

## Assault Charges Against Leroy McNeill Dropped

By Donald Alderman

ABC Officer Ronald Allen's assault charges against Leroy McNeill were dismissed Wednesday in Durham County District Court. Judge Karen Galloway ruled the state's evidence insufficient to convict McNeill.

The assault charge stemmed from a raid at the home of McNeill's mother in the Walltown section of Durham on November 7. When three officers arrived at the home, Mrs. Janet McNeill was not there. The officers reportedly located her at another house in the neighborhood. She then accompanied the officers to her home where her son, Leroy, asked to see the officers' badges. Allen, claiming McNeill knew him, struck McNeill on the head with a flashlight and proceeded to search the house.

Allen admitted during testimony that he struck McNeill. In another charge, Judge Galloway found McNeill guilty of obstructing a law enforcement officer. McNeill suffered a brain contusion, frac-

tured skull and loss of hearing in his left ear as a result of the flashlight blow to his head.

McNeill, after having been twice refused warrants and following the advice of Public Safety detectives, had not obtained a warrant against Allen until his trial, said he will now attempt to do so. District Attorney Dan K. Edwards, Jr., has been reviewing a Public Safety investigation report on the case. He has not yet made public a decision on what action he will take pursuant to McNeill's brutality charges against Allen. He had said he wanted to hear evidence at McNeill's trial before making a decision.

In the belief that many serious discrepancies exist in testimonies from witnesses, a letter has been sent to U.S. Attorney General William French Smith from the Durham Branch of the NAACP, requesting the FBI to investigate Allen's behavior as well as the conduct of ABC Chief of Police Roland Leary and District Attorney Dan Edwards, according to George Frazier, president.

## May Get Jail For Civil Rights Activities

ALICEVILLE, ALA.

— Two Alabama women who have worked to help black citizens register and vote in rural Pickens County may go to jail in January. Civil rights advocates see their cases as part of a widespread effort to turn the clock back on voting-rights.

The women are Ms. Julia Wilder, 69, president of the Pickens County Voters League and an officer of the local Southern Leadership Conference (SCLC), and Ms. Maggie Bozeman, 51, local NAACP president.

Ms. Wilder and Ms. Bozeman, who live in Aliceville, Ala., were arrested in November, 1978. The technical charge was "vote fraud." Their supporters say they were acutely helping elderly voters understand the ballot and vote.

They were convicted by all-white juries in 1979. Ms. Wilder was sentenced to five years, Ms. Bozeman to four years. Ms. Bozeman was also removed from the teaching job she had held for 27 years.

The convictions were appealed to the Alabama

Court of Criminal Appeals and the Alabama Supreme Court, which upheld them. In November, 1981, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the cases. The women's attorney, Solomon Seay of Montgomery, moved for suspension of sentences, and hearing was set for December 1. On that day, the courtroom in Carrollton, Ala., the Pickens County seat, was packed with supporters of the women. Circuit Judge Clatus Junkin postponed the hearing until January 11.

Meantime, support for the women in civil rights circles is building. In early December, a large crowd turned out in Birmingham for a rally in support of the women called by SCLC and the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic & Social Justice (SOC). The Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, long-time civil rights leader, spoke.

On January 9, two days before the women's scheduled court appearance, there will be a prayer meeting in Carrollton, called by SCLC, the NAACP, the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Alabama Hunger Coalition, SOC, and other groups. Dr. Joseph Lowery, president of SCLC, will speak. Participants will meet at the Salem Baptist Church in Carrollton at 1 p.m. and march to the courthouse. Pickens County, which is southwest of Birmingham near the Mississippi line, is forty per cent black. It has no black elected officials except mayors of tiny all-black towns. Ms. Wilder and Ms. Bozeman are life-long residents of the

area and long-time activists.

"1968 was my waking-up period," Ms. Wilder has said. "We were trying to get black cashiers hired at Piggly-Wiggly. We had a march, and thirteen of us went to jail. I was the oldest."

Ms. Bozeman describes what was happening in 1978: "We had a big registration drive, and black candidates running for office. The politicians were especially afraid of the young woman we ran for School Board against a white banker. As it turned out, she only lost by 106 votes."

As part of the campaign, Voters League members went to the homes of house-bound elderly citizens and helped those who could not read or write fill out absentee ballots — all perfectly legal, according to Attorney Seay, if the voters' wishes were followed.

Ms. Wilder and Ms. Bozeman were charged with "fraud" in connection with 39 of those ballots. The offenses were alleged to have occurred in the primary run-off in September, 1978. The arrests were made on the day before the general election in November.

"They picked me up at school — just I was coming in from the playground with my kids," says Ms. Bozeman. "There were five police cars — like I was a criminal."

At the trials, the state subpoenaed many of the elderly voters. According to Attorney Seay, all but one of them testified on cross-examination that they knew exactly what they were doing and that the ballots were marked

as they wished.

"One woman testifies that she didn't know what the voting was all about," Seay reported. "The State Court of Appeals said the evidence was 'confusing' but that the testimony of that one woman was 'sufficient for the jury to convict.'"

One of the elderly voters, Mrs. Lou Somerville, 95, recently described her experience in the courtroom:

"The lawyer said to me, didn't Ms. Bozeman come to my house and try to make me let her fix my ballot. It wasn't true. So I told him I'm the Lord's child, and the Lord doesn't want a lie. I said I have to tell the truth. No matter how many times they ask me, I'm going to tell the truth."

The charges against Ms. Wilder and Ms. Bozeman are not an isolated incident. Last year, a young black man in Pickens County, Willie Davis, was charged with disorderly conduct after he explained the ballot to voters. When Ms. Bozeman picked up absentee ballots that year, she said the sheriff said to her "You're getting some more of them. Maggie Bozeman will get them to vote if she has to vote them herself. We're going to get you this time."

