

Owensboro Home of a Mobster

By Jerry Long



George Clarence "Bugs" Moran (1893-1957)

George "Bugs" Moran, a Chicago gangster, who during Prohibition was a notorious bootlegger. He was a rival of Al Capone.

Moran was most active as the last captain of the North Siders, a Chicago mob, in the 1920s. He narrowly escaped when his gang on 14 February 1929 was wiped out in the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre" – when Capone, attacked the North Siders. Moran, the only survivor of his gang, fled and later led a band of bank robbers that struck across multiple states.

Moran lived in a home at 1921 Littlewood Drive in Owensboro, KY with his wife from November 1945 to March 1946 according to several newspaper accounts. However, the Owensboro Inquirer on 8 July 1946 (p.1) reported that Moran moved into the house in October 1945 and moved out the following May. He rented the home from H. C. Farmer. Moran at the time was heading a small band of bank robbers. Moran disguised himself as an oil tycoon while in Owensboro, the FBI spied on his home and, with the help of the Owensboro Police Department, and arrested him in Henderson in 1946. For a few days he was incarcerated at the old Daviess County Jail on St. Elizabeth Street. He died of lung cancer at Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary on 25 February 1957 at age of 63.

According to the biography, The Man Who Got Away: The Bugs Moran Story: A Biography, by Rose Keefe (Cumberland House Publishing, Nashville, TN, 2005) Bugs Moran's real name was Adelard Cunin. The mobster from Chicago's "Hell's Kitchen", was born in St. Paul, Minnesota - the son of French immigrants, Keefe writes. Cunin changed his name to Moran in 1912 - one of several early aliases. Moran wrote his name large in the crime annals of Chicago

during the Roaring '20s. "A virtual legend in his own time, Chicagoans read his name in the newspapers almost weekly during the 1920s, when gangsters made the headlines with their bootleg wars."

Keith Lawrence, in an article, "New Biography tells story of Owensboro's most infamous resident", published in Owensboro's Messenger-Inquirer (28 July 2005, p.1C) wrote that a man, who was arrested with burglary tools in Missouri, reported that Bugs Moran was then living in Owensboro, KY on "Millionaire's Row" [Littlewood was once known as "Millionaires' Row".] Lawrence continued:

"His home was headquarters for a multistate armed-robbery gang that was robbing banks between St. Louis and Cincinnati and down into Tennessee. Keefe features the Owensboro connection prominently in The Man Who Got Away. But before Moran could be arrested here, he moved to Henderson. He had been renting from a local man wintering in Florida. And the man had returned home in the spring of 1946. Early on the morning of July 6, 1946, FBI agents and members of the Owensboro Police Department raided the Henderson house and arrested Moran on charges of armed robbery in Ohio. Keefe writes that two Owensboroans went all the way to Dayton, Ohio, to testify in Moran's defense. Melville L. Nicely, who ran a service station here, and Henry Thomason, who drilled oil near Utica, both told the court that they had seen Moran here about the time of the Ohio robbery 278 miles away. But Moran was convicted of armed robbery. And the man who had evaded gangster bullets for so long - and rarely spent time behind bars - would never walk free again."

Adelard Leo Cunin, alias George Clarence "Bugs" Moran, was born 21 August 1893 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was the son of Jules Adelard Cunin & Marie Diana Gobeil. Bugs Moran died on 25 February 1957 at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas, where he was buried in the Penitentiary's cemetery.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 21 September 2004,
Connections, pp.50-51:

Organized Crime:
Chicago gangster used Owensboro as hideout

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

George Clarence "Bugs" Moran wrote his name large in the crime annals of Chicago during the Roaring '20s.

"A virtual legend in his own time, Chicagoans read his name in the newspapers almost weekly during the 1920s, when gangsters made the headlines with their bootleg wars," Joseph Geringer writes in a Moran biography on CrimeLibrary.com.

"A smiling, teasing, rakish, but oft-hot tempered punch thrower, Moran was a central member of the North Side 'Irish Gang' that would not play ball with crime czar Al Capone," he adds.

But by the '40s, with his criminal career waning, Moran, whose nickname came from his volatile temper, needed a place to start over.

