

CHAPTER I "DANDITS!" gasped the fat and perspiring traveling salesman who rode on top of the swaying Concord stagecoach. He grasped frantically at the bulging wallet in his breast pocket, then almost fell off the seat as Wahcc Jones, the driver, jerked his horses to a skidding stop or the narrow mountain

A hundred yards ahead of the coach two horsemen had materialized out of the sagebrush at the side | beside 'he driver. "Oh. what will | tered, he scouted hurriedly around of the road. Guns drawn, hats pulled | the boss say when I tell him how | low over their foreheads, the road agents trotted forward, their guns drawn. The taller of the two wore a black mask, the other's face was | Bandit, (Jeff Hawkins) and Polka partly covered by a tilk polka-dot | Dot (Sam McGee) were amicably | passenger he dragget the startled bandkerchief.

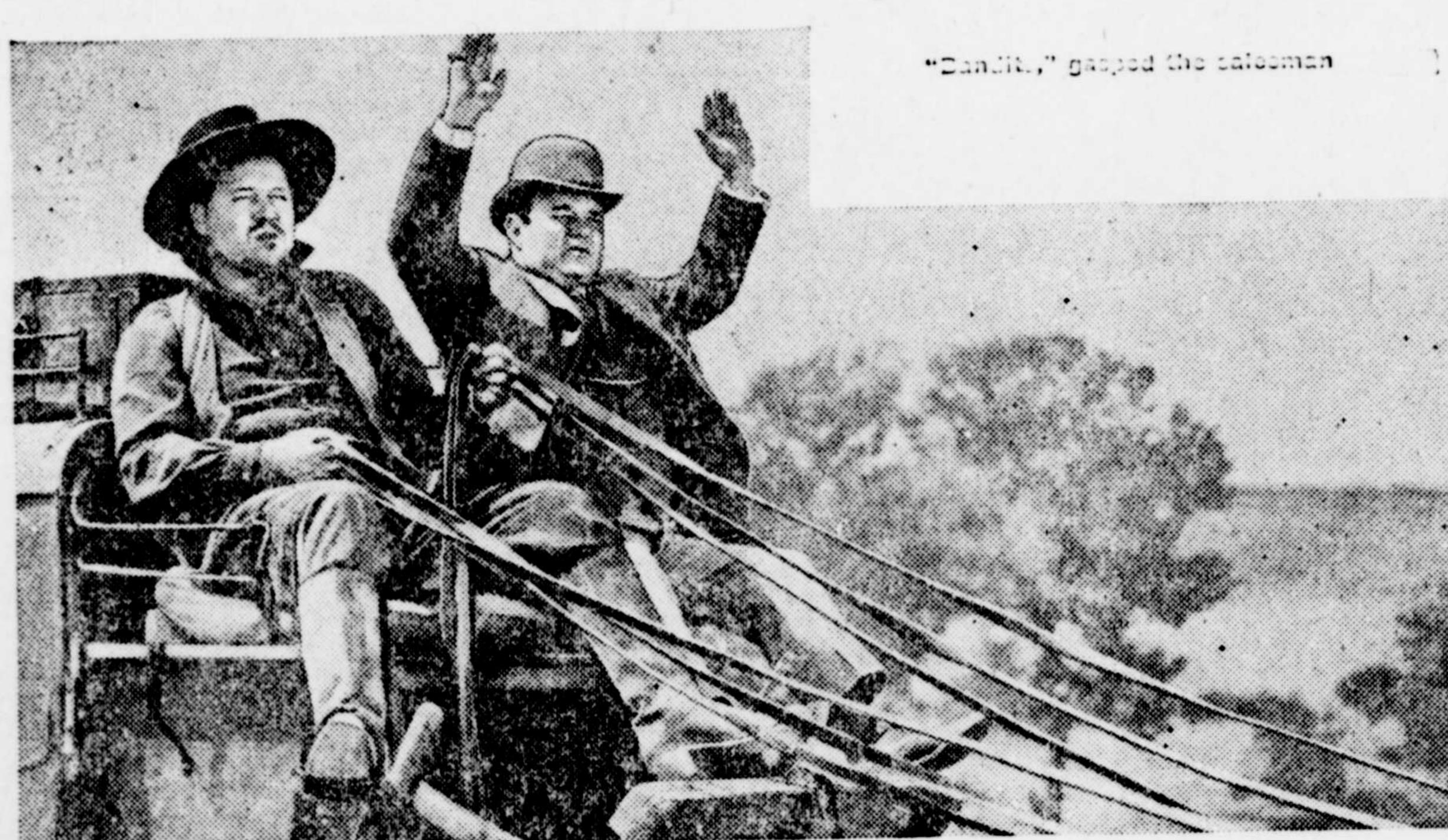
A moment later the road agents | answered the stranger. Then, as the tried to fire after them. But somehow the ejector jammed and he

"The dirty, thievin', robbin', lyin'. sons of coyotes-they'll rob my stage, will they!" he ranted. "They did rob it." sighed the drummer as he climbed shakily back much I lost? . . ."

