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THE NEWS - GAZETTE

Champaign-Urbana — Monday, June 20, 1988 — 24 Pages

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ALSHIP

ation. "Obviously, we're all very upset," said Lt. William Willis, an Illinois State Police narcotics investigator. "I guess growing marijuana's not a big thing in Iroquois County anymore."

Watseka Police Chief Michael Van Hovehn said the decision "certainly leaves you with a hollow feeling. We put a lot of time and effort into this."

Van Hovehn, a friend of Alship and Balding, had recommended at last week's sentencing hearing that both be sentenced to prison.

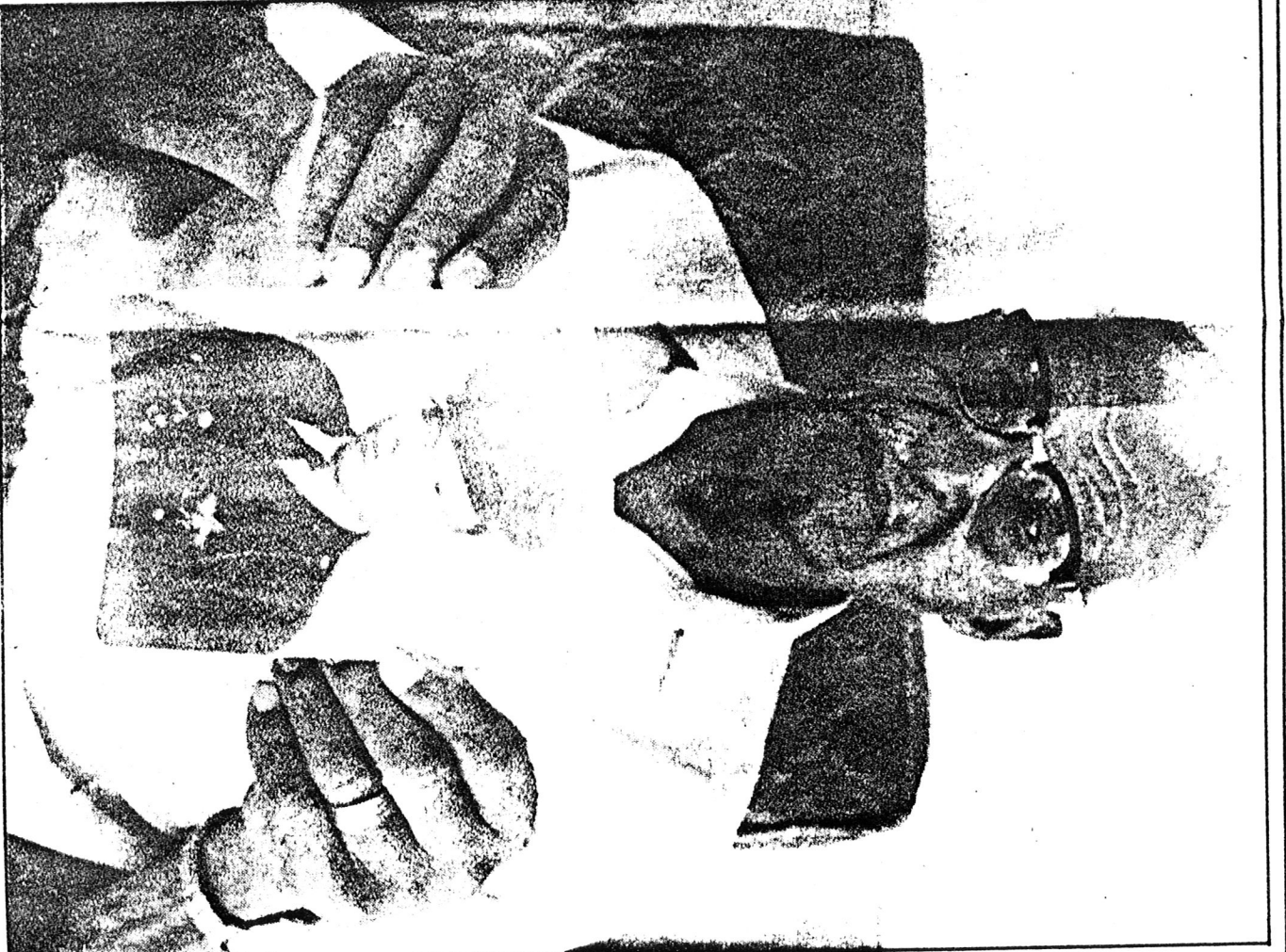
BRASEL SAID HE wasn't too surprised by the judge's decision, given the fact that Blunk wanted Alship's plea agreement worked out before sentencing the two police officers.

