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Article Summary: The robbery of the Union Pacific Overland Limited in Omaha on the night of May 22, 1909, by the "James Boys of Spokane," the investigation and trial, and the dispute regarding the disbursement of over \$200,000 in reward monies deserves a place in the chronicles of the Old West.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Zane Grey; Butch Cassidy; William T Canada; Elizabeth Hayes; Donald W Woods; Fred Torgensen; James Gordon; James Shelton; Lillian N Stevenson; Dan Downer; F W Derf; Frank Grigward; E E Hollingshead; Jack Shelton; Jack Gordon; Lawrence F Golden; Peter J Butterbough; William Matthews; William Marvin; G W Marvin; William Davis; J C Kelly; Thomas C Munger; Lawrence J Golden; Frank Grigware; John Briggs; Franklin Roosevelt; Woodrow Wilson

Place Names: Omaha, Nebraska; South Omaha, Nebraska; Spokane, Washington; Denver, Colorado; Brown Park Elementary School; Washington State Penitentiary; Walla Walla, Washington; Stevens County, Washington; Kansas City, Kansas; Ogden, Utah; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Charleston Hotel; Victoria, British Columbia; Everett, Washington; Leavenworth, Kansas; Jasper, Alberta

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Photograph / Image: May 29, 1909, *Omaha World-Herald* excerpt with Judge Thomas C Munger portrait insert

The Great Omaha Train Robbery of 1909

BY TOMMY R. THOMPSON

By 1909 the "Wild West" was passing from the American scene, soon to be preserved and remembered in the novels of Zane Grey and through the lens of the movie camera. The sun was setting on the careers of Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid, and many of their cohorts; the reign of western outlawry—and its romantic counterpart, imagined outlawry—was fast declining. Still, small groups of outlaws remained scattered throughout the West, occasionally surfacing to strike against cattle ranches, banks and trains. On the night of May 22, 1909, one of these bands stopped the Union Pacific Overland Limited passenger train, just outside the Omaha city limits, and with all the daring and audacity of Cassidy's Wild Bunch, relieved the mail car of several sacks of United States mail. Known by most as the Mud Cut Robbery, the crime deserves a place in the chronicles of the Old West.

The robbery of the Overland Limited began as the train glided over the tracks on the southwestern edge of the city. At approximately 11 o'clock, two men wearing long coats, slouch hats, and dark-blue polka dot handkerchiefs over their faces suddenly appeared over the tender and jumped down to the engine. Pressing a pistol to the temple of the engineer and watching out the cab window for a signal fire in the distance, the bandits ordered him to proceed about 1½ miles before stopping the train just west of 42nd Street. At that location the tracks lay between high embankments and thus provided the robbers good protective cover for the robbery.¹

Once the train had come to a stop, the bandits instructed the crew to leave the engine and march back to the mail car. Joined by two other bandits, the gang called for those inside the mail car to open the door. When the occupants failed to do so, one of the bandits fired through a window in the door,

which immediately produced the cooperation the bandits desired. After the door opened the bandits ordered seven mail clerks out of the car. One bandit entered the car with the chief clerk and ordered him to throw out several mail sacks. Simultaneously, some of the bandits fired their guns to intimidate their captives. Once the mail sacks were outside, three of the bandits told the clerks to carry the sacks about 100 yards up the tracks past the engine, while the fourth held the engine crew at gun point. As the party passed the engine, according to one witness, a fifth bandit joined the group. Caught in the glare of the engine's headlight, one of the bandits tried unsuccessfully to shoot it out. When they had reached a point a short distance from the train, the bandits told the clerks to return to the train and proceed to Omaha, and the remaining bandit joined his comrades. The entire operation had taken only 10 to 15 minutes.²

When the train reached the town of South Omaha, the crew sent word of the robbery to Omaha police. Immediately, the latter dispatched its auto patrol wagon with 15 officers and two detectives to the area of the robbery. Early Sunday morning they found two of the stolen mail sacks near 42nd Street and the Union Pacific tracks. The bandits had cut them open and removed most of the contents. Union Pacific officials also quickly became involved. Since one of the bandits had remarked that the mail sacks were "a h--l of a load to carry in an automobile," railroad personnel telegraphed stations around Omaha to be on the lookout for suspicious autos.³

