

# Carl & Grace Browder

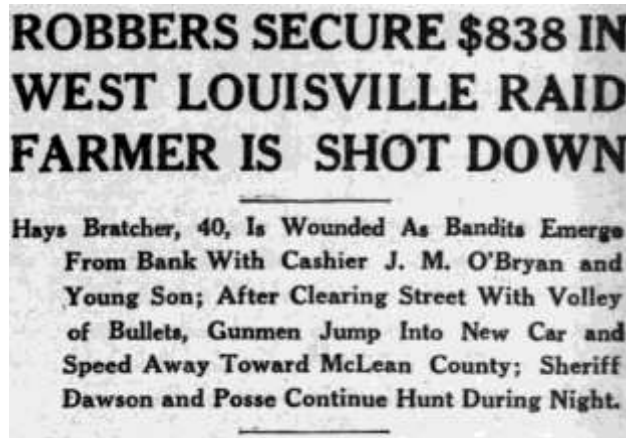
## Kentucky's Bonnie & Clyde

By Jerry Long



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 10 January 1929, pp.1 & 3:

### Bank Bandits' Automobile Is Found



The automobile used by the bandits who held up the Farmers bank at West Louisville yesterday afternoon, was found near Elba late last night by Sheriff Len Dawson, his deputies and several Owensboro men, who had been trailing the robbers. The car was across the road. It is a 1928 Dictator Studebaker with a Jefferson county license No. 49,778.

The car was brought to Owensboro by Sheriff Dawson and his deputies early this morning. Hunt for the bandits will be continued, at daylight.

Information received by the Messenger from Louisville this morning was to the effect a Studebaker car answering the description of the bandit motor, was stolen by bandits from a Louisville garage Wednesday night. The car is owned by S. K. Bernstein, Louisville.

The description of the bandits who stole the car tallies with that of the men who robbed the bank.

Two unmasked bandits held up the Farmers bank at West Louisville, fifteen miles west of Owensboro, at 2:45 o'clock yesterday afternoon, scooped up all of the money, \$838.42, backed the cashier and his son to the street, and then opened fire with a machine gun on pedestrians, probably fatally wounding one man.

The bandits, who were riding in a new Chrysler sedan, with Jefferson county license, drove out of West Louisville in the direction of Beech Grove, McLean county, pursued by Sheriff Len Dawson, Owensboro, his deputies and a large posse of men.

Bystander Is Shot

The wounded man, Hays Bratcher, 40 years old, farmer, of the St. Joseph section, was shot through the body near the heart. He was brought to Owensboro in an ambulance and taken to a hospital.

J. M. O'Bryan, cashier of the bank, and his fourteen-year-old son, Henry, were the only persons in the bank when the bandits entered. One of them was carrying a sack and said to the cashier, "I have got something for you." When the bandit raised up he had a machine gun in his hand, Mr. O'Bryan said. The cashier and his son were forced to stand with their hands over their heads while the bandit supposed to have, been a young woman, holding a pistol, took all of the money in sight.

The bandit with the machine gun told O'Bryan if he found a gun in the bank he was going to shoot him with it.

### Back Men to Street

When the collecting bandit had taken all of the available cash, O'Bryan and his son were backed to the street and told to walk down the street with their hands held above their heads. At the same time the command was given to everyone on the street to get inside and the machine gunner proceeded to press the trigger of his weapon.

Bratcher, who was standing in the door of the Heady Motor company garage, across the street, called to the bandits and asked them what they were doing when they fired one shot above his head. The answer was another fusillade of bullets, one of which went through Bratcher's body and he sank to the ground.

Three shots were fired at Jake Thompson, who was repairing a car in front of the garage, two of the bullets hitting a gas tank near him.

### Bandits Speed Away

When the streets were finally deserted the bandits jumped into their car and drove out of West Louisville.

Motorists arriving in West Louisville a short time after the robbery reported meeting the bandit car. O'Bryan said the machine gunner was dressed in overalls, wore a blue sweater and aviator's leather helmet. The other bandit, small of stature, had nothing to say. Both O'Bryan and his son said the small bandit was a woman.

Probably the most thrilling sight was witnessed by the young woman operator of the telephone exchange on the upper floor of a building nearby. She saw the bandit operating the machine gun from her position on the board. A mechanic from headquarters of the telephone company was in the exchange at the time and realizing what had happened immediately called the sheriff's office, notifying the officers of the robbery, and then proceeded to notify all surrounding towns and ferries across Green river.

### Bratcher Has Chance

Delbert Glenn, of the Davis & Glenn ambulance service, was called at 2:53 and notified a man had been badly shot and to take the ambulance to West Louisville to remove him to the city hospital. Mr. Glenn found Bratcher sitting in a chair at the garage and quickly removed him to the hospital, where an x-ray exposure was made and it was found he had been shot through the abdomen, just below the heart, the bullet ranging downward. The bullet was of large calibre, and

passed entirely through the body. Early this morning Bratcher was reported to be doing well under the circumstances.

Bratcher lived on the farm of Mrs. Huff, west of St. Joseph. Mrs. Huff is a sister-in-law of County Judge R. L. McFarland. Bratcher also worked much during the summer for the county judge on his farm in that section.

James McKinney, of the Neeley & McKinley insurance agency, left West Louisville ten minutes before the arrival of the bandits. He had been in the garage of the Heady Motor company and in returning to Owensboro saw the bandit car approaching the Glenn bridge about three miles out of West Louisville toward Owensboro. The bandit car was making such terrific speed McKinney pulled clear off the road and allowed it to pass.

T. M. Head, postmaster, whose place of business is across the street, saw the bandit car pull up to the bank and both men get out and go into bank, he said. They were in the bank some two or three minutes, when they came out and did their shooting and left hurriedly.

#### Has Narrow Escape

Goebel Hodgkins was standing near the Heady Motor company garage and one of the bullets from the machine gun passed through the sleeves of his coat. Hodgkins said he thought the men were just pulling off a little fireworks & did not mean to shoot anyone.

It was reported that twenty-eight shells were picked up in the road just outside the bank, where the machine gun operator stood when he fired his fusillade of shots. The gunner seemed to be shooting high when he first started, intending to frighten everyone away from catching the license number of the car, for when Bratcher and a few others failed to heed the warning to get in off the street, the gun range was lowered easily.

#### Sheriff Gets Trace

Sheriff Len Dawson was called at 5 o'clock and told by Juda Boyle, who lives on the Beech Grove Calhoun road, a short distance from Elba toward Calhoun, that he had passed the car giving the description already given the sheriff. The car was in deep mud and having plenty of trouble. Boyle said, and would not be able to negotiate the bad roads in that section.

Dawson, his deputies. Pack Morris, Robert Weikel and Dick Cashen, with a posse of West Louisville and Owensboro citizens headed into McLean county in the direction the bandits had taken, and were expecting to get into Wyman, a small hamlet five miles from Elba, toward Calhoun.

Sheriff Spicer, of McLean county. with; a good sized posse, was watching all roads and placed a guard at the bridge and ferries at and near Calhoun. Farmers in the neighborhood of where the bandits had gone into the McLean county section were aroused and a large number of them were searching the roads and nearby country. This section was about six miles from Green river in any direction, and efforts were being made to cut off the bandits from any of the ferries.

#### Bandits Were Novices

It was the belief yesterday afternoon the bandits were either inexperienced, or of local talent, to have, picked the West Louisville bank to rob as it is well known the bank keeps but a small amount of money on hand at any time, because of its ability to obtain any needed sum within thirty minutes from Owensboro.

The evident unfamiliarity with the road conditions and routes also was taken to be peculiar, as experienced bandits would have mapped out a route of quick and easy access, instead of through a territory that is very low and wet and roads are all but impassable.

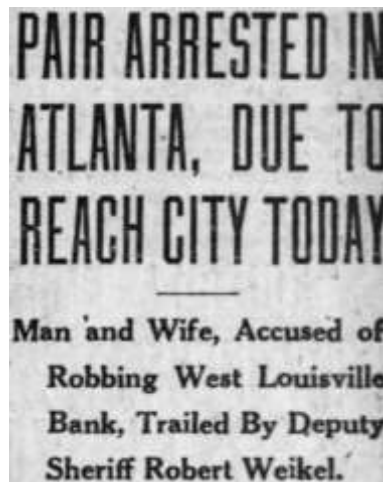
W. G. Riney is president of the bank, A. J. Shoemaker, vice president and J. M. O'Bryan the cashier. They; with R. L. Anderson and Judge Boyle constitute the directory. The bank was protected by ditry of this character in the burglary insurance.