In handing down the probation sentences, Blunk said he could not justify ordering prison sentences for Alship and Balding while Alship escaped incarceration.

"I would have no (problem) inmates in this case," he said. "But I find it hard to justify probation for the person who grew the marijuana and got the money" and prison sentences for his co-defendants, Blunk

(See SENTENCED, A-12)

ary chief president



News-Gazette photo by Brian K. Johnson

Allen Rivers, Champaign's first black police officer, shows a picture from when he joined the force in 1935. He retired in 1960 but keeps busy at his job at a local bank.

Jobs in 'Germantown' led to segregated 'Negro' area

By CHERYL THOMPSON
News-Gazette Staff Writer

In the 1930s, Champaign police called it the "jungle."
Now it's called the North End. The name has changed, but Champaign's northeast side is still known as the black community — more than 50 years later. But it wasn't always the black



Champaign's northeast side, also called the North End.

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(See SENTENCED, A-12)

City chief resident



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said. "He took a path that led

(See HAITI, A-12)



News-Gazette photo by Brian K. Johnson

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Champaign's northeast side is still
known as the black community —

more than 50 years later.

But it wasn't always the black
neighborhood, said Allen Rivers,
who moved to Champaign-Urbana
in 1919 at the age of 17 and became
Champaign's first black police offi-
cer in 1935.

In the first quarter of the century,
the northeast side was heavily pop-
ulated with German residents. Few
blacks lived there, Rivers said. Most
lived in north Urbana or just west
of the University of Illinois.

"When we first moved here, only two black
families lived from First Street to Wright
Street," Rivers recalled. "Champaign-Urbana
sure has come a long way."

Sarah Scott, 95, agreed.
"When I came here in 1911, there was a lot
of segregation in housing," said Scott, who
moved to Champaign-Urbana from Shawnee-
town, in far southeastern Illinois.

DURING THE EARLY 1930s, though, the Illi-
nois Central Railroad offered employment to
blacks, attracting people hoping for opportu-
nities from Arkansas and Mississippi.

Wanting to live near their jobs, blacks
slowly migrated to "Germantown," Rivers
said. Eventually, the German residents scat-
tered around Champaign-Urbana. They sold
their property to real estate agencies. The
houses in the North End were then sold to
blacks.

"The majority of the Negroes lived in the
northern part . . ." wrote Janet Andrews
Cromwell, a UI student who authored a thesis
on "The History and Organization of the Ne-
gro Community in Champaign-Urbana, Ill." in
1934.

Cromwell, now deceased, described what it
was like for blacks in northeast Champaign
more than half a century ago. A survey she
conducted revealed that out of 50 black men,
eight had professional jobs. Professional jobs
were defined as doctors, ministers, teachers,
musicians and funeral directors.

Sixteen of those surveyed worked in "un-
skilled" jobs — as ditch diggers and farm
hands; six were employed in skilled jobs,
which included barbers, carpenters, mechan-
ics and hairdressers; three worked in semi-
professional jobs as merchants, salesmen and
junk dealers; one was a student; five worked
as servants; and 11 were unemployed.
Of 50 black women surveyed, none had a
professional job, three worked in skilled jobs,
15 worked unskilled jobs, and 32 did not



Champaign's northeast side, also called the North End,
is an area of poverty, unemployment, substandard hous-
ing and a growing drug trade. It has little business.
But the North End also is a neighborhood with promise
— with a substantial commitment of government money
and a growing number of leaders concerned about its
future.

Sunday: Problems facing the North End.
Monday: A look at the neighborhood's history.
Tuesday: What the future holds for the North End.

work outside the home.

Cromwell also examined housing condi-
tions and found the area to be "run-down"
and "lacking the physical beauty of other
parts of Champaign."

"IN THE SO-CALLED Negro community,
these residences . . . are frame dwellings and
in most instances, they are placed on small
lots and are thus crowded on the block,"
Cromwell wrote. "The observer . . . would at
once notice the drab and unkempt appear-
ance of the structures."

