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SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 217

JAMES E. SIMPSON

FEBRUARY 24 (calendar day, FEBRUARY 25), 1926.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. TYSON, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 2215]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2215) for the relief of James E. Simpson, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with the recommendation that the bill do pass without amendment.

The bill has the approval of the Postmaster General and the Director of the Budget.

The facts are fully set forth in the following correspondence from the Post Office Department, which is appended hereto and made a part of this report.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., January 30, 1926.

Hon. RICE W. MEANS,
Chairman Committee on Claims,
United States Senate.

MY DEAR SENATOR MEANS: In compliance with your request of the 18th instant for my opinion as to the merits of bill (S. 2215) for the relief of James E. Simpson, formerly postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., I am transmitting copies of all material papers on file in the department relating to this case, consisting of (1) the postmaster's claim, filed under the provisions of the act of January 21, 1914, 38 Stat. 278, as amended by the act of July 2, 1918, 40 Stat. 754, (2) reports of inspectors, and (3) affidavits and correspondence.

These papers show that on December 18, 1920, between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning, the Federal building occupied by the post office at Collinsville, Ill., was entered by forcing open a window; that both doors of the money-order vault were opened by means of an oxyacetylene outfit; that a safe within the vault and the burglar-proof chest, also inside the vault, were cut through or blown open, both having been securely locked on the night preceding the burglary; that on September 14, 1920, the other vault in the post office was blown by burglars, and an attempt made to open the safes contained therein; that because the Treasury Department had not repaired the damage of this vault and of the safes it was necessary for the postmaster to keep all funds and stamps in the money-order vault—the one entered in the second burglary; and, that after certain adjustments the extent of loss is found to be somewhat less than as

originally estimated, aggregating the amount stated in the pending bill, consisting of the following items:

Postal funds	\$143. 81
Postage stamps	5, 752. 34
Money-order funds	575. 85
Postal savings funds	52. 50
987 war savings stamps, at \$4.23 each	4, 175. 01
3,176 thrift stamps, at \$0.25 each	794. 00
War-tax revenue stamps	1, 696. 58
 Total	 13, 190. 09

In compliance with a provision in the act cited as to claims in excess of \$10,000, the facts in this case were reported to Congress under date of February 27, 1923, with the recommendation that authority be granted to credit the postmaster in his accounts with the amount ascertained to have been lost in the burglary.

The loss appears to have resulted from no fault or negligence, and in the opinion of the department the pending bill is meritorious and should be enacted into law.

There is also inclosed for your information copy of a letter from the Director Bureau of the Budget, dated January 21, 1926, in response to my inquiry, advising that my report on this proposed legislation is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Very truly yours,

HARRY S. NEW,
Postmaster General.

BUREAU OF THE BUDGET,
Washington, January 21, 1926.

MY DEAR MR. POSTMASTER GENERAL: I am in receipt of your letter without date relative to the request of the chairman Committee on Claims, House of Representatives, for a report on the bill (H. R. 7124) for the relief of James E. Simpson, formerly postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., in the sum of \$13,529.48, on account of loss of funds and stamps in the burglary of the post office on December 18, 1920.

After reciting the facts you state that your response to the request would be that with the exception of the item of \$339.39 in paid war-savings stamps, which were improperly on hand at the time of the burglary, the loss appears to have resulted from no fault or negligence and that the pending bill is meritorious and should be enacted into law after amendment by stating \$13,190.09 instead of \$13,529.48 as the amount of the loss.

In reply to your letter I have to inform you that the proposed report would not be in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

H. M. LORD, *Director.*

The POSTMASTER GENERAL.

FEBRUARY 24, 1923.

In re James E. Simpson, postmaster, Collinsville, Ill.

Claim for credit on account of loss by burglary on December 18, 1920, as follows:

Postal funds	\$143. 81
Postage stamps	6, 612. 22
Money-order funds	1, 803. 51
Postal-savings funds	52. 50
Postal-savings stamps	1. 40
987 war-savings stamps, 2,925 thrift stamps	4, 906. 26
War-tax revenue stamps, etc	1, 696. 58

BRIEF

It appears from the evidence in this case, including the report of the inspector who made the investigation, that on the night of the date mentioned burglars entered the post office named by forcing open a window; that they burned and blew open the vault therein from which they took the funds and stamps for which credit is claimed.

The burglary occurred between 4 and 5 a. m., the burglars being detected in the Federal building by the janitor on his way to work, and the assistance of the police sought but not obtained until after the burglars had departed. An oxy-acetylene outfit which was stolen from an automobile shop in St. Louis, Mo., was used to burn a hole in the outer door of the vault and sever the bar between the combination and the handle. The inner vault doors were blown and the four safe doors within the vault were also blown. The powerful charges of explosives used caused the destruction of many papers and records, including a money-order report, and the scattering and mutilation of much of the stamps, money, envelopes etc., thereby rendering difficult an estimation of the loss sustained.

The computations of loss submitted by the postmaster and the inspector are practically in agreement, with the exception that the postmaster states in a letter of February 7, 1922, that in checking up the number of thrift stamps on hand after the loss, the inspector overestimated same by 251 stamps, which accordingly are added to the postmaster's claim. There is also an item of 12 war-savings certificates, for which credit will be allowed by the Treasury Department, and consequently their value, \$964.84, should be deducted from the loss of money-order funds in which they were being carried as cash. As above stated, the record of the money-order business was destroyed in the opening of the inner vault doors, and the computations of the postmaster and inspector are incomplete, inasmuch as there is no method of determining the amount of money orders paid, the paid orders themselves being stolen by the burglars. It is therefore proper to give preference to the figures submitted by the Comptroller for the Post Office Department, namely, \$1,540.69, from which should be deducted the \$964.84 above referred to, thereby reducing the loss of this item to \$575.85.

The correct amounts of the loss are as follows:

Postal funds (including key deposit funds)	\$143. 81
Postage stamps	6, 612. 22
Money-order funds	575. 85
Postal-savings funds	52. 50
Postal-savings stamps	1. 40
War-savings stamps: 987 war-savings stamps, at \$4.23 each; 3,176 thrift stamps, at \$0.25 each	4, 969. 01
War-tax revenue stamps	1, 697. 14
 Total loss	14, 051. 93

The loss appears to have resulted through no fault or negligence on the part of the postmaster, and I therefore recommend that credit in the amounts ascertained to have been lost be allowed.

JOHN H. EDWARDS, *Solicitor.*

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
County of Madison, ss:

I, James E. Simpson, of lawful age, being duly sworn depose and say: I am postmaster at Collinsville, Madison County, Ill., which is a second-class office located in a Federal building.

On September 14, 1920, the vault in the postmaster's office was blown open and an attempt made to blow open the safes contained therein. The burglars did not gain access to contents of safes, but damaged the safe doors to the extent that they had to be broken open, and they had not yet been repaired. For this reason the vault in the postmaster's room and the safes contained therein could not be used as none of them could be locked.

On the night of December 17, 1920, all of the stock and funds of the office were placed in the vault in the money-order room. All the stock and money except the stamped envelopes and postal cards were placed inside the safes in the money-order vault and the doors of the safes securely locked by means of the combinations.