This is the first attempt at ban - county since the attempt seven years ago to rob the Bank of Whitesville by three young men, who were frightened away by the cashier and later captured and served penitentiary sentences.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 15 January 1929, p.1:**

### **Louisville Cops Quiz Browders**



Carl Browder and his young wife, accused of holding up and robbing the Farmers bank at West Louisville last Wednesday of \$838 and shooting down with a machine gun, Hays Bratcher, bystander, as they emerged from the bank, who were arrested in Atlanta Ga., by Deputy Sheriff Robert Weikel. Owensboro and Atlanta Officers Sunday night, had reached Louisville last night en route to Owensboro.

The Browders arrived in Louisville at 10:37 p. m. accompanied by Deputy Weikel and W.M. Holland, of the Atlanta vice squad, and were met at the Union depot by Col. Roy W. Easley, chief of the Louisville police, with four detectives in the police patrol.

Browder's wife was questioned at headquarters until 11:12 o'clock and her husband until 12:54: o'clock this morning. Carl Browder was identified by Ben Fielden, white, night mechanic at the Klementz & Son garage, 1904 South Third street, as one of the men who on the night of Tuesday, January 8, held him at bay with a revolver and stole the Studebaker sedan which was later captured by Sheriff Len Dawson after it had been abandoned by the bank bandits.

Eight or ten persons, representatives of banks that had been robbed recently, were at police headquarters to look Carl Browder over as possibly connected with holdups. Roy Browder, brother of Carl Browder, is slated on the criminal court docket for this morning, in Louisville, as a common gambler.

Sheriff Len Dawson and Deputies Weikel and Cashen will leave Louisville this morning at 8 o'clock by train, with their prisoners for Owensboro, Dawson announced last night.

Browder denied any connection with the holdup at West Louisville, Deputy Sheriff Weikel said. He admitted, however, Weikel said, the car found in Central City Wednesday afternoon of the holdup was his car, but said he had acquired it by the simple process of taking it from George Coffin, of Indianapolis, who owed him \$1,000 and would not pay it.

#### Machine Gun Here

Sheriff W. E. Spicer. Of McLean county, sent over to Sheriff. Dawson yesterday the parts of the machine gun his deputy had found in McLean county following the robbery, but Chief of Police Forest Bibb, of Central City, who searched the Buick coupe which Carl Browder admitted owning, refused to deliver the articles found in the car. Sheriff Dawson said yesterday before leaving for Louisville.

County Judge McFarland issued a subpoena duces tecum for Bibb to bring all articles found in the car to Owensboro for the trial of John Carr at 2 o'clock Thursday afternoon.

#### Carr Trial Postponed

Carr, who was arrested Thursday on a charge of having a stolen automobile in his possession, and later with complicity in the robbery of the bank, will be given a preliminary hearing at 2 o'clock Thursday afternoon before Judge McFarland, a postponement being ordered at 1:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when the case was called from the order made Saturday upon the second arrest.

Both County Attorney Wilbur E. Miller, representing the state, and Elmer Brown, for Carr, agreed a continuance might be made until the arrival here of the Browders from Louisville. Carr had made no statement of how he came into possession of the stolen automobile, which he denies having driven. In the face of statements by a number of persons in Owensboro, who told the sheriff of seeing him in the automobile.

#### Weikel leaves on Trail.

Deputy Sheriff Weikel left Owensboro early Sunday morning after Sheriff Len Dawson had learned Mrs. Carl Browder's former home had been at Atlanta. Both of the officers went to Louisville, where they procured from the Louisville police department a photograph of Browder, and Weikel left Louisville for Atlanta at 8 o'clock Sunday morning.

Weikel got in Atlanta at 8 o'clock Sunday night and at once communicated with the police department there and two men were sent to a residence. These two officers all but queered the capture, for instead of making a quiet inspection and reporting back, they entered the house and were seen by Carl Browder, who was hidden in a closet. They reported back Mrs. Browder was sick and believed her husband had escaped through a window.

#### House Surrounded.

Deputy Sheriff Weikel then got a squad of police and returned at once to the. House, which was surrounded by the police while Weikel and another officer entered the room of Mrs. Browder and ordered her to dress, as they were putting her under arrest. Weikel asked Mrs. Browder where her husband was and she declared he had not been in her company since Christmas, or longer, and she knew nothing of him.

Weikel found Browder under her bed and ordered him out and then told his wife to look at her husband. At police headquarters in Atlanta after both Browders had been taken there some one of the officers said something about Browder hiding under his wife's bed, he turned to Lieutenant Andrews, one of the first two to go to the house, and said "only your gray hairs saved you, old man. I was standing in a dark room with a gun trained on your heart when you were talking to my wife. If you hadn't been an old codger, I'd have bumped you off."

Browder's wife was suffering with a deep cold when she reached Louisville.



**"Tracking Kentucky's Girl Machine Gunner," by Robert Faherty  
Startling Detective Magazine, February 1935:**



Old Green River flowing swiftly to the Ohio, is a strong and mysterious force. "Deepest in the whole world," say western Kentucky folk, awe in their voices. "It puts a spell." The legend was repeated often after January 9, 1929, the day of West Louisville's bank stickup.

On that afternoon a new sedan appeared in the hamlet's only street, and two strangers stepped out. That in itself was an event. Men in boots and mackinaws strolled from in front of the general store to Heady's garage to get a better view of the strangers while they continued their talk of prices of dark fired tobacco on the Owensboro markets.

The strangers walked quickly toward the Farmers Bank. One was a tall and slender young man in overalls, leather jacket and aviator's helmet, carrying a heavy object wrapped in burlap. The other was slim and short, in a sheepskin coat, khaki breeches, knee-boots and cap.

They strode past the mule team and its wagon laden with coal from the bituminous mine across the valley, and hurried into the bank.

Cashier Martin O'Bryan looked up and heard a drawling voice:

"I got something for you, Mister."

Then he saw a Thompson machine gun, leveled and ready, in the hands of the young man. O'Bryan jumped to his feet and raised his hands. The cashier's son, Henry, 14, heard the voice and walked in from the rear office. The gun was turned toward him and he held up his hands. The smaller robber was guarding the door with a pistol.

"Take this, and let go on 'em if they move!" the leader commanded. The small bandit pocketed the pistol, took the machine gun and held it on the O'Bryans.

"Don't move a finger, or you get it," the small bandit commanded. The voice was soft and gentle, like a woman's!

The tall bandit ransacked O'Bryan's cage, stuffed bills into a sack, and ran out of the cage, snapping:

"If I ain't got all the cash money you got, you're sure going to get a shooting. Now, march."

The cashier and his son marched, out the door and down the walk, while the small bandit held the machine gun behind them. The leader then snatched the gun and his pal drew a pistol. They heard an outcry and saw the townsmen rushing toward them from the garage.

"Get back!" the tall bandit yelled. He whirled, with his finger on the trigger. But still the men moved. The bandit pressed trigger and the townsmen dived for cover behind the gasoline tanks in front of the garage. Lead spattered against the tanks and sprayed the interior of the garage. Hays Bratcher, tobacco farmer, fell screaming, shot in the right side.

The gunner whirled then and sent a volley of bullets into Mackey's store, opposite the bank. Then he turned and raked the street with slugs.



Parking their car (1); the bandit pair entered the Farmers Bank (2) and forced the cashier and his son out of the building as they fled; before speeding away, the bandit leader (4) sent a rain of slugs into a group of loafers in front of Heady's garage (3)

### Officers Hit The Trail

The small bandit took the machine gun and the pair sprang into their car, and sped west.

Sheriff Len Dawson, at Owensboro, fourteen miles away, received the alarm by telephone. He called Deputy Bob Weikel, a giant of six-foot-three, expert with pistol and rifle.

