Pair lights fiery cross
by Stephen Willard

Two shadowed figures burned a cross in front of Perry House Saturday night in view of about 40 students attending homecoming parties at Perry and Wood Houses. At about 10:20 p.m., the two men, dressed in white sheets, lit the cross and a semicircle of flame around it, at the northeast corner of the Perry House lawn and fled in a waiting car. The incident sparked a reaction of fear and anger in the Williams community that led to a rally at noon Monday at Baxter lawn, where students and administrators denounced the act before a crowd of about 1200. (see accompanying story.)

The two dark-haired males, roughly 5'10" to 6' in height, were originally seen pouring a dark object into the Perry House lawn at about 10:15. "I thought they were doing something in connection with the Perry House party," recalled onlooker Gordon Collier '73. "The men rounded the Y by 11 p.m. into the ground with a third piece of wood, and after tying a small white rag to the top of the cross, drove the cross and a semicircle of lawn around it with gasoline. After lighting the wood, they turned north toward Route 3 and4 then waved the torch wildly for about 45 seconds before setting the cross and ground aflame. Once the cross was on fire, the two men ran around the west end of Perry House to a waiting car parked behind the house. The car was described as an eyewash ang as one of the Perry House lawn orange Japanese compact with a lot of body paint. The group paint on it." The car drove onto Route 3 and headed east toward the campus.

Students attending the Perry and Wood House parties first
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Rally draws more than 1200 participants

by Stephen Willard

More than 1200 students, faculty, and staff attended a noon rally Monday in response to the cross burning late Saturday nights at Perry House (see accompanying article). The crowd, many of whom were wearing white armbands distributed by the Williams Black Student Union (BSU), heard President John Chandler, College Council President Darrell McWhorter, BSU President Willard Bray, and BSU coordinator Greg Witcher '81 speak.

Chandler opened the rally with comments referring to a page statement which was put in student mailboxes about 11:00 Monday morning. Chandler emphasized in his comments that no one presently knows whether the perpetrators were part of the Williams community and that their motives are not known.

"The deeply disturbing incident is an affront to the fundamental values and commitments of Williams College," Chandler said. "We use the terrible symbolism of the fiery cross, whether seen as a thoughtless and insensitive prank or as a malicious effort to intimidate, will be tolerated at Williams. This episode has undoubtedly damaged and may still damage Williams." Chandler announced that the College is offering a reward of $1000 for information leading to the identification of those responsible. He called on students to "look ahead and re-dedicate our efforts to creating a positive social environment so that we can function with a sense of freedom from intimidation and harassment."

Darrell McWhorter was the next to speak, representing the student body as College Council president in expressing its collective shock at the incident. McWhorter emphasized the terrible symbolism of the burning cross to all people, but particularly to blacks. A cross burning evokes lynching, hanging, tar and feathering," said McWhorter. "It's clear that this (Williams) isn't an ivory tower." In his speech McWhorter assumed that the offenders were Williams students.

McWhorter tried to explain to the assembled students the difficulty of being a black student at Williams, saying that tension and fear of violence as well as the problem of racism is "a problem we (back students) have to face every day." McWhorter concluded with a call to black students to educate their white peers.

Reza proclaimed Shah

Reza Pahlavi '82 proclaimed himself the Shah of Iran last Friday in a message to the Iranian people, fulfilling his father's wish that he assume the throne on his 25th birthday.

Pahlavi entered Williams as a special student with the class of 1983 last year, but did not return for the fall semester. He is currently a Political Science student at the American University in Cairo, Egypt; there has been no official indication of when he will return to Williams.

Friday's statement was made at a simple ceremony in Pahlavi's office at the Kubbeh palace in Cairo, where the family has been living since March 25. He spoke for ten minutes saying that he feared over the "nightmare" of the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime and the "external aggression" of Iran.

Pahlavi predicted the overthrow of the present Iranian government in an interview with CBS News. "The Iranian people will stand up again," he said. "That I am convinced of, and will sweep away this regime."

As the exiled king of Iran, Pahlavi said he hopes to become the leader of an anti-Khomeini resistance movement. "Now that destiny demands that I take up my new duties, I dedicate myself to a new and shining era in our history," he told the Iranian people. "I seek your support, and I am confident of your response. It is imperative that all patriotic groups inside and outside Iran should join forces in the common cause."

The State Department said that the United States will not recognize Pahlavi's claim to the throne of Iran, which is based upon the 1906 Imperial Constitution. "We consider the present government of Iran the legally constituted government," said a Department spokesman.