

The Standard Democrat
Friday, February 23, 1934

Robbers of Local Bank In Custody

**Recover Over Half of Loot of \$6,000 Wheaton
Youths Get From Bank of Burlington**

Two Wheaton, Ill., youths, Frank Barton, 20 years old, and Stanford Alexander, 19 years old, who confessed robbing the Bank of Burlington of Burlington of over \$6,000 last Thursday afternoon were arrested at their homes last Friday afternoon about 12:30 o'clock. Their companion, Frank Brundage, 19 years old, also of Wheaton, was arrested about 6 o'clock that night at his home. He also admitted his part in the robbery.

Clues leading to the arrest of the amateur robbers within thirty-six hours after they fled from Burlington in a stolen Nash automobile headed south on Highway 83, piled up in rapid succession. Events were climaxed with the tragic killing of a Chicago taxicab driver at 5 a.m. Friday, after he had displayed a roll of \$250 which told his friends a drunken bank robber had given him as a tip for driving him to Wheaton earlier that night.

The men were take into custody by DuPage county authorities at Wheaton after being identified as the Bank of Burlington robbers by Henry Heidermann who faced the gun of one of the robbers in the bank Thursday and Hubert Sieker who also saw the men at close range.

When arrested each of the men had a quantity of the money still in his possession and police officers reclaimed \$3,332 of the stolen loot. Barton, who is believed the ringleader, had \$2,300 in his possession, Alexander had over \$600, and Brundage had over 100. Barton and Alaxander have police records. Barton had been recently released from the Illinois state penal farm at Vandalia. The Burlington bank robbery is the first crime Brundage is reported to have been a party to. The young men claimed they tried to persuade a fourth one to join them but he refused.

After stealing a coupe belonging to Dr. J. H. Raasch of Wheaton Wednesday, the three youths drove to Powers Lake, broke into the Earl Manville cottage and stayed there all night. They used Dr. Raasch's car to drive to Burlington Thursday and parked it in front of the Sport shop on Pine street.

Unmasked and armed with revolvers the three men entered the Bank of Burlington at 1:15 o'clock and staged the hold-up.

Six members of the bank force were in the bank. William Huse, Henry Heidermann, Frank Brehm and Miss Evelyn Boschart were at work on the main floor behind the grill. Elmer Ganswindt and Miss Theresa Branstetter were in the bookkeeping room in the basement.

Mr. Heidermann was at his place in his place in the first cage and the others were behind in the office. There were no customers in the bank when the robbers entered and no one came during the hold-up.

"This is is stick-up. Get down on the floor back there." one of the men ordered while the trio covered their victims with guns. Without resistance the four obeyed and lay face down on the floor back of the cages. They remained there until the hold-up was over and the robbers left the bank, the shots outside giving them the signal that the robbers were escaping.

The young bandits, apparently nervous even while giving the order to, "hold 'em up," went through the cages hastily and scooped up currency and silver from the cash drawers. They went into the vault and took what cash was there, but made no attempt to have anyone open the safe for them. The men were in the bank probably three or four minutes, one of the employees said, but it seemed longer.

Warning their victims to keep down on the floor, the hold-up men left the bank by the front door, and deliberately walked across the street, got into their car and made their getaway, headed south out of town on Pine street.

The burglar alarm had been given by Elmer Ganswindt while the robbery was in progress. He had gone downstairs, and as he started upstairs heard the commotion. Sensing a holdup, he ran to the telephone company office next door and put in the burglar alarm. The telephone office not notified the police station, the Reineman hardware store, a restaurant across the street, and the Meinhardt Bank. Miss Branstetter remained in the downstairs office.

Hubert Sieker took the call at the Reineman hardware store and ran out to get the license number of the automobile. He saw the men coming out of the bank and crossing the street to the car. He got the license number and went back to load a gun, but before he got back the car had sped on its way.

Ray Spiegelhoff of the Meinhardt Bank ran out and fired several shots at the car as it sped past the bank. None of the shots was effective.

George Hagemann, manager of the A. & P. store, who was going into the bank, passed the robbers coming out. He encountered Mr. Sieker at the door, who told him of the robbery.

