

## Williamston's First Bank Robbery Solved And Money Found

### Tobacco Market Has Best Sales Of Year Monday

More Than Two and A Half Million Pounds Sold Here To Date

Prices maintained an upward trend on the Williamston Tobacco Market yesterday when one of the best sales of the season was recorded. No records were broken, to be sure, but the market sold 398,860 pounds for \$223,773.00, an average of \$56.10. It was the largest sale of the year and the price average topped the previous high by a few cents per hundred pounds. While there has been no material change in the price for the top grades other than a \$1 to \$2 increase to \$70 and \$71 per hundred, prices for most other grades have strengthened.

Through yesterday the market had sold right at 2,527,752 pounds for an average of \$54.25. During the first eight sales days of last season, the market had sold only about one and one-half million pounds and the average trailed the one this year by about \$6 per hundred pounds.

A weekly review of all the markets in the belt combined follows:

Demand strengthened last week for Eastern North Carolina flue-cured tobacco, according to the Federal-State Market News Service. Volume of sales was fairly heavy; however, deliveries slackened on Tuesday and Wednesday. Quality of marketings was not up to that of the two-day opening week.

Sales for the week ending August 28 totaled 42,100,170 gross pounds and averaged \$53.97 per hundred. This average topped the one for the previous week by \$1.00. Season sales were brought to 66,420,850 pounds for a \$53.60 average. For the corresponding period last year, 39,578,947 pounds had averaged \$50.22.

Most grade average gained \$1.00 to \$3.00 per hundred pounds over the week before. A few grades showed losses of around \$1.00. The practical top continued at \$69.00 a hundred. Medium to lower quality grades averaged generally \$7.00 to \$17.00 above their Government loan rates; however, better offerings were mostly \$1.00 to \$5.00 over.

A large increase occurred in the percentage of leaf marketings. Primings and lugs showed a corresponding decrease. Principal sales consisted of poor to fair leaf, fair and good lugs, low and fair primings, and nondescript.

Deliveries to the Flue-cured Stabilization Corporation under the Government loan program for the week amounted to around 3 per cent of gross sales. Receipts for the season approximate 4.5 per cent. During the comparable period last year 11.3 per cent had gone under loan.

### Call Firemen Out Saturday Night

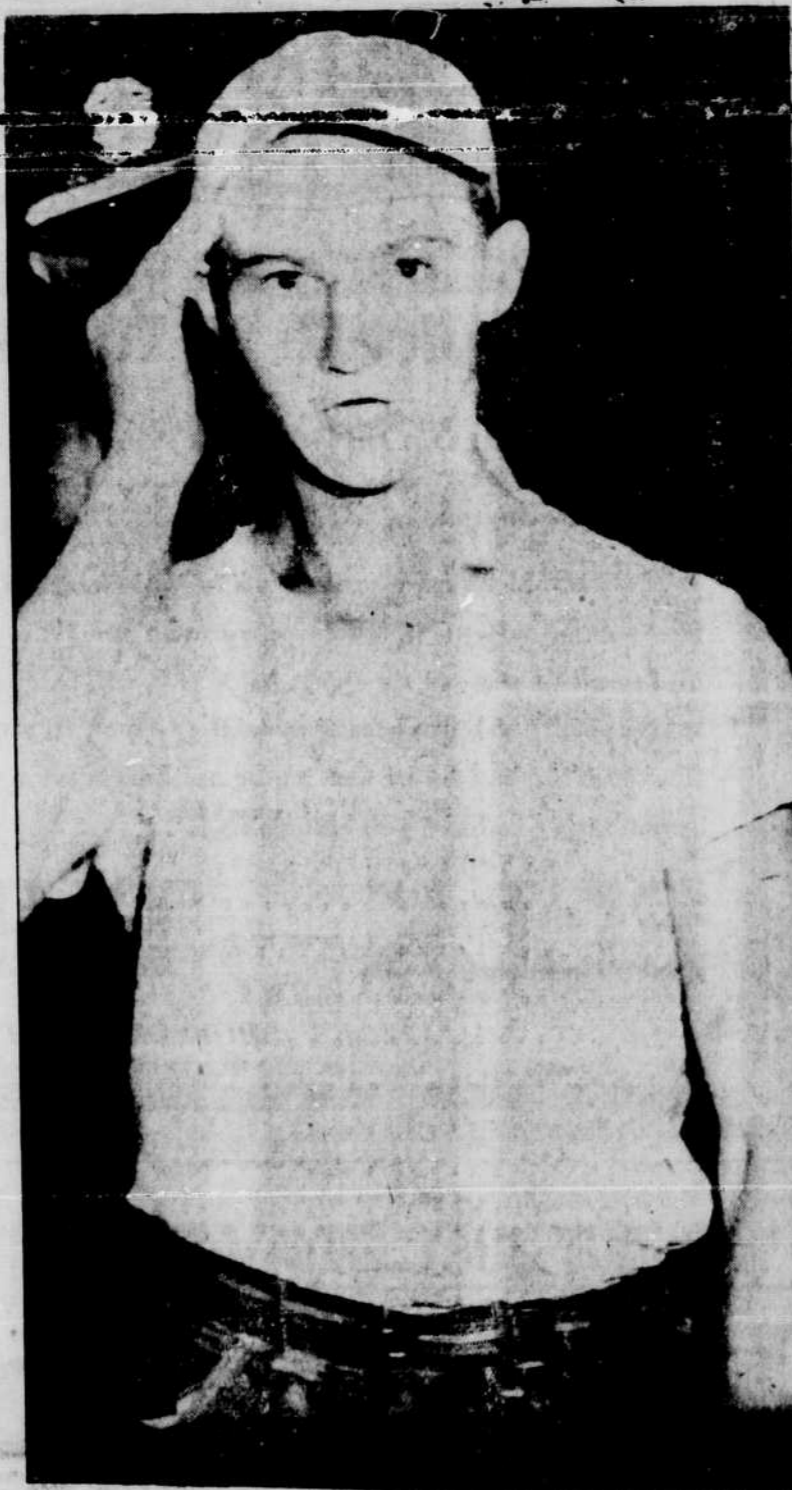
Firemen were called out about 10:00 o'clock here last Saturday night when fire threatened the Merita bread truck warehouse just off Washington Street near the Williamston Storage Corporation's warehouses.