The man who grew up in Chicago's "Hell's Kitchen" chose Owensboro. And a house on "Millionaire's Row."

In 1991, when Glenn Peyton Taylor, now a psychology major at Murray State University, was a fifth-grader at Owensboro's Sutton Elementary School, he compiled a record of Moran's Owensboro years.

His oral history interviews with two men involved in Moran's capture in 1946 earned Taylor an A-plus – and filled a gap in city history.

One of the men, Taylor's grandfather, Grady Harreld Jr., had never publicly discussed his role in the episode. Moran's claim to fame was something he missed by five minutes – Chicago's St. Valentine's Day Massacre on Feb. 14, 1929. That was when Capone's henchmen entered a garage dressed as policemen and machine-gunned seven members of Moran's gang.

FBI thought he was dead

Moran disappeared after that. The FBI thought he was dead – until he resurfaced in Owensboro in November 1945.

In Owensboro, the 52-year-old Minnesota native was an oilman, busy buying up oil leases. As far as most people knew, he was a prosperous and respectable businessman, married and renting a house at 1921 Littlewood Drive.

Harreld, who died on Dec. 14, 2003, at age 88, lived next door at 2001 Littlewood.

The subdivision south of Griffith Avenue was new then, Harreld told his grandson. He built his house in 1940. The house Moran leased was built a year later as a women's club project, Harreld said.

Moran wasn't a friendly neighbor, Harreld said.

"He was in the yard one day," Harreld said. "I walked over to the fence to say hello and he turned and went into the house."

Taylor also went to Robinson, Ill., to interview retired Judge A. Hanby Jones, who was the resident FBI agent in Owensboro from January 1943 until he left the agency in 1946.

The FBI became interested in Moran after a bank robbery in Boonville, Ind., in late 1945, Jones recalled.

He said he was called by police in Rockport, Ind. A farmer had discovered two graves in a wheat field – a man and woman bound with baling wire and shot to death.

The woman in the grave had a lot of the Boonville money stuffed in her bra, Jones said.

Shortly after that, he said, a man picked up in Missouri with burglary tools asked to talk to the FBI in Owensboro. The man said Moran was living on "Millionaire's Row" and his home was headquarters for a multistate armed-robbery gang that was robbing banks between St. Louis and Cincinnati and down into Tennessee.

"The bureau said Moran was dead," Jones told Taylor.

They soon discovered otherwise.

Harreld was at his pharmacy downtown when Jones and two strangers walked in.

Company coming

They asked permission to use the Harreld home for surveillance of the Moran house.

Harreld asked what would happen if he refused. "They said they would get a court order to move in," he said. So Harreld agreed.

One night in November, the Harrelds were eating dinner at the old Gabe's restaurant downtown, planning to go to the movies. FBI agents came in and signaled Harreld.

They were moving into the Harreld home that night.

For the next four months, two and sometimes three FBI agents were stationed in the Harreld home around the clock. The family had three small children at the time.

When the children asked who the men were, Harreld said they were "bug exterminators."

The FBI agents came from the West Coast, so Moran couldn't recognize them.

They worked in two 12-hour shifts, changing before dawn and after dark.

Harreld still remembered the .38-caliber pistols, the submachine guns, grenades, smoke bombs, night cameras and night binoculars they carried. The men set up operations in the family dining room and an upstairs bedroom.

Moran's heyday was long past, but he still had a formidable gang.

"They were having a war with an East St. Louis gang," Harreld said.

He remembered a day when the FBI agents told him to get the children out of the yard. A hit man from East St. Louis sent to kill Moran was parked on Ford Avenue, Harreld said.

He and his wife sent the children to stay with their grandparents for a few days.

Moran didn't trust telephones, Jones said. "He would go uptown and use the pay phone outside Gabe's" in the 300 block of Frederica.

Moran spent a lot of time downtown, Harreld said. The area between Third and Fifth streets on Frederica was wide open then, he said.

"You could get anything there back then," Harreld said. "There was a lot of gambling."

Owensboro was a central location and there was oil in the area, Jones said.

"Moran had interests in oil in southern Illinois and western Kentucky," he said. "I don't know that he did any drilling. He was a big-time operator."

The Messenger-Inquirer reported at the time of Moran's arrest that he was said to have drilled several wells and "to have brought it one small producer."

