

SEEK RELIGIOUS FANATIC AS SLAYER OF ALICE CRISPELL

Police Learn that Suspected Person had Prayed for Soul of Girl Found Dead in Pennsylvania Lake — Herbert Johns Held for Trial Despite Acquittal at Coroner's Inquest.



BOY WAS FOUND MIDWAY BETWEEN BOATHOUSE AND OPPOSITE SHORE

Wilkesbarre, Pa., July 12.—Exonerated by the coroner's jury which investigated the death of Alice Crispell, only to be held for the grand jury without bail on charge of murder in plait in which Herbert Johns finds himself.

The jury at the inquest on Thursday night returned the following verdict: "Herbert Johns, fiancé of seventeen-year-old Alice Crispell, was exonerated of all blame for the death of the girl on the night of July 4. The evidence in this case fails to show any motive for crime on the part of Herbert Johns, and we feel certain that he has had no part in the death of Alice Crispell. But we feel and consider that the evidence which shows the deceased always had a cheerful nature and not subject to morose spells, and therefore not liable to take her own life, that crime has been committed. However, we feel that this, as other crimes of its kind, will never be discovered until some stronger evidence of guilt may be brought to light resulting in just punishment for the culprit."

Last night, notwithstanding the verdict of the coroner's jury, Magistrate Frank B. Brown held Johns without bail on a charge of killing his sweetheart, Alice Crispell, seventeen years old, whose body was found floating in Harvey's Lake last Monday morning. The same witnesses appeared in the Magistrate's Court that testified at the inquest.

Johns is being held to throw off his guard a religious fanatic said to be a relative of the girl and who is thought killed her to save her soul when he discovered that she was leading a dual life. This is learned from a high court official. The latter asserted that they did not as yet have positive proof against the new object of suspicion, but that his every movement was being watched in the hope of incriminating him in the case.

He added that Johns had not given an entirely satisfactory account of his movements on the night of Independence Day, when the girl was last seen talking with him in Lovers' lane, skirting the lake, near the point where her body was found. As a consequence it was thought best to hold him.

While Frank A. McGowan, the prisoner's attorney, is filing habeas corpus proceedings to have Johns released from jail, John Bigelow, District Attorney, will ask Henry A. Fuller, County Judge, for permission to examine the girl's body from the little churchyard at Lehman Centre, where she was buried yesterday morning.

Another autopsy will be performed, Mr. Bigelow told me. He said that he would communicate with Dr. Otto H. Schultze, Coroner's Physician of New York county, and ask him to attempt to ascertain whether the girl was dead before entering the water, whether she had been poisoned or drugged and whether the external marks on the body indicated what led to her death.

Religious Fanatic Suspected.

More startling, perhaps, than the usual procedure of holding a suspected person who had been exonerated by a coroner's jury, is the sudden injection into the case of the mysterious man said to be a religious fanatic.

The Rev. "Billy" Sunday held a revival in this region last April. He came here eighteen months ago and was partly responsible for closing many low resorts. During his exhortations last April one of his principal themes was immoral women. The suspected person heretofore, a man of loose morals, according to report, attended the meetings held up in the mountain districts and in this city and was converted.

According to detectives his religion preyed on his mind and he was wont to kneel in prayer often while plowing and doing other farm work. Soon after his conversion he ascertained that Alice Crispell was not living the kind of life that her neighbors credited her with living. In letters to her sweetheart, and according to the police, in his own statements, this man at one time drew a revolver on the girl and threatened to kill her unless she stopped staying out at night. She thrust the weapon aside and begged for mercy. Then, according to her letters, he blackened both her eyes and beat her. The suspected person's actions were traced. The detectives say that he saw Miss Crispell with her gay party of friends at the lake but did not speak to her. He left the lake about nine o'clock that night and went home. The detectives say he told them that as soon as he reached home he took his Bible from a shelf and held a religious service, during which he prayed for the soul of Alice Crispell.

"We learn," a detective told me, "that after the religious service he opened the front door of his home and went to bed. He told us he left the door open for a belated occupant of his house. We learn from others in the household that the person he says he expected was in his room to bed at the time. Did he open the door so that a subsequent exit might be made more quietly?"

"After retiring, did the suspect leave his home by stealth and with religious fervor in his heart walk again to the lake?" Was it he who crouched behind the pile of logs and watched Alice Crispell and her lover sitting in the shadows of Lovers' Lane?

"What there was such a mysterious man is told by S. I. Rees, an automobile dealer, who says the searchlight on his automobile revealed a man in dark clothes crouching behind a pile of logs, apparently watching a man in a grey suit and white hat support her as she walked in uncertain steps. A girl in a blue dress, who seemed intoxicated or drugged."

"Herbert Johns wore a light grey suit. His sweetheart wore a blue dress. Could Johns, complaining of illness, have left his sweetheart to walk home alone, as he says, and could she have started down the dark and lonely lane to her home, only to be attacked, maltreated and thrown into the lake?"

"The inquest and the preliminary hearing failed to show any motive on part of Johns for desiring to put the girl out of the way."

"The only motive we can assign is that the man we suspect acted in a religious frenzy after seeing the girl in a semi-intoxicated condition, believing she would be better off dead," the detective added.