"Occasionally, he might notice a house that
has been painted or repaired, but that is
quite rare, she continued. "In this northern
section, one sees a number of small, weath-
er-beaten, shack-like structures . . . one sees
many houses with glass missing from doors
and windows."

She recalled that there was no "defined"
black business area except "several" grocery
stores and barbershops on First, Fifth and
Poplar streets.

There were two black hotels and several
insurance companies on the North End,
Cromwell wrote. There was one black doctor.
A black dentist from Danville commuted to
Champaign every Sunday.

"Before 1929, blacks supported a dentist,
but when the railroad shops reduced their
forces, the peoples' wages were reduced or
stopped and they were unable to pay their
bills," Cromwell said.

There were even a couple of black busi-
nesses that were profitable, Cromwell said.
The "red-light" district of First and Poplar
streets offered gambling, after-hours drink-
ing and prostitution. The houses and busi-
nesses along Poplar Street have since been
torn down, and many of the once-popular
drinking establishments on First Street have
closed.

(See NORTH END HISTORY, A-2)

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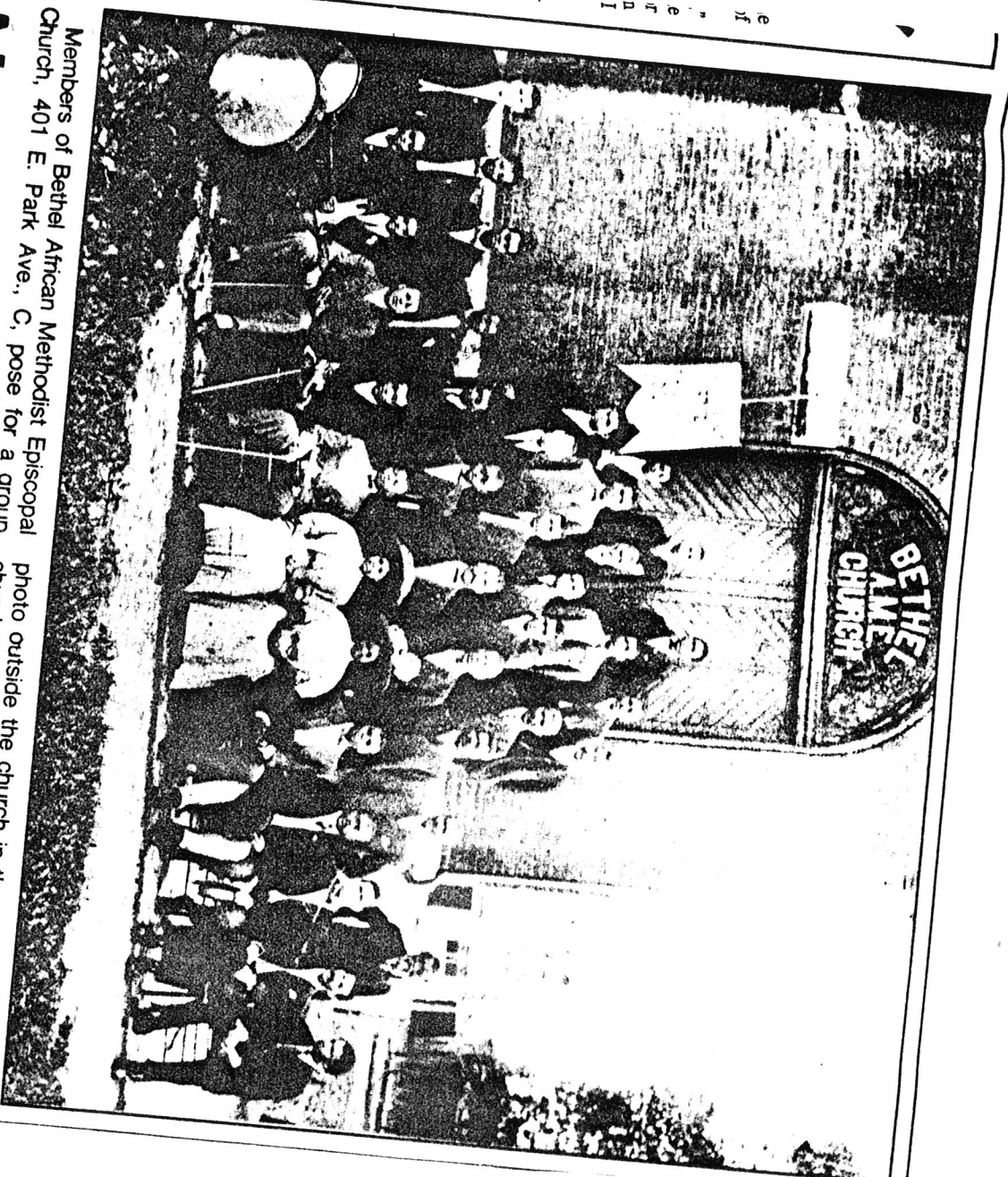
**More Weather
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Champaign's northeast side, also called the North End.



