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Bank Robbery Suspect Captured In Florida

One of three suspects in last week's Hot Springs bank robbery was taken into custody Thursday by Madison County Sheriff E.Y. Ponder in Florida and charged with robbing the Wachovia Bank & Trust Company of some \$50,000.

Charles Edward Williams, 18, of La Belle, Fla. waived extradition and was returned to Marshall early Friday where he remains in the Madison County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bond set Friday afternoon by District Court Judge Robert Lacey in Newland.

Ponder said he recovered "a sizeable sum" of the money that was taken in the robbery after arresting Williams. An all-points bulletin remains in effect in Florida for two other suspects charged in the holdup.

Williams is charged with bank robbery with firearms and dangerous weapons, Ponder said. Also charged in the holdup are David Jones, 18, of Miami, Fla., and Spender Allen, 44, of Moore Haven, Fla. Ponder said arrest warrants have been issued for Jones and Allen, and law enforce-

ment officers are in "hot pursuit" of the suspects.

Reports indicate Williams and Jones entered the Hot Springs branch of Wachovia Bank and Trust Company about 10:30 a.m. Monday, June 15 and demanded bank employees give them money. Both men, unmasked and reportedly carrying a pistol and a knife, locked three bank employees and a customer, Mrs. Gene Autrey, in the bank vault before leaving the bank. The robbers then walked approximately 500 feet down the street and got into a pickup truck and fled town.

Ponder said Allen was the driver of the truck. Allen is a former resident of the Spring Creek community and has lived in Florida for several years, the sheriff said. As of Saturday, the truck had not been located.

Williams is scheduled to have a probable cause hearing in Madison County District Court on Friday, July 3.

