

Yank Stewart

Charles Willis (“Yank”) Stewart, Jr., was born February 19, 1906, in Virginia.¹ He died October 1, 1985, in Wilmington, North Carolina, thus attaining 79 years. When a young man his nickname was “Willie.” Exactly when and why he obtained the nickname “Yank” is not known.

He was a son of Charles Willis Stewart and Susan Beckleheimer, who were married in West Virginia. The following is from a newspaper account of the murder trial of Charles Willis Stewart and C. Elmer Stewart:

“He said that he was born in Virginia and lived there until 12 years of age, when he moved to West Virginia, settling later at Oak Hill, in that state. He went to Salem, Virginia, in 1907, and two years later to Cascade, Virginia. Stewart said that he went to Wilmington in October, 1912. His occupation, he said, was carpenter, and he named several places in Wilmington where he had worked. Among them was on the customhouse job, where he worked on the interior. Stewart testified that he was a member of the Carpenters’ union and one time chairman of the Senior Mechanics, The Golden Eagle, Odd Fellows, Junior Mechanics and also the Wilmington Trade Council, of which at one time he was chairman. Until he had been crippled, he said, he was in good standing in all of these organizations. He moved to Brunswick County about seven years ago.”²

Charles Willis Stewart	Born:	c. 1874 (Virginia)
	Died:	17 April 1925 (Raleigh, NC)
	Buried:	Bellvue Cemetery Wilmington, NC
	Residence:	118 Meares Street Wilmington, NC
Susan Beckleheimer	Born:	
	Died:	
Oscar Stewart	Born:	18 November 1893
	Died:	15 April 1915 (California)
	Buried:	National Cemetery Wilmington, NC
Anthony Dewitt Stewart	Born:	c. 1898
	Died:	

¹ He claims that he was born in West Virginia, but his North Carolina death record shows a Virginia birth.

² *News-Dispatch* 9 October 1924.

C. Elmer Stewart	Born: c. 1902 Died: 17 April 1925 (Raleigh, NC) Buried: Bellvue Cemetery Wilmington, NC
Charles Willis Stewart, Jr.	Born: 19 February 1906 (West Virginia) Died: 1 October 1985
Elsie G. Stewart	Born: Died: Married: (1) Roy Noring; (2) W. J. Cottle Children: C. L. Noring (not confirmed)
Lorennna Stewart	Born: Died: Married: (1) Rufus Squires; (2) John Golden ³ Residence: 108 Wright Street Wilmington, NC
Possible Third Daughter ⁴	Born: Died: Married: Unknown Thompson

Oscar Stewart was killed as a result of a Ferris wheel accident at the 1915 San Francisco World's Fair.

Criminal Record and Escapades of Yank Stewart

1925 (March 28)

A March 30, 1924, newspaper article stated that charges of abduction for immoral purposes would be preferred against Willie Stewart and Ernest Tolar in connection with an arrest while on a camping and traveling trip with "three little Beaufort girls. The following is from a newspaper account of the murder trial of Charles Willis Stewart and C. Elmer Stewart":

"Charges of abduction for immoral purposes will be preferred against Tolar and Stewart, Sheriff Wade said. The girls will not be prosecuted but will be returned to their homes. Later

³ Also seen as B. Golden.

⁴ See the 18 April 1925 *News-Dispatch* account of the burial of the two executed Stewarts: "The father is survived by his wife, three daughters, Mrs. Rufus Squires, Mrs. Elsie G. Norin, Mrs. Thompson; and two sons, Anthony Stewart of this city, and Willie Stewart."

developments showed the car used in making the trip to be the property of Stewart and it will be turned over to his sister for the present.”⁵

1925 (January 12)

On January 12 Stewart was charged with being drunk and disorderly and spent 30 days on the roads in default of \$10 and costs.

1925 (February 20)

Stewart was arrested on Market Street in Wilmington, North Carolina, when seen by police officers to be in a drunken condition. He entered the police automobile without resisting but attempted to escape shortly after the car began to move. He was subdued after a struggle. A revolver was found in his possession. He is alleged to have shot Robert Revill in the foot earlier in the evening. This is the night before Stewart was scheduled to appear in court for judgment in a prior criminal matter.

1925 (February 21)

Sentenced to nine months on the roads by Judge John L. Pearse in the February 21, 1925, session of recorder's court, following conviction on a multiplicity of charges. Young Stewart announced that he would appeal the lower court's judgment. He was convicted of assaulting a female, simple assault, drunk, and assault with a deadly weapon. A fifth charge (resisting arrest) was merged with the more serious charge, assault with a deadly weapon. A sentence of six months was imposed for this offence. Three one-month sentences ran the total up to nine.

1925 (March 5)

Attempted to escape from New Hanover County Jail.

1925 (March 17)

This was the appeal of the 21 February 1925 sentence, which backfired because the court increased the sentence to 15 months in the New Hanover County Stockade (charges of two assaults, assault with a deadly weapon, and resisting an officer). Unclear is whether the offenses committed February 20, 1925, resulted in the longer sentence. Note that one newspaper report stated, apparently erroneously, that he was serving a 15-month sentence for violating “prohibition laws.”⁶

⁵ *Wilmington Star-News*, March 30, 1924. The newspaper article did not positively identify Willie Stewart as Charles Willis Stewart, Jr.

⁶ *News-Dispatch*, 16 April 1925.

1925 (April 27)

North Carolina Governor McLean on his own motion on April 27, 1925, paroled Willie Stewart, son of C. W. Stewart and brother of Elmer Stewart who were electrocuted April 17, 1925, at State prison for the murder of Leon George and U. S. Deputy Marshal Sam Lilly in Brunswick County July 1924.

1925 (September 9)

Stewart boarded a train in Wallace, North Carolina, headed for Virginia where his mother was said to be residing. This followed the discovery by police of eight gallons of whiskey in the home of Stewart near Front and Wright streets in Wilmington, North Carolina. Whether Stewart was arrested and encouraged to leave the jurisdiction was not made clear by the *News-Dispatch* article (10 September 1925).

1925 (September 10)

After police found the eight gallons of illegal whiskey in Stewart's Wilmington home they notified federal officials who searched the Stewart home in Brunswick County about twelve miles from Wilmington. There they discovered a whiskey still "complete in almost every detail" set up in the garage. The apparatus was confiscated, but no arrests were made. William Stewart had left the city hurriedly the day before. *Wilmington Star-News*, September 11, 1925.

1926 (January 25)

Stewart was arrested Monday morning, January 25, 1926, following a raid at his home, 108 Wright Street, Wilmington, North Carolina, where officers found him concealed in a trunk. He was wanted by city, state, and federal authorities in connection with liquor law (prohibition) violations. He was arraigned Tuesday, January 26, 1926, before Judge George Harriss, but the case against him, charging violation of the prohibition law, was left open.

1926 (January 28)

Stewart was sentenced to serve eighteen months on the county roads for violating the North Carolina prohibition laws. The sentence would run concurrently with the time remaining on the sentence that the North Carolina Governor had paroled in 1925. The court had requested direction from the Governor but not was forthcoming because the Governor was absent from Raleigh.

1927 (June)

An article in the March 3, 1930, edition of the *News-Dispatch* is a bit confusing as it has Stewart escaping from the New Hanover County road gang in June 1927:

"In March, 1925, Stewart was given four four-month sentences to the county roads in superior court here, was given a parole by the governor and went to Georgia, where convicted on

another charge, he was confined in the federal prison at Atlanta, according to reports. He escaped, returned here, was again put on the roads, escaping from the hospital in June, 1927. 1927 (September 15-16)

Stewart, who was serving a long road term for a multiplicity of offenses for which he had been forgiven by the Governor until his parole was broken, escaped from the road gang.

