

Travis Gang

DICK TRAVIS

Born in 1830 in Harland, Kentucky, Tom Rowland, became most widely known as "Dick Travis" and also used aliases of "Train" and "Travers". He became a Confederate Army war hero and promoted to Captain while fighting General Grant in Columbus, Kentucky. He was badly wounded and left to die on the field, but survived. From there he took command of a company of Texas Rangers and performed spy duty. At the end of the war, he took on a criminal career, much like – and for a short time with – Jesse James. We have no idea how many crimes he committed or deaths with which he was involved. Suffice to say they were numerous and his punishment, at least in this life, was miniscule. What we do know is...

During fall 1868 Travis and another man robbed a bank in Galena, Missouri. Snow started falling and they were easily followed. The posse caught up to them in three days, killed his accomplice, and shot him in the leg. He was hung three times in an effort to find the location of the stolen money, but he did not reveal its location. Though gangrene set in while he was in a jail cell, he survived and bribed his doctor for his release. The money, as it turned out, was bound under his shirt.

Later that year, Cincinnati Detectives Hazen and Carry attempted to arrest Travis as he boarded a train at the Little Miami Depot. Travis, however, got the drop on them and escaped to Louisville, Kentucky

In Louisville, he committed several burglaries and robbed a man of a diamond stick. He assaulted the Louisville officers who

arrested him and was subsequently sentenced to eleven years in the Kentucky penitentiaryⁱ. As soon as he got to prison, he was livid with the actions of a contractor, smashed his head with a heavy weight nearly killing him, and was flogged and placed for three years in a cell without privileges and on a diet of bread and water. He was finally released from solitary confinement by order of the Governor. He then escaped – twice – and recaptured. Still, he was pardoned after less than three years in 1871.

During April 1872, Travis and an accomplice stole \$25,000 from a bank in Indianapolis. While the accomplice engaged the teller, Travis crawled around the teller stand, reached into the vault, and took the cash. The two split the money and were never caught.

From there, he went to New Orleans and stole \$67,000 from a man by cutting off his money belt. Travis was caught and tried, but the only witness was driven from town by his friends and he escaped prosecution.

In 1877, Travis went to Elmira, New York, to burglarize a bank. With two accomplices, they cut through the top of the vault from a YMCA reading room above. They were caught in their attempt, convicted, and sentenced to four years in the Albany Penitentiary – from which he escaped.

He then robbed a bank in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, netting \$27,000.

Travis then teamed up with a Colonel Rowland (no relation) to rob a bank in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Colonel Rowland was captured, imprisoned, and died in prison. Travis escaped capture.

On December 5, 1877, Travis, along with Kid Dougherty, Frank Weaver, and a man named Carr (a friend of Dan Flannigan) were

arrested in the Over-the-Rhine area. Travis was armed, but the officer failed to search them until they reached the Bremen Street stationhouse. By then, the officer found the revolver in his own coat pocket. All four gave false names at the timeⁱⁱ and they were released on the next day.

Travis, Dougherty, Weaver, and Flannigan are the prime suspects in the January 1878 murder of Cincinnati Patrolman Martin Kunkel. Flannigan was arrested in Cincinnati. The other three were arrested after a shootout and pursuit in Indianapolis. Authorities in Cincinnati were unable to charge them in the Kunkel killing. Flannigan was held for another burglary. The other three were taken back to Indianapolis, convicted of carrying concealed weapons, fined, and released.

Travis was still in Indianapolis in mid-March 1878 and stole \$7200 from a bank there.

He then went to Cleveland where he married and attempted to settle downⁱⁱⁱ. By May 30, 1878^{iv} he and Dougherty were seen together in North Bend, Ohio. Nothing more was heard from him for three years.

In the fall of 1881 Travis garnered \$24,000 in a Clarion County, Pennsylvania, robbery. Two innocent men were imprisoned for the robbery. Travis was captured in Cleveland, but could only be charged with carrying concealed firearms^v.

Also during 1881, Travis was arrested for burglaries in Dayton, Ohio^{vi}.

He and another accomplice attempted a robbery in a small town in Michigan. He escaped, but his accomplice was killed^{vii}.