On Sunday, May 23, the robbery was the talk of Omaha. A Union Pacific spokesman vowed that the railroad would "do everything in its power to get the bandits." It started by offering a \$20,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of four bandits (confusion continued regarding the actual number of bandits). The federal government added \$4,000 of its own. Omaha and South Omaha police began searching hotels and boarding houses for suspicious characters; postal department inspectors and Union Pacific special agents were working on the case; and some of "Pinkerton's shrewdest operatives" were on their way to the city.⁴

By Monday the *Omaha World-Herald* reported the investigators had made "considerable strides," although the news-

paper concluded that the "systematic and thorough manner in which the holdup was planned and executed leaves not the slightest doubt in the minds of the police that the deed was done by four of the most expert and hardened desperadoes who ever engaged in the game." In reality, the authorities were making little progress. Identification of the masked robbers would be difficult, and police had only "meager descriptions."⁵ One of the few clues was that the bandits might have fled in an automobile, and one citizen reported that he saw a dark red auto on 32nd Street the night of the robbery with four "tough looking individuals" riding in it.⁶ The police responded cautiously to "hundreds" of clues, since they felt most were the products of "excited imaginations."⁷ On Tuesday, May 25, William T. Canada, head of the special service agents of the Union Pacific, could only promise "to keep on working until we get the men, no matter how long it takes."⁸

A break came on Thursday, May 27. At some point during the day several boys from the Brown Park Elementary School at 19th and U Streets in South Omaha found two guns, dark blue polka dot handkerchiefs, and slouch hats hidden in a gully near 18th Street between T and U. When the boys began kicking one of the slouch hats around the playground, Principal Elizabeth Hayes questioned them. She learned of their complete find and called the police. The South Omaha police staked out the area and at about 11 p.m. arrested three men who approached the area "in a suspicious manner."⁹

The three gave their names as Donald W. Woods, Fred Torgensen, and James Gordon. They claimed they had spent the evening in Brown Park with female companions, whom they would not identify in order "to protect their reputations." The police searched a room shared by Woods and Torgensen at 324 North 15th Street in Omaha. There they found a pair of greasy overalls like those reportedly worn by two of the robbers and a photograph of the three men together in an automobile with another male and a female. The photo seemed incriminating, since police still believed the bandits might have used an auto for their escape. The police began to circulate copies of the photo in cities to the west of Omaha in an effort to identify the three suspects and the other two "occupants" of the automobile.¹⁰

Quickly, the evidence began to accumulate against the three suspects. The police test-fired the guns found in the gully along 18th Street and discovered that one had a defective firing pin which left a tell-tale indentation on the shell. Police had found shells with a similar marking at the scene of the robbery.¹¹ Although the authorities could not yet directly connect the accused with the guns, the suspects had been arrested near the site where the guns were hidden and witnesses reported they had seen the men in the Brown Park area.¹² On Friday, May 28, two janitors at the Brown Park School discovered the missing mail sacks in the school's attic. The robbers had removed everything of value, leaving only such items as some women's underwear, an embroidered nightgown, and a package containing a dozen glass eyes. Again, there was nothing to connect the mail sacks with the accused, but the janitors stated that they had seen the men loitering around the school.¹³ More directly, the police could prove Woods, Torgensen and Gordon were associates because of the "automobile photograph."¹⁴ Gordon was suspected because he was young, and witnesses said two of the robbers were around 20 years old; and Torgensen and Woods had in their possession money taken from the robbery.¹⁵ The "circumstantial chain," as the *Omaha Daily News* called it, was growing stronger. Besides, the accused "looked guilty." Gordon and Torgensen had "shifty" eyes, and according to an Omaha police officer, Torgensen appeared to be a "dope fiend." A *Daily News* reporter noted that Torgensen had a suspicious "hacking cough and expectorates frequently," although he felt these signs only indicated that Torgensen might have tuberculosis. Gordon's personal habits astonished the police. He appeared not to smoke, "which is uncommon in most criminals." The authorities finally concluded he was not a "dope fiend."¹⁶