1927 (September 19)

Stewart was taken into custody early the morning of September 19, 1927, at the home of Earl Brown, by Sheriff Jackson and his men, the youth being found asleep on a "pallet" in a back bedroom.

1927-1928

Escaped from the New Hanover, North Carolina, prison road camp and began operating a "rum running" business from Charleston, South Carolina.

1928 (fall)

In the fall of 1928 Stewart was sentenced in a Charleston, South Carolina, federal court to a sixteen-month prison sentence for "rum running," the time to be spent in federal prison in Chillicothe.⁷ Note the following from the April 4, 1930, edition of the *Wilmington Star-News*:

"It is reported that Stewart escaped [from the New Hanover prison] in June, 1927, and since that time has been in the federal prison at Atlanta, Ga., for an offense committed in Florida."

1929

Stewart escaped from the federal prison in Chillicothe, after serving about six months of the sixteen-month term. This would place the escape late winter or the spring of 1929.

It appears that Stewart also served a term in Duplin County, North Carolina, for breaking into a filling station near Kenansville, North Carolina. Whether this offense occurred after his escape from the Chillicothe federal prison is not clear. However on June 7, 1929, the *Raleigh Times* reported that 23-year-old C. W. Stewart was in Wake County join Friday awaiting the time when federal officers will carry him back to the federal prison at Chillicothe to serve the balance of a sixteen-month prison term imposed on him in the fall of 1928, in Charleston, S. C., federal court for rum-running. Stewart was held for federal officers in Duplin County, where he had served a term for breaking into a filling station near Kenansville. Young Stewart was brought to Raleigh late Thursday afternoon by Deputy Marshal Elbert Fitzgerald. After serving his sentence at Chillicothe, New Hanover officers will bring him back to New Hanover to serve out the rest of his term. Before escaping from the Chillicothe prison, young Stewart had served about six months of his sixteen-month term. *News-Dispatch*, 9 June 1929.

⁷ Exactly where this prison was located is unclear. However, there is a federal prison in Chillicothe, Ohio. But it is believed that Stewart was in federal prison in Atlanta, from which he escaped.

1930 (March)

Apparently after completing his sentence in the Atlanta federal prison Stewart was brought back to North Carolina where his old friend, Judge Harriss, ordered him on March 3, 1930, to serve the remaining two months of his original sentence (the one with respect to which he had been paroled by the North Carolina governor in 1925. *News-Dispatch* 3 March 1930. By this time Stewart had escaped from prison three times.

1930 (April 3)

Stewart escaped from the New Hanover County Stockade for the third time.

1930 (October 29)

Stewart was arrested in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on a charge of breaking into a store in Wampee, South Carolina. The *News-Dispatch* reported that Stewart probably would be returned to the South Carolina town for trial before being sent to New Hanover County to continue his sentence.

1930 (November 16)

He apparently was convicted of the South Carolina offense (or was awaiting trial) because he was confined to a Horry County Jail in Conway, South Carolina. A November 16, 1930, article in the *Wilmington Star-News* reported that on November 15, 1930, "Yank" Stewart⁸ went berserk and beat the other prisoners, eventually having to be subdued with chloroform.

1930 (December 18)

Escaped from the Horry County Jail in Conway, South Carolina. He, of course, was still wanted in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he escaped from the chain gang.

1930 (December 22)

Yank Stewart was captured in the old Liberty Shipyard in Wilmington, North Carolina. In its 23 December 1930 article the *Wilmington Star-News* referred to Stewart as "Yank." He surrendered to overwhelming force without a show of resistance. He was wanted in New Hanover County to complete an unexpired term on the county road gang, where he was sent on conviction of violating the prohibition law. He escaped about a year ago. He also faces charges for jail breaking.

1930 (December 23)

According to a December 23, 1930, article in *The Wilmington News*, Stewart was sent by Judge Harriss back to the chain gang.

⁸ This was the first use of "Yank" seen in the newspaper reports of Stewarts escapades.

1931 (February 26)

Taken back to Conway, South Carolina, after completing his unexpired prison term in New Hanover County, North Carolina. He had almost sawed through both his arm and leg shackles when the South Carolina authorities came for him.

1933 (March 22)

Completed South Carolina prison sentence for holding up a filling station in Horry County. Arrested in Wilmington, North Carolina, in connection with a March 14, 1933, Conway, South Carolina bank robbery.

1933 (March 24)

Cleared of charges in connection with South Carolina bank robbery and released from jail.

1933 (June 10)

Again imprisoned in the New Hanover County, North Carolina, Stockade to serve a six-month sentence in connection with liquor charges, Yank Stewart escaped June 10, 1933.

1933-1935

On March 24, 1933, Yank Stewart was a free man in Wilmington, North Carolina. However, between that date and January 31, 1935, he apparently was imprisoned in both North Carolina (see the June 10, 1933, entry above) and Virginia. The 1 February 1935 edition of The Wilmington News reported his capture:

“Willie (Yank) Stewart, young but notorious Brunswick county man, was arrested with three companions at a house near Sixth and Meares streets [Wilmington, North Carolina] last night [January 31, 1935] by officers who later found two revolvers and an automatic concealed in the house. Stewart is a escapee from North Carolina and Virginia prisons, sheriff’s deputies said. They said he left six months of a term unexpired when he made his getaway in this state [North Carolina] and seven year unexpired when he escaped in Virginia.” If he had six months remaining he had served very little of the six-month North Carolina sentence. The Virginia sentence was for “car robbery.” After escaping from the Virginia prison he went to Florida where authorities sought him in connection with a “highway robbery.”

1935 (April 7)

After being captured as described immediately above, Stewart apparently was transferred to a North Carolina state prison near Goldsboro, North Carolina. He escaped in late March 1935. He was stopped by South Carolina patrolmen as he drove a stolen car but managed to evade escape by running into the woods, firing a gun as he went. That night, he went back to the jail and stole the car again!

1935 (April 9)

Stewart was captured again in a room in the Purcell House, 16 North Front Street, Wilmington, North Carolina, a lodging house, and charged with highway robbery and larceny of an automobile.

1935 (May 17)

Stewart was sentenced by Judge J. Paul Frizzelle, New Hanover Superior Court Judge, to a twelve-year sentence in Central Prison (Raleigh, North Carolina)⁹ for larceny of an automobile and robbery.

Apparently, Stewart was soon reassigned to a road gang because on July 24, 1937, he escaped from a North Carolina prison camp in Bryson City (Jackson County, North Carolina). He earlier had attempted to escape from the Caledonia prison camp but was thwarted when guards shot him. He recuperated in the prison hospital at Raleigh for months before he was able to be sent to a road camp again.

1937 (September 3)

Yank Stewart was captured in Washington, D. C. The September 3, 1937, article that appeared in *The Wilmington News* is a bit confusing as to his incarcerations and escapes, especially the purported 1932 escape from Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina:

“Stewart’s escapes date back to 1932 when he escaped from the state prison at Raleigh. He was arrested and imprisoned in Richmond, Va., escaped again and was re-arrested in Raleigh and escaped for the third time. His latest escape was made from the Jackson county prison camp July 24 [1937] while he was serving eight to ten years for highway robbery. He was sentenced May 13, 1935, in New Hanover Superior Court. When he completes his term in North Carolina, the state of Virginia has requested that he be turned over to Virginia authorities.”

