house just north of the Cape Fear River near Elizabethtown. Edmisten said he has asked Max Bryan, chief of the homicide squad to head the renewed investigation.

Edmisten said, "Local law enforcement agencies have worked very well with the SBI in this case, and I'm very

optimistic of a successful investigation of the murders."

No one has ever been arrested in connection with the murders, although rewards have been posted in connection with the slayings.

An inmate who escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit the day before the murders, Joseph Sledge of Fayetteville, was a suspect in the slayings, but was never charged with them. He has been convicted of escape and has been returned to the prison system.

The special SBI team has already been in touch with the local sheriff office and is expected to begin work on the case later this week.

Sheriff Allen has called the double murder the "most brutal killings I've seen during my entire 31 years as sheriff."

September 10-11

According To State Report:

Many Bladen Crimes Unsolved

BY JOE GALLEHUGH, JR.

Out of six murders which were reported to Bladen County Law Enforcement Agencies during 1976, Bladen County Law Enforcement Officers made no arrests, according to the 1976 Uniform Crime Report published by the North Carolina Department of Justice.

In addition no arrests were made in connection with 19 motor vehicle thefts reported to Bladen County Law Enforcement Agencies in 1976.

Other statistics reported in the 255 page report show that Bladen County Law Enforcement Agencies made two arrests in seven robberies reported during 1976, 23 arrests in 250 aggravated assault cases reported; eight arrest in 184 breaking and entering and burglary cases, 29 arrests in 231 larceny cases and one arrest in the one rape case reported during 1976.

The majority of the crimes reported in the 1976 Uniform Crime Report for Bladen

County were reported to the Bladen County Sheriff's Department. All six murders in the county were reported to the Sheriff's Department, five of the seven robberies were reported to the Sheriff's Department, 217 of the 250 aggravated assault cases were reported to the Sheriff's Department, 163 of the 184 breaking and entering cases were reported to the Sheriff's Department, 129 of the 231 larceny cases were reported to the Sheriff's Department

and 16 of the 19 motor vehicle thefts in the county were reported to the Bladen County Police Department.

The breakdown of the remaining crimes as reported to each department in the county is as follows: one rape reported to the Bladenboro Police Department; 22 aggravated assault cases reported to the Bladenboro Police Department; 11 breaking and entering cases reported to the Bladenboro

Many Unsolved Cases In Bladen

(Continued from page one)

Police Department, 36 larcenies reported to the Bladenboro Police Department; 2 motor vehicle thefts reported to the Bladenboro Police Department; seven larcenies were reported to the Clarkton Police Department; two robberies reported to the Elizabethtown Police Department; seven aggravated assault cases reported to the Elizabethtown Police Department; 10 breaking and entering cases reported to the Elizabethtown Police Department; 59 larceny cases reported to the Elizabethtown Police Department; and one motor vehicle theft reported to the Elizabethtown Police Department.

In addition the North Carolina Highway patrol in Bladen County handles reports of four aggravated assault cases.

The report includes information supplied to the state by the Bladen County Sheriff's Department, the Elizabethtown Police Department, the Bladenboro Police Department, the Clarkton Police Department, the White Lake Police Department and the State Bureau of Investigation and the North Carolina Highway Patrol stationed in Bladen County.

According to the report, Bladen County Law Enforcement Agencies reported \$142,867 in property was stolen during 1976 while \$59,097 of that stolen property was recovered.

The breakdown by Department is as follows:

\$126,554 in property reported stolen to the Bladen County Sheriff's Department, \$52,807 of that recovered; \$6,373 in property reported stolen to the Bladenboro Police Department, \$1,319 of that was recovered; \$974 in property reported stolen to the Clarkton Police Department, none was recovered; and \$8,965 in property reported stolen to the Elizabethtown Police Department, \$4,970 of that was recovered.

On a state wide basis, the report shows that North Carolina averages 568 serious crimes daily. Included in that number is murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

The report shows that an increase of less than one per cent occurred in serious crimes committed in North Carolina the first six months (January through June) of 1976 compared to the second six months (July through December) of 1976.

However the statistics show that robberies increased by 10 per cent from the first six months period of the year to the second six months, aggravated assault increased two percent for the same period; burglaries increased by one percent; and motor vehicles increased by eight percent for the same period.

Only larcenies decreased for the same period, showing a .9 percent decrease. A total of 334,033 arrests were made throughout the state during 1976. Of those arrested, 282,871 were male and 51,162 were female.

Sheriff Allen Says:

State Report Wrong

BY JOE GALLEHUGH, JR.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen Friday criticized statistics in the 1976 Uniform Crime Report which indicate six murders committed in Bladen County during 1976 went unsolved.

The report, published jointly by the North Carolina Department of Justice and the Police Information Network, shows, in separate crime index and arrest charts, that Bladen County had six murders in 1976 and no arrests.

"Those statistics are wrong," said Allen, "you have examined our records."

An examination of Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) in the Sheriff's Department, which are filed each month with the Police Information Network in Raleigh, shows that Bladen County had four murders in 1976 and that two of those remain unsolved. According to the reports, one murder was committed in January, one in April and two in September. However, the Bladen County Sheriff's Department is missing the UCR report for the month of June.

Of the four murders on record at the Bladen County Sheriff's Department, two of those have been cleared by arrest. The other two, both committed on Labor Day in 1976, are still unsolved.

Uniform Crime Reports for each month in 1976 on file in the Police Information Network Headquarters in Raleigh show that two murders did occur during the month of June, for a total of six murders for the year.

Arrest figures reported in the 1976 Uniform Crime Report,

however, can be somewhat misleading, according to Police Information Network Statistical Analyst Steve Johnson, who helped prepare the 254 page report.

"The Bladen County Sheriff's Department did not submit arrest forms for 1976," Johnson said. "This is a problem with agencies across the state because of the volume of paper work they have."

Johnson said that if arrests had been turned in by the sheriff's department they would have been included in the report. Johnson said that the two separate charts, one for the crimes committed and one for arrests reported, could be misleading and that is one reason the statistics seem to show that no arrest had been made for the six murders.

Another thing that makes the statistics seem related, said Johnson, is that one person might commit 10 of the same type of crime (Ex: larceny) and only be arrested once.

"Then there would be nine clearances," said Johnson, "and one arrest."

A clearance could also be made in a crime committed in Bladen County, if the arrest was made in another county or state. In that case, the offense would be recorded in Bladen but the arrest would not show on Bladen County law enforcement records.

Numbers of crimes committed in Bladen County, during 1976 according to the report, by category, are as follows: rape, one; robbery, seven; aggravated assault, 250; burglary B & E, 184; larceny, 231; and motor vehicle theft, 19.

Allen Will Not Seek New Sheriff Term

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen ended weeks of speculation about his political future this morning with a brief announcement that he will not seek re-election.

In a prepared statement, Sheriff Allen said: "For a long time I have called upon you, the people of Bladen County, for your vote and support. Not once have you

said no. I thank you all and I love you all.

"I will not be a candidate to succeed myself for the sheriff's office in the upcoming Democratic primary."

The sheriff would make no further comments about his decision to this newspaper. It is assumed that he will fill out his present term, which ex-

pires in December.

Allen first took the oath of office as sheriff December 2, 1946, and has been sheriff continuously since that time. He won eight straight elections.

Sheriff Allen did not say this morning whether or not he would endorse anyone for his job when he retires. Since he made his decision public, three deputies have already filed for the job. They include Broadus Hester, the chief deputy under Sheriff Allen, F.E. (Gene) Kelly, and Joe Kelly.

The latter Kelly is actually employed through the Sheriff's Department by the Bladen County Board of Education. His position is paid for by an LEAA grant and his primary responsibility has been to the school system, though he does work also as a regular deputy when he is needed.

Two others had already filed for sheriff. Jabe Frink of



ALLEN

Bladenboro, who had run unsuccessfully against Allen twice and had lost by only a narrow margin in a second primary four years ago, and Bobby Roberts, of Bethel Township, the present chairman of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners, had filed earlier in January.

With Allen's decision not to seek re-election, others are expected to enter the race before the February 6 deadline.

Three Deputies Now In Race

Following the announcement this morning that Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen would not seek re-election, his Chief Deputy, Broadus Hester and two other deputies filed for the position.

Hester, a 26-year veteran of the Bladen County Sheriff's Department, has served as Chief Deputy for the past six years. He is a Bladen County native from Route 1, Bladenboro.

The 51-year old Hester has never sought public office before with the exception of a defeat about 28 years ago for position of Township Constable in Bladenboro Township.

Hester has 28 years of law enforcement experience, having worked for two years on the Bladenboro Police Department prior to coming to the sheriff's department.

He served in the past on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Law Enforcement Officers Association.

Upon filing for the position Hester said, "I have been loyal and dedicated to the good people of our great county and have waited for this opportunity for 26 years and feel very strongly that I deserve a chance to seek the office of sheriff."

"Now that I have worked my way up to the rank of major as chief deputy I have been urged by a large number of my friends to file if my boss ever decided on retiring," Hester continued, "it will be my sincere aim to have enough help to continue a 24 hour protection by assigning more deputies over the county. We are presently understaffed and don't have a chance for the updated schools to better our force in coping with the present day criminal so more schooling is on my mind."

The other deputies who filed today are E.F. "Gene" Kelly and Joe Kelly. Both now serve on the Bladen County Sheriff's Department. Neither could be reached for comment prior to presstime.

Wachovia To Expand

Wachovia Bank and Trust Company has announced plans to expand its Dublin Office. Work is expected to begin within 30 days on the addition of 300 square feet to the existing facility.

Elizabethtown Office, made the announcement.

"We recently expanded the staff and services of this office and have just completed the installation of safe deposit boxes to make this office a full-service branch," said Jordan. "The expansion of the building will provide for an expanded lobby and the addition of two private offices."

"We consider this one more example of our commitment to this area," said Jordan, "and our promise to provide the best possible service to our customers."

Jordan said the branch will remain open for its regular business hours during the construction phase, which is expected to take six weeks for completion. The Dublin Office is managed by Mrs. Cynthia N. McClure.

Candidates Lining Up For Bladen's Political Races

Storms

Files For

Sheriff

Joe Storms, a 43-year old Bladen County resident who has been a Bladen County Sheriff for the past 10 years, filed Tuesday as a political candidate for Sheriff.

Storms joined the staff of the Bladen County Sheriff's Office in 1968 after 14 years of experience. At the time he was in the Bladen County Sheriff's Office, he was the head of the guard at the Bladen County Jail.

Storms' career as a Sheriff has been marked by his attendance at training schools on law enforcement work, including a Federal Drug En-

forcement school, and a Homicide Investigation school. He is a certified EMT. Storms is a life-long resident of Bladen and is a graduate of Bladenboro High School. Following High School graduation, he attended a short course at North Carolina State University.

He is married to the former Betty Yarborough of Abbeville, and they have two daughters: Janet, a student at Southeastern Community College, and Beth, a student in the Bladenboro schools.

They are members of the Zion Hill Baptist Church. Storms is past master of the Bladen Masonic Lodge, is a 32nd Degree Mason and is a Shriner.

After filing, Storms said he believes in "honesty, fairness and upholding the law."

"If I am elected," he said, "I would like, with the help of

involved within the local party affairs. He attended the inauguration ceremonies of President Jimmy Carter in January of 1977.

Register served as Chairman of the Bladen County Social Services Board for a four year period. He was recently reappointed by Governor James B. Hunt to a vacancy on the Social Services Board and has now been named as Vice Chairman of the Board. He also serves on the Bladen County Hospital Board.

Register is a member of the Mt. Horeb Presbyterian Church where he has served as deacon and now serves as an elder. He has been the secretary and treasurer of the church Sunday School for many years.

He has been a leading merchant in Bladen County for more than 31 years. He

continues to operate his farming business along with his general store operation. He is active in the Bladen County Farm Bureau.

The May 4 Democratic Primary will make Register's second attempt at a commissioners seat. He was unsuccessful in a bid four years ago.

Retired Teacher Files For School Board

A retired school teacher, John F.E. Normile of Elizabethtown, filed Tuesday for one of the three seats up for election on the Bladen (continued to page fourteen)



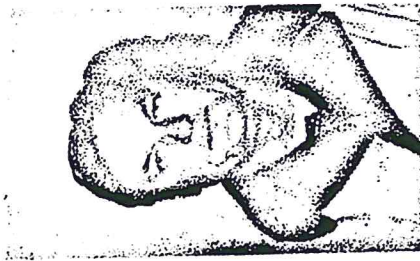
REGISTER



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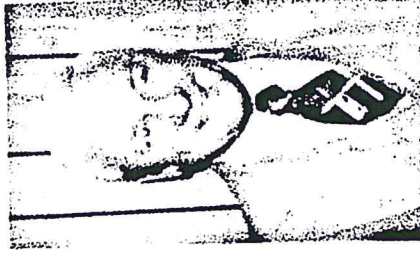
STORMS



CARL CHESHIRE



JOE KELLY



GENE KELLY



BLADEN SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR Phil Little (left) and Sheriff John B. Allen (right) are in the background. Sledge was transferred here from Central Prison Tuesday afternoon.

Hospital

Officials Mum On Possible Charges Sledge Returned To Bladen County Jail

Joseph Sledge, a 32-year-old prisoner who has been serving time in Central Prison in Raleigh on multiple offenses, was transferred to the Bladen County jail late Tuesday afternoon. Sledge, wearing leg irons and handcuffs, was escorted from Raleigh Tuesday by Bladen County Special Investigator Phil Little and Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen. Sledge was jailed at 6 p.m.

While authorities remained mum about Sledge's return to Bladen County, less than one week ago State Bureau of Investigation officials announced that an arrest in connection with the Labor Day, 1976, slaying of two women near Elizabethtown was "possible" within two weeks.

The SBI officials reported that new evidence was uncovered in the deaths of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Alleen Davis, 57, both of Bladen County.

The Davis women were found dead in their frame house west of Elizabethtown on NC 212 at about 4 p.m. on September 6, 1976. Both women had been savagely beaten and their throats had been cut. One of the women had been

sexually assaulted, according to investigation reports.

At one time Sledge was the prime suspect in the double murder but no arrest was made in the case while authorities interviewed numerous potential suspects.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit prior to the crime and law enforcement investigators traced his flight to near the home of the two women.

Investigators seemingly exhausted all leads in the case but managed to turn up no concrete evidence for months after the crime.

"The investigative road lead law enforcement officers to request the exhumation of the women's bodies two months after they were buried. According to investigators, the exhumation was necessary because certain desired tests had not been made during the initial autopsy.

Authorities did say Tuesday after Sledge's transfer that a grand jury hearing concerning Sledge would be held Thursday morning.

Commissioners Delay Recreation Park Bids

Sledge Indicted In Davis Murders

A Bladen County grand jury Thursday indicted Joseph Sledge Jr., a former Fayetteville resident, in the 1976 stabbing deaths of an elderly Bladen County woman and her daughter.

Sledge, 34, was an escapee from the White Lake Prison unit in Bladen County at the time of the Labor Day killings.

He was arrested three days after the deaths of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and Miss Ailene Davis, 53, and questioned in the killings. He was charged with the escape and automobile theft, but until Thursday, he had not been charged in the deaths of the women, although authorities said he had continued to be considered a suspect.

Since then, Sledge had been held in Raleigh's Central Prison until he was moved to the Bladen County jail Tuesday.

The grand jury met for nearly two hours Thursday before returning the murder indictments. Sledge was later arraigned before Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring Jr. of Cumberland County, who held court in Bladen County last week.

The two murder indictments were signed by Henry Poole, a State Bureau of Investigation

agent, and Bladen Sheriff's deputy Phil Little.

Sledge's case has not been calendared for trial.

An SBI spokesman said last week that new evidence had been uncovered in the case and that an arrest could occur within a short time.

Although authorities have declined to say what new evidence had been uncovered, local officials have been assisted in the investigation by the SBI new murder squad, formed to try to crack unsolved murders in the state.

Members of the Bladen County Sheriff's Department maintained an air of secrecy this week around Sledge's transfer from Raleigh.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen, who is retiring this year, called the killings the most brutal murders he had seen in some 30 years as sheriff.

Almost immediately the investigation focused on Sledge. At the time of his escape, Sledge was serving a four-year term for theft charges. Four days after the

double slaying, Sledge was arrested in Dillon, S.C., and returned to Cumberland County where he was questioned about the killings.

The questioning apparently failed to implicate him in the killings at the time, although he was never officially dropped as a prime suspect, officers said.

He was later sentenced to six to eight years for his escape, and in April, 1977, he was convicted of stealing a car during his bid for freedom and was given a four-year sentence for that conviction.

Two months after the killings, District Attorney Lee Grier of Whiteville requested an order to exhume the Davis bodies in order to compare palm prints with prints found at the scene of the crime, and to have scrapings made from beneath the fingernails, according to reports.

Bladen resident Superior Court Judge Giles R. Clark issued the order for exhumation.

Following the grand jury indictment of Sledge Thursday Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen declined to comment on the investigation except to say that authorities had been working on the case for over 19 months.

Hospital Gets State Grant

Bladen County Hospital received a \$7,000 grant from the Department of Human Resources Monday for the improvement of emergency equipment at the hospital, Bladen County Commission Chairman Roberts G. "Bobby" Roberts announced Monday.

The funds, approved last week, will be used to purchase equipment for the emergency room at the hospital such as a cardiac monitor, X-ray stretchers, a suction unit, a life pack and other emergency equipment.

Because Of Coal Shortage

Venue Change For Sledge

Bladen County Superior Court Judge Giles Clark Monday signed a change of venue order for the trial of Joseph Sledge who is charged with the slaying of two Bladen County women.

The trial will be held in Whiteville, May 1.

Judge Clark, in ordering the change of venue, acted after defense attorney Reuben L. Moore, Jr. argued that publicity surrounding the case would make it impossible for Sledge to get a fair trial in Bladen County.

At the Monday hearing, Clark agreed that the pre-trial publicity in Bladen County could present a problem.

An escapee from the White Lake minimum security prison unit at the time of the September 6, 1976 murders, Sledge was indicted February 23 by the Bladen County Grand Jury in connection with the Labor Day slayings of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57.

Sledge is currently being

held in Bladen County jail without bond.

Sledge was serving an eight-year sentence for auto lar-

ceny, escape, receiving stolen goods and breaking and entering prior to the recent indictment.

Taylor Says "No" To OSHA Inspection

Representative Ron Taylor confirmed this morning that he refused to allow representatives of OSHA inspect the Taylor Tobacco Enterprises plant Tuesday.

Though Taylor, who represents Bladen, Columbus and Sampson Counties in the North Carolina House of Representatives, confirmed that three OSHA officials and two Bladen County sheriff's deputies sought to inspect the plant which he operates with his family, he would give no further comments.

Reports of the incident indicate that the three OSHA men, along with the two deputies, asked permission to inspect the plant. Taylor denied them access, and cited personal rights as a reason for the rejection, according to the reports.

Taylor had earlier denied OSHA inspectors permission to tour his plant, and, during the last session of the general assembly, had introduced a bill to eliminate OSHA in the state.

Woman Charged In

Murder Victims Exhumed

ELIZABETHTOWN, N.C. (AP) — The bodies of two women who were murdered in their Bladen County home Sept. 6 were exhumed for further studies and reburied this week, officials reported.

Superior Court Judge Giles Clark signed the authorization for Josephine Davis and her daughter Aileen Davis to be exhumed Tuesday. The authorization was sought by Dist. Atty. Lee J. Greer who said in an affidavit that fingerprints and palmprints were found in the victims' home. The women's prints were not obtained prior to burial, he said.

Sheriff And SBI Still Seeking Clues In Davis Murders

NOV 7 '77

By DENNIS PATTERSON

of The Times Staff

LIZABETHTOWN — On Labor Day, Mrs. Omega Hales walked up the driveway to check on her 74-year-old mother, 53-year-old sister who lived in a nearby farmhouse.

The farmhouse, Mrs. Hales found the living room wrecked and bloody.

Her mother and sister had been stabbed and bludgeoned almost to death.

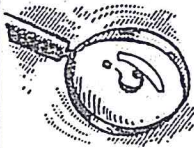
rs. Josephine Davis, 74, and Miss the Davis, had been killed about 4

Their bodies were discovered by Mrs. Hales 12 hours later.

The double slaying came as a shocking blow in the small farming community near here where the Davis women lived. Neighbors and friends of the two women were stunned that the violent crime "had happened here."

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen called the killings the most brutal murders he had seen in 30 years as sheriff.

In the 14 months since the slayings, a special team of SBI homicide specialists and sheriff's deputies has continued to check and recheck each lead in the case.



News Update

This is another in a continuing series of articles on a subject that has appeared in the news in the past. If you have a subject for News Update, please call Tip-Line at 323-1441 to give your suggestion.

No one has been arrested, but SBI officials say the case has a high priority for the SBI homicide squad.

"This case is still top priority," said Lin Hardin, SBI district chief, last week.

"It is still an active case, one that we are pursuing along with sheriff's deputies."

The investigation originally focused on Joseph Sledge, a 32-year-old convict who escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit

the day before the two women were killed.

The prison unit is close to the Davis home, and bloodhounds used to track Sledge after his escape led officers in the general direction of the Davis farmhouse.

Four days after the slaying Sledge was arrested in Dillon, S.C., and returned to Cumberland County jail where he was questioned about the killings.

Sledge later was sentenced to six to eight years for his escape. However, he was not implicated in the murders of the two women.

In April, 1977, Sledge was convicted of

stealing a car in Fayetteville hours after the two women were killed. He received a four-year sentence for that conviction.

Although Sledge has never been officially dropped as a prime suspect in the killings, investigators have continued to go over and over leads in the case, hoping to come up with clues that were overlooked, clues that might reveal the murderer.

"Both our agents and deputies have gone back over leads in the case," Hardin said. "In fact, this week we've been rechecking some things in it."

"The investigation is far from being finished."

SBI Expects Arrest Soon In Bladen Murders

FEB 1-8 78 1
BY FRED POST
Of The Times Staff

ELIZABETHTOWN — A State Bureau

of investigation official has confirmed

that an arrest is possible "within a

matter of weeks" in the slaying of two

women near here on Labor Day, 1976.

New evidence has reportedly been

uncovered in the deaths of Josephine

Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Da-

vis, 57.

Max Bryan, special operations supervi-

sor for the SBI, said this week that

evidence has been uncovered which will

make an arrest possible within a matter

of weeks.

"We are confident we have our man,"

the Associated Press quoted Bryan as

saying, "and we feel we can get a

suspect indicted within a matter of

weeks."

"The Davis women were found dead at

about 4 p.m. on Sept. 6, 1976. Both

women had been savagely beaten and

their throats had been cut. One of the

women had been sexually assaulted, ac-

cording to investigation reports.

Jack Thomas, deputy director for field

forces in the SBI confirmed Friday night

that Bryan's homicide officers, working

with Bladen County sheriff's deputies,

had uncovered evidence which made

Bryan's statement "an accurate state-

ment."

Bryan was not available for comment

Friday night to elaborate on his plans for

gaining an indictment in the case.

Bureau officials declined to comment

further in order not to jeopardize the

case, they said.

Sheriff's deputies and SBI agents have

continued investigation of the case with-

out letup, a spokesman said, but no

arrests had been made.

At one time a prime suspect was an

escaped prisoner from the White Lake

prison unit whose flight had been traced

near the Davis house at about the time of

the murders.

An unsigned letter was received by

sheriff's deputies shortly after the

slaying in which the writer wrote that he

knew the slayer but, "I'm afraid he'll kill

me if my name is exposed."

Two months after the murders the

bodies were exhumed at the request of

District Attorney Lee Grier of Whiteville.

persons responsible for the crime.

arrest and conviction of the person or

\$5,000 for information leading to the

The state has authorized an award of

exhumation, he said.

Giles R. Clark had issued the order for

Bladen resident Superior Court Judge

initial autopsy.

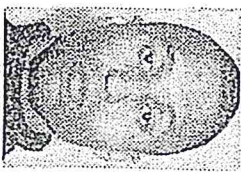
Tests had not been made during the

was necessary because certain desired

According to Bryan, the exhumation

Man Indicted In '76 Bladen Slayings

FEB 24 '78 T
By JOE GALLEGHAN JR.
Special To The Times



SLEDGE

ELIZABETHTOWN — A Bladen County grand jury Thursday indicted Joseph Sledge Jr., a former Fayetteville resident, in the 1976 stabbing deaths of an elderly Bladen County woman and her daughter. Sledge, 34, was an escapee from the White Lake prison unit in Bladen County at the time of the Labor Day killings. He was arrested three days after the deaths of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and Miss Ailene Davis, 70, and questioned in the killings. He was charged with the escape and automobile theft, but until Thursday, he had not been charged in

the deaths of the women, although authorities said he had continued to be considered a suspect.

Since then, Sledge had been held in Raleigh's Central Prison until he was moved to the Bladen County jail Tuesday.

The grand jury met for nearly two hours Thursday before returning the murder indictments. Sledge was later arraigned before Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring Jr. of Cumberland County, who has been assigned to hold court in Bladen County.

The two murder indictments were signed by Henry Poole, a State Bureau of Investigation agent, and Bladen sheriff's deputy Phil Little.

Sledge's case has not been calendared for trial.

An SBI spokesman reportedly said last week that new evidence had been uncovered in the case and that an arrest could occur within a short time.

Although authorities have declined to say what new evidence had been uncovered, local officials have been assisted in the investigation by the SBI new murder squad, formed to try to crack unsolved murders in the state.

Members of the Bladen County sheriff's department maintained an air of secrecy this week around Sledge's transfer from Raleigh.

Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen, who is retiring this year, called the killings the most brutal murders he had seen in some 30 years as sheriff.

Almost immediately the investigation focused on Sledge. At the time of his escape, Sledge was serving a four-year term for theft charges. Four days after the double slaying, Sledge was arrested in Dillon, S. C., and returned to Cumberland County, where he was questioned about the killings.

The questioning apparently failed to implicate him in the killings at the time, although he was never officially dropped as a prime suspect, officers said.

He was later sentenced to six to eight years for his escape, and in April, 1977, he was convicted of stealing a car during his bid for freedom and was given a four-year sentence for that conviction.

Two months after the killings, District Attorney Lee Grier of Whiteville requested an order to exhume the Davis bodies in order to compare palm prints with prints found at the scene of the crime, and to have scrapings made from beneath the fingernails, according to reports.

Bladen resident Superior Court Judge Giles R. Clark issued the order for exhumation.

Sledge Trial Opening Set For Today

The murder trial of Joseph Sledge Jr. was to begin this morning in a session of the Bladen County Superior Court at the Bladen County Courthouse in Whiteville.

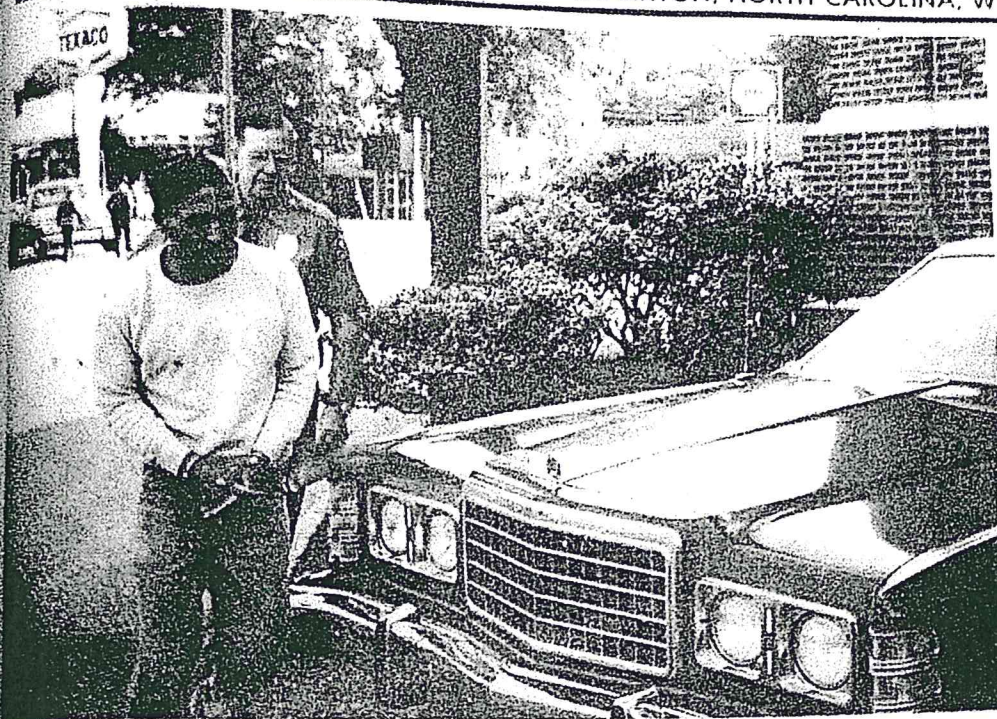
Sledge is charged with the murders of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Mary Davis, 53. The stab murders occurred at the home of the two Davis women near Whiteville.