Members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 401 E. Park Ave., C, pose for a group photo outside the church in the early 1900s. The church was torn down but rebuilt on the same lot.

North End history

(Continued from A-1)

Although Rivers maintained that blacks moved to the North End because of their jobs, Cromwell wrote that blacks were being segregated from whites and were purposely moved to neighborhoods near the railroad tracks.

"On the whole, the Negro sections in any town are usually the districts which are located in the areas least esteemed for residential purposes," Cromwell said. "This statement is quite true of Champaign-Urbana."

Despite Cromwell's observations, Rivers said blacks were content living in the North End then. Many had jobs and worked hard to maintain their homes.

By 1951, the government began building low-income housing units to accommodate residents — primarily blacks — who needed places to live. Because the North End had become the "black" area, it was the logical place to build them, according to David Murrell, director of the Housing Authority of Champaign County.

"Back then, they (housing projects) were designed to be 'Negro' housing," Murrell said. "So they were built in an area the city called the Negro community."

ONCE PEOPLE BEGAN labeling the northeast side as the "Negro" community, it became the only place they could live.

"You just get to know this is where you're going to live," said longtime resident Erma Bridgewater, who bought her home on East Washington Street in 1945. "You get mad, but what else are you going to do?"

A former city official agreed.

"You couldn't



Police officer Allen Rivers, right, stands guard at a murder trial in 1951. Andrew 'Pete' Parmer, seated in folding chair, was sentenced to 149 years for the rape and murder of 17-year-old Janet Clark of Champaign.

The Illinois Central Railroad tracks, north of University Avenue and west of Wright Street was targeted to be cleared by urban renewal in the mid 1950s.

Virgil Wikoff approved a fair housing ordinance that prohibited discrimination in housing.

CHAMPAIGN'S NORTHEAST SIDE, ALSO CALLED THE NORTH END.

Associated Press

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Assault

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woman.
Spruce Drive, C, was
shortly after 4:15 a.m.
sexual assault.
Champaign resident —
in the 700 block of North
Saturday when she was as-

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ag an arrest early Monday
g dealing.
and James E. Stennis, 29,
— appearance on prelimi-
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out 1:30 a.m. in a parking lot
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report.
Balden lacked a valid driv-
er's license and an outstand-
ing warrant.

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r substance suspected to be

invasion

as wearing a navy blue jog-
it with stripes on the sides.
person with information on
incident is asked to contact
stoppers at 373-TTIPS.

rs do not have to give their
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Need chase

Jefferson County Jail was to
signed Monday in Jefferson
Court.
injuries were reported.

Johnson of-based Inc.
John R. Foreman
Editor

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"You just get to know this is
where you're going to live," said
longtime resident Erma Bridge-
water, who bought her home on
East Washington Street in 1945.
"You get mad, but what else are you
going to do?"

A former city official agreed.



BRIDGEWATER

"You couldn't
buy houses out-
side the area,"
said Kenneth
Stratton, Cham-
paign's first
black alderman,
who served two
terms from
1960-65. "We
weren't allowed
to. It (the North
End) was a con-
glomerate of the
poor and middle
class."

But North End residents saw
some improvement in the early
1960s, when the federal govern-
ment offered funding to rehabili-
tate the neighborhoods. The Urban
Renewal program was designed to
"clear out slum area by acquiring
the property, demolishing it and
clearing out the area," according to
William Sweat, a housing rehabili-
tation specialist with the city of
Champaign.

"The entire northeast area was
designed as an urban renewal area
because of dilapidated and slum
conditions," Sweat said.

Roughly 225 acres in the area
south of Bradley Avenue, east of

Neighborhood, businesses once thrived

When Allen Rivers bought his
house on East Park Avenue in
north Champaign in 1950, the
neighborhood was thriving.