. . . That night Wahoo Jones, the Tall dividing up their "earn'ngs" around | bandit toward the ceach.

whirled away in a cloud of dust. | driver jumped and almost dropped | Wahoo scrambled to the top of the | the reins .e added: "We Texas Rancoach, snatched up his rifle and | gers are out to see that such thir.gs don't happen." He patted his rifle affectionately. "Come real trouble, had to confine his fury to loud | I'll shoot first an' ask questions afterwards. . . All you need to do is keep good hold o' them reins."

Wahoo digested this information for many minutes. Then, as the stage stopped at a tiny village in order that the horses might be waa little adobe shack where Jeff had planned to ambush them. He found his friend just as the latter was starting to adjust his black mask. Pretending to have discovered a new



"Put up your hands!" commanded t a campfire in the woods when a the tall bandit as he drew nearer. The drummer did so immediately but Wahoo reacheu fo: his rifle. Whereupon the tall bandit fired | was saying, as he gazed raptly at a from the hip. Jones' ha, flew off and he also raised his hands.

"All right," chuckled Polka Dot. "Get down, open the door and tell | night, lookin' at me with big round the passengers to step out peaceably. The gentlemen will keep their | my hair an' sayin' 'Mi dulcito papahands up."

As Wahoo scrambled to obey, the tall bandit shouted at the salesman: "Hey, you, bring me that express

box up there." "This is a vile outrage," Wahoo fumed, as the little company lined | run for it," whispered Jeff through up on the side of the road. "In fact | set lips. "Gettin' shot's better'n it's a shame—these people have paid their fares and they're entitled | they catch us." to my protection. . . .

"I haven't killed a stagecoach driver in a long time," grunted Polka Dot. "If you wan, to live, pass your hat around. This is for charity. | the fire," commanded Sam. As he folks," he added to the white-faced | spoke he kicked the coffee pot over, passengers. "We want all your

money and jewelry." "I want everybody to witness I'm doin' this agin' my will," shouted Wahoo as he retrieved his bulletriddled hat and passed expertly along 'he shivering little line, seeing to it that each passenger "con- cape. · tributed" al! of his or aer valuables. "This is an heirloom," pleaded a

young school-teacher, as she looked pleadingly at the tall bandit while holding out a valuable ring. "Keep it," replied the other graciously. Then, to Wahoo he added

quickly. "But I'll take this!" He lifted a huge sold watch out of the driver's pocket. "All right, Jeff," called Polka Dot.

who had been rifling the express box. "You passengers get in line. | they bounced rapidly through the face the coach and keep 'em in the

posse caught up with them. "I got a mind to keep this here one for Maria down in Texas," Sam brooch which had fallen to his lot. "What I wouldn't give to have that little enchilada settin' on my lap toeyes, runnin' her fingers through

"You fellows stay just where you are," a voice whipped out of the darkness. "We got you surrounded! Put up your hands."

"Let's take a chance and make a hangin' and we'll hang for sure if

"They're all aroun' us. They'll be afraid of hittin' each other," Wahoo l agreed nervously.

"Grab the hosses when I douse putting out the flames. A wild scramble ensued during which guns flamed through the Garkness and the frantic disappointed curses of the posse members made the forest resound. In the confusion all three of the bandits made good their es-

. . . Down in the Texas flat lands several months later Wahoo Jones was up to his old tricks. But this time. as he drove the clumsy stage into a trap laid by his pal Jeff Hawkins. the man beside him on the box was not a drummer but a taciturn individual who carried a loaded carbine

across his knees. "You seem mighty skittish," Wahoo grumbled to his companion as

"You might be held up today."

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mesquite under the broiling sun.

"Hello, Stranger," Wahoo bellowed. "Always got room for another passenger!" Then, out of the corner of his mouth he added: "Get into the coach, quick. That feller on the seat - he's a Ranger. Won't stand for any monkey business."

Thrusting the astonished Jeff inside, he clambered up the side of the vehicle and whipped up the horses. Five miles beyond the village, Hawkins heard the familiar shout of "Throw 'em up!" from the side of the road. Cursing under his breath because someone else had beat him at his own game, Jeff thrust his head out of the window. As he did so quick shots resounded from the top of the coach. Two of the masked men who were attempting to hold up the coach fell face forward into the dust, road. A third turned to run, but threw up his

shot rang out. Hawkins and the other passengers clambered out as the stage slithered to a halt. The Ranger already had jumped down and was examining the three dead men. Wahoo also leaped to the ground and sidled up beside his partner.

hands and collapsed also as a third

"That's what I was tryin' to tell you. . . ." The rawboned youth jerked a thumb at the burly passenger. "Them Texas Rangers ain't got no sense of humor. If that's a sample of how they behave I'm gonna stay clear of 'em."

