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Highwaymen are Captured!

Four Desperate Burglars Run Down Last Saturday

SHERIFF TAYLOR'S CLOSE CALL

Burglar Tried to Shoot Him But Got Shot Instead--Captured in the Seven Mountains--Implicated in Many Robberies--Tracked From Laurelton, Woodward, Spring Mills, Centre Hall, Potters Mills to Faust's Old Hotel--Taylor and Foster Take Great Risk--Safely Landed Three in Jail and One in the Hospital.

Since last Friday, Centre county has been wrought up to a high pitch over numerous robberies committed between Woodward and Linden Hall by a gang of four desperate men who were tracked into the Seven Mountains and finally captured Saturday afternoon by Sheriff Taylor and his score of armed deputies. The capture was thrilling, as great diplomacy was used from the start, and unusual risk taken by Sheriff Taylor and Treasurer Phil. D. Foster, who bravely approached the building and secured the surrender, but came near being shot themselves. They landed all four men, but not until the leader fell fatally wounded.

ROBBERS TRAILED.

We will take up our story with the first appearance of the burglars in Centre county. On page 4 will be found a complete description of the looking of several stores at Laurelton and the clubbing of a man into insensibility. That happened on Wednesday night, June 17th. Four men were implicated and the authorities down there traced them westward to the Narrows and there lost their trail. The Narrows is the name of a long, lonesome mountainous territory with a turnpike of seven miles, leading from Union county to Woodward, this county. In this unfrequented wilderness the posse spent the day, avoiding their pursuers.

WOODWARD P. O. ROBBED

Early Friday morning, at about 4 o'clock, Mich. Feidler went down to the postoffice, at Woodward, as was his custom, to get the mail sack out for the carrier who passes there for the early morning train at Coburn. The postoffice is kept in the general store of the R. M. Wolf estate, Miss Mabel Wolf (now Feidler) is the postmistress, and C. D. Motz is the assistant clerk and manager of the store. Mr. Feidler found the front double doors open, evidently forced by prying with a bar. The rear door was also open. The counters showed that goods had been handled, while burnt

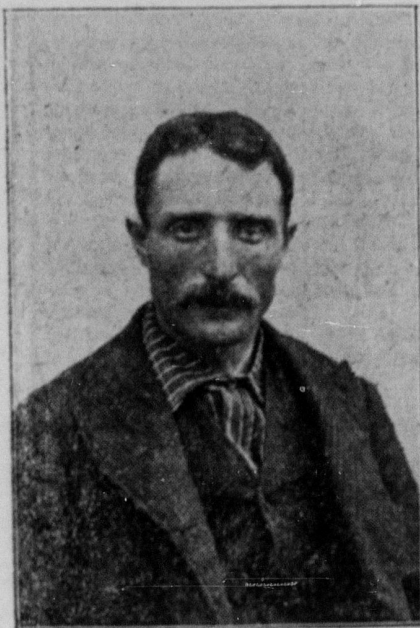
morning; the fourth, no doubt was on the front, and it is supposed that when merchant L. D. Orndorf came to his store, nearby, that morning at 3 o'clock, they were frightened away.

From Woodward all trace of the robbers is lost. They were not in evidence anywhere. An old pair of shoes lying along the road to Coburn led some to think that they changed foot gear there, but that is indistinct.

Friday night at 12 o'clock the street light at Spring Mills was put out, by some unknown persons, which leads some to think that the same parties were planning a raid, but the lodge was in session nearby and that may have discouraged them.

ROBBERS AT CENTRE HALL.

Two hours later an effort was made to rob the Penna Valley Bank, at Centre Hall, which place is six miles west of Spring Mills. Two different parties saw four men walking up the street at that hour, but had no occasion to suspect they were desperate outlaws and professional safe crackers. They went directly to the centre of the town and selected the bank in the corner of the building, for a raid. In the room above a bright light was burning where Mrs. Annie Bozner was in charge as operator of the local United Telephone Exchange. They threw a small stone through a pane of glass in the exchange, evidently to see if



SAMUEL SHIREMAN.

not be easily distinguished. At the station the tool house was broken open and the next morning the hand car was found beyond Linden Hall, which is four miles west of Centre Hall.

ROBBERY AT LINDEN HALL.

