

The Plattsmouth Journal

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Bullets and Law Write Finis to Crime Record of Infamous Purple Gang in Detroit Area

'Tough Guy' Youngsters Began Their Lawless Activity in 1919 and Flourished Until End of Prohibition

DETROIT (UP)—Eighteen years ago, when the war was still more than a memory, a group of Detroit youngsters, only one past 18, decided they were "tough guys."

They stole fruit, "rolled drunks," waylaid pedestrians late at night, and broke into stores.

"They're tainted," a bearded, old Jewish fruit peddler once said. "Those boys are discoloring. They are purple." The name stuck.

Ten years later in 1929 the group, then known throughout the middle west as the Purple gang, had a death-grip on Detroit's underworld, and maintained lucrative crime connections all over the country.

Last month, police picked off a tavern floor the bullet-ridden body of the last known member still operating, Harry Millman, 28, had big fists, a ready trigger-finger and a thorough criminal education begun in 1919 when he trailed the "big boys" of his neighborhood as they annoyed the merchants.

Gang Once Numbered 50 Odd With his slaying, the last of the 50 odd hoodlums was accounted for. All were either dead, in prison or missing so long that they were forgotten.

The gang took solid form in 1926 when gamblers supplied them with funds in return for protection from a St. Louis extortion ring.

A year later they began their killings in earnest, Abe Axler and his pal, Eddie Fletcher, machine-gunned three rivals to death in a street before their apartment. Axler and Fletcher were inseparable pals—even in death.

Late in 1928, when the gang was at its greatest period of power, two situations arose which greatly affected its strength and its future.

First, a cleaners and dyers war broke out, marked by daily acts of violence. Murders, bombings, thefts, sluggings, all the crimes in the books combined to hurt their prestige.

Secondly, and more important, they branched out from Detroit.

The Oakland Sugar company became their financial stronghold. From it, they supplied corn sugar to local moonshiners. With the money they opened speakeasies and night clubs.

Federal Policy will Cut State Highway Aid

State Engineer Tells County Officers Only \$3,284,000 Federal Funds Will Be Available.

OMAHA, Dec. 16 (UP)—State Engineer A. C. Tilley informed Nebraska county commissioners and supervisors today that only \$3,284,000 in federal aid funds will be available to Nebraska between now and June 30, 1939.

In 1940, Nebraska's share of federal aid would be only \$2,500,000 under the president's proposal, he said.

"If Nebraska's unfinished highway system is to be adequately completed, we should be vitally interested in retaining the national policy of federal aid for highway construction," Tilley said in an address before the annual convention of county commissioners and supervisors.

The high point in federal highway aid in Nebraska was reached in 1931 when allotments aggregated \$11,884,000. The total in 1936 was nearly as much, \$11,003,000, he said.

He estimated total expenditures for construction in 1937 at \$6,125,000. Tilley said he had instructed district highway engineers to consult with county boards about the location of federal feeder roads.

The state engineer said that when work now contracted is completed Nebraska will have 2,475 miles of paved highways, 5,809 miles of gravel roads and 310 miles of earth roads maintained by the state.

PINOCHLE SCORES

Table with 2 columns: Name and Score. Includes Lee Phillips (6010), Mrs. W. H. Puls (5650), A. J. Koubek (4970), etc.

FARMERS BENEFIT BY 'CO-OP'

More than 200 farmers and stockmen obtained loans during the first 10 months of the year from the South Omaha Production Credit association, according to records in the office of the credit "co-op."

Everett Spangler, secretary-treasurer of the association, reported that during the period loans were made to 323 farm operators in Burt, Dodge, Washington, Saunders, Douglas, Sarge and Cass counties.

A good share of the credit was advanced to farmers who plan to use the money for feeding livestock, Mr. Spangler said.

Plans will soon be completed, he said, for the association's annual meeting of stockholder-members, to be held shortly after the first of the year.

See the goods you buy. Catalog descriptions are alluring enough, but how about the goods when you get them?

MERCERVILLE SCHOOL NEWS

The Mercerville school has been quite active this year and are carrying on a number of very interesting projects. Their attendance record has been unusually good with several children with perfect attendance.

The following pupils have attended every day since school started: Grade 1, Gordon Hanika; Grade 2, Dwight Iles; Grade 3, Eunice Baumgart; Grade 4, Kathleen Snyder.

Our room looks very pretty with all its Christmas decorations. We have a Christmas tree at school too.

We have been enjoying store in arithmetic class. Here are some new words we learned: cash register, bill, receipt, counter, credit. It is fun learning how to make change and write out the bills.

We are having a good behavior contest at school. The room is divided into two sides, the Reds and the Blues. The Reds are ahead.

Each day we save all our papers. At the end of six weeks we make a cover for them and fasten them together so they will form a book. We take them home and show them to our parents.

The Mercerville school wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas!