The FBI had many chances to arrest Moran, Harreld said. But they kept waiting for a case big enough to put him away for life.

That came in June 1946, when a Dayton, Ohio, tavern manager was kidnapped and robbed of \$10,000.



George "Bugs" Moran, left, July 6, 1946, with FBI special agent M. W. McFarlin.

Moran had moved to a house on Center Street in Henderson – owned by a city policeman – in March when H.C. Farmer, from whom he was renting the Owensboro house, returned from Florida.

There was a housing shortage in Owensboro at the time.

Early on the morning of July 6, 1946, FBI agents and members of the Owensboro Police Department raided the house, arresting Moran and his cohort Virgil Summers.

Harreld said he was offered a chance to go along on the raid but declined.

When news of Moran's arrest broke, he said, "there was bumper-to-bumper traffic on this street," with people gawking at the house where the gangster had lived.

The house is still an attraction, says Joy Horton, who has lived there for the past 15 years with her husband, William. "We get a lot of comments from people," she said. "And Susie Tyler brings tour groups by."

The house is on PRIDE's "Curbside Architecture & Historical Home Tour."

There's irony in the house's story. Horton is district supervisor for the Kentucky Division of Probation and Parole. "I think it's hilarious," she said. "But I wasn't a parole officer when we bought the house. And no, we haven't found any hidden money."

Moran was returned to Ohio for trial and sent to prison.

He was released from the Ohio Penitentiary in November 1956. The FBI immediately arrested him on charges of robbing a bank in Ansonia, Ohio, in November 1945.

Moran was sentenced to 10 years at Leavenworth in January 1957. A few weeks later, on Feb. 25 at age 64, he died in prison of lung cancer.

He was buried in the prison cemetery in a \$35 casket.

Geringer quotes the attending priest, a Father O'Connor, as saying, "I am sure that God in His mercy was very kind to him in judgment."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 17 May 1991, pp.1A & 8A:

The dirt on an area 'godfather': 5th grader talks to
His grandfather, judge about racketeer's 1946 arrest

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

When Glenn Peyton Taylor, a fifth-grader at Owensboro's Sutton Elementary School, began an independent research project on Owensboro's claim to gangland fame, he wasn't satisfied with just digging through the library.

Instead, Taylor went to original sources and turned up significant oral history interviews with two men involved in the capture of famed racketeer George C. "Bugs" Moran in 1946. It earned him an A-plus.

One of the men, Taylor's grandfather, Grady Harreld Jr., had never publicly discussed his role in the episode. Forty-five years ago, Harreld feared the Moran gang would seek vengeance on his family.

In more recent years, he said, "nobody asked." Moran's claim to fame was something the gangster missed by five minutes – Chicago's St. Valentine's Day Massacre on Feb. 14, 1929. That was when Al Capone's men, seeking to wipe out rival Moran, entered a garage dressed as policemen and machine-gunned seven members of the gang.

Moran disappeared after that. The FBI thought he was dead – until he resurfaced in Owensboro in November 1945.

In Owensboro, Moran was an oilman, busy buying up oil leases. As far as most people knew, he was a prosperous and respectable businessman, married and renting a house at 1921 Littlewood Drive.

Harreld lived next door at 2001. The subdivision south of Griffith Avenue was new then, Harreld said. He built his house in 1940. The house Moran leased was built a year later as a women's club project, he said.



Glenn Taylor Jr., 12, a Sutton Elementary student, shows the school project he did on the arrest of racketeer Bugs Moran, who, for a time, lived on Littlewood Drive next door to what is now the fifth-grader's house and in 1945 was his grandfather's.

The research was exciting for Taylor because he lives where his grandfather lived then.

Moran wasn't a friendly neighbor, Harreld recounted to his grandson. "He was in the yard one day. I walked over to the fence to say hello and he turned and went into the house," he recalled.

Taylor went to Robinson, Ill., to interview retired Judge A. Hanby Jones, who was the resident FBI agent in Owensboro from January 1943 until he left the agency in 1946.

The FBI became interested in Moran after a bank robbery in Boonville, Ind., in late 1945, Jones recalled.

