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6rr Dudley St.
Dorchester, Oct. 19, 1897.

Dear madam:—

In response to the request in your letter of Oct. 11th, I have obtained from Mr. Bickerdyke the enclosed account of the St. Albans Raid. I have briefly stated some facts that lie outside of his personal experience, in order that my story might be continuous. But these facts you have undoubtedly obtained in detail from better sources.

Other portions of the story contain details apparently trivial — given at your request — since you are best able to determine what materials has value for your purposes.

I hardly need say that I act only as Mr. Bickerdyke's secretary: and that any use of my name is, of course, unnecessary.

Very truly yours,

Allen Burdick.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell.

P.S. If I can further aid you by looking over the proofs of the portion of your article containing this statement, I shall be glad to do so.

The St. Albans Raid.

In 1864 there were three banks in the town of St. Albans. Taylor Park, then known only by its old English name, as the "Green" occupied the center of the business portion of the town. At its southern and northern ends were Fairfield and Bank Streets, while on the west, which was Main Street, after running due north through the village, led by diverging roads through the towns of Sheldon on the one hand and Swanton on the other to the Canadian boundary, called then as now, simply "the line". ~~The bank or bank corner of Bank St at the upper or northern end of the Green, Kingman St. starting from Main St, ran west.~~ The "line" was distant by the former road about eighteen miles; and by the latter road through Swanton, about thirteen miles. Kingman Street, starting at Main Street opposite the upper or northern end of the Green ran west to the rail-road. (See inclosed map of streets; Not drawn to correct scale)

The First National Bank - Albert Fowles, Cashier, occupied the ground floor of a building on the south-east corner of Main and Fairfield Streets. It simply counter without the present customary screen of wire or glass, divided the banking room, and a large safe was provided for the books, the money, and securities.

The Franklin County Bank, Marcus Boardsley Cashier, occupied the building on the west side of Main Street, adjoining, and north of the American House. This the latter was building stood on the north-west corner of Main and Lake Streets. The banking room had a counter surmounted by a high screen of ground glass with a wooden framework,

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and had a vault was provided with a vault
of iron and masonry for its valuables.

The St. Albans Bank had temporary quarters in a brick dwelling house on the South West corner of Main and Kingman Streets, pending the construction of its own building on Bank Street. C. N. Bishop was Assistant Cashier, but the active duties of the Cashier were performed by him. Access to the banking room was had through a recessed entrance on the South side of the dwelling, or by the front door through the house as was the custom at that time. The banking-room itself was divided by a counter, surmounted as in the case of the Franklin County Bank, by a screen of ground glass. This counter did not extend entirely across the room and between its further end and the wall at the rear a narrow passage without a gate or door was given entrance behind it to the offices of the Bank. Directly opposite the end of the counter a door led into a smaller room known as the Directors' Room. The Banking Room contained a large safe in which the books and the bulk of the money and securities were placed; while the Directors Room contained a smaller safe holding at that time some papers and between $1500.00 and $1600.00 in silver coin.

There were twenty-three members of the band that took part in the St. Albans Raid on the 19th of October 1864. Some of them came to St. Albans from Montreal on the evening of October 18th; others on the following morning; while others passed through St. Albans to Essex Junction, a

station twenty miles south, and returned to St. Albans from that point. They came singly, or in groups of two or three. All took up their quarters at the American House, and there was no evidence of any previous acquaintance between them until they met each other. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th they assembled on Main Street in front of the American House. Some visited the livery stables and seized horses and saddles; while others took horses found on the street. Citizens on the street were warned, under penalty of death, to attempt no interference with their plans, and some were ordered from the street into the Green. Another detail visited the First National Bank, on Fairfield Street. Mr. Bowles, the cashier, was alone in the Bank and the safe, at this time, was wide open. From the Bank it is believed the raiders obtained bonds to the amount of about $10,000.00 Another detail of three visited the Franklin County Bank. Mr. Bradley, the Cashier, was alone behind the counter; but in the banking room named Clark. From this Bank were taken $20,000.00 or $25,000.00, mainly in bills. After securing the money, the raiders imprisoned Mr. Bradley and Clark in the practically air-tight vault. Although the doors were not shut, it was impossible to open the door of the vault from the inside; and the consequences to the men imprisoned might have been fatal but for the fortunate entrance, a few minutes later, of Mr. J. R. Farrington who heard their cries and released them.