About 4.45 o'clock of the morning of December 18, 1920, burglars were discovered at work by John Cox, the janitor of the Federal building when he came to work. He immediately searched for a police officer, but did not find the officer until about 5.05 a. m. He returned to the building about 5.10 a. m. but the burglars had departed. He came into the building and found the money-order vault and safe therein blown open and notified me. The janitor observed a big automobile, make and license unknown, standing in front of the post office building, headed toward St. Louis, which is about 15 miles distant.

I came to the post office building immediately and telephoned to the police of St. Louis and East St. Louis, but they were unable to intercept the burglars. Upon entering the post office I found the outer door of the money-order vault had been burned open by means of an oxy-acetylene outfit. Two gas tanks were in the money-order room, with connections still intact. I found a burlap sack in the office, also heavy safeblower's tools, and later John Reese found in the post office yard a burlap sack containing an extra set of gauges for the gas tanks with goggles contained therein. Later on Mr. White, 4728 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis, Mo., came to the office and identified the two gas tanks as having been stolen from the welding company which he conducts at that number.

The acetylene cutter, however, did not belong to him and no trace of its ownership has yet been found. The oxygen tank is No. 639, that is the big tank, and the smaller tank is No. 8234. I notified the post-office inspector in charge at Chicago by telephone and telegraph, also the post-office inspector at St. Louis, Mo.

I did not disturb the room or handle the vault doors and the débris from the vault and safes was left just as found by the post-office inspector. Fingerprints made by the safe blowers were found on the door of the vault and these were photographed by the inspector.

When the inspector arrived, he and I picked up the large pile of papers strewn all over the vault and money-order room, and found a small number of postage stamps, a small amount of change, and some pieces of mutilated money. We found also damaged portions of one out-going registered letter from Maryville, Ill., apparently to East St. Louis, Ill., with remnants of three \$50 bills and one \$10 bill. It was found so many charges of explosives had been used on the safes that many of the papers, money-order applications, coupons, etc., were blown to pieces. We found all of the blank domestic money-orders, some of which were badly damaged, but none were stolen. We found the international money orders but two numbers are missing as hereinafter stated.

The burglars cut through the outer vault door cutting the rod which connects the combination with the handle, thus enabling them to turn the handle. They then cut and blew the inner vault doors. After that they blew the door to the burglar-proof chest containing the money-order and stamp funds, the money-order cash drawer containing the day's business, paid money orders, etc. They blew open the inner doors to the chest. There were also two doors to the safe containing the stamp stock, including the war-savings stamps which they blew open. Altogether they blew or cut open seven vault and safe doors.

I found a package of thrift stamps numbering 6,572 which had been overlooked by the burglars as they were blown underneath the typewriter desk in the money-order room.

The loss as found by check made by myself, the assistant postmaster, and the inspector is as follows:

War savings and thrift

War savings:		
On hand Nov. 30, 1920-----		989
On hand after robbery-----		2
Loss (\$4,175.01)-----		987
Thrift stamps:		
On hand Nov. 30, 1920-----		9,497
On hand after robbery-----		6,572
Loss (\$731.25)-----		2,925

Sales during December had been light; there had been about \$24 in sales and about the same amount paid for redemption. As all the cash and redeemed stamps were stolen, and as it is not required that a daily sales be kept thereof, it is impossible to tell precisely the amount of cash on hand, but it could not have been more than a few dollars.

Documentary stamps

On hand Nov. 30, 1920, in stamps-----	\$1,446.22
Sales-----	\$15.56
Stolen-----	1,430.66

Of the cash \$15 was a check, payment on which has been stopped. The loss of war revenue is therefore 56 cents in cash and \$1,430.66 stock.

Proprietary stamps

Stock on hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$267.44
Found after robbery	1.52
Loss	265.92

No separate record is kept of the sale of this variety of stock and none is required. The loss of \$265.92 is in cash and stamps, but the cash was approximately forty-five to fifty dollars.

POSTAL CASH

The daily sales of postage stamps shows the sales for the 17 days of December and expenditures as follows:

Receipts:	
Sales Dec. 1 to 17, inclusive	\$896.90
Second-class receipts	4.97
Box rents	3.30
Total to be accounted for	905.17

Disbursements:	
Paid postmaster, clerks and carriers, Dec. 16	798.48
Second-class receipts not stolen	4.97
Silver coins found after safe was robbed	6.31
Total accounted for	809.76
Amount stolen	95.41

Total	905.17
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There was no postal cash in the bank at the time of the burglary, as all of it had been checked out to meet the pay roll. The bank book has been balanced and shows no balance on deposit at close of business December 17, 1920.

POSTAL STOCK

A count has been made of the stock on hand following the burglary, which disclosed that all of the stamp stock, except a few stamps found among the littered papers, were stolen. The explosion scattered stamped envelopes and postal cards on the vault floor, and evidently the burglars picked up a portion of these, as there is some loss of postal cards and No. 5 stamped envelopes.

The loss of postal stock has been found by count to be as follows:	
Stock on hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$8,507.93
Received since that date	46.40

Total to be accounted for	8,554.33
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On hand after burglary (less \$45 in redeemed stock on hand belonging to First National Bank)	1,045.21
Sales Dec. 1 to 17, inclusive	896.90

Total accounted for	1,942.11
Amount of stock stolen	6,612.22

Total	8,554.33
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MONEY-ORDER BUSINESS

There were on hand as money-order cash \$964.84, which represented 218 registered war-savings stamps of 1918 series, registered in name of Joseph Wilson, deceased, account Nos. 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 923, 218, 10 full certificates, and 217 with 4 stamps and 453 with 14 stamps attached. These stamps had been received by me with letters testamentary and all forwarded to the postmaster at Chicago, Ill., who sent me a check for \$964.84, which I paid to Mrs. Wilson (Mrs. Fannie Wilson), administratrix of the estate of Joseph Wilson. Some time after that the Chicago, Ill., postmaster wrote me to reimburse that

office for the \$964.84, as the matter would first have to be taken up with the Treasury Department, Division of Loans and Currency. I could not get in touch with Mrs. Wilson, who was out of town, and as it was necessary for me to send the money to the postmaster at Chicago, Ill., I used money-order funds for this purpose, the postmaster at Chicago, Ill., having returned stamps to me. I retained these registered war-savings stamps in the strong box with the money-order funds and carried the amount as money-order cash, and wrote to the Treasury Department, Division of Loans and Currency, November 15, 1920, and hold acknowledgment of C. N. McGroarty, Chief of Division Loans and Currency, Treasury Department, but received no further word from that division, and hence had the stamps on hand, and his failure to furnish me with instructions within a reasonable time is responsible for the loss of these registered war-savings stamps.

On the afternoon of December 17, 1920, I took up from the banks paid money orders as follows:

State Bank of Collinsville	\$681.44
First National Bank	157.23
Total	838.67

These paid money orders were with the business of December 17, and were stolen by the burglars. The money orders paid at the post office on that date were also stolen and as the day's business had not been entered there is no record of what they amount to. Judging by the business of other days, they were perhaps about \$100, but this is mere guesswork.

