

# IOWA HISTORY



(Courtesy Library of Congress)

## Strangers in Buggy Rob Bank

It was an early spring morning in 1895 when two strangers in a buggy made their way into town at Adel just west of Des Moines. By the time they left, two town folk lay close to death and the bank was short an undetermined amount of cash.

At 9 a.m. the two men alighted from their buggy and entered the bank where they approached a teller window and indicated they wanted to make a deposit. Teller S.M. Leech had his back to the window as the two approached and as he turned to greet the pair, “his first gaze was attracted to the points of revolvers held in the hands of the strangers and directed at his head.”

“Turn over the funds of the bank—or suffer the consequences!” one of the strangers ordered.

Mr. Leech “courageously refused” and suffered the consequences. He was shot down while calling for help.

C.D. Bailey, a “wealthy merchant” who happened to be in the bank, answered Leech’s call for help and was shot down in his tracks.

In the meantime, another bank employee obeyed and handed over an undetermined amount of money to the robbers, who gathered up the cash and jumped into the buggy—heading

out of town as the “stupefied” townspeople watched. The robbers were gone before anyone could attempt to intercept them.

The stunned town folk were quick to overcome their shock. A posse was organized and spread over the nearby territory. By noon the posse had met with success!

The two men were discovered hiding in a barn in DeSoto, about six miles south of Adel. They refused to come out when ordered by the posse. The mood of the men who composed the posse was not forgiving. They decided to smoke the two bandits out of their hiding place. When they tried to escape the burning barn, the two bandits were shot down. Both survived and were taken to the Adel jail. They refused to give their names.

Back in Adel it was reported cashier Leech’s wounds were thought to be fatal; Mr. Bailey was expected to recover. The money was not found.

Source

“Cashier and Robber Shot,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 6, 1895.

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