He said he was called by police in Rockport, Ind. A farmer had discovered two graves in a wheat field – a man and woman bound with baling wire and shot to death. The woman in the grave had a lot of the Boonville money stuffed in her bra, Jones said.

Shortly after that, Jones said, a man picked up in Missouri with burglary tools asked to talk to the FBI in Owensboro. The man said Moran was living on "Millionaire's Row" in Owensboro. His home was headquarters for a multistate armed-robbery gang, the man said. "The bureau said Moran was dead," Jones said.

They soon discovered otherwise.

One day Harreld was at his pharmacy when Jones and two strangers walked in. They asked permission to use the Harreld home for surveillance of the Moran house.

Harreld asked what would happen if he refused. "They said they would get a court order to move in." So Harreld agreed.

One night in November, the Harrelds were eating dinner at the old Gabe's restaurant downtown, planning to go to the movies. FBI agents came in and signaled Harreld. They were moving into the Harreld home that night.

For the next four months, two and sometimes three FBI agents were stationed in the Harreld home around the clock. The family had three small children at the time. When the children asked who the men were, Harreld said they were "bug exterminators."

The FBI agents came from the West Coast, so Moran couldn't recognize them. They worked in two 12-hour shifts, changing before dawn and after dark.

Harreld remembers the .38-caliber pistols, the submachine guns, grenades, smoke bombs, night cameras and night binoculars they carried. The men set up operations in the family dining room and an upstairs bedroom.

They brought their food with them and kept to themselves, Harreld said. But he spent most evenings with them. They taught him how to handle their guns and talked about their cases. "It was very interesting," Harreld said.

Moran's heyday was long past, but he still had a formidable gang.

"They were having a war with an East St. Louis gang," Harreld said. He remembers a day when the FBI agents told him to get the children out of the yard. A hit man from East St. Louis sent to kill Moran was parked on Ford Avenue, Harreld said.

He and his wife sent the children to stay with their grandparents for a few days.

Agents tapped into Moran's phone lines and set up a listening post in the basement of 2007 Littlewood on the opposite side of Harreld's house. It was a party line, he said, and several other families were being taped as well.

Moran didn't trust telephones, Jones said. "He would go up town and use the pay phone outside Gabe's" in the 300 block of Frederica.

Jones said Owensboro was the center of operations for a gang that was robbing banks between St. Louis and Cincinnati and down into Tennessee.

Moran spent a lot of time downtown, Harreld said. The area between Third and Fifth streets on Frederica was wide open then, he said. "You could get anything there back then," he said. "There was a lot of gambling."

"Bugs used to shoot dice in the basement of the Hotel Owensboro (at Fourth and Frederica) with a .45 on his hip," Jones said. "He was losing a lot of money, but it didn't bother him."

Moran's wife, Harreld said, was "a former chorus girl from Chicago." They came to Owensboro, he said, because Mrs. Moran's brother lived in Hartford. He remembers a time when the FBI searched her purse while she was in the doctor's office and found a .32-caliber revolver and a knife.

Owensboro was a central location and there was oil in the area, Jones said.

"Moran had interests in oil in southern Illinois and western Kentucky," he said. "I don't know that he did any drilling. He was a big-time operator."

Harreld remembers Moran as "a nice-looking, short, heavy-set fellow."

But Jones recalls that he looked like the late Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago. "He was about 5-foot-8, 190 pounds, not a thing of beauty or a joy to behold," Jones said. "He was a very nervous person."

The FBI had many chances to arrest Moran, Harreld said. But they kept waiting for a case big enough to put him away for life.

That came in June 1946 when a Dayton, Ohio, tavern manager was kidnapped and robbed of \$10,000.

Moran had moved to Henderson in March when the people from whom he was renting the Owensboro house returned from Florida. Early on the morning of July 6, 1946, FBI agents and members of the Owensboro Police Department raided the Henderson apartment, arresting Moran and cohort Virgil Summers.

Harreld said he was offered a chance to go along on the arrest but declined. He was afraid some member of the gang would recognize him and harm his family. Now, he says, "I've outlived them all."

When news of Moran's arrest broke, Harreld said, "there was bumper-to-bumper traffic on this street" with people gawking at the house where the gangster had lived.