Early Saturday morning, sometime after 2 o'clock, A. E. Zeigler the clerk in J. H. Ross' store and the post office, at Linden Hall, who sleeps on the second floor of the same building, was awakened. He heard a noise below on the porch. Thinking they were local lumbermen who had come along and pulled the door latch to annoy him, he got up to the window over the porch, which was open, and taking a window prop rapped on the roof. Hearing the noise again he went back and pounded louder; the noise not abating, he pounded the third time on the side of the building, so that they would keep quiet or move along, all the time supposing that they were home people, harming no one. Then one man walked out in the road, then another, finally four. After looking around two came back and soon all left. This was at 2:45 a. m. A short time afterwards the same four men were seen by Mr. Zeigler passing on the road, deliberately, and talking in usual tones, but caused no suspicion. Mr. Zeigler went down immediately and he found the store had been entered from a side window, the front doors were pried open from the inside. The postoffice drawer was forced open but a \$1 bill and a few stamps were not molested. About \$150 in change was taken from the store drawer; the handle on the safe was wrenched off and the crease of the safe door was sealed with wax or soap and there was evidence of a fluid being poured in. No doubt it was nitro-glycerine, and everything was ready for an explosion, but they were interrupted by the clerk.

That night the cellar of Mr. Catherman, a blacksmith at same place, was entered and various articles were taken.

PASS POTTERS MILLS.

About 6:30 Saturday morning four suspicious looking men came to Potters Mills. Previous to that time they were seen by different parties on the road from Linden Hall. At Potters Mills two went into Resh's hotel and bought a pint of whiskey, the others made some small purchases at Smith's store across the street, paying for the same mostly with pennies. They started into the mountains on the turnpike leading towards Milroy. On the way, in Potters Mills, they got Mrs. Harper to grind some coffee for them and some salt from Mrs. Hartman. They stopped about two miles further up at the Treasurer road where they cooked breakfast.

D. C. Bohn and Harry Ripka came driving along with two horses and a load of wood. As they passed the men, Ripka hid them the time of the day, saying, "Going a fishing to day?" when the big man (who later was shot) replied sullenly, "What's that to you."

They drove on, soon after noticing that a shoe was missing, Ripka went back, and passing the men asked if they saw a shoe his horse dropped. The big fellow sharply replied: "Better go back and look on your horse's hoof where you will find it!" intimating that Ripka had better go along about his business and not be nosing after them. This aroused Bohn and Ripka's suspicion.

The morning the bank was robbed at Centre Hall, telephone messages were sent all over the county and that made the people at Potters Mills suspicious.

At 9 o'clock Frank Bradford and Jas. Smetzler, of Centre Hall, arrived at Potters Mills to go fishing at Pat Gerrity's, in the Seven Mountains; they knew what transpired at Centre Hall and learned of the four peculiar looking men preceding them into the mountains. They naturally were on the alert.

DISCOVERED AT FAUSTS.

Four miles south of Potters Mills, near the summit of the Seven Mountains, a

quarter of a mile from the Mifflin county line, in a clearing in the lonely mountain fastness, is a stretch of fertile land on the plateau. The land is cleared and fenced, and the green fields are still farmed. In the centre of the clearing, alongside of the road, stands a dilapidated old barn, (shown in the above cut) alongside of it is the wall and old stone chimney, still standing like a guardian sentinel over the ruins of what was once one of the most famous hostleries in Pennsylvania, when the turnpike was the main outlet for travel from Central Penna. to the eastern upsets via the Juniata. This point was known in its day as "Faust's Hotel" where men stopped to feed their teams and regale the inner man with food and fire water. Around these lonesome surroundings, there still cling many romances of "Ye Olden Times" and gruesome tales are told of men who disappeared here as though the earth had swallowed them. A strange mystery seems to hover around the place, and tradition will long make the spot famous for weird tales of former generations, while now the building is only inhabited by owls and bats. The reader will pardon this brief digression in the narrative, but it is appropriate at this time, as this lonely abandoned sight again springs into prominence



JAMES RYAN.

as here, last Saturday, was enacted a tragic scene that will form an interesting chapter in the annals of Centre county for deed and daring that vividly recall the days when Lewis and Connelly, the famous highwaymen and robbers, had their abode in these same haunts and finally landed in our county jail.

