

Looking for crooks proved dangerous

Looking back, from page C1

No doubt authorities in Southern Indiana counties began to relax as the procedures of the courts began to proceed against those arrested. Then there was a startling event on Dec. 21.

According to the United Press, "The state case against the Bicknell bandit gang, charged with robbing the two banks here (Spencer) on the night of November 6, 'blew up' here today when the 11 men were

brought into court for preliminary hearing before Claude Hoffkins, justice of the peace."

Incredibly, James R. Miller, deputy prosecutor for Owen County, brought into court a motion to dismiss the case. His reason for doing so was based upon the important fact that several witnesses to the Spencer robbery were "unable to identify any of the prisoners as members of the bandit gang."

Not all of the 11 who had been arrested went free. The United Press reported that two of the men had

signed confessions about "complicity" in the robbery of the Coal City bank on Oct. 5. They were also unhappy about one of the men whom they claimed was involved.

Commented the wire story, "In their confessions they implicated Willard Peterson and stated that he got away with the big end of the money. Peterson claims to have no knowledge of the robbery, however, and claims that his mind is a blank concerning the whole affair. He was not charged with the Spencer robbery."