1937-1948

What happened during this eleven-year period?

1948

Stewart finally completes original 15-month sentence.

⁹ Central Prison, completed in December 1884 for \$1.25 million, was the first prison built in North Carolina. It took inmates 14 years to construct the original castle-like structure, built with granite quarried just outside the prison's east wall. The prison is located on 29 acres of land, most of it enclosed by a double wire fence with razor ribbon on top, located west of downtown Raleigh.

1954

Stewart was out of prison, but was implicated in a series of robberies. After being arrested, he complained of stomach pain but, when deputies tried to take him to the hospital, he escaped and robbed a grocery store. Consequently, he was declared an outlaw. Later that same day he was captured.

Outlaw Starts Prison Term

WILMINGTON (UP) — Outlaw Charles W. (Yank) Stewart has begun the latest in a series of prison terms, a 25-year sentence for the \$4,000 robbery of a supermarket here.

He was sentenced by Judge Henry L. Stevens Jr in New Hanover County Superior Court Tuesday after pleading guilty to a highway robbery charge.

Stewart's stepson, Mickey Ramsey, 27, was placed on probation for five years for aiding and abetting in the robbery. Ramsey, who pleaded nolo contendere, claimed he was forced to drive the car Stewart used in his getaway.

Stewart was captured by a posse which followed the trail of blood he left behind as he fled from the Patricia Ann Supermarket on Sept. 4. He had cut his hand on some broken glass during the robbery and was weak from loss of blood when he was found.

The robbery occurred while Stewart was free after escaping from jail here while waiting trial as mastermind of a burglary ring which had broken into some 20 business establishments in southeastern North Carolina.

The ex-convict feigned illness and then drew a gun on two deputies who were transferring him from New Hanover jail to a hospital for treatment. He escaped with their weapons and a Sheriff's Department car.

He was declared an outlaw by Stevens on July 27. Under the proclamation of outlawry, any citizen has a right to call on an outlaw to surrender and kill him if he refuses.

Convicted of robbing a grocery store and sent to Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina, to serve a twenty-five-year sentence. After officers arrested him he feigned illness and held up two deputies on the way to the hospital, fleeing with their guns, money, and car.

Note that this 1954 newspaper article refers Yank Stewart's stepson, Mickey Ramsey, age 27. Thus, Stewart was (or had been) married to the mother of Mickey Ramsey, and was not her first husband.

Statesville Record & Landmark, 8 October 1954 (Statesville, North Carolina)
1959 (October 25)

In 1959, Yank Stewart and James Edward Christy escaped from Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina, by sawing their way out of a prison ward. They slid down a rope made of bed sheets, taking improvised ladders with them. The two ladders, taped together, were used to scale the eight-foot wall topped with four feet of barbed wire.

The Daily Times News, March 2, 1964 (Burlington, North Carolina):

Few Have Accomplished Feat
Central Prison Escape List Is Small One
By Reese Hart

Raleigh, N.C. (AP)

The thought of escape gnaws at many long-term inmates inside Central Prison here, but few have ever tried to break out.

Even fewer have accomplished it.

Not since Oct. 25, 1959, has an escape been engineered at the 30-year-old prison. In the pre-dawn hours of that day Charles (Yank) Stewart and James Edward Christy staged an incredible break over the high wall. But their freedom was short-lived.

Today, Stewart languishes in a maximum security cell. Christy works in one of the prison shops.

"Custody comes first with us, so escape is an ever present problem," said Warden K. B. Bailey. "We've been exceptionally fortunate that only a few escapes have occurred over the years. After all, the prison is not escape proof. The building is old. But we take every precaution to try to keep down any escape attempt."

The biggest break from the high-walled institution was staged on April 22, 1933, when nine long-termers made their way to temporary freedom through a 50-foot tunnel under the east wall. All were captured. In August, 1937, eight prisoners tunneled their way under a wall, only to be apprehended later.

The late Otto Wood, whose criminal exploits became a legend in the 1920s, escaped five times from Central Prison. In May, 1924, he and another prisoner obtained a gun and forced the foreman of a prison plant to drive them through the gate. On another occasion he hid inside a concrete pipe and rode to freedom in a freight car.

Wood, a one-armed killer, was slain in a gun battle with Police Chief R. L. Rankin in Salisbury on Dec. 31, 1930.

Stewart, regarded as the prison's "number one tough guy," is kept in a cell because of his ability to get out of prison. He has escaped seven times.

The slippery New Hanover native was returned to North Carolina last year after completing sentences at federal prisons in Atlanta and Alcatraz for crimes committed following his escape from Ivy Bluff Prison in Caswell County in December, 1959.

Stewart and Christy escaped from Central Prison in 1959 by sawing their way out of a prison ward. They slid down a rope made of bed sheets, taking improvised ladders with them. The two ladders, taped together, were used to scale the eight-foot wall topped with four feet of barbed wire.

"We're not taking any chances with him," Bailey said. "He's very belligerent and thinks everyone is against him. He is taken out of his cell two or three times a week and permitted to have exercise."

Stewart has sentences totaling 23 years to serve.

Weapons are an incentive to try to escape, Bailey said. To avoid this, guards frequently search the cellblocks.

"Once in a while we turn up a weapon, such as a homemade dagger," he said.

Bailey, who started as a guard at the prison in 1936 and was appointed warden in 1952, would like to see a new Central Prison built.

"The present building is outmoded and in a congested area not conducive to a prison," he explained. "When it was completed in 1874 this area was in the country. Our guard towers are manned with powerful 30-30 rifles. A wild shot from a tower during an attempted escape could be disastrous in such a thickly populated area. We could still use this prison, but we need a new one for maximum security inmates."

Convicts Were Lucky In Escaping

RALEIGH (AP)—Two convicts who skipped Central Prison this weekend had plenty of luck.

One of three guards fired for "gross custodial negligence" by Prisons Director William F. Bailey blamed a fogged window on his guard shack and improper alerting procedure by a fellow guardsman as contributing to the bold break.

W. H. Emory, 31, asked Tuesday for a hearing on his dismissal. He said he wasn't as concerned about getting his job back as he was with relating his side of the story.

Meanwhile, Charles W. (Yank) Stewart, 52, of Wilmington, and James Edward Christy, 26, of Concord, prisoners normally confined at the state's rocky quarry prison for incorrigibles at Ivey Bluff, still were being sought.

They climbed from a third-story hospital window using home-made rope, bolted across the prison yard and scaled an eight-foot wall topped by four feet of barbed wire, using bed ladders.

Emory admitted he should not have permitted fog, caused by a heater, to obstruct his vision through his guard house window. However, he placed most of the blame on T. V. Wilkins, another guard fired by Bailey, for alleged slowness in alerting him.

The Daily Times-News, 28 October 1959
Burlington, North Carolina

1959 (December)

Escaped from Ivy Bluff Prison, Blanche, North Carolina, which was called North Carolina's "little Alcatraz" and billed as escape-proof. "In 1959 Yank Stewart took 19 of the state's most hardened criminals through nine steel doors and past six guards to freedom from the state's 'little Alcatraz' maximum security prison at Ivy Bluff.

Purportedly, after the Ivy Bluff escape (and capture) Stewart spent federal stints at Leavenworth, Alcatraz (where he remained until the prison closed), and Lewisburg (where he had been before and now completed his federal sentence).

