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BYRON J. NORDSTROM, *Editor*
KEVIN PROESCHOLDT, *Associate Editor*
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A Review of the 1876 Nicolaus Gustafson Murder

JAMES A. BAILEY AND MARGARET B. BAILEY

During the legendary 7 September 1876 Northfield Raid, orchestrated by the notorious James–Younger Gang, Nicolaus Gustafson, a Swedish immigrant to Minnesota, fell victim to a gunshot injury and died on 11 September 1876. A close examination of the events and details surrounding Gustafson and his demise renders insight into his life during the final months, weeks, and days that led up to his death. Gustafson, like so many of the nineteenth century's immigrants, had likely embarked on adventures to America fed by real or imagined promises of economic opportunities, and he probably ignored any of the potential negative consequences of the move, especially his own death.

As readers of this journal know well, some 1.3 million Swedes departed their homeland in an exodus that began as early as the 1840s and lasted well into the twentieth century. They were, on the one hand, pushed from their native land by reasons that included overpopulation, agricultural poverty, lack of employment options, legal and/or social restrictions on religious freedom, and military service demands; at the same time they were drawn by the lures of plentiful farmland, jobs, better wages, religious freedom, an escape from poverty, and the promise of a fresh start.¹ During the summer of 1876, Nicolaus Gustafson, only weeks

JAMES A. BAILEY is professor emeritus of political science and law enforcement at Minnesota State University Mankato. He is the author of several forensic science articles on the 1876 Northfield Minnesota raid, and his current research focuses on the use of forensics to examine aspects of that raid.

MARGARET B. BAILEY is a graduate of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where she earned a BA in English literature and secondary education. She is an author and researcher of journal articles involving the investigation of the James–Younger Gang. Her current research includes collecting genealogical information for those who played a role in the Northfield Raid.

from his thirtieth birthday, was apparently moved by one or more of these factors and chose to leave his Swedish homeland. He journeyed to the United States with his eleven-year-old nephew, Ernst Gustafson, in tow. The pair left Vissefjärda, a parish in eastern Småland, to join Gustafson's older brother, Peter Gustafson, who had settled near Millersburg, Minnesota—not far from Northfield.

Although many Swedish immigrants, including Gustafson's brother, had made the voyage before him, the expedition was not a simple undertaking. Undoubtedly, both Gustafson and his nephew, Ernst, were filled with excitement, while at the same time trepidation, as they walked the gangplank to board the vessel that was going to transport them away from the only life they had ever known. Unfortunately, Gustafson's aim to establish a new and long life in America was going to be cut short.

Nicolaus Gustafson was born in Sweden on 20 August 1846. He had two older brothers, Johan and Peter. Peter and his wife, Anna Carin Andersdotter, immigrated to America in 1871 and were possibly the first Swedish settlers in Rice County, Minnesota.² There they carved a farm from the wilderness of the fledgling state of Minnesota.³ Peter planned to depart for America earlier, but Anna was pregnant. Therefore, they delayed their journey for nearly a year, and during that time Charles, their first child, was born in Copenhagen. Five years after Peter and Anna settled in Minnesota, Johan and his wife, Amanda Maria Zetterberg, who still lived in Sweden, entrusted the safety of their eleven-year-old son Ernst to Gustafson for safe passage to America. So Gustafson and Ernst embarked on crossing the Atlantic and found their way to Minnesota.⁴

When Gustafson and Ernst left Sweden, they boarded a ship in Copenhagen that sailed to Glasgow, Scotland. About 26 June they went on from Glasgow by way of the Firth of Clyde and then crossed the North Channel to Larne, Ireland. At Larne they boarded *The State of Pennsylvania*, an iron steamship that accommodated sixty-five first-class, thirty-five intermediate-class, and four hundred third-class passengers. The steamship had one smokestack and three masts that enabled the ship to travel at a speed of twelve knots, or approximately fourteen miles an hour. At this speed, it took them roughly ten to twelve days to cross the Atlantic.⁵

On 6 July 1876 they arrived at the Castle Garden immigration station located on the southern tip of Manhattan Island in New York.⁶ Officials there were experienced in processing the numerous immigrants who

entered America from scores of nations, and by all accounts Gustafson and Ernst's arrival and entry were routine.⁷ Interestingly, just four days after Gustafson arrived a fire destroyed the main Castle Garden fortress, one of New York's oldest landmarks at the time. No doubt had Gustafson's ship arrived during the time of the fire, there would have been confusion for the pair of Gustafsons and their entry would have been far from routine.⁸

Certainly, Gustafson and Ernst encountered many challenges on their journey. Since Gustafson spoke Swedish and little if any English, the adventure probably became even more challenging on their arrival in America. Practically everyone he encountered would have spoken English



Figure 1. Ernst Richard Gustafson, Nicolaus Gustafson's nephew. Photo courtesy Delbert Gustafson, Dennison, Minnesota, Gustafson family historian.

unless they were Swedish immigrants like him or an immigrant from another non-English-speaking country. Despite the challenges they likely faced, they made arrangements to travel over twelve hundred miles west by train and arrived safely in Faribault, Minnesota, in early July 1876. From there the two newcomers walked about twelve miles to Peter Gustafson's farm near Millersburg.⁹ When Gustafson arrived in Millersburg he took up lodging with his brother Peter and his family. He settled into the Swedish community and contributed by helping his brother on the farm—which was, unlike so many of the poor farms in the “stone kingdom” of Småland, a prospering and productive operation.

