

# JOHN DILLINGER LEGEND BORN OF HIS DARING DEEDS

## Audacity in Crime Seizes Public Imagination.

John Dillinger's notoriety grew out of his desperate deeds. It was supported by his personality.

No other criminal in American history ever so captured the imagination of the public. His insouciance, his cynical attitudes, his put-on good humor when bullets did not serve the immediate purpose he had in mind, were as much a part of the legend of this super-criminal as his uncanny ability to shoot his way out of traps or his unflinching courage in battle.

Barely a year ago the name of Dillinger meant nothing outside the confines of Mooresville, Ind., his home town, and the walls of the Michigan City state prison. He was released from the prison on May 22, 1933, and went back to his father's farm, ostensibly to settle down to the quiet life of a rural worker.

### Holds Up Three Banks.

Within three months he held up three banks, from which he took \$40,000. On Sept. 25 he was captured and locked in the jail at Lima, O. Less than three weeks later he became a national figure in crime when three of his former companions in prison invaded the jail at Lima and rescued him from the law after shooting and killing Sheriff Jess Sarber. Thereafter the Dillinger gang was the most notorious band of outlaws in America, probably in the world.

Millions of words were published about them as they went from one spectacular crime to another. The American citizens who had not seen Dillinger's picture were those who didn't read daily newspapers. The hunt for him finally found every investigator for the government and nearly all the local police forces of the country anxiously searching for him. The National Guard of his native state was called out to try to halt his—and his companions'—depradations.

### Too Alert for Capture.

Yet for a long time John Dillinger was big enough to defy the law. In the admiring words of the underworld, he was a "good man," which meant not that his morals were regarded as of high grade but that he was too alert, too quick witted to be captured.

The underlying reason for his amazing criminality apparently was his treatment in court when he was captured after his first transgression. At the age of 20 he held up a grocery in his native town of Mooresville. He was recognized and captured. Pleading guilty, he was sentenced to serve ten to twenty-one years in the Michigan City prison. A companion, whose plea was not guilty, was sentenced to a mere two years.

Embittered at this trick of justice, the former boy brooded in his cell. The law had been harsh to him. He would be harsh toward the law and the law abiding when he got out. From September, 1924, to May 22, 1933, he stayed behind the walls and dreamed of his revenge.

Paroled, he laughed at the idea of farming. The three banks fell before him, one in Daleville, Ind., one in Montpelier, Ind., and the third in Indianapolis. Meanwhile he had not forgotten certain good friends in the prison at Michigan City. He arranged to smuggle weapons in to them.

### Ten Men Break Jail.

These proved valuable. On Sept. 26 of last year, the day after Dillinger was thrust into jail at Lima, ten men broke from the prison. Among them were John Hamilton, Charles Makley, Harry Pierpont, and Russell Clark. All were desperate men, and Hamilton and Pierpont were cold blooded killers. They were good men too, but not as good as Dillinger.

Makley, Pierpont, and Clark were the trio who raided the Lima jail. Dillinger had gotten them out of their cells and they got him out. There was more than gratitude involved. The gang needed a chief, one with imagina-

tion enough to conceive profitable crimes and to lead in the commission of them. Pierpont and Makley have since been captured and sentenced to death for the Sarber murder, and Clark is serving a life sentence in prison for the killing.

On Oct. 14, just two days after Dillinger was freed, the gang raided the police station at Auburn, Ind., seizing machine guns and bulletproof vests. A week later a Greencastle, Ind., bank was robbed of \$144,000.

### Take Refuge in Chicago.

Taking refuge in Chicago, he and his friends rented a few flats and changed from one to the other as their necessities indicated. They spent their spare time practicing with firearms. Dillinger shot his way out of a police trap at Irving Park boulevard and Keeler avenue. Just as a sideline he and his band held up a bank at Racine, Wis., and obtained \$28,000. Leaving the institution they took a bank official with them as a shield, tossing him from their car when the pursuit was distanced.

Hamilton killed a Chicago policeman. Then the outlaws rested a few weeks. On Jan. 15, passing through East Chicago, Ind., Dillinger suddenly decided that he and Hamilton should hold up the First National bank. They obtained \$20,000 and slew Policeman William Patrick O'Malley. Again they used the favorite device of a bank official for a shield and got away.

### Dillinger Is Captured.

Ten days later the police of Tucson, Ariz., quicker on the draw than their brethren in the east and favored by fortune, captured Dillinger, Clark, Makley and Pierpont with two women. The other three went to Indianapolis and later to Michigan City prison by train, but the notorious Dillinger was sent back to Crown Point in a plane. That is, he came as far as the Chicago airport by air. There a hundred Chicago policemen, armed and armored, took charge and drove with him to the Crown Point jail. The importance of the prisoner grew with this massing of guards. It was an impressive display of the law's majesty, and it sufficed to place him safely in Crown Point, there to await trial for the O'Malley murder.

Whittling out a little wooden gun, the popular Dillinger demonstrated on March 3 that stone walls do not a prison make, or anyhow not for long. He scared his jailers with the toy weapon and, accompanied by a Negro prisoner, Herbert Youngblood, drove away in the sheriff's automobile, equipped with plenty of arms and ammunition.

Presumably he rejoined his companions in Chicago, obtained funds from

them and again took up the business of dodging the police and robbing banks. So great was his notoriety that practically every bank robbery since his flight has been attributed in part to him. One bank in Michigan having been held up by five men, the employes were called in and all five were identified as Dillinger.

On March 31 the No. 1 desperado was trapped again in St. Paul, but shot his way out of a group of federal agents. He fled from a St. Paul apartment with Evelyn Frechette, his Indian girl friend, on April 3 or 4. He had been wounded in the brush with the agents, and Dr. Clayton May and Miss Frechette have since been convicted of harboring him. Both have been sentenced to the federal penitentiary.

### Escapes Another Trap.

There have been thousands of rumors since concerning the outlaw's whereabouts. It has been definitely established that he visited the old home farm at Mooresville in early April, also that he was in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., about April 20. On April 22 he and several companions fought their way out of another trap at the Little Bohemia lodge near Mercer, Wis. A federal employe and an innocent bystander, a CWA worker, were killed in this battle.

On May 15 the department of justice paid a high compliment to the abilities of Dillinger. An offer of \$10,000 for his capture, dead or alive, was made. Even Europe has heard of him. London papers have had their Dillinger scare. Scotland Yard prepared for him some weeks ago when it was reported he was en route to England on a cattle boat. Later, according to report, a widespread search was made for him in the vicinity of London.

Dillinger led a raid on the Merchants National bank of South Bend, Ind., June 30, in which a policeman was shot to death and four other persons were wounded. A policeman who took part in battling the robbers asserted that their leader was Dillinger, as did two other eyewitnesses. The loot was \$29,890.