SOCIAL WORKERS FLOWER CLUB

The Social Workers Flower club held their annual Christmas party at the pretty home of Mrs. Julius Pitz. The Pitz home was a scene of beautiful and artistically decorated rooms, Christmas colors and spirit having been carried out, which was very attractive and an ideal setting for this happy occasion.

After the regular business meeting a clever play, "Reading the Newspaper" was given by Mrs. Ernest Hutchison, Mrs. James E. Wurga and Mrs. J. L. Stamp. For this playlet, Mrs. John Schutz sang several numbers.

"Trimming the Christmas Tree" another short playlet was given by Mrs. Albert Wheeler and Mrs. Mike Kaffenberger.

Little Marilyn Irene Wurga gave a Christmas poem. Christmas carols were sung by the club members. After the interesting program, gifts were presented to everyone by Santa.

A delicious lunch was served, presided over by Mrs. James E. Wurga. Mrs. Ernest Hutchison and Mrs. Ray Willes, refreshment committee.

Table decorations were in keeping with the holiday spirit. The centerpiece was tiny reindeers among pine trees.

The next meeting will be an all day quilting party at the home of Mrs. James E. Wurga, Jan. 12, 1938.

JUDGE PARSONS DIES

DES MOINES, Ia., Dec. 16 (UP)—Justice James M. Parsons of the Iowa supreme court died here today after a long illness. He was 79 years old. He had undergone an operation December 5.

Justice Parsons was elected to the supreme court in 1934. He had planned to retire when his term expired January 1, 1941.

An Iowa farm boy, he was admitted to the bar in 1889 and served for 25 years as general counsel for the Iowa State Bankers' association.

He was primarily a trial lawyer and most of his professional time was spent in court. He was a democrat and twice was a delegate to democratic national conventions.

SUPPORT JUDICIAL COUNCIL

LINCOLN, Dec. 18 (UP)—Clinton J. Campbell, president of the Nebraska Bar association today lent his support to the movement for establishing a judicial council in Nebraska.

MURDOCK ITEMS

Lacey McDonald and family went to Lincoln last Thursday, where they did some Christmas shopping.

Merideth Weddell, who resides in Lincoln, where he has a position, will be at home with his father and sister on Christmas day.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Heinemann were in Lincoln Thursday of last week, where they looked after business and did some shopping.

While Mrs. Zabel was looking after the store Friday of last week, Mr. Zabel made a trip to Lincoln after a truck load of goods for the store.

The Extension club of Murdock and vicinity met at the home of Mrs. William Eisele last Thursday. The regular meeting was followed by a most enjoyable Christmas party.

August Bornemeier and wife departed last Thursday for the northern part of the state, where they went to look after business matters. They made the trip in their car.

Harold and Louis Luetchens were delivering corn to the Murdock elevator, having shelled their 1937 crop, and although the volume was not so large, they are well pleased with what they received.

Carl Buck and Bobbie Miller were hauling baled straw for Paul Socks who has been busy of late baling the same, delivering it to a number of customers about town and in the immediate vicinity.

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Tool are looking forward to a very pleasant Christmas day, which they will spend at the home of their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George Work and family, in Omaha.

Herman R. Schmidt was called to Plattsmouth to look after business matters at the court house. On his return home, he came via Wabash, where he visited with the family of Louis Schmidt for a short time.

Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Craig and Miss Orland Parriott were in Lincoln on Thursday of last week where they secured some supplies for the barber shop and beauty parlor and also did some of their Christmas shopping.

Mrs. Albert Straich, daughter Miss Lydia were in Lincoln last Thursday, where they did some trading. The weather had been bad before that and they took advantage of the fine day to make the trip Thursday.

Charles Campbell, a former resident of Cass county, when he resided between Murdock and Greenwood, accompanied Ed Leach Lincoln traveling salesman and brother of P. J. Ulrich of Alvo, on his trip to Murdock this past week, enjoying meeting old friends of this vicinity.

Residents of this vicinity seemed to have contracted an epidemic of wood sawing last Thursday. Many were thus engaged and others who were desirous of getting their wood out of the way for the winter were delayed by not being able to secure help and the necessary equipment.

Miss Sara McCroney, who is a member of the Senior class of the Murdock high school, entertained the members of the class at her home on Friday evening of last week. Games, music and refreshments made the occasion a most enjoyable one.

Arranging for Historical Meeting

Dr. G. H. Gilmore of Murray and A. A. McReynolds of Nehawka were in Murdock Thursday arranging for a meeting of the Cass County Historical society to be held here in the near future. They were interested in securing further data and information on what was known as the Mullen ranch, located at the edge of where Murdock now stands, which was a stopping place for overland trains as they crossed the prairies in the early sixties and seventies.

These gentlemen have been doing a great deal of research work and are engaged in writing a history of the days before this generation came upon the scene.