Let us come back to Bradford and Smetzler. About 10 a. m., these two fishermen reached the edge of the Faust clearing. Looking in the orchard they espied a man under an apple tree, close to the barn. Bradford remarked that they had better not look in but pass right along. They turned to the left a short distance above Fausts to go to the fishing ground at Gerrity's. Going down, Bradford glanced back and saw the man enter the barn. They decided the gang was in the barn. At Gerrity's they borrowed repeating rifles, hastily returned by the woods and stationing themselves above and below the barn, they carefully guarded the building. Finally Mrs. W. O. Rearick, formerly of Centre Hall, but now of Milroy, came driving along and she was given the information to take to Potters Mills, and telephone messages for the sheriffs of Mifflin and Centre counties to hasten to the scene. This she did in prompt order. When the news reached Potters Mills, merchant Frank Carson and five others got their rifles and hastily drove to Fausts. Later merchant J. H. Ross, W. Catherman, Charles Ross and Harry Hagerman, all of Linden Hall, who tracked the men across the valley to Potters Mills, got on the Faust premises by noon. Sheriff H. S. Taylor got the news about 11, but the commissioners trifled and dilly-dallied over fear of expense for almost an hour. Finally they directed him to go. He was joined by Co. Treasurer Philip D. Foster, and they took with them two Krag-Jorgensen rifles, the new firearms recently received by Company B. They arrived at the scene in less than two hours and other riflemen joining the party.

ATTACK ORGANIZED.

Remaining in the woods about a quarter of a mile from Fausts, Sheriff Taylor swore in the following as deputies: Frank Bradford, James Smetzler, Wm. Sando, Frank Shutt, of Centre Hall; Frank A. Carson, F. Pennington, E. J. Sweetwood, Calvin Rhule, Calvin Cummings, Reuben Colyer, Frank McCoy, of Potters Mills; Walter and Pat Gerrity, who live a mile east, and many others kept arriving on the scene. All was done beyond view from the buildings. The sheriff then directed the men, armed with repeating rifles and plenty of ammunition, to divide in two squads and surround the premises, but not to come in the open until he drove towards the barn.

Sheriff Taylor waited a quarter of an hour for the deputies to locate themselves, then he and Foster started for the barn.

BURGULARS TRAPPED

At 2:45 they drove by the old barn, tied their team at the fence about 60 feet distant. Foster remained at the buggy and the sheriff, unarmed, went directly to the building. In the meantime the armed deputies began to close in from all sides, like a steel-toothed trap, making escape deadly, impossible as most all were old-time hunters and expert marksmen.

Now comes an exhibition of courage and diplomacy that is unusual. Unarmed and alone, Sheriff Taylor walked right up to the building and entered under the shed, the left portion of the building, at the centre. He found the lower part clear. Then he walked around to the front at "A" and pulled the latch and threw the horse stable door open.

COMMANDED TO SURRENDER.

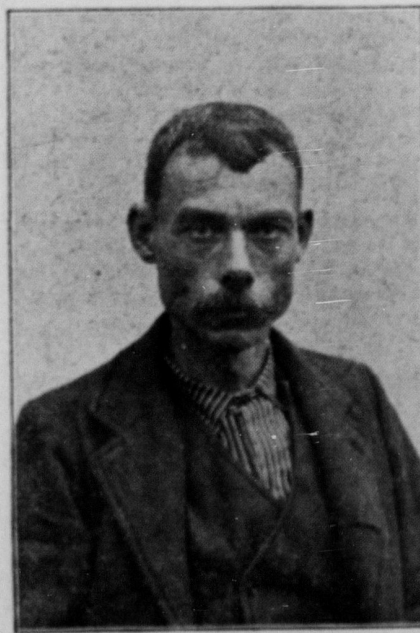
He saw a basket, bucket and other packages in the centre. The sheriff heard a movement on the floor above and was convinced his birds were cornered, but not yet captured. The sheriff then spoke in a loud voice:

"Boys, you are surrounded, by armed men! I am the Sheriff of Centre county; am unarmed. I want you to come out, and surrender as my prisoners. You will be protected. If you don't come I will have to take you dead or alive."

There was no response except a scuffling overhead and in the rear horse-stalls. The sheriff returned to his buggy and got his rifle. Foster had his rifle in hand. Everything was quiet; Foster and Taylor were near the buggy and about 50 feet from the barn.

EFFORT TO SHOOT SHERIFF.

Some one yelled: "Look out Taylor!" "See that revolver!" "He is going to shoot Taylor!" Following the words five rifle shots broke the profound suspense and re-echoed over the mountain tops. A man fell to view at the point "X" on the loft of the barn and, still clutching his weapon, staggered forward pushing his arm over the sill attempting to shoot, but there was no report; he rolled over limp a few seconds later where he fell, in view of Foster and Taylor. It appears from that, the men in the stalls were asleep, and the man above was on guard. He watched the sheriff from the spot "Z" and some say he thrust out his revolver. Then he ran back. Foster called "halt", he wheeled



WM. PALMER.

and crouched about the corner post with his left and took aim with his right, when the shots were fired. Foster fired twice, the sheriff once, Bradford once, also another shot.