I find from the money-order cashbook that it had not been written up for December 15, 16, and 17. Miss Henrietta Emig is the money-order clerk. The work had been balanced and checked December 1 to 14, inclusive, and the balance entered by her found to be correct, to wit, \$1,354.53. Continuing the business from applications, stubs, and such other original data as is available, discloses that the balance on the morning of December 17 was \$2,184. The day's business so far as can be determined was as follows:

Balance due United States close of Dec. 17	\$2,184.00
Domestic issued	388.88
Fees on same	3.61

Total	2,576.49
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Paid (can not be determined, account stolen)	0
Deposits	850.00
Transit	200.00
Balance	1,526.49

Total	2,576.49
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As hereinbefore stated it is known there was stolen the registered war-savings stamps valued at \$964.84 and paid money orders to the amount of \$838.67. The total of these two items is \$1,803.51, which is more than the balance just shown. Therefore it is known there exists items which are not accounted for or charged for, and as the money-order blotter was not written up the night of the burglary, and as the paid money orders and other data were stolen, it is impossible to arrive at the exact amount of the money-order loss. It is known, however, that there was some cash on hand, and it is believed to have been less than \$200, and perhaps in the neighborhood of \$100.

Two international money-order blanks are short, Nos. 14883 and 14884, and I have written the exchange office at New York to ascertain if these orders were issued and for what amounts.

POSTAL SAVINGS BUSINESS

A check was made of the postal savings certificates of deposit and business. No certificates were stolen. Loss of stamps and cards is as follows:

On hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$8.20
On hand after burglary	6.80
Stolen	1.40

Postal savings cash:		
Cash on hand Nov. 30, 1920	-----	\$10.50
Certificates	-----	4,494.00
Total	-----	4,504.50
Certificates paid	-----	110.00
Interest paid	-----	2.00
Deposits to credit of trustees	-----	4,340.00
Cash stolen	-----	52.50
Total	-----	4,504.50

KEY DEPOSIT FUNDS

Key deposit funds were contained in the safe which was blown and same were all stolen. Records show there was on hand \$48.40, all of which was stolen by the burglars.

REGISTRY LOSSES

In addition to the above losses the registered letters which were received for dispatch on train 143, Pittsburgh & St. Louis, at 7.30 a. m. December 18 were stolen. A list of these has been furnished the inspector and the forms have been made out.

As I gave to the stamps and funds the protection provided by safes and vaults in a Federal building, and all of the protection required under the postal laws, I claim credit for the entire loss as shown above.

JAS. E. SIMPSON, *Postmaster.*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 18th day of March, 1921.

[SEAL.] W.M. R. AMBROSIUS, *Notary Public.*

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE,
Collinsville, Ill., March 18, 1921.

SOLICITOR POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C.

SIR: I herewith send you a full report of the robbery that occurred at our office on December 18, 1920, in the form of an affidavit.

It was a difficult matter to get all the information necessary to comply with the regulations as some of our records were burned and others badly mutilated by the burglars; however, with the assistance of the inspector and assistant postmaster I make the following report and believe it to be as near correct as is possible to make it.

Respectfully,

JAS. E. SIMPSON, *Postmaster.*

— FEBRUARY 14, 1922.

Mr. JAMES E. SIMPSON,
Postmaster, Collinsville, Ill.

MY DEAR MR. SIMPSON: The difference in the number of thrift stamps on hand after the burglary of your office on December 18, 1920, and the number on hand at the time of the final count on January 17 last, as shown in your letter of the 7th instant, will be taken up in the adjustment of your claim filed in this office, and it will not be necessary for you to file an additional claim to cover this difference.

Very truly yours,

JOHN H. EDWARDS, *Solicitor.*

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE,
Collinsville, Ill., February 7, 1922.

Subject: Recall of unsold 25-cent thrift stamps.

SOLICITOR FOR POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SIR: On December 18, 1920, our office was burglarized, and a few days thereafter the inspector came and made a check of the stock that was not taken by the burglars.

The thrift stamps were placed in two packages by the inspector, one containing 5,000 and the other was checked as 1,256, the remainder of the loose stamps, 316 in all, were placed in envelopes, making a total as counted at that time of 6,572.

The two packages were placed in the vault at the time of the count by the inspector and there remained untouched until we took a final count of them on January 17, 1922, and we found that the count of the larger package containing 5,000 was correct, but the smaller package contained only 1,005 instead of 1,256, making a difference of 251 stamps, which makes a discrepancy in our records to that amount.

The envelopes contained 316 stamps, of which 72 were sold during the past year, leaving a balance of 244 in the envelopes.

No one has access to the stamps except myself, the assistant postmaster, and the register clerk, and we are positive that an error was made in the count at the time of the burglary. We are willing under oath to testify to the facts as set forth in this letter.

I request that you permit me to file an amended claim, and that you furnish me the proper blank on which to make claim.

Sincerely yours,

JAS. E. SIMPSON, *Postmaster.*

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, February 4, 1922.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
Division of Loans and Currency, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SIR: The following papers from the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., are referred to your department for consideration in connection with a claim for payment of war-savings certificates or stamps:

An application on Form WS 3353 by James E. Simpson, postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., for payment of 12 war-savings certificates registered at the Collinsville, Ill., post office, in the name of Joseph Wilson, now deceased, together with a report of Post Office Inspector F. W. Reuter, dated June 25, 1921, relating to the burglary of the post office at Collinsville, on December 18, 1920, showing that the above-mentioned certificates were among the securities stolen and that payment of the certificates had been made previous to their loss.

The certified copy of the letters testamentary granted on the estate of Joseph Wilson, deceased, 12 registration cards, and a letter from the postmaster at Collinsville were transmitted to your department on March 2, 1921.

By direction of the Postmaster General.

Sincerely yours.

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, February 4, 1922.

The SOLICITOR POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT:

Inclosed herewith is a copy of my letter addressed to the Secretary of the Treasury in connection with the claim of James E. Simpson, postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., for payment of 12 registered war-savings certificates inscribed in the name of Joseph Wilson, now deceased, which were lost in the burglary of the post office at Collinsville on December 18, 1920.

As the value of these certificates was included in the total loss of \$15,216.84, which Post Office Inspector Reuter recommended for credit, this amount should be reduced by \$964.84, the amount paid to the administrator of the estate of Joseph Wilson, deceased.

W. IRVING GLOVER,
Third Assistant Postmaster General.

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, June 29, 1921.

The SOLICITOR POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT:

This office has received damaged stamped paper as follows, and credit will be granted therefor unless the amount has been allowed by you on account of loss from fire, burglary, or other unavoidable casualty:

Damaged stamped paper received from J. E. Simpson, postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., two war savings stamps. Stamps damaged in robbery.

W. IRVING GLOVER, *Third Assistant.*

—
JULY 1, 1921.

The THIRD ASSISTANT,
Division of Stamps:

Claim for credit by the above-named postmaster under section 150, Postal Laws and Regulations, is pending in this office.

JOHN H. EDWARDS, *Solicitor.*

—
JULY 2, 1921.

The SOLICITOR:

The application of the above-named postmaster for redemption of damaged stamped paper has been received and a credit of two war savings stamps reported to the auditor later.

W. IRVING GLOVER, *Third Assistant.*

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POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR,
East St. Louis, Ill., June 25, 1921.