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Being the counter of the St. Albans Bank was C. N. Bishop the Assistant Cashier and a clerk was in the Directors Room in the rear Martin Seymour, a [illegible] At quarter after three o'clock Mr. Bishop sat at a table counting a large deposit made by the Vermont Central Rail Road Co. Two strangers entered at this moment; each with a travelling bag suspended from his shoulder by a strap. Mr. Bishop stepped to the counter and as he did so each of the strangers drew a revolver on Mr. Bishop. Mr. Bishop made a dash for the door leading to the Directors room which stood partly ajar. From this door Mr. Bishop and the strangers were equally distant although they stood on opposite sides of the counter. Mr. Bishop was the first to enter the Directors Room, and as he did so the attempted to close and fasten the door after him. His hastily formed purpose was to escape through a window in the room, opening onto the ground and give an alarm. Up to this time there had been no disturbance, no shots had been fired, and there had been no disturbance on the streets sufficient to attract the attention of those who were not actually cognizant of the affair. Unfortunately Fortunately for Mr. Bishop believed that a bank robbery was being attempted, and that the two strangers, with possibly an outside accomplice or two were alone concerned in the

While attempting to close the door of the Directors Room Mr. Bishop stood on a carpet not fastened to the floor. The pressure on the door from without was sufficient to

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the crowd and thereby secure a sufficient
firm footing to enable him to withdraw the pressure
from with in, and the robbers obtained an
entrance. Seizing Mr. Bishop, and holding
cocked revolvers
held at his head they explained declared themselves to be
Confederate soldiers, and stated that their purpose was
to burn, rob and plunder a Northern soldiers had
burned, robbed and destroyed in the South. They then
exhibited the oath of allegiance to the C.S. At this juncture
three others, members of the band, entered the Bank. One
locked the Key of the street door, and remained on guard
there. The others joined their companions in the Directors
Room. Placing Mr. Daymon by the side Mr. Bishop
in a spirit of diabolical pleasantry they compelled Smith more
also
[illegible] to read the Oath of allegiance to the
Confederate States of America.

Mr. Daymon guarded by one of the robbers, was
then led in the Directors Room and Mr. Bishop ordered
to show them the money and securities in
ordered by the others to produce the contents of
the safe
Vaults. He was taken by them into the banking
room. The open safe was found to contain a little
more than $7000.00 in greenbacks, and bill of the
St Albans Bank. This they placed in the bags slung
from their shoulders, in their pockets, their boots
and in every possible places of concealment about
their persons. Having accomplished this they returned
to the Directors Room, and overhauled the contents of
the smaller safe already described. An attempt was
made to remove the safe, (as already stated
it contained
as they said
about $500. or $600.) but it was too heavy and bulky
that to weight and bulk made it undesirable to carry.

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Between $200. and $300 in Silver was later the most of the ~~loot~~ was found the following day scattered along the Street; having been thrown away because of its inconvenient weight, or else falling from their pockets in their hasty escape.

While this was taking place, two customers came to the door of the Bank, and were admitted by the guard left at the door. One came prepared to make payment of a note due that day; the other to make a deposit. Both were relieved of their money and placed with Mr. Drummond under guard.

