

Mr. Leonard Pryor
Art Teacher, Lincoln High School

Mr. Pryor is one of the five teachers shown in the picture at Lincoln High on Wednesday, April 10, talking to Ptl. Nelson and Lt. Gibeson. He described incidentally the former as being nasty and ready to do battle and the latter as helpful and cooperative.

Mr. Pryor did not see the original "pass" of the police car. He was enroute to his classroom in the newer section of the school when he was told by students that police cars were stopping in front of the school. He observed the correctness of this message when he looked from a first floor window on the south side of the building. The police at that time were getting out of cars, entering the campus, tear gas followed shortly. The time was just about 8:13 a.m. just before the first bell. Along with several other teachers he managed to herd the students inside the building. Following this he and teachers Matthews, Anderson, Daniels and Carothers went aside to attempt to persuade the police to leave. A number of school drop-outs collected across the street from the school waiting and watching, but did not become involved. Mr. Pryor heard no abusive language by the teachers. Although the police agreed to leave, they actually did not but returned, continually circling the school. Some male students began to drift outside where they began to throw rocks at the cars. While the teachers again attempted to get them inside the police again approached and lobed tear gas cannisters. This time the building was surrounded by police and guardsmen and some "gas" was thrown into the building. A white guardsman with fixed bayonet entered the front door only to be stopped by Mr. Pryor and another teacher. He explained that he came to get another guardsman who was in the building. The guardsman, a Negro, was found on the second floor (with fixed bayonet); he said that he had been sent there by the police. He was escorted out by the teachers.

Tear gas was also thrown into the girls rest room, one student suffered a burn on the arm when a gas grenade exploded. Mr. Pryor joined by an assistant superintendent, Mr. Robert Wheeler, were able to get some students out of the front door and lined them up against the building. Teachers also exited the rear of the building and persuaded the police to permit students to vacate the building by the rear door. Eight female students were taken to the hospital, all were overcome or affected by gas.