



STORIES OF THE SECRET SERVICE

BY Capt. Patrick D. Tyrrell

STORY No. 4

The Biebush Band

Being an Account of the Capture and Conviction of That Notorious Band of Counterfeiters of Which Fred Biebush Was the Leader.

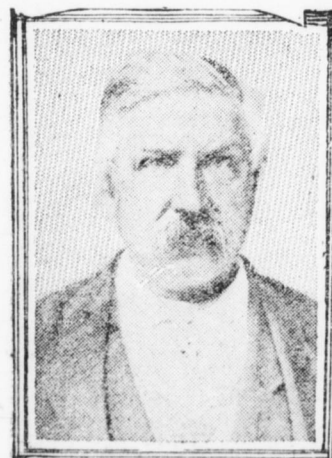
By CAPTAIN PATRICK D. TYRRELL

While there was no possible doubt that the members of Biebush's family had full knowledge of the nefarious business in which he had been engaged all his life, they seemed to take his arrest as hard as though it was not to be expected.

The leader of the band in custody, the work of the night was only begun. I had determined to make all the arrests that night—or as many of them as possible—before the news of the arrest of the ringleader reached the others.

In my detective career of 40 years I do not recall another night as lively as that one. Our next move was against the Thomases. To make these arrests we took Officer Weigman, as he was familiar with the minister and his wife, and with the premises, besides being an intelligent and trustworthy policeman.

While Weigman was holding Mrs. Thomas in conversation Wheeler and I entered the house, telling Mrs. Thomas we intended to make a search of the premises. She was properly indignant, but cool. I ordered her under arrest, and placed her in Wheeler's custody. I



JOSEPH HARGATE

then sent Weigman out to wait for Thomas, as it was evident his wife had told the truth about his absence. We intended, of course, to take Mrs. Thomas to jail, and as she was not properly attired for such a trip, I directed Wheeler to have her select such additional clothing as she wished to wear.

The preacher's wife was an Amazon in physique and strongly masculine in disposition and action. She claimed to have been Mrs. Richard Pollard, a widow, when she married Thomas, two years before, having formed the acquaintance of the minister, through taking music lessons from him during her widowhood. There had been some sinister suggestions concerning the disappearance of Pollard, but I believe no evidence ever was presented going to show that there was anything irregular in the affair. We had learned a good deal concerning her physical bravery and determination while "shadowing" her during the previous weeks, and, while wishing to show her every possible

courtesy due a woman, I dared not let her out of our sight. After she had selected the clothes she wanted I had Wheeler search them for a concealed weapon, but none was found.

While she was dressing for the street and I was making a hurried search of the house, I was startled by a pistol shot outside. Telling Wheeler to watch the woman, I ran from the house, to find Weigman grappling with Rev. Mr. Thomas. It seems when Thomas arrived Weigman promptly covered him with his revolver and told him he was under arrest. The minister, a powerful man physically, did not see fit meekly to submit to arrest, and he fiercely attacked the policeman, striking him a terrific blow on the jaw. Weigman fired a shot to bring help. I ran up to Thomas, and, before he had a chance to offer further resistance, clapped the handcuffs on him.

"One seems to have done it," said "No three men in St. Louis can take me," angrily declared Thomas. Weigman.

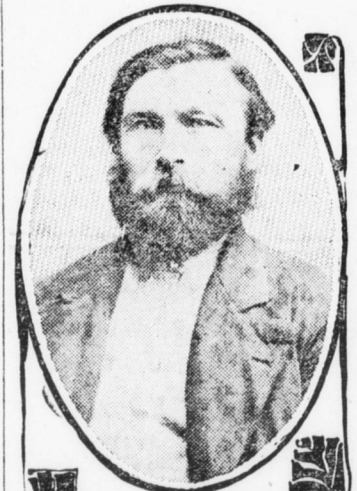
"Not by a d—d sight," retorted the minister, significantly.

Just what he intended to do I cannot say, for at that instant there came loud shrieks from the woman in the house. Leaving the preacher handcuffed and under cover of Weigman's revolver, I rushed into the house to find Wheeler desperately trying to wrest a revolver from the determined grip of the minister's wife. The deputy marshal was a man of great physical power, but he had all he could do to secure the loaded weapon and subdue its owner. Although Wheeler had searched the clothes she put on, the woman had made a sudden movement toward a bureau drawer, from which she grabbed the revolver. After this masculine outburst of physical force, Mrs. Thomas sought refuge in the feminine relief of loud and continued screaming. I tried to quiet her, but she refused to stop. Then I threatened to handcuff her unless she calmed herself.

"For God's sake don't do that," she begged.

"Madam, I never did such a thing in my life," I said, "but I certainly shall be obliged to in this case if you don't stop that outlandish shrieking."