Moran was returned to Ohio for trial and sent to prison. He was released from the Ohio Penitentiary in November 1956. The FBI immediately arrested him on charges of robbing a bank in Ansonia, Ohio, in November 1945.

He was sentenced to 10 years at Leavenworth in January 1957. A few weeks later, on Feb. 25 at age 64, he died in prison of lung cancer.

The four months Moran lived in Owensboro were exciting times for the Harreld family. "It was a relief to have them (the FBI agents) gone," Harreld said. "But it was exciting to have them here."

George C. "Bugs" Moran

- Born: 1893 in Minnesota.
- Died: Feb. 25, 1957 at the U.S. Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan. Lung cancer. Buried in prison cemetery in a \$35 casket.
- Aliases: George Miller, Thomas Moran, James Marre, George Ryan, G. Heiter and W.R. Smith.
- Career: Dropped out of school before he was 10. Joined a Chicago gang before he was 16. Once stole horses and held them for ransom. Committed 21 Chicago robberies before he was 21. Teamed with Dion O'Bannion against Al Capone, hijacking Capone's beer trucks. Amassed a personal fortune of \$500,000 during the Depression. Lost seven members of his gang in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, Feb. 14, 1929. Avenged the "massacre" by killing Capone henchman "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn in 1936.
- Local connection: Moved to Owensboro in the fall of 1945. Rented a house at 1921 Littlewood Drive. Left in March 1946 when the owner returned from Florida. Arrested in Henderson on July 6, 1946, by Owensboro police and the FBI.



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 16 October 2013, p.1B:

“Names & Notes”, by Suzi Bartholomy, Messenger-Inquirer

... When autumn leaves begin to fall, John Snyder is reminded of his encounter with Chicago gangland boss Bugs Moran, who lived on Littlewood Drive from 1945-46.

"I was born in 1935, so I was 10 or 11 years old when I met him. My friend, Robert Glover, and I thought Littlewood would be the place to rake leaves," Snyder said. "We knocked on a door in the 1900 block, and a nice, smiling man came to the door."

The boys were charging \$1 to rake leaves that day, and the man on the porch told them to go ahead and get started.

Before Snyder and Glover finished the job, Moran came out with ham sandwiches and bottles of Pepsi for them.

Not long after that, Snyder said, Moran was arrested in Henderson.

Snyder said FBI agents had set up a surveillance operation in the basement of the home next door that probably led to his arrest.

"It was thought that his trip to Henderson was his getaway," Snyder said.

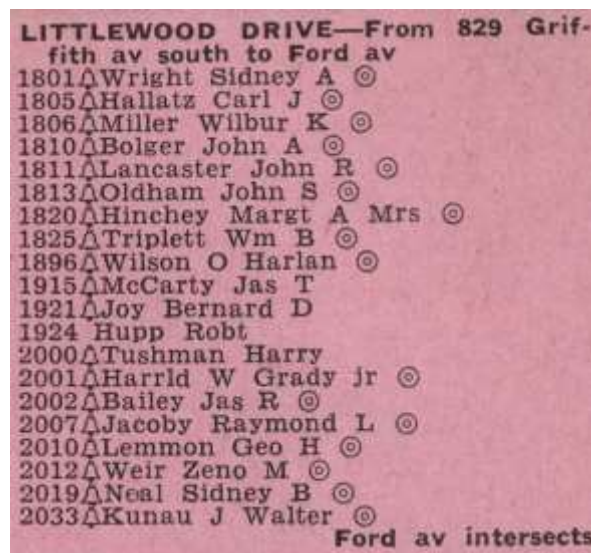
"When we were raking leaves, we got the impression there were other people in the house, but we didn't see anyone else," he said.

"There were a lot of leaves. (It) must have been toward the end of the season 'cause he didn't ask us back," Snyder said. "He paid us each a dollar. We were surprised because we expected to make 50 cents apiece."

"When he paid us he said 'Thanks, it's looks real nice,' " Snyder said.