"Want to meet up with a machine gun?" the sheriff asked. "Two fellows shot up West Louisville and got \$1,000, all the Farmers Bank had."

"I'm on my way," said Weikel, strapping on a cartridge belt. After telephoning the alarm to other towns, Dawson and Weikel led three carloads of deputies and citizens with rifles in a search of the roads west of West Louisville. They had good descriptions of the robbers and of the Studebaker sedan, but the car's license plates had been covered with mud.

The officers hunted in the desolate bottom lands along the Green River southwest of Owensboro. They sped to St. Joseph and Beech Grove and combed the side roads until nightfall, questioning bridgemen and ferrymen along the river, without result.

After more hours along Green River in the silent lowlands swept by a strong and chill wind, the officers came upon an abandoned car—the Studebaker—stuck in the mud. In the sedan were two caps, handkerchiefs, bullets.

"They're near here," Dawson said. "There must be some tracks!"

Searching with flashlights, the officers found the most elementary of clues, footprints in the mud, and they hurried on in the darkness, following bootprints, one pair always of deep imprint, the other pair smaller and of lighter imprint. The trail led to an abandoned shack, and then away from it. The fugitives had rested there, apparently, and then had gone on.

Soon after dawn the officers reached Calhoun, twelve miles distant. They learned that a ferryman had been held up at Eastwood by two tired travelers afoot, and had been forced to ferry them across Green River. Dawson and Weikel then followed the stream, and found more clues. Footprints near a bush led to discovery of the machine gun there, wrapped in a sweater.

Near Central City the officers found a Buick coupe abandoned by the roadside. The telltale bootprints were near it. Dawson found a woman's overnight bag and a larger bag in the car. The small case contained a key which opened the large one. Under the seat were a .38 pistol and some .45 cartridges.

Dawson studied the contents of the large bag, a man's shirt with a "B" monogram, and a woman's dress and shoes and lingerie.

"The little robber is a woman!" Dawson told Weikel, "A gal that totes a machine gun!"

But the trail of bootprints ended in Central City. The sheriff knew the pair could have taken a bus out of there or hitch-hiked. He continued to search in the town for some indication of the direction of their flight. He learned the Buick had been stolen in Calhoun. Then he got apparent confirmation of his belief that one bandit was a girl.

A storekeeper in Central City said he had sold a woman's coat, dress, shoes and hat to a helmeted young man in overalls who said they were for "his sister," and described her as weighing 90 pounds. He had paid with new bills.

But an all-day search along Green River failed to yield another trace of the fugitives.

### Watch Gambling Spots

Dawson and Weikel talked things over. Weikel said: "If that fellow is a Kentuckian he gambles some, especially if he's the kind, that sticks up banks."

Dawson agreed, and decided upon a quest at Louisville, where a gambler always can find any sort of game if he has money. Dawson and Weikel sped to Louisville with the bags and the clothing and the machine gun. They hurried to the office of Detective Chief M. Rey Yarberry at Louisville headquarters.

Yarberry told them the Studebaker had been stolen from a used car lot in Louisville three days before. He studied the various effects of the bandits.

"Isn't there somebody whose name begins with B that plays in the gambling spots here?" Dawson asked.

"Browder!" said Yarberry. "He's in all of them. But he isn't tall and slim like the robber. Wait—he has a brother, and we've got his description."

Yarberry checked his record and found the description of Carl Browder was exactly that of the bandit leader. The clue of the monogram on the shirt apparently had led in the right direction. Carl Browder was 26 years old, tall and slender, weighing 140 pounds.

Dawson learned that day that Browder had been seen in Hawesville the day before the robbery, and later had been seen at Calhoun and Owensboro. Calhoun folk told the sheriff of Browder's young wife, Grace, slim and pretty. Both had lived along Green River. Dawson charged the pair with the robbery and shooting and handed two warrants to Weikel to serve on them.



Weikel hunted vainly about Owensboro. The couple had vanished. Louisville police searched without result. Weikel then hunted out Browder's friends in Green River towns and traced their movements. He found that one young man had telephoned often to Atlanta, Georgia. He seized the youth and searched him and found a card with an Atlanta phone number.

"That's Browder's number," Weikel said coolly, "but what's his street address?"

The young man stepped into the trap. "All Carl gave me was the phone number," he said.

Weikel kept the youth locked up while he sped to Atlanta with his two warrants. He was in the Atlanta police station the next night, and obtained the aid of Police Lieutenant W. H. Andrews. While Weikel and Andrews approached the door of the house that had the phone number, a squad of detectives surrounded the building.

Weikel rapped on the door and a gray-haired man looked out. Andrews seized him and Weikel ran in, with his .45 ready. An inner door slammed shut. Weikel sprang to it and jerked it open. He saw a woman lying on a bed. She was small and slim and pretty, looking like a child.

"Who are you?" she said. "What do you want?"

Weikel covered her with his .45.

"You're Grace Browder," he said. "I want you and Carl. Where is he?"

She sat up on the edge of the bed.

"I ain't seen Carl since Christmas," she said in a soft voice. "But I'm Grace. If you're a policeman you've gone looking for the wrong folks."

"Let's See Your Hands!"

Weikel jerked open a closet door. There was no one in it. He jabbed his pistol against the clothing on the hangers. Then he heard a sound—from under the bed.

Weikel sprang near the bed.

"I'm holding on you," he snapped. "Come out, Browder, and let's see your hands!"

Slowly hands extended out from under the bed. Weikel seized them and pulled. He dragged out a man, a young man, tall and slender and good-looking, with dark hair and dark flashing eyes.

"Sure, I'm Browder," he said. "I'd have given you a right smart fight if I didn't have to move my legs so you heard me."

Weikel confirmed that possibility. While Andrews covered the two prisoners the deputy searched under the bed and found a loaded .45.

While Weikel was taking his prisoners back for trial he heard Grace's story of old Green River. She said Browder had spent his boyhood along the stream, fishing and hunting and frog-sticking. Then he became a vagabond in the East, shipped to European ports, returned and wandered in the West. On one trip back to his boyhood haunts he met Grace and they married and made their home in Detroit.

"Carl hankered for Kentucky all the time," she said, with a sigh, "and I did too. He talked about the Green River and the frogs a-hollerin' in the bottoms. We planned to buy a place near Calhoun and settle down to be near the river. Carl was going to get some money quick and put it on the dice at Louisville and win enough for a home."

Though the couple fought the bank robbery charge, there were many to identify them and conviction was simple. Louisville police said they suspected Browder of machine gun holdups there. A jury sentenced Grace to twenty years and Carl to eighteen.

"Green River puts a spell on folks," she often said, "and Carl and I will go back and have a home there when we get out."

But Green River was not to offer shelter to the couple. Carl attacked a guard at the Eddyville prison and was shot to death. Grace mourned and wept, while there remained many years in which she must pay for her dubious distinction as Kentucky's girl machine gunner.



Carl Browder (1902-1931)



On left – Joseph Martin O’Bryan (1882-1952), cashier at West Louisville Farmers Bank, who was held up by Carl & Grace Browder. On right – Robert Sebastian Weikel (1880-1966), Daviess County Deputy Sheriff, who captured the Browders.



**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 7 March 2013, p.1B:**

### **Browders' saga made for movies**

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

It's a shame Hollywood never discovered Lillian Grace Browder. Her life — at least the early years — would have made a great movie. Grace was 23 when she and her husband, Carl, drove into West Louisville on the afternoon of Jan. 9, 1929.

Eighty-four years later, she's still remembered as Daviess County's version of Bonnie Parker.

According to Startling Detective magazine's February 1935 account of the incident — "Tracking Kentucky's Girl Machine Gunner" — Martin O'Bryan, the 47-year-old cashier at Farmers Bank of West Louisville, was sitting at his desk, working with an adding machine.

His 14-year-old son, Henry, (who would later become a Catholic priest) had brought in some coal for the stove.

T.R. Hicks, 43, who lived near West Louisville, noticed a Studebaker pulling to the curb as he left the bank.

Two people got out of the car. One carried a sack under his arm.

One was a tall, slender man in overalls, leather jacket and aviator's helmet. The other was slim and short, wearing a sheepskin coat, khaki breeches, kneeboots and a cap.