By this time the looting of the other Banks, but of which were located ~~near~~ across the American House, & which place the Raiders had commenced operations, had been accomplished; and horses for the all the members of the band had been secured. Having warned Mr. Bishop and the others to make no outcry and attempt no pursuit under penalty of death, the ~~Warning~~ made their exit, backing towards the door with weapons still drawn, ~~raiders~~ mounted, and joined their comrades, waiting them ~~down~~ on the street, ~~at the door~~, mounted their horses, avoiding ~~them~~ them, and made their escape. It seems that the Confederates

~~At the first it was to be said that~~

Although the raiders had secured so large a sum of money from the St. Albans Bank, they fortunately - for the Bank - overlooked $10000. and the rest a few remaining hundred dollars in silver, was left in the smaller safe all that was left to the Bank to resume business with on the following morning. This sum of $10000. in bills, was contained in a large cash drawer underneath

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The drawer had
the counter. It had neither knobs, pulls, keyhole or
escutcheon, and was opened by means of small
slots cut for the fingers beneath the beading of the
moulding. In the absence of these usual appendages
to a drawer, it [illegible] the appearance
of a panel and so escaped the notice
of a [illegible] on a search for the booty. As made up immediately afterwards
The cash account of the St. Albans Bank, [illegible]
showed a
[illegible] a shortage of $72527.00.

[illegible] the robbery of the St. Albans Bank [illegible]
been accomplished, the entire party began their flight
to Canada. Instead of taking the shorter road through
Dunston the raiders took the longer way through Sheldon.
It was apparent that in the original plan
had been to include a raid on Sheldon, as
the splendid horses of the place. They could
Sheldon furnish for this in the afternoon to accomplish
their purpose, and finding the bank at that place
closed, retained their flight via the "line"

The robbery of the St Albans Bank having been
accomplished, nothing remained but their flight into
Canada. Their plans up to the time had been carried
out system already, quickly and quietly. Mounting their
horses they rode rapidly North; [illegible] as they did so
through the village, and as they did so they kept
up a constant and rapid [illegible] fire
with the evident intention of terrorizing the citizens and dispersing pursuit.
The street was filled with citizens whom swift rumors
of trouble had brought from their homes; and it is a
remarkable fact that although scores [illegible] shots
were known to have been fired, but two persons were wounded.
A little earlier than this, while the bank details were

ging at their work, and the remainder of the band was patrolling and guarding Main Street in the vicinity of the bank. Mr. Huntington an old and well known citizen of the town was stopped and ordered to turn back by one of the mounted guards. Not understanding, hearing the order clearly or looking upon it as a jest, and ignorant of the actual condition of affairs, he kept on his way; and as he did so was shot at one of the bandits and slightly wounded.

Later on, when the raiders had begun their retreat from Lisbon, a gentleman not a resident but a visitor who had been engaged for a long time in building operations, was shot in the abdomen by the wounded bandit, proving fatal in a few hours. A curious circumstance in this connection is that the wounded man was not only the most ardent Southern sympathizer in Lisbon but had openly expressed his views on the question and had given any full expression to those sympathies to others but was not at all unwilling to give expression to his political opinions.

But two shots are known to have been fired at the retreating party. Mr. Wilbur Gibson living on Main Street a few rods south of Fairfield Street obtained his rifle from his house, and fired one at the group of mounted men in front of the American House. He believed that his shot took effect, and that one of the band was seen to reel in his saddle; but there was never further evidence that one had been injured. Later on, while the raiders were on their way through the village Mr. H. E. Hollenbeck a house painter living near Main St obtained a gun and shot at the escaping men, probably without result.

Immediate armed pursuit of the retreating robbers was impossible, as St. Albans had at that time no organized militia or "Home Guard". A dozen or fifteen mounted but unarmed men however followed them in their flight, and overtook the rear near Sheldon. They came in sight then

After leaving the Village the raiders took the longer road to the "line" through Sheldon; instead of the shorter one through Swanton. It was afterwards learned that their original plan included a "raid" on the former home and the plundering of the Bank; but Sheldon was reached so late in the day that its bank was closed, and nothing remained but to push on while the border was reached. In the meantime the raiders had changed their horses, and those which gave out while on the road were replaced with fresher ones taken from astonished travellers along the way. As a further precaution against possible pursuit, an attempt was made to fire the bridges crossing the Missisquoi River at Sheldon Creek. The bridge however was little damaged.