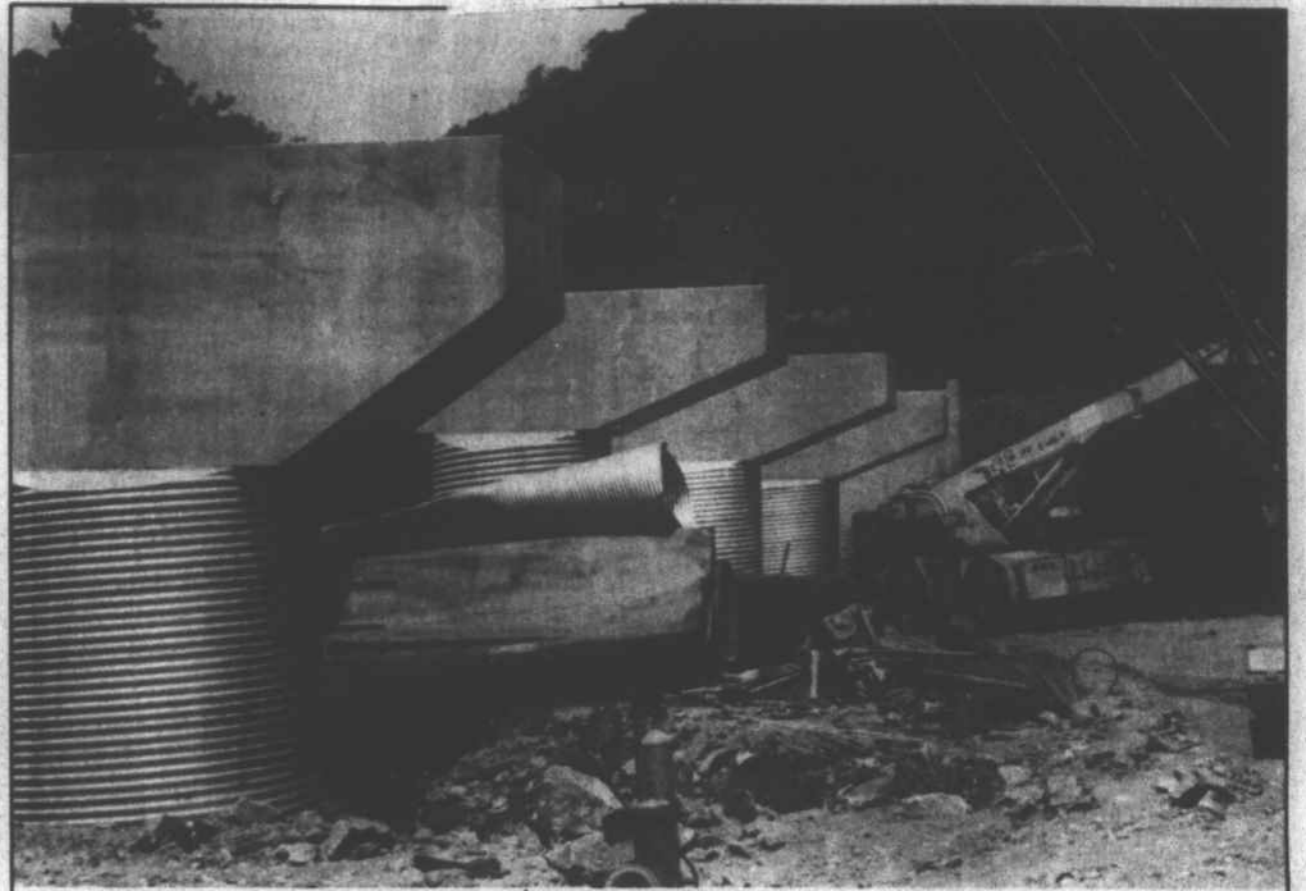


Photo by N. Hancock

PROGRESS CONTINUES on the construction of the new Southern Railway bridge across the French Broad River at Ivy Hill section south of Marshall. Four of the six supporting concrete piers have been poured and

the fifth pier should be poured in a few days. Engineers project completion of the steel and concrete structure for late August or early September.

House Approves Gas Tax, Nixes Tax Hike On Cigarettes

By ERNEST MESSER

The N.C. House, by a 70 to 49 vote, approved the Senate passed bill to increase the gasoline tax.

Modifications by the House Finance Committee reduced the tax from three to two and three-quarters cents and deleted a proposal to pay a rebate of up to \$22.50 to North Carolina drivers.

All Democratic House members from the far West voted for the gas tax.

The major opposition came from representatives of counties which already have good roads and in which most of the secondary roads are already paved.

Support for the tax increase was almost unanimous by representatives of eastern and western counties where most of the unpaved road mileage is located.

All available facts indicated that, in order to maintain our 76,000 mile of roads and 16,000 bridges, more funds will be necessary. These observations were presented



Ernest Messer

during the tax debate:

Since the last gas tax increase in 1969, inflation has eroded the — highway dollar by about 200 percent, and revenues from the gas tax have decreased by about \$20,000,000 per year.

People don't want their taxes increased; neither do they want the roads "to go to pot."

Sentiment in the west is

strong for a tax increase on cigarettes, which we don't have the votes to levy.

No one wants the food tax used for highways.

There is strong sentiment to let those who use the highways pay for them.

While drastic economy measures are being implemented — construction projects cancelled, highway employees laid off — there just isn't enough money to provide reasonable maintenance and a limited construction schedule.

Despite a bloc vote by Western Democratic House members last Tuesday, efforts to increase the tax on cigarettes by three cents was killed by a lop-sided 75 to 41 vote.

All Western House members, except Charles Hughes of Henderson County, supported the effort to place the cigarette tax on the calendar for full debate and a vote.

This decisive victory by the anti-cigarette tax forces virtually assures that there will

be no increase in the cigarette tax this year.

An "Act to Provide for the Management of Hazardous and Low-Level Radioactive Waste in North Carolina" will be considered by the House this week. The bill has already passed the Senate.

All local hazardous waste control acts will be repealed and the responsibility and power to devise a waste control and disposal plan will be given to the state.

No longer will local governments be able to veto waste disposal plans.

The bill provides a 15 member Waste Management Board to manage the plan with actual supervision being the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources.

A new automobile tag bearing the inscription "First in Flight" has been approved.

House and Senate Redistricting plans have been enacted but the Congressional plan is still in limbo.

Adjournment may be possible by July 3.

Elections Board Officers Elected

The Madison County Board of Elections met Wednesday evening, June 17 to confirm appointments by the State Board of Elections.

Oscar McDevitt of Marshall was re-elected chairman, and John A. Hensley also of Marshall was re-elected secretary. Both officers are Democrats. Republican William B. Zink Jr., of Mars Hill will also serve on the board.

County boards of election throughout Western North Carolina completed their reorganization

meetings last Tuesday and Wednesday following appointments by the State Board.

Many of the boards continued with the same members as before, and all contained two Democrats and one Republican by virtue of the governor being a Democrat.

Normally the two board officers, chairman and secretary, are of the majority party. Board members appoint the full-time elections supervisor for their respective county.

Hendon Wants Vote On Expenses

WASHINGTON — If members of Congress want an increase in their expense accounts, they should have to go on record and vote for it, Rep. Bill Hendon said Wednesday.

