

Safecrackers rob Wicks store in '26

"Yegg — Safecracker, robber,"
Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

When William Allen went to the Wicks Department store on the north side of the square early Sunday morning, June 18, 1926, to clean up the place for the opening of business on Monday morning, to his surprise he discovered that the store had some unauthorized, after-hours "customers."

It was also not long before Allen, who was accompanied that morning by his 10-year-old son, realized that the intruders didn't appreciate having them around. Burglary was the visitors' intent, and they weren't interested in having any witnesses.

According to Allen, he had found the lock on the front door of the store broken when he arrived and burglars as surprised as he was. The *Bloomington Evening World* reported that Allen said, "What are you doing here?"



Looking back

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at approximately the same time as the burglars asked the same question of him.

Before Allen and his son were led to the basement, the janitor was escorted to the store office, where he noticed a leather bag and some burglary tools laid out on a table. A few moments later in the basement, Allen and the boy were tied up with ropes from the store's rug department. Allen was advised by one of the two men that "if he made a noise they would kill him." He later told the police that the intruders were

well-dressed and one seemed to have a foreign accent.

Back in the office, the burglars placed rugs over the safe to muffle the explosion caused by nitroglycerin. They had reason to believe that the contents of the safe would make the risk worth their while. Later Miss Zella Denny, the store bookkeeper, would explain to the police officers that two men had called at the store office to cash a \$10 bill on Saturday evening. She later observed them looking down into the office from the balcony above.

Janitor Allen told police he heard the muffled explosion. Apparently to keep him quiet for a little longer, the burglars said they were planning to use a little more "soup" on the safe. Instead, they departed, never to be seen again.

see **Safecrackers**, Back page