The following week, on Tuesday June 2, another break developed in the case. Denver police arrested a fourth suspect, James Shelton, in the company of one Lillian N. Stevenson. Two weeks earlier she had run afoul of the law by throwing a piece of pie at a policeman from a hotel window. As a result, Denver police recognized her as the female member of the bandits' automobile photograph, which had been sent to them from Omaha. After watching her closely for several days, they

followed her to the Charleston Hotel at 15th and Curtis. The police allowed her to enter her room in the hotel then broke in and found Shelton and Stevenson together in bed.¹⁷ As soon as they were in custody, Stevenson agreed to testify against Shelton, Woods, Gordon, and Torgensen. Apparently, the Denver chief of police suggested to her that turning state's evidence would be her means of avoiding prosecution. One newspaper reported, however, that she agreed to "tell all" after the Denver police "sweated" her.¹⁸

A few days later Denver authorities returned Shelton to Omaha. In mid-June a federal grand jury indicted the four men for robbery of the United States mails and for endangering the lives of the mail clerks. The grand jury indicted them by their best-known names and aliases: Donald W. Woods, alias Dan Downer, real name unknown; Fred Torgensen, alias F. W. Derf, real name unknown; Frank Grigward, alias James Gordon, alias E. E. Hollingshead, real name unknown; and Jack Shelton, alias Jack Gordon, alias Lawrence F. Golden, alias Peter J. Butterbough, real name unknown. Also indicted was "John Doe," since investigators continued to believe that a fifth individual was involved.¹⁹

Authorities became even more convinced this theory was correct when a Spokane detective arrived in Omaha in early June and identified Woods (real name Dan Downer), Torgensen, and Gordon (incorrectly identified as Lawrence F. Golden) as members of a gang from the Pacific Northwest led by a man named Matthews. This information was invaluable in the search for the missing suspect and authorities were soon on his trail.²⁰ One detective, presumably employed by the Union Pacific, declared that the railroad "never quits when it is after a fellow for a job like this, and neither does Uncle Sam. This whole bunch is going to be put away for keeps."²¹

He was right, at least in this case. On June 18, authorities arrested William Matthews, alias William Marvin, alias G. W. Marvin, alias William Davis, in Buhl, Idaho. As authorities burst into his hotel room, they found Matthews writing a letter at a desk with a handgun beside him. The letter to J. C. Kelly—another alias for James Shelton, authorities said—related that Matthews had sent some suitcases to Kelly from Omaha. Matthews tried to swallow the letter but was

ALLEGED TRAIN ROBBERS NOW PRISONERS OF UNCLE SAM

United States Marshal Warner Read Warrant to Them in Their Cells Last Evening.

Will Be Taken Before Commissioner Anderson Today --- Plenty of Evidence, Say Officers.

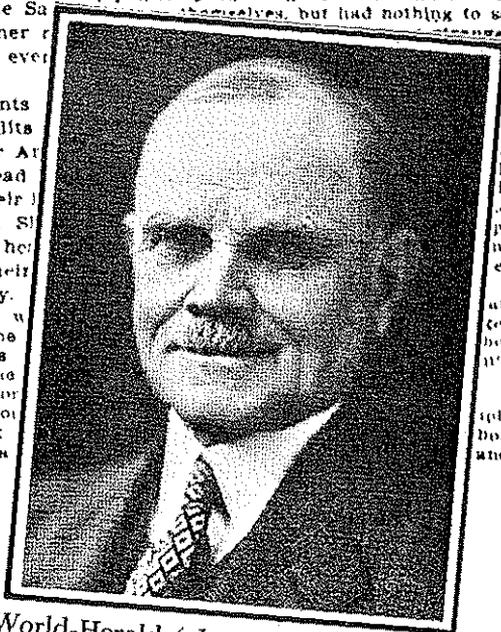
The three alleged train robbers lodged in the city jail are now prisoners of the government. They are now entirely at the mercy of Uncle Sam.