Hendon's comments came during an announcement that he has introduced a resolution that would change the rules of the House of Representatives to require the full House to vote on travel and office ex-

pense increases. Last month, the House Administration Committee, in full accordance with existing rules of the House, approved cost-of-living increases in the travel and office allowances for members of Congress. Under existing law, a full, recorded vote of the House was not required to approve the increases.

"People are justifiably upset over the method used by the House Administration Committee," Hendon said.

"My bill would require the full House to vote on any further expense account increases. At a time when Congress is cutting dozens of programs in order to reduce federal spending and inflation, I, too, find it incredible that a House committee could approve more spending for Congress without a recorded vote.

"If my resolution passes, each congressman will have to stand up and be counted before any more increases are granted," the Western North Carolina congressman said.

On The Inside

Ken Edwards plans debut of new column next week. Details Page 2.

NCAE President Opposes Senate Bill

Teachers Oppose Statute Change

A bill directing a study be conducted of the so-called teacher tenure statute before the October meeting of the General Assembly is a "backdoor attempt to destroy job security for the state's public school educators," the president of the North Carolina Association of Educators said recently.

Mrs. Loretta M. Martin, a Thomasville teacher serving as NCAE president, said Senate Bill 621 "in an unfair attempt by the State School Boards Association to do by study commission what it cannot do by legislation."

Martin said the North Carolina School Boards Association has been promising all this session of the General Assembly that it would sponsor legislation to replace the present Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute with a five-year renewable tenure statute.

That proposal, said Martin, was recognized by members

of the General Assembly for what it was — "a bold attempt to give school boards a hunting license on all educators every five years."

She said passage of such legislation "would immediately turn teachers and principals into timid individuals afraid to speak out on anything for fear their names would go on the list for the time when their personal hunting season approached." Support for such legislation was lacking, she said.

Martin said the School Boards Association has prevailed upon powerful members of the General Assembly to introduce legislation calling for a study of the Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute.

The study is to be conducted by the Legislative Research Commission and the Personnel Administration Commission and reported back to the

General Assembly by the October special session.

"It looks to us as if what is planned is a quick endorsement of the peculiar philosophy that has been espoused by some leaders of the School Boards Association recently," Martin said.

She said the so-called tenure statute came into being because of "abuses in the hiring and firing of teachers, abuses so flagrant the General Assembly itself demanded that something be done."

She said in some counties teachers were required to contribute to a particular political party in order to keep their jobs, that principals were often summarily dismissed by school boards and even school committees, and that in one particularly flagrant case a school board fired a female English teacher solely because of her being a member and reported back to

leave the county. "With what is happening in our society right now with the Moral Majority and the New Right, can you just imagine what a state of chaos will exist in our schools if we take away the minor job security teachers and principals now have," she asked.

She said NCAE believes the present Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute, which lists reasons school boards may use to dismiss a teacher or principal, has worked well over a fairly long period of time since it was adopted in 1971.

She said NCAE will fight the attempt to amend the statute by a study commission.

"The statute doesn't seem anything like what we're talking about in why some people are so afraid of it," she said.

Public Meetings

The Madison County Board of Commissioners will hold a public tax rate adoption hearing on Tuesday, June 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the courtroom of the Madison County Courthouse in Marshall.

The Madison County Board of Commissioners will hold its regular monthly meeting on Friday, July 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the courtroom of the Madison County Courthouse.

The Madison County Board of Education will meet on Monday, July 6 at 10:30 a.m. at the courthouse on Main Street in Marshall.

The Mars Hill Board of Aldermen will meet on Monday, July 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the Mars Hill Town Hall on Main Street.

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Marshall will meet on Monday, July 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall on Main Street in Marshall.

The Hot Springs Board of Aldermen will meet Monday, July 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in Hot Springs.

GOP To Convene In Hayesville For First Time

The 11th Congressional District Republican Convention will convene Saturday, June 27 at 3 p.m. in Hayesville at the Hayesville High School auditorium, according to Joe L. Morgan of Marshall, chairman of the 11th District GOP resolutions committee.

Rep. Bill Hendon of Asheville will be the principal speaker at the event which is expected to attract nearly 500 persons including some 30 delegates and alternates from Madison County. Dr. Larry Stern will head the Madison group.

Morgan said district officers and delegates to the N.C.

Republican Convention will be elected during the business session. The state convention will be held in Wilmington July 24-25.

Harold Corbin of Franklin, current district chairman, is expected to seek another two-year term, Morgan said. Other posts up for election will be district secretary and treasurer.

Clay County will be hosting the 11th District convention for the first time. Boby Garret, chairman of the Clay County Republican Executive Committee said a dinner will be served in the school cafeteria at 4 p.m.