HERO OF HILLSBORO: Tells Inside Story of School Burning, Neglect of Insane

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles written exclusively for the CALL & POST newspapers by Partridge, Phillip, Civil Engineer who set fire to Hillsboro's Jim Crow Linear elementary school and was subsequently sent to Lima State Hospital for the criminally insane.)

By PHILIP PARTRIDGE

When I reached Junior High football last fall I couldn't help notice the stand-offish attitude between the white and colored boys. It seemed doubtful if the gap would ever heal.

The Saturday before the fire my boy Tom sold boy
toons in a drive to raise money for "God's Intended," the colored people gave more
—at least to him.

The Sunday before the fire our President spoke and sermon about people who deliber-
ate violate the law, expecting to take the consequences, in order to bring about needed reforms. He drew a line to be crossed. He was tell-
ing her work was not good because she was destructive. I dis-
agreed with that but with this re-burning of the Lincoln School was an act of self-destructive set, as it looked to me.

In the Sunday paper that same day there was an article of interest. The folks at 45 should start thinking about retirement and the year of less strenuous living being trans-
portable so they could wait for their death. This ticked me off. I am 43 and nowhere near wanting to think about death.

Thought about Problem

I thought of the many things that needed to be done in the world and how little I had done. I thought of the school problem in Hills-
boro and our comfortable home and food and not sitting down by a rock-
ing chair year after year waiting for death and the problem going unattended for years here during which time I had been in the company, our organization was accomplished
—and then two nights before the fire, the fire, the fire,
except except our Negro employees.

I felt the bitterness of watching this go on and not being able to do anything about it. Experience had taught me that, for me at least, there was not enough to talk and argue about. I have an opinion of how it is. I am blunt and tactless, and

I don't know whether I have the mind to go ahead. I did not dare think of my family and I

thought of how things could have been in Hillsboro—maybe it involved millions of
in

Every hour the secret world is closing in on us. We are asleep, and we are asleep, and we are asleep. We are asleep. We are asleep.

Events Before Lima

The serial editor Jim Partridge told my duties at Lima State Hospital were to report on the rest of the hospital, to tell how, even a brief review might be in order for those who are not ac-

quainted. At 11 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, July 7, I volunte-

ered a signed confession sub-
itantiating my earlier oral con-

fession to set fire to the segre-
gated Lincoln Elementary School in Hillsboro.

The local officials who received my confession were shocked as they would have been and expressed their sympathy and regret at the duty that faced them. Later in the day my good friends, the Highland County Commission-

ers expressed their grief and shocked at the news and asked me to resign my position as Highland County Engineer.

This I was reluctant to do since I had become very fond of Highland

County. I asked for time to think over this over which they reluctantly granted.

The next morning they notified me somewhat frantically that I must resign by 1 p.m. at the latest or they would bring charges against me.

I wondered what charges they might bring since the act involved in my confession was in no sense a breach of my official responsibil-
ties.

However it was easy to see that the Commissioners were in great distress from pressure being brought to bear on them and took paper and typewriter in hand with the full intention of granting me a fair time.

However as I tried to think how to word the letter the question came to me—"Is this the right thing to do?"

Painful Decision

After a time of painful indecision (Continued on Page SIX-C)
sion I knew I could not do it. I wrote the following letter, submitted it to the commissioners and walked out.

Highland County Commissioners

Dear Sirs:

It is the right and duty of every citizen to take a firm stand for things he believes to be right.

Where the need is great and the problem difficult he must be prepared to make great sacrifices.

I was elected Highland County Engineer for a four year term on the Republican Ticket.

In accepting this office I did not agree to surrender my rights and duties as a citizen.

My acts as a citizen have offended some people.

I am not a habitual criminal nor one likely to repeat the offense.

The need for a county engineer in Highland County continues. There is none who knows the road and bridge problems of Highland County as I do.

I should be derelict in my duties both as a citizen and as County Engineer if I should resign under these conditions.

Respectfully yours and signed my name.

The next morning before seven o'clock there was a ring at the doorbell and my boy, Tom, ran tearfully upstairs to tell me that there were men at the door with guns.

I went down, admitted the Sheriff and Sheriff's Deputy and asked what they wanted.

They said they had a court order to take me to Lima State hospital and granted me time to finish shaving and breakfast.

These finished, I calmed my family's fears and started toward one of the most interesting experiences of my life.

(Continued Next Week)