The farming conditions in much of Småland made it especially difficult for anyone to earn a decent living. Farm units were small, the soil was poor, and the rocks were an endless frustration. Bad weather often complicated matters. As historian George M. Stephenson has written, from 1867 to 1869 the region experienced

a succession of crop failures that reduced the entire population of the province to the verge of starvation. From April to September 1868, rain fell only two or three times and then only

for two or three hours. Everything was scorched by the sizzling heat; trees were burned black and died. Nobody remembered such a drought. The lean cows roamed at large; houses and farms were deserted. At every station ... crowds were gathered, begging for money and bread. The unripe rye was chopped up, dried in ovens, ground into flour, and made into bread. When even this scanty fare was denied, grass was eaten.¹⁰

The Gustafson family lived in Småland and probably experienced some of these harsh conditions—conditions that contributed to their decision to forsake their homeland where generations of Gustafsons before them had lived. Despite the challenges presented by the unknown in a foreign land, they immigrated to a state developmentally in its infancy, Minnesota. The pioneer spirit thrived in Millersburg, Minnesota, and very basic establishments initially supported the community where Nicolaus Gustafson made his new home.



Figure 2. Peter Gustafson, Nicolaus Gustafson's brother. Photo courtesy Delbert Gustafson, Dennison, Minnesota, Gustafson family historian.

Millersburg was primarily recognized as a farming community, supported by a sawmill and blacksmith shop. The village had a hotel that housed the post office.¹¹ In 1871, when Peter and Anna arrived in Millersburg, although people gathered and worshiped in religious groups, the village was without a proper church. Thus, it was considered a hamlet rather than a town.¹²

Northfield was the closest relatively big town to Millersburg, and it was there that more stores and commodities were readily available. It also provided the families who lived in Millersburg with a market for their farm products. Although only minutes away today by car, a round-trip by wagon to Northfield then took nearly a full day. However, being able to combine purchasing supplies and selling their produce

more than compensated for the distance they had to travel.

Nearly three months to the day after Gustafson joined his Swedish family in Millersburg, he innocently prepared to take what would become his last journey to Northfield. On the morning of 7 September 1876, Peter Youngquist, a friend of the Gustafsons, and some other Swedish neighbors left Millersburg to make a trip to Northfield to pick up some supplies. Youngquist lived approximately eleven miles from Northfield, so the trip would take them until about noon. In preparation for going into town, Youngquist hitched a team of mules to his lumber wagon. The wagon was large enough to carry several people and some produce, and still had space to bring back supplies. Those traveling to Northfield with him were Mrs. Carl Swanson, Mrs. Sven Olson, and Anna Gustafson. Anna's brother-in-law, Nicolaus Gustafson, also went along to help load the supplies.¹³ Only four of the five passengers were destined to make the return trip to Millersburg.

When Youngquist and his traveling companions arrived in Northfield, they set about taking care of their business; Youngquist tied the mules to a hitching post on Division Street south of the First National Bank of Northfield.¹⁴ Of course, at this time the Swedish settlers arriving in Northfield had no knowledge that the James–Younger Gang had been in the Rice County community for a few weeks, preparing and planning to rob the First National Bank of Northfield. Neither the robbers nor the settlers realized that within the next few hours the life of one of the Swedish immigrants would be put in peril by an unidentified shooter during the impending bank robbery.

The membership of the gang varied according to the lawmen pursuing them; however, at Northfield it included Frank and Jesse James; Cole, Bob, and Jim Younger; and Samuel Wells, Clell Miller, and Bill Chadwell. There was evidence that the gang methodically planned the robbery because, in the aftermath, John Mulligan, who lived near Northfield, reported how two of the gang members approached him before the robbery about purchasing his farm. In their conversations, the gang members had numerous questions about the roads and terrain in the area as well as about the habits and customs of the Northfield people.¹⁵ Merchants in town also came forward and said some gang members visited the hardware stores and made inquiries about what types of rifles and ammunition were available.¹⁶

Between eleven and twelve o'clock on the morning of the raid, four members of the gang dined in Northfield at Jeff's Restaurant near the

railroad station. Two other members were at John Tosney's saloon on the west side of town. Both men at Tosney's ordered drinks; one had wine and the other had whiskey. Two more members were at the Exchange Saloon on the east side of the river. Those two men ordered whiskey.¹⁷ The out-of-town restaurant and saloon patrons were noticed, but attracted very little attention during their morning visit to town.