"I got something for you, Mister," the taller of the two said as they entered the bank.

The elder O'Bryan mumbled, "That's fine."

Then he looked up into the muzzle of a Thompson submachine gun.

The smaller bandit was guarding the door with a pistol.

"Take this and let go on 'em if they move!" the leader commanded, handing over the submachine gun.

The little bandit pocketed the pistol.

"Don't move a finger, or you get it!" the small robber said, in a voice as soft as a woman's.

The tall bandit cleaned out O'Bryan's cage and said: "If I ain't got all the cash money you got, you're sure going to get a shooting! Now, march!"

The O'Bryans walked out of the bank with the small bandit behind them.

Two boys came out of Mackey's Store. The lead robber ordered them back inside.

They didn't move fast enough. So he opened fire, sending the boys diving for cover.

Hays Bratcher, a West Louisville farmer, was sitting at the garage waiting for a bus. When he heard the shooting, Bratcher walked to the door to investigate.

The gunman turned, spraying bullets in that direction. Bratcher was hit in the right side and critically wounded.

Then the pair leaped into the car and roared away. In the scramble, they dropped 42 cents — the only money ever recovered.

The other \$838 was never found.

Sheriff Len Dawson was at the courthouse in Owensboro —14 miles away — when the call came in. He assigned the case to Weikel, a 6-foot-3 deputy who was an expert with pistol and rifle.

Weikel led a three-car posse of deputies and citizens into southwestern Daviess County in search of the robbers.

Hours later, they found the getaway car stuck in the mud in the Green River bottoms.

When they reached Calhoun, they learned a ferryman had been held up near Eastwood by two tired travelers who forced him to ferry them across the Green.

The submachine gun was recovered near the ferry, wrapped in a sweater, hidden in a bush.

A Buick, stolen in Calhoun, was discovered abandoned near Central City. Inside were bags with a man's shirt monogrammed with the letter "B," and a woman's dress, shoes and lingerie.

"The little robber is a woman!" Dawson is said to have exclaimed. "A gal that totes a machine gun!"

The monogram pointed to Carl Browder, 26.

Calhoun friends told about his pretty young wife, Grace. Both had lived along the Green River. But the couple had vanished.

Finally, Weikel discovered an Atlanta phone number on a friend of the Browders. He got two warrants and headed South Jan. 13.

With Atlanta police in tow, Weikel knocked on the door of the house to which he had tracked the pair. Police grabbed the man who answered the door. And Weikel ran in with a .45 in his hand.

Grace Browder, who had an ear infection, was lying on the bed. Covering her with his pistol, Weikel yanked open a closet door. Then he heard a sound from beneath the bed.

"I'm holding on you!" he snapped. "Come out, Browder. And let's see your hands!"

"I'd have given you a right smart fight," Browder said, "if I didn't have to move my legs so you heard me."

Under the bed, Weikel found a .45-caliber pistol.

The two were charged with bank robbery, auto theft and malicious shooting and wounding.

Grace said when they married, the couple had moved to Detroit.

But "Carl hankered for Kentucky all the time," she said, "and I did too. He talked about the Green River and the frogs a-hollerin' in the bottoms. We planned to buy a place near Calhoun and settle down to be near the river. Carl was going to get some money quick and put it on dice at Louisville and win enough for the home."

When Weikel and his prisoners arrived at Owensboro's Union Station, the crowd was so thick police had to shove a path through to the patrol wagon.

The couple were indicted on Feb. 4. Carl's trial was set for Feb. 13.

The jury heard all the evidence, including Bratcher's dramatic testimony, which included pointing a finger at Browder and exclaiming, "That is the man who shot me down!"

But the case ended in a hung jury.

Two days later, Grace went on trial. At 7 a.m., two hours before the trial, the courthouse was already packed.

It took the jury 35 minutes to sentence her to the maximum 20 years in prison.

The state waited 11 days to put Carl back on trial. This time, it took a jury 45 minutes to give him 18 years.

"Green River puts a spell on folks," Grace said, "and Carl and I will go back and have a home there when we get out."

But for Carl Browder, it was a death sentence. Three years later, at age 29, he attacked a guard at Eddyville prison and was shot to death.

Grace continued to live on the edge.

On Nov. 6, 1930, The Associated Press reported that three women serving terms ranging from 10 years to life had escaped from the state reformatory in Frankfort.

They were listed as Otis Grammar, serving life on a Harlan County murder conviction; Grace Browder, 20 years for bank robbery from Daviess County; and Alma Williams, the "blonde bandit," serving 10 years for holdups in Covington.

They had been in the prison hospital when they broke the lock on the weaving room door in the women's department, made a rope and slid down from the second floor. Once on the ground, they scaled a wall with a plank.

They must have been captured shortly after that, because the AP reported on April 4, 1935, that Gov. Ruby Laffoon had just paroled Browder and Williams.

Browder reportedly returned to Atlanta and lived quietly after that.  
Weikel was elected jailer that fall, eventually serving two terms — 1930-38.  
He died in 1966 at age 85.  
Farmers Bank is long gone.

But Grace and Carl Browder's submachine gun is still on display in the Daviess County Sheriff's Department, a reminder of another time.



Thompson submachine gun used by Carl Browder in the 1929 robbery of the West Louisville Bank. The gun is on display in a locked case at the Daviess County Sheriff's office at the Daviess County Courthouse.



### **Carl Browder (1902-1931)**

Carl Browder was born 15 May 1902 in McLean County, Kentucky. He was the son of John Browder (1873-1905) & Nora L. Bartley (1867-after 1900), grandson of Josiah B. Browder (1840-1920) & Laura A. Morris (1849-1907) and great grandson of Thomas Browder (1810-1880) & Pernetie Pettus Jackson (1810-1886) . Carl's parents married 30 January 1897 in McLean County, KY and were listed in the McLean County, KY 1900 census.

Carl's father, John Browder, was born 22 September 1873 and was shot and killed near Panther in Daviess County, KY on 4 August 1905. John Browder has a monument in the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Cemetery in McLean County, KY. He was shot by his stepson, Forest Page, age 17, who was reported to have been defending his mother. Carl's mother, Nora, had married first Smith Page (1860-1894), 15 January 1885, in Breckinridge County, KY. Nora had children – Isaac El Page (1886-1964), Forest L. Page (1887-1960), Roy Lee Browder (1897-1952), Ruby Mae Browder Spearman (1898-1954) and Carl Browder (1902-1931).

Carl Browder was three years old when his father was killed. He and three of his siblings were listed in the home of an uncle, Edward Bartley, in the 1910 census of McLean County, KY.

Carl married Lillian Grace Johnson on 24 January 1927 in Chicago, Cook County, IL. Carl had several scraps with the law before he and Grace on 9 January 1929 robbed the Farmers Bank in West Louisville, a small hamlet in the western section of Daviess County, KY. Four days after the robbery, on 13 January 1929, they were arrested in Atlanta, Georgia, Grace's home town. Carl was given an 18-year sentence on 26 February 1929 for the robbery and an additional 5 years was added for the shooting of a bystander. He entered the Kentucky State Penitentiary at Eddyville, in Lyon County, KY on 3 March 1929. At the prison Carl was shot and killed on 15 June 1931 by a

prison guard, C. F. Logsdon, who it was ruled was being attacked. Carl's body was taken to Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, where his half-brother, Forest Page, was a resident. He was buried on 17 June 1931 at Rose Hill Cemetery, in Owensboro (section E, lot #86, the grave is unmarked). The Farmers Bank in West Louisville, KY closed its doors on 5 January 1932.



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 5 August 1905, p.1:**



"Papa, don't come any nearer. I'll kill you if you do." These were the words spoken by Forrest Page, a seventeen-year-old boy, as he raised his shotgun to his shoulder and gave warning to his stepfather, John Browder, who, it is alleged, was advancing on him with half of a brick in his hand, at his home near Panther, early Friday morning. Browder did not take the boy's warning. A moment later a shot rang out and the stepfather staggered to the fence nearby and sank to the ground. The shots from the gun had entered his breast and death was almost instantaneous.