Starting in a small office where a small bed was stored, the fire destroyed a mattress and burned a small place in the wall. Firemen brought the fire under control with a small hose line.

### Firms Announce Personnel Change

The Woolard Furniture Company and Roanoke Chevrolet Company this week effected changes in their personnel. Mr. Harvey Baggett, connected with the Roanoke Chevrolet Company for more than eight years, has gone with the furniture company as assistant manager. Mr. Raymond Rawls, former deputy sheriff, is succeeding Mr. Baggett at the Chevrolet Company and will be in the sales department.

### Robber Salutes Cameraman



Arrested in connection with the Guaranty Bank robbery here last Friday morning, James Earl Strickland, 19, saluted when News and Observer photographer Inmon snapped his picture in the courthouse hall.

### Robber In Disguise



Quitman Strickland tried and almost succeeded in disguising himself by discarding all his clothing but dungarees when he returned to the spot where he had ditched the getaway car following the Guaranty Bank robbery last Friday. Muddy feet and scratches gave him away, however, and Lt. Tom Brown of the Highway Patrol nabbed him. (Picture, courtesy of Associated Press Photographer Faircloth).

### Exciting Time Reported When Youths Entered Bank Friday

#### Overlooked Large Amount Of Money On The Counters

Bank Employees and Patrons, Obeyed Excitement, Obeyed Orders

In all its 174 years of history Williamston had its first bank robbery last Friday morning when two amateurish robbers, Adrill Strickland, 24, and his 21-year-old brother, Quitman Strickland, held eight of the bank employees and several patrons at gun point and walked out a few minutes later with \$17,384.

News of the daring robbery spread rapidly and excitement was town-wide in a matter of minutes. Although a bit unnerved, bank employees held their composure for the most part and soon brought order out of confusion. Within a short time after the two robbers left, Assistant Cashier Jos. Griffin gave a pretty accurate estimate of the loss, and banking operations, although carried on with the lobby packed at times were returned to normal. Ammonia was used liberally by bank workers to steady their nerves.

It is not quite clear just when the robbers came to town. One said they reached here about 1:30 o'clock that morning and the other said they drove in about 5:00 o'clock, and casually decided to rob the Guaranty Bank.

Shortly before the bank was opened for business that morning, the 1953 blue two-toned Mercury, bearing a South Carolina license plate, was driven to Raynor's station for gas, the driver asking change for a parking meter. A Ford, belonging to Quitman Strickland, was parked near a tool shed where the new Christian church is under construction, corner of Liberty and Smithwick Streets, and the Mercury was parked in front of the Firestone store next to the bank.

The younger brother held to the Ford on the church lot, and the other two took a seat on the steps of the bank. According to one report they had planned to follow Cashier D. V. Clayton into the bank when he opened the front door. When the banker tarried for a conversation with a friend, the two boys moved away to eliminate the possibility of creating suspicion. When they returned Mr. Clayton had entered the bank and not knowing the door was unlocked, the two boys again took their seats on the steps and waited. All the employees passed them and after the bank was opened, the two boys walked in.

Quitman Strickland went to  
(Continued on page eight)

#### National Guard Gets Back Home

After going through two weeks of intensive training at Camp Stewart, Georgia, Williamston's National Guard Unit, Battery C, 150 AAA Gun Bn., returned home Sunday.

Officers stated that the men showed up well and did a good job during the two weeks of training.

Special equipment, including guns, radar trucks and other items, are scheduled for delivery to the battery here within the near future, it was learned.

#### No One Injured In Car Accident Sunday

No one was injured but considerable damage resulted when an automobile driven by a Biggs boy went out of control and turned over on the Big Mill Road just off Highway 17 late last Sunday afternoon. Damage to the car was estimated at about \$300.

The driver, just from the service, had had the car only a short time, it was reported.