According to Cole Younger's account from 1903, the original bank robbery plan was to send a party of three men into town first to evaluate the conditions and wait at Mill Square for the arrival of two other men. If conditions were favorable, three men would enter the bank and two would stand guard at the door. The other two gang members would wait at Mill Square to provide reinforcements in case someone sounded the alarm.

Early in the afternoon, the party broke camp and proceeded to town in groups. Bob Younger, Charlie Pitts (alias Samuel Wells), and "Howard" arrived first at about 2:00 P.M. (Howard was the alleged alias for Jesse James.)¹⁸ Cole said he did not know it at the time, but these three men had consumed a quart of whiskey after breaking camp on the way to town. When Cole and Miller started to cross the Cannon River Bridge, the three gang members were waiting at the corner of Division Street and Mill Square. Instead of waiting for Cole and Miller to arrive at the Square, the three robbers proceeded down the street and entered the bank. By the time Cole and Miller arrived, the robbery was in progress. The remaining two gang members who followed Cole and Miller remained at Mill Square. Cole and Miller dismounted and hitched their horses to a post near the bank. As the bank robbery was in progress, J. S. Allen, a hardware merchant, approached the bank on Division Street from Mill Square. When Allen arrived at the front door, Miller grabbed him by the collar and ordered him away. As Allen retreated back toward Mill Square, he called out the alarm: "Get your guns, boys, they're robbing the bank!"¹⁹

When the raid commenced, Nicolaus Gustafson's whereabouts were unknown. Nevertheless, according to subsequent events, he was somewhere in the vicinity of the intersection of Division and Fifth Streets, south of the First National Bank—either in an establishment, on the street, or on the sidewalk.

Henry Mason Wheeler, a University of Michigan medical student home on summer vacation, was sitting in front of his father's drug store across the street from the bank and heard Allen's alarm. Wheeler yelled

out "Robbery!" and ran into the drug store and out the back door. Wheeler proceeded to the Dampier House Hotel, which faced Mill Square on the opposite side of the street just north of the bank. He borrowed Edward Dampier's .50 caliber single-shot Smith Carbine and three rounds of ammunition and then proceeded upstairs and to the front window. Wheeler, a significant participant and witness, never presented any evidence pertaining to Gustafson.

Concomitantly, Allen returned to the hardware store and told Manning the bank was being robbed. At this point, Allen provided Elias Stacy with a shotgun. During this time, Cole and Miller mounted their horses and were joined by the three robbers stationed at Mill Square.²⁰

While suspicious Northfield citizens watched and reacted to the strangers' behavior on the street, in the bank Joseph Heywood, acting cashier; Frank Wilcox, bookkeeper; and Alonzo Bunker, teller, were behind the counter when three of the strangers entered the bank. According to Bunker, the robbers drew their revolvers as soon as they entered and demanded that the safe in the vault be opened. Heywood refused to open the safe, so one of the robbers fired a shot into the vault to intimidate the bankers. During a brief moment, Bunker seized an opportunity to escape and ran toward the back door. Pitts followed him and shot Bunker in the shoulder as he fled down the back alleyway. By this time there was gunfire on the streets. As the three robbers left the bank, the last robber to leave shot Heywood in the head. He died instantly.²¹

Because so much of the information about the events of the robbery and the death of Nicolaus Gustafson that was provided by witnesses is contradictory, it is difficult to say exactly what happened that fateful afternoon. Witnesses to crimes often express minor differences in describing their observations, and in the case of the Gustafson story there are

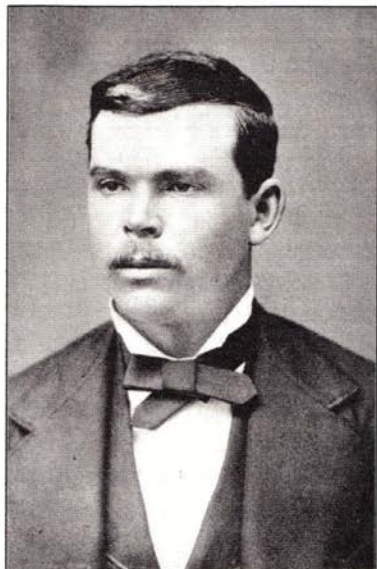


Figure 3. Henry M. Wheeler, University of Michigan medical student and Northfield resident. Photo courtesy of Hayes Scriven, Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, Minnesota.

