

# From Albion's past: Murder in Albion, 1931

Submitted by the Albion Academy Historical Society

On Friday, January 23, 1931 a robbery and murder happened in the community of Albion. The Wisconsin Tobacco Reporter reported in the January 29 issue:

The post office and store of Frank H. Kelling, located at the intersection of Highway 51 and 106 (Note: Edgerton and Albion Roads today), Albion Center, was the scene of an attempted robbery Friday evening at about 6:30 o'clock in which Mr. Kelling was shot and fatally wounded.



**Maynard Anderson (left) and Elba Slagg, Albion youth, who witnessed the shooting. Anderson was struck on the head by one of the two men as they fled from the store, but was not seriously hurt. (Photo and text from Jan. 26, 1931, issue of the Janesville Daily Gazette)**

Two men entered the store and asked for a package of cigarettes. Mr. Kelling reached for the cigarette package and when he faced the strangers he found one of them pointing a revolver at him and at the same time the bandit demanded that Kelling should get down on the floor, Kelling refused and dared the bandit to shoot him.

The bandit blazed away and the bullet entered the body of Kelling in the region of the heart, striking the backbone.

The store had three customers at the time the bandits entered it: Maynard Anderson, Elba Slagg and Gunder Swenstrude. The second bandit ordered the three men to get to the floor, and attempted to enforce his demand by swinging a club. Slagg (19) dodged the club but Anderson (23) was hit on the side of the head. As Swenstrude (80) was back of the stove and a few feet distant from the other men, the bandit did not reach him with his club. When the revolver exploded, which sent the bullet into the body of Kelling, both bandits made a run for the front door, through which they had entered, and hastily made their getaway. It is believed that a third bandit was in the car which was parked in front of the Kelling store.

Slagg and Anderson scrambled to their feet when the bandits turned their backs upon them and found that the automobile in which the bandits were making their getaway was only a few feet distant headed in a northerly direction. They then returned to give help to Kelling who remarked that "the bandits

had got him."

(Mrs. Eggers, who lived in an apartment above the store, had noticed the car, then heard the shot. Mr. Eggers hurried downstairs and tended to Mr. Kelling.)

Anderson then made haste to notify C.H. Townsend, a storekeeper, who telephoned the sheriff at Madison, the chief of police at Stoughton and Edgerton. Kelling retained consciousness until he was placed upon the operating table at the Edgerton Memorial Hospital, where he was taken by Maynard Anderson, Willis Stillman and E.O. Eggers. An emergency operation was immediately performed on Mr. Kelling on his arrival at the hospital in the thought that his life might be spared by so doing, but the wound was a deadly one and he died at 7:15 o'clock Saturday morning. (He was 59 years old.)

The two bandits had entered the store with caps pulled down over their eyes and coat collars turned up but did not wear masks. The tragedy in the store happened in the course of probably a minute and some of the witnesses to it are not sure that they can identify the criminals.

A Chevrolet car owned by Rev. L.L. Nesvig, Stoughton, was stolen Friday evening and was found abandoned in that city Saturday morning. In the car was found a flashlight and an exact duplicate of the Peters cartridge which was fired at Kelling.

The officials of Dane and Rock counties are investigating every clue and it is hoped that the criminals will soon be brought to justice.

(Kelling's store was also a gas station and bus stop, and federal agents investigated the crime because of the Post Office. On Thursday, February 5, two men, 20 and 21, were arrested in Ottawa, Ill. and finally confessed, and implicated a man from Stoughton, 28, as the one who planned the robbery. They were all taken to Madison where they pleaded guilty to first degree murder and were sentenced to life imprisonment in the state penitentiary. All three men were from Mendota, Ill. where their families were considered wealthy. The men also committed several robberies in Illinois prior to the murder of Frank Kelling.

Mrs. Anna Kelling continued to run the Post Office and store, which Frank had purchased in 1926. She had an apartment at the back of the store where she and her husband had raised two children. Lillian was teaching in Mason, WI at the time of the murder and Franklin was a student at Milton College. Later the building was a nursing home, apartment house, then abandoned and destroyed by a fire in 2012.)

*From Albion Academy Museum Post Office display Information in parentheses added to newspaper report*

# Tigers

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the Tigers dispatched Clinton with a 4-0 decision in Albion Park. One week later, the Tigers exploded for eight runs in the last three innings at Fort Atkinson to win a sectional title for the fifth time in their history.

However, the 2016 Tigers were far from satisfied with a trip to the Home Talent League Grand Championship Series. The three-week, round-robin tournament of sectional champions included Albion (South-east), Monona (East), Wiota (West) and Sauk Prairie (North). After consecutive 4-1 victories against Monona and at Sauk Prairie, the Tigers had set the table for the biggest and most important game in their 70-year history – a home game against Wiota to win an undisputed Home Talent League title.

A back-and-forth game left the Tigers facing a 5-3 deficit in the bottom of the eighth, but RBIs from Tyler Oren, Lars Olstad and Lucas Gregory highlighted a furious three-run rally and gave them a 6-5 lead going into the ninth. Wiota was able to move the tying run to third base with two outs, but right fielder Josh Eastman caught a routine fly ball to set off a celebration in Albion Park that will not be soon forgotten. After seventy years, the Albion Tigers were champions of the largest and oldest amateur baseball league in Wisconsin.

**Today's Albion Tigers**  
Albion's current roster includes no less than ten former or active collegiate players and several long-time veteran players who remain committed to playing for their hometown club.

Many of the players key to the success of the last few seasons remain, including former UW-Whitewater infielder Adam Gregory and All-Star shortstop Tyler Oren. Veteran support and reliability comes from reigning Southeast MVP Aaron Laskowski, former Winona State catcher Kyle Johnson, and slugging outfielder/pitcher Josh Eastman.

A batch of young stars that includes UW-Oshkosh pitcher Lucas Gregory and recent Edgerton graduates Jake Zeimet, Brennan Deegan, and Jake Taylor will surely contribute to any success that Albion may have in 2017 and in the coming years.

A full copy of Albion's 2017 schedule accompanies this article and can also be viewed on the Tiger website, [www.eteamz.com/albiontigers-baseball](http://www.eteamz.com/albiontigers-baseball) or their Facebook page.

Whether you're a die-hard baseball fan or simply looking for an enjoyable day in the park, there are plenty of reasons to make the trip to Albion for a unique baseball and community experience.

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