This shooting made the other men fierce, they wanted to riddle the building, but were restrained. Sheriff Taylor called to the men inside several times to surrender, that he did not want any more shooting or unnecessary bloodshed.

THE SURRENDER.

After at least twenty minutes waiting the sheriff finally announced that "This is last call; if you don't surrender we will fire into the building. Come out, I will protect you." Finally one man answered and said: "We will surrender, if guaranteed protection." Sheriff Taylor replied: "My men are under my control. I will protect you. Come out at once, one at a time, drop your revolvers as you step out, and throw up your hands."

In a few minutes one came out, dropped his revolver and threw his hands over his head; then another followed and did the same; the third man completed the scene; standing there, covered by a half dozen rifles, they were quickly handcuffed and searched. Phil Foster went in the barn and found the fourth man lying near point "X" in a pool of blood, semi-conscious, still clutching his revolver. The limp body was slid down the plank, shown in the picture. The men were hustled in conveyances and taken to Potters Mills. The

wounded man suffered on the trip. At Potters Mills he was turned over to Dr. Alexander for treatment, and Michael Smith as watchman, with instructions that he receive the best possible attention. At Centre Hall they were given a hearing before Justice Mingle and committed.

By 7:15 Sheriff Taylor, with the little man, and Phil Foster with Dan Zeigler, as driver, brought the other two to Bellefonte. Almost a thousand people gathered on the streets and about the jail to see the procession. They were quietly searched, little more was found; turnkey Jerry Condo put them through the bath-tub process, got clean underwear, and soon they were securely locked in the solid steel cells.

They gave their names and ages as follows: William Palmer, 49; Samuel Shireman, 35, and James Ryan, 32. The wounded man as Showalter, of Wisconsin, then again as from St. Louis, age 38, weight 158, height 5 feet 8 inches. He is a man of intelligence and strong features and muscular build. Men in this business, under such circumstances, give fictitious names, and it is not likely that they will give their's.

The following articles were found in the stable and on their persons: Five revolvers--38 calibre and lot of cartridges, stick of dynamite, knives, razors, purse containing paper money and lot of small change, tin bucket and table cloth--identified by Mr. Catherman, of Linden Hall, basket, bread, bacon, coffee, pan, soap, mirror, etc.

\$168 IN STAMPS FOUND

Walter Gerrity was engaged by Sheriff Taylor to search the barn and a couple hours later reported his find, and immediately proceeded to Bellefonte, reaching here at 11 p. m. He had an oilcloth pouch, covering a large manilla, post-office letter with address erased, which contained stamps from 1 to 10 cent denominations, mostly in full sheets, in good condition, aggregating in value \$169.48. Also an "Ingersoll" watch and chain, plug of "Worth" tobacco, knife, 5 colored handkerchiefs and 2 pint bottles of brown greasy fluid supposed to be nitro-glycerine. This closed Saturday's thrilling events. The topic in every nook and corner of Centre county Saturday and Sunday was the capture of these four men; and if all the wild rumors afloat were published, it would prove amusing. From all that has been told, we have carefully sifted the leading points and the above we believe the true story.

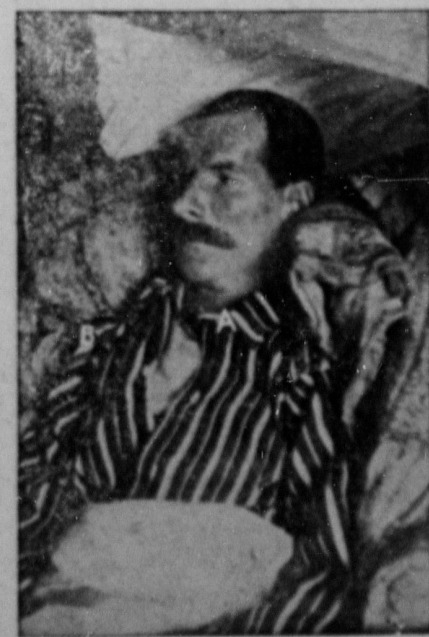
Mr. Gerrity found the various articles hidden at different places in the straw in the abandoned horse stalls.

On Wednesday a dagger with deer horn handle was found in the barn.

A SUNDAY JOB.