The neighbors were immediately notified of the murder. Justice of the Peace T. L. Martin, soon arrived on the scene. The boy made no attempt to escape and he was turned over to Sheriff Short, after an inquest had been conducted by Justice Martin. County Judge Triplett issued a warrant for his arrest, charging him with murder, and he was brought to this city late Friday afternoon and lodged in jail. He will be arraigned before Judge Triplett this morning.

#### Only Two Witnesses.

Only two witnesses were examined at the inquest – the boy and his mother. Mrs. Browder was the first witness. She said that her husband was about twenty-eight years of age. They moved near Panther from McLean county last winter. Her husband worked at a sawmill near Panther. He came home late Thursday night. The family had gone to bed. His wife let him in the door and she stated that she saw that he was mad. She had intended going to Owensboro on Friday with one of the neighbors to take some fruit. She and her son, Forrest, worked on the farm while Browder was at the sawmill.

Mrs. Browder stated that she arose rather early Friday morning and told her husband she wished he would get up and harness the horse, saying at the same time that she wanted to go to town. She stated that her husband told her she could not have the horse. She then told her son to go to John McLemore's farm and tell him that she could not go to town that day. The witness said the boy passed through the house and as he did so he took down his shotgun. It was his habit when going anywhere on an errand to take his gun with him to shoot birds and squirrels on the way. As the boy passed out the door Browder came out on the porch and heard him say that his mother should go to town anyway. This seemed to enrage the man. He followed the boy out in the yard, abusing him.

Picked Up Brick-Bat.

Mrs. Browder stated that her husband made an effort to pick something up from the ground and she caught hold of him. She had her child in her arms and he brushed them aside and went through the gate. The witness said she began to scream and saw that her husband was advancing on the boy with his arm drawn back, ready to throw a brick at him. She turned her head just as a shot rang out from the boy's gun.

Young Page was next examined. He told practically the same story that his mother told. He told of starting over to McLemore's farm and about his father following him. He said that his stepfather was advancing on him with a brick.

"Papa, don't come any farther. I'll kill you," said the boy. "He continued to advance and I fired."

The verdict of the jury at the Inquest was that Browder came to his death from gun shot wounds, inflicted by Forrest Page. The members of the jury were F. M. White, H. P. Hill, John McLemore, Will Hinton, James Beeler and John Cravens.

Very little was known of Browder by his neighbors. Besides his widow he leaves three children. The Page boy has a good reputation.

[Note: At a subsequent hearing on 10 August 1905 charges against Forest Page were dismissed. See: Owensboro Messenger, 11 August 1905, p.2]



**1910 Federal Census of McLean County, KY  
Calhoun & Hartford Road, p.134B:**

Bartby, Edward	Head	M	W. 33	M	8	Kentucky
Lora L.	wife	F	W. 24	M	8	Kentucky
William G.	Son	M	W. 12	S		Kentucky
Patje, L.	Nephew	M	W. 23	S		Kentucky
Browder, Roy	Nephew	M	W. 12	S		Kentucky
Ruby	Niece	F	W. 10	S		Kentucky
Carl	Nephew	M	W. 6	S		Kentucky



**1930 Federal Census of Eddyville, Lyon County, KY  
Kentucky Branch Penitentiary, p.242B:**

Browder Carl	206				M	11	29	M	24	70	yes	Kentucky
Lawson Ed	200				M	11	29	S		80	yes	Indiana
Giles St Clair	200				M	11	30	S		80	yes	Tennessee
Calton Emanuel	200				M	11	18	S		80	yes	Kentucky
James Carl J.	200				M	11	21	M	19	80	yes	Missouri
Ingony Milton Y.	200				M	11	23	S		80	yes	Kentucky



Form V. B. - Item - 1-11-27  
**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY**  
 State Board of Health  
**BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS**  
**CERTIFICATE OF DEATH** 20259

County LYON File No. ....  
 Vol. Pat. W. EDDYVILLE Registration District No. 930 Registered No. 800  
 Inc. Town EDDYVILLE Primary Registration District No. 2855  
 City EDDYVILLE (No. KY STATE PENITENTIARY, Ward) (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number)

1 FULL NAME CARL BROWDER **DELAY**  
 (a) Residence No. .... St. .... Ward. ....  
 (Usual place of abode) (If nonresident, give city or town and State)  
 Length of residence in city or town where death occurred 7 yrs. 3 mos. 17 ds. How long in U.S. (if of foreign birth) yrs. mos. ds.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH			
2 SEX <u>MALE</u>	4 COLOR OR RACE <u>WHITE</u>	3 Single Married <u>MARRIED</u> Widowed or Divorced (Write the word)	16 DATE OF DEATH <u>6</u> <u>15</u> <u>1931</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from ..... 19..... to ..... 19..... that I last saw h. alive on ..... 19..... and that death occurred on the date stated above at ..... The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: <u>gun shot wound in chest</u> <u>173</u>		
5a If married, widowed, or divorced HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of <u>William GRACE BROWDER</u>	6 DATE OF BIRTH <u>5</u> <u>15</u> <u>1902</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	7 AGE <u>29</u> yrs. <u>1</u> mos. <u>0</u> ds. IF LESS than 1 day ..... hrs. or ..... min?	Contributory (Secondary) ..... (Duration) ..... yrs. .... mos. .... ds.			
8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work <u>ELECTRICIAN</u> (b) General nature of industry, business or establishment in which employed (or employer) <u>WESTINGHOUSE CO.</u>			18 WHERE WAS DISEASE CONTRACTED If not at place of death? ..... Did an operation precede death? ..... Date of ..... Was there an autopsy? ..... What test confirmed diagnosis? ..... (Signed) <u>William James Owen</u> 6-15-31 (Address) <u>PUTMAN LA.</u>			
9 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country) <u>KENTUCKY</u>			*State the Disease Causing Death, or, in deaths from Violent Causes, state (1) Manner and nature of Injury; and (2) whether Accidental, Suicidal or Homicidal. (See reverse side for additional space.)			
PARENTS	10 NAME OF FATHER <u>JOHN BROWDER</u>	19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL, DATE OF BURIAL <u>Owensboro</u> <u>6-15-31</u>				
	11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (city or town) (State or country) <u>KENTUCKY</u>	20 UNDERTAKER <u>SAM GLENN</u> ADDRESS <u>KUTTAWIA, KY</u>				
	12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>NORA (?)</u>					
	13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) (State or country) <u>KENTUCKY</u>					
14 (Informant) <u>J.P. Jones</u> (Address) <u>Edyville, Ky</u>						
15 Filed <u>6-16</u> 19 <u>31</u> <u>J.M. ...</u> Registrar						







Kentucky State Penitentiary, Eddyville, KY, where Carl Browder was incarcerated



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 16 June 1931, p.1:**

### **Prison Guard Kills Carl Browder**

**LOGSDON FIRES IN SELF DEFENSE. JURY DECLARES**

**Body To Be Shipped Today To Owensboro To Browder's Half Brother, Forest L. Page.**

Arrangements for the funeral of Carl Browder, who was killed at Eddyville penitentiary yesterday, have not been announced. The body, which remained in the prison morgue last night, is to be shipped to Owensboro today. Leaving Eddyville at 10 o'clock this morning, the body is due to arrive in Owensboro about 5 o'clock this afternoon on the I. C. train, it was stated at the prison. Whether burial will be in an Owensboro cemetery or in McLean county, near Carl's birthplace, was not learned.

Grace Browder, who is in the Frankfort reformatory, communicated with prison officials at Eddyville yesterday in regard to having -the body sent to Atlanta, Ga, her home, but later decided to have it turned over to Forest Page in Owensboro for burial, it was stated.

Eddyville, Ky., June 15. (AP) – Carl B. Browder, 28, convicted with his wife of robbery two years ago, was shot to death in Western State penitentiary here today by a guard whose life he threatened.

The guard, C. F. Logsdon, of Metcalfe county, was exonerated by a coroner's jury which returned a verdict of justifiable homicide. A dozen witnesses, collar shop foremen, guards and convicts, backed up Logsdon's story that Browder cursed him and struck at him with a mallet weighing four to six pounds. Logsdon fired twice, both bullets striking Browder near the heart.