Owensboro City Directory, 1945, p.405:



When the 1945 Owensboro City Directory (pp.189 & 405) was compiled Bernard D. & Jeannette M. Joy were reported to be residents of 1921 Littlewood Dr.; the next house on the south was the residence of W. Grady Harreld, Jr. Shortly after this Bugs Moran was living at 1921 Littlewood Dr. Among those living on Littlewood were several prominent residents of Owensboro. The next available Owensboro City Directory is 1948.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 7 July 1946, p.1A & 2A:

“Bugs” Moran Is Lodged In Jail Here

Notorious Chicago Gangster And Virgil Summers
Seized In Raids At Henderson; Wanted In Dayton

Chief Vernie Bidwell and Glyn Seward Aid FBI Agents In Arrest of Pair;
Moran and Wife Under Surveillance While Residing In Littlewood Drive In Owensboro.

George C. "Bugs" Moran, 50, whose headquarters in Chicago was the scene of the notorious St. Valentine's Day massacre in 1929, is in the Daviess county jail charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution, in connection with the \$10,000 armed robbery June 28 of a Dayton, Ohio, tavern owner.

Moran was brought to Owensboro early Saturday after his arrest in Henderson by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents under the direction of M. W. McFarlin, special agent in charge of the Louisville FBI office. The federal officers were assisted by Owensboro Police Chief Vernie Bidwell and Glyn Seward, Henderson county patrolman.

Arrested along with Moran, and held in the county jail, was Virgil Summers, 32, also charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution in connection with the Dayton robbery. The men were arraigned Saturday afternoon before U.S. Commissioner J. E. Walters, who held them under \$25,000 bond each for an examining trial which was set for Wednesday. Neither entered a plea at the arraignment.

Moran and Summers Saturday night declined to make any statement about their arrest, saying they didn't know what "it's all about."

Chief Bidwell said that Summers was arrested at his residence in the outskirts of Henderson where he had been living for several weeks with his wife and child. Moran, the officer said, was taken in custody at his residence in Center street, where he and his wife were occupying an apartment in a house owned by Richard Stites, a Henderson policeman.

Bidwell said Moran and Summers were asleep when the officers arrived at their homes. The doors of both residences were unlocked and the officers were in the houses before Moran and Summers awakened, he said. Moran did not awaken until the officers were in his bedroom th chief of police stated.

After Moran and Summers were brought to Owensboro the questioned at length by FBI agents in the office of Chief Bidwell at police headquarters. Summers was interrogated first, Moran, meanwhile, being held in the Daviess county jail. Moran was then brought to headquarters and questioned. Following his interrogation he, too, was photographed and fingerprinted and returned to the jail.

McFarlin said neither of the men had anything to say in reply to the questioning of the officers.

McFarlin said the pair was charged by the state of Ohio with having assaulted and robbed John Kurpe, Jr., Dayton tavern operator of \$10,000 and that the arrests were made on charges authorized by United States Attorney R. J. O'Donnell, of Columbus, Ohio.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and McFarlin issued announcements simultaneously Saturday relative to the arrest of Moran and Summers. Hoover's announcement, which was made at Washington, said also that charges had been filed against "an associate" of Moran and Summers in connection with the holdup.

From Dayton it was reported that Al Fouts, 62, of that city, was arrested by Dayton police at his home shortly before noon Saturday In the same case. Kurpe was reported to have said that he was held up as he was taking the money to his tavern to cash payroll checks for General Motors employes. Kurpe said the holdup men bound him with adhesive tape and fled after leaving him

shoeless on a country road. They left his car and also abandoned a car police said was stolen in Middletown, Ohio.

A fourth man in the holdup, according to Dayton police, has not been arrested.

Both men have criminal records, McFarlin said. Moran, he added, was received at the Illinois state penitentiary at Joliet on September 26, on a burglary charge, on October 30, 1913, on an unnamed charge and again on January 14, 1918, on a charge of robbery. The FBI agent said that his record showed further that he was arrested by the Chicago police department in 1930 on a charge of operating a confidence game and in 1938 on four counts of forgery and two of conspiracy. McFarlin listed six aliases, which, he said, Moran was known to have used including George Miller, Thomas Moran, James Marr, George Ryan, G. Heitel and W. R. Smith.

Summers, the FBI agent said, was arrested January 7, 1934, by the state's attorney's office at Mt. Vernon, Ill., on a charge of murder and subsequently was sent, to the Manard, Ill. reformatory for seventeen years, from which he was discharged in 1943. Summers' alias, according to McFarlin, was Howard Stephens. Summers is a native of Mt. Vernon, the FBI agent said.