The trial would normally be held in Bladen County, but Bladen County attorneys asked for

and received a change in the location of the trial because of the extensive publicity involving Sledge and the murders.

Sledge, 34, was an escapee from the White Lake Prison Unit at the time of the murders. He was, from the beginning, a suspect in the case, but he was not charged with the murders until February of this year.

A Bladen County Grand Jury returned a true bill of indictment against Sledge on February 23.



Sledge led to Whiteville Courtroom

Two Fellow Inmates Testify In Trial

Two convicted felons who were at separate prisons with Joseph Sledge, Jr. during the months after the brutal double murders of two Bladen County women, testified in Whiteville Court Tuesday that Sledge admitted to them that he had killed the two women in 1976.

Sledge is charged with two counts of first degree murder in the September 6, 1976, deaths of 74-year-old Josephine Davis and her daughter, 53-year-old Aileen Davis, in their uncompleted frame house 1 1/2 miles North of Elizabethtown on NC

ETown Native Gets Top L & M Position

Elizabethtown native John Hemingway has been named Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Liggett and Myers International Corporation.

The announcement was made last week by Robert B. Hemingway, group vice president for Tobacco Company Liggett group, Inc.

Hemingway has served as Vice President and Regional General Manager, Europe-Africa, Liggett and Myers International Corporation since 1975. Headquartered in Durham, He will assume his new responsibilities as they relate to the worldwide tobacco operations of Liggett and Myers International Corporation. (continued to page four)

242.

Donnie Lee Sutton, a prisoner at the Sampson County Prison Unit in Clinton, testified that on September 17, 1976, while in the Cumberland County jail, Sledge told him about his escape and the murders.

Sledge, Sutton testified, said he was trying to leave the State because he was afraid two murders were going to be "pinned" on him.

"He (Sledge) said he didn't intend to kill those people, but was put in a position where he had to," Sutton testified. "He talked about there being a lot of blood and how the women were stabbed and cut up."

"He said he'd hid his clothes and they would never be found," Sutton said.

Sutton also testified Sledge referred to 73-year-old Josephine Davis and her 54-year-old daughter Aileen as "she devils."

Herman Baker, Jr., currently serving a term for breaking and entering at White Lake Prison Unit, testified that in June 1977, he and Sledge talked about the murders at the Moore County Prison Unit in Carthage.

Baker testified Sledge told him he had entered what he thought as an abandoned house, ran into two white women, who he killed, and then ran from the house.

"He said one woman started screaming at him and he hit her," Baker testified. "He told me another woman tried to pull him off the first woman and he stabbed them both."

"He said he went sort of crazy or something and kept stabbing them," Baker said. "He said they were 'she devils' (continued to page three)

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outlining their each category whose record of achievements and service to school and com-

Inmates Testify Against Sledge

(continued from page one)

he didn't expect blood when he stabbed them. He expected fire to come out of them, not blood," testified.

When he sprinkled black pepper around the back of the car, he said, "I didn't expect blood when he stabbed them. He expected fire to come out of them, not blood," testified.

He volunteered the information to White Lake supervisor C. L. Sparkman in February, and gave the law enforcement authorities Feb. 15, 1978.

He also testified he told his story to law officers when he was indicted Feb. 15, 1978.

He was indicted in the two murders Feb. 23 by the County Grand Jury. A spokesman for the State of Investigation said at that time new evidence had been discovered in the case, but did not specify what the new evidence was.

Phillip Little of the Bladen County Sheriff's Office testified Tuesday he found a small can of black pepper on the floor of the Davis kitchen the day the two bodies were found.

The can had been checked for fingerprints, but no prints were found, and the can had been returned to its position on the floor.

He said the can remained on the floor from Sept. 17 to Feb. 17, 1978, when he took custody of the can as evidence.

Joseph Sledge, a laboratory specialist with the Federal Bureau of Investigation testified hairs found on the body of the victim "could have originated from Joseph Sledge."

trial Starts Monday

James C. Brier, of the FBI, compared hairs taken from Miss Davis' body with hairs taken from Sledge, but said such comparisons could not be used for positive identification.

He testified the hairs could have come from Sledge, "or someone of his race with unusually similar hair traits."

SBI lab specialist Jeb Taub testified his chemical analysis of a car used by Sledge in his escape showed blood smears on the front and back seats as well as the doors.

Taub testified the blood stains were not visible to the eye, and that the blood apparently was transferred to the seat from some other material.

Taub said the car upholstery had apparently been wiped clean of visible blood spots, but said the spots became obvious under chemical analysis.

Sledge remained stoic through most of Tuesday's testimony, as he did on the opening day of the trial Monday.

He sat impassively, occasionally rubbing his shaved scalp or scratching his beard.

He held several quiet consultations with his court-appointed attorney, Reuben Moore, during testimony by Sifton and Baker, and left the courtroom muttering in a high-pitched voice.

The defense begins its arguments this morning, and Moore indicated to Superior Court Judge D. B. Herring there would be little testimony from defense witnesses.

If the defense case is brief, the case could go before the jury of nine men and three women as early as Wednesday afternoon.



Mistrial Ordered In Sledge Case

Superior Court Judge D. B. Herring Thursday, declared a mistrial in the case of 34-year-old Joseph Sledge, Jr., who is accused of the 1976 murders of 74-year-old Josephine Davis and her 53-year-old daughter Aileen.

Herring declared the mistrial at 5 p.m., after the jury foreman told him the jury was hung at 11-1, and that it appeared to be "hopelessly deadlocked".

Earlier in the day, Herring had summoned the jury, asking they had reached a decision. At that time, the foreman told the vote was 10-2, and Herring sent the jury back for further deliberation.

The case was turned over to the jury of nine men and three women at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, following closing statements from Sledge's court appointed defense attorney, Reuben Gore of Elizabethtown.

The jury was summoned late Wednesday afternoon by Herring, but the foreman at that time reported the jury did not appear to be close to a decision.

The jury returned at 9:30 a.m. Thursday and deliberated throughout the day, but failed to reach a unanimous decision. The jury had sought for a total of eight hours and 15 minutes to reach a unanimous decision when Herring declared the mistrial.

While no date or place has been set for Sledge's re-trial, he believed it would be held in Whiteville some time in August. The trial was originally scheduled for Bladen County, but the defense requested a change of venue, which was granted and the trial was moved to Whiteville.

Sledge, formerly of Fayetteville, escaped from the White Sulphur Unit near the Davis home, September 5, 1976. He was captured on September 9, in Dillon, S. C. The bodies of the two Davis women were discovered in

their blood-splattered living room the afternoon of September 6, by a relative.

In testimony during the trial, prosecutors attempted to show through circumstantial evidence that Sledge broke into the small Davis frame house, killed the two women, and fled.

Two convicts who were imprisoned with Sledge at times during the last 18 months testified during the trial that Sledge had admitted to them he killed the two women.

Ronnie Lee Sutton testified during the trial that while he and Sledge were confined in the Cumberland County Jail on Sept. 17, 1976, that Sledge had admitted to him he killed the women.

Another convict, Herman Baker, told the jury that Sledge had described the murders to him while he and Sledge were imprisoned in the Moore County Prison Unit in June 1977.

Sledge's defense attorney declined to present any defense evidence or put Sledge on the witness stand, but hammered away at the state's evidence during his closing summation to the jury.

Lester Chalmers, a special prosecutor in the case, in his summation told the jury witnesses had shown Sledge knew of the murders, and said the testimony should remove any reasonable doubt of Sledge's guilt.

District Attorney Lee Greer said the testimony of police officers and the two convicts had spread a "net of guilt" around Joseph Sledge in this case and has torn away his robe of innocence.

Greer said the state had to use circumstantial evidence because the crime was committed "in the dead of night without the benefit of witnesses".

A definite time and place for a re-trial will be set later.

Sledge Trial Begins In Columbus County

The trial of Joseph Sledge, accused murderer of two Bladen County women, began Monday in Columbus County Superior Court at Whiteville.

Sledge is accused of the September 6, 1976 double slaying of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 58, of Rt. 2, Elizabethtown.

The Davis women were found with their throats cut lying in the floor of their five room farm

house about a mile north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242 on the 6th of September, 1976.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit on September 5. Guards and dogs ran him in the general direction of the Davis residence. He was convicted in Bladen District Court for escape and auto thief after his capture on September 10 in Dillon, S.C.

Sledge was formally charged with the killings on February 23, 1978. He was arraigned in Bladen Superior Court shortly after that date.

Due to extensive newspaper

coverage of the murders, defense attorney Reuben Moore requested the trial be moved to another county.

The trial began quickly with jury selection made with only two challenges.

Bladen special investigator Phillip Little testified Monday that Sledge told him and another deputy that a white man killed the Davis women. Little said Sledge made the statement 4 days after the killings.

Little said he and Deputy Earl Storms were transferring Sledge back to Bladen and before they returned to Elizabethtown.

they went to the Davis home. As they were driving up in front of the house, Little said Sledge told them that a white man killed the women since a black man wouldn't have cut them up like that.

After nearly two hours of testimony, Little had described the murder scene and told the jury of 10 white and two blacks the body of Aileen Davis was lying against the front door and her mother's body was a few feet away. He said their bodies had been stabbed several times in the face and neck areas and in the upper part of their bodies.

Community

OUR SEVENTY-FIRST YEAR

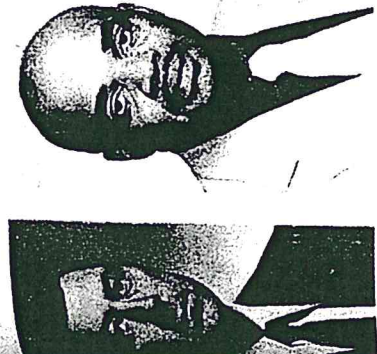
THE BLADEN JOURNAL

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

NUMBER ONE IN BLADEN

171 No. 34 ★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 THURSDAY, MAY 4, 1978 ★ ESTABLISHED 1908 ★ SEVEN SECTIONS - FIFTY PAGES PRICE 10c

Storms, J. Kelly In Sheriff Run-Off



J. KELLY

Deputies Earl Storms and Joe Kelly are heading for a second primary May 30 for the Democratic nomination as sheriff of Bladen County.

The two deputies mustered a great portion of the first primary vote Tuesday. Storms led Kelly by 82 votes.

Kelly's total was 1912 with Storms getting 2,024 votes.

Political observers say the vote for the deputies reflect two factors. One, the overwhelming support of retiring Sheriff John B. Allen from the established voters of Bladen and support from the Black community for Kelly.

One man said the vote for deputies Storms and Kelly reflect the people's support of

Sheriff Allen's program of law enforcement in Bladen County and the confidence the people have in the department.

Others receiving votes in the sheriff race were: Bobby Roberts, 880; Jabe Frink, 700; Carl Cheshtre, 500; Gene Kelly,

605. (Gene Kelly is also a deputy. Observers say his total reflected the people's lack of knowledge of him during this campaign.) James Pall, 370; Dennis G. Strickland, 53 and Charles Taylor 188.

In the county commission-

er race, a run-off is certain between incumbent commissioners Robert Foster, Vance Clark and William Butler with newcomers O.J. Carroll, Jr., Byron McNeill and Pat Melvin.

Hester managed 2707 votes

to Butler's 1718; Clark's 23-20; Carroll's 1348. McNeill's victory for two women and a farmer to the Bladen County Board of Education.

Carol Moore received 3324

to Nancy Phillips' 3563. Wilbur Ward, a Bl. 1, Clarkson farmer received 2801.

Incumbent Education Board member C.T. Bowen received 2789 votes; Esther M. Huntley, 1331; John Normile, 1633; David Singletary, 990; Franklin Yarborough got 644 votes.

Incumbent State House members Ed Nye, Richard Wright and Ron Taylor all carried overwhelming majorities in the primary.

Slate Senator R.C. Soles, Jr. mustered a total vote of 11,095 in the district, Brunswick, Bladen and Columbus Counties to Odell Williamson's 10,992. Bladen gave Soles 3497 votes to Williamson's 2709.

SEE RUN-OFF ON PAGE TWO

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After nearly two hours of testimony, Little had described the murder scene and told the jury of 10 white and two blacks the body of Alleen Davis was lying against the front door and her mother's body was a few feet away. He said their bodies had been stabbed several times in the face and neck areas and in the upper part of their bodies.

Input Sought On Health Care At Town Meeting

Feeling has been cal-
a situation in the
of the Bladen County
at 4:30 P.M. Wednes-
day, to discuss health
care. Attending
board of directors
local health care.

15 Southeastern North Carolina
Counties, including Bladen,
The directors intend to ask
questions of persons attending
the meeting, including: "What
do you think about health care?
What's right? What needs chan-
ging?"

At other times the directors

Main purpose of the meet-
ings is to gain input preparatory to revising the long-range
Health Systems Plan.

The April, 1978, issue of "The
Bird's Eye View," Cardinal's
news letter, said, in part:

"Good health and good health

Community Bulletin

Weather

CHANCE OF RAIN

EXTENDED FORECAST
Rain Thursday and Friday.
Clear and sunny weekend.
Highs in the 70s.

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SHOW

Trial Opens In Bladen Slayings

WHITEVILLE — After only two challenges, a jury was seated and testimony began Monday in the trial of a former Fayetteville man accused of murdering a middle-aged Bladen County woman and her elderly mother after he escaped from prison on Labor Day weekend 1976.

Joseph Sledge Jr., 34, who reportedly claims to be a black muslim, showed no emotion as he slouched in his chair scratching his shaved head and bearded chin, listening to testimony concerning the murders of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, Ailene Davis, 33, both of Elizabethtown.

Sledge has been charged in both deaths, which were attributed to multiple stab wounds in the chest, neck and face of both women.

In over two hours of testimony, Bladen County Deputy Phillip Little described how he found the two wom-

en lying in their blood-spattered cabin off N.C. 242 north of Elizabethtown.

Little testified that when he and deputy Earl Storms took Sledge and retraced his escape route from prison four days after the murders, Sledge revealed knowledge of the murders and their location before either of the deputies gave him such information.

"We were pulled over on the shoulder of the road in front of the Davis house and he (Sledge) pointed to the house and said 'A black man didn't kill them two women. A white man did. A black man wouldn't have cut them women up like that,'" Little testified.

"Little said under oath that he had not yet questioned Sledge about the murder, nor had he told Sledge they were parked in front of the Davis house.

Sledge has already received a six to eight year sentence for his escape from the White Lake prison unit at

about 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 5, 1976. The prison is located about five miles north of the Davis home and about seven miles north of Elizabethtown.

At about 10 p.m. on the day of Sledge's escape, Mrs. Omega Hales, sister and daughter to the two slain women, came home from the Church of God and offered to take Mrs. Josephine Davis home. Her mother lived just 300 yards north of Mrs. Hales, immediately across the road from the Church of God.

Mrs. Hales has said that when she drove her mother up in the yard, her sister, Miss Ailene Davis, opened the door and greeted them, but did not come out on the porch. Mrs. Hales said she did not bother to get out of the car.

When Mrs. Davis and her daughter went in the board and batten house and closed the door as Mrs. Hales was pulling out of the driveway, it was the

last time that anyone saw the two women alive.

Mrs. Hales returned early the morning of Sept. 6, 1976, and when her knocks on her mother's door went unanswered, she struggled to open the front door and found her sister lying in a pool of blood against the door inside. She said her mother was lying several feet away, also severely stabbed.

Little's testimony describing the murder scene as he found it confirmed Mrs. Hales' account. Little told the jury of 10 whites and two blacks that the bodies were found stabbed numerous times in the neck, face, and upper body and that the room was "splattered with blood." He illustrated his testimony with photographs taken at the scene the day the murders were discovered.

Sledge, who sat heavily chained and manacled, displayed no reaction to the courtroom scene.

THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 1978

7A



Register For Fayetteville Technical Institute's ON-CAMPUS SUMMER EVENING COURSES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3 or THURSDAY, MAY 4

3:00 - 8:00 P.M.

8:30 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

AT THE GYMNASIUM

ALL FEES MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION. Tuition is \$3.25 per quarter hour or \$39.00 maximum in-state and out-of-state tuition is \$16.50 per quarter hour through 11 hours of \$195.00 maximum, plus \$1.00 activity fee.

Payment of tuition and other fees or costs may be made by cash, personal check (in-state bank only), BankAmericard, or Master Charge. Personal checks will be accepted for the amount of tuition or fees only. Personal checks drawn on out-of-state banks, second party checks and checks in excess of actual costs will not be accepted for payment of fees. No student is considered enrolled until his fee is paid.

ATTENTION SERVICEMEN and VETERANS

FTI is a Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC). Veterans Administration assistance is available for veterans and servicemen enrolled in business, college transfer, health, public service, technical and vocational subjects.

Veterans should contact the Veteran's Counselor, the Veterans' Outreach office or a regular Counselor for complete information on V.A. requirements.

SUMMER QUARTER BEGINS TUESDAY, MAY 23
ENDS FRIDAY AUGUST 11

BUSINESS EDUCATION

ACCOUNTING

TITLE	QTR. HRS.	DAYS
Accounting Prin I	6 5-10:00	TT
Accounting Prin II	6 6-10:00	TT

BANKING AND FINANCE

TITLE	QTR. HRS.	DAYS
Teller Training	4 6-10:00	TH
Prin of Bank Operation	4 6-10:00	W
International Banking	4 6-10:00	W
Effective Speaking	4 6-10:00	TU

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL EDUCATION (CONT)

HISTORY

TITLE	QTR. HRS.	TIME	DAYS
West Civ I	3 7-10:00	W	
U.S. History II	3 7-10:00	F	

MATHEMATICS

TITLE	QTR. HRS.	TIME	DAYS
Tech Math I	5 5-7:30	TT	
Tech Math II	5 5-7:30	AAW	
Tech Math III	5 5-7:30	TT	
EDP Math I	5 5-7:30	AAW	
College Algebra	5 7:30-10	TT	
College Trig	5 7:30-10	TT	
Vec Math I	4 5-7:30	AAW	
Calculus I	4 7-10:00	TT	

OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY, MAY 7th

ENGINEERING

CIVIL ENGINEERING

000224

Engineering I

4 7-10:00 TT

Atty. Gen. Brewer - P.O. Box 2917 Fayetteville, N.C. 28342
- 910-678-7100

Fayetteville Observer

Local-Area
Living

May 4, 1978 1B

Sledge Awaits Verdict In Trial In Whiteville

By J. L. PATE
Staff Writer

WHITEVILLE — After denying a defense motion to sequester the jury, Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring Jr. ordered a jury of nine men and three women to return this morning at 9:30 to continue deciding the innocence or guilt of Joseph Sledge Jr. in the stabbing deaths of a mother and daughter in 1976.

The former Fayetteville man faces two first-degree murder charges in the deaths of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 73, and her 54-year-old daughter, Allene. The two women were found stabbed and mutilated in their unpainted frame house two miles north of Elizabethtown on Sept. 5, 1976.

Sledge, who was an inmate at the White Lake Prison unit six miles north of Elizabethtown, had escaped Sept. 5, 1976 from the unit and was recaptured four days later in Dillon, S.C.

The jury was sent out for a verdict at about 3:25 p.m. Wednesday and the jury foreman reported at 5:15 that they were not close to reaching a decision. Herring denied a motion by Sledge's court-appointed attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, to seclude the jury. He sent the 12 jurors home for the night, warning them not to read, watch or listen to any news accounts of the trial.

Attorneys for the state and the defense spent most of Wednesday's session making their final arguments to the jury.

Assisted by deputy district attorney Michael Easley, solicitor Lee Greer and Lester Chalmers, a special prosecutor from the state attorney general's office, spoke for one hour and forty-five minutes.

Chalmers invoked the Golden Rule to the jury in a plea for a guilty verdict on both counts, reminding them that "we are our brother's keeper and as our brother's keeper, we have a duty to perform."

"I hope that by bringing back verdicts of guilty, juries will deter other people from committing crimes," Chalmers said.

Chalmers also quoted a battlefield letter from Robert E. Lee to his son: "I don't know whether I'll live or die. . . But to you, I say this: Do your duty, for 'duty' is the most sublime word in the English language."

As he paced up and down gestulating in front of the jury box, the guest prosecutor's voice would rise and fall with emotion as it reached periodic crescendos — then drop off to start again.

"We don't want sympathy on either side," Greer told the jury. "neither because the defendant is black nor because the victims were two older women who lived alone."

Greer, who called Moore "the best attorney in this part of the state," warned the jury, however, to beware of the defense lawyer's "smokescreen" tactics.

The district attorney charged that Moore had purposefully used only selected portions of some of Sledge's statements in reading them to the jury, leaving out pertinent parts which were later brought out in testimony by state witnesses.

Greer also discounted Moore's efforts to discredit the testimony of two prison inmates who claimed that Sledge confessed the Davis murders to them in jail on two different occasions following his recapture.

Ronnie Lee Sutton and Herman Baker, both still serving time in prison, testified in detail Tuesday about confessions Sledge allegedly made to them concerning the deaths of the two Davis women.

Baker, who has one more year to serve for breaking and entering, testified that Sledge, who is reportedly a black Muslim, told him last year in a Carthage prison camp that "the (Sledge) thought fire would come out of those women when he cut them instead of blood because he thought they were 'she-devils,' meant to trick the black man. . . He said he sprinkled black pepper around the back door before leaving so the spirit of the 'she-devils' couldn't follow him."

Donald Lee Sutton, who was in the Cumberland County Jail with the defendant following Sledge's recapture, said Sledge went in the house after walking through the woods from the prison because he thought it was unoccupied. Sutton said Sledge told him he had not intended to kill the women, but that they surprised him and "he was put in a position where he had to."

It was the can of black pepper upon which the prosecution based its assertion that Sledge was at the scene of the crime. Lee told the jury that there was no other way for the two prisoners to have known about the pepper can or the large amounts of blood found splattered throughout the cabin.

Bladen County Sheriff's Detective Phillip Little testified that the pepper can was the only object found on the kitchen floor during his initial investigation. After finding no fingerprints on it, Little said he returned the can to its original position on the floor, where he said it remained from Sept. 6, 1976, until Feb. 17, 1978, when it was retrieved as "new evidence" after Little heard Sutton's account of Sledge's confession.

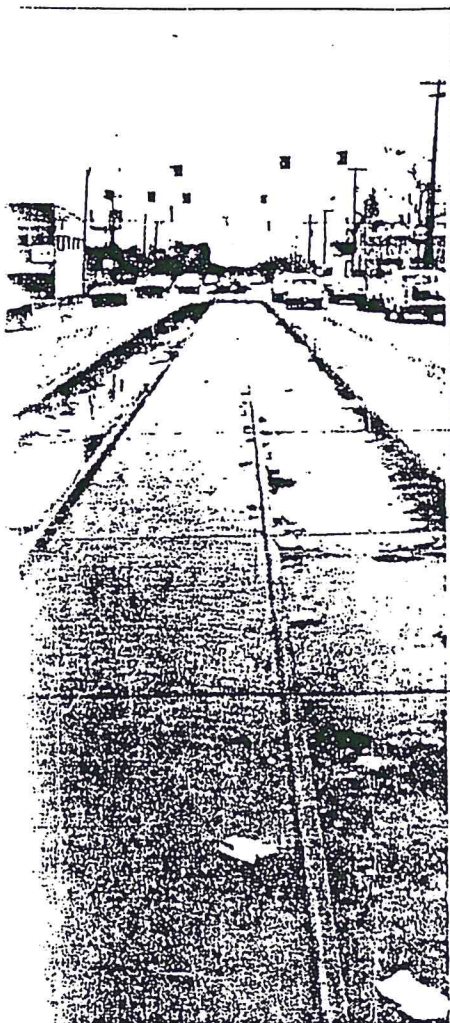
Greer admitted to the jury that all the evidence was circumstantial, but that this was the only evidence anyone could ever produce when a crime "was committed in the dead of night."

In his final argument, Moore told the jury that the time of death was never revealed, that his client was still at the prison when the murders occurred. He attacked Greer's use of circumstantial evidence, saying there was nothing definite to place Sledge at the crime scene.

Moore also questioned the whereabouts of Sledge's prison clothes, asking why his pants weren't produced and why no blood was found on any of his other clothes.

"I believe this state has an obligation to serve truth and justice in this matter," Moore said. "I believe all the evidence should have been brought here for you to examine in deciding this matter."

"There were 97 sets of fingerprints taken," according to state's witnesses. There were plaster casts of footprints taken yet none of these have been presented in the courtroom, Moore told the jury.



Your Choice

rain began falling in Cumberland County
Wednesday night (Staff photo—Bill
Shaw)

Medical Unit Sets Session

By PAT RIVIERE
Staff Writer

PINEHURST — Three separate resolutions concerning national health insurance will be considered by the North Carolina Medical Society this weekend.

Doctors from across the state gathered here this afternoon for the opening session of the society's four-day annual meeting.

Delegates are expected to act Saturday on a number of resolutions including two opposing national health insurance, one support for the American Medical Association's

Hant is expected to talk about his primary care proposal as well as the federally required certificate of need law.

Friday night delegates will have an opportunity to talk with various state legislators during the society's political action committee banquet.

A resolution from the Forsyth-Stokes-Davie County Medical Society calls for support of the AMA's proposal for national health insurance.

The AMA proposal would make comprehensive private health insurance available through private health insurance companies.

000225



Junior Miss Winners

Winners of the first preliminary competition of American Junior Miss Pageant in Mobile, Ala., are from left: Joyce Krucsek (Massachusetts), scholastic; and Betty Relicetti (New Jersey), spirit. Finals will be May 8. (UPI Photo)

Molra Kaye (Tennessee), poise; Kim Corsby (Missouri), talent; Debbie Solomon (North Carolina), youth fitness.

Sledge Mistrial Ruled

By J. L. PATE
Staff Writer

WILMINGTON — Joseph Sledge Jr. won a mistrial in his double murder trial here Thursday.

After a day and a half of deliberations, the Columbus County jury was reported at 5 p.m. Thursday that the 10 whites and two blacks were "hopelessly deadlocked" at 11-1 in favor of conviction.

Superior Court Judge D. B. Herring Jr. declared a mistrial and District Attorney Lee Greer notified Herring that Sledge would be retried, probably in August.

Sledge has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 73, and her 14-year-old daughter, Allene. The bodies of the two women were found Sept. 5, 1976.

A former Fayetteville resident, Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison unit Sept. 5, 1976, and was captured four days later in Dillon, S.C.

The state produced two prison inmates as witnesses. The two convicts each testified Sledge admitted on different occasions that he killed the two women.

One said Sledge made a jail cell confession soon after he was recaptured. The other said Sledge told him last year he committed the crime.

Both inmates testified to Sledge's frequent mention of "she-devils" in reference to the two victims, saying that he thought fire instead of blood would flow from the women's wounds after they were stabbed and that he was "glad the bitches were dead."

A small empty tin of black pepper was the state's strongest piece of evidence in trying to prove Sledge's presence at the crime scene.

One inmate testified that Sledge told him after the killings he sprinkled black pepper around the back door of the Davis home so the spirits of the "she-devils" could not follow him.

Bladen County Detective Phillip Little testified that the pepper can was the only object found on the kitchen floor of the Davis house after the murder. Little said he found no fingerprints on it so he returned the can to its original position on the floor.

Little testified the pepper can remained on the floor from Sept. 6, 1976, until Feb. 17, 1978, when it was retrieved as "new evidence."

Sledge's attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, argued to the jury that the state had not proved beyond reasonable doubt that Sledge was positively at the murder scene.

The trial, which was moved because of publicity about the case in Elizabethtown, will probably be held again in Whiteville, Greer said.

Man Arrested In Harnett Murder

WILMINGTON — Harnett County deputies have arrested Chester Harvey McDougald, 21, of Rt. 1 in Bunnlevel in connection with the throat-slashing murder of a partially paralyzed elderly woman in his neighborhood last month.

McDougald was arrested at 11 a.m. Thursday and charged for the murder of Patsy Lee McLean, 70, who was found April 27 by a half brother who came to take her to the doctor.

The suspect was arraigned Thursday afternoon and is being held in Harnett County jail without privilege of

bond. He was released Monday without charges after questioning that reportedly lasted most of the day.

When Lacy McLean arrived to take his half sister to the doctor on Friday, April 28, he found Ms. McLean fully clothed on the floor of her living room with most of the lights turned on.

Harnett County Coroner Paul Drew of Dunn said the victim's throat was slashed in two places, one on each side of her neck. He said there was no sign of a struggle and robbery was apparently not a motive.