United States Marshal Warner read the warrants to the men last evening in their cells.

Unless other arrangements made the three alleged bandits be taken before Commissioner Anderson today. Should they plead guilty a date will be set for their trial before the commissioner. Should they waive the preliminary hearing a date will also be set for their trial before the federal grand jury.

The prisoners will not receive a "show trial" known in police parlance as the "degree." The federal authorities sanction anything like this. The officers would be to draw a card from one of the men. And from some of the officers stated last night it would not be hard to write a

pool hall at 108 North Twenty-fourth street. They were seen in this place several times during the week. They played pool, laughed and talked about themselves, but had nothing to say



The May 29, 1909, Omaha World-Herald (above) reported extensive details of the train robbers' capture. Their trial began October 25 under Judge Thomas C. Munger (lower right).

prevented from doing so. Omaha police asked Idaho officials to return Matthews for trial with the rest of the gang. Matthews lost a fight to prevent extradition, and authorities brought him back to Omaha on July 11.²²

The trial of the accused bandits was originally scheduled to begin in July. Probably due to time consumed in securing the return of Matthews, though, the district attorney asked in early July that the trial be postponed until September. The defense agreed.²³ During the remainder of the summer and early fall the district attorney gathered background information about gang members and lined up witnesses to testify in the trial. By fall the prosecution had a good profile of the accused bandits.

These men were not novices in crime but instead western desperadoes who generally roamed the Pacific Northwest. Supposedly Matthews was the leader of the gang. According to an Idaho sheriff who helped arrest Matthews, he had for 20 years known Matthews and Woods in Idaho and Spokane, Washington, which was thought to be headquarters for the gang. They may also have perfected their organization while under sentence at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. Matthews reportedly served a sentence there, as did Woods and Shelton. Shelton and Gordon had lived in Spokane for several years and were friends. Shelton's real name was Lawrence J. Golden and Gordon's, Frank Grigware. Grigware's family had moved to Spokane from Michigan around 1900. Grigware and Golden, school friends in the early years of the century, eventually developed bad reputations through run-ins with authorities. Grigware, a carpenter in Spokane, by 1906 began to leave the city for brief periods of time. On a trip in 1907, Grigware, then 23, was arrested in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for burglary and larceny. Golden was the son of Thomas Golden, a fruit peddler with "one good eye and one bad eye." Fred Torgensen, who claimed to have been born in Denmark, gravitated to Spokane, where authorities in the Northwest wanted him on numerous charges.²⁴

Matthews, Woods, Torgensen, Golden and Grigware probably had worked together in crime approximately one year, it was thought. During that time authorities accused the gang

with horse theft, postal robberies at Victoria, British Columbia, and Everett, Washington (an individual was killed by the gang during the latter robbery), and other assorted crimes.²⁵ Woods was arrested in Spokane in the spring or summer of 1908 for attempting "to clean out a noodle joint," and in October, 1908, he and Torgensen were arrested as suspects in the Everett postal robbery. At the time they had nitroglycerine in their possession. Authorities also regarded the gang members as possible suspects in the robbery of a Great Northern Railroad train in Stevens County, Washington, in 1908. The Spokane detective who identified some of the men labeled Woods, Torgensen, and Golden as "three well-known Spokane crooks and safe blowers." The Spokane chief of police denounced them as three "bad men" but thought Grigware had never before been in trouble.²⁶ An Omaha journalist concluded that the gang members were "the James boys of the west."²⁷

By the end of 1908, perhaps because authorities were looking for them in the Northwest, the gang decided to switch its activities to another locale. Grigware and Golden left Spokane together in the company of Lillian Stevenson. They traveled to Denver, Hot Springs, Arkansas and Kansas City, although Stevenson remained in Denver. In Kansas City they joined Woods and Torgensen, who arrived there via Ogden, Utah. Matthews rendezvoused with the others after leaving his "front" area in Idaho, where he had been driving a stage coach. He said he left Idaho about April 1 to "investigate the horse market" in Kansas City and Omaha for a friend, Rex Buck. From Kansas City all but Matthews proceeded to Denver. Before leaving for Omaha, the group, in a whimsical mood, had a picture made by a professional photographer, who posed them in a studio "prop" auto. Matthews probably went straight to Omaha from Kansas City.²⁸

