

CIVIL RIGHTS

Rights Leader Burned

Mich. Club Fire Probe Sparks Black Tension

The city of Muskegon, Mich., could be thrown into a "volatile situation," a Black leader has warned, if police don't step up an investigation of an arson fire that has left a local civil rights official in critical condition.

Black leaders have charged that the city is conducting an "apparent casual and low-key investigation" of the fire at the Brown Derby supper club owned by Owen Pearson, 54, a regional official of the state's Civil Rights Commission, though city officials have created a reward for possible leads.

The incident occurred when, after closing the club early one morning, Pearson went back for the asthma medicine he left behind, only to be assaulted by a White man who set the fire.

Pearson's leg has been amputated and he suffered burns over

Store Firebombed

1,200 Natchez Blacks Protest Man's Killing By Storeowner

Local officials and Black leaders in Natchez, Miss., sought to calm racial tensions after a protest march by 1,200 Blacks was followed by scattered vandalism and the firebombing of a White-owned store.

Although no injuries were reported, and damage to the store was minimal, nearly a dozen people, mostly Blacks, were arrested.

The march was in protest over the handling of an investigation into the shooting death of Terry Thornburg, a 25-year-old Black, by the White wife of storeowner John Reeder. They accused Thornburg, who was shot in the back, of trying to steal some cigarettes.

half of his body. He remains hospitalized in critical condition.

Many Blacks in the city believe the assault, which followed two recent break-ins at the club, is race-related because it is the city's first Black-owned supper club.

THE SEXES

Black Queen Left Out; Students Burn Yearbooks

About 40 Black students at Elon College recently burned their yearbooks to protest the omission of a photograph of the school's homecoming queen—the first Black queen in the North Carolina college's 91-year history.

The omission was not intentional, but just a matter of circumstance, said Tim McDowell,

the college's director of public information. He said the photographer who covered the homecoming activities merely failed to get the photo in by the printing deadline, as was the case with several other group shots which also were left out.

While he says the incident was "regrettable to all of us since we all look forward to homecoming," McDowell says the protest over the situation was "very orderly," and under fire department supervision at the 2,500-student college.