At the time of the women's December hearing, local district attorney P.M. Johnston told the news media in Birmingham: "They could have been arrested on other charges since their conviction. Their efforts at the polls have continued. They are not satisfied with voting themselves. They have been bringing people into polling places, watching them vote, insisting that they be allowed to assist people."

Recently Ms. Wilder said: "No matter how rough it gets, I'm going to be here." Ms. Bozeman, in addition to continuing voter registration and education work, constantly appears before local government bodies to protest policies she claims are discriminatory.

There is a legend that the face of a black man lynched in Pickens County after the Civil War can be seen in the window of the courthouse in Carrollton. After the December 1 court session, SCLC President Joseph Lowery told those who had gathered:

"These two women were politically lynched. We came here to be on their side."

## SOLAR SOUP?

Using water heated to over 200 degrees F. by solar energy, George E. Clausen, president of Gilroy Foods, of Gilroy California, mixes a cup of instant onion soup.



The sun is getting into hot water. The more than 200° F. water filling this cup was heated by solar panels.

The "recipe" calls for a clean cup, 8 oz. of hot water, a package of instant onion soup — and 402 solar panels, each four feet by four feet, installed atop the Gilroy plant in a project sponsored with the U.S. Dept. of Energy.

Believed to be the first use of solar energy in the processing of food on a large scale, the solar project will supply heat to help dehydrate the more than 250 million pounds of garlic and onions processed annually by Gilroy Foods, a subsidiary of McCormick and Company, Inc.

Studies show the energy conserved this year by the new solar process could be enough to satisfy the energy requirements of 300 homes.

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## Ms. Banks Promoted By M & F Bank

RALEIGH — Ms. Julia Vivian Banks has recently been named assistant branch manager of the Rock Quarry Road Branch of Mechanics & Farmers Bank in Raleigh. Ms. Banks, a Raleigh native, who attended West Cary High School, has progressed steadily since her affiliation with the bank in 1979 when she began as New Accounts Clerk and Head Teller.

Ms. Banks is a member of the American Institute of Banking and a former Consul with the Wake County Chapter-Mechanics & Farmers Bank. When not on the job at the Rock Quarry Road Branch, Ms. Banks is actively involved with the choir and usher board at Saint Matthew Baptist Church. She has also taken on the added responsibility of 1982 chairman of the Finance Committee for the Missionary Group and Young Adult Choir at Saint Matthew.

Ms. Banks and daughters Kimberly Dawn and Kelly Renee reside at H-14 Washington Terrace in Raleigh.



FBI figures show an increase in female arrests for serious crimes — up 80 per cent from 1966 to 1971.

## N.C. Mutual-Heublin Sign Group Agreement

North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co., the nation's largest predominantly black-managed financial institution, has announced that it has been assigned \$42 million of employee group life insurance coverage from Heublin Inc.

Heublin, a Connecticut-based international food and beverage marketer, said that the coverage represents fifteen per cent of the total life insurance provided for approximately 17,000 of its employees.

Heublin reported more than \$2 billion in

sales in 1981. Its best known products include Smirnoff Vodka, Inglenook wines, A.I. Steak sauce and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

North Carolina Mutual, founded in 1898, has nearly \$6 billion of insurance in force and is the nation's 129th largest insurance company. It has over 900,000 policyholders and assets of \$200 million.

Maceo A. Sloan, executive vice president of North Carolina Mutual, said: "North Carolina Mutual is certainly pleased to form this relationship with Heublin, Inc.

We are impressed with Heublin's desire to include minority firms in its purchases and investments. It is our feeling that such arrangements are not only mutually beneficial but are good for all America. We look forward to long and pleasant relationship."

Hicks B. Waldron, president and chief executive officer of Heublin, said: "Placing this insurance with North Carolina Mutual reflects a continuing commitment on the part of Heublin to support minority-owned and managed enterprises."

"That consideration aside, however," said Waldron, "we have been very impressed by the organization itself and its proven ability to provide topflight service to the insurance needs of companies such as ours."

## Bowe Officially Files As Sheriff Candidate

Jess Bowe officially filed as a candidate for the office of Sheriff of Durham County on Monday.

According to a press statement issued Monday, Bowe, a thirty-year professional in the criminal justice field, said that he believes "the time is right for a new approach to the problems which beset the department and which, if not solved, could threaten the safety and well-being of our community."

Containing that "This is a time for competence. . . . experience. . . . integrity. . . . fresh ideas", Bowe's statement lists fifteen pledges if he is elected sheriff. They are to:

- professionalize the sheriff's department;
- provide better police service in suburban and rural areas;
- afford effective police service for the aged, handicapped, and minors;
- facilitate access to the sheriff's department;
- upgrade education

- and training of all personnel;
- assure fair and impartial treatment of all employees;
- promise unbiased, non-political interference in the hiring, dismissal, promotion, and job assignment of personnel.

— seek professional civilian jailers to maintain the county jail;

- recruit and hire women and other minorities;
- increase visitors' hours at the jail;
- cooperate 100 per cent with school officials and parents in the solving of school problems relative to criminal justice;
- seek close cooperation with social agencies, including school counselors, Alcoholics Anonymous, and juvenile agencies;
- stress impartial enforcement of laws;
- streamline the efficiency of the sheriff's department; and
- strive for justice and equality for all citizens of Durham County.



Spirited Exchange

Maceo A. Sloan, right, executive vice president of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co., learns about the production of Smirnoff Vodka from Hicks B. Waldron, president of Heublin Inc., during a visit to the company's spirits plant in Hartford, Conn. North Carolina Mutual, the country's largest predominantly black-managed financial institution, recently signed an agreement to provide \$42 million in group life insurance coverage to Heublin employees.

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