The threat had the desired effect. We bundled the minister and his now calm spouse away to the police station. In my hasty search of the house I had found plaster of paris molds used for making counterfeit dies, but I did not



HANKEY THIELEN

make a thorough search at that time, as there was other more important work to do. The next day, provided with a spade, I went to the Finney avenue house and made a careful search. In the back yard under the kitchen window I found buried 23 counterfeit silver dollars, while in a jar in the pantry I found a quantity of counterfeit 50-cent pieces, such as had been passed by the preacher's wife.

It was now 11 o'clock. The stable of Dr. Barnes, in which Sullivan lived, was the next objective point. The colored man had been shadowed to the Barnes residence that night, and we knew he was somewhere around the premises. I stationed myself at the alley entrance to the stable and sent Wheeler around to the front door of the house. He rang the bell, which was answered by Dr. Barnes. Wheeler asked for Sullivan.

"He is not here," said Dr. Barnes, curtly.

Wheeler told the doctor his mission. "Sullivan isn't here," he repeated, "and you've no business around here looking for him."

Wheeler did not know how to act in the face of this extraordinary reception from a man who, we supposed, would gladly assist officers of the United States, and came around the house for further instructions from me. I had taken my stand in the alley, believing Sullivan to be in the house, and that, at the first sign of danger, he would seek to escape by way of the alley. I told Wheeler to go to the back door of the house, seek admission in the regular way, and if it were refused him, to smash the door in. He started to carry out these instructions when Sullivan dashed past him at break-neck speed in the direction of the alley, running plump into my arms. No man was ever more surprised than he. We lost no time in getting him behind the bars, for the night's work was not finished.

From the Barnes residence, after securing Sullivan, we went to Bosse's. At no time had we ever had any evidence that Bosse was implicated in any way other than having guilty knowledge of what was going on in his saloon, and by allowing the counterfeiters to rendezvous there. When we arrived he was partly undressed, counting the proceeds of the day's business. We gave him a chance to dress himself before we took him away, but no counterfeit money was found on the premises.

It was 3:30 in the morning when we disposed of Bosse. The night's work had been hard, and I decided that we had earned some sleep. Thielen was arrested the next day.

It will be recalled that Whalen and Woods, after being cornered by the authorities, had consented to aid the government in its efforts to put a finish to the career of Biebush and his principal assistants. It was arranged that these men should be arrested and then formally turn state's evidence, thereby securing leniency in their own cases. They were picked up by Deputy United States Marshal Soest and myself the day after the arrest of Biebush, in an alley near Thirteenth and Olive streets, and were locked up. Early the same day, also, we raided the home and workshop of Hargate, the die-cutter, arresting him and securing a quantity of



"I PUSHED HIM TOWARD THE CARRIAGE."

dies for the manufacture of counterfeit money. I had intended to use him as a state's witness, as he told me he had made dies for Biebush within a period which would make him liable at the time of his arrest. In this statement he was undoubtedly telling the truth, but in some way he got into communication with Biebush, and when the cases came up for trial we found Hargate had suddenly suffered from a lapse of memory in telling the first story. He said he made the dies at a time so far in the past that the offense was outlawed, and by this trick, originated by Biebush, the Englishman nearly escaped. He was in ill health, and was given a light sentence on that account. He was not an engraver of the first class, and I believe never made any more trouble for the government.

"Old Fred," realizing that he had come to his last ditch, retained the ablest criminal lawyers he could find—Judge Simmons and ex-Gov. Fletcher. Writs of habeas corpus had been sued out for "Hoosier Bill" and John Mitchell, and they were brought to St. Louis to testify against Biebush. The latter's attorneys immediately raised the point that these two were prohibited from testifying under the Missouri law, and a three days' argument on this point followed. The judge finally decided, however, that their testimony should be admitted, and I believe this case stands out as the first in that state in which convicts' testimony was admitted.

All that money and the best legal talent could do failed to break down our case, and "Old Fred" was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary. The government law fixes a maximum penalty of 15 years' imprisonment for counterfeiting currency and ten years for counterfeiting metal money. Sullivan was sentenced to two years. Rev. Andrew Jackson Thomas' ministerial career was brought to a sudden close by his being sent to the penitentiary for five years. "Hankey" Thielen's sentence was one year.

Mrs. Thomas was sentenced to serve four months in jail. Technically, her offense merited greater punishment, for she had passed counterfeit money at times without the knowledge of her husband. Had her offense consisted merely in aiding her husband and working at all times with him, she would not have been punished at all, for supreme court decisions protect women who commit crimes at the instance and in the company of their husbands. Harry Woods was released as a reward for the work he had done for the government, although he was kept in prison until the time of trial.

Whalen had secretly married two months before his arrest, and, although his position was the same as that of Woods, his imprisonment resulted in his going insane, and he was taken to an asylum.