His grandfather and brother had
a "nickel and dime" store on Poplar
Street. And Davis' Grocery Store
was just a block away.

There also were black-owned bar-
ber shops and beauty salons, and
several taverns.

There was even a black-owned
newspaper — The Illinois Times —
published out of Blanche Harris'
North End home.

And 91-year-old Ida Banks remem-
bered how the neighborhood
teen-agers would gather at her hus-
band's Bank's Old-Fashioned Barbe-
que on East Washington Street to
eat and "dance the night away."

But no more.
"When the Negroes started mov-
ing in, the businesses were flour-
ishing," Rivers said. "Now we
haven't got a decent business place
in the North End."



Associated Press

Police officer Allen Rivers, right, stands guard at a murder trial in
1951. Andrew 'Pete' Parmer, seated in folding chair, was sentenced
to 149 years for the rape and murder of 17-year-old Janet Clark of
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The Illinois Central Railroad tracks,
north of University Avenue and
west of Wright Street was targeted
to be cleared by urban renewal in
the mid-1960s and early 1970s.

THE DILAPIDATED and con-
demned homes along Bradley Ave-
nue between Fourth and Fifth
streets were razed to make room for
what is now called Mansard Square
— a low-income housing project.
Areas around the Douglass Center
on North Fifth and Eureka streets
also were part of urban renewal,
Sweat said.

During urban renewal, 951 people
or 210 families were displaced.
Bridgewater said. Five of those fam-
ilies were white. Since most of the
housing on the North End area was
substandard, the families had to re-
locate to other areas.

But there was no fair housing law
before 1968, and blacks were limit-
ed in neighborhoods they could
move to. Few real estate agents
would even show blacks homes out-
side the North End, Bridgewater
said.

"They still had restricted prop-
ties on the books," Bridgewater
said, referring to real estate prop-
erty books marked "restricted,"
which prohibited certain homes
from being shown to blacks.

But in 1968, Champaign Mayor

Tuesday: The future of the North
End.

Rivers said he doesn't know what
happened to the business section of
the North End.
But longtime resident George
Pope said the businesses were run
out by larger companies.

The lot where the Douglass Cen-
ter Annex now sits, at 804 N. Fifth
St., C, once housed a grocery store.
Another grocery store on Eureka
and Bradley streets was forced out
of business because of larger gro-
cery stores, he said.

There were also three black-
owned funeral homes — McHaney,
Campbell and Parker. Only Parker,
which became Blunit-Parker Funer-
al Home several years ago, remains,
Pope said.

Rivers said part of the problem
was the lack of financial support
from the community. No one seems
interested in investing in the North
End anymore because of its appear-
ance, he said.

In addition, many of the North
End houses that once belonged to
— CHERYL THOMPSON

Champaign's northeast side, also called the North End.

WV



Waltz of Des Moines

ALLAN RIVERS JR.
KOREAN WAR
CHAMPION

Pfc. Charles H. Rivers
Serving in Korea 2/1954
Marine Pfc. Charles H. Rivers, son of A. A. Rivers, 405 1/2 E. Park St., Champaign, and husband of Mrs. Vivian Rivers, 507 N. 5th St., is serving in Korea with the First Marine Aircraft Wing.

Alexander Weds In Saturday Ceremony

In the office of Justice of the Peace J. M. Griffith, at 11 p. m. Saturday Miss Vivian Alexander, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clark Alexander, 608 1/2 North Ash street, became the bride of Charles Rivers, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Rivers, 405 1/2 East Park avenue, Champaign.

SUN JUL 10 1949

The bride's parents presented the couple and the bride's father gave her in marriage in the double ring ceremony. The bride wore a powder blue Palm Beach suit which she accented with white accessories. She had a corsage of mixed vari-colored flowers. Her mother wore a pale blue sheer and highlighted her ensemble with a corsage of white carnations.

Centering the bride's table at the reception in the home of her parents for the families was a three-tiered wedding cake topped with a miniature bride and bridegroom.

The couple will leave tonight on a wedding trip to Michigan and Wisconsin and upon their return will be at home at 608 1/2 North Ash street. The new Mrs. Rivers attended the schools in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Rivers was graduated from Champaign high school and employed at Delta Tau Delta Fraternity on campus.

RIVERS

Rivers Named On Cop Force In Champaign

AUG 7 1935

City Commission
Board Announces First
Colored Policeman in
City's History; Plan
Examinations.