Julian Bond: Advances Negated

By J. L. PATE
Staff Writer

LAURINBURG — Blaming a reversal of advances made by blacks over the last two decades on a "Bargasso Sea of crime in high places," Georgia State Senator Julian Bond said, "Yesterday's gains (in civil rights) seem wiped out today. The right to education means little to children who are bussed from one ignorant academy to an-



lected a candidate who promised us the best. It was the biggest breath of fresh air in Washington since the last time a Democratic president came in behind a Republican 17 years ago, then promising us "the best and the brightest."

"The beginnings of the two administrations (Kennedy's and Carter's) were so similar, we look at some of the people in the White House today and it looks as if some of

ignorant, though we have integrated schools, we have desegregated lunch counters, but no money to eat," he said.

"I am by profession a politician, which is thought to be the second oldest profession and the best group of men that money can buy. It's ashamed, though, that politicians are not held in greater respect, because it's people who do what I do who decide what people like you can do."

Slower Universities

RALPHIGH (AP) — Officials at private colleges have in the state to slow the growth rate of the University of North Carolina system to save public funds and help insure the vitality of non-public schools.

The Council of Trustees for Independent Higher Education in North Carolina unanimously adopted a position paper Thursday calling for stabilization of the growth of public universities.

Belk

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only reporting leading the a narrow Gibson, in a distant ere open on nly commis- districts one, Incumbent was leading the district mall margi- Herndon, le Smith by ee to one, of a victory gures avail- erson County race in dis- school board- es were run- ats, but re- were insig- so no figures School Board, ven non-par- ran for four

en
OWN—A He deputy in and six can- three county ats will face t, while there clean sweep ty offices in ry elections. vers credited ivy turnout of bined with a ticipation of percent, with ne N. Kelly in e stretch that become the ck sheriff. norms outpol- ly 73 votes, he 7,263 votes candidates in B. Allen, 25, sheriff for the nounced his er this year, ide field of commission- idates were ee seats. In- m A. Butler, C and Robert ace O.J. Car- (Pat) Melvin McNeill in a er county or court can- S. Harris of winning a Mrs. Wanda e last several heriff Allen,) announced ar that she e election, 1,373 of the

handily defeated challenger Joseph T. Bowden. The race for retiring Sheriff Wade Stewart's job saw Lewis Rosser, a member of the sheriff's department, leading the other four candidates. Rosser's closest challenge came from Ralph Barefoot who was 1,626 votes behind Rosser. Trailing Rosser and Barefoot were B.E. Sturgill, Andy Collins and George Edward Cameron. In the District Two race for the board of education, Gerald W. Hayes Jr. will face a Republican opponent in November following his defeat of W.N. Porter. In the District Four race, Johnnie H. Taylor Jr. defeated incumbent Rebecca M. Mann by 302 votes. Ms. Mann was the first woman member of the board of education. In the race for county surveyor, Andrew (Andy) Joyner defeated Mickey R. Bennett and Artis P. Spence handily in his bid to succeed outgoing Mike Donovan.

bridge and Carson Gregory received the nod from Har- nett County voters.

Scotland

LAURINBURG—Scotland County Sheriff B.P. Lyich is going to have to win a runoff election later this month to retain his job as a result of Tuesday's primary election. Lyich was defeated by Laurinburg police officer Carlton Alfred White by more than 300 votes forcing the runoff. White received 1,649 votes compared to 1,378 for Lyich, 122 for Robert L. Wingate, 346 for Samuel N. Cribb and 178 for J.B. (Bunk) Odom. In the race for the board of commissioners from the Sewardville Township, new-comer James A. (Jimmie) Gibson and incumbent Floyd W. Nichols were the winners of the two open seats. Another incumbent C. Harold Morris Jr. was third and new-comer Gary M. Brown fourth. The votes totaled 2,304 for Gibson, 1,878 for Nichols,

four persons, but none each other for two seats in the November election of the board of education members as two challengers were eliminated Tuesday. Anne G. Tindall was the top vote-getter with 1,603 votes followed by Tom Whitlock with 889, incumbent George S. McNeill with 867, John T. Alford Jr. with 656, Larry W. Owen with 613 and David Raley with 224. In the race for the N.C. State House from the 21st District, the top three vote-getters were incumbents David Parnell, Robert E. Davis and new-comer Adolph L. Dial. Parnell received 1,826 votes followed by Davis with 1,452, Dial with 1,218, incumbent Horace Locklear with 879, Tracey Britt with 870 and William C. Gay with 726. In the races for district court judges from the 16th District, Scotland County voters choose the two incumbents, Sam Britt and Charles G. McLean.

In the U.S. Senate race, Scotland County voters voted like the rest of the state putting their support behind Luther Hodges and John Ingram. The voting looked like this: 1,198 votes for Hodges, 653 for Ingram, 600 for McNeill Smith, 487 for Lawrence Davis, 36 for William B. Griffin, 33 for David P. McKnight, 32 for Joseph Felmet, and 23 for Thomas B. Sawyer. In one race for associate justice of the state supreme court, Robert M. Martin received the nod with 1,227 votes compared to 988 for Walter Brock. In the other race for associate justice of the state supreme court, David M. Ruff received 2,250 votes compared with 328 for Reginald Frazier. And in the race for judge of the court of appeals, Scotland County voters backed Richard C. Erwin with 1,522 votes compared with 736 for Austin B. Campbell.

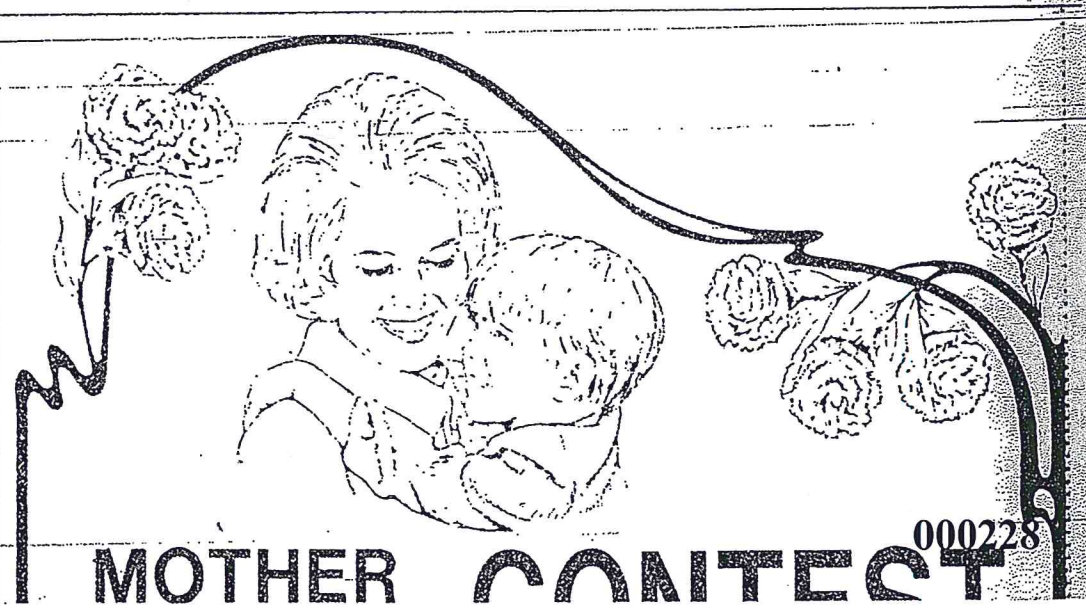
Witness: Slain Victims 'She-Devils'

WHITEVILLE — Joseph Sledge Jr., formerly of Fayetteville, on trial for the brutal murder of two Bladen County women, thought his victims were "she-devils" and "breeding devils," according to testimony Tuesday by two prison inmates who claim the suspect admitted the double murder to them. "He (Sledge) told me he thought fire instead of blood would come out when he cut them, since they were 'she-devils.' He talked about a lot of blood, said he went crazy (during the murders) and he talked on and on about killing white women," said Herman Baker, 27, who has one more year to serve for breaking and entering. The prosecution rested late Tuesday after the two surprise witnesses presented the new evidence that law enforcement officials claimed to have found earlier this year. District Attorney Lee Greer and Lester Chalmers, a member of the special prosecuting team of the attorney general's office, hung their case against Sledge on a can of black pepper. Baker, who said he met Sledge in a Moore County prison last summer, said Sledge told him of escaping and running through the woods to the Davis house, which he thought was unoccupied. Baker testified that Sledge told him that after the murders, he sprinkled black pepper around the back door so the spirits of the "she-devils" could not follow him. Bladen County Sheriff's Detective Phillip Little said the only object found on the kitchen floor during the murder investigation was the empty black pepper can.

blood, about cutting and stabbing. He talked about women a lot. He said they were 'she-devils' and 'breeding-devils' and that they were used to trick the black man." Sutton was imprisoned until 1985 for being an accessory to murder. "He said he was glad the bitches were dead," Baker testified. "He said he ran through the woods after his escape and that he broke into the house because he thought no one lived there. When a woman ran into the room and screamed at him, he told me he hit her in the fist with his jaw." "When another woman ran in the room and screamed to call the police," Baker said, "he told me he picked a knife up and started stabbing her. When the other one jumped on him and tried to stop him, he told me he knocked her down and fell on top of her, stabbing her over and over. "He said he sort of went crazy then and couldn't remember everything he did. Afterward, he said he couldn't remember how or why, but that he knew both women were cut up very badly," Baker said. Sutton, who cut his eyes at Sledge while sworn for testimony, avoided Sledge's gaze while on the witness stand. Sledge, emotionless for the most of trial, leaned forward and stared intently at Sutton during his testimony. Baker glanced nervously at the defendant during his testimony. As Baker left the stand and walked across in front of the defense table, Sledge

leaned forward again, staring at Baker with a slight smile. Baker said he volunteered his information to White Lake Prison Supervisor C.L. Sparkman in February and later told law enforcement authorities. Sutton said he revealed what he knew at about the same time. Sledge was not indicted for the Sept. 3, 1976, murders until Feb. 17, 1978, when the unsolved murders unit of the State Bureau of Investigation said they had uncovered "new evidence" in the case, but declined to reveal what it was. Still lab specialist Jeb Taub testified that his analysis revealed numerous blood smears in the front and back seats and on the doors of a car stolen in Elizabethtown and used by Sledge in his

flight to South Carolina following his escape. Taub testified that the blood smears were not visible to the naked eye, and that the blood was apparently transferred to the car interior by being smeared from some other material. Taub said the upholstery was apparently wiped clean of visible blood spots, but a chemical tests revealed unseen traces of blood remaining. Sledge's court-appointed attorney, Rubin Moore of Elizabethtown, cross-examined prosecution witnesses only briefly, primarily to challenge their credibility. Moore indicated that the defense would present its case in Wednesday morning's session. Moore was uncertain whether he would call Sledge to testify in his own defense.



MOTHER CONTEST

000228

Darrington with 1,000 votes compared with 1,351 for Young and only 43 for J. Robert Saunders.

In the race for three county commissioner seats, incumbents John G. Balfour and James A. Hunt led the voting with 1,181 and 1,128, while Mabel M. Riley gained the third seat.

Uncontested all candidates with 1,952 votes followed by Balfour with 1,711, Mrs. Riley with 1,428, Robert L. Doby with 1,265, Younger F. Snead Jr. with 1,128, Clinton McLaughlin with 420 and Wesley G. Miller with 229.

In the clerk of superior court race, incumbent Juanita Edmund easily defeated challenger Betty McFadyen.

Speaker, 300 for a tie against for McLamb.

Butler will face former Republican sheriff Cranford Fann in the November general election.

In the race for two seats to the county board of commissioners, incumbent L. Shelton Warren was apparently re-elected and incumbent J. Homer Butler was defeated.

Warren received 2,491 votes followed by newcomer C. Marion Butler with 1,313 votes. J. Homer Butler with 2,329 and J. Albert Dudley with 1,119.

The two Democrats in the race will face Republicans in position in November.

Results of the Simpson

sparring the two main candidates.

In the county commissioners' race, 13 candidates were running for three seats. Incumbents William A. Butler, W. Vance Clark and Robert G. Hester will face O.J. Carroll Jr., John P. (Pat) Melvin and Byron L. McNeill in a runoff election for county commissioner.

Clerk of superior court candidate Smith S. Harris seems assured of winning a position held by Mrs. Wanda Campbell for the last several years. Like Sheriff Allen, Mr. Campbell announced earlier this year that he would not seek reelection. Harris captured 1,373 of the

votes, witnesses presented the new evidence that law enforcement officials claimed to have found earlier this year.

District Attorney Lee Greer and Lester Chalmers, a member of the special prosecuting team of the attorney general's office, hung their case against Sledge on a can of black pepper.

Baker, who said he met Sledge in a Moore County prison last summer, said Sledge told him of escaping and running through the woods to the Davis house, which he thought was unoccupied. Baker testified that Sledge told him that after the murders, he sprinkled black pepper around the back door so the spirits of the "he-devils" could not follow him.

Bladen County Sheriff's Detective Phillip Little said the only object found on the kitchen floor during the murder investigation was the empty black pepper can, which, after finding no fingerprints on it, was returned to its original position on the floor.

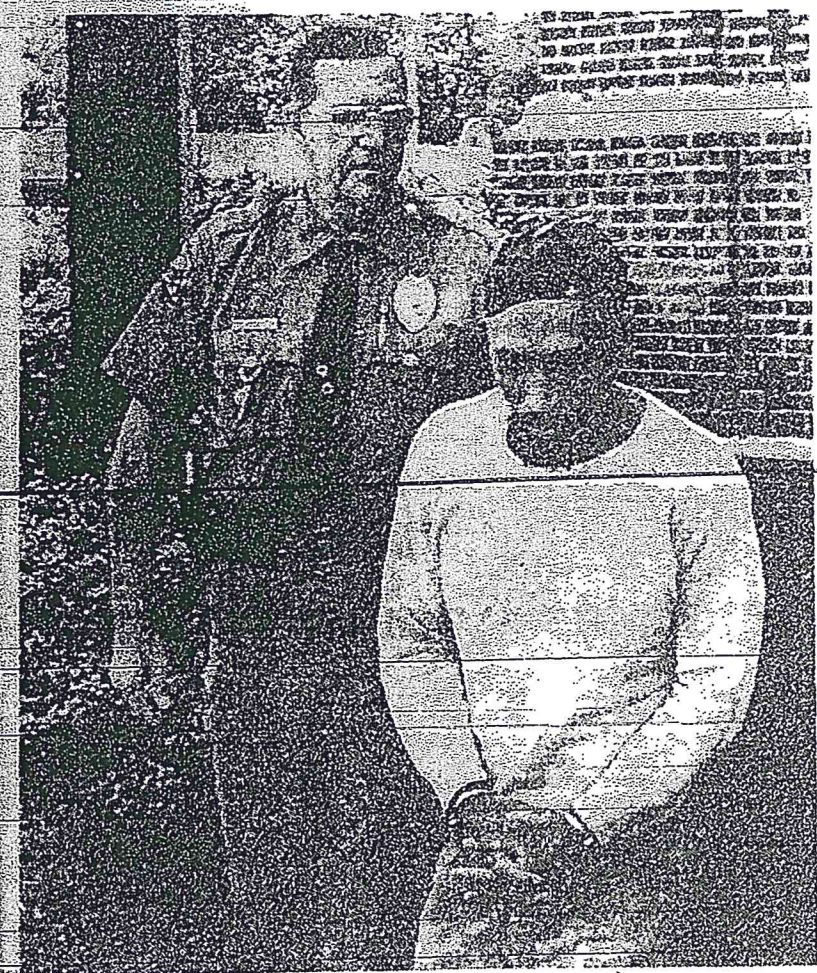
Little testified that the pepper can remained on the floor of the Davis house from Sept. 6, 1976, until Feb. 17, 1978, when it was retrieved as "new evidence."

Several members of the family of Josephine Davis, 71, and her 34-year-old daughter, Aileen, the two murder victims, were escorted from the courtroom in tears again Tuesday as color slides of the Davis women's bodies and their home were shown.

With the courtroom lights still on when the first slide was viewed, the dim images jumped into sharp focus as the lights were dimmed, all causing groans of protest from the jury and a flutter of turbulence among some children in the courtroom.

Another inmate who testified, Donald Lee Sutton, jailed in Cumberland County with Sledge immediately following his capture in Marion, S.C., a few days after the double murder, said Sledge told him he didn't want to kill the women, but that he was out in a position where he had to.

"He (Sledge) told me he had to get out of the state because he was afraid his murders would be pinned on him," Sutton said. "He said the women were out of their minds."



Sledge On Trial

Joseph Sledge Jr., formerly of Fayetteville, is led into the Columbus County Courthouse Wednesday by officer Kenneth Squires in what may be the last day

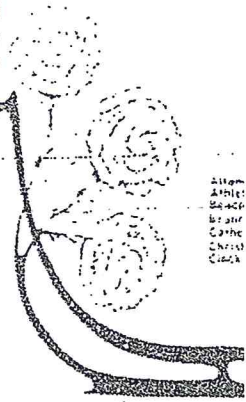
of his trial for the brutal murder of two Elizabethtown women in 1976. (Staff Photo Ken Cooke)

MOTHER OF THE \$32

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All forms must be returned by 9:00 P.M. Thursday, May 11th.

Winner will be notified Friday, May 12th.



Testimony Begins In Trial Of Sledge For Bladen Deaths

MAY 2 78 T

By DENNIS PATTERSON
of the Times-Star

WILMINGTON — Testimony started Monday in the Columbus County Superior Court trial of a former Fayetteville man accused of two 1976 murders while he was a prison escapee.

Joseph Sledge Jr. had escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit in Bladen County on Sept. 5, 1976 — the day before the bodies of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 74, and her daughter, 53-year-old Aileen Davis, had been discovered in their home two miles north of Elizabethtown.

Sledge was recaptured Sept. 9, in Dillon County, S.C., and returned to Bladen County Sept. 10.

He was indicted on two murder charges in the case by the Bladen County Grand Jury on Feb. 23, 1978.

The trial got off to a quick start Monday, with a jury seated after only two challenges.

In almost two hours of testimony, Bladen County Deputy Phillip Little said that Sledge, after he was captured, told him and another deputy that a white man, not a black man, brutally murdered the two Bladen County women.

Little said Sledge made the statement four days after the women's bodies were found in their home.

Little testified he and deputy Earl Storms drove Sledge from the prison unit to the Davis home Sept. 10 trying to retrace the route of his escape.

"We were pulled over on the shoulder of the road in front of the Davis house," Little testified. "He (Sledge) pointed to the house and said, 'A black man didn't kill them two women. A white man did. A black man wouldn't have cut them women up like that.'"

Little testified he had not yet questioned Sledge about the murders, and did not tell Sledge they were parked in front of the Davis house.

Little spent nearly two hours on the stand Monday afternoon describing the murder scene to the jury of 10 whites and two blacks.

Little, using photographs taken at the scene, told the jury the body of Aileen Davis was found lying against the front door.

The body of her mother, Josephine, was found several feet away.

Both bodies and the areas where they were found were splattered with blood.

Little testified both women had been stabbed numerous times in the face, neck and upper body.

The dresses worn by the women were admitted as evidence, both heavily stained with dried blood.

Omega Hales, another of Mrs. Davis' daughters, was led from the courtroom in tears when the dresses were shown in court.

Sledge, a 34-year-old former Fayetteville man, sat impassive through Monday's testimony, occasionally rubbing his shaved scalp, or scratching his bearded chin.

The short, muscular Sledge was led to and from the courtroom in heavy chains, accompanied by Columbus County police officers.

Sledge received a sentence of six to eight years for his 1976 escape, and another four-year sentence to stealing a car during that escape.

He was not charged with the murders until after a spe-

See SLEDGE, Page 1c-B

Sledge

From Page 1-B

cial unsolved murders team of the State Bureau of Investigation entered the case.

An SBI spokesman in February said new evidence had been found in the case, but law enforcement authorities have declined to say what that evidence is.

An agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is scheduled to take the witness stand this morning to testify about lab tests run on evidence found at the murder scene.

Witnesses Say Sledge Admitted Killing Two

MAY 3 '78
By DENNIS PATTERSON
Of The Times Staff

WHITEVILLE — Two convicts testified here Tuesday that Joseph Sledge Jr. admitted to them he killed Josephine and Aileen Davis in 1976.

Sledge is charged with two counts of first degree murder in the Sept. 6, 1976, deaths of the two Davis women in their small farm house near Elizabethtown.

Donnie Lee Sutton, a prisoner at the Sampson County Prison Unit in Clinton, testified that on Sept. 17, 1976, he and Sledge were being held in the Cumberland County jail.

Sutton, who is due to be released in 1986 on a conviction for accessory to murder after the fact, testified he was being held in Cumberland County on an escape charge, and talked to Sledge about his escape from the White Lake Prison Unit Sept. 5, 1976.

Sledge, Sutton testified, said he was trying to leave the state because he was afraid two murders were going to be "pinned" on him.

"He (Sledge) said he didn't intend to kill those people, but was put in a position where he had to," Sutton testified. "He talked about there being a lot of blood and how the women were stabbed and cut up.

"He said he'd hid his clothes and they would never be found," Sutton said.

Sutton also testified Sledge referred to 73-year-old Josephine Davis and her 51-year-old daughter Aileen as "she-devils."

Herman Baker Jr., currently serving a term for breaking and entering at White Lake Prison Unit, testified in June 1977, he and Sledge talked about the murders at the Moore County Prison Unit in Carthage.

Baker testified Sledge told him he had entered what he thought was an abandoned house, ran into two white women, whom he killed, and then ran from the house.

"He said one woman started screaming at him and he hit her," Baker testified. "He told me another woman tried to pull him off the first woman and he stabbed them both.

"He said he went sort of crazy or something and kept stabbing them," Baker said. "He said they were 'she-devils' and that he didn't expect blood when he stabbed them.

"He said he expected fire to come out of them, not blood," Baker testified.

"He told me he sprinkled black pepper around the back door when he left so the 'she-devils' would not be able to follow him."

Baker said he volunteered the information to White Lake Prison supervisor C.L. Sparkman in February, and gave the story to law enforcement authorities Feb. 15, 1978.

Sutton also testified he told his story to law officers when questioned Feb. 15, 1978.

Sledge was indicted in the two murders Feb. 23 by the Bladen County Grand Jury. A spokesman for the State Bureau of Investigation said at that time new evidence had been uncovered in the case, but did not specify what the new evidence was.

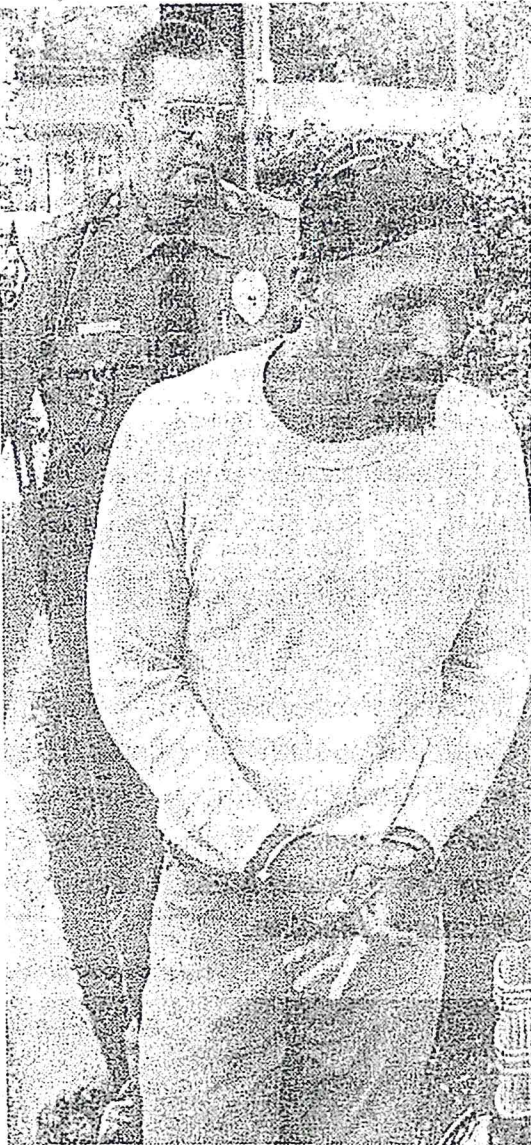
Detective Phillip Little of the Bladen County Sheriff's Office testified Tuesday he found a small can of black pepper lying on the floor of the Davis kitchen the day the two bodies were found.

He said the can had been checked for fingerprints, but no prints were found, and the can had been returned to its original position on the floor.

The pepper can, he said, remained on the floor from Sept. 6, 1976, until Feb. 17, 1978, when he took custody of the can as evidence.

Earlier Tuesday, a laboratory specialist with the Federal Bureau of Investigation tes-

See SLEDGE, Page 16-B



Staff Photo By KEN COOKE

JOSEPH SLEDGE JR. IS ESCORTED TO COURT
Officer Kenneth Squires Accompanies Him

Sledge

From Page 1-B

tified hairs found on the body of Aileen Davis "could have originated from Joseph Sledge."

James C. Brier, of the FBI, compared hairs taken from Miss Davis' body with hairs taken from Sledge, but said such comparisons could not be used for positive identification.

He testified the hairs could have come from Sledge, "or someone of his race with unusually similar hair traits."

SBI lab special Jeb Taub testified his chemical analysis of a car used by Sledge in his escape showed blood smears on the front and back seats as well as the doors.

Taub testified the blood stains were not visible to the eye, and that the blood apparently was transferred to the seat from some other material.

Taub said the car upholstery had apparently been wiped clean of visible blood spots, but

said the spots became obvious under chemical analysis.

Sledge remained stoic through most of Tuesday's testimony, as he did on the opening day of the trial Monday.

He sat impassively, occasionally rubbing his shaved scalp or scratching his beard.

He held several quiet consultations with his court-appointed attorney, Rubin Moore, during testimony by Sutton and Baker, and left the courtroom muttering in a high-pitched voice.

The defense begins its arguments this morning, and Moore indicated to Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring there would be little testimony from defense witnesses.

If the defense case is brief, the case could go before the jury of nine men and three women as early as this afternoon.

Fate Of Sledge In Jury's Hands

MAY 4 '78 T.

By DENNIS PATTERSON

Of The Times Staff

WHITEVILLE — A nine-man, three woman jury is scheduled to resume deliberations today to decide whether 34-year-old Joseph Sledge Jr. brutally murdered two Bladen County women in 1976.

Sledge has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the Sept. 6, 1976, stabbing deaths of Josephine Davis, 73, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 51.

The Bladen County Superior Court jury began its deliberations late Wednesday afternoon after three days of testimony. But, the jury foreman reported to Judge D.B. Herring shortly after 5 p.m. Wednesday that jurors did not seem to be close to a decision.

Sledge, formerly of Fayetteville, escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit near the Davis home Sept. 5, 1976. He was recaptured on Sept. 9 in Dillon, S.C.

The bodies of the two Davis women were discovered in their blood-splattered living room the afternoon of Sept. 6 by a relative.

In testimony this week, prosecutors attempted to show through circumstantial evidence that Sledge broke into the small Davis farmhouse, killed the two women and then fled.

Two convicts who have been imprisoned with Sledge during the last 18 months testified Tuesday Sledge had admitted to them he killed the two women.

Ronnie Lee Sutton said Tuesday that while he and Sledge were confined in the Cumberland County Jail on Sept. 17, 1976, that Sledge had admitted to him he killed the women.

The other convict, Herman Baker, told the jury Tuesday that Sledge had described the murders to him while he and Sledge were imprisoned in the Moore County Prison Unit in June 1977.

Sledge's attorney, Rubin Moore, Wednesday declined to present any defense evidence or put Sledge on the witness stand, but hammered away at the state's evidence during his closing summation to the jury.

"I believe the state has an obligation to serve truth and justice in this matter," Moore told the jury. "I believe all the evidence should have been brought here for you to examine in deciding this matter.

"There were 97 sets of fingerprints taken, according to state's witnesses," Moore said. "There were plaster casts of footprints taken, yet none of these have been presented in this courtroom.

The state has not even submitted evidence as to when the two women were killed," Moore said. "It just appears that because Joseph Sledge had escaped from the prison unit and happened to be in the same general area, he became the target without any physical evidence to tie him to the murders."

Lester Chalmers, a special prosecutor in the case, in his summation told the jury witnesses had shown Sledge knew of the murders, and said the testimony should remove any reasonable doubt of Sledge's guilt.

District Attorney Lee Greer said the testimony of police officers and the two convicts had spread a "net of guilt around Joseph Sledge in this case and has torn away his robe of innocence."