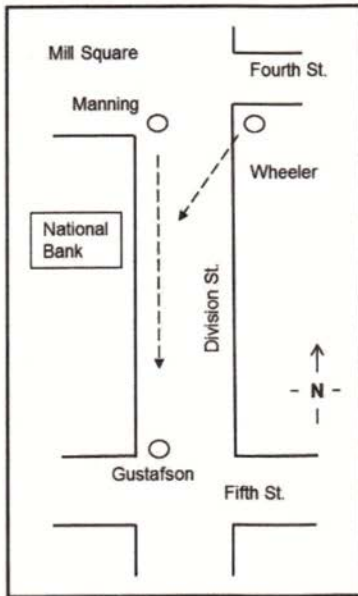


Figure 4. Diagram of approximate location for Wheeler's, Manning's, and Gustafson's positions on Division Street. Coleman Younger's position is not noted because he was reported in various locations during the raid, ranging from the intersection of Division and Fifth Streets to locations in front of the bank.

While Youngquist tried to calm his mules, a gunman rode up to Olson, pointed a revolver at him and ordered him back. At this time, the robber was distracted by a little boy crying in the street.²⁴ It was Gilbert K. Onstad's little boy, Carl. At the same moment, Gilbert was headed onto the street toward Carl. The robber approached Gilbert as he was picking up Carl and ordered the father and son off the street.²⁵ Gilbert fled into the building that was located on the southeastern corner of Fifth and Division Streets, south of the bank.²⁶ While standing at the corner, Olson saw a robber fall. This would likely have been Bill Chadwell. At once, Olson retreated toward the cellar stairs located on Fifth Street.

As Olson ran, he encountered Nicolaus Gustafson somewhere about

significant discrepancies regarding the circumstances that resulted in his death. What follows is an attempt to summarize the accounts of eyewitnesses.

Nicolaus Gustafson, Peter Youngquist, and the other Swedish settlers had been in town about an hour before the bank raid, but it is not known exactly where Gustafson was when gunfire erupted on the street. Nearby, where Youngquist had hitched his mules, John Olson, a carpenter, was working on a cellar door. Olson was near the southeastern corner of Fifth and Division Streets when he heard gunshots. He ran up the stairs located on Fifth Street and walked about twenty feet east toward Division Street.²²

Olson noticed Youngquist's team of mules trying to break free from the hitching post and reported seeing Youngquist run toward his team of mules, which he then tried to calm. One of the robbers ordered Youngquist off the street, but he paid no attention to the robber's demands. He just kept repeating, "All I want to do is take care of my mules."²³

halfway between the corner and the stairs. Olson warned Gustafson, perhaps in Swedish, about the danger.²⁷ Just as they met, Olson believed a ball struck Gustafson because Gustafson fell backwards and brushed against him and made Olson stagger.

Although Gustafson brushed against him and fell backwards, Olson continued to run in the opposite direction away from Gustafson. Since Olson ran westward and Gustafson ran eastward, Olson would have been unable to see what happened to Gustafson, with his back to him. When Olson reached the cellar door, he crouched down. But his conscience got the best of him, and he decided to chance getting up to help the Swede. However, when he started out from his hiding spot, a robber ordered him off the street. As he stepped down and crouched on the stairs leading to the cellar, he saw Gustafson running west toward the Cannon River, which was approximately five hundred feet from the corner of Division and Fifth Streets.

Shortly after he saw Gustafson run to the river, Olson went down to the river to check on him. Gustafson washed his wound in the river, and afterwards Olson helped get the injured young man to the Norsk Hotel on Division Street, where a doctor was called to treat him.²⁸ When Gustafson was first taken to the hotel for treatment, "he was able to speak and asked them to wait for him."²⁹

On the opposite side of Division Street from where Olson was located when he helped Gustafson, F. O. Rice was in Converse and Fuller's Drug Store.³⁰ This shop was located on the southeast corner of Division and Fifth Streets. Rice, a surveyor by trade, was unarmed and did not attempt to confront the gang. Nonetheless, he witnessed the shootout on the street from the drug store doorway and later reported his version of the events. He recounted that when he looked up the street toward the bank Gustafson was only seventy-five or one hundred feet away. By the time Gustafson was wounded, Rice could see that Northfield citizens had already shot two robbers. He could not identify who actually shot Gustafson, but he did recall that the young man was, at that moment, standing at the corner of Division and Fifth Streets on the opposite side of the street from the bank.³¹

Another eyewitness, Ellen M. Ames, came forward twenty-one years later and gave a contradictory account of Gustafson's death for the 1897 parole hearing of the Younger brothers. She told the Board of Pardons that she was in her carriage on Fifth Street between Water and Division Streets when she heard shots. She met Bunker, who was coming from

halfway between the corner and the stairs. Olson warned Gustafson, perhaps in Swedish, about the danger.²⁷ Just as they met, Olson believed a ball struck Gustafson because Gustafson fell backwards and brushed against him and made Olson stagger.