Subject: Collinsville, Ill., burglary of Federal building vault. Case No. 29, 804-D, preliminary.

The INSPECTOR IN CHARGE,
Chicago, Ill.

DEAR SIR: Preliminary report is submitted of an investigation at St. Louis, Mo., December 19, and at Collinsville, Ill., December 20, 21, 22, and 28, 1920, pertaining to the forcible entry of the Federal Building at Collinsville, Ill., on the early morning of December 18, 1920.

An investigation discloses that on September 14, 1920, the vault in the postmaster's office at Collinsville was blown open and an unsuccessful attempt made to blow open the safes therein contained. The safe doors were damaged to the extent they were rendered useless and had not been repaired by the Treasury Department. Consequently all stock and funds had to be kept in the vault connected with the money-order room.

About 4.45 o'clock of the morning of December 18 burglars were discovered at work in the Federal building by John E. Cox, the janitor, when he came to work. He walked by two men posted as lookouts and by the automobile, which was a large machine, and immediately searched for the police officers, but did not find an officer until 5.05 a. m. Cox returned to the building at 5.10 a. m. but the burglars had departed. He entered the building and found a side window had been forced open, and the money-order vault burned open by means of an oxy-acetylene outfit, which was left by the burglars. The janitor failed to get a good description of the automobile, its license number, or the men he saw. The car was headed toward St. Louis, Mo., which is 15 miles distant by hard surface roads, which require less than 30 minutes' drive. The janitor immediately notified the postmaster, who telephoned to St. Louis and surrounding towns in an unsuccessful attempt to intercept the offenders.

Attention is respectfully invited to affidavit of Postmaster James E. Simpson, accounting in detail his actions, the finding of the burglar tools, etc.

I traced the acetylene-tank outfit to Mark E. White, St. Louis, Mo., who conducts an automobile repair shop at 4728 Delmar Boulevard. White bears a good reputation, and states he is convinced Tommy Hayes, a St. Louis auto bandit, stole this tank from him, or knows who did so. With St. Louis detectives, Hayes was arrested at St. Louis and held in jail there for several days. He is an intelligent,

fine-looking young man of good family and all efforts to obtain information were unavailing. White states Hayes, whom he knows well, came into his place of business the day before the burglary, bringing with him a stranger, whom he stated desired to buy an automobile. Previously a similar oxy-acetylene had been stolen from White and he states he noticed the men were more interested in the burning and welding outfit and the doors and locks than in the automobile. From a knowledge of Hayes and his associates, I am convinced Hayes knows all about the Collinsville burglary. He has been arrested numerous times and is the type of high-class crook with political influence found in large cities. He associates with Timothy Lotsey, whom I now have under arrest for blowing the Federal building vault at Edwardsville, Ill., on April 20, 1921, with James Trainor, arrested this week for holding up an express driver at Granite City, Ill., another industrial town across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Mo., and stealing a pay roll amounting to \$17,500; he was suspected of the Jefferson City, Mo., \$35,000 mail robbery, and also of the St. Charles, Mo., mail robbery wherein the messenger was kidnapped. The Federal building vaults at Edwardsville and Collinsville, Ill., were both blown on two different occasions since last August, and feeling convinced of the identity of the gang, the case has not been reported, believing that some proof would in time develop, as did in connection with Timothy Lotsey, for the last burglary at Edwardsville, Ill. This report will therefore be confined practically to a statement of the loss sustained at Collinsville, Ill., December 18, 1920, and final report submitted later.

The loss sustained in the Collinsville, Ill., post office burglary is the largest burglary loss in years in this section. Postmaster Simpson is an efficient official. He kept everyone out of the money-order room until I could get there, and as a result I obtained photographs of finger prints, which may eventually lead to a conviction.

The burglars burned a hole in the vault door, severing the bar between the combination and the handle, thus affording a means of turning the handle and opening the door. The inner vault doors were blown, and four safe doors on safes inside the vault were blown open, making seven doors in all either burned or blown open. Tremendous charges of explosives were used and papers, such as the money-order report which had been partially prepared, were blown into shreds. Pieces of stamps and money, cards, envelopes, etc., were scattered all over the money-order room. The postmaster and I picked up the pieces of paper, piece by piece, recovering a considerable quantity of more or less damaged stamps, coins, etc.

This being completed a careful count was made and the accounts audited, showing losses as follows:

War savings and thrift stamps

War savings stamps:	
On hand Nov. 30, 1920	989
On hand after the burglary	2
	987
Stolen	
Thrift stamps:	
On hand Nov. 30, 1920	9, 497
On hand after the burglary	6, 572
	9, 497
Stolen	2, 925
Value of thrift stamps stolen	\$731. 25
Value of war savings stamps	4, 175. 01
	4, 175. 01
Amount of loss	4, 906. 26

The postmaster states the sales during December had been very light, and amounted to but about \$24, and about the same amount paid in redemption, which it appears came out of the war savings instead of postal funds. All the cash and redeemed stamps were stolen, and it was impossible to tell precisely the amount of cash on hand, but it could not have been more than a few dollars. The large amount of thrift stamps recovered is due to the fact that almost an entire block were blown out of the safe under the typewriter desk and were overlooked by the burglars.

Documentary stamps

On hand Nov. 30, 1920	-----	\$1,446.22
Less sales to Dec. 18	-----	15.56

To be accounted for	-----	1,430.66
On hand after burglary	-----	00

Stolen	-----	1,430.66

Documentary cash

Sales Nov. 30 to Dec. 18	-----	15.56
On hand after burglary (check)	-----	15.00

Documentary cash stolen	-----	.56

Proprietary stamps

Stock on hand Nov. 30, 1920	-----	267.44
Found following burglary	-----	1.52

Proprietary stamps stolen	-----	265.92
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No separate record is kept of the sale of this variety of stamps and none is required. The loss of \$265.92 is in stamps and cash combined, but the cash was approximately \$45 to \$50. For the purpose of adjusting the account, all may be considered as stock.

POSTAL CASH

The daily sales record of postage stamps for the first 17 days of December and the expenditures shown by the postal account, are as follows:

Receipts

Sales Dec. 1 to 17, inclusive	-----	\$896.90
Second-class postage receipts	-----	4.97
Box rents	-----	3.30

Total cash receipts to be accounted for	-----	905.17
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Disbursements

Paid postmaster and clerks and carriers Dec. 16	-----	\$798.48
Second-class receipts not stolen	-----	4.97
Silver coins found in débris after safe was blown	-----	6.31

Total amount accounted for	-----	809.76
Amount stolen	-----	95.41

Total	-----	905.17
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There was no postal cash in the bank at the time of the burglary, as it was checked out to meet the pay roll of December 16. The bank book was balanced, showing nothing to credit of postmaster December 17, 1920.