On October 25, the trial for the Omaha robbery opened under Judge Thomas C. Munger. The district attorney said he had a good case against the accused bandits, and with the courtroom "crowded to capacity," he began his presentation.²⁹ It was difficult to tie the accused directly to the scene of the crime, since the men had been masked. Witnesses could not agree whether four or five men had participated. Members of the train crew testified they believed Woods, Torgensen and

Grigware were members of the gang. Chief mail clerk George Whitmore said that "Woods practically answered the description of the man who commanded him to hand over the mail sacks."³⁰ Witnesses placed the accused men in Fremont, Nebraska, the evening of the robbery. The two bandits who commandeered the train probably boarded there. Others testified they were in Omaha before and after the robbery and in the Brown Park area of South Omaha. Some of the testimony was suspect. The boys who saw the suspects around Brown Park identified them, even though they were "about a block and a half from the men."³¹ Elizabeth Hayes, principal of Brown Park School, testified that she saw all five men around the school the week before the robbery. When the defendants' attorneys asked her if she was not testifying in an attempt to gain some of the reward money, she answered flippantly that she "did not count her chickens before they were hatched."³² There is no doubt all of the accused were in Omaha at the time of the robbery; Torgensen and Woods boarded at 324 North 15th, Golden and Grigware had a room at 518 South 16th, and Matthews lived at 1814 Dodge. But the defendants' locations at specific times remained disputed. Witnesses never really placed Matthews or Golden at the scene of the crime.³³ Nor can the impact of the reward money on witnesses be ignored, considering the struggle which later developed for these funds.

Although the accused could not be positively identified as the bandits, circumstantial evidence strongly linked them to the crimes. (1) As mentioned previously, stolen money was found on some of the men when arrested. Woods and Torgensen had three bills which could be identified because they were mutilated currency being submitted for redemption by a western bank.³⁴ (2) Hardware clerks in Spokane and Ogden, Utah, testified that they had sold the guns found in the gully to Grigware, Torgensen and Woods.³⁵ (3) Police experts testified that one of the guns had a defective firing pin which left a mark on the shell and that shells with a similar marking had been found at the scene of the robbery.³⁶ (4) The picture of Woods, Torgensen, Grigware and Golden taken in the fake automobile in Denver associated four of the men.³⁷ Lillian Stevenson testified that she knew only the four and not Mat-

thews, but Kansas City witnesses claimed all five were together in that city.³⁸ (5) Authorities testified that a love letter written to Grigware was found at the site of the robbery, and Alice Evans of Spokane testified that she wrote the letter to him.³⁹ (6) The prosecution exhibited parts of Spokane newspapers found at the site where one of the bandits lighted the signal fire to tell the bandits in the engine where to stop the train.⁴⁰

The defendants did not present a unified defense; Torgensen and Woods did not even testify. The newspapers do not say if Grigware presented an alibi. Golden claimed he spent the evening of the robbery at the movies, yet when called upon could not describe the movie. Golden said that after the movies he returned to his boarding house where several individuals saw him; however, no one could substantiate his claim.⁴¹

In their summaries the defense attorneys virtually wrote off Woods and Torgensen by admitting that the stolen money found in their possession was "a strong point against them." On the other hand, several Spokane citizens of substantial character submitted written depositions attesting to the good character of Grigware and Golden. The attorneys also pointed to the largely circumstantial nature of the evidence against them. Matthews, the defense contended, could not be implicated in the robbery. Lastly, the defendants' lawyers appealed to the members of the jury to remember that the accused, if convicted, would by law receive life imprisonment in the "living tomb."⁴²