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the alley and was on his way to the doctor's office, holding his wounded shoulder. She then recounted how she got out of her carriage and a man led the horse away. Ames said a robber rode up to her on the street and told her to get off the street. At the same time a man came out of a saloon, and the robber fired his revolver and wounded the man. When photographs appeared, she identified Coleman Younger as the person who had shot Gustafson.³²

While a limited number of witnesses and concerned citizens described Gustafson's injuries, a doctor who was called to treat and attend to Gustafson made a hasty diagnosis. He concluded that the bullet had fractured his skull and pierced his brain. Clearly, the injury was severe, and, as we know, Gustafson died four days later.³³

In another account, Joseph Have Hanson, a journalist who published under the pseudonym of John Jay Lemon, visited Gustafson soon after he was injured. He described the wound in some detail. He said that the bullet had struck Gustafson in front of his right ear, pierced the skin, traveled under the scalp, and exited at the top of his head. Hanson also reported how Gustafson had said that "when he was struck, and for several minutes, his whole left side was paralyzed. But after a few minutes of unconsciousness, he was able to reach his boarding house, but the next day he was not able to rise from his bed." Hanson visited Gustafson again two days later, on Saturday, and found him in a coma. He believed that in the absence of trepanning Gustafson's skull, he would surely die.³⁴

The injury that Hanson described bears some of the indicators of a ricochet bullet injury. According to Hanson's description of Gustafson's wound, a glancing bullet fired by someone at the north end of the block was the most probable source of the bullet that struck Gustafson in his right temple while he walked west on Fifth Street toward the Cannon River. Hanson's description also refutes reports that Gustafson was shot point-blank by one of the robbers. Injuries from a .44 caliber revolver fired point-blank would have resulted in instantaneous death with massive trauma to Gustafson's skull—trauma that neither Hanson nor anyone else ever mentioned.

An objective review of the robbers' and Northfield shooters' positions on the street renders a wealth of information on the shooters' intentions. For example, some of the shooting seems to have been intended merely to alarm and frighten the locals. The robbers who remained mounted on horseback were riding up and down the street in front of the bank firing their revolvers up in the air and down into the ground. Two shots

were fired into Lee & Hitchcock's front windows, adjacent to the bank, leaving smooth holes, and the bullets came to rest inside in the shelving. Other storefront windows were damaged by shots, and some bullets were found lodged in ceilings as well. Nearly every citizen who described the gunfire said the robbers fired above or beside them into door and window frames.³⁵

On the other hand, some of the townsfolk clearly had more specific targets in mind, i.e., members of the gang. Wheeler was positioned upstairs in the Dampier Hotel, aiming the .50 caliber carbine toward a robber in a southern direction toward the bank. The distance from the front of the Dampier Hotel to Gustafson's reported position on the street was approximately 235 yards. The military test for accuracy of the Smith Carbine was a distance of 400 yards, almost twice the distance between Wheeler and Gustafson.³⁶ Wheeler believed his first shot missed; later, however, the conclusion was that Jim Younger was struck by Wheeler's first shot. Even though Gustafson was not in the direct line of fire from Wheeler's position, the bullet could have grazed Jim Younger and then traveled in a southerly direction to strike Gustafson. It would be similar to Lee Harvey Oswald's bullet passing through John F. Kennedy and striking Governor Connelly in 1963. Generally, a bullet can ricochet by striking a surface at certain angles, and the ricochet angle is usually slightly less than the angle of incidence.³⁷

Wheeler's next round struck Clell Miller in the chest as he sat in the saddle. The third round hit Bob Younger in the right arm or leg. Once again, even after striking Younger, the bullet could have had sufficient velocity to have continued and injured Gustafson. Wheeler did not fire the fourth round. In the process of loading the carbine he had dropped the fourth cartridge, and as it hit the floor the paper case



Figure 5. A. R. Manning, Northfield hardware store merchant and resident. Photo courtesy of Hayes Scriven, Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, Minnesota.

ruptured, spilling the powder.³⁸

A. R. Manning was firing a single shot "rolling block" rifle from behind the stairs on the side of the Lee and Hitchcock Store.³⁹ Even though one fired cartridge case stuck in the chamber and had to be forced out with a rod, the rolling block mechanism would have made reloading relatively quick after each shot.⁴⁰ Manning was firing from the corner of the store behind the stairs toward robbers in front of the bank. The bullets would have been traveling southerly toward Gustafson, standing on the corner of Division and Fifth Streets. Manning is credited with killing William Chadwell, injuring a second robber, and killing one of the horses. Manning reported that he had grabbed a rifle and a handful of cartridges from inside his hardware store. The actual number of rounds taken from the store or fired by Manning is unknown.⁴¹ The distance from Manning to the robbers in front of the bank was approximately 100 to 150 feet. The distance from Manning to Gustafson would have been 375 to 400 feet. Based on the positions and directions of fire for Wheeler and Manning, a bullet from either shooter could have resulted in Gustafson's injury.⁴²