POSTAL STOCK

A count was made of postage-stamp, envelope, and card stock following the burglary, disclosing all of the stamp stock stolen except a few stamps found among the littered papers on vault floor. The explosions scattered the postal cards and stamped envelopes, and in their haste to getaway a portion of the cards and stamped envelopes were stolen. The loss of postal stock is as follows:

Stock on hand Nov. 30, 1920	-----	\$8,507.93
Received since that date	-----	46.40

Total to be accounted for	-----	8,554.33
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On hand after burglary (less \$45 in redeemed stock belonging to First National Bank)	\$1, 045. 21
Sales Dec. 1 to 17, inclusive	896. 90
Total accounted for	1, 942. 11
Stamp stock stolen	6, 612. 22
Total	8, 554. 33

POSTAL SAVINGS STOCK

A check was made of the postal savings certificates of deposit, disclosing there was none missing. The loss of stamps and cards is as follows:

On hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$8. 20
Found after burglary	6. 80

Stolen	1. 40
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Postal savings cash

Cash on hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$10. 50
Certificates issued since	4, 494. 00

To be accounted for	4, 504. 50
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Certificates paid Dec. 1 to 17	110. 00
Interest paid	2. 00
Deposits to credit trustees	4, 340. 00
Cash stolen	52. 50

Total	4, 504. 50
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KEY DEPOSIT FUNDS

Key deposit funds were contained in one of the safes inside the vault and the total amount was stolen:

On hand Nov. 30, 1920	\$48. 40
No business since that date	0. 00

Key deposits stolen	48. 40
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REGISTRY LOSSES

Eleven registered letters were stolen, all of which were properly on hand and in the safe which was blown open:

Registered 2089 to National Stock Yards, Ill., contained Liberty bond coupons	\$257. 55
Registered 2085 to Los Angeles, Calif., currency	25. 00
Registered 2086 to Concordia, Mo.	12. 00
Registered 7019, Maryville, Ill., to East St. Louis, Ill.	160. 00
Registered 2090, negotiable bonds to Chicago, Ill.	5, 000. 00

Total	5, 454. 55
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The remaining registered letters contained valuable papers, money orders, drafts, etc.

MONEY-ORDER BUSINESS

The money-order account is not susceptible of definite determination as to amount of loss involved, due to destruction of records and theft of paid money orders by the burglars, and incomplete records of paid orders, due largely to the Christmas rush of business. The affidavit of the postmaster, reciting matters pertinent to this account, is in brief as follows:

There were on hand as money-order cash \$964.84 in redeemed war-savings stamps of the series of 1918, which represented 218 registered war savings stamps registered in the name of Joseph Wilson, deceased, account numbers 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, and 218—10 full certificates,

and account 217 with 4 and account 453 with 14 registered war-savings stamps. These stamps had been received with letters testamentary, and all forwarded to the postmaster at Chicago, Ill., who sent a check for \$964.84 to the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., which he in turn paid to Mrs. Fannie Wilson, administratrix of the estate of Joseph Wilson, deceased. Sometime later, the postmaster at Chicago, Ill., wrote the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., to reimburse him for the \$964.84, stating the matter would first have to be taken up with the Treasury Department, Division of Loans and Currency, returning the stamps above described to Collinsville. Mrs. Wilson was away and the postmaster could not take the matter up with her, and as the postmaster at Chicago demanded return of the money, the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., sent him money-order funds for the amount, holding the registered stamps as money-order cash. These stamps were retained in the strong box of the money-order safe furnished by the Treasury Department, inside of the regulation Federal Building vault, the postmaster writing the Treasury Department for instructions, November 15, 1920, and receiving acknowledgment of C. N. McGroarty, Chief of Division Loans and Currency, Treasury Department, but received no further word from that division; hence the stamps were on hand in the safe and were stolen, due to failure of the Treasury Department to furnish instructions within a reasonable time.

The post office at Collinsville, Ill., is nearly always short of postal funds, and while the war-savings stamps should have been paid out of postal funds, as the postal funds were also stolen and the safe in which they are kept was likewise blown, the loss would have been the same regardless of which fund was used to reimburse the Chicago, Ill., postmaster.

On the afternoon of December 17, 1920, the postmaster took up from banks paid money orders as follows:

State Bank of Collinsville	\$681.44
First National Bank	157.23
Total	838.67

The postmaster paid cash to the banks in redeeming these money orders, and his statement is corroborated by affidavits obtained by me from the two banks, and which are submitted herewith.

These paid money orders were with the business of December 17, and were stolen by the burglars. The money orders paid at the post office on that date were likewise stolen, and as the day's business had not been entered there is no record of their aggregate value. An average arrived at from payments on other days indicates the money orders paid at the post office amounted to approximately \$100, but this is a mere estimate.

The money-order cash book shows that it had not been written up for December 15, 16, and 17. Miss Henrietta Emig is the money-order clerk. The work had been balanced and checked to December 14, inclusive, and the balance found to be correct, to wit, \$1,354.53. Continuing the business from applications, stubs, and other original data, such as is available and was not destroyed or stolen by the burglars, the balance on morning of December 17 was \$2,184. The business of December 17, so far as can be determined, is as follows:

Balance due United States close Dec. 16, 1920	\$2,184.00
Domestic orders issued	388.88
Fees on same	3.61
Total	2,576.49

Paid orders can not be determined because stolen by burglars	00.00
Deposits	850.00
Transit (O. D. 8925 since received)	200.00
Balance	1,526.49
Total	2,576.49

As already stated it is known there were stolen out of the money-order business cashed registered war-savings stamps to the amount of \$964.84 and paid money orders cashed by the banks of \$838.67, or a total of \$1,803.51, which is more than the balance shown. In addition there was some cash on hand which was stolen, believed to have been about \$100, but as the money-order blotter was not written up for December 17, it is impossible to fix the amount of cash stolen, or amount

of cashed orders stolen which were paid at the post office. It is proven, however, the following loss occurred in the money-order business:

Money orders paid by Collinsville, Ill., banks and redeemed by postmaster Dec. 17-----	\$838. 67
Redeemed registered war-savings stamps held as money-order cash-----	964. 84
 Total stolen-----	1, 803. 51

The additional loss will need be adjusted in some manner by the auditor.

No domestic blank money orders were stolen, although many were badly mutilated, and the postmaster was instructed to return same to the department. Two international orders were stolen, Nos. 14883 and 14844, and I notified the exchange office at New York with reference to same.

The description of the postage stamps stolen will be submitted with final report upon the case.

I recommend the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., be allowed credit for the following losses sustained in burglary of the vault and safes contained therein on morning of December 18, 1920:

War savings stamps; number, 989, value-----	\$4, 175. 01
Thrift stamps; number, 2,925, value-----	731. 25
Documentary stamps, value-----	1, 430. 66
Documentary cash-----	. 56
Proprietary stamps-----	265. 92
Postal cash-----	95. 41
Postal stock-----	6, 612. 22
Postal savings stock (stamps)-----	1. 40
Postal savings cash-----	52. 50
Key deposit funds-----	48. 40
Money-order funds, consisting of paid orders and war savings stamps redeemed and held as cash-----	1, 803. 51

Total loss sustained by Government----- 15, 216. 84

Very respectfully,

F. W. REUTER, *Post Office Inspector.*

Report examined, approved, and forwarded to chief inspector June 28, 1921.

A. E. GERMER,
Acting Post Office Inspector, in Charge Division.

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
County of Madison, ss:

H. Esterlein, of lawful age, being sworn, makes affidavit as follows:

I am employed by the First National Bank of Collinsville, Ill., and on Friday, December 17, 1920, received from Postmaster Simpson, \$157.23, for which I delivered to him paid post-office money orders to that amount which had been cashed by the bank.