And Yank Stewart was the ring leader of the largest prison break in the history of North Carolina. After escaping from Central Prison in 1959 Stewart was transferred to a newly constructed maximum-security facility in Caswell County, North Carolina, Ivy Bluff Prison. This state-of-the art prison was described as "escape-proof"! Not only did Yank Stewart escape from Ivy Bluff Prison in December 1959, he took along nineteen of his inmate friends! So much for "escape-proof."

Escape From Southern Prison

20 Dangerous Convicts Loose

Take Rifles, Machinegun

YANCEYVILLE, N. C. (UPI) — Twenty convicts armed with pistols, rifles, and a sub-machine gun escaped early today from Ivy Bluff Prison Camp, North Carolina's maximum security unit for hard-core prisoners.

Leading the pack was Charles "Yank" Stewart, a long-term "troublemaker" who had been sent to Ivy Bluff only a few weeks before after sawing his way out of the infirmary at Central Prison in Raleigh.

Leading the pack was Charles "Yank" Stewart, a long-term "troublemaker" who had been sent to Ivy Bluff only a few weeks before after sawing his way out of the infirmary at Central Prison in Raleigh.

Stewart's father and brother were electrocuted in Raleigh in the 1920's for the murder of a policeman.

About 15 prisoners, also described by officials as "hardened criminals," chose to stay behind when the escapers threw open the prison gates with keys they had stolen from the guard's control room.

State Prison Director Col. William F. Bailey rushed to the camp from Raleigh, about 45 miles southeast of here, to investigate the escape which he termed "inexcusable."

WRECK ESCAPE CAR

The 20 prisoners, 15 white and 5 Negro, raced away from the camp shortly after midnight in a stolen prison truck and a guard's car. The car later was wrecked and all 20 piled onto the truck.

A statewide alert was broadcast about 6 a. m., when the escape was first reported.

The escape, apparently planned by Stewart, began in the camp's segregation unit. Stewart sawed a bar from his cell and called a guard, asking for tissue paper.

When the guard reached his cell Stewart grabbed him and threatened him with the bar.

Another prisoner broke out

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20 Convicts On Loose

(Continued From Page 1)

of his cell about the same time, prison officials said, and the two held the guard captive. They forced him to call the guard from the control room, asking for a relief.

GRABBED KEYS

When the control room custodian answered the call, the prisoners captured him also and then had complete freedom of the prison. They picked up a pistol and two rifles from the control room and grabbed keys to all of the cells.

But their path was still blocked by two guard towers outside the prison compound.

They pointed a pistol at the head of the guard from the control room and forced him to call the towers. He told guards there that he was sending out relief guards for midnight meals.

Two of the prisoners dressed as guards relieved the men in the tower and the stage was set for the flight.

The guards were rounded up and locked in the cells while the prisoners fled.

Prison officials said there were no injuries except for one of the guards who was knocked unconscious during the period when Stewart was trying to get the control room guard to his cell. The guard recovered consciousness and was not apparently hurt seriously

Prison Break's Leader Seized; 6 Still Hunted

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (AP)—Charles W. (Yank) Stewart, 52, described as the ringleader of Tuesday's escape of 20 men from North Carolina's Ivy Bluff Prison, was captured here early today after a high speed chase that resulted from a police officer's hunch.

The Wilmington, N.C., convict was nabbed when the car he was driving failed to make a curve at the north end of the Smith River bridge and flipped about 30 feet to the edge of the river.

Stewart's arrest left at large only six of the escapees. Two of them believed to have been with Stewart as late as Thursday are being sought in the Lynchburg-Roanoke, Va. area.

NO RESISTANCE

Before Stewart was caught, eight others had been taken into custody in Virginia, four in Ohio and one near the prison shortly after the mass break. None offered any resistance.

Yank Stewart was identified positively by State Police Sgt. J. H. Barnes after first giving the name of Woodrow Stewart. One of the escapees still at large is Woodrow Stewart, 38, of Boone, N.C.

He was driving south on U.S. 220 at the northern edge of Martinsville when Martinsville officer Roy Emerson decided to check on the car because it bore city tags from Roanoke, where a car had been reported stolen.

CAR PURSUED

When he ordered the car to stop, Emerson said the vehicle roared away. Emerson pursued the car through Martinsville and was joined by state and Henry County police.

Stewart jumped from the car after it crashed through the bridge and ran. He was captured by State Trooper J. E. Peverall and Henry County officer L. D. Witt. Barnes said Stewart was armed with a .38 caliber revolver.

He was taken under heavy guard to Martinsville General Hospital where attendants said he was not seriously hurt. He later was transferred to the Henry County jail here.

Yank Stewart was serving 23 years for armed robbery and storebreaking and recently was recaptured after staging a daring break over the walls of the State Prison in Raleigh, N.C.

Besides the two being sought in the Lynchburg - Roanoke area, three of those still at large were believed to be in the Arlington, Va. area where a stolen car was left and another vehicle taken.

Meanwhile in Columbus, Ohio, four of the convicts captured Wednesday were arraigned before a special U. S. commissioner yesterday.

Glen Hensley, 35, was held without bond because he is sentenced on a first-degree murder charge. Hensley and Leslie Gautier, 23, waived hearings before U. S. Commissioner Robert Newlon. They are charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

Grady F. Stone, 23, and Hilliard Inman, 24—charged with robbery and unlawful flight to avoid prosecution — will be given hearings Monday before Newlon.

Stone, Inman and Gautier were placed in custody of the U. S. Marshal and lodged in prison under \$25,000 bond.

All four also have been charged with interstate transportation of a stolen vehicle and violation of the federal firearms act.

Charleston Daily Mail, 11 December 1959

West Virginia Police Still Alert For Cons

West Virginia municipal police and state troopers today continued to maintain an alert for escapees from a North Carolina prison. Six remain at large.

Four prisoners of the 20 who escaped at Ivy Bluff, N. C., early Tuesday were captured Wednesday in Cambridge, Ohio, after burglarizing two stores and stealing an automobile in the Charleston area.

Police in this area became doubly observant of strangers when the four captured in Cambridge said they had separated from seven other escapees south of the Charleston area.

Charleston Daily Mail, 11 December 1959

1960-1962

Stewart apparently was in federal prison during this time, possible at Alcatraz. However, after the Ivy Bluff escape he purportedly also spent time federal time in Alcatraz, Atlanta, and Lewisburg. It appears that Lewisburg (Pennsylvania) was his last federal prison before being returned to Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina.

1962-1963

Yank Stewart reportedly was a prisoner at Alcatraz federal prison when it closed, which was June 1963. And, Alcatraz prison records show the following:

Prisoner Number: 1469
Name: Charles Stewart
Ethnicity: White
A. E.: N
Crime: Interstate Escape Risk

In the fall of 1962 began the relocation of Alcatraz prisoners. When Yank Stewart left the Rock is not known.

Most of the criminals serving time in Alcatraz were repeat offenders and had in fact committed crimes while in another prison. To some extent Alcatraz was the prison system's prison. Many of the prisoners on Alcatraz had also served time at Leavenworth Penitentiary (KS), Atlanta Penitentiary (GA), Florida State Penitentiary (FL), Lewisburg Penitentiary (PA), McNeil Island Prison (WA), San Quentin Prison (CA), and Terre Haute Prison (IN). Alcatraz had 336 cells each nine feet by five feet. There were three stories of cells consisting of Blocks B, C, and D. In D block there were six solitary confinement cells. Alcatraz averaged 250 prisoners at one time and contained a total of 1576 prisoners during its 29 years of business.