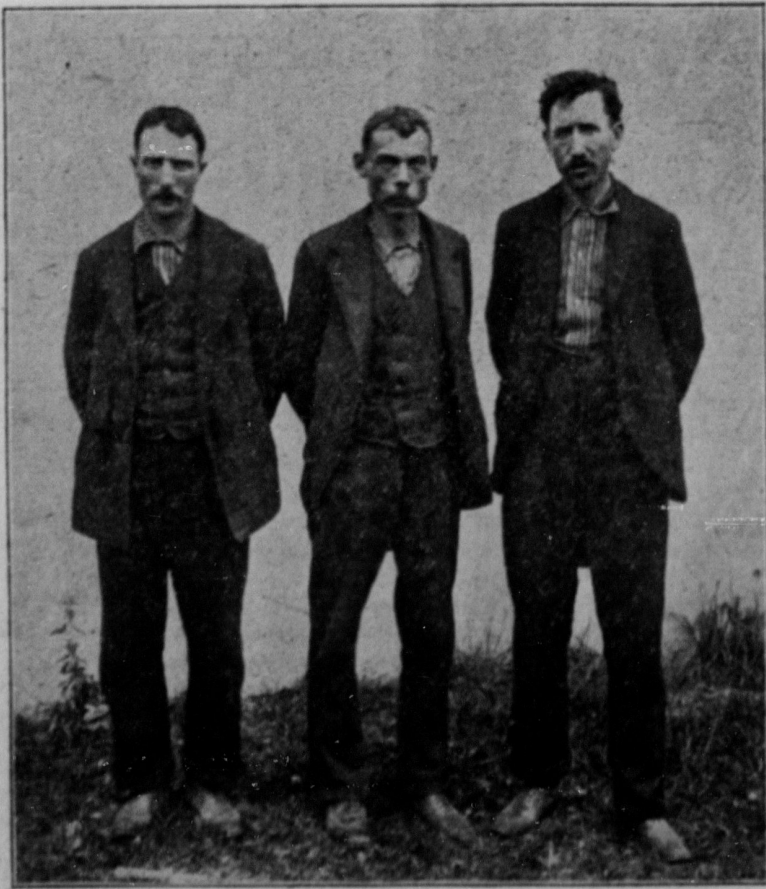
In order to obtain portraits of these men, send same to Philadelphia and have cuts made and returned in time for this edition, we had to do some hustling the next day. Early in the morning a visit to the jail was made. Sheriff Taylor granted permission to see the prisoners, and Jerry Condo soon landed us inside. They had very little to say, but soon cheered up finding that no impertinent questions would be asked.

The sheriff told them of securing the postage stamps, etc., and they realized that the "jig was up." The writer read the list of articles, to which they listened with interest and looked at one another with a knowing glance. When asked if the two pint-bottles contained nitro-glycerine, the smaller man grinned and said: "Better handle that stuff carefully." At first he objected to sitting for his picture, but finally yielded when told that the postal authorities would do it later. The other two willingly assented. In a short time Mr. Mallory, photographer, was on hand and they gracefully yielded to any suggestion and we got perfect



JOHN SHOWALTER.

Shot 'at Faust's Barn: photo taken while in bed at Resh's Hotel, Potters Mills. Ball entered at "A" came out at "B."



THE THREE ROBBERS STANDING IN ORDER, AS THEY SURRENDERED.

candles indicated that it was done at night. The postoffice drawers were broken open. The upper till contained about \$5 in small change which was missing, while some loose postage stamps were not disturbed. The bottom till contained the supply of postage stamps, each denomination being in a large manilla envelope, with contents marked on the outside, the total value being about \$150, all of which were missing. The following merchandise has been missed from the stock: 5 pair men's shoes--sizes 7 and 8, 2 new revolvers, 2 Yankee Ingersoll watches and chains, 4 umbrellas, a lot of 38 cartridges, several razors, pocket knives and colored handkerchiefs. They made their exit from the rear of store, hastily, as there were three distinct trails, through the high grass in different directions, noticeable the next

any man would respond. Mrs. Bozner was so frightened that she never moved from her chair. Wm. McClellan, the night watchman sleeping in the rear room of the bank apartments, on the first floor, was awakened by the breaking of a window glass in front. He came into the main office and heard some one prying at the front window sash. Without much hesitation he pulled his persuader and fired. The ball passed two feet above where the men were working, plowing through about ten inches of wood. The men hastily dropped their tools, consisting of picks, bars, an umbrella, and started towards the station, and on their way passed several parties but aroused no suspicion. The shot was heard across the street and the men were seen walking away. The street light being out of repair, they could

[Continued on page 4, first column.]