H. H. ESTERLEIN.

The above statement made and sworn to before me at Collinsville, Ill., this 22d day of December, 1920.

F. W. REUTER, *Post-office Inspector.*

STATE OF ILLINOIS,
County of Madison, ss:

Clara Schroeppel, of lawful age, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

I am employed at the State Bank of Collinsville, Ill., and hereby make affidavit to the fact that on the afternoon of December 17, 1920, Postmaster Simpson paid the State Bank of Collinsville \$681.44 and received in return paid money orders to that amount which the bank had cashed. The records of this bank show this to be as above stated.

CLARA SCHROEPPEL.

The above statement made and sworn to before me at Collinsville, Ill., this 22d day of December, 1920.

F. W. REUTER, *Post-office Inspector.*

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR,
Chicago, Ill., June 15, 1925.

Subject: Collinsville, Ill.—Unaccounted balance of \$339.39 in war-savings and
thrift stamps account of the postmaster.

INSPECTOR IN CHARGE,
Chicago, Ill.:

This case was personally investigated at Collinsville, Ill., and at St. Louis, Mo., on May 26, and at Springfield, Ill., on May 27, 1925. It was originally jacketed on a communication from the Third Assistant, dated March 7, 1923, in which it was stated the postmaster at Collinsville, Mr. J. K. Simpson, had a claim pending action by Congress for the loss of war-savings and thrift stamps valued at \$4,969.01, which was \$339.39 less than the amount he had stated in his accounts to the Third Assistant as being unaccounted for, due to a burglary of his office on December 18, 1920. After request for investigation of this matter other files bearing on the finances of the Collinsville office were referred for concurrent attention.

On March 5, 1924, an investigation was made at Collinsville by myself and Inspector R. J. Purcell, the results of which are contained in a report dated March 25, now with the files of the case. It was found difficult to secure accurate data as to the condition of the accounts at the time of the burglary, due to the fact that many of the records had been destroyed when the vaults were blown, and also because Miss Etta Emig, the employee in charge of the war-savings and thrift business, had left the service and gone to California. However, it was confidently believed that no shortage existed in any of the accounts. Mr. Simpson, an expert accountant, had noted there was an apparent shortage of something like \$300 in the accounts of the office, taken as a whole, following receipt of information from the department as to the total amount it was proposed he be credited with as result of the burglary. Along about this time he received credit corrections from the department, in different accounts, which had the result of reducing the apparent shortage to \$262.26, according to his calculation. He then found that on the day preceding the burglary certain war-savings certificates valued at \$268.20 had been cashed with money order funds and it was his belief that on account of the loss of these certificates (which were stolen in the burglary) he had failed to receive proper credit on their account. Nothing was known by him of the balance due on the war-savings and thrift stamp account at the time of the robbery, the records having been lost or destroyed.

At the time of the investigation by me and Inspector Purcell there was nothing to be found in the office showing that there had been a balance due in the war-savings and thrift accounts at the beginning of the month in which the burglary occurred; but, as stated in our report, Miss Emig had made an entry at the end of the month indicating that there had been cashed certificates on hand when the robbery took place, amounting to \$339.39. The postmaster believed the certificates cashed the day preceding the robbery (with possibly a few others he was unable to identify), to which reference has been made, were the ones Miss Emig referred to in the entry, "Stamps cashed and stolen—\$339.39." I have examined the report of Inspector Reuter, who investigated the burglary of December 18, 1920, and he makes no reference to a balance due in the war-savings and thrift account at the beginning of that month. Mr. Reuter informed me when in St. Louis on the 26th ultimo that he had found the accounts of the office in such damaged condition, due to use of explosives at time of the burglary, that it was difficult to make an accurate adjustment of the loss. He recalled no balance as having been due on the war-savings and thrift account at the beginning of the month of December, 1920, and, as has been stated, his report made at the time does not indicate there was such balance.

In reopening the case for further investigation, the Third Assistant submits copies of the statements of war savings and thrift stamp business transacted at Collinsville during the year 1920. From these it appears the balance of \$339.39 had been due at the close of November, that year, also that a balance of somewhat more than this amount had been carried since March, 1920. Mr. Simpson is now out of office, but he was seen at Springfield, Ill., on May 27, and shown the copies of the statements. He was wholly unable to make any explanation, except that in all probability Miss Emig had been carrying some cashed certificates in the account which could not be regularly disposed of, due to some irregular indorsement or other defect; he suggested, further, that the certificates may have been the property of some deceased person and that advance payment might have been made pending appointment of executor. Miss Emig is the only person who

is in position to have accurate knowledge in this matter. She is said to be a lady of the very highest standards of honesty and no one suspects any financial irregularity on her part. It is necessary that she be interviewed carefully and thoroughly, since it is believed she will be able to explain the reason for carrying a large balance in the war savings and thrift account for a period of approximately nine months. Her present address is 2830 East Sixth Street, Los Angeles, Calif.

It is recommended that the case be transferred to the San Francisco division for interview of Miss Etta Emig. If she can satisfactorily explain the balance of \$339.39, credit in this amount should be recommended, which will have the effect of entirely squaring up the accounts of former Postmaster Simpson; if she can not explain, consideration should be given the question of making collection from her, since she was in sole charge of the war savings and thrift business at Collinsville post office at the time the balance was being carried.

W. O. BAUMGARDNER, *Inspector.*

Report examined, approved, and forwarded to San Francisco division June 16, 1925.

G. B. MILLER,
Post Office Inspector in Charge Division.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR,
Los Angeles, Calif., August 27, 1925.

Subject: Collinsville, Madison County, Ill.—War savings and thrift stamp account of J. E. Simpson, postmaster, shows \$339.39 unaccounted for.

INSPECTOR IN CHARGE,
San Francisco, Calif.:

The above numbered case relating to the war savings and thrift stamp account of J. E. Simpson, postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., indicating that there was \$339.39 in that account unaccounted for, is herewith returned with result of personal investigation at Los Angeles, Calif., July 1, 2, and 30, and August 27, 1925.

The initial investigation of this case was taken up by Inspector W. O. Baumgardner of the Chicago division, who, in a report dated Chicago, Ill., June 15, 1925, states in substance that this case was personally investigated at Collinsville, Ill., and at St. Louis, Mo., on May 26, and at Springfield, Ill., on May 27, 1925; that it was originally jacketed on a communication from the Third Assistant, dated March 7, 1923, in which it was stated that the postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., Mr. J. E. Simpson, had a claim pending action by Congress for the loss of war savings and thrift stamps valued at \$4,969.01, which was \$339.39 less than the amount he had stated in his accounts to the Third Assistant as being unaccounted for due to a burglary of his office on December 18, 1920.