#### **Serving Two Sentences**

Browder was serving eighteen years for bank robbery and five additional years for malicious shooting during the holdup of the Farmers bank of West Louisville in Daviess county January 9, 1929. Hays Bratcher was wounded by a burst of fire from a machine gun as Browder

and his wife, Lillian Grace Browder, left the bank. She is serving a 20-year sentence at the state reformatory, Frankfort. She recently escaped, but was recaptured.

The couple was captured in Atlanta shortly after the bank robbery. Browder was a brother of Roy Browder, gangster sought, in several states after jumping bail.

L. R. Gumm, warden, said tonight Logsdon had returned to duty after testifying at the inquest, and that there had been no disorder as a result of Browder being killed. He added:

"This morning, Browder failed to report to his room for work and the guard, Logsdon, in charge of the room sent for the yard guard, that is supposed to look after those things. When a man fails to report for duty in the shop the shop guard has to report it to the yard guard.

"An hour later Browder came into the shop. The shop guard, Logsdon, asked him where he had been. Browder said 'it's none of your \_\_ business!' and struck at the guard with a mallet weighing four to six pounds. Logsdon shot him."

Mr. Gumm at once notified James A. Benton, county attorney, and Coroner Shelley Dunn, and the inquest was held.

Mr. Gumm said Browder's body would be sent tomorrow morning to Browder's half brother, Forest L. Page, in Owensboro.

#### BORN IN McLEAN

#### Carl Browder Sent to Prison From Daviess County

Carl Browder was born and reared in McLean county. His first clash with police occurred in Detroit when he and his Brother, Roy Browder, were arrested following a gun fight. They finally got out of the Detroit trouble and later made their headquarters in Louisville.

Carl Browder and his wife, Grace Browder, spent the summer in Owensboro preceding the robbery of the Farmers Bank at West Louisville. They resided at Hotel Owensboro. At that time Carl appeared to be running liquor in Southern Indiana. It was a custom of Carl to pay his hotel bill each week with a \$100 bill. The last time he paid his bill he said to the clerk, "this is the last one I have got and I am leaving to get some more."

The next time Carl was heard of in Owensboro was when he and his wife drove through here enroute to West Louisville. They had spent the previous night at Hawesville. Grace was dressed in boy's clothing. She and Carl entered the bank at West Louisville and with a machine gun forced Martin O' Bryan, cashier, to stand with his face to the wall while they scooped up \$1,000. As the bandit pair left the bank, Carl opened fire with a machine gun on the bystanders, wounding Hays Bratcher.

#### Browders Escape

The Browders escaped in an automobile stolen from a garage in Louisville. A posse was formed by Sheriff Len Dawson and the bandits trailed through McLean county. Their automobile was found deserted, it having run off of the road. Part of the machine gun was also found on the road. John Carr was arrested by Owensboro officers following the robbery, as he had been seen driving the automobile that was used by the Browders. The Browders, after spending the night in a church in McLean county, following the robbery, made their way to Central City where it is believed they were driven to Atlanta in an automobile. It was not many days until the pair was trailed to Atlanta and Deputy Sheriff Robert Weikel, together with Atlanta police, surrounded the house in which it was believed the bandits would be found. They were placed under arrest and

taken to Louisville where they were questioned by Roy Yarberry, chief of detectives, and then brought to Owensboro.

#### Crowds at Trials

The trials of the Browders attracted large crowds to the Daviess circuit courtroom. Carl was given five years for shooting Bratcher. Grace was sentenced to 20 years in the penitentiary. She was sent to the reformatory at Frankfort, where she has made two attempts to escape. The Browders were prosecuted by Glover Cary, then commonwealth's attorney, and Wilbur K. Miller who was county attorney. They were defended by Beckham Robertson.

Roy Browder is being sought by the police in a number of cities. He is believed to have been one of the ring-leaders in the fleecing of a Chicago woman of \$50,000 in a crooked card game.



#### **Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 16 June 1931, p.6:**

##### CRIME CAREER ENDS

In the widely read gangster novel, "Little Caesar," the gangster "hero," finally driven from his throne in an American city, hunted by police and rivals, is at last cornered in an alley and shot down like a rat. "This is a horrible end for Little Caesar," he says as he falls, his body' riddled with bullets. Yesterday, in the Eddyville penitentiary, Carl Browder, serving a sentence of 23 years for bank robbery in Daviess county and for shooting an innocent bystander, was shot down and killed by a prison guard when he attacked the guard with a heavy mallet. Browder was considered one of the most dangerous prisoners at Eddyville, according to the Associated Press story of his death. But he met the fate that is usually meted out to "bad men." His was a life of crime. He had murder in his heart when he turned his machine gun on the men standing on the street in West Louisville two years ago, following the hold up and robbery of a bank, and sprayed them with bullets, shooting down an aged man. He had murder in his heart when he attacked the prison guard. The end of his career like that of "Little Caesar," was a horrible one.



#### **Lillian Grace Johnson Browder (1905-1991)**

Lillian Grace Johnson was born 16 September 1905 in Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. She was the daughter of Jacob Milligan Johnson (1881-1960) and Dora Almand Crusselle (1889-1977), both natives of Georgia, who were married in Fulton County, GA on 17 July 1904. Grace is listed in the 1910 and 1920 censuses of Atlanta, Fulton County, GA.

Grace Johnson married Carl Browder in Chicago, Cook County, IL on 24 January 1927. Their marriage license recorded that he was 24 and she 21. Grace on 15 February 1929 was convicted of participating in the robbery of the Farmers Bank in West Louisville. She was given the maximum sentence of 20 years. On 6 March 1929 Grace Browder was incarcerated at the Kentucky State Reformatory in Frankfort, KY. She is listed as a prisoner there in the 1930 federal census. On 4 April 1935 Kentucky Governor Ruby Laffoon granted a pardon to Grace Browder

and she was released from prison. She returned to her former home, Atlanta, GA, where she was listed in the 1935 city directory (p.232).

Grace Browder married Charles Greenwall Schiedel (1898-1946) on 19 September 1936 in Camden County, New Jersey. They are listed in the 1940 census of Camden, Camden County, NJ. Grace was granted a divorce from him on 2 February 1945 in Camden County, NJ. Grace married William ('Bill') Besonet Albertson (1897-1974) on 28 July 1945 in Collingswood, Camden County, NJ. The father of Grace, Jacob M. Johnson's obituary published in the Atlanta Constitution in Atlanta, GA on 31 October 1960. (p.8) listed among his survivors a daughter, Grace Albertson. William B. Albertson and Lillian Grace, were living in Collingswood, Camden County, New Jersey at the time of the 1950 census. Grace's parents were also living in the same county. In 1988 Grace was living at the Colonial Hills Nursing Home in Maryville, Blount County, TN. Lillian Grace (Johnson) Albertson died in September 1991. She and William were buried in the Harleigh Cemetery, Camden, Camden County, NJ.



Lillian Grace Johnson with parents, Jacob M. & Dora A. Johnson



Lillian Grace Johnson Browder Albertson (1905-1991)



Lillian Grace Johnson / Browder with husband, William B. Albertson; in picture on right they are with Grace's mother, Dora A. Johnson (on left)



**1910 Federal Census of Atlanta, Fulton County, GA, p.257A:**

Pernice, Kate Mrs	Head	F	W	38	W	10	6	Georgia
— Alberta	Daughter	F	W	12	S			Georgia
— William	Son	M	W	10	S			Georgia
— Francis	Daughter	F	W	7	S			Georgia
Johnson Dora A	Daughter	F	W	20	M	6	1	Georgia
— Grace	Granddaughter	F	W	4	S			Georgia



**1920 Federal Census of Atlanta, Fulton County, GA, p.147A:**

Johnson, Jacob M.	Head	10	M	21	W	38	M	Yes	Yes	Georgia
— Dora A.	Wife		F	W	30	M		Yes	Yes	Georgia
— Grace S.	Daughter		F	W	14	S		Yes	Yes	Georgia
— John S.	Son		M	W	8	S		Yes		Georgia
— Suie M.	Daughter		F	W	6	S		No		Georgia
— Albert S.	Son		M	W	10	S				Georgia



**Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, 17 March 1929, p.3:**

**Grace Browder's Mother Writes Trial Judge, Tells of Parents Love, Sorrow**

Judge George S. Wilson has given the Messenger and Inquirer a letter received by him Saturday from the mother of Grace Browder, convicted recently and sentenced to the penitentiary for connection with her husband, Carl, in the hold up of the Farmers bank, of West Louisville, on January 9. She is now in prison at Frankfort, to which she was sentenced for twenty years, and he at Eddyville, for eighteen, on the bank robbery charge and five years for wounding a bystander, Hays Bratcher. The letter tells of the girlhood and training of Grace Browder. It follows:

Atlanta, Ga., March 14, 1929.