Greer said the state had to use circumstantial evidence because the crime was committed "in the dead of night without the benefit of witnesses."

Judge Herring ordered the jury to report back to the courtroom at 9:30 a.m. today. He rejected a defense motion to sequester the jury.

Mistrial Ruled In Sledge Case

MAY 5 1978

By DENNIS PATTERSON
Of The Times Staff

WHITEVILLE — The murder trial of Joseph Sledge Jr. ended in a mistrial Thursday when the jury deadlocked on a vote of 11-1.

Sledge, charged in the 1976 murders of Josephine Davis and Aileen Davis in Bladen County, showed emotion for the first time in the four-day trial, smiling as the jury foreman reported the deadlock.

The jury began their deliberations Wednesday afternoon, and began again at 9:30 a.m. Thursday.

JOSEPH SLEDGE
Defendant

At 2 p.m., the jury foreman told Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring

the vote was 10-2. He did not say which side favored guilt in the case.

About 4:20 p.m., the foreman reported the vote had changed to 11-1, and Herring ordered the jury to go on deliberating until 5 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the foreman reported the jury was "hopelessly deadlocked" at 11-1.

Herring at that point declared a mistrial and thanked the jury of 10 whites and two blacks for their service.

Jurors indicated after the trial that 11 of them had voted for conviction on the murder charges, with one juror holding out for innocence.

District attorney Lee Greer told

Herring immediately after the mistrial was declared that the state would try Sledge again for the murders.

Early indications were that the matter probably would be tried again in Columbus County in August.

The trial had been moved from Bladen County to Columbus County because of pre-trial publicity.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit in Bladen County Sept. 5, 1976.

The bodies of 73-year-old Josephine Davis, and her 54-year-old daughter Aileen, were found the next day in their small farm house near Elizabethtown.

Investigators testified this week

that both women had been repeatedly stabbed and beaten almost beyond recognition.

The inside of the house was described as a "slaughterhouse" by Special Prosecutor Lester Chalmers, of the state Attorney General's office.

Chalmers and Greer Wednesday told the jury circumstantial evidence, and the testimony of two convicts who alleged that Sledge admitted to them he murdered the two women, "wove a net of guilt" around Sledge.

Sledge's attorney, Rubin Moore, however, argued that the state had produced no concrete physical evidence linking Sledge with the murders.

Black Candidate Wins In Wake Sheriff Race

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — John H. Baker Jr., seeking to become North Carolina's first black sheriff, scored a decisive victory in a Wake County Democratic runoff primary over the man who has served as chief deputy for the past 12 years.

But black candidates for sheriff in Bladen and Granville counties went down to defeat in Tuesday's voting.

In New Hanover County, Democratic voters turned their incumbent sheriff out of office, but Wilson County Sheriff Robin Pridgen, whose department has been under investigation, was returned to office by a sizeable margin.

Cumberland County Democrats nominated a candidate for coroner who wants to abolish the office, and voters in mountainous Yancey County overwhelmingly rejected a series of ballot questions that would have legalized beer and wine sales.

All told, 38 of the state's 100 counties had at least one local race.

Alex Brock, state elections director, said those counties tended Tuesday to have higher voter turnouts than others because "people always respond to local races in a more spirited way than they do statewide races."

In Wake County, where Sheriff Robert Pleasants is retiring after 32 years in office, Baker won the right to

November.

Baker, a former professional football player and aide to U.S. Sen. Robert Morgan, D-N.C., received 22,414 votes. Chief Deputy Lester Kelly, got 18,923.

In the Bladen County sheriff's race, a black deputy, Joe N. Kelly, was defeated by a white deputy, Earl Storms. Storms, who will oppose Republican Bob McDuffie in the general election, tallied 4,354 votes to Kelly's 2,357.

A black candidate for sheriff in Granville County, Henry E. Royster, was defeated by the incumbent, William A. Jenkins. Royster led a five-man race in the first primary, but lost to Jenkins in the runoff, 4,191 to 2,757.

New Hanover County Sheriff H.G. Grohman lost a Democratic runoff by Thomas A. Radewicz, who resigned as a sheriff's lieutenant to challenge his boss.

Radewicz, who will face Republican James Kerr in the general election, garnered 6,366 votes in the runoff, while the incumbent received 5,235.

Yancey County residents, by an average margin of 2½ to 1, voted down a ballot initiative that would have legalized beer and wine sales. They followed the lead of neighboring Mitchell County, which rejected a similar ballot issue May 2.

Sledge Trial Set Aug. 24

Joseph Sledge, 34, will be tried for the second time Aug. 24 in Columbus County Superior Court, officials said here this week.

Sledge is charged with the slaying of Mrs. Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 58, of Elizabethtown, Sept. 6, 1976.

The trial was moved to Columbus County at Whiteville because of pre-trial publicity. Judge D.B. Herring, Jr. of Fayetteville declared a mistrial four days after jury deliberations without coming to a verdict May 4, 1978.

Sledge was charged with the killings by a Bladen County Grand Jury in Elizabethtown Feb. 23, 1978.

District Attorney Lee Greer of Whiteville said Tuesday he does not believe the state could ask for a death sentence if it won a conviction in the case because the state capital pun-

ishment law was unconstitutional at the time of the slayings SEE SLEDGE ON PAGE TWO

Lights On Tractor

There were lights on the front of a tractor being operated by Clarence "Sonny" McLemore and a slow moving vehicle sign on the rear, according to members of his family.

McLemore was killed Friday night when a car operated by Rudolph Fulton of Elizabethtown struck the tractor. McLemore was driving about 6 miles northwest of Elizabethtown on N.C. 53.

In the original report, the State Patrol said there were no lights on the tractor, however, the family reports to The Bladen Journal that there

Elkins Service Planned

The Department of the Navy will hold a commemorative service for Commander Frank Callihan Elkins on Aug. 24.

It will be held at the National Cemetery, Wilmington, at 10 a.m. on the 24th.

The status of Cdr. Elkins, Navy pilot, MIA over North Viet Nam, Oct. 12, 1966, was changed to POD, (presumptive death), Jan. 1, 1978.

Commander Elkins was a native of Bladenboro.

Sledge

--from page one

and the new law for the death penalty did not go into effect until later.

The bodies of the Davis women were discovered on Labor Day, Sept. 6, 1976, lying on the floor of their living room. They had been beaten savagely, investigating officers said.

Sledge became a suspect shortly after the killings were discovered. He had escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit the day before and was believed to have traveled on foot in the direction of the Davis home on N.C. 242 just two miles north of Elizabethton. He was later captured in Dillon, S.C. and charged with escape and auto larceny. He was later convicted on those charges. Sledge has remained in the prison since that time.

The initial investigation revealed few clues and no charges of murder were made against Sledge until later in the investigation.

State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten re-opened the case Aug. 26, 1977, and turned it over to the State Bureau of Investigation with Henry Poole of the Homicide Squad and Bladen County Detective Phillip Little in charge.

NUMBER ONE
IN BLADEN

THE BLADEN

Vol. 71 No. 67 ★ LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY NEWSPAPER IN BLADEN COUNTY ★ ELIZABETHTOWN, N. C. 28337 MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 1978 ★ THE P. O. BOX

Sledge Trial Started At Whiteville Monday



JOE SLEDGE

The second trial of Joe Sledge for the double killings of Josephine Davis, 75, and

her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, of Elizabethtown, began Monday morning at Whiteville.

The Davis women were found brutally beaten to death Labor Day, September 6, 1976 at their home just two miles north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242.

Sledge was tried earlier this year, however, a mistrial was declared by Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring, Jr. of Fayetteville when the jury failed to reach a verdict. The jury voted 11 to 1 finding Sledge guilty of the slayings.

The trial had been moved to Columbus County because of pre-trial publicity given the case by State, regional and local newspapers.

Jury selection was expected to get underway early Monday morning.

Sledge cannot be given the death sentence since the murders occurred prior to the establishment of a new capital offense ruling by the United States Supreme Court.

That ruling became effective

July 1, 1977. The murders occurred September 6, 1976.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison unit the day before the bodies of the Davis women were discovered. He stole a car in Elizabethtown on September 6 and was seen in Fayetteville, however, Sledge evaded law officers in Fayetteville. About two days later, Sledge was stopped in Dillon, S.C. for questioning by a police officer. The officer let Sledge go without charges, but later recognized Sledge from a photo shown on TV-6 at Wil-

lington. The officer patrolled Dillon once again to find Sledge was arrest him.

Sledge was returned to Fayetteville after his arrest in Dillon and then back to Bladen County where he stayed for a very short time before being transferred back to Fayetteville then to maximum security at Raleigh.

Sledge was returned to Bladen later for trial on the escape and auto larceny charges. He was found guilty on both charges.

Major Opium Seizure

HONG KONG (AP) — Customs officers here seized 7½ pounds of opium at Kaitak Airport Saturday and arrested a 33-year-old who carried the drug from Singapore.

A government spokesman said bags of opium, valued at about \$22,500, were strapped to the man's legs. His name and nationality were not disclosed.

Farmers Asked Cut Tobacco Sta

Bladen County tobacco growers are encouraged to cut

tobacco stalks soon after harvest. The county extension ser-

vice says tests have shown cutting tobacco stalks and ridding fields of old crop residue can reduce insects which the ser-

vice says, over-winter and appear in the coming year crop.

Growers are asked to mow down the stalks with a bush hog. Then, plow out the plant's

Inmate Says Sledge Admitted Slayings

An inmate in the state prison system testified Tuesday that Joe Sledge, 34, accused killer of two Bladen County women, confessed to him that he killed Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Alleen, 57, on Labor Day of 1976.

Inmate Donald Sutton told a Whiteville jury Tuesday that Sledge admitted killing the two Davis women while they, Sledge and Sutton, were inmates in the Cumberland County Jail a few days after the murders were discovered.

The Davis women were found by another daughter of Mrs. Davis lying in their livingroom floor dead about 4 p.m. Labor Day, 1976. Their bodies had been brutally beaten. One of the women had been sexually assaulted.

The trial was the second one for Sledge in this case. A mistrial was declared May 5 by Superior Court Judge Darius R. Herring, Jr. of Fayetteville after the jury voted 11 to 1 in favor of a life sentence for the accused inmate.

The new trial began Monday at Whiteville with jury selection. The new jury is now composed entirely of whites. Sledge is black.

Sutton told the jury Sledge told him that the women were killed because they were "she devils" and they bred devils.

The trials of Sledge were held out of Bladen County because of pre-trial publicity given to the case by local and out-of-state newspapers.

Two detectives—one for the State Bureau of Investigation, the other, a Bladen County deputy sheriff—said they were told the story of the killings by Sutton in a February 1978 conversation with him.

State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten re-opened the case in September of 1977 upon request of Bladen County

Sheriff John B. Allen.

Allen said that at the time of the killings they were the worst he had ever seen in his entire career of law enforcement.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison unit about six miles northeast of the Davis home the day before the killings were discovered. He was also

charged and found guilty of auto larceny and escape in Bladen County.

The Davis home is located just two miles north of Elizabethtown on N.C. 242

Bladen County Resident Superior Court Judge Giles R. Clark is the presiding judge for Sledge's second trial.

Tobacco Festival Beauty Pageant Requirements

Requirements for the 1978 Clarkton Tobacco Festival Beauty Pageant were announced Wednesday by the Clarkton Jaycettes, sponsoring organization.

For the beauty pageant contestants, all must be single, between the ages of 16 and 21, have a written consent of their parents to enter the contest, have a sponsor, pay a fee of \$15 and make their entry into the contest by September 25. The pageant is set for October 7 to be held in the Bladen Technical Institute's auditorium.

Competition for the pageant consists of evening gown and beauty and swimsuit. Winners will receive cash awards. First place will get \$100, first runner-up will receive \$75 and second place runner-up will get

a \$50 cash award.

In the Little Miss portion of the pageant, youngsters desiring entry must be 4 to 6 years old, must have long dresses, pay an entry fee of \$5 and

must attend rehearsals at BTI on Oct. 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Entry forms may be obtained by calling Brenda Watts at 862-2796 after 6 p.m.

Concert Leads County Arts Series

Miss Marcia Brisson of Raleigh will present a piano concert at Baptist Church in Elizabethtown on Thursday, September 7, at 7:30 p.m.

The artist, a 15-year-old student at Sanderson High School

in Raleigh, is the daughter of Virgil Brisson, formerly of Dublin, and the granddaughter of Mrs. Sam Davis of Tar Heel and Mrs. A. W. Brisson of Dublin.

Rotary Gov Visits Here

B&E Re

Two Elizabethtown men were charged with grand larceny and breaking and entering of the

Patrol Ready

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State Resident Superior Court Judge Giles R. Clark passed sentence on Sledge immediately after an all-white jury returned the verdict of guilty of second degree murder about 10 p.m. that night.

Sledge was charged with the brutal slayings of the two Davis women in early September of 1976. Their bodies were discovered in their home on September 6 by a relative.

Defense attorney Rueben Moore of Elizabethtown filed an appeal to a higher following the passing of Sledge's sentence by Judge Clark.

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Two inmates testified that Sledge admitted killing the Davis women to them while they were in jail with Sledge.

The case went unsolved for more than a year when State Attorney General Rufus Edmisten, upon request of Bladen Sheriff John B. Allen, re-opened the investigation. Edmisten ordered the State Bureau of Investigation's murder squad into the investigation.



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Joseph Sledge

Sledge Trial Opens In Whiteville

AUG 29 '78

WHITEVILLE — Testimony was expected to begin this morning in the retrial of Joseph Sledge Jr. of Fayetteville, who is charged with two counts of first degree murder in connection with the stabbing and bludgeoning death of two elderly women near Elizabethtown on Labor Day in 1976.

Superior Court Judge D.B. Herring Jr., who presided over the first trial in May, ordered a new trial held after a jury hung at 11 to one in favor of conviction. A jury is required by law

to be unanimous in its decision before any defendant can be convicted.

The trial in May was moved to Columbus County from Bladen County where charges were brought because the court-appointed defense attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, moved that Sledge could not get a fair trial in Bladen because of extensive publicity.

Superior Court Judge Giles Clark recessed proceedings until this morning at 9:30 after a jury of 10 whites and two blacks were seated late Monday afternoon.

During the first trial, two former cellmates of Sledge testified that the defendant admitted to them that he killed the Davis women after he entered what he thought was an unoccupied house.

Donald Lee Sutton, who was in the Cumberland County jail with Sledge after the defendant was recaptured following a prison escape in White Lake the afternoon before the women's bodies were discovered, testified in May that Sledge referred to the victims as "she-devils, meant to trick the black man."

Herman Baker, who has less than a year remaining to serve on a breaking and entering conviction, testified that Sledge told him last year in a Charlotte prison camp that "he thought fire would come out of those women when he cut them instead of blood because he thought they were 'she-devils.'"

District Attorney Lee J. Greer indicated Monday that the state will call a number of out-of-state witnesses and will offer new evidence in the retrial this week.

By J. L. PATE
staff writer

AUG 31 '78

WHITEVILLE — Taking the witness stand in his own defense Wednesday, Joseph Sledge Jr. of Fayetteville said he never went near N.C. 242 the night two women living along the road were brutally stabbed and beaten to death.

The bodies of Josephine Davis, 75, and her daughter, Aileen Davis, 57, were found Sept. 6, 1976, in their home on N.C. 242 about two miles north of Elizabethtown.

Sledge, who escaped from the nearby White Lake prison camp the afternoon before the women were found, was charged with two counts of first degree murder on Feb. 23, 1978.

The defendant said the only time he had been on N.C. 242 was with prison road crews, "cleaning right-of-ways, bursing dead dogs, whatever they told me to do."

The small, muscular black man with a beard who has begun to let his shaved head grow out, testified that he stayed next to U.S. 701 as he walked toward Elizabethtown where he stole a car the night of his escape.

"I stayed two or three yards off the highway, you know, in the brush where I couldn't be visualized by the human beings coming down the highway. . . I did this so whenever an occurrence would take effect, I could immediately visualize it and see creatures moving on the earth and take some plan of action," Sledge testified under cross-examination by Lester Chalmers, a special prosecutor from the state Attorney General's Office.

Sledge, who was recaptured with the stolen car in Dillon, S.C., Sept. 9, 1976, answered "No, sir," emphatically, when asked by his court-appointed attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, whether he killed the two Davis women.

Asked by Chalmers why he decided to escape from the White Lake prison camp, Sledge said he was afraid another inmate there was planning to harm him. With his large eyes wandering across the high ceiling of the superior courtroom, Sledge said he heard after his escape that he was a suspect in the murders and was trying to find "a man" who would give him money, legal assistance and help him turn himself in.

"What man?" Chalmers inquired.

"A man — a man, man," Sledge shot back, seeming somewhat irritated.

"Where was this man?" Chalmers asked.

"He was on another part of the earth," Sledge said.

Herman Baker Jr., who testified he met Sledge in the Hole In

(See SLEDGE, Page 2B)

Sledge Denies Slayings

The Wall Pool Room in Fayetteville in 1969, said Sledge admitted the double-murder to him last year while the two were in the Carthage prison camp together.

"Joe told me he went in the (Davis) house because he thought nobody lived there. Then he said this old lady ran into the room hollering, 'What are you doing in my house?' He said he hit her in the jaw and began to stab her when another woman ran into the room and tried to pull him off her," Baker, who now works in Philadelphia, Pa., testified.

"He said he knocked the other woman down and began to stab her, too. I remember that he (Sledge) said he was surprised by all the blood. He said the women were she-devils and he thought fire, not blood, would come out of them when he cut them. He told me, 'Damn. It seemed like I went crazy!'"

"Sledge was always talking about she-devils. He said she-devils were white women and that all of them should be killed because they were the breeders of devils," Baker said. "I remember him telling another (black) inmate that he (the inmate) should kill his girlfriend because she was white."

Under questioning by Moore, Sledge said he did not think white women were she-devils and he denied that he hated white women.

Baker also testified that Sledge allegedly told him that after killing the women, he poured a circle of black pepper around the back door of the unpainted Davis farmhouse "so the spirits of the she-devils wouldn't be able to follow him."

Jury Deliberates 5 Hours

Sledge Gets Sentences
in Two Bladen Deaths

By J. L. PATE

Staff Writer

WHITEVILLE — Almost two years after the alleged crime was committed, Joseph Sledge Jr. of Fayetteville was given two life sentences after he was convicted on two counts of second degree murder in the Labor Day slayings in 1976 of Josephine Davis, 75, and her 57-year-old daughter, Aileen Davis.

A jury of 10 whites and two blacks deliberated for five hours before bringing back a guilty verdict at about 10:45 p.m. Thursday.

Sledge, who still maintains his innocence concerning the brutal stabbing and bludgeoning of the two women in their home two miles north of Elizabethtown on Sept. 5, 1976, sighed heavily and showed no emotion as the verdict was read.

His court-appointed attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, gave immediate notice of appeal.

After the bodies of the two women were found late on the afternoon of Sept. 6, 1976, Sledge, who escaped from the White Lake prison camp the day before, became the prime suspect. He was captured

in Dillon, S.C., Sept. 9, 1976, but he was not indicted for the murders until Feb. 23, 1978.

Citing his Islamic faith, Sledge said life in prison will not be a burden to him "because it's the power of God. . . . The person that committed this crime, he's got to suffer. He's out there in civilization and it's on his conscience.

"But I'll suffer in prison," Sledge said. "He's going to read in the paper tomorrow and say 'They got that old boy for something I did.' I don't know what he's going to do, but whatever he does, he ought to straighten it up because he knows that I'm an innocent man."

Superior Court Judge Giles Clark of Elizabethtown immediately sentenced Sledge to two life terms when a verdict was returned.

Special prosecutor Lester Chalmers of Long Beach, presented two inmates who testified that Sledge confessed the double murder to them on two different occasions.

Herman Baker Jr. of Philadelphia, Pa., said under oath that Sledge confessed killing the "she-devils" while the

two were in a Carthage prison camp last year. Baker testified that Sledge told him he sprinkled a circle of black pepper near the back door before leaving the murder scene "to keep the spirits of the she-devils from following him."

Detective Phillip Little of the Bladen County Sheriff's Department testified that after he heard this account from Baker in February, he returned to the Davis residence, which he said had been locked since the crimes, and allegedly found a can of black pepper near the back door on the floor.

The defense called two inmates who were in the Cumberland County jail with Sledge when he allegedly confessed to Donald Lee Sutton, who also testified against Sledge. The two inmates called by the defense said they were with Sledge and Sutton and that no confession was ever made.

The defense objected to the introduction as evidence a statement that Sledge allegedly made to Little when returned to the crime scene, a statement which the state contended implicated Sledge in the crime.

Relatives of the two Davis women wept as the verdict was read.



Summary

Jury Hears Report Of Statement By Sledge

By J. L. PATE
Staff Writer

WHITEVILLE — A convict repeated Tuesday a confession allegedly made to him in jail by Joseph Sledge Jr. of Fayetteville that Sledge stabbed and brutally beat an elderly woman and her daughter to death in their home near Elizabethtown the night following his escape from the White Lake prison camp Sept. 5, 1976.

"All he (Sledge) talked about were 'she-devils' and a whole lot of blood. We were eating breakfast (in the Cumberland County jail) and he said those were two (women) that would never eat breakfast again," testified Donald Lee Sutton, who is serving a 28 to 30-year sentence for being an accessory to murder. Sutton said under oath that Sledge told him "he thought all white women should be killed that came across his path."

"He (Sledge) said he didn't know those women were in that house and he hadn't intended to do it, but he was put in a position where he had to (kill them)," Sutton said.

Sutton testified in the first trial of Sledge in May, which ended in a hung jury, voting 11 to one for conviction on two counts of first degree murder.

Herman Baker, who also testified in the first trial that Sledge admitted the crime to him while the two were in a Carthage prison camp, is expected to be the final witness called by the prosecution today. Baker, who was serving a sentence for breaking and entering, is now free. He came from Philadelphia, Pa., to testify.

Mrs. Josephine Davis, 75, and her 57-year-old daughter, Aileen, were found on Sept. 6, 1976, by their relative and next-door-neighbor, Wanda Hales, who was the first witness to take the stand Tuesday.

Mrs. Hales, who had brought (See JURY, Page 15B)

(Continued From Page 1B)

Mrs. Davis home from church late the night of the murders, but did not go into their house, told of having trouble pushing open the front door the next day after no one would answer her knocks. She said she found her Aunt Aileen just inside the door, with her grandmother sprawled in the middle of the floor, both women with their dresses pulled up around their waist and underclothes removed.

Photographs introduced as evidence and passed to the jury to illustrate the testimony of Bladen County Detective Phillip Little showed the two victims lying in huge pools of blood, with blood also splattered on three walls of the large room and all over two refrigerators.

Little testified he found a bloody shoeprint in another room headed out the rear door of the home.

As photographs of the bloodsoaked murder scene were passed to the jury, Sledge, who spent most of his time slumped down in a chair, broke into a smile that turned down at the corners of

his mouth. At other times, he closed his eyes and seemed to doze.

Defense attorney Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown objected several times before the jury was allowed to hear testimony from Little concerning an inadvertent admission Sledge allegedly made when returned to the crime scene by Little. Sledge was captured in Dillon, S.C., Sept. 8, 1976.

Little, who testified he had advised Sledge of his rights twice, and who said he had questioned Sledge only about his prison escape, but had not mentioned any murders to him, said of returning to the murder scene, "We sat across the road from the Davis house for several minutes. Sledge's hands were handcuffed in front of him and he raised both hands and pointed to the Davis house and said, 'A black man didn't kill those two women, a white man did.

A black man wouldn't have cut those women up like that."

Lee Sampson, Marshall Evans and Jed Taub, all of the State Bureau of Investiga-

tion, and Jim Friar from the main office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C., are expected to testify this morning concerning some hair identified by lab tests as being of "negroid origin" found embedded in blood on one of the Davis women.

Little is also expected to take the stand to testify about a piece of circumstantial evidence, an empty pepper can, he found on the floor that corroborates testimony Baker will make about Sledge's confession.

In a switch from the first trial, in which no defense witnesses were called, Moore told The Observer he might call two defense witnesses today, but it is doubtful that Sledge will take the witness stand in his own defense.

A jury of 10 whites and two blacks is expected to begin deliberating the case Thursday.

Jury Hears Alleged Statement

...the bus actually did not fail.
The brakes did not hold and
bus rolled back into another bu

"We have to work like Trojans to
get all 338 buses through," he said.
"This is one of the most busy times
any schools have already started."
Unlike the students they carry,
school buses don't get a summer
break.

County student bus drivers as-

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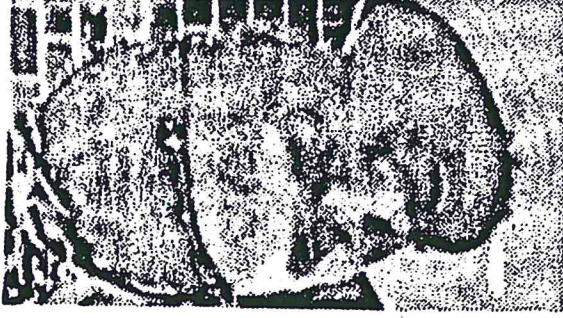
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...the bus actually did not fail.
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Sledge Denies Killing 2 Bladen County Women



JOSEPH SLEDGE
Defendant

U.S. 701 from the prison unit into Eliza-
beth town the night of Sept. 5.

"I stayed maybe two or three yards off
the road, so if any traffic came along I
could stay concealed," Sledge testified.

The Davis residence, where the two
women were found brutally beaten and
stabbed the afternoon of Sept. 6, is a few
hundred yards off U.S. 701 along N.C.

242.
"Did you kill the two Davis women?"
Sledge's attorney, Rubin Moore, asked.

"No, sir, I did not," Sledge replied.

For almost an hour Sledge described
his flight from the prison unit to Elizabe-
thtown, where he stole clothing and a
car. He later drove to Fayetteville and
was recaptured Sept. 9 in Dillon, S.C.

Under cross examination, Sledge testi-
fied he was not sure of exact times during
his flight.

By DENNIS PATTERSON

OF THE TIMES STAFF

WHITEVILLE — Joseph Sledge took
the witness stand in his own defense
Wednesday, denying that he killed two
Bladen County women in September
1976.

Sledge has been charged with murder
in the slayings of Josephine Davis, 75,
and her daughter, 56-year-old Ailene Da-
vis, in their home just outside Elizabeth-
town.

Sledge, a short, stocky black man with
close-cropped hair and goatee, testified in
a squeaky, high-pitched voice that he did
not go near the Davis house the night of
Sept. 5, 1976, after he escaped from near-
by White Lake prison unit.

Sledge, who frequently stammered
during his testimony, said he followed

He also testified he found out about the
murders from a newspaper article he saw
in Fayetteville after arriving there Sept.

"I said to myself, 'uh, oh, I better get
out of this present environment,'" Sledge
testified. "I decided to get with some
people who could help me out about these
alleged murders."

Prosecutors will continue questioning
Sledge when the trial resumes this morn-
ing.

Earlier Wednesday a former convict
testified Sledge told him he had killed the
two Davis women, and sprinkled pepper
around the back door of the house "to
keep the she-devil spirits from following
him."

Herman Baker, who now lives in Penn-
sylvania, testified he saw Sledge in Penn-
sylvania.

See SLEDGE, Page 2-B

Veteran Lee Deputy Quits Al

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Sledge

From Page 1-B

which was in the Carriage prison and with Sledge in 1977.

Kubler repeated his testimony from Sledge's first trial in May that Sledge told him he stabbed the two women and was forced to see fire come out of them as blood and bones they were absorbed.

Sledge's May trial ended in a hung jury.

Detective Philip Lalle of the Jackson County Sheriff's Department testified that after interviewing Baker at the White Lake prison and in January 1978, he returned to the Lake to interview and found a black pepper can near the back door of the house.

Lalle said he first saw the pepper can after the bodies were discovered Sept. 1, 1976, but did not take the can as evidence until after talking to Baker. The house had been searched during those 15 months. The defense is expected to request a retrial today, and the case would go to the jury of 10 whites and two blacks in late this afternoon.

Demity

From Page 1-B

SENTENCED

Sledge Convicted In Bladen Slayings

By DENNIS PATTERSON

Of The Times Staff

WHITEVILLE — Joseph Sledge Jr. was given two life sentences late Thursday night after being found guilty of second degree murder in the 1976 slayings of two Bladen County women.

The jury deliberated for five hours before finding Sledge guilty of the murders of 75-year-old Josephine Davis and her 56-year-old daughter Ailene in their small home just outside Elizabethtown.

Sledge escaped from the White Lake Prison Unit Sept. 5, 1976, and the bodies of the stabbed and beaten Davis women were found about 4 p.m. Sept. 6.