Following the robbery, the Youngers escaped from Northfield. However, on 21 September 1876 they were captured near Madelia, Minnesota, and Charlie Pitts, also known as Samuel Wells, was killed. Before the Younger brothers went to trial, the prosecuting attorney, George N. Baxter of Faribault, went to Northfield to interview witnesses for the Youngers' indictment. Baxter could not find a single witness who could identify Gustafson's shooter. When the Younger brothers were captured, they denied shooting Gustafson. They testified that the gang was shooting to frighten the citizens and in a northward direction toward the armed citizens. At the time of Baxter's inquiry, the consensus among the Northfield citizens was that Gustafson's injury was from a stray bullet that could have been fired by either a citizen or one of the robbers.⁴³

The Younger brothers were arraigned in district court at Faribault, the county seat for Rice County, on 9 November 1876. An arraignment hearing opened on 14 November with prosecuting attorney George T. Wilson presenting four indictments for each of the defendants to Judge Samuel Lord. The first charge was "being accessory to the murder of Heywood; the second was for attacking Bunker with deadly weapons; the third was for robbing the First National Bank; and the fourth charged Cole as principal and his brothers as accessories in the murder of Gustafson."⁴⁴

Many have asked, why would any of the Younger brothers confess to the murder? A Minnesota statute is the answer. As a result of an 1868 Minnesota Law which was still in force at the time of the bank robbery, a person charged with murder could avoid the death penalty by entering a guilty plea. The maximum penalty a judge could then impose was life in prison. However, if a person pled not guilty and were then found guilty in the course of a jury trial, they could be executed.⁴⁵

Three attorneys represented the Younger brothers: Thomas Rutledge, Thomas S. Buckham, and George W. Batchelder.⁴⁶ Rutledge, who was from Madelia, Minnesota, advised the Younger brothers to plead guilty.⁴⁷ It was a logical plea for them to enter to avoid the possibility of execution. The plea choice was logical from a legal standpoint, and Rutledge knew a fair and impartial jury would have been difficult to impanel for their trial, given how aroused the people of Northfield were following the deaths of Heywood and Gustafson. Consequently, on 20 November 1876 the Younger brothers pled guilty to all charges, and Judge Lord applied the 1868 Minnesota Law. He sentenced each of the



Figure 6. Coleman Younger, James-Younger Gang member and Gustafson's alleged shooter. Photo courtesy of Hayes Scriven, Northfield Historical Society, Northfield, Minnesota.

Youngers to be confined in Stillwater Prison, Minnesota's state prison, until the end of their natural lives.⁴⁸

From the time of arrest to parole, Cole Younger always denied that he or any member of the gang was the shooter in Gustafson's death. "My theory always has been that the man, Gustafson, who was shot down in the street, was struck by a glancing shot from some of the citizen's rifles, as they were blazing away at the time."⁴⁹

One way to determine whether Cole Younger's assertion is true would be to exhume Gustafson's body and examine the damage to his skull. In some cases the size and shape of a fracture is indicative of the caliber causing the injury. The James-Younger Gang members were firing .44 caliber bullets, while Wheeler was firing .50 caliber bullets.⁵⁰ An examination of the fracture to Gustafson's

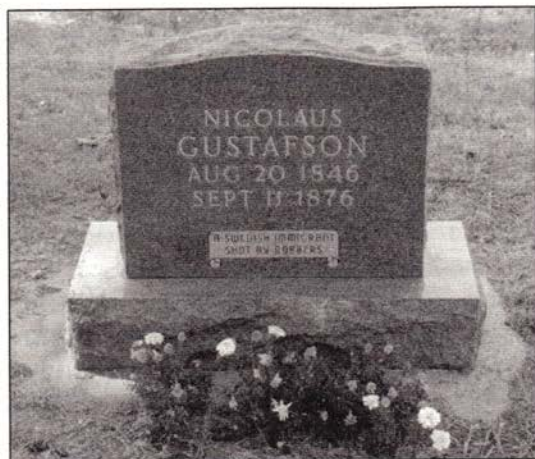


Figure 7. Marker memorializing Nicolaus Gustafson in the Northfield City Cemetery. Photo by the authors.

skull could eliminate the claim that the fatal bullet was fired by one of the gang members.

Another question remaining is whether the bullet came from A. R. Manning's rolling block rifle. This gun was manufactured in a number of calibers, and which one Manning's weapon required is unknown. Nevertheless, if the skull fracture is consistent with a caliber larger than a .44, it would elimi-

nate the James–Younger Gang members. Only Nicolaus Gustafson's living next of kin can pursue an exhumation to have the remains examined by a forensic pathologist and firearms examiner. Evidence from this type of examination could provide new information that could identify Gustafson's shooter.

