For Robert Massey, the timing couldn't pick." have been better.

The North Carolina Central cornerback was selected in the second round (46th pick overall) by the New Orleans Saints, who have a huge need for defensive backs.

"We had a glaring need to address the cornerback situation," said Saints personnel Robert would have been gone and others backfield was selected in the draft. would have been gone. When we called

So, the Saints figured they'd better select him before another team did.

1989 draft, was one of 14 taken overall.

predominantly black schools in 1988 and five; Alcorn State defensive back Michael Washington Redskins in round 12; and director Billy Kuharich, "because we lost 17 in 1987. A total of 11 were taken in 1986 Andrews by the Buffalo Bills in the fifth Howard wide receiver John Jarvis by the two corners (in the new free- agent draft). and 13 in 1985. It's also interesting that round; Grambling State running back Bryan Denver Broncos in round 12. We felt if we waited until the third round, three--fourths of Alcorn State's defensive Tobey by the Kansas City Chiefs in the

back Lewis Tillman was taken by the New Charles Jackson by the Raiders in round 10; York Giants in the fourth round; Southern Alabama State fullback Brad Baxter by the Massey, the first player from a pre- University defensive back Maurice Hurst Minnesota Vikings in round 11; South Cardominantly black school selected in the by the New England patriots in the fourth olina State fullback William Dubose by the round; Alcorn State defensive back Elliott Indianapolis Colts in round 12; Howard A total of 19 players were drafted from Smith by the San Diego Chargers in round University tight end Jimmy Johnson by the eighth round; Florida A&M running back the Saints liked his man-to-man coverage After Massey, Bethune-Cookman Derrick Gainer by the Los Angeles Raiders ability, size and speed. Massey is 5-10, 185 around to other clubs, we got indications defensive back Anthony Florence was in the eighth round; Alcorn State defensive pounds, with a 4.45 to 4.5 time in the 40that he would be an early second-round selected by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in back Jack Phillips by the Chiefs in round yard dash.

the fourth round; Jackson State running nine; Jackson State defensive lineman

In referring to Massey, Kuharich said

"He played a lot of man coverage in college," Kuharich said. "Plus, we got to see him in the East-West Shrine Game and Senior Bowl. We saw him go against supposedly the top receivers in the country. I thought he made great improvement from the first practice of the East-West game to the Senior Bowl."

Although the Saints drafted cornerbacks in rounds three and four, they lost Michael Adams and Van Jakes to free agency. And they elected not the re-sign Reggie Sutton, who's been plagued by personal

"It gives Massey a good shot to make the team and work his way in," Kuharich said. "There's daylight there."

Lewis Tillman was the 93rd player selected in the draft. "He seems to be a real Horatio Alger-type guy," said Ed Croke, the Giants' director of media services. "I could have written 12 legal-size pages on this guy. He broke all of Walter Payton's records. His hometown, Hazelhurst, Miss., threw him a Lewis Tillman Day." Tillman, listed by the Giants at 6-0, 200 lbs., also had a 3.1 grade point average and graduated with a business management degree.

The Giants kept five running backs last season, but as Croke said, they lacked a back with inside power. "That's what we need. We already have a lot of outside

That means that Tillman, who has impressed the Giants with his acceleration. should have a good chance of playing. If the Giants start Joe Morris and Maurice Carthon in the backfield, Ottis Anderson is strictly a third-down short-yardage back with maybe one good season left. Lee Rouson, the other backup, is strictly an outside runner, like Morris. And George Adams, the Giants' first-round pick in 1985, has been injury-plagued and fumble-prone.

The rap against Tillman was his lack of blazing speed. The pre-draft reports said he would make many six-yard runs but few 60-yard gains. Still, he played in three postseason all-star games and was named MVP in two -- the Blue-Gray Classic and East-West Shrine Game.

"Tillman seldom fumbled the ball in 830 college attempts," Croke added. "He



Photo by J.D. Schwalm

Jackson State's Lewis Tillman was not selected until the fourth round. The New York Glants were Impressed with his acceleration. They believe he could be the inside power back they've been looking for.

player selected. "We look at him as a guy stocky, but he has good speed (4.5 in the ceptions." Phillips, however, is trying to spot. Being an 11th-round draft pick, Baxwith great measurables," said Rick Smith, 40-yard dash)," said Jon Kingdon, a Raiders make a team that arguably has the best ter's chances are slim, "but," as Gilliam the Chargers' director of public relations. scout. Gainer gained 627 yards on 126 car- defensive backfield in the NFL.