On November 29, 1883, Travis and 3 companions blew up a safe in

New Washington, Ohio^{viii}. The next day, on November 30, 1883, they blew up another in Shelly, Ohio, and shot the Shelly Marshal in the leg when he pursued them. The Marshal continued the pursuit, returned fire, and killed the youngest of the four. Travis and the two remaining burglars shot back, hitting the Marshal in the leg again and in the chest. The whole populace gave chase and the leader of the posse was shot through the heart and killed. All three desperados were separately captured. One died from a bleeding and festering leg wound^{ix}. We assume the remaining two were convicted and imprisoned as we cannot find him mentioned in any publication.

On August 17, 1893, 63-year-old Travis and Rube Smith were locked up in Louisville for Robbery. They pulled up planks from the jail floor and escaped^x. We can find no accounting for Travis, at least using that name, thereafter.

DAN FLANNIGAN

Authorities believed that Flannigan was the triggerman and that he, Travis, Dougherty, and Weaver were the prime suspects in the January 1878 murder of Cincinnati Patrolman Martin Kunkel. Flannigan was arrested in Cincinnati, but police lacked sufficient evidence to charge any of the gang.

Flannigan was found guilty of a burglary during 1878 and sent to prison for four years.

After he was released, he was almost immediately imprisoned in Tennessee for another burglary in 1882^{xi}. He escaped.

Flannigan was back in Cincinnati in 1884 and told at least two people that if an officer tried to arrest him, he carried a

revolver and would shoot him. He then robbed a grocery store at 3rd and John Streets. A lieutenant and three detectives investigated the offense, determined Flannigan was the robber, found him, and arrested him after a short struggle. Flannigan told the investigators that he didn't have his pistol with him; else there would have been bloodshed^{xii}. He was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labor. His "hard labor" was making tobacco plugs. During January 1892, less than eight years into his sentence, Governor Campbell commuted his sentence^{xiii}.

By October of that year, Flannigan was arrested in St. Louis for another robbery^{xiv}. It is assumed that he was charged, convicted, and imprisoned. In any case, we cannot find mention of him again, at least not using that name, for almost 18 years.

At 53 years old, on March 24, 1910, he was arrested at a restaurant at 1013 Vine Street where he held people at gunpoint for not laughing at his jokes. We do not know what happened to him after that.

FRANK WEAVER

Frank Weaver had been a brakeman on the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad and lived in Glendale and Middletown. On May 28, 1864, he paid commutation in lieu of serving in the Civil War^{xv}.

At some point, he spent four years in an Indiana penitentiary, across from Louisville, Kentucky, and learned the trade of making stoves.^{xvi} It is unlikely that he ever put his training to use.

Weaver, along with Travis, Dougherty, and Flannigan, was not

initially charged in the January 1878 murder of Cincinnati Patrolman Martin Kunkel. He did apparently admit his involvement to a cellmate in Columbus in 1879. He may have possibly even been charged as discussed later.

Within months, on November 5, 1878, Weaver was in Middletown with his brother "Shanty" Weaver. Middletown Policeman Moyer responded to a quarrel between Shanty and another man. Frank Weaver shot the officer and left Middletown on the run.^{xvii} There are two conflicting reports in the Cincinnati Enquirer, one day apart. One states that that a shot grazed the officer's ear. Another states that he was shot in the breast.

On January 20, 1879, Butler County Sheriff Deputy Williams called upon Colonel Wappenstein and informed him that Weaver was arrested in Columbus, Ohio, for Highway Robbery^{xviii}. Though it was reported that Deputy Williams and Colonel Wappenstein would travel to Columbus, it was Patrolman Kushman who came back on January 22, 1879 and reported on Weaver. Weaver had apparently admitted his guilt in the Kunkel Murder to his cellmate, was indicted in Columbus for Highway Robbery, and was charged in Middletown for the shooting of Policeman Moyer.^{xix}

The Cincinnati Enquirer reports that on February 18, 1879, Weaver was in a Cincinnati Court for some charge and that the case was continued^{xx}. It is not known if he was charged with the Kunkel Murder or how he got from Columbus and/or Middletown to Cincinnati. Then, on May 22, 1879, the Enquirer reported that Coroner Carrick (Cincinnati or Hamilton County) found that Frank Weaver committed suicide by morphine overdose on May 20, 1879^{xxi}. We do not know if it was the same Frank Weaver, if he was in jail, or what his status was at the time.