If any Omahans doubted the guilt of the defendants as the trial drew to a close by November 10, most were probably convinced when they read their newspapers the following day. On November 11, the people of Omaha learned that the defendants had been working to secure an early release from jail. Someone had smuggled saws to the prisoners, and on the evening of November 9 the police discovered that Woods had almost completed sawing a 3-foot hole in the roof of his "solitary" cage on the second floor. The next morning authorities found six saws in the cell occupied by Torgensen, Grigware and Golden. Although the police immediately implemented tighter security measures, they kept the attempted

escape a closely guarded secret. They did not want to endanger a conviction in the trial by letting members of the jury be prejudiced by the prisoners' actions.⁴³

The jury brought in the verdict the afternoon of November 11 after deliberating only 75 minutes. The defendants were all found guilty. Upon hearing the verdict, Woods was "noticeably nervous" and Golden "turned deathly pale." The defendants' lawyers announced that they would ask for a new trial, on the grounds that the jury might have learned of the attempted escape and let that information bias their decision. Whatever the grounds, the lawyers declared they would "go to the limit in an endeavor to secure an acquittal, at least in the cases of Grigware and Golden."⁴⁴ The following week, on November 18, Judge Munger refused to grant a new trial and sentenced the men to life imprisonment.⁴⁵ The "James Boys of Spokane" had reached the end of the line in their outlaw careers.

Authorities lost little time in removing the men to a federal penitentiary. The next morning, handcuffed together and wearing heavy leg irons, the men boarded a train for Leavenworth, Kansas.⁴⁶ Most of them would remain there for several years. Grigware did not. In April, 1910, he and four other prisoners commandeered a locomotive in the prison grounds and crashed through a gate to freedom. All the escapees except for Grigware were quickly captured.⁴⁷ He managed to elude all pursuers and rode a freight train to Minneapolis. A year later he settled on a homestead in Canada, married and became a Canadian citizen, eventually becoming a successful building contractor. In 1934 Grigware was accidentally discovered when he trapped a silver fox out of season. When arrested, authorities sent his fingerprints to Ottawa and on to Washington, DC. Twenty-four years after his escape, authorities learned that James Lawrence Fahey of Jasper, Alberta, was actually Frank Grigware, train robber. But Grigware had established himself as a popular member of the Canadian community. Friends and neighbors defended him, and the Alberta Legislature unofficially voted that he should receive a pardon or clemency. Many appealed to President Franklin Roosevelt on Grigware's behalf and the United States government decided not to demand extradition.⁴⁸

Grigware's former companions fared differently than he. Matthews and Golden unsuccessfully appealed their convictions to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals.⁴⁹ Golden gained his release in August, 1913, when President Woodrow Wilson pardoned him after Woods and Torgensen swore that Golden was completely innocent. After his release, Golden passed through Omaha on his way to Spokane. In an interview he said that Matthews, Woods and Torgensen were all model prisoners and hoped to secure their freedom in one to two years by having their sentences commuted to 10 years.⁵⁰ Quite possibly they felt their chances would be improved by "coming clean" and clearing Golden, an "innocent" man. Release, though, did not come as quickly as they hoped. In 1919 President Wilson commuted Torgensen's and Woods' sentences to 15 years, and they were released in July of that year.⁵¹ In the fall of 1919, President Wilson commuted Matthews' sentence to 25 years, and he gained his freedom only in 1926 after having served almost 17 years.⁵²

The events surrounding the bandits marked the end of their story and the beginning of another. As the *World-Herald* remarked shortly after the conviction of the bandits, the verdict produced a rush of claimants for the reward money—\$25,000 by the Union Pacific and \$5,000 by the United States Government.⁵³ In reality the race for the money had started soon after the robbery in May. The *World-Herald* declared in an editorial that the boys who found the robbers' guns and other items should receive a large share of the reward. This deed was said to show the real quality of the American boy. He might occasionally play hookey, smoke cigarettes, or steal apples, but basically "he has good stuff in him."⁵⁴

Chief of Police John Briggs, of South Omaha, declared that Union Pacific officials had told him he would have "practically the say of how the reward money shall be split." Briggs felt he deserved some of the money for his role in the investigation and arrest of the bandits.⁵⁵ However, the parents of the boys besieged Briggs in his office and informed him that their sons were first in line. But others also wanted a share. In June, 1909, two South Omaha police officers became involved in an altercation because one felt the other had received undue

credit for his share in arresting the bandits, and thus had an unfair advantage as an applicant for some of the reward money.⁵⁶