Carthon."

"He's 6-2, 192, with great speed (4.52 in the ries (5.0-yard average) and scored nine 40-yard dash). He didn't come out with a lot of great notoriety, but our scouts liked him and we think he has a great chance of making our team.

"He's coming into a good situation if he can do the job, mainly because the Chargers didn't select any other corner-

Smith's teammate Andrews was the 137th player selected. "He has great athletic ability," said John Butler, the Bills' director of college scouting. "He can cover man-toman very well. Has a feel for the passing game, is very aware. He's bright-eyed, sharp and readily picks everything up. He's a happy person. He's the type you want on your ballclub. You can tell he really wants to play football."

Andrews has been timed at 4.5 in the 40, has a 35-inch vertical jump and leaped 10 feet, 6 inches in the standing long jump. passes, scoring another two touchdowns. ter athlete than a football player," the also want him to block and go deep." "It will be tough for him to start," Butler "He's a stocky, competitive guy," Kingdon Raiders' Kingdon said. "He shows a lot of NFL. You always have to prepare yourself. back and halfback." But you need good backups. You never know when someone will be called on to step in in case of injury."

Tobey, taken by the Chiefs, was the Gainer may have the opportunity to back up 199th player selected. He is a 6-foot, 250- Marcus Allen, and later bo Jackson. But 225, was the 303rd player taken. He runs a pound fullback who runs a 4.8 in the 40- Gainer has to battle Vance Muiller and 4.75 in the 40. "He's a big back, power yard dash. "He has good size and running Steve Strachan, also. ability for a big man," said Mark Hatley, the

might be able to play fullback, too. He he has a lot to learn." Plus, he's competing might be able to play in the same backfield against Christian Okoye, a giant of a fullwith Morris and in the same backfield with back with elusive speed."

Florida A&M's Gainer was the 205th

and in the same backfield with

touchdowns last season. He also caught 11 6-4, 283 lbs. defensive lineman, "he's a bet-

selected by the Raiders in the draft. And Jackson can play three different positions

since he can play both backfield positions, defensive end, tackle and nose tackle.

Corners who can cover are coveted by the pros

probably a nickel back," the Chiefs' Hatley said. "He's a good athlete. Is a 4.6 guy. An In college, he was an I-back. A lot of col-

advantage for him is that he played bumpand-run at Alcorn. He's been a good pro-Alcorn State's Smith was the 120th player taken. Gainer, 5-10, 215 lbs., "is ductive player, had about 15 career inter-Jackson was the 262nd player taken. A

314th player selected, the key is training camp. The Colts like his versatility -- "He "Tillman seldom fumbled the ball in 830 played both fullback and halfback in colcollege attempts. He might be able to lege," said Craig Kelley, the Colts' director of public relations. "But he has his work cut play fullback, too. He might be able to play in the same backfield with Morris

Howard University's Johnson was the 316th player taken, by the Redskins. "He is a good prospect," said Dick Daniels, the Redskins' director of player personnel. Johnson is 6-3, 240 lbs. and runs a 4.75 in a the 40. Although the Redskins are wellstocked at tight end with Clint Didier, Mike Tice, Ken Whisenhunt, Greg McEwen and Terry Orr, Daniels said, "Johnson has a Director of Media Services chance. Each of our tight ends is in accordance with roles. We think Johnson can play H-tight end in the one-back offense and be a receiver out of the backfield. We

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was a thousand-yard guy for multiple years.

Anderson and Rick Fenney at the fullback

said, "there's a guy who will make it in

For South Carolina State's Debose, the

Baxter will compete against Alfred

leges have a big I-back, the power teams."