Visited in Southwest

Messrs and Mesdames Carl and Hermosa Schlaphoff, who visited at Oatman, Arizona, for a couple of

State Tested and Certified

We have for sale Iowa Hi-Bred No. 930 Yellow Dent Corn. This corn has been certified by both the states of Iowa and Nebraska. If you want to grow more corn on less acreage, see us and we will tell you all about it and guarantee seed corn true to all our claims.

The Farmers Elevator Company

Henry Carsen, Mgr. Murdock, Neb.

weeks, returned home last Saturday. While there they visited with Elmer Schlaphoff and sister, Miss Doretta, who are making their home there for the winter. They report a splendid visit and say they were much impressed with the country and climate there.

Mrs. Bessie Hite Very Ill

Mrs. Bessie Hite has been very ill at her home in Murdock for some time, her condition becoming so serious that the children were all called to her bedside. They are: George, of Oakland; Louis of near Walton; Mrs. John Amgwert, of Lincoln and Floyd Hite of Weeping Water.

They have been doing all possible for her care and comfort, when we visited Murdock grave fear was expressed for her recovery.

Will Entertain Christmas Day

Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Tool will entertain at their home in Murdock on Christmas day, when they will be joined by Mr. and Mrs. O. E. Bradford and their daughter of Beatrice and Kenneth Tool and wife of Wahoo. If it is possible Richard Tool and wife also expect to be here, but that will depend on the condition of the roads and weather.

Departed for West Coast

John Bornemeier and wife departed Thursday for the west, with Los Angeles as their destination. They expect to visit there over the holidays, and will also visit at nearby points where they have friends and relatives residing.

Returns from the West

Mrs. Hannah McDonald, who visited at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Harry Eastman and family, of Sterling, Colorado, for two weeks or more, returned home late last week. She reports a most enjoyable visit.

Afflicted with Lumbago

W. O. Gillespie and son Merle have both been troubled with attacks of lumbago, which have kept them from their work, but at latest reports they are said to be improving.

Christmas Program at Callahan

A Christmas eve program will be given at the Callahan church Friday night at 7:30. The Bible school has charge of the arrangements and in addition to the program there will be a Christmas tree with presents and a treat for all the kiddies.

On Christmas day there will be a special Christmas service held at 10 o'clock to which all members and the public are invited.

Will Spend Christmas at Home

Miss Dorothy Gorthey, who is attending the Normal school at Peru, will be home for the Christmas holidays and will be accompanied here by a schoolgirl chum, who will visit at the Gorthey home over the holidays.

Shall We Have Skating Court

The matter of providing amusement for the young people is one to command attention in every town. With the winter weather that has prevailed, thoughts turn naturally to skating, and numerous towns are taking steps to provide suitable skating courts by selecting a level piece of ground and flooding it. Elmwood, Alvo and Nehawka have provided excellent places of this kind. In Nehawka the fire department sponsored the movement, while the city provided the water.

The question of furnishing such a place of amusement for the children and grown-ups of Murdock is being raised and as the Christmas season approaches when the children will be out of school and looking for a place to skate, sentiment seems to increase for doing the same here. Certainly we do not want to send the boys and girls to dangerous sand pit lakes to skate, where they run a great chance

of being drowned by venturing on ice that might be too thin to support them.

Enjoyed Class Meeting

Donald Rikli, who is a member of the Freshmen class of the Murdock high school, was host at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Rikli, to the members of the class on last Tuesday evening. A most pleasant time was enjoyed and his classmates were loud in their praise of Donald's ability as an entertainer.

VISITS IN CITY

Thomas Thomsen of Nebraska City, who is preparing to establish the new credit bureau here for the Plattsmouth Business Men's Ad club, was in the city Friday to look after some matters in connection with the work.

Mr. Thomsen has a very highly perfected system of checking and information on the residents of the communities where his bureau is operating and has found them most successful in every way.

He states that he has secured prospective workers for the Plattsmouth office and who will be taken to Nebraska City to receive instruction and become familiar with the work of operating the office and the handling of information that may be required.

HAVE NEW DAUGHTER

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Read are rejoicing over the arrival of a baby daughter born December 14 at the University hospital in Omaha. The little one weighed 6 pounds and 13 ounces at birth. Both mother and daughter are doing fine. The baby has been named Margaret.

GRIEF KILLS ENGINEER

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (UP)—J. C. Milliken, railroad engineer, suffered a stroke and died here a week after his locomotive struck and killed five children near Knox City, Mo.

IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK AT WORK when you've found a way to ease the pains of RHEUMATISM and do it the inexpensive way, too. Includes image of a man and Bayer Aspirin product.

WISHING YOU ALL A Merry Christmas. We are extending to our customers and to everyone our very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Includes image of a clock.

Thomas Walling Company Abstracts of Title Phone 324 - Plattsmouth

PEACE When a cough due to a cold plagues you, give your throat peace with a Smith Brothers Cough Drop. Includes image of a man.

GIVE AN Ingersoll. There's an Ingersoll for every member of the family - watches for pocket, wrist or handbag at prices from \$1.25. Includes image of a watch.