Sledge was recaptured Sept. 9, 1976, in Dillon, S.C., but was not indicted for the murders until Feb. 23, 1978.

Sledge gave a deep sigh as the jury returned to the courtroom about 10 p.m.

Thursday, but said nothing and showed no emotion as the jury foreman read the verdict and the jury was polled.

Immediately after the verdict was given, Superior Court Judge Giles Clark sentenced Sledge to two consecutive life terms in prison.

Sledge's attorney, Rubin Moore, immediately served notice of appeal.

Some members of the Davis family wiped tears as the verdict was read.

The jury at one time returned to the courtroom to ask Clark for more instructions on first-degree murder, specifically the legal definition of premeditation.

The jury foreman indicated at that time, 5:30 p.m., the jury might have a verdict within 30 minutes.

Sledge sat in the courtroom most of the evening, waiting for the jury to return with the verdict.

"It's in the hands of God," Sledge said as he waited. "It will come out as he wants it because he has all the power."

"If I'd done what I was supposed to do, I wouldn't be in this mess now," he said.

"I went over that fence (at the prison unit) and that was wrong. My time would have been out about January, but I went and jumped that fence."

Sledge, taking the stand in his own defense Wednesday, said he did not kill the Davis women, and that he did not go near their house on his way from the prison unit to Elizabethtown.

One convict and another former convict testified earlier this week that Sledge confessed to them he had killed the women.

Two other prisoners who were in the

See SLEDGE, Page 2-A

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Sledge

From Page 1-A

Cumberland County jail with Sledge after he was recaptured, however, said Sledge never mentioned the murders to them and made no confession.

Sledge was indicted after former prisoner Herman Baker told officers Sledge admitted the murders, and said he

sprinkled pepper at the back door of the house so "the she-devil spirits wouldn't chase him."

Detective Phillip Little of the Bladen County sheriff's Office discovered a can of black pepper near the back door of the

house after taking Baker's statement.

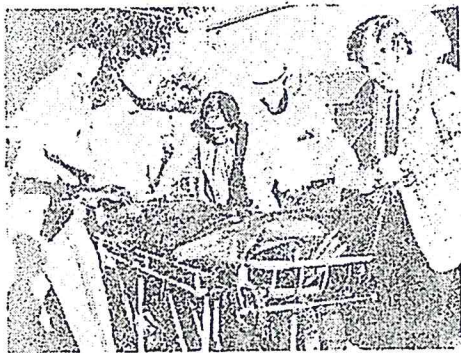
Bladen County Sheriff John B. Allen characterized the murders, in which one woman was stabbed at least seven times and the other three or four times, as the worst slayings he had seen in more than 30 years as sheriff.

OSLO, Norway (AP) — A Soviet military plane believed

The bodies of three persons were spotted near the crash

Per Bjarne Lundgard, an army spokesman, said the

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Master Detective

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BLOODY BUTCHERY IN BLADEN COUNTY

by RICHARD DEVON

THE FIRST TIME he saw the can of black pepper, Investigator Phillip Little paid it no more attention than he did a lot of other things in the kitchen of the little frame house. His senses were so heightened by the unusual activity of his adrenal glands that he could smell the scattered pepper, the odor of the cooked steak and gravy in the kitchen, and above all, the faint odor of the blood which by now had crept like a ghost through the house and hung there unseen and positive.

The pepper can lay on the floor, not on a table or sideboard as it might have been expected to, but that didn't necessarily mean anything in particular. The pepper can was brushed lightly with black powder, but the powder produced no clear, well-defined loops or whorls, only smudges. The can was returned to its original position.

Under the circumstances, the fact there were no lifts possible was not a matter of any particular disappointment. Certainly there was no reason to seriously consider that there was any significant relationship between the pepper can and the two bloody bodies

lying on the ground in front of the house.

The chances were almost 100 percent that not one but both of the women lying dead in the front of the house had handled the pepper can in the course of preparing the meaten meal. As for the can of pepper being on the floor, probably every housewife in the county at one time or another had knocked a can of pepper on the floor in haste to move a pot that was boiling over or pull a pan of biscuits out of the oven when they were about to be burned or something like that. And, for any one of a hundred reasons, it could have lain there unnoticed until somebody decided to sweep the floor or look for the pepper when it was needed.

At the time, the only difference Investigator Little could give this particular pepper can and all the others that might have been knocked on the floor in all the other houses in the county was that all the other houses in the county were not scenes for double murders. In fact, in his experience, this particular house was unique for that reason alone. Bladen County, N.C. just doesn't have that many murders.

The carnage that greeted North Carolina lawmen at the home of the Davis sisters was only the beginning of one of the most bizarre cases in Southern crime annals

Who would have thought the success or failure of the probe would hinge on a can of black pepper?

Of much more interest in the kitchen were two butcher knives that were stuck in the wall. They were brown-stained, although the stains didn't appear to be new and they didn't look like new blood. The knives were taken away, though, while the pepper can went back to its exact spot on the floor where it had been found.

So the pepper can stayed there for two years, almost, shut up in that house where the smell of the blood finally became an unidentifiable part of the general mustiness that grows in a closed-up house where people once lived. For Inv. Little, those almost two years consisted of long sleepless nights, grueling, frustrating weeks of riding and talking and asking questions, including the investigation of other murder cases.

For awhile there, because of the other killings, people in Bladen County were constantly on edge, because when you aren't used to murders close by and suddenly there are four of them, you just naturally have a tendency to get edgy. A solution to two of them brought a certain amount of relief to the public, but not to lawmen.

Then, on February 17, 1978, Inv. Little went back to the small frame house and back to the kitchen. The pepper can was right where it had been left all those months before. This time when he picked it up, he put it in an evidence envelope, wrote his name and the date, because after all those months, that can of black pepper had become a piece in a jig-saw puzzle, and, in the final analysis, it probably was the key to the whole picture that would convict an accused murderer.

The case had its beginnings, officially, on the afternoon of September 6, 1976. Investigator Little and Chief Deputy Earl Storms of the Bladen County, North Carolina Sheriff's Department were riding together near a little crossroads community known as Kelly on NC 53. As desolate as this road is, there probably isn't a community of any size in the original 48 states which doesn't have one citizen who is familiar with that strip of black top.

Not only does NC 53 intersect with US 301-Interstate 95 in Fayetteville, but it is also a popular route for literally thousands of young Marines who use it as

a starting point from Camp Lejeune on the Atlantic Coast at Jacksonville. It also is one of two major routes which skirts White Lake. White Lake, a big resort, is a unique body of crystal clear water which has no inlet or outlet. It is a self-purifying lake fed by underground springs and on a given day in the summertime, it is not uncommon to find at least one vehicle from all of the contiguous states parked at the various motels, camping sites and cottages which surround the sparkling waters.

On this particular Monday afternoon, the area was more crowded than usual. It was Labor Day. Deputy Storms and Investigator Little had ridden slowly through the White Lake area and then on out NC 53 when their car radio crackled alive. Both men immediately recognized the voice of Sheriff Johnny Allen, asking them to respond. Both also realized there was an unusual urgency in the sheriff's voice.

As soon as the sheriff was advised the location of Storms and Little, he responded with the information that he was standing by at a residence on NC 242, two miles from the county seat of Elizabethtown, where two women had been discovered murdered.

By the time the car carrying Storms and Little had turned around and headed back on NC 53 toward the crime scene, Sheriff Allen had identified the victims as Josephine Davis and her daughter Aline.

Murder is a rare item in Bladen County, but making the situation even more rare for Phillip Little was that the two victims, Sheriff Allen identified over the phone were neighbors of the county's chief criminal investigator. Little's residence was less than a mile from that of the Davis women, in a rural area.

When Chief Deputy Storms and Investigator Little arrived at the little frame house, a crowd had already gathered, but Sheriff Allen had managed to keep the distressed family members as well as a growing gathering of curious and neighbors from trampling over what might provide evidence in the case.

Little, a deceptively slender man with a receding hairline, and the more heavily-built Storms were quickly briefed on the situation. The 75-year-old mother and her 53-year-old daughter had been found by a relative who had summoned Sheriff

Allen at about 4:30 p.m. Allen had arrived a short time later, confirmed that the women were dead in a front room of the house and had then called for his chief deputy and chief investigator.

The house consists of five rooms and is located on the east side of NC 242 at a point 1.3 miles from Elizabethtown, which is the Bladen County seat.

Little went to the front door, which could not be opened all the way because it was blocked by the body of Aline Davis, whose bloody form was on its back, the right foot on the edge of a sofa. The left leg was bent almost double at the knee joint with the left foot near the left wall and the knee itself was almost straight up in the air. The 53-year-old woman's arms were thrown back above her head and bent at the elbows. She was dressed in a dark checkered dress and slip and these items of clothing had been pushed up past her waist. She wore neither panties nor brassiere.

Near the inner right thigh, between the outspread legs, was a brown and white lace-up type woman's shoe. There was no jewelry on the body, no socks or stockings.

The body of Josephine Davis was on its back in the middle of the floor, the head pointing east in contrast to the head of Aline Davis, which was in a southerly direction. She was lying so that her spread legs were outstretched, with the right foot touching the right elbow of Aline Davis. She was wearing a light-colored dress and slip, and these items were also pushed above the waist.

The mother's right arm was thrown back beside her head with the elbow bent and the right hand touching the sofa at the opposite end from where Aline Davis' right foot touched the piece of furniture. Josephine Davis' left arm was also bent at the elbow with the hand almost touching the left shoulder.

The upper torso of the older woman, who wore neither panties or brassiere, was covered with a printed bed sheet. It was placed in such a fashion as to leave the head exposed as well as the lower torso, where the clothing had been pushed up, but covered the arms.

On first examination, it was discovered that both women had suffered numerous stabbing or cutting wounds about the face and neck, and the lower

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arms and hands of both the victims were marked with defensive wounds. The head and neck area of both bodies were heavily saturated with blood. There were pools of blood beneath the heads and upper torsos of both bodies. The blood was still in a liquified state, but there was a thin film of coagulation in the heavier concentrations.

The body of Aline Davis showed smears of blood on the lower torso and on both legs. Josephine Davis' body had lesser amounts of blood smears on the torso and legs.

Dr. Ralph Meinhardt, county medical examiner arrived and made a preliminary examination. He set the time of death at probably no earlier than 8 a.m. that morning.

Meanwhile, Deputy Lynn Moore arrived at the scene to aid in the investigation. He searched the area behind the residence and found nothing that appeared to be connected with the crime. Aside from the general spatters of blood in the front room where the women obviously were killed, drops of blood later were found leading from the living room into one of the bedrooms, forming more or less a trail to a metal cabinet in that room. The room itself was in disarray, although it did not necessarily indicate it was from the result of ransacking.

In the kitchen area, besides the black pepper can on the floor, one bloody footprint was found. A number of latent fingerprint lifts were found in the kitchen area, where a pan of steak and gravy was still on the stove. At a table in the kitchen

was a glass and a plate where someone obviously had been eating some of the steak and gravy.

The drinking glass on the table did not turn up any latent lifts. Neither did two wood-burning stoves, although an electric stove near the south wall did turn up some good latent lifts. The aforementioned butcher knives were inspected carefully, but other than the fact that the pepper can was on the floor there was no sign of possible struggle in the kitchen area. Neither was there sign of any forced entry at the back windows or back door.

Outside the house, beneath the window of the north bedroom, two tennis shoe tracks were located. They were of such quality that casts were poured for possible future comparisons against suspect shoes. There were further signs that someone had walked completely around the house, but other than the two prints under the bedroom window, Deputy Lynn Moore could find none from which he could pour casts.

Near the front of the house automobile tracks, not associated with any of the vehicles at the scene when officers arrived, were discovered. It was first thought these might have been left by the car of a relative of the victims on the previous evening, but this theory was quickly discarded.

A thorough search of the outside area failed to turn up any weapon or any signs of blood. After the interior of the house was photographed, the bodies of the victims were ordered removed to Southeastern General Hospital in

Lumberton, in nearby Robeson County, for the purpose of autopsy. Before this was done, however, Investigator Little removed hair samples from the bodies of both victims. Aside from the known samples of the victims he also discovered what appeared to be negroid hair on both bodies in the pubic area as well as some which adhered to the victims in the smeared blood about the various areas of the bodies.

While all the crime scene work was being done within and around the house, other investigators were putting together statements from neighbors and relatives. The last time anyone had seen either of the slain women alive had been about 11:30 on Sunday night. In the course of a neighborhood canvass, one witness reported that about 3:30 a.m. she had heard an automobile which had obviously been leaving the Davis residence in a hurry. However, that was not considered unusual.

NC 242, which branches off US 701 just short of the Cape Fear River bridge which skirts the north edge of Elizabethtown, frequently is the cause of some confusion for people not familiar with intersection where NC 53 and NC 242 branch off US 701 near the scene of the murder. As a result, it is not uncommon for drivers, day and night, to head up NC 242, discover after a short distance they are on the wrong road and make a turnaround at the most convenient spot, which usually will be the driveway of one of the residences in the vicinity.

(Continued on page 50)

Joseph Sledge Jr., here with Inv. Phillip Little and Sheriff John B. Allen (at rear), was taken into custody as suspect in murder of two elderly women. Sledge, a convict, had escaped from prison only one day before the ghastly double-slaying.



interested in is, does she know now where Dupont and Wachter are?"

"Surely, they wouldn't be stupid enough to contact anybody here in Avion," said the sergeant.

"If they were stupid enough to torture a little girl to death, they're stupid enough for anything," said the inspector.

"So, what do we do?" said the sergeant.

"Bring in Noreuil and Tousseaux," said the inspector. "If I can't grill the truth out of a great-grandmother, I'll turn in my badge."

The inspector did not have to turn in his badge, for Georgette Noreuil cracked like a paper-shell pecan. Her conscience had been bothering her in any case and she seemed positively grateful for an opportunity to confess what she knew about the death of Sabine Pierru.

"I was always afraid that they'd kill her," she said. "Maryse hated the child because she looked like her father and I've often heard her urging Jacques on to whip her and beat her. She'd say, 'Go on! Give it to the little bitch! Teach her some manners!' and Jacques would punch her in the face with his fist or use that whip he had on her.

"On the morning of the twentieth, Maryse called me and said something had happened, I was to come over right away.

"I went to the house and Sabine was lying on her straw bed in the utility room and I could see she was dead. Maryse said she had fallen down and hit her head on the stairs, but later she told me that she had spilled some food at the table and they had started to discipline her with the whip. Sabine got scared and tried to run, but Jacques caught her and lifted her by one leg and her head hit the steps of the stairs. I don't know if that was all true. I think Maryse may have had more to do with it.

"Anyway, she was dead and they wanted me and Bernard to help dispose of the body. I don't know what we had to do with it. I guess they just didn't want to be alone.

"We went off in two cars, us in front and them behind with Sabine wrapped up in blankets on the back seat. They were going to blink their lights when they found a place they thought was good and when we got down a ways south of Paris, they blinked the lights and I guess that's where they stopped. Bernard and me, we didn't wait. We just went back to Avion."

Georgette Noreuil and Bernard Tousseaux were charged with withholding information in connection with a felony and placed in detention. Although Georgette had denied that she had any knowledge of where Dupont and Wachter were at present, a search of the apartment produced a number of letters from Maryse giving a return address in the Fifteenth Arrondissement of Paris. Two hours later, the Paris Criminal Police made the arrests.

Maryse Wachter and Jacques Dupont

were brought back to Avion where, as the doctor had predicted, they claimed that the death of Sabine Pierru had been no more than an accident. She had been, they said, messy at table and Jacques had started to discipline her. Sabine had run to escape and had fallen down the stairs, knocking herself unconscious. They had not realized that she was seriously injured and had put her in her bed, but the following morning she was dead.

At the trial which began in February of 1978, the defense made an impassioned appeal to the jury, asking for compassion for two young persons, hardly more than children themselves, who had, perhaps, been careless, but, in no way criminally negligent. Given another chance, he said, they could become useful members of society while a jail term would ruin their young, hopeful lives.

The prosecution drew quite a different picture, pointing out that, by her own admission, Maryse had not wanted either of the children, but had obtained custody through the courts merely to spite her former husband. She had particularly hated Sabine and, according to the evidence of the autopsy, had tortured and mistreated her from the time that she had been returned to her by the court.

Pictures were shown of the urine-soaked heap of straw which had served as the child's bed and to these the defense

replied that Sabine had been a habitual bed-wetter and could, therefore, not be allowed to sleep in a normal bed.

Unfortunately, the prosecution was unable to prove premeditation and on February 6, 1978, Maryse Wachter and Jacques Dupont were found guilty of homicide without intent. They were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment each, the maximum sentence which the court could impose for the crime of which they had been found guilty.

Georgette Noreuil and Bernard Tousseaux were sentenced to two years and six months imprisonment as accessories after the fact.

Both Jacques Dupont and Maryse Wachter felt themselves very badly treated by the jury and were led away cursing and weeping.

In the square outside the courthouse, however, the crowd chanted, "To the guillotine! To the guillotine!"—showing that, in France too, the people are considerably less lenient toward criminals than their government. ♦♦♦

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Louis Lebrun, Pierre Goncalves and Alain Maubert are not the real names of the persons so named in the foregoing story. Fictitious names have been used in order to comply with French police regulations.

Bloody Butchery In Bladen County

(Continued from page 18)

When Investigator Little finally was finished with his work inside the house he made one more walking tour, carefully committing to memory the two cluttered bedrooms, full of furniture and clothing, the obvious collection of years of packing away everything which came into possession of the two slain women.

Then he went back to that awful, bloody front room. It was here that the two murder victims actually lived. At night, they slept here on couches and in the daytime, the couches were converted to normal use.

From relatives, it was determined that only one thing was positively missing from the residence: a woman's black handbag. This was identified as the bag in which Josephine Davis usually kept her money. However, in a total of seven other women's handbags found in the house, lawmen turned up checks, currency and change totaling \$469.10.

Local lawmen could not recall ever having seen a bloodier place than that from room outside of a slaughterhouse. Blood was on the ceiling, all four walls, and the floor. At certain places on the walls, amounts of blood were such that it

actually had run in streaks, not just spatters.

However, the obvious motive of the attack, despite the woman's missing purse, was sexual. There was no way of knowing if it had been by one or more persons, but discovery of the negroid pubic hair immediately turned the attention of Bladen authorities toward one Joseph Sledge. Sledge had jumped the fence at the nearby White Lake prison camp on Sunday afternoon and escaped. Dogs had tracked Sledge down a dirt road to a creek and then lost the trail.

However, Sledge's criminal record showed no record of violence, and he had generally been held in high regard by officials at the honor grade camp where he was serving time. A member of a religious sect which was strong on physical fitness, Joseph Sledge was known not to drink, smoke or use drugs. Besides the normal report that Sledge had escaped, area lawmen were now advised that he was wanted for questioning in connection with the double murder in Bladen County.

The following day, a request was made for a mobile crime unit from the regional office of the State Bureau of Investigation in Fayetteville. Special Agent Lee Sampson was assigned to do a second crime scene search of the murder house and it was at this time, through the use of luminol, that the trail of blood from the living room to the metal cabinet was dis-

covered. Other than that, Sampson located nothing which appeared to be of significance.

In the meantime, Inv. Little went to Lumberton where he observed the autopsies on the victims. Aline Davis, who had stood five-foot-five, weighed 140 pounds and had blue eyes and gray streaked blonde hair, had been stabbed three times, twice to the right side of the neck at the chin line and a third time at the left side of the neck. She had obviously put up a struggle for her life, having suffered a laceration above the left eye that obviously was the result of a blow, not a knife wound, and a split upper lip. There were numerous other bruises about the face and head.

No sperm was discovered on the vaginal swabs, but lacerations to the canal wall were evident, although of a superficial nature.

Josephine Davis, who had been five feet tall, weighed 130 pounds, had grey hair and blue eyes, had been more viciously attacked. She had suffered a total of seven knife wounds. Two were in the upper thoracic area, two near the solar plexus, two in the upper center of the chest and one in the lower left abdomen. The body also showed bruises of the upper left shoulder area; the chest, the left side of the face, the right temple and a scalp bruise near the center of the head.

She, too, had attempted to ward off her attacker and obviously at one point had actually grabbed the slashing blade of the knife with her left hand, which bore a deep wound across the palm and fingers. Vaginal smears were negative and there was no evidence of trauma to the 74-year-old victim's sex organs.

The investigation's interest in Joseph Sledge as a suspect continued. The Monday morning Elizabethtown City Police reports carried the information that an automobile had been stolen sometime between midnight Sunday and 7 a.m. Monday. Ironically, whoever had stolen the vehicle had had to drive it right past the county jail and sheriff's office on the way out of town.

The investigation into the double murder was almost at a standstill when, on Tuesday night, a Fayetteville city policeman spotted a speeding car and gave chase. The driver wrecked the car, but escaped on foot. However, the driver of the vehicle was described as black, very muscular and with a clean-shaven head.

A city-county identification mobile unit processed the vehicle. Located inside and on the door were fingerprints identified as those of Joseph Sledge.

It wasn't until Thursday that Joseph Sledge surfaced again. In the meantime, it was announced that Sledge was the only suspect in the Davis murders, and local and area news media were provided photographs of the escapee. Thursday afternoon, a South Carolina highway patrolman spotted a car bearing North

Carolina plates speeding in Dillon County, S.C.

After first running a check on the car to see if it was stolen and finding no such report, the car was impounded and police jailed the driver because he could not post bond on the speeding charge nor produce evidence of ownership.

With the speeder finally in jail, the South Carolina patrolman went home to dinner. While there, he watched the evening news on television. To his surprise, the picture of the man he had just lodged in jail was flashed on the screen as being wanted in connection with a double murder in Bladen County, North Carolina, only some 50 miles away. Just to make sure, the patrolman returned to the jail and took a look at his speeder. He then called Bladen County to report that he had their man.

It was later determined that the vehicle Joseph Sledge had been driving was stolen in Fayetteville, but that theft had not been discovered at the time Sledge was stopped in Dillon County. Sledge was returned from South Carolina to Fayetteville after waiving extradition.

Questioned in the Cumberland County jail, Sledge denied any knowledge of the murders in Bladen County. He admitted being in the general vicinity of where the murders took place and agreed to show lawmen where he had stolen clothing in Elizabethtown and stashed his prison garb, as well as where he had gotten other clothing in Fayetteville.

Also, Sledge agreed to take a polygraph test, which was administered by Frank Johnson, who came away with no conclusions about whether Sledge was being truthful or not.

Meanwhile, Inv. Little had taken a good look at Sledge in Dillon, S.C. and later in Cumberland County. The escapee and murder suspect had numerous scratches on his arms and hands. Questioned about this, he said he had suffered the scratches during his escape from the White Lake prison camp.

Sledge, appearing cooperative, gave permission for a blood sample to be taken for comparison with the numerous specimens obtained at the crime scene.

When all the questioning was over with, there was just no case against Joe Sledge. He was returned to prison to complete his sentence and await trial on charges of auto theft and escape. Still, he remained the No. 1 suspect in the murder case, although the physical evidence wasn't there. Two months later, the bodies of the two victims were exhumed and carried to Chapel Hill, where Dr. Page Hudson, chief medical examiner for North Carolina, did a second post mortem. The chief purpose for the exhumation was to fingerprint the victims a second time since the ones made at the initial autopsy were unsuitable for comparisons with the latent lifts made inside

the house in which the murder occurred.

In the course of the second autopsy, Dr. Hudson x-rayed the bodies and discovered that Elizabeth Davis had also suffered a broken jaw, a point which had not been included in the original autopsy. Any hope that fingernail scrapings might be associated with the scratches on Joseph Sledge were quickly dispelled. The funeral home had done a good job, and even if it hadn't, they decay of what might have been evidence two months before was now complete.

The hair samples taken by Inv. Little and samples secured from Joseph Sledge were forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington. This report came back saying, in essence, that the hairs could have come from Joseph Sledge, but it was not positive.

When it became public knowledge that Sledge was not being charged with the double murders the local rumor mill began to grind. In the meantime, Marshall Evans had been assigned to work with Little. Evans, a State Bureau of Investigation agent, did not get involved in the case until a month after the two women were discovered murdered. Together, he and Little ran it out to the point where Joseph Sledge was the only suspect in the case, but there was nothing strong enough to bring an indictment.

As time went on, following Sledge's activities until the time he had jumped the fence at White Lake prison, the two investigators questioned a number of his acquaintances in the Fayetteville area who had known him over the years. Contrary to reports on Sledge's prison activities, he was known on the street as a violent man and, above all, one who hated whites.

In November of 1977, Hayward Starling, director of the SBI, brought a special homicide unit, headed by Max Bryan, into the investigation. Bryan in turn assigned Henry Poole to the case to work with Inv. Little and Agent Evans. They simply started all over again.

One small bit of information that somehow had not surfaced in the beginning was that Aline Davis had been a part-time employee of a carnival operation at White Lake which had closed down Labor Day. This led to a number of false leads that the Davis residence had been the site of parties involving "dope and drinking."

However, despite the fact that the autopsy showed that Josephine Davis blood contained .05 percent alcohol, the rumored parties were proven to be figments of active imaginations. In the end, after hearing over and over again that Mrs. Davis had never taken a drink in her life, and the fact that no alcohol or medicine found in the house could account for the blood alcohol level, the investigators decided the elderly murder victim might have been a "secret nipper."

After all this was run out, a list of every person Sledge was known to have been

incarcerated with—that is, confined to a cell with—during the time since he was captured in Dillon, was obtained. This looked like a difficult task since, prior to being tried for auto theft in the previous summer and since that time, Sledge had been frequently shifted about.

It was decided to take things in chronological order and interview those with whom Sledge had close contact while lodged in the Cumberland County jail after his capture in South Carolina. Among the first interviewees was a homosexual, who related an incident at breakfast on one of the first days Sledge was incarcerated in Fayetteville. That particular morning, the investigators were told bacon was among the items of food.

"They're trying to kill me, feeding me pork," Sledge was quoted as saying. "I know two white bitches who won't enjoy pork. I did away with them." During the course of his conversation with the homosexual, Sledge allegedly said, "They'll never pin it on me because I hid the evidence where they can't find it."

For the first time, Phillip Little had heard something which gave him hope that there might be a light at the end of the tunnel. But despite lengthy questioning, the witness could say nothing else that was of importance to the investigation.

The round of interviews in jails and prison units continued. Then they talked with a prisoner who had known Sledge a number of years and who was able to expand on what the homosexual had been told. This prisoner said Sledge had talked to him several times about the murders, each time revealing a little more.

In early February of 1978, more than three months after the renewal of the investigation, the final break came.

Dave Martin, who had been serving with Sledge in a prison unit at Carthage, was scheduled to get out on parole. Before leaving the unit, he had gone to the warden and told him he had something he wanted to get off his chest.

The warden contacted the SBI and Phillip Little and Henry Poole went to hear the story. Martin said that during the previous summer, he and Sledge had been in the yard and Sledge was working with a weight rack, exercising. Another prisoner had come up and told Sledge he was wanted at the office. Sledge left and returned a few minutes later to relate that he was being returned to Bladen County. (The purpose of the return was for trial on the auto theft charges, but Sledge had not been told this.)

"They want me back in Bladen," he was quoted as saying. "I wonder if it's about killing those two women?"

Martin said he told Sledge he didn't know and Sledge had said:

"Look, man, can you keep a secret?"

With that, Martin said, Sledge related a series of incidents which followed his escape from the White Lake camp.

"I came up on this old house and went inside," Sledge was quoted as saying. "Suddenly this old white lady appeared screaming. I hit her in the jaw and knocked her down and then another one came in. I just went crazy and started beating and stabbing. They were bleeding all over the place. I really didn't think they would bleed. I thought fire would come out of them."

"Then I ran out the back door. On the way out, I saw this can of black pepper and I picked it up and sprinkled the pepper around the door so the she-devils wouldn't come after me."

"What did he say he did with the pepper can?" Iny. Little wanted to know. "He said as he was going out the door, he threw it down."

On February 21, 1978, Joseph Sledge was returned to the Bladen County jail. On February 23rd, a Bladen County grand jury indicted Sledge for the murders of Josephine and Aline Davis.

Defense attorneys appointed to defend Sledge moved for a change of venue and it was granted. Trial began May 1, 1978 in Whiteville, N.C., the Columbus County seat. After four days of testimony, in which the defendant did not take the stand, the case went to the jury. After more than eight hours of deliberation, at which time the judge was advised that the panel was hopelessly hung at 11-1 in favor of conviction, a mistrial was declared.

Joseph Sledge went on trial a second time on August 28, 1978. After the jury was seated before Judge Giles Clark, the case proceeded much as it had in May with the state weaving a web of circumstantial evidence around Sledge's

known activities and the testimony of two of his former prison mates. However, in his second trial, Sledge took the stand to deny the killings.