Allen A. Rivers, colored, was given a probationary appointment to the Champaign police force by the fire and police commission Tuesday afternoon, it was announced by R. A. Stipes, Jr., secretary. The appointment is effective immediately.

Rivers was high man on the police department eligible list, established a short time ago by examination.

According to the practices of the police department, his appointment will be temporary for six months, after which, if he has proved satisfactory, he will be made a regular member of the force. During the probationary period his salary will be \$140 a month.

Goes on Night Force

He will be assigned to the night force, on a beat in the northeast section of this city.

Rivers will be the first colored police officer in Champaign in recent years. Before making the appointment, the police commission checked the use of colored policemen in neighboring cities, Secretary Stipes said. They found that Bloomington, with colored population of 650, had three colored police; Danville with 2,565 colored population had two colored policemen; Decatur with 1,550 colored population had one colored policeman, and Springfield with 3,324 colored population had three colored policemen. Champaign's colored population is 1,598.

The school board has already recognized the colored population of Champaign by employing a colored janitor and a full staff of colored teachers at Lawhead school, Mr. Stipes pointed out.

Patrolman Lyle Jochim, who has been serving on a probationary appointment since Feb. 1, will be placed on a regular basis Aug. 1, according to Secretary Stipes.

Extend Vacation

Patrolman Leo Hanley was granted two weeks additional vacation without pay by the commission. Hanley's vacation starts Sept. 1 and he will return to duty Oct. 1. The vacancy will be filled during the second two weeks of his absence by the top man on the extra list, Stipes said.

An order for all members of the police and fire department to submit to a physical examination will be issued at once, Stipes said. The examinations, which will be conducted annually during the present administration at least, will be given this year by Dr. G. D. Getnon.

A special police commission for plumbing Inspector Martin H. Turner was approved by the commission Tuesday.

The commission also recommended to Mayor Flynn that a private telephone be established in the police chief's office.

2 charged after fight

Two men were arrested early Saturday after a fight near 3rd and Green streets, Champaign.

Arrested were Benjamin A. Dozier, 21, of 909 S. 1st St., Champaign, and Charlie Rivers, 21, of 105 E. Daniel St., Champaign. Both were charged with disorderly conduct while Rivers also was charged with aggravated assault.

SUN JUN 4 1972
The Champaign police answered the call. Six persons reported being attacked by a group of seven youths. The police saw a group of youths running as they prepared to return to the police station.

Officers arrested Dozier immediately and Rivers was later arrested by University of Illinois police near 1st and Green streets.

Dozier was taken to Burnham Hospital where he was treated for a cut on his head and had his shoulder X-rayed.

Both were turned over to the Champaign County Jail. Dozier was released on \$50 bond, and Rivers was still being held late Saturday.

**Mrs. Allan Rivers, Sr.,
Dies; Services Friday**

Mrs. Allan A. Rivers, Sr., 46, of 404½ East Park avenue, wife of Champaign Police Officer Allan A. Rivers, died at 1:40 p. m. Wednesday in Burnham hospital after an illness of three years.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p. m. Friday in Salem Baptist church. Rev. R. L. Lillard, pastor, will officiate. Burial will be in Mount Hope cemetery. The Mc-Haney funeral home is in charge.

Serving as pallbearers will be R. M. Scott, Nathan Williams, Robert Earnest, Theato Bowles, Gus Dixon, and Richard R. Edwards.

Mrs. Rivers was born May 20, 1902, in Fulton, Ky., the daughter of Henry and Eliza Simpson. She moved to Champaign with her parents as a child. Mr. Simpson died about 20 years ago.

On Feb. 15, 1923, she was married to Mr. Rivers in Champaign. The couple celebrated its 25th wedding anniversary in 1948.

An active member of Salem Baptist church, Mrs. Rivers was a past matron of Deborah chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. She was also a member of the Illinois and Indiana Automobile club.

Besides her husband, she leaves her mother, Mrs. Eliza Simpson, 103 East Church street, Champaign; two daughters, Mrs. Betty Roberts and Miss Dorothy M. Rivers; three sons, Charles H., Allan A., Jr., and Richard Eugene, all at home; two sisters, Mrs. Rose Stovall, 103 East Church street and Mrs. Lena Featherstone, Fulton, Ky., and one brother, Fred D. Simpson, Lansing, Mich.