The daily activities of the prisoners on Alcatraz are definitely a point of interest. The activities (except for those in solitary) consisted of meals, exercise, and cell time. Those prisoners who were given special privileges were allowed to work. Those who worked either did laundry for the military or did hard labor outside. Alcatraz, of course, was a maximum security prison. The prisoners were kept distant from the outside world and were pretty uninformed. There was little recreation and radio allowed. There was absolutely no rehabilitation, professional counseling, or television.

Source: <http://www.scrappygraphics.com/Alcatraz/Prison/Prisoners/prisoners.html>

It became the place that all the country's rotten eggs were put.

Did Yank Stewart go from Alcatraz to North Carolina Central Prison? Apparently, Lewisburg (PA) was his last federal prison before being returned to North Carolina.

1963

The following is from *The Daily Times News* (Burlington, North Carolina) (October 5, 1963):

Remaining Escapee Is Apprehended. Raleigh (AP) -- The last of the 20 inmates who made their way out of Ivy Bluff prison on a bleak December day in 1959 is back in a North Carolina cell.

How long he will stay there nobody knows. The prisoner is Yank Stewart, one of the most daring escape artists in North Carolina prison history. After the Ivy Bluff escape, Stewart spent almost three years in a variety of federal prisons, including now-closed Alcatraz.

But Stewart returned on a sour note. Prisons Director George Randall said that Stewart "spit in the warden's face" in the Pennsylvania prison where he awaited transfer to North Carolina.

Earlier, according to Randall, guards found a knife in a bar of soap in his room. They also found a handcuff key hidden in his dentures.

But North Carolina prisons have never been too good at holding Stewart. He has escaped from them in six of his seven trips over the wall.

In 1963, Stewart was returned to Central Prison in Raleigh and surprised everyone by beginning a long period of good behavior. An appeal won him a new trial in Wilmington in 1966 and his original twenty-five years was cut to nine years, seven months.

1966

New trial on car theft and robbery resulted in sentence being reduced from twenty-five years to nine years, seven months. And, this eventually was reduced by an additional two years.

1968 (August)

Stewart first becomes eligible for parole.

1969 (April)

Stewart, after spending 36 years behind bars and after escaping at least thirty times, is given a parole review. Moved from Central Prison to the Columbus County unit after being stabbed by another inmate.

1970

Paroled and continued on work release in New Hanover County, North Carolina.

1971 (July 19)

On July 19, 1971, Yank Stewart became a free man. Earlier he had been placed on work release.

“Stewart is probably best known in the state for leading a prison break from the maximum security prison unit at Ivey Bluff Prison in Caswell County. The break made headlines over North Carolina, and was the first – and probably only – escape from the maximum security facility.” *Wilmington Star-News*, July 20, 1971.

1976

North Carolina outlaw law declared unconstitutional by federal court. Yank Stewart interviewed by the *Wilmington Star-News*.

1981

Yank Stewart, 78, makes the newspapers again in connection with a shooting. Stewart claimed that someone shot him with a shotgun.

1985

October 1, 1985, Yank Stewart dies.

Central Prison (Raleigh, North Carolina)

Central Prison, completed in December 1884 for \$1.25 million, was the first prison built in North Carolina.¹⁰ It took inmates 14 years to construct the original castle-like structure, built with granite quarried just outside the prison's east wall. The prison is located on 29 acres of land, most of it enclosed by a double wire fence with razor ribbon on top, located west of downtown Raleigh.



The original structure has undergone significant change. In the 1940's, the three-story prison industries building was constructed to house the state license plate fabrication operation and a complete print shop. In the 1960's, an acute care infirmary hospital opened with wards for 86 patients, operating rooms, X-Ray laboratories and a pharmacy. The infirmary now operates a mobile surgical unit for same-day-surgery. In the 1970's, two mental health wings were constructed with a total of 144 single bed rooms.

Central Prison - circa 1900
NC Division of Archives and History

The prison underwent major renovations in the 1980's. During the \$28.8 million first phase of construction, a maximum security housing building with 384 single cells, a custody control and administration building, central services building and central plant utility systems were built. In the \$8.6 million second phase of construction, the three-story working resident building was built with single cells for 192 inmates who are assigned jobs within the confines of the prison.

A central security corridor runs the entire length of the institution. All facilities are connected to this corridor that has control stations and sally ports to control access along the corridor and into each building.

¹⁰ In 1868, North Carolina adopted a new State Constitution that provided for building a state penitentiary. Inmates began building the state's first prison, Central Prison, in 1870 and moved into the completed castle-like structure in December 1884. In 1881, the state leased two tracts of land near Raleigh for inmates to farm. State law 379 enacted in 1885 provided for the allowance of good time as an incentive for inmate cooperation.

The prison serves many functions. It houses the state's execution chamber, deathwatch area and men's death row. The infirmary and mental health facility serve the needs of male inmates from around the state. It also serves as a diagnostic center, the point of entry into the prison system for male felons, age 22 years or older, with sentences greater than 20 years.

While security requires that certain inmates remain in their cells, there are more than 260 inmate job assignments to include working in the kitchen, laundry or canteen. Inmates also work as barbers, janitors and clerks.



Classes for adult education and preparation for the GED tests are offered. Inmates may also participate in correspondence college courses or classes offered by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Inmates can attend substance abuse group therapy meetings, play team sports and attend Bible studies or worship services.

Caledonia Correctional Institute (Halifax County, North Carolina)



Caledonia Correctional Institution is located in Halifax County on approximately 7,500 acres that was purchased by the state in 1899. It has been operated since 1892 as the state prison farm.

With the intent of putting inmates to work, the General Assembly leased the Caledonia farm in 1890. Nine years later, the property was purchased for \$61,000. Roanoke River flooding damaged the farm in 1901 and 1902. In

1919, the prison farm was auctioned in parcels for a total of \$497,000. The auction raised little cash since most of the land was purchased on credit.

Flooding problems continued to plague the area and practically the entire farm was repossessed by the state within five years of the auction. About 600 inmates were returned to

the prison and housed in temporary wooden shacks. They worked to ditch and clear the land for farming. In 1925 construction began on a brick dormitory. Inmates moved into the building in 1927. Heat and hot water were provided the inmates in 1929.

Caledonia's main building originally housed men and women. Eight dormitories downstairs housed men and two dormitories upstairs housed women. Today the dorms house medium custody adult male inmates.

In 1976, 144 additional cells were built. These cells currently house medium custody adult male inmates. Another 144 cells built in 1980 are used today to house medium custody inmates. The prison also has buildings for vocational classes and recreation.

Halifax Community College works with the prison to provide vocational classes like cook school, block masonry, facility services and small engine repair. Inmates may participate in classes for adult education and preparation for the GED tests. Inmates may also take part in self-help programs on substance abuse, stress, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, DART aftercare, minimum custody readiness and self-improvement.

About 5,500 acres of farmland are under cultivation at Caledonia. Correction Enterprises manages the farm which contains cattle, chickens and row crops such as corn, wheat, cotton and soybeans. In addition, the inmates farm 300 acres of vegetables like tomatoes, sweet corn, collard greens, sweet potatoes, squash, cucumbers and melons. During the off-season, fresh vegetables are grown in green houses. One hundred close custody inmates from Caledonia and 200 minimum custody inmates from nearby Tillery Correctional Center work on the farm daily.

Inmates also work in the prison's cannery. The cannery processes and cans crops grown on the farm for distribution to prison kitchens across the state. It is 12,770 square feet and has the capability of canning about 500,000 gallons of commodities per year. Inmates may also work as janitors or kitchen help.