In three short months, Nicolaus Gustafson experienced what, for many, might have been a lifetime of experiences. He overcame odds that many men in his situation would never have undertaken. As a courageous young Swedish immigrant, who spoke very little English, he sailed the Atlantic and navigated the railways from New York to Faribault, Minnesota, with hopes of having a long and productive life in his new home. Such was not to be the case. Despite the brevity of his life, however, the memory of Gustafson will be long-lived. For example, his death prompted the Swedish community of Millersburg, Minnesota, to expand its religious resources by founding Christdala Church—although Gustafson was not interred at Christdala. Orrin DeLong, a local Northfield historian, discovered that Northfield City Cemetery records indicate Nicolaus Gustafson's remains were buried there. In 1994 a ceremony commemorated the installation of a memorial marker in the city cemetery, dedicated to Nicolaus Gustafson, the immigrant from Småland, Sweden, whose life was cut short when a bullet from an unidentified shooter struck him down during the 1876 Northfield Raid.

ENDNOTES

1. Wayne Quist, *The History of the Christdala Evangelical Swedish Lutheran Church of Millersburg, Minnesota* (Dundas, MN: Small World Press, 1994), 7.

2. Author's interview 17 December 2012 with Delbert Gustafson, family historian.

3. United States Census 1900, "Peter Gustafson," Forest, Rice County, Minnesota.

4. Johan and Amanda Maria Zetterberg Gustafson immigrated to America sometime between 1876 and the 1880s. They made their home in Rice County, Minnesota. Both Johan and Amanda are buried at Christdala Church, Millersburg, Minnesota.

5. The ship Gustafson came to America on was the *State of Pennsylvania*. In the nineteenth century it was not unusual to name passenger ships after the names of states in America. The ship was built by London & Glasgow Company and launched in February 1873 as the *Pennsylvania*; however, to avoid confusion, it was renamed in December 1873 to the *State of Pennsylvania*. At the time of Gustafson's transatlantic crossing, the ship was owned and operated by the State Line Steamship Company. In 1891 the ship was sold to the Allan Line, and in 1893 it was sold to Marmara, a Turkish company, and was renamed *Medina*. In September 1915 the ship was reported to have been sunk by a Russian destroyer off the coast of Kefken in the Northern Turkish Black Sea. See also N. R. P. Bonsor, *North Atlantic Seaway 2* (Jersey, Channel Islands: Brookside Publications, 1978), 865; correspondence from the Library of Congress, 25 January 2013; and United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Part V. Report of the Commission for 1877* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), 504. As well as transporting passengers, the steamship transported menhaden oil on its return voyage from New York to Glasgow. In fact, 206 barrels of menhaden oil were transported on the *State of Pennsylvania* in June 1876.

6. *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897*. Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives at Washington, D.C. The ship's passenger list erroneously noted that Nicolaus Gustafson was from Poland. However, Ernst Gustafson was correctly listed as from Sweden.

7. Barry Moreno, "Castle Garden: Ancestry," *The Forgotten Gateway* 21 (2003): 41-43. See also *Passenger Lists of Vessels* and Bonsor. Note: Castle Garden operated from 1855 to 1892 and is now referred to as the old immigration center. Ellis Island operated from 1892 to 1954 and is now referred to as the new immigration center. Before Castle Garden opened on 3 August 1855 the ships docked at different piers and all passengers exited.

8. "The Castle Garden Fire," *New York Times*, 12 July 1876, 5; and "Castle Garden in Ashes: The Famous Edifice Destroyed," *New York Times*, 10 July 1876, 1.

9. Delbert Gustafson, *Gustafson Family History* (Dennison, MN: self-published, 2001), 8. Ernst Gustafson, alternately spelled Ernest, was born 4 July 1864 in Fiddekulla, Vissefjärda, Sweden, and immigrated to Rice County, Minnesota, where he lived to be seventy-five years old. He married Mathilda Anderson Quist and they had seven children, one of whom died at an early age. Many Gustafsons who descend from Ernst and his uncles, Peter and Johan, continue to live in Minnesota.

10. George M. Stephenson, "The Background of the Beginnings of Swedish Immigration, 1850-1875," *American Historical Review* 31 (1926): 708-23.

11. Edward D. Neill, *History of Rice County Including Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota and Outline History of the State of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Company, 1882), 483-85.

12. Neill, 482.

13. "Gustafson's Descendent Speaks Out," *Northfield News*, 23 July 2005, n.p.

14. Alice Olson, "Gustafson Death in Bank Raid Told by Alice Olson," *Northfield Independent*, 28 August 1947, 4.

15. "The Northfield Tragedy, of Sept., 7, A Full Account of the Robbery: The Latest from the Seat of War Which is Near Mankato," *Rice County Journal*, morning ed., 14 September 1876, 1.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. Frank James, James Andrew Liddell, and Clarence B. Hite, *The Trial of Frank James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1898), 10; and William H. Wallace, *Speeches and Writings of Wm. H. Wallace with Autobiography* (Kansas City, MO: Western Baptist Publishing, 1914), 274.