That evening Mr. Bishop, with Judge A.O. Aldis as Attorney for the St. Albans Bank went to St. Johns P.Q., to procure warrants for the arrest of the raiders. Judge Aldis at that time one of the Judges of the County Court in Vermont, afterwards became well known, first as U.S. Consul at Nice and later as one of the Commissioners of the Board of Southern Claims Commissioners. The unusual ability and understanding shown in this position won for him a considerable measure of fame.

At St. Johns the warrants were procured, and on the following morning, accompanied by a Canadian sheriff

to serve them, Judge Aldis and Mr. Bishop went on to Pritchardsburg, P.Q., where they overtook the raiders. There they found that fourteen of the twenty-three had already been arrested by an warrants obtained from the local authorities by other interested parties from St. Albans. Driving rapidly back they found the nine remaining members of the band were successful in making their escape, and were never placed under arrest. During the day it was decided to take the prisoners to St. Johns for trial. About $90,000.00 found in their possession at the time of their arrest was held by the authorities at Pritchardsburg. The prisoners were accordingly taken to St. Johns, and Judge Aldis Mr. Bishop and others interested followed them. At St. Johns again it was thought that in view of the importance of the case, and in consideration of the possibility of international complications, to take the men to Montreal for trial, when a day or two later the case came up before Judge Coursol.

A lengthy trial followed. It was plainly evident throughout the trial that Canadian sympathies, like those of the British, were strongly in favor of the Confederate cause; and forejudiced all decisions of the Court in the case: and later, abundant evidence was had that a very large part of the money taken from the southerners was divided among Canadians. The decision was almost a foregone conclusion. On trivial, or technical grounds the prisoners were released: and the Court recognizing the robbery as a legitimate act of war, and the money as legitimate spoils of war, returned the probably inconsiderable remainder —

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of the $90,000. to the Banks
of St Albans. Having formed the request
was made had some time before been obtained
the request of the raiders. but after the discharge of the prisoners
it was discovered that not a
Sheriff, Clerk, Police or other officer capable of
serving the warrants could be found. Many conveniently
kept themselves out of the way
impediments in holding: and when, finally, such an
officer was found, but few of the fugitives
prisoners could be found. Two were the others
discovered, although the country was search for them
recaptured. These five were brought before the Queens Bench,
a higher court: but the decision of the lower court that
the robbery was an act of war, and that the Court
had no jurisdiction, was sustained: and the prisoners
were
again released.

Suit was then brought against the city of Montreal
for the recovery of the money taken from
confederates and returned to them after them
by the Banks
were released. The ground was taken that regard-
less of the decision of the prisoners, the money
belonged to the banks and should have been returned
by the Canadian authorities. This suit was not pressed to trial
& the amount was subsequently dropped.
The Canadian Parliament, which then sat at Ottawa
immediately
was at Ottawa and Quebec passed a bill to
in Quebec.
reimbursing the Banks for the amount proven before the Court
& have belonged to them
by the raiders, less
when arrested. In this way the St. Albans Bank
recovered $30,000. of the $72,527. so taken. More than
thirty days were spent by the bank officers and
their counsel in the attempt to secure the

extradition of the men arrested
~~on the Canadian side, and the subsequent proceedings~~
~~before Commissioners by whom~~,

Among the Attorneys employed by the Banks was George F. Edmunds, afterwards U.S. Senator from Vermont. Only members of the Canadian bar were allowed to practice in Canadian Courts, ~~of course~~; but the services of Mr. Edmunds and Judge Aldis ~~were of great value to the Vermont~~ ~~Banks~~, and ~~by~~ the suggestions ~~given~~ by them to their Canadian associates ~~who~~ were of the greatest value.

C. N. Bishop,
Dorchester, Mass.

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