Judge George S. Wilson, Owensboro, Ky.

Dear Sir – In reading the paper's statement in which you pronounced sentence on my children, I learned that you were a Christian, and may I express my appreciation of the excellent advice you gave Carl and Grace at that time.

Guilty or not guilty is not for me to say, but I do know that both are unsaved, which is very deplorable.

Grace is the oldest of five children, and was always, while at home, a good obedient child, went to Sunday school all her childhood, and later became a member of the Baptist church. She was loved by all who knew her, but sometimes, regardless of our children's home life and training, they are overcome by' evil forces in this sinful world in which we live.

How can we endure knowing our little girl is to be shut away from us and God's sunshine for eight years, but we know she will be pardoned at that time, for her conduct at Frankfort will be the very best.

I love Grace and Carl. He needs a mother's love and prayers, as he has not known much of the blessings of home life, God's first institution on earth. My daily prayer for them is that some time in the future they will be reunited, respected citizens with God and man.

I would like for you to know that Grace and Carl went by the name of Browder on their visits to our home. Our family physician treated Grace for influenza, and he has known her all her life. The name of Browder was on the bottles containing her medicine, and so were the prescriptions written in her name. The surgeon was a stranger called in for emergency operation, which he performed on both ears on two visits. .They positively did not use any fictitious name while here.

I am pleading with the people to be fair and just; to our children, and I know that so much publicity and false rumors cause prejudice to play a large part in my daughter being given the maximum sentence, and I must say in Grace's defense that I do not believe the rumor abroad in Owensboro that she tried to break away the night before she left for Frankfort.

I wish I had some way of thanking all of the people who were in the least kind to her in her confinement, for it meant so much to her mother, who could not be near her.

I beg you as a favor to have this letter published in the Messenger and Inquirer for me, which I believe you will be glad to do for a sorrowing mother and father.

I thank you in advance for the time you have taken to read this letter and may I be allowed to say that all the time you spend in sowing the seed of the Kingdom, which is the .word of God. is time well spent, and will bring a reward to anyone in that great day when all nations stand before the great Judge to be rewarded according to the deeds done, whether they be good or evil.

To the people of Owensboro: May we all make the effort to love God and keep His commandments. "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so them, for this is the law and the prophets."

One question before I close: Was this in the minds of the jurors when they gave my little girl (the weaker vessel), twenty years behind prison walls?

I have tried to write this letter with due respect to everyone, and with love in my heart toward all.

A Christian only and only a Christian.

MRS. DORA JOHNSON, 518 Cameron Street. S. E., Atlanta, Ga.



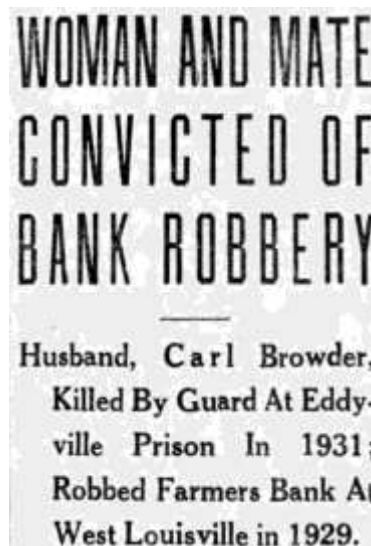
**1930 Federal Census of Frankfort, Franklin County, KY  
Kentucky State Reformatory, p.82B:**

Browder, Grace	PRISONER				F	46	24	M	21	Mr	Geo	Georgia
Hughes, Clifford	PRISONER				M	46	31	M	21	Mr	Geo	KENTUCKY
Rebertt, Willis	PRISONER				M	46	23	M	21	Mr	Geo	KENTUCKY
Collins, Shereff	PRISONER				M	46	37	M	29	Mr	Geo	KENTUCKY
Hunt, Marie	PRISONER				F	46	22	M	20	Mr	Geo	KENTUCKY
Carlo, Joe	PRISONER				M	46	24	M	21	Mr	Geo	KENTUCKY

Grace Browder, prisoner, age 24, born Georgia, parents born Georgia, married at age 21



**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 4 April 1935, p.1:**



Frankfort, Ky., April 4. (AP— On recommendation of the Department of the Public Welfare board, Governor Ruby Laffoon today approved paroles for Grace Browder, who was sentenced to 20 years on a robbery charge in Daviess county in 1929, and Alma Williams who was sentenced to 10 years on a robbery charge in Kenton county in 1929.

Grace Browder was convicted in the Daviess circuit court on a charge of robbery of the Farmers bank at West Louisville in the spring of 1929. Her husband, Carl Browder, was convicted at the same term of court, being given 18 years on the bank robbery count and five years on a charge of shooting and wounding Hays Bratcher, who was standing across the street from the bank during the hold-up. Bratcher moved from West Louisville to Louisville where he died. Carl

Browder was killed by a guard in the Eddyville penitentiary in June of 1931. Grace Browder made attempts to escape from the Frankfort reformatory.

Following the West Louisville bank robbery the Browders escaped, and were arrested several days later at the home of Grace Browder's parents in Atlanta, Ga., by Robert, Weikel, who was , then deputy sheriff.



**1940 Federal Census of Camden, Camden County, NJ, p.1641B:**

Schiedel, Chas	Head	07	24	51	79	70	7	1	Tennas
Lillian	Spouse	17	24	34	79	70	11	1	Georgia



**1950 Federal Census of Collingswood, Camden County, NJ:**

Albertson, William B Head	W	M	53	Mar	N.J.
Lillian G. Wife	W	F	44	Mar	Georgia



Mausoleum at Harleigh Cemetery, Camden, Camden County, New Jersey



**SEE ALSO:**

- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/10 p.1 (“Bank Bandits’ Automobile Is Found: Robbers Secure \$838 In West Louisville Raid Farmer Is Shot Down”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/11 p.1 & 3 (“Browders Are Sought By Officers”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/12 p.1 & 3 (“Bank Bandits Again Dodge Police”)



- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/13 p.1B & 3B (“Warrants Accuses Browders, Carr: Trio Linked With Robbery At West Louisville”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/15 p.1 & 2 (Carl & Grace Browder arrested in Atlanta)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/16 p.1 & 5 (“Date Is Not Yet Fixed For Browders' Trial”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/17 p.1 (“Toots Yeiser Held In Bank Robbery”) and p.3 (“John Carr's Trial”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/18 p.1 & 2 (“Bank Officials To View Pair In Jail”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/19 p.1 & 2 (“Witnesses Name Browders As Bank Bandits”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/20 p.1B & 3B (“Carr Waves His Examining Trial In Bank Robbery”) and p.3A (“Roy Browder’s Case Is Passed”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/22 p.1 & 4 (“Indictment For Carl Browder”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/23 p.3 (“Browder Served In Robbery Case”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/24 p.1 (“Armed Men Guarding County Jail”) and p.3 (“Another Continuance Given Roy Browder”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/27 p.1B & 12B (“Bank Robbery Is Big Case Due For February Court”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/29 p.1 & 8 (“Carl Browder’s Brother, Roy, Held In Bank Robbery”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/30 p.3 (“Trial Of Roy Browder Set For This Morning”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 1/31 p.2 (“R. Browder Trail Again Postponed”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/1 p.4 (“Habeas Corpus Writ Is Hinted: Immediate Hearing For Roy Browder Is Sought By His Attorney”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/2 p.1 & 3 (“Writ Of Habeas Corpus Secured For Roy Browder”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/3 p.1 & 3 (“Two Bouts Lost By Roy Browder In Local Courts”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/5 p.1 & 10 (“Indictments Are Found Against 2 In Bank Robbery”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/6 p.2 (“R. Browder May Be Given Liberty”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/7 p.6 (“Browders Fight Going To Trial In Daviess County”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/8 p.5 (“Roy Browder Is Freed By Grand Jury Dismissal”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/9 p.2 (“Extension Given Grand Jury For More Witnesses”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/10 p.1B (“Browder Trails Set For Monday”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/12 p.1 & 2 (“Browders Go To Trial On Charges Of Robbing Bank”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/13 p.1 & 3 (“Carl Browder Goes To Trial In Bank Robbery Case”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/14 p.1 & 2 (“Browder Jury Hangs On Penalty: Nine For Limit Of Twenty Years, One For Three Years”) and p.6 (Editorial: “Browder’s Trial”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/15 p.1 & 3 (“Women Of Fashion Attend Grace Browder’s Trial”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/16 p.1 & 8 (“Woman Bank Bandit Gets 20 Years: Grace Browder Is Given The Limit By Daviess Jury”)

- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/17 p.1B & 5B (“Browders May Be Transferred To Louisville”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/19 p.1 (“Clothes Worn By Woman In Bank Robbery Found”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/21 p.4 (“Woman Bandit Asks New Trial”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/24 p.1B & 7B (“Carl Browder’s Trial On Monday”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/26 p.1 & 3 (“Second Trial Of Carl Browder Due To Be Brief”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/27 p.1 & 2 (“18-Year Sentence Browder Verdict: Two Years Less Than Given Wife In Bank Holdup”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 2/28 p.4 (“John Carr Freed On \$1,000 Bail To Next June Term”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/1 p.1 & 9 (“5 More Years Added To Browder’s 18-year Sentence”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/2 p.6 (“Bandit Pair To Get Sentences In Circuit Court”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/3 p.3 (“Sentences Pronounced On The Browders”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/5 p.2 (“Carl Browder Is Taken To State Prison”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/7 p.7 (“Grace Browder Goes To Prison At Frankfort, Ky.”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/12 p.12 (“Stolen Machine Gun Identified”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/17 p.1 & 3 (“Grace Browder’s Mother Writes Trial Judge, Tells Of Parents Love, Sorrow”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/19 p.1 (“Roy Browder Refers To Cop As ‘Liar’ Case Continued”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/22 p.7 (reward given for discovery of machine gun) and p.9 (“Sheriff Denied Browder Costs”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 3/26 p.12 (“Roy Browder Is In Jail Again”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 4/13 p.1 & 3 (“Roy Browder is Given 6 Months”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 4/17 p.1 & 3 (John Carr escapes)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/1 p.7 (wound of Hays Bratcher)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/9 p.1 (John Carr is captured)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/10 p.2 (“Requisition For Carr Is Produced”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/12 p.3 (“Browder Turns Back On Daviess Visitor”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/15 p.8 (“Carr’s Bondsman Surrenders Him”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 5/25 p.10 (“John Carr Is Wanted In Two States to Prosecute”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 6/14 p.1 & 3 (“Browders’ Cases Go Up On Appeal”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 7/2 p.14 (“Hays Bratcher, Browder’s Victim, Reported Improving”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 9/15 p.1 & 2 (“Cases Against John Carr Here Are Dismissed”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 9/25 p.4 (“Sampson Holds Up Requisition For John Carr”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 10/3 p.3 (Roy Browder in Owensboro seeking release of brother on bond)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 10/8 p.1 & 9 (“Browder’s Bail Fixed At \$25,000”)

- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 10/10 p.8 (“Carr Is Removed To Indiana Jail”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 11/5 p.9 (“John Carr Trial Be Called Today”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 11/9 p.1 & 2 (“John Carr Convicted Of Banditry”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 11/10 p.3 (“Carr Sentenced To 12 Years For Auto Banditry”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 11/14 p.10 (“Two Local Men Go To Prisons: John Carr, Dutch Morton Serve Long Terms In Indiana”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/4 p.4 (“Browders Ask To Be Given Bonds”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/5 p.8 (“Browder Motion For Bond Is Set”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/7 p.8 (“Browders May Execute Bond”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/8 p.12 (“Browders May Not Be Released” on bond)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/10 p.3 (“Browders’ Bonds Are Insufficient”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1929: 12/21 p.3 (“Browders Made Small Haul at West Louisville”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1930: 1/22 p.12 (“Carl Browder’s Term Affirmed”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1930: 11/7 p.1 & 2 (Grace Browder escapes from prison)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 1/27 p.1 (Roy Browder, brother of Carl, being sought)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 1/28 p.3 (nation wide search for Roy Browder)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 4/26 p.1 (Roy Browder wanted for murder)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 4/30 p.3 & 5 (“Grace Browder Is Again Indicted”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 5/5 p.1 (“Grace Browder’s Term Lengthened” after escape attempt)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 5/20 p.10 (Roy Browder linked to gun battle)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 6/16 p.1 (Carl B. Browder killed in prison at Eddyville, KY)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 6/17 p.1 (Carl B. Browder buried in Owensboro’s Rose Hill Cemetery)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 6/18 p.4 (funeral of Carl B. Browder)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1931: 7/3 p.1 (“Grace Browder To Seek Pardon From Governor”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1933: 3/12 p.1B (“Move Started To Secure Release Grace Browder”)
- Owensboro Messenger, 1935: 4/5 p.1 (“Grace Browder Granted Parole By Gov. Laffoon: Woman Convicted With Her Husband In West Louisville Bank Holdup; Given 20 years in Daviess Court”)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1956: 8/19 p.8D (“Robbery Of West Louisville Bank Provided An Exciting Episode In History Of County”, by Frankie Scott)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1964: 9/5 p.20B New Daviess County Courthouse special edition (“Looking Backward With A Bandit's Captor: Bob Weikel Sr. Recalls Pursuit And Arrest Of Noted Bank Robber”)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1967: 2/26 p.3C (Grace Browder’s purse)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1971: 8/22 p.1D (“County’s First Holdup Contrast To Latest Crime”)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1976: 7/4 Bicentennial Edition Part 3 p.16 (“Husband, wife robbed bank in West Louisville”)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 1992: 9/14 p.1C (“Before Bonnie and Clyde, Daviess saw Grace and Carl Browder”, by Keith Lawrence)

- Messenger-Inquirer, 2004: 1/8 p.1B (" `Flapper bandit' struck Daviess bank 75 years ago", by Keith Lawrence)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 2013: 3/7 p.1B ("Browders' saga made for movies", by Keith Lawrence)
- Messenger-Inquirer, 2019: 6/13 p.1B ("The '20s roared in West Louisville", by Keith Lawrence; January 9 marked the 90th anniversary of the 'Great West Louisville Bank Robbery'; in 1935, Startling Detective magazine wrote the tale of "Tracking Kentucky Girl Machine Gunner," based on interviews with Daviess County Jailer Robert Weikel, the man who captured Carl, 26 & Grace Browder, 23; \$838 robbed from the bank was never found; the case was assigned to Weikel, who tracked the couple to Atlanta where they were arrested; when Weikel and his prisoners arrived at Owensboro's Union Station, the crowd was so thick police had to shove a path through to the patrol wagon; the couple were indicted on February 4, 1929; the first trial of Carl Browder ended in a hung jury; in the trial of Grace Browder it took the jury 35 minutes to sentence her to the maximum 20 years in prison; in the second trial of Carl Browder it took the jury 45 minutes to give him 18 years; three years later, at age 29, he attacked a guard at Eddyville prison and was shot to death; Grace, Daviess County's only "flapper bandit," served more than 10 years, she was released shortly after her 33rd birthday and returned to Atlanta to live; Weikel was elected jailer that fall, eventually serving two terms, 1930-38, He died in 1966 at age 85; Farmers Bank in West Louisville is long gone, but Grace and Carl Browder's submachine gun is still on display in the Daviess County Sheriff's Department)
- [During 1929-1953 there were two newspapers in Owensboro. The articles in the Owensboro Inquirer were not included in the prior listing.]

SEE ALSO:

“The Browder Gang”, Part I and Part II, Internet, <https://kentuckycopstories.wordpress.com/>