

## "Distillery Robbed in 1923"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Carroll countians voted to outlaw the sale of alcoholic beverages in 1914, however, production at local distilleries continued even after Prohibition began in 1918. These rural distilleries became tempting targets for gangs who supplied liquor to speakeasies and individuals who still imbibed. The Industrial Grain Products Corporation in Carrollton was robbed in broad daylight and the story was front page news in the November 23, 1923 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate newspaper:

### "UNMASKED YOUTHS ROB DISTILLERY IN DAYLIGHT

Watchman Buckingham and Harry Larrimore Handcuffed and Wired Together at McGinnis --Seven Barrels Hauled Away On Truck --Knew The Guards Were Away --Left Three Barrels Behind --Make Good Their Escape.

Three unmasked men robbed a warehouse of the Industrial Grain Products Corporation at McGinnis Siding near Carrollton Sunday afternoon about 12:30 o'clock. Proceeding at broad daylight without any effort at concealment, the bandits handcuffed the watchman who was on duty and escaped with seven barrels of liquor in an automobile truck.

The warehouse of the distillery contains more than 7,000 barrels of whisky, it is not thought the bandits were frightened off before they had finished their work, but that the men felt that three barrels was all they could carry in their truck.

The truck is said to have been accompanied by a powerful touring car. Miles Long discovered the men robbing the distillery and walked out on the porch to look the men over. When the robbers saw Mr. Long they drove away hastily toward Leister's church. The truck was noticed going and coming from the distillery, which aroused suspicion of the neighbors believing a haul was being made.

Harry Buckingham, a watchman of the distillery, was seated in the boiler room of the plant about 12:30 p.m.. He suddenly was ordered to throw up his hands by a young man who had entered the room without attracting Buckingham's attention.

The intruder leveled a revolver at Buckingham's head and commanded him to throw up his hands. The guard did as he was ordered and was handcuffed by the bandit.

A moment later Harry Larrimore, entered the boiler room with Mr. Buckingham's lunch. He also was commanded to put up his hands. At first he thought the command was a practical joke, but soon saw the intruder was in earnest. He also was handcuffed.

After the robbers had handcuffed Messrs. Buckingham and Larrimore they remarked to them that Burns would be up on the 3 o'clock train and release them and that Mr. Doran was at the Westminster Hotel for dinner. The information was true but how did they know these facts.

Three suspicious looking men drove to Thomas Chapel Saturday afternoon and made a survey of the plant as in the roadway. They were in a roadster and stopped just north of the W.M.R. tracks, two got out of the machine and started to walk down the track but upon seeing some people at Mr. Jacob Long's

turned and walked back to the car and drove up the road and turned into the road leading to the distillery. They drove out the road within 200 yards of Mr. Joshua Murdock's barn, and then turned and came back on to the Gorsuch Road and disappeared up the road in the direction of Leister's Church.

One barrel in the warehouse had the bung out and some whiskey taken from it.

Using a crowbar the three men forced the Government lock on D warehouse. Five or six barrels of whisky were taken from the warehouse and rolled to C. Warehouse where their truck was stationed. Three barrels were abandoned outside of C. warehouse.

It took the guards more than an hour to free themselves from the heavy wire with which they were bound. They immediately notified Maurice Doran, manager of the distillery. Doran telephoned state and city police headquarters.

Charles Wiegand, Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue, and Edmund Budnitz, State Prohibition Director, also were notified. They directed Federal agents to investigate the robbery.

Both Theodore F. Brown, representative of the State's Attorney in Carroll county, and Sheriff Edward Martin were away in business.

Warehouses of the Industrial Grain Products Corporation, formerly known as the McGinnis Distillery, contain 7,000 barrels of whisky. Officials of the company said they did not believe the robbers had stolen more than three barrels of whisky, valued to bootleg prices at about \$1,000 a barrel.

Both guards said they believed that none of the three bandits was more than 20 years old. All of them wore sweaters and caps and were unmasked, according to the guards.

The officials were of the opinion that the truck used by the robbers was a light truck with a Maryland license, seen in the neighborhood of the distillery Saturday night and Sunday morning. The license is listed under a Baltimore address.

It is said that truck was stolen that hauled the seven barrels of whiskey away."

Robbers visited the distillery again in 1926 and made off with a large quantity of whiskey valued at nearly \$100,000. Only the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 made the distilleries less likely targets for armed robbers.

Photo caption: The thieves who robbed the distillery in Carrollton in 1923 may have known that State's Attorney Theodore F. Brown (pictured here) and Sheriff Edward Martin were out of town. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.