Caledonia houses many long-term offenders and inmates who have difficulty adjusting to incarceration. Correction staff work to maintain security while preparing inmates for their eventual move to another prison.

DIRECTIONS - Take I-95 north to Halifax County and exit onto N.C. 481. Take N.C. 481 for about 18 miles through Enfield to Tillery. At Tillery, take county road 1141 and drive past Tillery Correctional Center to Caledonia Correctional Institution 4.5 miles northeast of town.

New Hanover County Stockade (North Carolina)

As of 1918 and apparently when Yank Stewart first ran afoul of the law in 1925, New Hanover County, North Carolina, had an institution known as the County Stockade, which was really a prison for men and women, described as follows:

It is a concrete structure of the most repellent old style penal type, located in the country some four miles from Wilmington. No white boys have been sent there since the Stonewall Jackson Training School has been available, but we found 6 colored boys and 2 colored girls present on June 6th, 1918. They were all committed from the Recorder's (or Juvenile) Court, the court order reading, "Paroled to F. J. Dempsey." F. J. Dempsey is superintendent of the County Farm which adjoins the County Stockade, but the children paroled to him are with a few exceptions lodged and fed at the Stockade. They work during the day, however, under Mr. Dempsey's direction on the farm, apart from the adult prisoners.

Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania)



The Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary is a high security prison housing male inmates in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. An adjacent satellite prison camp houses minimum security male offenders. The Lewisburg Penitentiary was opened in 1932. USP Lewisburg is located in central Pennsylvania, 200 miles north of Washington, DC and 170 miles west of Philadelphia.

Atlanta Federal Penitentiary (Atlanta, Georgia)



The United States Penitentiary (USP) in Atlanta, Georgia, houses high security male inmates and has a detention center for pre-trial and holdover inmates and a satellite camp for minimum security male inmates.

The USP is located in southeast Atlanta at the junction of Boulevard and McDonough Boulevard.

Atlanta Federal Penitentiary is a high-security prison for men in Atlanta, Georgia. For many years it has been a notorious part of the U.S. federal prison system. It also has a detention

center for pre-trial and holdover inmates and a camp for minimum security male inmates. The prison is located in southeast Atlanta at the junction of Boulevard and McDonough Boulevard. Its population as of July 6, 2006 is 1909 in the penitentiary and 554 in the camp.

The first residents of the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary arrived in 1902. They were the beneficiaries of the Three Prisons Act of 1891, which established penitentiaries in Leavenworth, Kansas; Atlanta, Georgia; and McNeil Island, Washington. All three facilities remain open today. The Atlanta site is the largest Federal prison, with a capacity of 3000 inmates.

Bellevue Cemetery (Wilmington, North Carolina)

There are 4 different books that cover Bellevue Cemetery which began in 1879 as a private cemetery company. Some of the following compilations are taken from stones, some from the registers, and some include both. It is wise to check all of the volumes. *Burial Records of Bellevue Cemetery, Wilmington, N.C.* compiled by Jeff and Susan Phillips (Call number NC 929.375627 B). *Register of Deaths and Burials, Bellevue Cemetery Company, July 1876 - May 1988*, (Call number NC 929.375627 B) an Eagle Scout project, led by Jonathan T. Rowell of Boy Scout Troop 215. *Bellevue Cemetery, Wilmington, North Carolina, A Directory of Grave Sites*, a photocopy of an old hand written listing. *Lower Cape Fear Gravestone Records, Vol. III (Bellevue Cemetery, Wilmington, North Carolina)*, by Ida Brooks Killam. (Call number NC 929.37562 M).

Miscellaneous Notes

The Stewart still (moonshine camp), the protection of which resulted in murder, purportedly was eight miles downriver from Wilmington. Star 2 August 1924.

A 22 February 1992 Wilmington Star article stated that Willie Stewart was a member of the crew of the *Medoc*, purportedly a Coast Guard cutter. This has not been confirmed.

In 1925 Stewart apparently had an aunt in Roanoke, Virginia (paternal or maternal unknown).

Stewart apparently served time in a Chillicothe federal prison, but the location of this facility is unknown.

STEWART AND SON. ARE SENTENCED TO ELECTRIC CHAIR

**C. W. and Elmer Stewart Must
Die For Murder of Detective
and Deputy United States
Marshall**

By The Associated Press

Southport, N. C., Oct. 13.—In the quiet and calm of a beautiful Sabbath afternoon, C. W. Stewart and his son, Elmer, today heard the solemn words of Judge Henry A. Grady that sentenced them to die in the electric chair on November 28 for the murder on July 29 last, of Detective Sergeant Leon George and Deputy U. S. Marshall Sam Lilly.

The verdict of the jury finding the father and son guilty of murder in the first degree with a recommendation for mercy was returned at 8:30 this morning, and received by the court thirty minutes later.

The elder Stewart heard the words of his doom with an air of resignation, but Elmer forgot for the once his sardonic smile of supreme indifference and his ruddy face turned aside for the moment. He quickly recovered his composure and the old smile returned.

Mrs. Nerring, widowed daughter of C. W. Stewart, who has sat by the side of her father for the two weeks of the trial burst into a flood of tears as she heard the verdict of the jury, and threw her arms about the neck of her parent.

Sentence was formally pronounced a few minutes after 3 o'clock this afternoon, Judge Grady delivering an impassioned address to the prisoners before uttering the words that numbered their days.

"No as you come to the end of your journey," the court said in a voice that quivered with emotion he could not suppress "your sole comfort rests with that God whom you seem to have forgotten."

Overrules Motion

The court overruled the defense motion to set aside the verdict and order a new trial, and likewise nipped the maneuver to restore sentence in that the verdict as returned by the jury did not represent the findings of the members thereof.

The defense also registered objection to the wording of the verdict which in the language of the foreman was "we find the defendants guilty of murder in first degree with the mercy of the court."

The contention was waived aside by the court without argument.

The notice of appeal to the supreme court for a new trial was voiced by David Sinclair, youngest of the defense attorneys, and Judge Grady gave the defense sixty days in which to file exceptions. This appeal automatically stays execution of the defendants on the day named by the court, and assures them of immunity from death by the state until February, as the supreme court will have adjourned the present session before the expiration of 120 days allowed for the filing of exceptions by the defense and the reply by the state.

It was exactly 8:30 this morning when the bell in the courthouse tower clanged upon the stillness of a still sleeping city, bearing the tidings that the fate of the Stewarts had been finally sealed.

File Into Box

It was 30 minutes later, however before Judge Grady arrived, and the jurors, solemn of mien, filed slowly into the box.

There was a moment of intense silence, the clerk of the court inquired:

Mr. Foreman, and gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon a verdict?

"We have," was the response of the foreman. "And what is that verdict?" "Guilty of murder in the first degree with the mercy of the court."

Again that moment of tense silence, and the clerk again found his voice.

"So say you one and all."

There was a chorus of "yes." The defense then moved for a poll of the jury, which was taken, and each of the 12 answered to his name.

Taken to Raleigh

By The Associated Press

Southport, Oct. 13.—C. W. Stewart and his son, Elmer, today sentenced to death in November 28 for the murder of Detective Sergeant Leon George and Deputy Marshall Sam Lilly, stated their journey toward the death chair late this afternoon, when they were taken by motor to Raleigh.

The prisoners were in the custody of Sheriff F. L. Lewis and his deputies.

The Kingsport Times
(Kingsport, Tennessee), 13
October 1924

THREE HELD AT SOUTHPORT.

Elmer Stuart, Jack Ramsey and Linwood Tindall Arrested In Connection With Slaying of Two Prohibition Officers In Brunswick County.