So far as I know no member of the Biebush band "settled" at that time ever appeared again in the criminal history of the country.

STORY No. 5 WILL BE "THE BOSCOBEL KONIACKERS."

Lesson for Husbands.

The late Marv A. Livermore liked to tell a story of a young friend of hers in Melrose, for she believed in this story lay a lesson for husbands. Mrs. Livermore's friend was passing a month alone, her mate having been summoned to Europe on a business trip. "And you are very lonely without your husband now?" the elder said to the younger woman one morning. "A little lonely," was the qualified answer. "But surely," said Mrs. Livermore, "you miss your husband very much now he is away?" The other laughed rather bitterly. "Oh, no," she said. "At breakfast I just stand his newspaper up in front of his plate and half the time I forget he isn't there."—Buffalo Enquirer.

Silly Girl.

"Do you like Miss Sharpun?" "No; she's dreadfully stupid, y' know." "Stupid? What makes you think so?" "The other night when I was calling on her, she exclaimed: 'Why, must you be going so soon?' And I give you my word I hadn't mentioned such a thing!"—Cleveland Leader.

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In effect May 28, 1905. TRAINS LEAVE EMPORIUM EASTWARD. 6:10 A. M.—Sundays only for Renovo and Week days for Sunbury, Wilkesbarre, Scranton, Hazleton, Pottsville, Harrisburg and intermediate stations, arriving at Philadelphia 6:23 P. M., New York 9:30 P. M., Baltimore 6:00 P. M., Washington 7:30 P. M. Pullman Parlor car from Williamsport to Philadelphia and passenger coaches from Kneie to Philadelphia and Williamsport to Baltimore and Washington.

WESTWARD. 6:10 A. M.—Emporium Junction—daily for Erie, Ridgway and stations arriving at DuBois, Clearmont and intermediate stations. 10:30 A. M.—Daily for Erie and week days for DuBois and intermediate stations. 4:23 P. M.—Daily for Erie and intermediate stations.

RIDGWAY AND CLEARFIELD R. R. CONNECTIONS. (Week days.)

Table with columns: SOUTHWARD, Stations, NORTHWARD. Rows include Renovo, Driftwood, Emporium Junction, etc.

BUFFALO & ALLEGHENY VALLEY DIVISION.

Leave Emporium Junction for Port Allegany, Olean, Arcata, East Aurora and Buffalo. Train No. 107, daily, leaving Emporium 8:05 A. M. Train No. 115, daily, leaving Emporium 4:15 P. M.

LOW GRADE DIVISION.

EASTBOUND.

Table with columns: STATIONS, 109, 113, 101, 105, 107, 951. Rows include Pittsburg, Lv., Red Bank, etc.

WESTBOUND.

Table with columns: STATIONS, 108, 106, 102, 114, 110, 952. Rows include Via P. & E. Div., Emporium, Lv., Driftwood, Ar., etc.

Daily, Monday except Sunday. Tuesday only. On Sunday only train leaves Driftwood 8:23 A. M., arrives at DuBois, 10:00 A. M., returning leaves DuBois, 2:00 P. M., arrives at Driftwood, 3:40 P. M., stopping at intermediate stations.

For Time Tables and further information, apply to Ticket Agent.

J. R. WOOD, Pass'gr. Traffic Mgr.

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Effective Sunday, May 29, 1905. Eastern Standard Time. Time of Trains at St. Marys.

DEPART.

7:45 A. M.—For Keresey (Arr. 8:14 A. M.), Tyrone (Arr. 8:54 A. M.), Woodville (Arr. 9:03 A. M.), Elbon (Arr. 8:46 A. M.), Shawmut (Arr. 9:28 A. M.), Brockwayville (Arr. 9:42 A. M.), Smethport (Arr. 2:20 P. M.), connecting for Bradford (Arr. 3:30 P. M.), Eldred (Arr. 3:40 P. M.), Olean (Arr. 3:40 P. M.), connecting for Buffalo (Arr. 6:10 P. M.), Bolivar (Arr. 2:33 P. M.), Friendship (Arr. 4:08 P. M.), Angelica (Arr. 4:24 P. M.), Hornellsville (Arr. 4:40 P. M.), Wayland (Arr. 7:23 P. M.), connecting at Wayland with D. L. & W. R. R., and at Hornellsville with Erie R. R., for all points East and West.

ARRIVE. 11:05 A. M. } From Brockwayville, Shawmut, 4:50 P. M. } Elbon, Tyrone and Tyroneville. 1:40 P. M. } From Wayland, Hornellsville, Canaseroga, Angelica, Friendship, Bolivar, Buffalo, Bradford, Olean, Eldred, Smethport and Clearmont. All trains daily except Sunday.

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