The bandits headed for Powers Lake where two other cars were waiting for them. One of their tires went flat, but they continued on their way some distance, finally abandoning the car on county highway P, just north of highway 36. Two persons saw the three men leave the car, carrying what they thought was a small bag. James Blaine, who works for Lynn Alman near whose farm the car was deserted, and Mrs. Albert Koehn who lives between Powers lake and Lake Benedict, both watched the men walk across the Powers Lake golf course headed for the resort district.

They got into two cars parked near the Manville cottage and drove away. A gang of workman putting up ice on Powers Lake told of seeing a car arrive at the cottage Wednesday night. They thought nothing of it. Thursday morning they also saw two other cars drive up. Later three men left in the first coupe.

Burlington and Racine county officers officials who took up the chase as the bandit car left Burlington lost track of it some distance out on highway 83. Later they found the abandoned coupe. Later a coat with several bullets and a sales receipt from a Wheaton store in the pocket, was picked up on the highway south of Burlington. Officials of Racine and Kenosha counties and DuPage county Ill., combined their efforts to locate the robbers. Wheaton police began to check up on suspects as soon as Dr. Raasch reported his car stolen Wednesday. Barton and Alexander were known to be missing.

Report of the murder of Harry Moskowitz, 30-year old taxicab driver of Chicago early Friday morning and subsequent stories of fellow taxi drivers of his receiving the \$250 tip from a professed bank robber for driving him twenty miles to Wheaton early Friday morning, confirmed suspicions of authorities. Someone who had seen Moskowitz flash his roll of bills had followed him home, fired three shots into his body as he crossed the alley to his house, and robbed his dead body of \$165. Another roll of \$80 was found in an inner pocket.

Barton later confessed to going on a "spree" in Chicago Thursday, ending his day at a cabaret at 3

a.m. He said he persuaded a cab driver to take him home to Wheaton. The taxi driver charged him \$10 for the trip, he said, but he gave a "handful of bills," he didn't know how much.

Friday morning an officer of the DePage county sheriff's department and a Chicago detective came to Burlington with photographs of the suspects. Local men identified them and shortly after noon Barton and Alexander were arrested at Wheaton. Early in the afternoon, accompanied by Sheriff Miles Hulett, Henry Heidermann, Hubert Sieker, Fred New, trust officer at the Bank of Burlington, and Sherman Dudley member of the bankers' protective association for Racine and Kenosha counties, made a trip to Wheaton. Heidermann and Sieker confirmed identification and talked with the prisoners who told freely of the hold-up.

The hold-up last Thursday was the second robbery of the Bank of Burlington within three years. The last robbery occurred February 19, 1930 when a band of robbers secured \$10,000 and made good their escape.

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Bank Robbers Brought To Racine For Trial To Appear in Burgess Court Today for Sentence

The three Wheaton youths, who confessed to robbing the Bank of Burlington last Thursday afternoon were brought to Racine Wednesday and arraigned before Court Commissioner Eugene Haley on the charge of having robbed the Bank of Burlington of \$6,000.

They waived preliminary hearing and their bond was fixed at \$15,000 each. District Attorney John Brown said they would be brought before Municipal Judge E. R. Burgess Friday for sentence.

The youths are Frank Barton 20, Stanford Alexander 19, and Frank Brundage 19. Extradition warrants, were obtained from Gov. Schmedeman early in the week, and District Attorney Brown and Sheriff Miles Hulett then procured a warrant from Governor Horner of Illinois entitling them to bring the men to Racine to stand trial.

When they were arrested last Friday, the three men had expressed willingness to be extradited to Wisconsin without delay, but special proceedings were required because they are minors.

Though they are minors, the youths may be sentenced either to state penitentiary or the reformatory at Green Bay. The crime is punishable by 15 to 40 years in prison.

The bank robbery was Brundage's first venture in crime. Formerly he was tackle on the Wheaton college football team. Barton has served one year at the Illinois penal farm at Vandalia and was released in December. Alexander was on parole for former delinquencies.