Inspector Baumgardner also stated that on March 5, 1924, an investigation was made at Collinsville by himself and Inspector R. J. Purcell, the results of which are contained in a report dated March 25, 1924, now with the files in this case; that it was then difficult to secure accurate data as to the condition of the accounts at the time of the burglary, due to the fact that many of the records had been destroyed when the vaults were blown, and also because Miss Etta Emig, the employee in charge of the war-savings and thrift-stamp business, had left the service and gone to California; but, however, it was confidentially believed that no shortage existed in any of the accounts; that Mr. Simpson, an expert accountant, had noted there was an apparent shortage of something like \$300 in the accounts of the office taken as a whole, following receipt of information from the department as to the total amount it was proposed he be credited with as a result of the burglary; that along about this time he received credit corrections from the department in different accounts, which had the result of reducing the apparent shortage to \$262.26, according to his claim, and he then found that on the day preceding the burglary certain war-savings certificates, valued at \$268.20, had been cashed with money-order funds, and it was his belief that on account of the loss of these certificates (which were stolen in the burglary), he failed to receive proper credit on their account, and nothing was known by him of the balance due on the war-savings and thrift-stamp account at the time of the robbery, the records having been destroyed or lost.

Inspector Baumgardner further states that in reopening this case for further investigation the Third Assistant submitted copies of the statements of war-savings and thirft-stamp business transacted at Collinsville during the year 1920. From these it appears the balance of \$339.39 had been due at the close

of November of that year. Also, a balance of somewhat more than this amount had been carried since March, 1920; that Mr. Simpson is now out of office, but that he was seen at Springfield, Ill., and shown the copies of the statements; that he was wholly unable to make any explanation except that in all probability Miss Emig had been carrying some cash certificates in the account which could not be regularly disposed of, due to some irregular indorsement or other defect. He therefore suggested that the certificates may have been the property of some deceased person, and that since payment might have been made pending appointment of an executive.

Former Postmaster Simpson further stated that Miss Emig is the only person who is in a position to have accurate knowledge of this matter; that she is said to be a lady of the very highest standards of honesty, and no one suspects any financial irregularity on her part, but he deemed it necessary that she be interviewed carefully and thoroughly, since it is believed she would be able to explain the reason for carrying a large balance in the war-savings and thirt-stamp account for a period of approximately nine months, and as her present address is 2830 East Sixth Street, Los Angeles, Calif., he recommends that the case be transferred to this division for attention by an inspector operating at Los Angeles, and if Miss Emig can satisfactorily explain the balance of \$339.39, credit in this amount should be recommended and will have the effect of entirely squaring up the accounts of former Postmaster Simpson, but if she can not explain, consideration should be given the question of making collection from her, since she was in sole charge of the war-savings and thirt-stamp business at the Collinsville post office at the time this balance was being carried.

In my first interview with Miss Emig, who is now conducting a small confectionary and notion store at 563 South Mathews Street, corner of East Sixth Street, Los Angeles, she stated that she had no recollection whatever of the balance mentioned in Inspector Baumgardner's report, but that, however, she would get in touch with Mr. N. F. Herbst, the assistant postmaster at Collinsville during the period in question, and he probably would be able to give her some information which might bring some of the facts concerning the war-savings and thirt-stamp account during the period mentioned.

In my last interview with Miss Emig, she informed me that she had received a letter from Assistant Postmaster Herbst and he advised her that he had no recollection whatever concerning this matter. However, Miss Emig informed me that since my last visit she had given this matter considerable thought and attention, and now recalls that some time, and she believes, in the early part of 1920, some one else attached to the money-order section of the Collinsville post office, and she further believes it to have been Assistant Postmaster Herbst, had redeemed several cards (she believes three or four), with war-savings stamps adhered thereto, from a Mr. Val Forte; that when she was preparing these redeemed stamps for remittance to the depository at Chicago, Ill., she noted some irregularity in the signature or in the indorsements thereon, and therefore held them out pending the possibility of getting in touch with Mr. Val Forte concerning the same, and that she believes that these war-savings stamps were among those in her custody at the Collinsville office up to the day preceding the robbery. Miss Emig's affidavit to the foregoing facts is inclosed herewith, and in connection with this affidavit will state that I believe it is absolutely true.

This young woman is now conducting a small notion and confectionery store at the address before mentioned, and appears to be just about making a living. I visited her home in the first place at 2830 East Sixth Street, and found that she was living there with her aged mother in a very modest manner.

In view of the foregoing facts, and as it is just possible that Mr. N. F. Herbst, who was assistant postmaster at Collinsville at the time of this burglary, may be able to throw some light on the said redemption of war savings and thirt stamps from Mr. Val Forte, whom Miss Emig informed me is an old resident at Collinsville, and probably resides there yet, will recommend that this case be retransferred to the Chicago division, and assigned, if deemed appropriate, to Inspector Baumgardner for such further action as he may deem necessary to take in the premises.

FRANK J. HARE, *Inspector.*

Report examined, approved, and forwarded to inspector in charge Chicago division, August 28, 1925.

E. P. SMITH,
Acting Post Office Inspector in Charge Division.

AFFIDAVIT OF HENRIETTA EMIG

JULY 23, 1925.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

County of Los Angeles:

I, Henrietta Emig, under oath depose and state I was a clerk at the Collinsville, Ill., post office and employed in the money-order section thereof at the time of the burglary of that post office on December 18, 1920, and in that capacity and at that time had charge of the war savings and thrift stamps accounts.

I have no recollection whatever of the balance of \$339.39 having been due at the close of November of that year. However, I have some recollection of a number of war stamps that had been redeemed by one of the other attachés of the money-order section, and to the best of my knowledge and belief it was Mr. Ware F. Herbst, assistant postmaster, for a party named Val Forte.

When I prepared to send these stamps in to the depository, Chicago, Ill., I discovered that these stamps that had been redeemed from Mr. Val Forte were not properly signed, and I was holding them at the time of the robbery to get in touch with Mr. Val Forte with the view to having them properly signed.

This transaction being so long ago has practically passed my memory. I am therefore at this time unable to state under oath positively that the war stamps herein described were in my possession previous to the robbery, but I believe they were.

At any rate will simply state that all money or other securities belonging to the Government and were in my care just previous to robbery were legally in my care and that I accounted for conscientiously and honestly and will further swear that if there was a balance of \$339.39 due the United States or the war and thrift stamps account at the post office at the time of the robbery, there were vouchers either in the form of redeemed war and thrift stamps or other securities to cover any such balance.

HENRIETTA EMIG.

Sworn to before me at Los Angeles, Calif., this 27th day of August, 1925.

FRANK J. HARE,
Post Office Inspector.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF., July 23, 1925.

Mr. FRANK HARE:

I wrote to the assistant and all the information he gave me was, if he remembered right, the stamps were for Val Forte, but just how many he did not remember.

He did not send me registration cards as he is not in the office at this time any more.

HENRIETTA EMIG,
*2830 East Sixth Street, Los Angeles, Calif.*OFFICE OF INSPECTOR,
Chicago, Ill., December 24, 1925.

Subject: Collinsville, Ill.—Unaccounted balance of \$339.39 in war savings and thrift stamp account of the postmaster.

INSPECTOR IN CHARGE,

Chicago, Ill.