"They sure are efficient," answered Jeff glumly. "And us without a dollar left to our names. And Sam somewhere down on the Ris Grande with Maria where we may never find him." He took out the "makings" and rolled a cigarette with hands that shook slightly. "!t seems that we should oughter change our plans." He studied tho Ranger's back thoughtfully. (To be continued)

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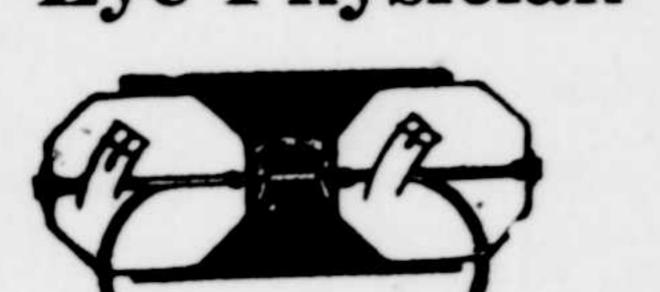
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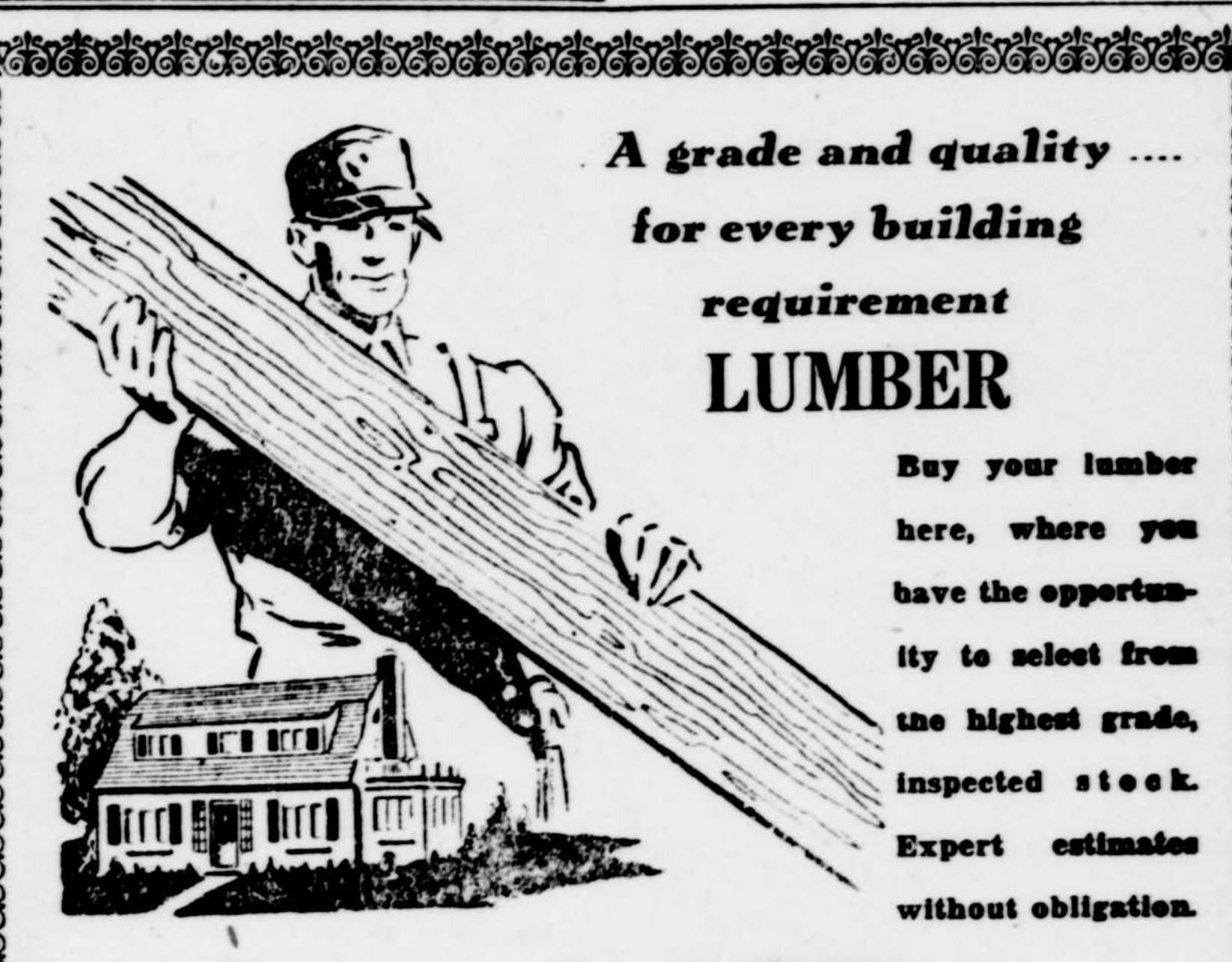
Notice To Creditors

This is to give notice that the subscriber of Cecil County, has obtained from the Orphans' Court of Cecil county, Letters of Administration on the personal estate of

HAZEL M. HOLLOWAY All persons having claims against the said deceased are hereby warned to exhibit the same with the vouchers thereof duly authenticated on or before the 7th day of February, 1937, they will otherwise by law be excluded from all benefit of said estate. All indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the subscriber. Given under my hand and seal this

5th day of August, 1936. Administrators: Elena Marshall, Charlestown, Md. James F. Thrift,

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