

# A Stakeout for Bonnie & Clyde

by Donald E. Fish

ONE JULY DAY in 1933 I was in my office when Evalyn Mark, my secretary, asked, "What do you suppose is going on out north of the courthouse?"

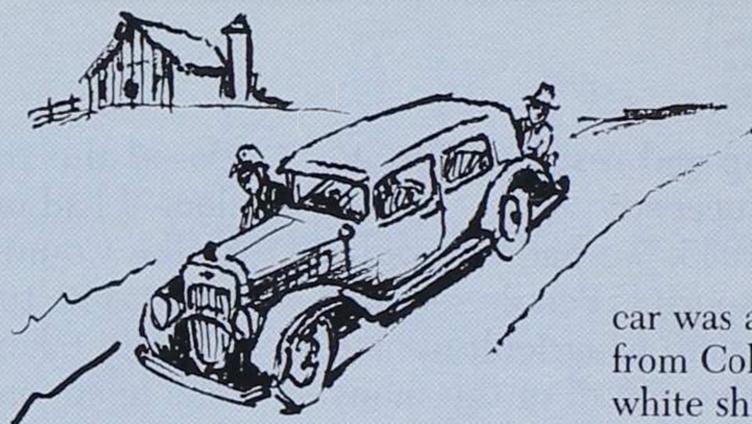
"I don't really have time, Evalyn. I have a few more wheat contracts to check. Then I'll go out and see."

Evalyn was not to be put off. "You'd better look. There's really something going on."

I looked. I couldn't believe it. About twenty-five men were getting out of cars and walking into the Dallas County Courthouse. All of them were armed, with revolvers, rifles, or shotguns. One or two appeared to have machine guns.

I urged Evalyn to go investigate while I quickly finished up. She returned in a flash with news of a shoot-out with the Barrow Gang in Dallas County. This got me properly excited, and I ran down to the sheriff's office. Sheriff Clint Knee announced, "We had a shoot-out with the Barrow Gang early this morning out at Dexfield Park. We got two of them, but Bonnie and Clyde and another man got away."

Deputy Evan Burger tossed shotguns at Harold Garoutte, Andy Wallukait, Pete Mason, and me and said, "Why don't you fellows go up to the Four Corners and see if the Barrows go by? Bonnie and Clyde escaped into the brush, forded the South Coon River, and ran through a riverbottom cornfield that belongs to Valley Fellers. They held him up and took his car. He drives a '31 green Pontiac two-door. If you see anything that looks like them, follow



ARTWORK BY JAMES FISH

them and try to get word to us. Don't try to shoot it out with them."

We drove as fast as we dared up to the Four Corners, five miles north of Adel at the junction of highways 169 and 7. We parked behind a highway commission shed. At the Four Corners, cars were visible from a long ways — except from the west, where the bandits would probably come from. After crossing the Highway 7 bridge, cars winding up the hill were lost to sight until fifty yards from our position.

"I'm sure Bonnie and Clyde would just as soon shoot at us as look at us," I told Harold. "If we see them coming, we better duck out of sight and follow them at quite a distance."

My car was a 1932 Chevy two-door, not particularly fast like the Barrows' Ford V-8s, but I was certain it could keep up with the 1931 Pontiac they'd stolen from Fellers.

We must have sat there almost two hours. Most of the cars in those days were black, and I can't remember seeing *any* green cars. Then a flash of green crossed the bridge. "Oh, oh, Harold, this is it. We better duck down."

Harold didn't waste any time. I ducked down too — but I kind of peeked. In a few minutes the car got far enough up the hill for me to see that it was a '31 two-door Pontiac, or very similar.

"Duck down, you darn fool, duck down," Harold said.

But there was something funny about the car. Finally I raised right up and laughed. Driving the

car was a Dunkard friend of mine from Colfax Township. He wore a white shirt buttoned at the collar, a black vest, and the black hat typical of his religious sect. Next to him sat his wife in a black dress and sunbonnet. Relieved, we headed back to the courthouse in Adel.

There, later that day, a crowd watched as officers struggled to get a woman out of a car. Somebody told us that this was Buck Barrow's wife. She was small — not over five feet and a hundred pounds — and she was kicking, screaming, and cussing. I had never seen a woman with such a hard-looking face. Four men were having a great deal of trouble just holding her. Buck had been shot, and she wanted to be with him in



the hospital. They finally got her over to the jail.

I didn't get any more work done on the wheat contracts that day. The Barrow Gang was all that anyone could talk about.

Buck Barrow died of gunshot wounds the next week at the hospital in Perry. His wife was taken to Des Moines. The rest of the Barrow Gang — Clyde, Bonnie, and the other man — got away. (We didn't hear about them again until they were shot down the next year in Louisiana.)

Everyone in Adel locked their doors tight that night, and the jail was well guarded. You didn't take chances when a Barrow was screaming in the county jail! □