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Racial Violence Erupts, 14 Ferris Students Hurt

By Journal Wire Services

BIG RAPIDS — State Police were called once again to the racially troubled Ferris State College campus early today to quell fighting between white and black students that left 14 students injured and extensive property damage.

Police said an estimated 200 students threw rocks, bricks, clubs and bottles in a swirling scuffle through a dormitory, the food center and a parking lot.

Fourteen persons suffered cuts and other minor injuries from fights and from thrown bottles, bricks and boards. Two were admitted to the student infirmary and 12 others were treated and released.

All of the windows in one dormitory were smashed and about 33 cars were damaged, mostly by objects thrown through windshields. Furniture in a dormitory lounge was smashed and at least one Molotov cocktail was thrown, police said.

Police arrested 10 black and three white students. Some white students were reportedly arrested after overturning cars belonging to the local leaders of the NAACP student chapter.

Police identified two of those arrested as Ron Snead, president of the NAACP student chapter, and Louis Stone of Albion, former president of the group.

Forty-eight troopers joined Mecosta County sheriff's deputies, Big Rapids police and campus security forces to quiet the rumble. State Police were called to the campus earlier this year to end student racial

strife. Police had no immediate damage estimate but reported large numbers of broken windows in Pickrell Hall, a dormitory, along with furniture damage. Windows were also broken along with dishes at the college food center and cars overturned and windshields broken at a nearby parking lot.

Charles Benagh, an editor on the campus newspaper, said 100 black students and up to 400 white students congregated in a

parking lot outside two dormitories before police arrived.

Benagh said the trouble began late Monday night when 11 Negroes entered a predominantly white dormitory to talk with another black student. En route, the Negro students got in an argument with white students, and then left.

About an hour later, nine black students entered the building and got into a fight with students in the dorm's lower lounge. The lounge was almost destroyed. After a fire alarm was pulled Benagh said all the students left the dorm and gathered in the parking lot.