Wilmington, July 31.—Bullets found in the bodies of Deputy United States Marshal Samuel Lilly and city prohibition officer, Leon George, who were shot to death near Phoenix Tuesday, fit empty shells found in the automobile of Elmer Stewart at his home in Brunswick county, officials announced here today after an autopsy on the bodies. Stewart and Jack Ramsey, under arrest as suspects, are in the Southport jail. Linwood Tindall, also held in connection with the case, is in jail here.

The officials said that not only did the bullets taken from the bodies of the slain men fit the empty shells in Stewart's car but they corresponded with unfired shells found in the car. They said that they expected to arrest two more suspects.

Rewards for the arrest and conviction of the slayers now total \$900 with the State expected to add \$400 to this sum.

The body of George will be buried here late today with the services under the auspices of the local police department. The body of Lilly will be taken to New Bern today for burial.

Solicitor Woodus Kellum today said that he believed the authorities were on the right trail and predicted conclusive developments soon. Officials were unanimous today in expressing the belief that the two officers, who had been active in prohibition cases, were lured to the Brunswick county swamp by a false tip regarding a still and then slain from ambush.

Wilmington, July 30. — With the arrest late tonight of Linwood Tindall, brother of Deputy Sheriff Louis Tindall, of New Hanover county, charged with being an accessory before the fact to the murder of Officer Leon George and Deputy United States Marshal Sam Lilly last night, police officials expressed the belief that they have apprehended three of the leaders of a bootleg ring they blame for the killing of the two officers.

Tindall was arrested at his home in this city by Detective A. A. Nelms, of the local police department. He will be transferred to Brunswick jail tomorrow.

Evidence gathered today by local police and county officers, they say indicates that George and Lilly were the victims of a bootleg ring, for which Tindall was the alleged spotter, and Elmer Stuart and Jack Ramsey, arrested earlier in the day near Phoenix, two of the actual leaders.

The Landmark (Statesville, North Carolina),
31 July 1924

Southport, July 30. — Elmer Stuart and Jack Ramsey, white, were placed in jail here late this afternoon charged with the murder of Prohibition Agent Leon George and Deputy United States Marshal Sam Lilly near Phoenix early last night. They were held without bail. Stuart and Ramsey were arrested by a posse at Phoenix, led by Sheriff Jackson, of New Hanover county, Sheriff Lewis, of Brunswick county, and Chief of Police Lane, of Wilmington.

The two prisoners are mere youths, neither being more than 22 years of age.

Suspicion centered on Stuart early this morning when empty shells were found in an automobile parked near the Stuart home. Repeated visits by members of the posse to the home failed to disclose the whereabouts of any male member of the family, Mrs. Stuart, mother of Elmer, saying that her husband and sons were frequently absent for many hours.

This afternoon the officers received a report that Elmer Stuart and Jack Ramsey were en route to the former's home in a motor truck, and they immediately deployed their posses so as to approach the house from all directions.

Just as Sheriff Jackson and Sheriff Lewis reached the front of the Stuart home, Stuart and Ramsey drove up, young Stuart voicing a friendly greeting to the officers, and extending his hand to Sheriff Jackson. Sheriff Lewis at once placed both men under arrest and charged them with the murder of George and Lilly.

Stuart protested his innocence and admitted, officers say, that he had been engaged the entire night previous in making whiskey. Ramsey claimed to have been with Stuart.

Anthony Stuart, younger brother of Elmer, arrived on the scene a few moments later and was questioned by officers but allowed to go.

The situation here is quiet, there being no evidence of violence or excitement on the part of the populace.

Officers today were informed that George and Lilly were lured into Brunswick county from Wilmington by a telephone message telling them that if they would come to a certain point near Phoenix, they would be led to a still.

Authorities are seeking to trace this call.

The Landmark (Statesville, North Carolina), 31 July 1924

Stewart Suffering From Wounds Given In Prison

RALEIGH (AP)—Prison escape artist Charles "Yank" Stewart was recovering in North Carolina's Central Prison Hospital today from four stab wounds inflicted by a fellow prisoner.

Stewart's condition was described as critical Saturday night, but Central Prison Administrator David Henry said Sunday he had showed marked improvement although his condition was still serious.

Meanwhile, Commissioner of Correction Lee Bounds said charges would be brought against Edgar Welborne, 25, of Greensboro and James Gentry, 39, of Hubert, as a result of the stabbing.

Bounds said Welborne assaulted Stewart in the main cellblock of Central Prison, first hitting him over the head with an iron bar and then stabbing him with a prison made knife. Bounds said that Welborne, who is serving prison terms for several offenses, gave the knife to Gentry who hid it in a heating unit. Both Welborne and Gentry were placed in solitary confinement while the incident is being investigated.

"We are still trying to determine what precipitated it (the attack) and what we should do about it," Bounds said.

Stewart, 62-year-old New Hanover County native, who has spent most of his life in prison and had escaped seven times, currently is serving nine years for robbery with a dangerous weapon.

He is credited with being the master mind of the famed Ivy Bluff Prison break in 1959. Twenty prisoners escaped from

the facility.

Stewart was returned to North Carolina in 1963 after serving time in federal prisons for offenses committed while he was a fugitive.

"He has been a good prisoner since we got him in October, 1963," said Bounds.

Burlington (N.C.) Times-News, 5 February 1968

Stewart Surrenders in Brunswick County.

Wilmington, Aug. 1.—C. W. Stewart, fourth man sought in connection with the slaying of Officer Leon George and Deputy United States Marshal Sam Lilly Tuesday, surrendered to Hoyt Kennedy, a Phoenix county merchant, this afternoon.

Stewart was turned over to Sheriff Lewis, of Brunswick county, and carried to jail at Southport.

Immediately after his arrest, Elmer Stewart, his son, and Jack Ramsey, arrested Wednesday in connection with the killing, were removed from the Southport jail to the city prison at Wilmington. The Stewarts, Ramsey and Linwood Tindall, the latter held as an accessory to the murder, will be given a preliminary hearing at Southport Wednesday morning.

Incensed at the slaying of Officer George and Deputy Marshal Lilly, armed posses of Brunswick citizens today toured the county warning suspected bootleggers to cease operations or quit the county, according to information received here tonight from I. D. Harrelson, of Winabow. The action followed a mass meeting last night in which a law and order league was formed, Mr. Harrelson said.

The Landmark (Statesville, North Carolina), 4 August 1924

Note that Charles Willis Stewart, Jr., the youngest son of C. W.

Stewart, eventually had a stepson named Mickey Ramsey. Query the relationship *vel non* between Jack Ramsey and Mickey Ramsey. Was Jack Ramsey the brother of Mickey Ramsey?

FATHER AND SON EXPLATE CRIMES IN DEATH CHAIR

*The Galveston Daily News, 18
April 1925*

By Associated Press.

Raleigh, N. C., April 17.—A double execution, that of a father and a son, took place at the state prison today when C. W. Stewart, 51 years old, and Elmer Stewart, 23 years old, confessed murderers of Deputy United States Marshal Samuel Lilly and Leon George, died in the electric chair.

The father was the first to die. Three shocks were required before the prison physicians pronounced him dead.

Ten minutes later the son entered the room.

As he was bound in the chair he spoke to the guards: "Take your time, boys. I'm in no hurry."

Father and Son Pay With Lives for Murder

(By Associated Press)

Raleigh, N. C., April 17.—Charles W. Stewart, 51, and Elmer Stewart, 23, his son, were electrocuted today for a double murder last year. The father was led to the chair first.