John Jarvis -- known as the "Howard said. "It's such a difficult position in the added. "It's possible for him to play full- natural ability. It's up to our people to Flash" -- was the 320th player taken out of develop him." Jackson runs a 5.15 time in 335. Although no one in the Broncos' scout-Gainer was one of two running backs the 40. But one thing in his favor is that ing department could be reached, Redskins director of player personnel Daniels said of the 5-10 3/4, 183-lbs. Jarvis: "He's a receiver, fast, runs a 4.5 in the 40. He also returned punts and kickoffs. Unfortunately, he was in a run-oriented offense -- which

-G.D. Clay

back," said Frank Gilliam, the Vikings' kind of hurt him for the draft. It was tough Alcorn State's Phillips was 227th play- director of player personnel. "Hopefully, for teams to evaluate him because of those Chiefs' director of player personnel. "He's a er taken by the Chiefs. Basically a free safe- he'll break tackles and develop into a circumstances." big fullback. He catches the ball well. But ty, Phillips, 6-0 1/4, 200 lbs., "is strong and receiver. He was impressive in college. He

Alabama State's Baxter, who is 6-1,

Man-to-man.

Predominantly black colleges seem to specialize in it, and the NFL covets it.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

After Lewis Tillman was taken by the to whether they can play man-to-man." Young. Giants, the New England Patriots drafted another cornerback, Maurice Hurst of Southern University.

Florence and Hurst, both taken in the State secondary was selected).

and the Oakland Raiders in the 1960s' to has the athletic ability." Albert Lewis (Grambling), now with the

Williams (Bethune-Cookman), with the games on film," Ruskell said, "saw him now with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "Ten-New York Jets. The list continues to grow.

Defensive backs who can cover one- schools play a great deal of man-to-man on-one are at a premium in the NFL. In this coverage," said Jim Mendes, the New Eng- of great wide receivers. So you need people on me." year's draft, as expected, North Carolina land Patriots' director of college scouting. who can cover. You must have cover cor-Central cornerback Robert Massey was the "They show the speed and athletic ability, ners." first player from a predominantly black of course. When you go to a Penn State or a school selected. The second player chosen Maryland, you see guys playing in a zone, his chances, even though the Patriots selectwas little-known Bethune-Cookman corner- and you don't see them in man-to-man or ed defensive backs Eric Colman yard dash and he can cover man-to-man. back Anthony Florence, taken by the see them back pedal. When seeing guys (Wyoming) in the second round and Rodplay zone, it's more of a guessing game as ney Rice in round eight from Brigham backs - Eugene Profit and Ernest Gibson --

> Florence is 5-11, 185 lbs. and runs a 4.45 time in the 40 on grass. The Buccaneers think he has a world of potential.

schools drafted by the NFL (and consider of colleges for the team. "He has quick feet turned it into a long touchdown play. How- and start." that in '89, three-fourths of the Alcorn and can cover man-to-man. He's raw tech- ever, I 'm looking forward to facing (Jets' nique-wise because he didn't get a lot of All-Pro) Al Toon." From Willie Brown of Grambling State individual attention. But he can cover and

Fuskell said Florence will get playing Minnesota Vikings, Milton Mack (Alcorn time behind incumbents Ricky Reynolds toughest competition in college was former State) with the New Orleans Saints to Terry and Bobby Futrell. "I saw most of his Tennessee State wide receiver Frank Pillow,

play against Florida A&M and they didn't "One of the possible reasons is those complete a pass against him."

Said Mendes, "this whole league is full

That means Hurst, who is confident of

"I have allowed only two touchdown passes against me," said the 5-10, 185-

cornerback. As a cornerback, he said his

nessee State picked on me a lot that night," Hurst said. "They threw at me like 18 times. But they only completed about three passes

Said Mendes, "he had a career of taking the best receiver on the opposing team

Hurst has been timed at 4.55 in the 40-Because the Patriots lost two cover cornerin the free-agent signing period, New England has a need for cornerbacks.

"[Hurst] is a good open-field tackler pound Hurst, speaking of his two seasons as and has good athletic ability," Mendes said. "We knew about him and followed him a Southern University cornerback. "They "I feel he has cover ability. I also feel he fourth round, follow a long line of defen- all year," said Tim Ruskell, a Bucs' scout were short passes where I took chances on can be our nickel and dime guy [in defensive backs from predominantly black who handles the nation's southeastern sector the ball, but the receiver caught it and sive formations], and then one day come in

> Just like so many of his predecessors. "I think dealing with the black schools, Hurst played wide receiver his first they teach you man-to-man coverage," two seasons before making the switch to Hurst said. "A lot of SWAC teams play man-to-man. It's a trend in black colleges. "

> > And the pros know it. -G.D. Clay