#### COMING HOME



A prisoner of the Red Chinese since November, 1950, S/Sgt. Martel Hardy is coming home, according to information received by his mother, Mrs. Martel Hardy, from the U. S. Air Corps this week. The young man is now in Tokyo. A cablegram from the young man is being delivered to his mother on RFD 3, Williamston, today, but the contents were not disclosed.

### Robber Arrested On Local Street 3 A. M. Saturday

Last Of Three Strickland Brothers Admits Bank Robbery Here

The last in a series of arrests made in connection with the last Friday morning robbery of the Guaranty Bank here was handled in the Julian Masons' back yard on Simmons Avenue a few minutes after 3:00 o'clock Saturday morning, Sheriff M. W. Holloman stating that Lieutenant Tom Brown of the State Highway Patrol, and FBI Agent Art Lee ran down and took Adrill Strickland 24, into custody without incident. Even at that early hour, news of the arrest spread rapidly and the tension that had gripped the town for almost eighteen hours quickly subsided.

The 24-year-old Strickland, a brick layer by trade and declaring he had no home, said he was originally from Apopka, Fla., but he offered very few other pertinent facts about his past other than to say he had served thirty days on the roads for careless and reckless driving. When asked what time he and his brother, Quitman, separated in the woods, he answered, "What brother?"

Strickland traced his courses of travel after reaching the woods, but made no mention of his brother who waited in a car at the new Christian church. During the afternoon, Strickland said he moved out of the far side of the woods trap by crawling through a culvert. He later retraced his steps and traveled to the east side of the cordon thrown up by twenty-five patrolmen and about thirty or thirty-five officers, including FBI agents, sheriffs and deputies, and members of the local police department. Shortly after dark he pierced the cordon and walked to Williamston, traveling most of the way on a secondary highway that led him to the Williamston Packing Company at the Smithwick Street and the railroad to the junk yard, then worked his way over to Main Street and finally

(Continued on Page Five)

### Robbery Is Solved And Money Found In Thirty Hours

Mother Of Boys Declares She Could Not Believe The Robbery Report

Thirty hours after the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company robbery, the first in the history of local banking, last Friday morning the case was solved and the \$17,348 recovered. The solution and success of the money search entitle the various agencies and law enforcement officers to much credit.

The final chapter in the case solution was written about 4:00 o'clock last Saturday afternoon when Adrill Strickland, following a preliminary hearing before a U. S. Commissioner in Rocky Mount, broke down and told the officers where he had hidden the second batch of money. The first batch, two \$100 bills and \$186 in silver, had been recovered early Saturday morning in the woods just off the Lee Road about one mile from Highway 125.

Accompanied by U. S. Marshall Ben Buck and FBI Agents Art Lee, W. H. Gibson and Richard Wood, Strickland was returned to Williamston, and a rendezvous with Corporal M. C. Byrum, Sheriff M. W. Holloman, Chief John Roebuck, Sergeant Boyd and Patrolman Surlis of the highway patrol, was arranged for at the Patrol Radio Station. The group moved to the highway underpass on West Main Street and Strickland revealed the hiding place. Strickland had squeezed between two cross ties down about five feet and pushed the bag of money back of some timbers and piling near the railroad bridge abutment. Sheriff Holloman said the money would not have been found easily, possibly not until repairs were made on the bridge if Strickland had not revealed the

(Continued on Page Eight)

### Last Of The Bank Robbers



Adrill Strickland, 24, is pictured with FBI Agent Art Lee, left, and Sheriff M. W. Holloman, right, soon after his arrest just off Simmons Avenue here shortly after 3:00 o'clock last Saturday morning. His arrest completed the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company robbery round-up.—Photo by Royal Studio.

#### SIXTY-ONE SHORT

The recruitment program for the tenth quarterly visit of the Red Cross Bloodmobile here on Thursday of this week is sixty-one recruits short, it was learned this morning. The appeal for more recruits is being renewed. Those who will donate a pint of blood are earnestly requested to contact the Red Cross office or Dr. Jas. S. Rhodes, Jr., chairman, without delay. The bloodmobile will be at the American Legion Hut on South Wat's Street from 10 a. m. until 4 p. m. Thursday.

### Firemen Called To Marvil Plant

Competing against a bank robbery, a two-call fire alarm attracted comparatively little attention at 12:15 o'clock here last Friday afternoon. The public apparently was too interested in the robbery developments to take time to chase after the fire-fighting equipment.

Te call was received when a fuel supply caught fire between the boiler room and the bottom mill. Plant employees had the fire under control a few minutes after it was discovered, and there was little or no damage.

#### WITH INTEREST?

After three young brothers were arrested in connection with the early Friday morning robbery of the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company here, talk Saturday morning centered on the stolen money. When the last amount was found at the highway underpass on West Main Street, \$140 more than had been reported lost was found. Bankers explained that a deposit slip could have been taken along with the money and lost. Then there is the possibility that the money drew interest!

### Play Santa Claus For Robbers



Cashier D. V. Clayton and Miss Marie Griffin, bank employee, unwillingly played Santa Claus for two robbers when the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company was robbed last Friday morning. Each took a sack of the command of the robbers, but instead of putting in apples, oranges, and little toys, they filled the bags with more than \$17,000 cash.