The two men were sentenced for the murder of Sam Lily, a United States deputy marshal, and Deputy Sheriff L. George while the officers were searching for prohibition violators.

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune, 17 April 1925.

3 N. C. Fugitives Remain at Large

IVY BLUFF, N. C. — (A) — Only three fugitives — two of them bearing distinctive identifying marks — remained at large Saturday five days after they and 17 other felons cracked North Carolina's tough Ivy Bluff prison.

Also missing are 10 of the 22 prison weapons taken in the spectacular escape Tuesday. The weapons include a sub-machine-gun, six revolvers and three rifles.

Three convicts were captured Friday night in Harlan, Ky., when, like rats in a maze, they became lost and drove their stolen car in circles, attracting attention of the police. The three were Wiley Cummings, 35; John R. Kilbourne, 31; and Johnny Lee Miller, 27.

"Their big mistake," said Kentucky State Police Sgt. James Cox, "was getting onto the wrong highway and coming here. This is a mighty easy town to get lost in at night if you're a stranger."

Still free were James Cleveland McNeill, 28; Willie Bradford Shaw, 30; and Woodrow Stewart, 36.

The FBI said that Shaw, a 6-foot, 210-235 pound life termier, has a five-inch scar from the corner of his mouth to his left ear. Stewart, who was serving 18-20 years for highway robbery, has an irregularly shaped burn scar from the center of his head to his right ear. No hair grows on the scar. Stewart is 5-9 and weighs about 140 pounds. McNeill, serving 15 years for assault, housebreaking and escape, is 5-11 and weighs 165.

At Martinsville, Va., Saturday, Charles W. (Yank) Stewart, the 52-year-old escape artist described as the mastermind of the prison break, pleaded guilty to a federal charge of auto theft. He was held in lieu of \$50,000 bond for the February term of federal court at Danville.

Sunday Gazette-Mail (Charleston, West Virginia), 13 December 1959

"I'LL PLEAD GUILTY because I want to go to a federal court," Stewart told U. S. Commissioner English Ford.

"They'll treat you good in a federal penitentiary."

Stewart, who is not related to Woodrow Stewart, has broken jail six times during a criminal career that began after North Carolina executed his father and brother in 1925 for murdering a probation officer.

Yank Stewart complained to newsmen about conditions at the Ivy Bluff camp, a rock quarry where discipline is rigid and living conditions spartan. He said he had been two years in soli-

tary confinement there and added:

"I didn't do nothing. They're just mean."

His last previous escape was from the central prison infirmary at Raleigh, where he had been transferred from Ivy Bluff after he mutilated himself by slamming a cell door on his hand.

McNeill and Shaw also were among the group of Ivy Bluff inmates convicted of self-mutilation. Shaw cut off the little finger on his left hand and McNeill broke his left foot. The prisoners claimed they injured themselves to attract attention to conditions at the prison camp, the Alcatraz of North Carolina prisons.

Investigations by two state agencies and a Charlotte newspaper — The Observer — did not turn up any instances of brutality at the camp. But a grand jury has been ordered to investigate conditions there.

Guilford County Officers Seize Prison Escapee

GREENSBORO 17—Guilford County sheriff's deputies early today captured Charles W. Yank Stewart, 52, of Wilmington, who escaped Oct. 25 from Central Prison in Raleigh.

Burlington (N.C.) Daily Times-News,
4 November 1959

Later, they were still searching for a second man believed to be James Edward Christy, 26, of Concord, who also escaped from Central Prison on the same date.

Deputies E. R. Phipps and A. H. Caviness were patrolling near the intersection of highway 153 and highway 220 north, about 15 miles from Greensboro, when they noticed a 1969 model car parked at a service station with the motor running. One man ran from the building into some woods nearby. Deputies obtained bloodhounds from Prison Camp No. 1 and followed the man in the woods and back to the highway, but they lost the trail.

Phipps and Caviness returned to the service station, and were

joined by Chief Deputy G. T. Jones.

In checking, they found Stewart on top of the air conditioning ducts inside the station. Jones talked Stewart into coming down to the floor after first firing a warning shot at him.

Stewart, who was armed with a .32 caliber automatic, first said his name was Williamson. He then admitted he was Stewart, officers said. However, he would not admit that the other man was Christy.

Stewart said the car they had been driving was stolen in Roanoke.

Stewart was serving a 25-year prison sentence for armed robbery and two counts of highway robbery. He entered prison in October, 1954, from New Hanover Superior Court.

Christy was sentenced to 19 to 25 years from Mecklenburg for manslaughter, breaking and entering, and larceny. He entered prison in April, 1953.

Escapees Given Varying Sentences In Prison Break

ROANOKE (AP) — Eight of the prisoners who staged a spectacular break last month from the Ivy Bluff, N. C., prison were given varying sentences Wednesday in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta.

Federal Judge Ted Dalton handed out five-year terms to six of the men and four-year sentences to the other two on charges that included transportation of stolen cars and firearms across state lines.

Through court-appointed attorneys, the eight requested the maximum sentences to avoid returning to Ivy Bluff. In a statement entered in court records, they said they were treated at Ivy Bluff like "dogs in a snake pit of mistreatment."

The case of a ninth prisoner, Charles (Yank) Stewart, 52, of Wilmington, N. C. — alleged ring-leader of the break—was postponed until next week after he was assigned a court-appointed attorney.

Given five - year terms in Atlanta were:

Douglas Ray Anderson, 24, of Atlanta; James W. Strickland, 31, of Columbia, S. C.; William M. Vaughn, 39, of Halifax County, Va.; John R. Kilbourne Jr., 34, of Winston-Salem, N. C.; John Lee Miller, 26, of Albemarle, N. C.; and Wylie Frank Cummings Jr., 34, of Winston-Salem.

Judge Dalton gave four-year terms to James Edward Christy, 26, of Concord, N. C., and Ralph Douglas Byers, 27, of Winston-Salem.

The nine men had been indicted Monday by a U. S. District Court grand jury in Lynchburg. The eight sentenced today all pleaded guilty to the charges against them.

Kingsport News, 14 January 1960

Armed Cons Flee Prison

**Long-Term 'Troublemaker'
Leads Felons on Break;
Guards Locked in Cells**

YANCEYVILLE, N.C., Dec 8
---(APD)---Twenty hard-core convicts fled Ivy Bluff maximum security prison early today when four convict leaders sawed their way out of isolation cells and overpowered guards.

The prisoners took 17 weapons, including a sub-machine gun, with them after locking the entire prison complement in the cells the prisoners had escaped from. Seventeen of the prison's 37 prisoners chose to stay behind although all could have escaped.

The prisoners fled in a prison truck and a guard's car but were believed to have stolen two cars before heading for the Virginia state line only a few miles north of here. The FBI announced in Washington it was sending agents in to work on the case.

BREAK LEADER

Leading the break was Charles (Yank) Stewart, a long-term "trouble-maker" who had been returned to Ivy Bluff only a few weeks earlier after an escape from the infirmary at Central Prison in Raleigh.

With Stewart today was James Edward Christy, his companion in the Raleigh escape in October.

The escape was well planned and was made possible by a hacksaw blade or blades that enabled Stewart, Christy and two other prisoners to saw two bars off each of their cells and set up the mousetrap that snared unwitting guards.

Stewart led a band that included six life-termers, two convicted of burglary, two of murder, one of kidnaping and one of rape. All were described as hardened criminals, misfits who could not be housed in the state's other prison units.