Sledge denied the murders and said the only time he had ever been on NC 242 was while working with road crews from the prison camp. As to his escape and the period following, Sledge said he followed US 701 into Elizabethtown, where he had stolen a car.

"I stayed two or three yards off the highway, you know, in the brush where I couldn't be visualized by human beings coming down the highway. I did this so whenever an occurrence would take effect I could immediately visualize it and see creatures moving on earth and take some plan of action."

Sledge said the first thing he knew about the murders was when he read about it in a Fayetteville newspaper. "I said to myself, uh-oh, I better get out of this present environment. I decided to get with some people who could help me out about these alleged murders."

The case went to the jury on August 31st. After deliberating for five hours, the jury returned with guilty verdicts on two charges of second degree murder. Judge Clark imposed two life sentences after thanking and dismissing the jury at 10 p.m. Sledge's defense attorney, Rubin Moore Jr., immediately filed notice of appeal. ♦ ♦ ♦

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dave Martin is not the real name of the person so named in the foregoing story. A fictitious name has been used because there is no reason for public interest in the identity of this person.

Ex-Con Paroled To Rape Again!

(Continued from page 37)

for a while, then started for a neighborhood candy store. She told her sister she was going to spend the night at the home of a girlfriend in the neighborhood, then skipped gaily out of the house.

The following afternoon, when the Houghten School let out, Kelly's aunt was waiting to pick her up. The woman watched the children stream out of the building, but she did not see the familiar face of her niece. When the school doors closed and surrounding streets were almost empty, the woman drove to the Curley home on Labser.

Kelly was not there and her sister told the aunt Kelly had spent the night at a friend's house.

The aunt began making phone calls and soon learned Kelly had been absent from school that day and had not been at the girlfriend's home the night before.

The worried woman called Mrs.

Curley, who called Detroit police and reported her daughter missing at 4:20 p.m.

Detectives from the juvenile division went to the Curley home to take the details. They were told Kelly Curley was a happy, well-adjusted, 11-year-old, definitely not the runaway type.

They found out Kelly had been looking forward to a trip to Florida to visit with her father. Her bags, packed for two weeks, were still in her room.

The detectives made inquiries around the neighborhood, but found no one who had any information on what might have happened to the child. Calls were made to former neighbors of the Curley family, but again, to no avail.

It was a long anxious night in the Curley home, and on Thursday morning, Mrs. Curley was still awaiting word of her missing daughter.

Early that Thursday afternoon, a couple of 20-year-old men were taking a stroll in Farmington Hills. Another friend joined them as they started across a desolate field west of Halstead Road.

There were several houses at the far edge of the field, but a large parcel of



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Printed on page 1B

Former writer's life is recalled

By Ronald Totten

Star-News Correspondent

Published: Sunday, June 11, 2006 at 12:30 a.m.

Some people dream about finding the perfect mate. Haydee Jeb-Lee Hendrix and her husband of 38 years, John L. Hendrix, were so close they shared a name. Literally.

Family and friends honored Haydee Hendrix, who died May 31 at age 69, last Monday at Harrell's Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Burgaw.

Born to John Paul Jeb-Lee and Cleopatra Cowan Jeb-Lee on Christmas Day 1936, in Roanoke, Va., Haydee Hendrix grew up in Burgaw on property that now sits off New Savannah Road. She graduated from Burgaw High School in 1954.

Early on, she showed an aptitude for writing, publishing articles in several journals and newspapers before she had graduated from high school, said her daughter, Vivian Pettyjohn Anderson, 45, a registered nurse in Tucson, Ariz. Haydee Hendrix and her husband later formed a dynamic team specializing in writing murder cases for investigative journals such as *True Detective* and *Master Detective*. They shared the pseudonym "Richard Devon."

"Haydee had actually adopted the name years before as her own pen name," her husband said. "She believed a man's name would help her get published because males got more attention."

"She got me into the business of crime writing," he said, "and we were successful for about 10 years. But when the cable news programs and the networks picked up on it, the publications we wrote for were doomed."

From 1962 until 1968 she worked in Charleston, S.C., as a travel agent, forming a lifelong friendship with her boss, Ruth Ravenel, who owned the Ravenel Travel Agency.

She met her future husband in Charleston, where he was working for *The News and Courier*. He approached her on a dance floor and boldly asked, "Would you like to dance because your partner obviously cannot?"

They married in 1968.

In the 1980s Haydee Hendrix helped her husband launch the *Coastal Carolinian*, a weekly newspaper in Carolina Beach that lasted several years. She was active in local politics and worked tirelessly on Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 campaign for president.

"She was very upset when he was shot," Anderson, her daughter, said. "She was saddened by social and racial injustice and worked hard to do her part to find answers to those problems." More recently, she was disturbed by the greed in the Enron scandal.

Haydee Hendrix also worked as a paralegal for a series of attorneys. She ended her career in Wilmington at the law firm of Stevens, McGhee, Morgan, Lennon, O'Quinn

and Toll, from which she retired in 2001.

She was Alton Lennon's personal secretary for 15 years, and he remembered her as someone who could bring great calm to people under stress.

"People loved her," said Lennon, who described Haydee Hendrix as innately intuitive. "She could size up people's character, or lack thereof, within minutes. It was a special gift."

Lennon and his colleague, Alan Toll, each spoke at Haydee Hendrix's memorial service, at which friends and family took turns reciting stories about her. Haydee Hendrix is also survived by two sons, Victor H.E. Morgan, 48, an attorney in Jacksonville, and John Perkins Hendrix II, 36, a restaurant manager in Wilmington; and daughter Badea Regina Pettyjohn Richards, 42, a registered nurse in Phoenix.

"She was very proud of us - her children," Anderson said. "She was a loving and sincere parent, and she guided us the best way she knew how."

Mrs. Hendrix was also proud of her indoor green thumb. Her husband said that one of the last things she said to him was, "Don't forget to water my plants."

This story appeared in print on page 1B

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6 arrested in Wake Forest prostitution sting, including champion poker player

Discarded evidence costs some NC inmates a chance at freedom

Published: March 16, 2013 Updated 3 hours ago

By Mandy Locke — mlocke@newsobserver.com

For decades, claims of innocence have been thwarted by a simple, regrettable fact: The courts and police didn't know how important pieces of evidence would be as modern science evolved.

Rape kits and blood-stained sheets were thrown away over the years – and, with them, the only shot some prisoners had to prove they were wrongly convicted.

The story of North Carolina's haphazard collection and storage of vital crime scene evidence can be told through a notable collection of innocent men. Dwayne Dail was set free in 2007 after a nightgown from the rape he'd been convicted of was found and tested after being misplaced for years.

Most recently, investigators at the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission found a set of fingerprints in a Hickory police file that proved Willie Grimes had been wrongly convicted. Nationally, roughly 300 DNA exonerations have relied solely on the availability of crime scene evidence preserved for years.

But while some wrongly convicted inmates eventually located evidence that proved their innocence, dozens more who say they aren't guilty are resigned to lives in prison because the evidence that could prove their claim has been lost or destroyed.

The North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence has fielded 45 applications for help in which DNA testing would settle the claim but the evidence in the cases has been destroyed or lost, said Christine Mumma, director of the center.

North Carolina legislators passed laws in 2001 that specified which biological evidence from decided cases needed to be retained and for how long, as well as evidence in unsolved cases. It established strict parameters for how clerks and police must destroy evidence.

The law requires judges to approve destruction notices, and only after defense attorneys and the Office of Indigent Defense Services has been notified to make sure there is no lingering appeal or unsettled claim. Intentional efforts to tamper with the evidence or block it from being tested is a crime.

But for local law enforcement, undoing habits from decades before remains a challenge.

Rodney Hester, a captain with the Bladen County sheriff's office, which investigated Joseph Sledge's case in the 1970s, said his department didn't create a computerized inventory for evidence until the 1990s. Through the years, the department has lost evidence to a flood and struggled to keep it in good order through multiple relocations.

Hester, who teaches law enforcement techniques at a community college, said he wished the department had done better.

"No one imagined DNA," he said. "We just didn't keep a lot of stuff back then, and we didn't keep up with much of what we did" retain.

Not a priority

Some fear that the new law isn't being followed. Since 2006, clerks have filed notices to destroy evidence in only 52 cases. Those notices came from only eight counties.

The Center on Actual Innocence, a nonprofit that investigates claims of innocence, fielded four claims after the laws were passed in which evidence that should have been preserved was lost or destroyed. Mumma wants a central repository of crime scene evidence to standardize storage and preservation.

"It's just another example of how the criminal justice system is not keeping up with technology," she said.

While the law applies to cases before 2001 in which evidence still exists, many law enforcement and clerks' offices haven't reviewed and categorized those old cases. The problems are particularly pressing at smaller law enforcement agencies, where the staff juggles many responsibilities and may not consider the assignment important.

"It's considered low on the totem pole," said Neil Woodcock, executive director of the North Carolina Association for Property and Evidence, an organization that helps law enforcement with proper maintenance of crime scene evidence. "The guy doing it doesn't take the long-term approach."

Lessons learned

Rick Glazier, a defense lawyer and a state representative from Fayetteville, helped spearhead efforts to reform evidence preservation in 2001 after a sobering lesson from an innocence claim he handled.

In 1991, Glazier helped free Leslie Jean, convincing the courts that the police's use of hypnosis during the interview process was inappropriate. Jean had always maintained his innocence. Each time Glazier looked for evidence, he was told it had been destroyed.

When he asked a friend to check the clerk's office once more in 1998, staffers located a box of evidence shoved behind a shelf that had been cleaned out. The rape kit needed to prove Jean's innocence was inside.

"There's lots of issues out here," Glazier said. "Lack of resources sometimes. Lack of time. In some cases, it's lack of thought."

A legislative committee that explored evidence preservation was sidelined in 2010 to shepherd reforms at the State Bureau of Investigation crime laboratory. The committee dissolved at the end of the 2011 session, and Glazier's efforts to bring it back have failed.

"There's still a whole lot of work" to be done, he said.

The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission began vetting claims of innocence in 2006. As a state agency, the commission can search for and compel evidence in ways advocates and law school clinics cannot.

Its authority has paid off. In seven cases, commission investigators found evidence that other agencies had been told didn't exist.

"Sometimes in these cases, it's pure luck," said Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, executive director of the inquiry commission.

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Durham police investigate fatal stabbing

In prison for 34 years, but 'God knows I'm innocent'

Published: March 16, 2013 Updated 3 hours ago



Joseph Sledge, photographed at Pamlico Correctional Institution Thursday, February 28, 2013.

Ethan Hyman — ehyman@newsobserver.com Buy Photo

By Mandy Locke — mlocke@newsobserver.com

Editors note: Joseph Sledge has spent half his life trying to convince North Carolina court officials that he is innocent of the 1976 Bladen County murders of a mother and daughter. He hopes the recent DNA test on some long-lost hair will soon lead to his release.

Explore this interactive timeline of Joseph Sledge's ordeal that includes audio of Sledge and the SBI report from the 1976 murders.

BAYBORO -- Joseph Sledge's salvation rested in an envelope misplaced for years on a shelf so high in the Columbus County clerk's evidence room that no one noticed it.

Sledge has languished in prison for 34 years. Since the 1990s, when the technology became widely

available, he has begged anyone who would listen to perform DNA tests on evidence from his trial. Now the courts must reckon with his unwavering proclamations of innocence.

The man who murdered mother and daughter Josephine and Ailene Davis in 1976 left pieces of himself in their bloodied Bladen County home. Investigators found a smattering of head and pubic hairs on the exposed bodies of the Davis women. At the time, the best science available offered limited clues: The killer was a black man, maybe Sledge.

A DNA test performed in December offers a new revelation: The hairs don't belong to him.

"Miracles happen in their own kind of way," said Sledge, a slight, shy 68-year-old imprisoned at Pamlico Correctional Institution in Bayboro, east of New Bern.

Sledge is poised to become the oldest and longest-serving inmate in North Carolina found to be wrongly convicted, though he has tried mightily to avoid the distinction. His hand-written letters asking for help fill four files in the Columbus County Clerk of Court's office.

The letters met resistance or excuses from a cast of prosecutors and judges highly regarded in the state. A 2003 order to find and test evidence went unheeded for five years. It would be another four years before the key evidence – head and pubic hairs – would be found and tested.

In the 1970s, no one imagined where science would lead criminal investigations. Evidence with little value 30 years ago became the proof that dozens of innocent North Carolina men needed to show that the courts had the wrong guy. Although new laws forbid destruction of key evidence in many cases, they do little for the generation of prisoners convicted when evidence was disposed of as easily as trash.

If exonerated, Sledge will be the fifth North Carolina man proved innocent by DNA or fingerprint analysis performed on evidence that had been misplaced or forgotten. For lawyers who investigate innocence work, the reality of lost evidence is a daily frustration.

"We can never feel that there's closure," said Christine Mumma, director of the North Carolina Center on Actual Innocence, a Durham nonprofit that investigates claims of innocence. "Unless we can get into the evidence room and the case files ourselves, we can never be confident that someone has done a thorough search."

Mumma had been investigating Sledge's case for years, trying to find crime scene evidence and track down witnesses.

Last August, boxes of documents from Sledge's case covered the floor of her Durham office. She could think of nothing more to do and braced herself for a final visit to Sledge to deliver the news.

Then her phone rang.

Columbus County Court clerks had been cleaning the evidence room, and as assistant clerk Rita Batchelor climbed a ladder to inspect the top shelf, she spotted a thin envelope labeled with a file number and a name: Joseph Sledge.

"His name just stuck out," said Columbus County Clerk Sheila Pridgen. Because of his letters, "all of us knew him."

Wrong place, wrong time

Sledge was an impulsive young man who had a habit of showing up in the wrong places at the worst times. In 1976, that sealed his fate.

Sledge, a Georgia native, came to North Carolina by way of the draft during the Vietnam War. He drove a supply truck for the Army at Fort Bragg.

After leaving the Army, Sledge lingered in the state. He found work as a janitor but was soon laid off. Broke

and hungry, Sledge stole boxes full of clothes from a department store. In 1973, a judge sentenced him to four years in prison.

One day in 1976, while working on a White Lake Prison Camp work crew picking up highway litter in Bladen County, another inmate quarreled with Sledge and punched him. The inmate was sent to another prison as punishment, Sledge said. The day the other prisoner was due to return to White Lake, Sledge feared he'd try to settle the score.

Sledge, small at 147 pounds, didn't want to take that chance. After the sun set on Sept. 5, 1976, he climbed a fence at White Lake and hid in nearby woods until the darkness could cover his tracks.

Within hours, less than five miles away, someone would murder the Davis women.

An obvious suspect

The slayings rattled Bladen County, especially young sheriff's detective Phillip Little. Josephine Davis, 74, and Ailene Davis, 53, lived a mile from him. He had known them his whole life.

Both had been stabbed repeatedly; a pool of blood puddled around them. The killer had lifted their gowns and slips above their midsections and raped Ailene, Josephine's daughter. The State Bureau of Investigation sent help to hunt for the killer.

Sledge was an obvious suspect: a known criminal with an opportunity. Authorities caught him four days later.

Sledge said he was desperate to cooperate. He detailed his escape route for investigators and showed them where he stashed his prison clothes and others he stole from clotheslines and cars along the way. He consented to give samples of blood and pubic hair.

He said he would have gladly offered a head hair sample, too, but he had been shaving his head since his Army days.

Aside from the coincidence of Sledge escaping the day before the murder, investigators didn't have enough to tie Sledge to the crime. None of the fingerprints in the house matched his; neither did shoeprints inside the house and outside beneath a bedroom window.

An FBI analyst who examined the hairs Little found on the women's bodies determined they were "Negroid" and said they were "consistent" with Sledge's pubic hair.

"The case was very thoroughly investigated based on what we had at our hands," Little, who retired last year, said in a recent interview.

A year after the murders, the trail was cold. The victims' family grew impatient and wrote to the SBI asking about progress in the case. The director wrote back Aug. 12, 1977, saying the "Investigation to date has failed to produce sufficient evidence to justify an arrest."

He promised to keep looking. The governor had promised a reward for information that could solve the crime.

Little and SBI agents hit the road, looking for all the men Sledge had known in prison in the last year.

The snitches emerge

When Little and SBI Special Agent Henry Poole first met Donnie Sutton in November 1977, more than a year after the murders, he had little to say. Sutton, a young man in prison for murder who had also escaped in September 1976, had known Sledge in prison.

Records show that Sutton said he didn't know anything about Sledge being involved in the murders but that he'd think harder about anything Sledge might have told him.

When investigators visited Sutton again in February 1978, he painted a different picture, saying that Sledge told him that the Davis women were supposed to die. Sutton said Sledge hated white women and called them "she-devils."

Investigators also found another jailhouse informant named Herman Baker, who was in jail briefly with Sledge after the murders. Mumma, Sledge's lawyer, said the SBI case file includes no mention of Baker or copies of those interviews. But at Sledge's trial, Baker's testimony delivered a decisive blow.

Baker's memory of Sledge's comments offered details police had never publicly released. Baker, who was not in prison at the time of the murder, testified that Sledge talked about slugging one of the women in the jaw and that he had sprinkled black pepper in the house to keep the victims' spirits away from him.

Little had seen the pepper can on his first visit but didn't take it as evidence. In February 1978, just three months before Sledge's first trial, Little returned and collected the pepper can.

The first attempt to convict Sledge failed in May 1978, ending in a mistrial.

In August of that year, prosecutors tried again. This time, a fresh young prosecutor joined the team.

Michael Easley had begun working for the district attorney's office after graduating from law school in 1976. He would go on to become district attorney, state attorney general and, in 2001, North Carolina's governor.

Easley declined through his lawyers to talk about the Sledge case, saying only that he has spoken to both Mumma and current district attorney Jon David and has offered his assistance in reviewing Sledge's claim of innocence.

'It's scandalous'

Sledge had a funny feeling about the jailhouse informants who convinced a jury he had killed Josephine and Ailene Davis.

He had no memory of ever meeting Baker, and he testified he'd never said anything about being involved in the crime to Sutton. The inmates painted him to be a racist with a violent temper. Their comments still bewilder him.

"I only weigh 147 pounds, then and now," he said. "How could I be violent with anybody?"

There's no indication Sledge's attorney, Reuben Moore of Elizabethtown, was given copies of Sutton's earlier interviews; he asked no questions about Sutton's shifting statements.

Four months after Sledge was convicted, the state rewarded Baker and Sutton. Baker collected \$3,000. Sutton got \$2,000.

"It's scandalous they were paid," said Moore, now retired. "I'm not surprised it happened. It's just amazing we found out about it."

Little, the sheriff's detective, said his memory of the case is spotty. But he recalls investigators discussing the rewards after the trial. He does not remember making any promises about the money.

Sutton died in 1991. Efforts by The News & Observer to find Baker failed.

Easley says no

The jailhouse snitches gnawed at Sledge inside prison. He was convinced they were rewarded for their testimony.

He began writing to judges, asking them to investigate. In loopy cursive, Sledge asked again and again for judges to give him another trial.

By April 1983, Easley had become the elected district attorney in Columbus County. Easley replied to one of Sledge's motions, saying "no promise was made to Herman Baker and Donald Sutton in return for their testimony by the District Attorney's Office" or the attorney general. In his response, he didn't mention anything about the rewards for Baker and Sutton. Superior Court Judge Robert Hobgood denied Sledge's request for a new trial.

Sledge spent hours each day in prison law libraries. He dissected every moment of his trial. He read court opinions and memorized legal phrases such as "jurisprudence" and "ineffective assistance of counsel." He wrote letter after letter, asking judges to examine irregularities in his case.

One evening in 1993, Sledge and other inmates watched a news program in the prison's common room. A lawyer on television talked about a new kind of science revolutionizing crime scene analysis: DNA. Every person had a unique profile that could be detected in their blood or semen or hair.

Sledge remembers thinking: "Here's my opportunity to find freedom."

He returned to his cell and started a new letter.

Long quest for a test

For the past 20 years, Sledge knew his only chance of dying a free man rested on DNA testing.

He wrote more letters. Some were polite and deferential, others more direct and desperate. In a letter to the Innocence Project in New York in 2001, Sledge was emphatic: "Yes sir God knows I'm innocent."

In total, he filed more than 20 motions, all without a lawyer. Some potential help in 1997 from the Innocence Project ended quickly when John Watters, counsel for the SBI, wrote to a lawyer for the group, saying the SBI had no records and had not been involved in the case.

Actually, the SBI had dispatched agents to help work the case, and multiple reports listed dozens of items of evidence collected for analysis at its crime lab. A lawyer for the state Department of Justice said last week that Watters' response "appears to have been due to an oversight."

In 2003, Superior Court Judge William Gore heeded Sledge's decadelong pursuit of evidence to test for DNA.

Gore ordered the district attorney and all investigating agencies to look to see if they could find any evidence to test. And, if they couldn't, he wanted an affidavit explaining why.

"There was nothing to be lost by it," said Gore, now a defense lawyer in Whiteville. "If there was someone innocent, and we could determine it with new technology, I was anxious to do it."

Gore's order was ignored. No one responded, not even with an explanation as to why they couldn't find the evidence.

Gore wrote to Sledge in December 2004, saying none of the agencies had responded.

"As a Superior Court Judge I am not in a position to make any further investigations into your claims," Gore wrote. "I have acted in good faith and believe the agencies and people I have sent the order to have acted in good faith as well."

Gore said in an interview that he's not surprised no one heeded his order.

"We didn't have a mechanism to follow up," he said. "I'm not making excuses, but this was not unusual. I'm sure that I ordered many people to do things that they never obliged."

Rex Gore, district attorney for Brunswick, Columbus and Bladen counties from 1991 until 2011, said he didn't remember seeing the judge's order.

He did, however, begin searching for evidence in 2005 when a lawyer at Duke University trying to help Sledge inquired. Rex Gore found a box of evidence in the Columbus County clerk's office but said evidence kept by the Bladen sheriff's office, which would have included blood samples from the house, fingerprints and the rape kit, had long since been lost or destroyed.

Rex Gore, who is not related to William Gore, said he's not surprised the envelope with hair evidence was overlooked.

"The things we see on 'CSI' where things are tagged and locked and numbered like a Dewey Decimal System, that's more movie than reality," he said.

No ride to Raleigh

Lawyers trying to help Sledge struggled along the way, too. Rex Gore consented to having the evidence found in the clerk's office tested at the SBI; the judge's order directed the clerk of court to submit the evidence to the SBI laboratory in Raleigh but didn't specify how it would get there.

The box remained on the shelf. Two years passed.

Mumma took over the case in 2008 and shepherded a new order specifying that deputies would take the box to Raleigh.

Over the coming years, analysts tried to detect the killer's DNA on the victims' clothing. A partial profile – less than a full view of all 23 pairs of chromosomes – was detected on the women's clothing. It excluded Sledge, but Mumma knew it wasn't enough. Anyone could have come in contact with the women before they were killed.

She believed Sledge was telling the truth, but she had run out of ways to prove it. So many of the witnesses were dead, so much of the evidence missing.

As Mumma slowly prepared Sledge for a letdown, the clerk called about the hairs. Sledge still has the letter Mumma sent with the news.

"Your entire letter smells like freedom," Sledge wrote in his reply.

'I can't hold a grudge'

Prison has tamed Sledge. All the stubbornness and impulse of his youth have been stripped away.

So has his anger.

While he passed year after year behind bars, Sledge watched Easley's career flourish, including his two terms as governor. When Easley pleaded guilty in 2010 to a felony involving a campaign finance violation and was stripped of his law license, Sledge found no satisfaction.

"I ain't nobody to him; I know that," Sledge said. "I can't hold a grudge against no man. ... Animosity won't solve the problem."

Still, he waits, eager for a trip back to court to undo the jury's decision.

Mumma received the results from the DNA tests on the hair in December and has urged Jon David, the current district attorney, to help her free Sledge. Although the partial profile on the hairs definitively rules out Sledge, it's not full enough to compare to the SBI's DNA database of convicted felons to find whose hair it is.

David has engaged the SBI to help him investigate further.

"I really see us as sharing the goal of making sure this conviction rests on credible and substantial evidence," David said. "I'm going to go where the truth leads in this matter."

Little, the Bladen detective, is skeptical of the new information. He said that the informant testimony was so compelling that it would take more than DNA from the hairs to convince him Sledge wasn't involved.

The Davises' relatives wait anxiously, too.

"This will really bring up a lot of bad memories for my family," said Billy Ray Hales, Josephine Davis' grandson. "If (Sledge) did it, he needs to go out feet first. If he didn't, I'm mad as hell they didn't get the right guy in the first place. Somebody has to pay."

Seeking solitude

At 68, Sledge feels his age.

He sleeps through much of the day, eager to pass it. Sledge tries to keep up his strength and focus by studying his case and corresponding with Mumma.

He doesn't dwell on questions of what could have been. He's ambivalent about what his life would have been like if he hadn't spent it in prison. He shrugs. A wife probably, maybe kids. He would have liked to fix cars for a living.

But if he's released, he knows exactly how he'll spend his remaining years.

After decades of sharing showers and meals with strangers, he's desperate for a life of solitude. He has kept his family at a distance since his conviction, refusing to let them see what he had become in prison: small and caged.

If Sledge is freed, he'll return to his native Georgia to a plot of land his mother saved for him.

He wants to grow what he eats and let the sun soak his skin. He will keep dogs for company.

He's eager to spend his last years much like he has the past 34: out of sight and forgotten.

News researchers Brooke Cain and David Raynor contributed.

Locke: 919-829-8927

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In prison for 34 years, but 'God knows I'm innocent' | Crime | NewsObserver.com

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Snitch in Joseph Sledge case now says he lied, new motion contends

Published: March 26, 2013 Updated 52 minutes ago



Joseph Sledge, photographed at Pamlico Correctional Institution in Bayboro, N.C. Thursday, February 28, 2013.

Ethan Hyman — ehyman@newsobserver.com Buy Photo

By Mandy Locke — mlocke@newsobserver.com

A jailhouse snitch who helped ensure that Joseph Sledge spent the last 34 years in prison now says he lied at Sledge's 1978 trial, Sledge's lawyer said Tuesday in a new motion aimed at winning his freedom.

Sledge has insisted for decades that he is innocent. The News & Observer reported March 17 that new DNA tests showed he was not the person who left hair on the bodies of Josephine and Ailene Davis, two Bladen County murder victims.

In a motion filed Tuesday in Columbus County, Sledge's attorney, Christine Mumma, asked a judge to

overturn Sledge's conviction, release him and dismiss any charges related to the murder. The district attorney could join Mumma in petitioning for Sledge's freedom.

The motion lays out dozens of missteps in Sledge's case, including recent allegations of bribed testimony and improper conduct by investigators. A key witness at the trial, Herman Baker, says investigators "fed me all the details" to form his testimony.

Sledge's conviction rested firmly on testimony of two jailhouse snitches.

Baker, one of two inmates who testified at the trial, told Sledge's lawyers at the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence last week that he was lured by reward money and promises of early parole into giving damning testimony implicating Sledge in the murder. According to the motion, Baker also told Mumma that investigators told him he was a suspect in the murders of the Davises and could be charged if he didn't cooperate.

According to the affidavit, Baker said that law enforcement and prison officials provided him specific details of the crime in order for him to provide believable testimony.

"I did not have any personal knowledge of any information relating to the murders of the two women in Bladen County," Baker said. "Law enforcement fed me all the details of the crime to which I testified."

In 1978, while investigators tried to make an arrest in the murders, Baker was in prison on a breaking and entering conviction. He could have encountered Sledge in prison, but Sledge says he does not remember him.

The other jailhouse informant who testified against Sledge died in 1991. That informant's information shifted in the months before Sledge's trial; he initially told investigators he knew nothing of Sledge's involvement in the murders.

Mumma, director of the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence in Durham, said in the motion that the new evidence "now completely undermines any confidence in Mr. Sledge's conviction and irrefutably establishes his innocence."

Mumma asked the judge to order an investigation into cases involving snitch testimony handled by the officers involved with Baker's testimony.

The two officers who handled Baker's interviews and trial preparation are now retired. Henry L. Poole retired from the SBI in the 1990s after heading an unsolved crimes unit. Phillip Little retired last year from the Bladen County sheriff's office.

Little said in an interview earlier this month that he would have a hard time believing Sledge's innocence, even with DNA evidence. Little said the jailhouse informants' testimony was compelling.

In 1976, Sledge, an Army veteran, was serving a four-year sentence at a prison in Bladen County for receiving stolen property and larceny. He escaped the day before the Davises were killed because he feared another inmate would attack him.