19. "Cole Younger Tells Story of Northfield Raid," *The St. Paul Globe*, 3 May 1903, 10.

20. "Manning, Wheeler Rout the Bandits," *Northfield Bank Raid: Fiftieth Anniversary Finds Interest Undimmed in Oft-told Tale of Repulse of James-Younger Gang. Reprinted from The Northfield News, August 27, September 3, 10 and 17, 1926* (Northfield, MN: The Northfield News, 2008), 9.

21. "The Northfield Tragedy."

22. "The Northfield Raid," *Northfield News*, 10 July 1897, 2.

23. Alice Olson.

24. John Olson, "The Northfield Raid," 2.

25. Gilbert Onstad, "The Northfield Raid," 2.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Alice Olson.

28. *Minnesota State Gazetteer and Business Directory 1878-9* (Detroit: R. L. Polk and Co. and A. C. Danser, 1879), 1:415; and John Olson.

29. "Gustafson's Descendent Speaks Out."

30. Rice, who celebrated his forty-second birthday on September 8th,

remembered the raid events. The drug store was later occupied by G. H. Scofield Grocery.

31. "F. O. Rice Was Eye Witness," *Northfield Bank Raid: Fiftieth Anniversary*, 19.

32. Minnesota Board of Pardons Nos. 85 and 86, *Affidavit of Ellen M. Ames* (St. Paul, MN), 12 July 1897.

33. John Olson. Also, see Gustafson. Although Gustafson's father died in 1871, Gustafson's mother, Ingrid Petersdotter Gustafson, was living when Gustafson died. Ingrid Petersdotter Gustafson died in Sweden in 1886.

34. John Jay Lemon, *Northfield Tragedy* (London: Westerners Publications, 2001), Thomas K. Resk, M.D., forensic pathologist, Chico, California, letter to author, 9 October 2009; Dr. Resk suggested that Gustafson's cause of death was from cerebral edema resulting from traumatic brain injury. Darwin Farr, M.D., neurosurgeon, Wilmington, North Carolina, interview by author, 4 December 2012. Considering medical knowledge in 1876, "It is possible that a careful trephination in this case, based on a good neurological exam, may have benefitted the patient [Gustafson]. But the results would be less than one out of three for someone with Gustafson's symptoms to survive. Trephination was used primarily to explore for a clot, usually subdural. This was done before there were good diagnostic studies. The trephined hole was usually small, perhaps a half inch. Until the use of intra-operative diuretics in the 1960s, it was very difficult to relieve intra cranial pressure."

35. "Northfield," *Minneapolis Tribune*, 8 September 1876, 1.

36. Dean S. Thomas, *Round Ball to Rimfire: A History of Civil War Small Arms Ammunition, Part Two, Federal Breech loading Carbines & Rifles* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2002), 226.

37. Lucien C. Haag, "Bullet Ricochet: An Empirical Study and a Device for Measuring Ricochet Angle," *AFTE Journal* 7 (1975): 44-51.

38. Ted P. Yeatman, *Frank and Jesse James: The Story Behind the Legend* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, 2000), 174; and Robert Barr Smith, *The Last Hurrah of the James-Younger Gang* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 112-13.

39. J. L. Hamery, "James Boys' Bank Holdup Vividly Told by Local Man: J. L. Hamery, Polk Parole Agent, Saw Famed Men in Action," *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, 7 August 1926; and Yeatman. About this firearm see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remington_Rolling_Block_rifle.

40. John J. Koblas, *Faithful Unto Death* (Northfield, MN: Northfield Historical Society, 2001), 80.

41. Konard F. Schreier Jr., *Remington Rolling Block Firearms* (Union City, TN: Pioneer Press, 1977), 17-25.

42. The estimated distances used in the shootout analysis were obtained from an 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Northfield, Minnesota.

43. Telegram from George N. Baxter, Prosecuting Attorney, to Governor

David Marston Clough, 13 July 1897.

44. "Youngers Enter Plea of Guilty," *Northfield Bank Raid: Fiftieth Anniversary*, 13.

45. Walter N. Trenerry, *Murder in Minnesota: A Collection of True Cases* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1962), 100.

46. *Ibid.*

47. John D. Bessler, *Legacy of Violence: Lynch Mobs and Executions in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 102.

48. "The Younger Bandits: Indicted for Murder," *Faribault Republic*, Carlton College Digital Collection.

49. William Casper Heilbron, *Convict Life at the Minnesota State Prison Stillwater, Minnesota*, 2nd ed. (St. Paul, MN: W. C. Heilbron, 1909), 136.

50. The caliber in some American firearms is expressed as the approximate diameter of the bullet in hundredths of an inch. For example, .44 caliber is 44-hundredths inch, and .50 caliber is 50-hundredths inch.