Then, in a dispatch from Dayton, Ohio, a Cincinnati resident

named Frank Weaver was reportedly arrested for a burglary there, committed with an accomplice named George Mason. It is further asserted in the article that Weaver had been imprisoned in March 1897 for a burglary in Miamisburg and charged under an alias of Charles Jones^{xxii}. We will endeavor to determine which, if either, is the same Frank Weaver.

KID DOUGHERTY

James Dougherty was variously known as “Kid Dougherty”, “The Kid”, “Doherty”, and “Daugherty”. He was going by “The Kid” when he, Travis, Weaver, and Flannigan were thought to have killed Cincinnati Patrolman Martin Kunkel during January 1878 and during their flight to Indianapolis. For all of that, he was convicted of carrying concealed weapons, fined, and released from Indianapolis.

On May 30, 1878^{xxiii} he and Travis were seen together in North Bend, Ohio. Nothing more was heard from him for two years.

Dougherty was convicted of and imprisoned for a Burglary in Xenia, Ohio^{xxiv}, but we do not know exactly when that occurred.

Dougherty and Tom English were arrested on suspicion on March 16, 1880 when they were caught carrying a bundle of clothing at the Court Street Market. They were taken to the Hammond Street Station^{xxv} and charged on March 17^{xxvi}. Both were convicted on March 24, 1880. English’s sentence was suspended, but Dougherty was sentenced to two years and sent to the Cincinnati Workhouse^{xxvii}.

He was in the Cincinnati Workhouse on January 22, 1882, when he tried to escape from there with Bill Quinn. A shot from a guard

dissuaded them at the wall^{xxviii}. Assuming he was released within a year thereafter, we find no mention of him using these names for 17 years.

During 1899, he was imprisoned in the Ohio Penitentiary for a September 1899 burglary in Akron, Ohio. After that, we do not know his whereabouts.

ⁱ THE KUNKEL INQUEST. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 29, 1878; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 8

ⁱⁱ BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

ⁱⁱⁱ BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^{iv} The Three Graces Again. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); May 31, 1878; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 5

^v BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^{vi} An Old Cincinnati Burglar Caged. SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Feb 17, 1881; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{vii} BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^{viii} BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^{ix} BULLET-PROOF.: Is Rowland Dead or Alive? A Mysterious Stranger's Remarkable Story Relative to the... Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 12, 1883; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^x Riot Alarm SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Aug 18, 1893; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 1

^{xi} DAN FLANNIGAN IDENTIFIED: As an Escaped Convict from the Tennessee Penitentiary. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Mar 12, 1884; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 8

^{xii} BOLD ROBBERS.: Dan Flannigan Arrested at Last, and Fully Identified by His Victims. Another Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Mar 5, 1884; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xiii} DAN FLANNIGAN: Soon To Be Turned Out. The Sentence of a Desperate Cincinnati Robber Reduced, SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 11, 1892; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xiv} HAMILTON.: A Sensation As To Health Officer Huston–The Fair Opens. SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Oct 4, 1892; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 5

^{xv} NEWPORT NEWS. The Cincinnati Daily Enquirer (1852-1872); May 28, 1864; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 3

^{xvi} THE DAYTON-STREET GANG.: Something More as to Their History. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 28, 1878; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 8

^{xvii} MIDDLETOWN. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Nov 5, 1878; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 7

^{xviii} Frank Weaver Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 20, 1879; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xix} Weaver's Vagaries. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 22, 1879; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xx} The Central Station Clock. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Feb 19, 1879; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati

Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 8

^{xxi} Other 6 – No Title Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); May 22, 1879; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xxii} HELD FOR BURGLARY. SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Dec 7, 1898; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 3

^{xxiii} The Three Graces Again. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); May 31, 1878; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 5

^{xxiv} On Duty When They Met Death, The Enquirer, Cincinnati, Sunday, September 20, 1891, pg. 1

^{xxv} On Suspicion. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Mar 17, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 4

^{xxvi} STORES' STALK.: He Abandons His Wife and Takes Her Money. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872- 1922); Mar 17, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 10

^{xxvii} Cupid's Victims. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Mar 24, 1880; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 – 1922) pg. 8

^{xxviii} AT THE WORKUS.: A Prisoner Dies of Typhoid Fever–The Attempted Escape. Cincinnati Enquirer (1872-1922); Jan 20, 1882; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Cincinnati Enquirer (1841 –

1922) pg. 8