DEAR SIR: This case was personally investigated at Collinsville, Ill., on the 16th instant. It originally was jacketed on a communication from the Third Assistant, dated March 7, 1923, in which it was stated the postmaster at Collinsville, Mr. J. E. Simpson, had a claim pending action by Congress for the loss of war savings and thrift stamps valued at \$4,969.01, which was \$339.39 less than the amount he had stated in his accounts to the Third Assistant as being unaccounted for due to a burglary of his office on December 18, 1920. After request for investigation of this matter other files bearing on the finances of the Collinsville office were referred for concurrent attention.

On March 5, 1924, an investigation was made at Collinsville by myself and Inspector R. J. Purcell, the results of which are contained in a report dated March 25, now with the files of the case. It was found very difficult to secure

accurate data as to the condition of the accounts at the time of the burglary, due to the fact that many of the records had been destroyed when the vaults were blown, and also because Miss Etta Emig, the employee who had been in charge of the war savings and thrift business, had left the service and gone to California. But it was confidently believed that no shortage existed in any of the accounts. Mr. Simpson, who had had considerable experience as an expert accountant, had noted there was an apparent shortage of something like \$300 in the accounts of the office, taken as a whole, following receipt of information from the department as to the total amount it was proposed be credited to his accounts as result of the burglary. He had corresponded with the Post Office Department on the subject, and as the result had arrived at the conclusion that if certain items be adjusted so that he be given credit the entire matter would be satisfactorily smoothed out. These items involved one of \$249.60 having to do with a Treasury savings transaction with T. P. Griffin, and the other related to a debit of \$268.20 charged against the postmaster in the money-order account. The postmaster was convinced, after his correspondence with the department and in the absence of Miss Emig and many of the lost records, that if given credit with the two amounts mentioned all financial difficulties would adjust themselves.

In view of the conditions which existed following the burglary, it was impossible for us, over three years later, to determine by actual check just exactly the amount lost. In this connection it may be pointed out that Inspector Reuter, who made the investigation immediately following the burglary, learned nothing of the balance in the war-savings and thrift account amounting to \$339.39. It was found, however, that the postmaster rightfully was entitled to credit for the two items mentioned in the preceding paragraph and since the best evidence obtainable seemed to warrant the conclusion that these credits would approximately balance the total debits, as had been concluded by the postmaster, the case was returned for closing after allowance of the two credits.

Not long afterwards the Third Assistant asked for further investigation, stating in substance that the recommendations as to the two credit items were satisfactory; but that independent of these, the balance of \$339.39 in the war-savings and thrift account still stood. There also were submitted at this latter time certain copies of the postmaster's war-savings accounts, as submitted by him, which indicated there had been a balance carried at the time of the burglary, amounting to \$339.39, and that a balance somewhat in excess of this amount had been so carried since the month of March, 1920. It was requested that, after further investigation, if no better evidence could be obtained than that shown in the first report, the amount of \$339.39 be collected and properly deposited.

A second visit was made to Collinsville on May 26, 1925, at which time every effort was made to explain the balance carried in the war-savings account at the time of the burglary. This it was found impossible to do, for the reason that Miss Emig, the only employee who might know the facts, was still in California. Mr. Simpson, who is no longer postmaster, was seen in Springfield, Ill., the following day. He was entirely unable to explain the balance as carried by Miss Emig, but stated he was absolutely positive there had been some good reason and that some certificates must have been held at the time of the burglary which could not be transmitted for credit, possibly because of some irregularity or because legal requirements could not be promptly met, as in the case of appointment of executor of an estate. Miss Emig's honesty is beyond question, as is also that of Mr. Simpson. In view of the facts learned at that time, the case was transferred for investigation by an inspector at Los Angeles, Calif., where Miss Emig was located.

The investigation at Los Angeles was made by Inspector F. J. Hare, whose report is with the files. After having been given a month or more for thought, Miss Emig stated she had been able to recall certain war savings certificates which had been cashed by one Val Forte, a patron of the Collinsville office; that these certificates had not been properly receipted at time of payment; and that they were being held for the purpose of getting in touch with Mr. Forte, at the time of the burglary. Miss Emig made affidavit of the facts before Inspector Hare, which the latter states is believed to be absolutely true. Her reputation in Collinsville is the highest and I feel positive she would not falsify under any circumstances.

As result of the inquiry at Los Angeles the case was returned for further attention at Collinsville with view to determining whether there could be anything unearthened to sustain the affidavit of Miss Emig. I again made a trip to that place on the 16th instant. Mr. Val Forte, without knowledge of the object of

the investigation, stated that shortly before Easter, 1920, he had cashed three full war-savings certificates and in addition two or three other certificates with a small number of war-savings stamps attached to each were cashed at the same time. These were in the names of his three children, the oldest of which was 12 years, and the certificates were cashed for the purpose of purchasing "Easter outfits" for them, as described by their mother, who also was positive as to the year of cashing and who stated the total amount was just about the sum I had mentioned (\$339.39). Mr. Forte is an Americanized Italian of some means and there is no doubt of his reliability in this statement; he was unable to recall just how the certificates were cashed, but does remember that he went to the post office with the children at the time. He said he could not remember having been requested to make any correction in the signatures, but thought he might have signed them and that the children possibly had been asked to put their names on the certificates. The three children were absent at school and I was unable to see them, but Mrs. Forte stated they likely could not recall the details. She also said that one of the children had been away from home shortly after Easter, 1920, on a visit. It is probable that this absence may have caused delay in correction of the signatures and corresponding delay in transmission for credit. Miss Emig had not corresponded with these folks on the subject, according to their statement, and they knew nothing of the investigation until seen by me. Their statement is believed to be absolutely true.

Mr. Herbst, mentioned in Miss Emig's affidavit, who had been assistant postmaster at Collinsville, stated he had had a letter from her some months ago asking if he had any recollection of certificates on hand at the time of the burglary, but that she did not mention the name of Mr. Forte or any other person. He had replied he could not recall such an occurrence. In this connection it is stated in Inspector Hare's report that Miss Emig had recalled the Forte transaction after she had written to Mr. Herbst. When the Forte matter was mentioned to him on the 16th instant, he stated he was able to remember there had been some difficulty concerning certificates cashed by this patron and that Miss Emig had been unable to get credit for them on account of some irregularity; he was unable to recall the date, but it was at about the time set by Mr. and Mrs. Forte.

I have not the slightest doubt that there were at the time of the burglary "stamps cashed and stolen" in the sum of \$339.39, as indicated in the statements submitted to the department by Miss Emig. I am also convinced in my own mind that the war savings certificates referred to by Miss Emig in her affidavit were the ones being held, and I have no doubt there was good and sufficient reason for holding these certificates in the office at Collinsville. Knowing conditions at Collinsville and considering the character and reputation of all the post-office employees, from the postmaster down, I feel that it would be an injustice to make collection on account of a balance on hand at the time of the burglary, especially after the lapse of two or three years' time. Fortunately, however, Miss Emig has been able to recall the circumstances, which I have no doubt existed as stated by her.

It is recommended that J. E. Simpson, former postmaster at Collinsville, Ill., be granted relief in the further amount of \$339.39 on account of a balance in that amount on hand and stolen in the burglary of his office December 18, 1920.

W. O. BAUMGARDNER,
Inspector.

Report examined, approved, and forwarded to chief inspector December 23, 1925.

G. B. MILLER,
Post Office Inspector in Charge Division.