Sledge was convicted in 1978 in Columbus County. Mike Easley, then a young prosecutor, helped convict Sledge. Easley, who went on to become the local district attorney, state attorney general and eventually governor, would fight Sledge's attempts over the years to undo his conviction.

In 1983, Easley responded to one of Sledge's motions for appropriate relief, saying that the snitches had received no promises of reward money for their testimony.

Sledge fought for nearly two decades to get DNA testing on evidence from the crime scene. He finally got his wish last year; DNA tests in December on long-misplaced evidence showed that hairs left on the victims' bodies were not his.

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Key witness in Sledge case recants, saying investigators pushed him to lie

Published: March 26, 2013 Updated 6 hours ago



Joseph Sledge, photographed in February at Pamlico Correctional Institution, has served 34 years in prison for killings he says he didn't commit. A jailhouse informant now says he lied at Sledge's 1978 trial.

Ethan Hyman — ehyman@newsobserver.com Buy Photo

By Mandy Locke — mlocke@newsobserver.com

Editors note: Joseph Sledge has spent half his life trying to convince North Carolina court officials that he is innocent of the 1976 Bladen County murders of a mother and daughter. He hopes the recent DNA test on some long-lost hair will soon lead to his release.

Explore this interactive timeline of Joseph Sledge's ordeal that includes audio of Sledge and the SBI report from the 1976 murders.

Two jailhouse informants sealed Joseph Sledge's fate in 1978, offering a jury an elaborate story of a satanic-crazed Sledge stabbing to death a Bladen County mother and daughter.

One of those informants, Herman Baker, now says he lied, lured to testify with threats of arrest and promises of reward money and early parole.

"Law enforcement fed me all the details of the crime to which I testified," Baker said in an affidavit filed Tuesday in Columbus County.

The shift in Baker's testimony is the latest development in an unraveling case against Sledge, who has spent half his life – 34 years – in prison for murders he says he didn't commit.

The News & Observer reported on Sledge's odyssey March 17, examining how for 20 years Sledge pleaded with the courts to test evidence in his case. In August, clerks found a long-misplaced envelope containing hair that investigators at the time believed the killer left behind.

DNA tests on those hairs in December showed that they did not belong to Sledge, boosting his case that he did not kill Josephine and Ailene Davis in rural Bladen County in southeastern North Carolina.

Christine Mumma, Sledge's attorney and director of the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence, filed a motion Tuesday asking a judge to release Sledge, overturn his conviction and dismiss all charges from the 1976 murders. District Attorney Jon David has engaged the State Bureau of Investigation for help in re-examining the case. The new evidence "now completely undermines any confidence in Mr. Sledge's conviction and irrefutably establishes his innocence," Mumma wrote.

Sledge's case highlights the types of missteps in North Carolina cases that courts have struggled to fix over the past 30 years. When Sledge was convicted, prosecutors didn't have to share all their files with defense counsel. At the time, SBI lab analysts testified evidence was covered with blood when they hadn't done the tests to prove it, and jurors didn't always hear about the deals that informants struck with investigators in exchange for their testimony.

In her motion, Mumma asked the judge to order a full investigation into all cases involving informant testimony handled by the officers who handled Sledge's case: former SBI agent Henry Poole and former Bladen County sheriff's detective Phillip Little. Fabricating evidence to deceive a jury could amount to felony obstruction of justice.

Poole said Tuesday that Baker's allegations are false.

"That's an absolute untruth," said Poole, who retired from the SBI in 1993.

The key testimony

Herman Baker Jr. provided the most damning testimony against Sledge at his 1978 trial. Baker painted the jury a picture of Sledge as a racist who brutalized an elderly white woman and her grown daughter after escaping from a nearby prison. He told jurors Sledge believed white women were "she devils" who ought to be killed to protect black people.

At trial, Baker offered two details that investigators had never publicly released. Baker said Sledge hit one of the women in the jaw; an autopsy showed that Josephine Davis' jaw had been broken.

Baker provided jurors another vital tidbit: Sledge confessed to sprinkling black pepper around the bloody scene and out the back of the house to keep the women's spirits from following him.

Bladen County sheriff's detective Phillip Little retrieved a can of black pepper from the house after interviewing Baker in February 1978, more than 18 months after the killings. Little submitted the pepper can at trial to validate Baker's story.

Baker said in an affidavit that he was pulled out of solitary confinement at White Lake Prison Camp to talk to investigators in February 1978. At the time, he was serving time for a breaking and entering conviction.

Baker told Mumma, Sledge's attorney, that investigators warned him that he was a suspect in the murders and that if he didn't cooperate, he'd be charged. They told him about the \$5,000 reward for information in

the case and told him they would release him from prison early, according to Baker's affidavit.

Investigators then told him what he needed to know to offer a convincing story, Baker said in the affidavit. Baker's story was said to be based on a conversation he had with Sledge when they were in prison together in Carthage.

Before Sledge's August 1978 trial, Baker was released on parole and went to Pennsylvania to be near family. In August 1978, Little and Poole drove north to fetch him for the trial. They put him up in a motel, and paid for his transportation home.

Two months later, the SBI requested that Baker and the other informant, Donnie Sutton, who died in 1991, be given the governor's \$5,000 reward in the case, saying the conviction was due in part to "the testimony of both Baker and Sutton." In December 1978, Baker collected \$3,000, records show.

Little said in an interview this month that neither informant had been promised the reward before the trial.

Two respected investigators

Henry Poole retired from the SBI in the mid-1990s after a respected career solving some of the most complex and haunting homicides in the state. He headed the agency's cold case unit until his retirement.

Phillip Little logged more than three decades with the Bladen County Sheriff's Department. He retired last year and has kept close ties to law enforcement, lobbying Congress for laws to help narcotics investigators and helping emergency management responders during local disasters.

When reached by The N&O this month, Little said he was skeptical of Sledge's claim of innocence.

Little said that DNA evidence wouldn't be enough to change his mind about Sledge's guilt. The testimony from the informants, Little said, was convincing and compelling.

In the interview, Little pointed to Baker's knowledge of the black pepper can and the victim's broken jaw.

"Only the person who committed the crime would have known about that," Little said.

Little couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday.

Mike Easley, then a young assistant district attorney, helped prosecute Sledge in 1978. As the elected district attorney years later, Easley fought Sledge's attempts to secure a new trial because of the informant testimony.

Easley, who would go on to become attorney general and eventually governor, said in an answer to Sledge's request for a new trial in 1983 that "no promises" had been made to the informants at Sledge's trial.

Easley said Tuesday that he couldn't recall knowing anything about informants being paid. He declined to comment further.

'Eager to litigate'

Baker and Sutton's testimony gnawed at Sledge. He didn't even recall knowing or ever talking to Baker. Sledge wrote letter after letter to judges asking that they reveal any compensation paid to the men.

Sledge, now 68, filed more than 20 motions asking the courts for relief. In 1993, he began asking judges to order DNA tests in his case, certain those results would exonerate him.

Many of his requests went unheeded. Investigators and the district attorney simply didn't respond to a judge's order in 2003 to search for evidence and perform DNA tests. His long-awaited wish arrived in August 2012 when clerks found an envelope containing hairs that had been separated from a box of evidence collected during Sledge's trial.

Scientists analyzed the hairs – both pubic and head hairs left on the exposed bodies of the victims – and concluded they couldn't have belonged to Sledge.

Mumma has been in talks for months with Jon David, district attorney in Brunswick, Bladen and Columbus counties, about Sledge's potential release. David has said he would go where the truth led in the case.

On Tuesday, David said he couldn't comment on the motion. He said in a statement: "I am eager to litigate this case in a courtroom. Public oversight and transparency are vital to ensure a fair process and just result." A spokeswoman for the SBI declined to comment on the allegations because the case is ongoing.

The motion filed Tuesday puts Sledge's case in the hands of the court and starts a clock on Sledge's request for relief. Within two months, a judge will have to schedule an evidentiary hearing or rule on the request to overturn the conviction.

David also has the authority to investigate questions of investigator misconduct or ask for assistance from a special prosecutor.

Poole, the retired SBI agent involved in Sledge's case, said he would welcome any investigation of his prior work.

"That doesn't bother me one bit," Poole said. "They can have their day with it."

Locke: 919-829-8927

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Editorial - Inmate shouldn't have had to wait this long for a chance to prove innocence

Published: Monday, March 18, 2013 at 10:09 p.m.

Joseph Sledge may become the latest in a series of examples of wrongful conviction in North Carolina. What is North Carolina going to do about it?

It is almost criminal that this man has spent at least two-thirds of his 34 years behind bars trying to get someone to review his case. Sledge, now 68, has been in prison half his life for a crime he probably did not commit. DNA testing seems to exonerate him, and he has one of the best advocacy teams in the state working on his case, lawyer Christine Mumma and the Actual Innocence Project staff. Without that group's commitment to justice, wrongfully convicted North Carolinians have little hope that someone will take a second look at their case.

A compelling report by The News & Observer of Raleigh outlined Sledge's almost Quixotic quest to prove his innocence since his conviction for the murder of a Bladen County woman and the murder and rape of her adult daughter. His is a tale of unfortunate coincidences, starting with an escape in September 1976 from a Bladen County prison camp where he was working off a conviction for stealing boxes of clothes from a department store. Within hours of his escape, Josephine and Ailene Davis were stabbed to death five miles away, and Ailene Davis, 53, was raped.

The physical evidence didn't match, but that mattered little. Questions surrounding money paid to jailhouse witnesses after their testimony against Sledge were brushed off by then-prosecutor Mike Easley and others. Still, he maintained his innocence.

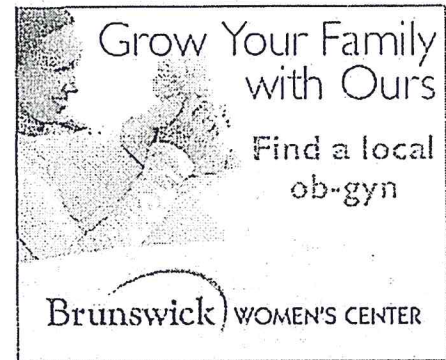
Finally, in 2003, Superior Court Judge William Gore ordered testing of evidence that was available, which did not include the missing blood, fingerprints and the rape kit. Nothing happened until Mumma and her staff picked up the case and, miraculously, the lost evidence was found after someone in the Columbus County court clerk's office apparently decided to do some housecleaning.

Further work will be needed to clear his name, but at least now he will have that chance.

Sledge is not alone in having his pleas of innocence fall on deaf ears. Four men so far have been exonerated by DNA evidence. Others, including former death-row inmate Alan Gell and convicted murderer Greg Taylor, were determined to be innocent based on prosecutorial misconduct or shoddy investigations that overlooked exculpatory evidence.

Sledge shouldn't have to prove his innocence. In the United States the law doesn't allow us to imprison people because they look guilty. We imprison them only upon the establishment of guilt beyond a "reasonable doubt." In Sledge's case, "reasonable doubt" meant that the hairs found at the scene belonged to a black man who might be Sledge. That doesn't meet the standard.

District Attorney Jon David, who is now head prosecutor over Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties, says he will "go where the truth leads." And if that truth leads to someone other than Sledge, as appears likely, David should lead the charge for



reforms to prevent wrongful convictions and remedy those that have already occurred. At the very least it should include broader processing of DNA evidence in older cases.

Apologists for the current flawed system note that usually, the law gets the right person. That's not good enough. Sentencing an innocent person isn't justice. Neither is the inevitable result – allowing the guilty person to escape punishment.

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The Fayetteville Observer

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2013

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1976 DOUBLE MURDER CASE



Staff photo by Andrew Carr

'I became a scapegoat'

Joseph Sledge
says new
evidence proves
he's not guilty
of murdering
two Bladen
County women.
After 35 years
in prison,
he's ready
for another
day in court.

By Paul Woolverton
Staff writer

BAYBORO — Every day, Joseph Sledge does hundreds of pushups on the floor of the Pamlico Correctional Institution and thinks about the justice he says he was denied 35 years ago.

The former Fayetteville resident, brought to Fort Bragg from Georgia by the draft in 1965, was convicted in 1978 of killing an elderly woman and her daughter in Bladen County. He is serving two life sentences.

Sledge has always maintained his innocence. Now, he thinks he has a real chance at freedom.

He says recent DNA testing proves that someone else committed the killings. And in

March, a key prosecution witness said he lied about Sledge on the stand to collect a cash reward.

"They had evidence to prove whoever did it, but they couldn't find him," Sledge said in an interview from the Pamlico prison in May. "So, to make a long story short, I became a scapegoat."

Will the new evidence be enough to exonerate Sledge? Bladen County District Attorney Jon David says no. David argues that the new evidence is of little validity or relevance. He is trying to keep Sledge, who turned 69 on Monday, behind bars for the rest of his life.

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INSIDE

■ A time line tells the story of the murders and the court case, Page 5A

Above: Joseph Sledge, a former Fort Bragg soldier, has been in prison on a murder conviction since 1978. He is appealing his conviction.

PROPERTY CRIMES

City is 5th highest in 2012

■ The FBI's rankings of 279 cities come as the City Council is trying to decide on a tax increase to pay for more police officers.

By Cal'lin Dineen
Staff writer

Fayetteville had the fifth highest rate of property crimes in the U.S. last year, according to preliminary figures from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The city's burglary rate, which is a category of property crime, ranked sixth highest. And for larcenies, the city ranked eighth.

The statistics, which are for 279 cities with at least 100,000 residents, show increases in total violent and property crime reports between 2011 and 2012. The raw number of property crimes reported to police rose 1.5 percent, to 13,166 reports last year. Violent crime reports increased 13 percent, to 1,187.

The FBI's release of the annual crime numbers comes at a time when the City Council is grappling with whether to raise property taxes to hire more police officers. The issue will come up Monday when the council meets to adopt a budget.

Police Chief Harold Medlock, who took over the department in February, said his force is addressing the city's crime problems.

"I constantly look at our numbers," he said. "I'm constantly concerned."

Medlock has restructured his department and is working on new initiatives, including a way to monitor repeat offenders with tracking devices.

The FBI calculates rates based on reports submitted from law enforcement agencies and 2010 census population numbers.

The report lists Fayetteville's population as 205,968, which in

See CRIME, Page 4A

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION'S POSITION

Controversy arises over disease label

■ Supporters celebrate the decision to designate the condition as a sickness, while critics say it'll fuel the stigma against obese Americans.

By Marni Jameson
Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — When the American Medical Association this past week declared obesity a disease — a move that instantly labeled one-third of Americans as sick — it launched a controversy not seen since alco-

holism received the disease designation.

Hailed by some obesity experts as a long-overdue victory, the news from the nation's largest and most respected medical group was denounced by others who say the move fuels the stigma against obese Americans.

Fat activists promptly started the #IAmNotADisease on Twitter, and a petition demanding that the AMA reverse its position, which had nearly 1,200 signatures by Friday.

Calling obesity a disease will open doors to better treatment and better reimbursements, said Dr. Steve Smith, president-elect of The Obesity Society, which has referred to obesity as a disease since 2008.

"It adds legitimacy to the problem, will help raise public awareness and will get doctors engaged in treating the condition," said Smith, also scientific director for the Florida Hospital-Sanford Burnham Translational Research Institute for Metabolism and Diabetes, in Orlando.

The AMA's decision "is a defining moment," said Joe Nadgrowski, president of the

See OBESITY, Page 5A



Staff photo by Raul R. Rubiera

INSIDE

■ Lumberton native Johna Edmonds, competing as Miss Johnston County, is the new Miss North Carolina. Page 1B

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Clouds and sun, a thunderstorm in spots.

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High

Low



000258

Sledge: Defense lawyer says sheriff was pressured to make arrest in racially charged case

From Page 1A

If Sledge is factually innocent and cleared, he will be the longest-serving wrongly convicted inmate in North Carolina history to regain his freedom, said his lawyer, Chris Mumma.

Always a suspect

Lawmen had focused on Sledge since Labor Day 1976, the day Josephine Davis and her daughter Aileen were killed. A relative found the bodies. Josephine was 74; Aileen, 53. Sledge, then 32, had escaped from a prison near the women's home the day before and was still on the loose.

Sledge says he never was at the house.

He had been serving time in what's now called Bladen Correctional Center, a minimum-security prison near White Lake. He had less than a year left to serve on charges of larceny, receipt of stolen goods and escape.

The day before the murders, Sept. 5, Sledge said he feared for his life.

Six months earlier, another prisoner — a convicted murderer — hit Sledge on the head, cracked his skull, his court filing says. That inmate was sent to a higher-security prison as punishment, and his parole was delayed six months, Sledge's lawyer said. Now the man was back at the Bladen County prison.

Sledge thought the other inmate would come after him. "It was a bad time. I jumped the fence," he said. He escaped about 12:30 p.m. and hid in the woods nearby until dark, according to his account of the escape. Then he walked west toward Elizabethtown.

Along the way and in town, Sledge later told authorities, he dumped his prison shirt in the exhaust pipe of a truck and stole other clothing.

In the early hours of Sept. 6, Sledge said, he found a car in Elizabethtown with the keys in the ignition. He stole it and drove to

Fayetteville. On his way out of Elizabethtown, he said, he saw a town clock that read 2:20 a.m.

Sledge said he reached Fayetteville about 3:15 a.m.

The bodies were found about 4:30 p.m. that afternoon. The women's dresses had been pulled up above their waists. Aileen was left half-naked; Josephine was partly covered with a bedsheet, according to notes from the investigation.

Blood was splattered on the walls and furniture and spread across the floor of their dilapidated five-room house. Injuries suggested that Aileen had been sexually assaulted.

"This is the most brutal murder I've seen since I have been sheriff in Bladen County, and I have been sheriff for 30 years," John B. Allen told reporters that day.

The Fayetteville Times reported that the mutilated bodies were almost unrecognizable.

The first deputy to enter the house reported some of the blood was still wet, and blood had dripped throughout the house. A shoe print from outside the home matched two bloody shoe prints found inside.

Those prints don't match the prison-issued Converse shoes that Sledge said he was wearing when he was on the run.

Investigators found fingerprints and a bloody hand print. Those don't match Sledge, either, according to court documents.

The women were white. A deputy collected hairs found on Aileen's abdomen and imbedded in the blood on her forehead.

Investigators later determined they came from a black person. They suspected that the hairs belonged to the killer.

The DNA from the hairs, tested last year, does not match Sledge, according to test results filed by his lawyer, Chris Mumma, director of the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence.



Joseph Sledge is being held in the Pamlico Correctional Institution on a double murder conviction. His appeal, based on DNA evidence, has been taken up by the N.C. Innocence Inquiry Commission.

Mumma says Sledge typically kept his head shaved, so the head hairs the deputy found could not have come from him.

News of the killings filled newspapers and the wires from Fayetteville to Wilmington. Sledge said a man he knew in Fayetteville told him about it.

"He said, 'Man, who you kill?'"

"I said, 'What you talking about, man?'"

"He said, 'They got in the paper for you to turn yourself in 'cause some people got killed down there in Bladen County, and they're looking for you.'"

The Fayetteville Observer reported that a Fayetteville police officer spotted the stolen car and chased it on Tuesday, Sept. 7. The paper reported that Sledge drove down a dead-end street, abandoned the car, ran into woods and got away.

On Sept. 9, Sledge was captured in another stolen car when he was stopped

for speeding in Dillon, S.C.

He was taken to the Cumberland County Jail in Fayetteville, then back to Bladen County and the crime scene. He was questioned about the murders and denied involvement.

Delayed indictment

Despite the capture of the prime suspect, the Bladen County Sheriff's Office did not charge Sledge with the murders right away.

Speculation arose that a relative of the women killed them. The sheriff in late September 1976 responded with a statement that the killer was "non-white."

"Physical evidence recovered at the scene of the crime, as examined by the FBI laboratory, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect," he was quoted as saying.

A reward of \$2,500 was offered in October 1976 for information leading to the

conviction of the killer.

A year went by. Sledge's lawyer, Mumma, says pressure mounted on law enforcement to make an arrest. News stories recounted the unsolved double homicide and other murders. In one, a resident questioned the abilities of the sheriff.

Sledge said a deputy warned him: "They're going to try to figure out a way to blame you for this case because they can't catch the guy that did it."

Investigators began questioning prisoners who had been in jail or prison with Sledge. The reward was doubled to \$5,000 in December 1977.

Two inmates said they knew something. Their statements led to Sledge's indictment for murder in February 1978.

According to an investigator's notes, inmate Donnie Lee Sutton said in November 1977 that Sledge told him police thought he

killed the Davis women, but Sledge denied doing it. Sledge's lawyer included the notes in a motion she filed asserting evidence of his innocence.

In interviews in February 1978, Sutton's story changed, according to the notes. Although Sledge denied killing the women, Sutton said, he had mentioned a lot of blood.

According to Sutton, Sledge said he was glad the women were dead, that he hated white "she-devils."

Sutton testified at the trial in 1978 that Sledge told him he was put in a position in which he had to kill the women.

In her motion, Mumma says Sutton was also an escapee from the White Lake prison at the time of the murders. But Sutton was not prosecuted for the escape after he testified at Sledge's trial.

A convicted murderer, Sutton was paroled in 1982. See SLEDGE, Page 5A

Crime: Medlock says restructured department has been successful

From Page 1A

cludes part of Fort Bragg annexed by the city in 2008. However, Fayetteville police do not patrol on the installation, and crimes reported there are handled by military and federal law enforcement. The Fayetteville Observer analyzed the crime rates using a city population of 184,859, a figure provided by the city that excludes residents on Fort Bragg.

Among North Carolina's nine largest cities, Fayetteville ranked first for its property crime rate and fourth for violent crime, which includes murder, forcible rape and robbery. All categories in which Fayetteville had the highest rates in the state last year.

The city's total rate — both property and violent crimes — ranked No. 1, with 7,764 reports per 100,000 people.

The next highest city was Winston-Salem, with 6,503 crimes per 100,000 people. Raleigh's crime rate was 3,699. Charlotte's rate was 4,678.

Medlock said the city's success at fighting crime should not be measured by how Fayetteville compares with other municipalities, but rather by how the city's numbers change over time. "I will gauge the success of community involvement in 2013 by the number of suspicious calls we have to 911 at the end of the year," he said. "That tells me that folks are starting to pay attention to what is going on around them, and they're calling us to intervene prior to someone committing a crime."

Priority

The City Council has identified crime and gangs as a top priority this year. At a council retreat in February, Councilman Bill Crisp said the crime rate scared him enough to keep a gun in his nightstand. Last week, council mem-

FAYETTEVILLE CRIME

Offenses reported to law enforcement in 2012 for Fayetteville excluding Fort Bragg. The rates and rankings are based on a Fayetteville population of 184,859, provided by the city. National rankings are among 279 municipalities with at least 100,000 people.

Crime	Offenses	Rate per 100,000 residents	State ranking	National ranking
Violent crime	1,187	642	4	93
Murder	22	12	1	47
Forcible rape	71	38	1	94
Robbery	560	303	1	53
Aggravated assault	534	289	7	137
Property crime	13,168	7,122	1	5
Burglary	4,109	2,223	1	6
Larceny-theft	8,300	4,490	1	8
Motor vehicle theft	757	410	1	107
Arson	47	25	4	84
Total violent and property crimes, excluding arson	14,353	7,764	1	12

SOURCE: FBI

bers debated how to address crime-fighting in the budget. City Manager Ted Voorhees earlier proposed raising taxes by a penny to hire 16 more police officers and fund the construction of a \$3 million police district office.

But now the city faces an unexpected money crunch with the possibility of having to refund \$3 million in license fees paid by sweepstakes cafes, and a loss of \$3 million in annual revenue due to the legislature's tax reforms.

The city had applied for a federal grant to fund 75 percent of salaries for 15 new officers, meaning the city would need to pay the other 25 percent. Voorhees has now suggested the city withdraw the application and not fund the new positions.

Some on the council, including Keith Bates, have said they still support the tax increase if it means more officers able to patrol city streets.

Bates said he thinks Fayetteville's high crime rates could be attributed to unemployment and the number of residents who abuse drugs. Getting more officers to patrol would help, he said. "The crooks don't want to get caught; you'll take away

their paychecks," he said. He said city officials know having more officers patrolling is key, because officers have said they're so busy responding to calls that they don't have time to spend in troubled neighborhoods.

"If we had more on the street, once they get done with the call, maybe they'll have a little time to show their presence in the neighborhoods," he said.

Medlock has told the council he would like until the end of the year to determine the number of staff he thinks is appropriate to patrol the city.

Crisp said he thinks the council should listen to Medlock and give him the time he's asked for.

"The chief has asked for time," he said Wednesday. "I think we owe it to him; he's the resident expert."

Voorhees said he had not yet gone through the FBI's report and could not comment on the latest crime statistics. However, he said he supports Medlock and his approach to policing.

"The direction Chief Medlock is moving the department is the right approach," Voorhees said, referring to increase in officers on the

been proven to be the most successful approach in our country."

This month, Medlock restructured the department to split police coverage into three districts. He increased the number of officers patrolling during peak crime hours, which he says has been successful.

"I think it's going well," he said.

Medlock said officers have told him they have more time to be able to handle quality of life issues, which should decrease crime. Trust between officers and residents has slowly improved, too, he said. A stronger relationship with the public is necessary to truly fight crime, he said.

"I'm encouraged by what I hear members of the community share with me," he said. "They have a different feeling about our police officers."

Cumberland County District Attorney Billy West said his office independently tracks crime rates. He already knows Fayetteville's rate was high.

But high rates also indicate that people are willing to call police and report crime, West said. The combination of an aggressive police force and an increase in officers on the

2012 RANKINGS

National 2012 rankings of crime rates per 100,000 people, among 279 cities with at least 100,000 residents.

Property crimes

(burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft):

1. Springfield, Mo.: 9,011
2. Spokane, Wash.: 8,730
3. Little Rock, Ark.: 8,061
4. Salt Lake City: 7,374
5. Fayetteville: 7,122
6. Birmingham, Ala.: 6,934
7. St. Louis, Mo.: 6,902
8. Knoxville, Tenn.: 6,673
9. Orlando, Fla.: 6,614
10. Oakland, Calif.: 6,594

Burglary:

1. Flint, Mich.: 2,931
2. Cleveland: 2,473
3. Toledo, Ohio: 2,353
4. Jackson, Miss.: 2,344

5. Vallejo, Calif.: 2,280
6. Fayetteville: 2,223
7. Birmingham, Ala.: 2,206
8. Little Rock, Ark.: 2,165
9. Dayton, Ohio: 2,141
10. Winston-Salem: 1,930

Larceny:

1. Springfield, Mo.: 6,982
2. Spokane, Wash.: 5,939
3. Salt Lake City: 5,546
4. Little Rock, Ark.: 5,338
5. Glendale, Ariz.: 4,660
6. Knoxville, Tenn.: 4,591
7. Orlando, Fla.: 4,552
8. Fayetteville: 4,490
9. San Antonio: 4,393
10. Independence, Mo.: 4,357

street results in "more crimes charged and more warrants served."

One hurdle his office faces is the time it takes for drug tests to be conducted by the State Bureau of Investigation lab. He said it could take 12 to 18 months to get results from a routine drug test, which slows down the number of cases in the court system.

"We cannot proceed to trial without that data," he said. "I know the SBI is doing a lot, but that is a statewide problem that is driving the delay."

West said a lot of crimes committed in Fayetteville are by repeat offenders. His office operates a special repeat offender program that works to track offenders as they move through the justice system.

"What we try to do is identify folks and if they have been arrested on multiple crimes," he said.

By using that information, West said, prosecutors can determine if balls are being set high enough by magistrates at the Cumberland County Detention Center. And the District Attorney's Office can present a criminal

history to a judge and argue the need to keep someone in custody if they are a risk to the community.

Medlock said his department and the district attorney's office are in the final stages of a new program that would better track the worst offenders.

"We want to identify the 50 most prolific offenders in our city," Medlock said. "The folks that are causing the greatest fear and causing the most damage and creating the most crime."

Habitual felony offenders would be monitored with an electronic ankle. Medlock said a similar program was effective in Charlotte. The program would improve "accountability for those that are wearing the bracelet," he said.