After conviction of the bandits, all claims came forward. On November 18, six of the boys who had found the bandits' cache of articles in South Omaha filed suit in federal district court for the Union Pacific reward. Separate claims had to be filed for the \$5,000 federal reward. The *World-Herald* correctly predicted that this was "but the beginning of what promises to be a long and bitter struggle for a division" of the money.⁵⁷

Many other individuals filed as intervenors in the boys' suit, asking for a share of the reward. Principal Elizabeth Hayes asked for \$20,000 since she had notified police of the discovery of the bandits' items in the gully and testified that she had seen all five men around the school; South Omaha police requested \$15,000 for their role; another South Omaha lad declared that he should have \$5,000 for having found the robbers' flashlight hidden near their cache; an Omaha landlady asked for the same amount because she testified that Matthews, who rented a room from her, had met with the other men at her house.⁵⁸ In all, approximately 40 persons, including the original six boys, filed claims for the Union Pacific reward, amounting to almost \$200,000.⁵⁹ The situation was so complicated the Union Pacific decided to avoid any role in a final decision. In 1912, the railroad turned over its reward of \$25,000 to Judge Munger for proper distribution.⁶⁰

In May, 1913, nearly four years after the robbery, with the decision still forthcoming, an attorney involved in the case cynically observed that the claimants' lawyers would get most of the reward money and the claimants would have to settle for the four years' interest earned on the funds.⁶¹ In October, 1913, Judge Munger finally handed down his decision. He awarded \$2,700 to each of the six boys who had filed the suit, and \$5,400 each to two Denver policemen who had arrested Golden and to an Idaho marshal who had arrested Matthews. Five of the six boys—actually no longer boys—planned to use the money either to buy or rent farms or homes in South Omaha. The other boy, who was still in school, wanted to buy a shotgun.⁶² Only the South Omaha police expressed disappointment that they did not receive any of the Union Pacific

money. They did, though, receive some of the \$5,000 of federal reward money. The government handed out that money a year earlier. The six boys received \$375 each, Elizabeth Hayes \$400, Chief of Police Briggs \$200, and two South Omaha policemen \$200 each. The remainder went to the Denver police officers involved in the case. With the division of the reward money completed, the "Great Omaha Train Robbery" drew to a close.

NOTES

1. *Omaha World-Herald* (all references are to the morning edition unless otherwise noted), May 23, June 3, 1909. *Omaha Daily News*, May 23, 1909. The Omaha newspapers were very haphazard in their reporting of the robbery. The description that follows is a synthesis drawn as accurately as possible from the various accounts.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Omaha Daily News*, May 23, 24, 25, 1909. Although Pinkerton's still has a file on the robbery, most of their material consists of newspaper clippings. There are only three original Pinkerton documents remaining. George F. O'Neill, assistant vice president, director of personnel, Pinkerton's, Inc., to author, February 20, 1981, and Glenn Johnson, "The Mud Cut Robbery, A story straight from Pinkerton files," *Omaha*, February, 1981, 64-65.

5. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 24, 1909.

6. *Ibid.*, May 27, 1909.

7. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1909.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 28, 29, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 28, 1909.

10. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 29, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 28, 1909.

11. *Omaha Daily News*, May 28, 1909.

12. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 29, 1909.

13. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 29, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 29, 1909. No exact figure ever appeared as to the total amount taken during the robbery. Estimates ranged from \$300 to \$500.

14. By May 28 authorities discovered the automobile in the photograph was simply a photography prop from a studio in Denver, Colorado. But the picture proved the three men in custody were acquainted with one another. *Omaha Daily News*, May 28, 1909.

15. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 24, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 29, 1909.

16. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 29, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 29, 1909.

17. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 3, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, June 2, 1909.

18. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 3, 6, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, June 2, 1909.

19. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 13, 1909.

20. *Omaha Daily News*, June 3, 1909.

21. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 13, 1909.

22. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 19, 20, 21, 30, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, June 19, 26, July 11, 1909. One other theory is that a Kansas City waitress provided a descrip-

tion of Matthews and the Portland, Oregon, Pinkerton office identified him from that description. Johnson, "The Mud Cut Robbery."

23. *Omaha Daily News*, July 3, 1909.

24. *U.S. v. Donald W. Woods, et. al.*, United States District Court, Omaha Division, District of Nebraska, No. 141P; Depositions for Frank Grigware and request to subpoena witnesses by William Matthews; *Omaha World-Herald*, June 20, November 6, 10, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, June 3, 4, November 9, 1909; *Omaha Bee*, June 4, 5, November 6, 9, 10, 1909.

25. *Omaha Daily News*, June 3, 1909. There was continual confusion throughout the coverage of the robbery and the trial concerning the use of the names of the bandits. For this paper I will use the original names given in the newspapers for Matthews, Torgensen and Woods since they were listed as defendants, convicted and sent to Leavenworth by those names. For Shelton and Gordon I will use Golden and Grigware because they were so identified by authorities, although Golden entered Leavenworth as Jack Shelton.

26. *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, June 1, 3, 7, 1909. The chief of police perhaps meant that Grigware had never been in trouble in Spokane.

27. *Omaha Daily News*, June 3, 1909.

28. *U.S. v. Donald W. Woods, et. al.*

29. *Omaha Daily News*, October 25, 1909.

30. *Omaha World-Herald*, October 28, 29, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, October 27, 1909.

31. This quotation by the boys was from testimony given in a preliminary hearing before a federal commissioner in early June. It is assumed the boys did not change their testimony during the trial. *Omaha Daily News*, June 3, 1909.

32. *Ibid.*, October 30, 1909.

33. Testimony by witnesses regarding the location of the accused can be found in the *Omaha World-Herald*, October 29, 30, November 2, 3, 4, 1909, and the *Omaha Daily News*, October 29, November 2, 3, 1909.

34. *Omaha Daily News*, November 4, 1909.

35. *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), November 5, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, November 5, 6, 1909.

36. *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), November 5, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, November 5, 1909.

37. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 6, 1909.

38. *Ibid.*, November 3, 6, 1909.

39. *Omaha Daily News*, November 5, 1909.

40. *Ibid.*, October 28, 1909.

41. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 6, 1909.

42. *Omaha Daily News*, November 10, 1909.

43. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 11, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, November 11, 1909.

44. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 12, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, November 12, 14, 1909.

45. *Omaha Daily News*, November 18, 1909.

46. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1909.

47. *Omaha World-Herald*, April 22, 23, May 13, 1910.

48. This information is in the Pinkerton files. Johnson, "The Mud Cut Robbery."

49. *Omaha Daily News*, November 23, 1911.

50. *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), August 13, 1913. Prison Record of Jack Shelton, U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas, provided by G. R. Gilson, records control supervisor.

51. Prison Records of Fred Torgensen and Donald W. Woods, U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas.
52. Prison Record of William Matthews, U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas.
53. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 13, 1909. The sums were raised when authorities arrested the fifth man.
54. *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), May 31, 1909.
55. *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), May 31, 1909; *Omaha Daily News*, May 30, 1909.
56. *Omaha World-Herald*, June 1, 1909.
57. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1909.
58. *Ibid.* (evening edition), February 1, 3, 7, 14, 17, March 24, 1910.
59. *Ibid.*, October 11, 1910 (evening edition), May 7, 1913.
60. *Omaha Daily News*, February 11, 1912.
61. *Omaha World-Herald*, May 7, 1913.
62. *Ibid.*, October 24, 1913. The Union Pacific rewards totaled more than \$25,000 because of accumulated interest. Unfortunately, some of the boys profited from their experience with the Great Omaha Train Robbery only in a monetary sense. In 1916, two of the boys, now young men who had married and started families, were convicted of stealing goods from boxcars. They received a year in jail for their "train robbery," *Omaha World-Herald* (evening edition), March 4, 1916.