

SESQUICENTENNIAL HIGHLIGHTS



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Excerpts from the Plain Talk

By Cleo Erickson  
1933

**OMAHA EX-CONVICTS  
SUSPECTED OF  
VERMILLION BANK  
ROBBERY**

\$2,799 Cash Obtained by  
Quartet From Citizens  
Bank Monday  
TRIO KIDNAPED  
Is First Stickup in  
Sixty Years of Banking  
History Here

The first bank holdup in Vermillion's 60 years of banking history occurred here Monday afternoon at 2:20 when four unmasked, youthful bandits carrying sawed-off shotguns strolled into the Citizens' Bank

& Trust Co. and escaped a few minutes later with nearly \$2,800.00.

Indications are the holdup was perpetrated by a group of Omaha ex-convicts. Talking with several local men Monday night, Sioux City's Chief of Detectives Green said the descriptions of the bandits who did the job here tally with those of an Omaha gang. Efforts will be made to have local persons who saw the bandits view police photos of the Omaha suspects.

Some sort of identification may result from photos of fingerprints taken at the bank Tuesday night by D. V. Baker, of the Merchant's Mutual Alliance, of Sioux Falls. Those who went to Sioux City to look at the rogue's gallery Monday were Chief of Police Fowler, Lawrence Huetson, an old station attendant who sold gas to the bandits just before the robbery, C. T. Bolstad, who was in the bank at the time of the holdup, and George Russell, who has been assisting his brother, William Russell, in the sheriff's office. Examination of the Sioux City rogue's gallery was futile.

**THREE "KIDNAPED"**

A temporary kidnapping of three of the bank's officials featured the holdup. After the men had gathered up the loot, the bank president, M. J. Chaney, and the two assistant cashiers, Miss Maud Sloan and Lester Lloyd, were taken along in the bandits' car as protection. They were released without harm in front of the Episcopal Church on Dakota street.

This holdup was so neatly and quietly performed that pedestrians chatting near the bank did not notice anything unusual until it was all over with. Rev. W. C. Deer, pastor of the Baptist church, walked in front of the bank while the holdup was in progress, glanced in the window and saw nothing to arouse his curiosity; in fact, he went on into the bank to look for C. E. Prentiss.

Across the street, standing in the Gunderson Hardware store, a Standard Oil Co. representative saw the bandits enter the bank and leave a short time later with their hostages, but his curiosity was not aroused until a crowd

began to gather. In this same store, his attention diverted elsewhere, was Morris Chaney, cashier of the bank.

**NEATLY GARBED**

The bandits, all neatly dressed and wearing long overcoats, under which they concealed their "artillery", nonchalantly entered the bank's front door a step or two behind Plain Talk's editor, Mr. Bolstad. Having almost shut the door in their faces, Bolstad turned about, said: "Pardon me." Before he knew what was happening, one of the bandits was escorting him towards the customer's room in the rear.

Two of the three bandits up front then leaned against the counter with the noses of their guns barely showing.

"Shhh!" said one of them. Lester Lloyd, who, with Miss Sloan, was the only one behind the counter, looked up and started to arise from his desk, saying: "Beg pardon?"

"Shhh!" again cautioned one of the bandits. A swear word or two and then: "This is serious! This is a stickup!"

In a flash the two men at

the counter were behind the counter, one leaping over and the other hurrying around a front opening. The third man remained just inside the front door.

In the customer's room into which Bolstad had been hurried were the bank's president, Mr. Chaney, and a Greenfield farmer, A. D. Erickson, with whom he was conferring. The lone bandit lined these three men near the wall and told them to keep still.

In the meantime the two bandits behind the counter were busy searching counter drawers. Miss Sloan was commanded to lie on the floor and Lloyd was taken into the bank vault to help round up money.

**WAS UNSUSPECTING**

While the lone bandit was behind the counter, Rev. Deer passed by and looked in. He saw the strange man behind the counter, but thought it might be a bank official from outside of town. The bandit behind the counter whispered to the bandit near the front door: "Bring that fellow in here." Just then Rev. Deer

turned, entered the bank. He started to put his hands on the counter when the bandit by the door, who had escaped Rev. Deer's notice, said "Keep your hands down!"

Thinking someone was kidding him; Rev. Deer looked at the young man and smiled. The bandit then held open his coat and pointed to a sawed-off shotgun hanging inside. Following instructions, Rev. Deer hurried to the customer's room and was lined up beside Bolstad, Chaney and Erickson.

The thug who had rushed Lloyd into the vault learned, much to his surprise, the inside safe was locked. Lloyd explained, he could not open this safe as it was on time lock.

"He's lying" said a bandit outside the vault. "Bump him off!"

Another of the bandits turned to Chaney and asked him about the safe. He simply shook his head. Asked about the lower part of the safe, Lloyd said he could open that and did. In it was several hundred dollars in silver which was dumped into sack procured by Lloyd.

*Continued next week.*



**Meeting the senator**

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) meets with students from Irene-Wakonda School. The students were in Washington, DC for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. The organization promotes personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences education. Pictured with Sen. Johnson (from left to right): Teacher Joni Lowe, Ashleigh Schroeder, Krysta Erickson, Ashley Oien, Taylor Lyso, Karli Rye and Jamie Healy.

**Wakonda Thanksgiving Service set for Nov. 25**

The Wakonda Community Thanksgiving Service will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church, rural Wakonda. Pastor Elaine Miller of the Wakonda United Church of Christ, Congregational will bring the message that evening.

A community choir, under the direction of Ruth Williams, will present a special musical number during the worship. All who would like to add their voice to the choir are invited to arrive for a 6:30 p.m. rehearsal at the church.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

**Labor Department prepared for extended unemployment benefits**

The South Dakota Department of Labor (DOL) is prepared to assist unemployment claimants in receiving 14 additional weeks of benefits. Last Friday, President Obama signed the legislation passed by Congress to extend unemployment benefits for jobless Americans.

DOL's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division will directly notify all claimants who have exhausted their claims. Those claimants will

need to contact the UI Call Center at 605.626.3179 to reinstate their claims.

Applicants still claiming benefits will be notified by the UI Division when those benefits are exhausted. They can then contact the Call Center for the extension. There will be no waiting week.

Eligibility to start new extended unemployment

compensation claims will end Dec. 26, 2009. Workers who exhaust their regular claims after that date will not be eligible unless Congress acts to extend the program.

If claimants have questions, they should call the UI Benefits Section at 605.626.2452. Information is also available at www.sdjobs.org

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