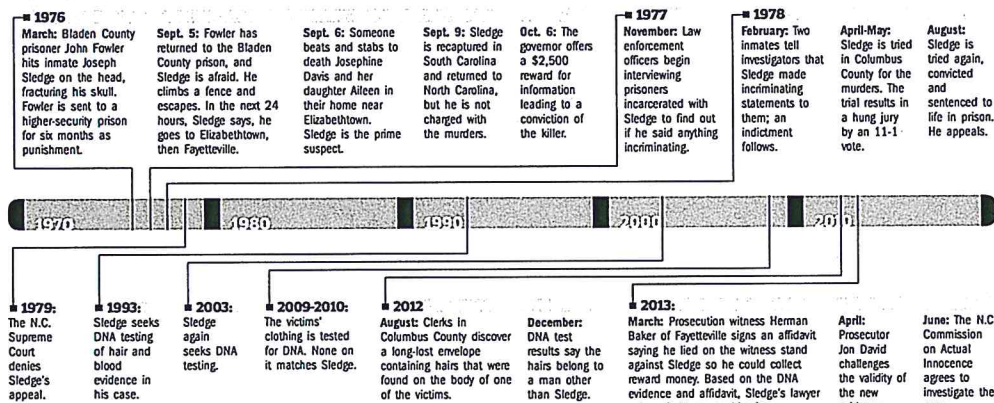
"We're going to do everything that we can that is legal, ethical and moral to reduce crime in the city of Fayetteville, North Carolina," he said.

Staff writer Cabin Dillen can be reached at cdillen@observer.com or 486-2509.

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THE CASE OF JOSEPH SLEDGE

Joseph Sledge, who escaped from a Bladen County prison in 1976, was convicted of murdering two women in their home near Elizabethtown.



Sources: Court records, newspaper accounts, interviews with Joseph Sledge and Chris Mumma.

Sledge

From Page 4A

about 12 years into a minimum 28-year sentence. Sutton collected \$2,000 of the \$5,000 reward. He has since died.

The second inmate with information about Sledge was Herman Lee Baker, who now lives in Fayetteville.

Baker came forward with information about Sledge in 1976, when he was in Bladen County Jail.

Little told the State Bureau of Investigation this year.

According to notes of the interview, which was conducted in March and filed with the court by the district attorney, Little said Baker knew key facts that had not been made public. He knew that one of the victims had been hit on the jaw and that a can of black pepper was found at the crime scene.

At the trial in August 1978, Baker testified that Sledge confessed to him in a Moore County prison in 1977.

He said Sledge described a confrontation in the house and a screaming woman. Baker testified that Sledge said he hit her in the jaw, knocked her down and was stabbing her when a second woman ran up. Baker said Sledge told him he stabbed her, too.

Baker testified that Sledge also told him that he spread black pepper at the back door or the back of the house to keep the "she-devil" spirits from following him.

Baker, released on parole before the August trial, collected \$3,000 of the reward money.

In March, Mumma tracked down Baker in Fayetteville. She got him to

sign an affidavit that his testimony in 1978 was a lie.

"My testimony was not truthful. Joseph Sledge never told me he murdered anyone," the affidavit says. "Although Joseph Sledge did not admit to committing any such crimes, I testified that he did because of promises of financial reward made to me by law enforcement."

Baker's affidavit says police and prison guards told him about the can of pepper, the victim's broken jaw and the reward money.

Baker, reached by telephone this month, referred questions to his lawyer, Billy Richardson. Richardson did not return messages seeking comment.

A trial in spring 1978 ended with the jury hung 11-1 in favor of guilt. The retrial, in August 1978, ended with a guilty verdict and two life sentences for Sledge. The prosecutors included a lawyer from the state Attorney General's Office and local Assistant District Attorney Mike Eastley, the future governor.

Appeals filed

Sledge appealed his conviction and made other court filings throughout his incarceration to try to get a judge to review his case.

He first began asking for DNA testing in 1993, just a few years after law enforcement began using the technique to solve crimes.

In 2003, Sledge got a judge to order law enforcement to look for the evidence from the Sledge case and have it tested for DNA.

The victims' clothing was tested in 2009 and 2010. No DNA found on the clothing matched Sledge's. In August 2012, staff members in the Columbus County Clerk of Court Office found in their evidence vault an envelope

with the hairs collected from Aileen Davis' body.

Tests of two head hairs and a pubic hair in 2012 found that they came from a black man, someone other than Sledge.

Jon David, the district attorney for Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties, is not convinced by Sledge's new evidence.

A private lab in October 2012 found the hair samples too degraded to test, David said in a court document opposing Sledge's claim. A second lab followed up with more testing and in December ruled out Sledge as the source.

Even if the second tests are accurate, "at best it only establishes that in a wooden shack in rural Bladen County hairs from some person other than the defendant were present," David wrote. "It does not establish who they came from, how they got there, when they had been present, or determine if the scene was contaminated by any number of persons."

David also does not believe Baker's affidavit recanting his trial testimony. "The circumstances surrounding the defendant's obtaining the alleged 'recantation' are important for the court to consider when evaluating what, if any, credibility to assign Mr. Baker's recant affidavit," Mr. Baker's physical and mental state are also legitimate subjects of inquiry," David wrote.

An FBI agent interviewed Baker, who is 63, in March. The agent described him as smelling of alcohol. He wrote that Baker was unsteady on his feet and that he appeared to be in pain. The agent said Baker told him he was drinking wine that day to ease the pain

from an illness.

But according to the SBI agent's notes, "Baker stated Sledge never told him that he had killed the women in Bladen County. Baker said Sledge talked about some things but did not make a confession to him."

Victims' family

Relatives of Josephine and Aileen Davis are monitoring Sledge's effort.

"I've heard about it, but I don't believe it," said Wanda Sue Hales. She is Josephine's granddaughter and Aileen's niece. "I just don't believe he's the one that did it."

Wanda Hales discovered the bodies, according to a transcript of Sledge's trial. Josephine's grandson, Billy Ray Hales, told The News & Observer newspaper in Raleigh that if Sledge is guilty, he should die in prison. But if Sledge is innocent, Hales said, he would be furious at law enforcement for convicting the wrong man and not punishing the right one.

Mumma is convinced

that Sledge was railroaded by a Sheriff's Office under pressure to solve a race-tinted double-homicide.

"They think they're framing the guilty guy, so it's OK," Mumma said. "Framing the guy they think is guilty is not OK because sometimes they're innocent."

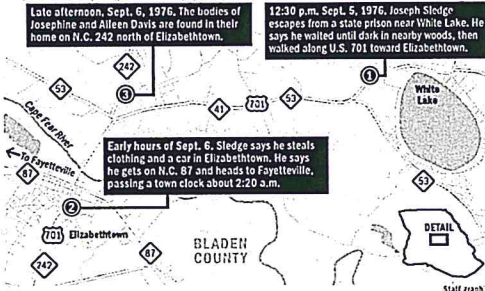
She thinks the often cynical law enforcement community refuses to accept that it sometimes makes mistakes.

"I get pretty frustrated when thinking about this case. The tunnel vision and the bias is just so prevalent," she said.

The N.C. Innocence Inquiry Commission agreed this month to investigate Sledge's case, Mumma said. The commission is a state agency that examines claims of factual innocence. A three-judge panel could review the evidence, and, if it finds it persuasive, exonerate Sledge and set him free.

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THE ESCAPE AND THE MURDERS



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Since it began operating in 2007, the Innocence Inquiry Commission says it

has reviewed hundreds of cases and held hearings for six defendants. Four were exonerated.

Separately, Sledge has a motion for appropriate relief — a means of getting newly found evidence before a judge — pending in Columbus County Superior Court. A judge can review the evidence. If he finds it persuasive, he can dismiss the murder charges and set Sledge free.

The next hearing in that action is scheduled for July 11 in Whiteville.

Although he disputes the value of the DNA evidence and Baker's affidavit, David wants the court to hold a hearing to consider them.

Sledge said he is not angry at the men who helped convict him.

"People are going to do what they do, so why hold animosity toward anybody or anything when you've got no control over it?" he said.

Staff writer Paul Woolverton can be reached at woolverton@observer.com or 436-3512.

Obesity: 'We don't see ourselves as diseased,' spokeswoman says

From Page 1A

Obesity Action Coalition, a national nonprofit organization based in Tampa, Fla., that helps those struggling with obesity. "It puts obesity on the same path as treatments for addictions to alcohol or tobacco, and mental health problems, such as depression."

A few decades ago, those conditions also were perceived as behavioral problems, said Nadgrowski.

"Once we realized they involved a disease process, that drove better coverage, better treatment and real change."

In making the call, the AMA aims to reduce the incidence of obesity-related diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, said AMA board member Dr. Patrice Harris in a statement accompanying the announcement.

More than 35 percent of Americans are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Declared sick

But that doesn't necessarily mean they're sick, many argue.

"We don't see ourselves as diseased," said Peggy Howell, spokeswoman for the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, a 44-year-old nonprofit group that works to improve the quality of life for people of large size.

"To label a whole segment of society as diseased without any knowledge of their health is unacceptable," she said. "It directly fuels discrimination. This is a step backward."

Howell, who is 65, added, "I have been fat my entire life. If being fat were so horrific, why am I not wracked with problems? I have slightly high blood pressure, like a lot of thin people, but other than that, I perceive myself as a healthy woman, far healthier than a lot of people I know. But two days ago, I was declared diseased."

Linda Bacon, a nutritionist at Davis, said, "I'm appalled that the AMA chose to use the term and name obesity a disease."

Bacon, author of "Health at Every Size," joins other critics in noting that the definition of obesity — basically how one's weight and height ratio stacks up on a BMI chart — is im-

precise, and only defines size, not health.

"The AMA just determined that some people are sick based on how they look," said Bacon. "What's next? Will they pronounce being black as a disease because there are higher rates of cardiovascular disease in black communities?"

Nadgrowski of the Obesity Action Coalition believes the new designation will reduce the stigma around obesity.

The coalition also has long referred to obesity as a disease based on the complexity of the issue, he said. "It's not as simple as pushing away from the table and getting on the treadmill."

Last year the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists joined the coalition and The Obesity Society in calling obesity a disease.

One change Nadgrowski expects to see as a result of the AMA's position is obese patients feeling more comfortable discussing weight issues with their health-care providers. Now that their condition can be recognized as a legitimate disease, he said, they will feel less ashamed talking about it with their doctors.

He also hopes the new

awareness will improve training in medical schools, where education on treating obesity is minimal.

Howell, however, believes the label will make those of large size even less likely to seek medical care.

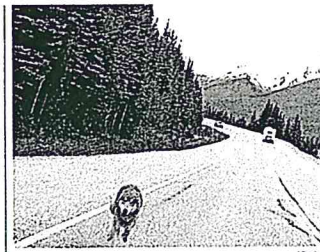
"A high percentage of doctors still perceive obese patients as those who over-consume fast food and sugary sodas, and have weak characters," she said. "The AMA decision won't change those attitudes overnight."

Other critics of the new classification say that obesity is not a disease, but a risk factor for other diseases.

"Obesity itself is not necessarily a disease," said Bacon. "If we are concerned about disease, let's focus on disease."

The fact that obesity contributes to as many as 60 illnesses amplifies the need for obesity to be treated specifically, said Smith. "To just treat all the diseases that result misses the opportunity to address the root cause."

Moving forward, he said, now that "what has been a very healthy debate" has come to an end, "it's time for us to get serious about treating obesity. We have to call it what it is."



A wolf chases Tim Bartlett's motorcycle down Highway 93 on June 8 in Kootenay National Park in British Columbia, Canada.

Wolf chases man on motorcycle in Canada

The Associated Press

BANFF, Alberta — A Canadian man says he was chased by a gray wolf while he was riding a motorcycle in British Columbia.

Tim Bartlett of Banff told the National Post the wolf darted onto the roadway and began chasing him June 8 as he was riding through the Canadian Rockies. The animal got within several feet of him before Bartlett accelerated.

After Bartlett put some distance between himself and the wolf, he stopped to take some photos, capturing it in full pursuit. He said he could hear the wolf's feet on the road.

He said he believes the wolf was after his bike. Bartlett accelerated again as traffic picked up, and he says he lost sight of the wolf running away from the highway and into the trees.

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Joseph Sledge continues fight to clear his name in Bladen County double murder



Staff photo by Andrew Craft

Joseph Sledge, a former Fort Bragg soldier, has been in prison on a murder conviction since 1978. He is appealing his conviction.

By Paul Woolverton
Staff writer

BAYBORO - Every day, Joseph Sledge does hundreds of pushups on the floor of the Pamlico Correctional Institution and thinks about the justice he says he was denied 35 years ago.

The former Fayetteville resident, brought to Fort Bragg from Georgia by the draft in 1965, was convicted in 1978 of killing an elderly woman and her daughter in Bladen County. He is serving two life sentences.

Sledge has always maintained his innocence. Now, he thinks he has a real chance at freedom.

He says recent DNA testing proves that someone else committed the killings. And in March, a key prosecution witness said he lied about Sledge on the stand to collect a cash reward.

"They had evidence to prove whoever did it, but they couldn't find him," Sledge said in an interview from the Pamlico prison in May. "So, to make a long story short, I became a scapegoat."

Will the new evidence be enough to exonerate Sledge?

Bladen County District Attorney Jon David says no. David argues that the new evidence is of little validity or relevance. He is trying to keep Sledge, who turned 69 on Monday, behind bars for the rest of his life.

If Sledge is factually innocent and cleared, he will be the longest-serving wrongly convicted inmate in North Carolina history to regain his freedom, said his lawyer, Chris Mumma.

Always a suspect

Lawmen had focused on Sledge since Labor Day 1976, the day Josephine Davis and her daughter Aileen were killed. A relative found the bodies. Josephine was 74; Aileen, 53.

Sledge, then 32, had escaped from a prison near the women's home the day before and was still on the



Staff photo by Andrew Craft

Joseph Sledge is being held in the Pamlico Correctional Institution on a double murder

loose.

Sledge says he never was at the house.

He had been serving time in what's now called Bladen Correctional Center, a minimum-security prison near White Lake. He had less than a year left to serve on charges of larceny, receipt of stolen goods and escape.

The day before the murders, Sept. 5, Sledge said he feared for his life.

Six months earlier, another prisoner - a convicted murderer - hit Sledge on the head and cracked his skull, his court filing says. That inmate was sent to a higher-security prison as punishment, and his parole was delayed six months, Sledge's lawyer said.

Now the man was back at the Bladen County prison.

Sledge thought the other inmate would come after him. "It was a bad time. I jumped the fence," he said.

He escaped about 12:30 p.m. and hid in the woods nearby until dark, according to his account of the escape. Then he walked west toward Elizabethtown.

Along the way and in town, Sledge later told authorities, he dumped his prison shirt in the exhaust pipe of a truck and stole other clothing.

In the early hours of Sept. 6, Sledge said, he found a car in Elizabethtown with the keys in the ignition. He stole it and drove to Fayetteville. On his way out of Elizabethtown, he said, he saw a town clock that read 2:20 a.m.

Sledge said he reached Fayetteville about 3:15 a.m.

The bodies were found about 4:30 p.m. that afternoon. The women's dresses had been pulled up above their waists. Aileen was left half-naked; Josephine was partly covered with a bedsheet, according to notes from the investigation.

Blood was splattered on the walls and furniture and spread across the floor of their dilapidated five-room house. Injuries suggested that Aileen had been sexually assaulted.

"This is the most brutal murder I've seen since I have been sheriff in Bladen County, and I have been sheriff for 30 years," John B. Allen told reporters that day.

The Fayetteville Times reported that the mutilated bodies were almost unrecognizable.

The first deputy to enter the house reported some of the blood was still wet, and blood had dripped throughout the house. A shoe print from outside the home matched two bloody shoe prints found inside.

Those prints don't match the prison-issued Converse shoes that Sledge said he was wearing when he was on the run.

Investigators found fingerprints and a bloody hand print. Those don't match Sledge, either, according to court documents.

The women were white. A deputy collected hairs found on Aileen's abdomen and imbedded in the blood on her forehead. Investigators later determined they came from a black person. They suspected that the hairs belonged to the killer.

The DNA from the hairs, tested last year, does not match Sledge, according to test results filed by his lawyer, Chris Mumma, director of the N.C. Center on Actual Innocence. Mumma says Sledge typically kept his head shaved, so the head hairs the deputy found could not have come from him.

News of the killings filled newspapers and the airwaves from Fayetteville to Wilmington. Sledge said a man he knew in Fayetteville told him about it.

"He said, 'Man, who you kill?' "

"I said, 'What you talking about, man?' "

"He said, 'They got in the paper for you to turn yourself in 'cause some people got killed down there in Bladen County, and they're looking for you.' "

The Fayetteville Observer reported that a Fayetteville police officer spotted the stolen car and chased it on Tuesday, Sept. 7. The paper reported that Sledge drove down a dead-end street, abandoned the car, ran into woods and got away.

On Sept. 9, Sledge was captured in another stolen car when he was stopped for speeding in Dillon, S.C.

He was taken to the Cumberland County jail in Fayetteville, then back to Bladen County and the crime scene. He was questioned about the murders and denied involvement.

Delayed indictment

Despite the capture of the prime suspect, the Bladen County Sheriff's Office did not charge Sledge with the murders right away.

Speculation arose that a relative of the women killed them. The sheriff in late September 1976 responded with a statement that the killer was "non-white."

"Physical evidence recovered at the scene of the crime, as examined by the SBI laboratory, eliminates any Caucasian from being suspect," he was quoted as saying.

A reward of \$2,500 was offered in October 1976 for information leading to the conviction of the killer.

A year went by.

Sledge's lawyer, Mumma, says pressure mounted on law enforcement to make an arrest. News stories recounted the unsolved double homicide and other murders. In one, a resident questioned the abilities of the sheriff.

Sledge said a deputy warned him: "They're going to try to figure out a way to blame you for this case because they can't catch the guy that did it."

Investigators began questioning prisoners who had been in jail or prison with Sledge. The reward was doubled to \$5,000 in December 1977.

Two inmates said they knew something. Their statements led to Sledge's indictment for murder in February 1978.

According to an investigator's notes, inmate Donnie Lee Sutton said in November 1977 that Sledge told him police thought he killed the Davis women, but Sledge denied doing it. Sledge's lawyer included the notes in a motion she filed asserting evidence of his innocence.

In interviews in February 1978, Sutton's story changed, according to the notes. Although Sledge denied killing the women, Sutton said, he had mentioned a lot of blood. According to Sutton, Sledge said he was glad the women were dead, that he hated white "she-devils."

Sutton testified at the trial in 1978 that Sledge told him he was put in a position in which he had to kill the women.

In her motion, Mumma says Sutton was also an escapee from the White Lake prison at the time of the murders. But Sutton was not prosecuted for the escape after he testified at Sledge's trial.

A convicted murderer, Sutton was paroled in 1982, about 12 years into a minimum 28-year sentence. Sutton collected \$2,000 of the \$5,000 reward. He has since died.

The second inmate with information about Sledge was Herman Lee Baker, who now lives in Fayetteville.

Baker came forward with information, former Bladen County Detective Phillip Little told the State Bureau of Investigation this year.

According to notes of the interview, which was conducted in March and filed with the court by the district attorney, Little said Baker knew key facts that had not been made public. He knew that one of the victims had been hit on the jaw and that a can of black pepper was found at the crime scene.

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In 2003, Sledge got a judge to order law enforcement to look for the evidence from the Sledge case and have it tested for DNA.

The victims' clothing was tested in 2009 and 2010. No DNA found on the clothing matched Sledge's. In August 2012, staff members in the Columbus County Clerk of Court Office found in their evidence vault an envelope with the hairs collected from Aileen Davis' body.

Tests of two head hairs and a pubic hair in 2012 found that they came from a black man, someone other than Sledge.

Jon David, the district attorney for Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties, is not convinced by Sledge's new evidence.

A private lab in October 2012 found the hair samples too degraded to test, David said in a court document opposing Sledge's claim. A second lab followed up with more testing and in December ruled out Sledge as the source.

Even if the second tests are accurate, "at best it only establishes that in a wooden shack in rural Bladen County hairs from some person other than the defendant were present," David wrote. "It does not establish who they came from, how they got there, when they got there, how long they had been present, or determine if the scene was contaminated by any number of persons."

David also does not believe Baker's affidavit recanting his trial testimony.

"The circumstances surrounding the defendant's obtaining the alleged 'recantation' are important for the court to consider when evaluating what, if any, credibility to assign Mr. Baker's recent affidavit. Mr. Baker's physical and mental state are also legitimate subjects of inquiry," David wrote.

An SBI agent interviewed Baker, who is 63, in March. The agent described him as smelling of alcohol. He wrote that Baker was unsteady on his feet and that he appeared to be in pain. The agent said Baker told him he was drinking wine that day to ease the pain from an illness.

But according to the SBI agent's notes, "Baker stated Sledge never told him that he had killed the women in Bladen County. Baker said Sledge talked about some things but did not make a confession to him."

Victims' family

Relatives of Josephine and Aileen Davis are monitoring Sledge's effort.

"I've heard about it, but I don't believe it," said Wanda Sue Hales. She is Josephine's granddaughter and Aileen's niece. "I just don't, because he's the one that done it."

Wanda Hales discovered the bodies, according to a transcript of Sledge's trial.

Josephine's grandson, Billy Ray Hales, told The News & Observer newspaper in Raleigh that if Sledge is guilty, he should die in prison. But if Sledge is innocent, Hales said, he would be furious at law enforcement for convicting the wrong man and not punishing the right one.

Mumma is convinced that Sledge was railroaded by a Sheriff's Office under pressure to solve a race-tinged double-homicide.

"They think they're framing the guilty guy, so it's OK," Mumma said. "Framing the guy they think is guilty is not OK because sometimes they're innocent."

She thinks the often cynical law enforcement community refuses to accept that it sometimes makes mistakes.

"I get pretty frustrated when thinking about this case. The tunnel vision and the bias is just so prevalent," she said.

The N.C. Innocence Inquiry Commission agreed this month to investigate Sledge's case, Mumma said. The commission is a state agency that examines claims of factual innocence. A three-judge panel could review the evidence, and, if it finds it persuasive, exonerate Sledge and set him free.

Since it began operating in 2007, the Innocence Inquiry Commission says it has reviewed hundreds of case and held hearings for six defendants. Four were exonerated.

Separately, Sledge has a motion for appropriate relief - a means of getting newly found evidence before a judge - pending in Columbus County Superior Court. A judge can review the evidence. If he finds it persuasive, he can dismiss the murder charges and set Sledge free.

6/24/13

Joseph Sledge continues fight to clear his name in Bladen County double murder

The next hearing in that action is scheduled for July 11 in Whiteville.

Although he disputes the value of the DNA evidence and Baker's affidavit, David wants the court to hold a hearing to consider them.

Sledge said he is not angry at the men who helped convict him.

"People are going to do what they do, so why hold animosity toward anybody or anything when you've got no control over it?" he said.

Staff writer Paul Woolverton can be reached at woolvertonp@fayobserver.com or 486-3512.

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Sledge hoping for new trial

by Erin Smith

Staff writer

07.06.13 - 10:10 pm

WHITEVILLE — On Thursday, Joseph Sledge and his defense team will get a chance to have their arguments heard regarding whether new DNA evidence warrants giving Sledge a new trial.

Sledge has spent the past 34 years in jail for the murder of Josephine Davis and the murder and rape of her daughter, Aileen Davis. The original trial was moved from Bladen County to Columbus County, and Thursday's arguments will also be held in Columbus County.

"They have filed a motion for appropriate relief arguing that new evidence is going to clear his name," said District Attorney Jon David. "The purpose of this is to decide if the new evidence would have made a difference ..."

He added that the rules ethics prevent him from speaking to the specifics of the case.

"We are asking the community to withhold judgment from this case until facts are revealed in the courtroom," said David.

He added that he did request the State Bureau of Investigation to conduct an investigation, which will be presented in court.

David said Sledge's attorney has also filed a motion requesting the case be heard before the Innocence Committee in Raleigh. Both motions will be heard on Thursday at 2:15 p.m. in Columbus County Superior Court.

N.C. Center on Actual Innocence Director Christine Mumma, who is serving as Sledge's attorney, recently asked that a judge "overturn Sledge's conviction and dismiss all charges related to the murders of Aileen and Josephine Davis in Elizabethtown" according to WRAL.

According to reports, Herman Baker, who testified against Sledge in the 1978 trial, alleges that investigators gave him all the details of the crime so he could testify at trial. Baker also alleges that investigators bribed him for his testimony by offering him reward money and early parole, according to WRAL.

Mumma told WRAL in March, "Baker's admission completely undermines any confidence in Mr. Sledge's conviction and irrefutably establishes his innocence."

The other informant, Donnie Sutton, died in 1991.

Sledge was serving a four-year sentence for larceny when he escaped from the

White Lake Prison Camp one day before the murders took place.

Sometime on Monday, Sept. 6, 1976, Josephine Davis, 74, and her 53-year-old daughter, Ailene Davis, were brutally murdered and Ailene Davis was also raped. The women were reported to have been stabbed to death in their home on N.C. 242 North.

According to reports, Mumma said that the fact Baker is now claiming to have lied and been given information about the crime coupled with the fact that DNA testing on hair found on the bodies that does not match Sledge, is enough to call the conviction into question.

Former Gov. Mike Easley served as the prosecutor in the case. According to WRAL, Easley has fought efforts over the years to have the conviction overturned.

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New evidence could earn convicted murderer a new trial

Posted: Jul 11, 2013 8:15 AM EDT

Updated: Jul 11, 2013 8:32 AM EDT

By: Lindsay Curtin - bio | email

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC (WECT) - A man who has been in prison for more than 30 years may see the inside of a courtroom again to fight for his freedom, thanks to possible new evidence.

Joseph Sledge was convicted in 1978 for the murder of Josephine Davis and the murder/rape of her daughter Aileen Davis in Bladen County. The conviction, however, came from the Columbus County Court system as it was moved there for pre-trial publicity issues.

Questions regarding the accuracy of a hair DNA test done in the 70s could be what earns Sledge a new trial.

Sledge and his attorney, Christine Mumma, filed a "motion for appropriate relief," saying this new evidence will clean him of his conviction.

"In the 70s they didn't have the testing technology we have now. So back then, a hair expert with the FBI said Sledge's hair was microscopically consistent with the hair found at the crime scene," explained Mumma.

Mumma, says current testing shows the hair found at the crime scene doesn't match her client's hair.

District Attorney Jon David said in an interview Wednesday that the evidence envelope of hair was actually found by mistake. A courthouse clerk found it lost behind a cabinet.

Another factor in the possible re-opening of this case is Herman Baker, who testified against Sledge in the 1978 trial but is now saying he lied.

Thursday's afternoon hearing in the Whiteville Court House will be a small gathering, comprised of David, defense attorney Christine Mumma, a Superior Court Judge, and possibly the victims' family.

The meeting will determine if this new evidence is good enough to move forward with the case.

David added that although the defense attorney is pushing this new evidence, she has shown interest in moving the case to the Innocence Commission first, rather than going straight to a public hearing.

The Innocence Commission is generally comprised of a group of attorneys who investigate a case. If they find it has merit, the group will send the case to a three judge panel and then to a public hearing.

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Convicted killer seeks third trial to prove innocence

Submitted by Sarah Murphy on Thu, 07/11/2013 - 6:05pm.

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WHITEVILLE, NC (WWAY) -- A man convicted twice for second degree murder is seeking a third trial.

Joseph Sledge says he was wrongly accused of the murder of two Bladen County women in the late 1970's. Josephine Davis, 74 and her daughter Aileen, 53, were found dead in their home Labor Day 1976.

Sledge has been incarcerated since 1977 and is serving a sentence of over 161 years on the Pamlico Correctional Institution.

Today Sledge's lawyer, Chris Mumma appeared in front of a judge to ask a judge for a motion of abeyance in the case.

After almost an hour of discussion between Mumma and District Attorney Jon David, the judge granted 90 day abeyance. This means there will be a delay in the case.

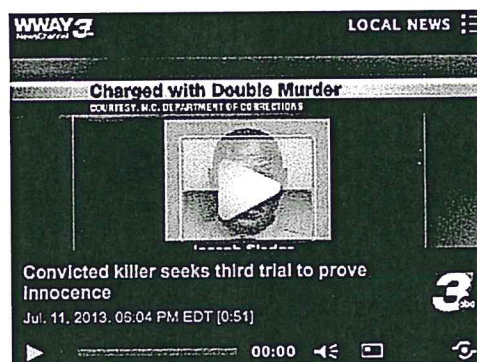
During this time the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission will continue with its investigation into the case and perform DNA testing on pieces of evidence.

Family members of the victims walked into the courtroom Thursday with tissues in their hands and left shaking their heads.

"We cannot believe this, we thought this was over 35 years ago," Katherine Brown, granddaughter of Josephine after the hearing. "Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we go through this difficult time."

Jon David fought against the motion to grant an abeyance. He said he and his office are ready to litigate the case immediately.

David said he questions the significance of the DNA testing along with the recantation from a key witness this past winter. He says the witness appeared intoxicated during the time he signed the affidavit that stated the testimony he gave in the trial decades ago was false.



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The defense and the prosecution will meet again in October. They will examine the progress the Inquiry Commission made in the case during the 90 day period.

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