Chief of Police Berner L. Pigg of Mt. Vernon, said Saturday that Summers lived in Mt. Vernon prior to the murder. He said the man killed was a farmer by the name of Green. Four or five were implicated in the killing which was the result of a holdup and robbery, the Mt. Vernon officer said.

Chicago police said that Summers is a member of a Chicago gang wanted for questioning about a series of gambling house holdups in Cook county last year. He also is wanted for questioning in connection with the slaying of another Chicago mobster April 19, 1946, they stated.

Three guns and a "large sum of money" were found in Moran's home by the officers, McFarlin said.

Moran came to Owensboro in the fall of 1945 where he rented a house at 1921 Littlewood Drive, in an exclusive residential district, owned by H. C. Farmer, who was preparing to leave to spend the winter in Florida. Moran engaged in the oil business locally and has some oil interests in this area. Moran is said to have drilled several wells in the Owensboro area and to have brought in one small producer.

Soon after his arrival here, however, the residence in which he lived was placed under surveillance of the FBI with the cooperation of Chief Bidwell. At times during the last few months, a 24-hour watch was maintained by the officers.

In May of this year the owners of the property in which Moran and his wife had been living returned to Owensboro and Moran, unable to find living quarters in Owensboro due to the housing shortage, moved to Henderson. However, he returned here often, apparently to look after his oil interests.



Moran resided in the house above, owned by H. C. Farmer, Owensboro oil man, and located at 1921 Littlewood drive, in one of Owensboro's exclusive residential sections, from last fall until the first of May when he moved to Henderson. Owensboroans who became acquainted with Moran after he came here knew him as an oil field operator. Federal Bureau of Investigation agents maintained a watch on the house for several months, and were aided in keeping their vigil by Chief Bidwell.

Shortly after he left Owensboro. rumors of his identity spread throughout the city. People who had come in contact with him during his residence here described him as having an affable disposition and one who had the appearance of a prosperous business man.

The entire Moran gang a liquor punning syndicate of the prohibition era was wiped out in the massacre of St. Valentine's Day, 1929, with the exception of the gang leader himself whose fate was unknown for some time.

The wholesale killing occurred when seven rival Chicago gangsters, posing as policemen, invaded the North Side headquarters of the Moran gang, lined up seven helpless victims with their faces to a brick wall and mowed them down with automatic pistols and machine guns.

H. W. Magee, Associated Press staff writer, reported the notorious massacre of February 14, 1929, in the Messenger of the following day, in part as follows:

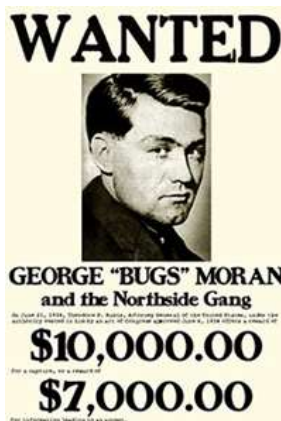
"Five men drove up to Moran's headquarters after putting through a telephone call inquiring whether certain members of the gang were there. They rushed into the garage with drawn pistols and machine guns, informing the seven men they were police officers. Some of them flourished stars and others wore parts of police uniforms. Without ado they herded the victims into a courtyard in the rear.

"Overhead gleamed a powerful electric light to make the work of the firing squad easier. Whether the victims realized they had been trapped by a clever ruse will never be known. There was a word from the leader, the clatter of machine guns and the massacre was complete.

"In a few minutes, the firing squad, still carrying the pistols and machine guns, sauntered out, climbed into an automobile, stowed the weapons in the rear and drove away."

The St. Valentine's Day massacre was said to have resulted from the failure of the Capone syndicate to make a deal with the Moran organization in its liquor operations. Arrangements were made to "bump off" the entire Moran gang at one of the weekly meetings of the Capone organization, it was said.

The men involved in the mass killing were never apprehended.





1921 Littlewood Dr., located on the Dogwood – Azalea Trail in Owensboro, KY. Bottom picture is of Littlewood Drive, looking north from its intersection with Ford Avenue; picture was taken in May 1993 by Jerry Long