Prisoner's Friends are Angry.

Fully two thousand persons gathered outside of the small court room of Magistrate Brown in an effort to see Johns and learn whether he would be held. Many of those in the crowd were miners who had worked with the prisoner, and there were angry mutterings when the result became known. A squad of police kept order. District Attorney Bigelow put the witness through a severe cross-examination. Dr. H. G. Higgins, Mrs. Martha Holcomb, S. T. Nicholson and others gave practically the same testimony as at the inquest. Dr. Higgins' examination in part follows:

Q. Did you perform the autopsy to determine whether there had been foul play. A. Yes.

Q. Did you examine the stomach or its contents? A. No.

Q. Did you examine the lungs? A. No.

Q. Yet you made this examination to determine foul play? A. Yes, I came to the conclusion drowning was the cause of death. It is not necessary to examine the lungs, because often a person seen to drown has no water in his or her lungs. A drop of water on the epiglottis closes the windpipe and the person dies of asphyxia. Magistrate Brown in holding Johns asserted that the Commonwealth had made out a prima facie case, and that it was not in his province to determine the guilt or innocence of the prisoner; he would bind him over to the grand jury.

District Attorney Bigelow told me he was most dissatisfied with the inquest.

Every organ in the girl's body should have been examined carefully," he said. I propose to get a New York coroner's physician who is an expert at autopsy work, probably Dr. Schultze, and have another performed.

If I also could get Dr. Schultze then I will get some other New York physician. I shall apply to the County Clerk in the morning for an order to examine the girl's body."

Detectives are still carefully perusing the mass of letters that passed between Johns and Miss Crispell. In one dated June 18 he upbraids her for giving a photograph to "Canney," or Harrison Cann, as the testimony developed, and tells of a fight they had. The letter reads:

"Darling Alice: What did you want to give Canney one of those pictures of yours for? He is making a side show of it. Why, he showed it to about a million people, telling them of the time we had together when I was idle. I did get a little mad and took the picture from him. Then there was trouble in camp. I pretty near knocked the left wing off him. Whatever you do don't let him know too much, because he is like a news-paper reporter. He said he was sorry he showed the picture. From the fellow who loves you."

"HERBERT JOHNS."

In another letter, dated May 4, she says:

"Dearest Herbert: I don't care, but I don't want Cann to bother me after this, or he might look like a clothespin. O yes, I went to church after I left you, and the meeting was fine. I wish you could have been with me. Well, maybe things will change after a while and we won't have to part or else it is forever, but I hope not. Your loving ALICE."

In a letter written on St. Patrick's day, Johns adds a postscript showing that he feared the father of the girl. He says: "I would go over, but I fear your father is in his warps again and may use me for a target."

Johns said he regretted his further incarceration greatly, one reason being that he could not assist in finding the slayer of his sweetheart.

RETURNING FROM PARADE FALLS DEAD

Charles W. Stockton, Prominent Orangeman, Taken Ill in Street and Died before Aid Arrived.

After he had taken part in the annual celebration of July 12th by marching to divine service with his fellow members of the Orange Lodge, Charles W. Stockton, aged fifty-eight years, who for a number of years held a prominent position in the ranks of the Orange Order, fell ill in a faint near the head of King street while returning to his home, and death, which is attributed to heart disease resulted almost instantly.

As soon as he was overtaken with this weak spell he was supported by two of his brother members, and with their assistance taken into Watson's drug store where death occurred. Dr. Berryman, who had been summoned to the scene, arrived after the man had passed away, and after viewing the body he gave orders for its removal to the undertaking rooms of John Chamberlain, 164 Mill street.

When the sad news was brought to the home of the family, who reside at 22 Brussels street and imparted to the wife of the deceased, who not more than a few hours before had left her husband apparently in the best of health, she was prostrated with grief and has since been confined to her bed.

Mr. Stockton, although to outward appearance a strong man, had recently not been in the best of health, and frequently complained of sharp pains above the heart. Members of the family say that he was subject to fainting spells, and not more than two weeks ago one morning at breakfast he fell in a dead faint, and it was some time before he was restored to consciousness.

Bearing in mind the fact that he was not strong constitutionally, and suffered from a weak heart, the members of his family and his fellow members at the lodge quarters advised him not to join in the procession, but his keen devotion to the society associated, would not allow him to remain out of the ranks.

Mr. Stockton was Worthy Preceptor of Queen's Preceptory No. 62 of the Royal Black Knights of Ireland, had completed the day's march and was returning to his home on Brussels street with Porter Brown and W.

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Quigley, also of the Orange Order. When opposite Watson's drug store, about 5:45 o'clock, he was seized by a fainting spell, and with his friends assistance hurried into the drug store. It was first thought that it was simply a weak turn and that the man would regain consciousness soon. T. Merriam, who was the scene worked over the body for a few moments, but seeing that it was more than a faint, he called Dr. Berryman, summoned, but before his arrival the eyes were seen to close and life was extinct.

For forty years the deceased had been connected with the water works department of the city, and for fully twenty-five years had acted as foreman of the same. Besides his connection with Royal Black Knights, as cited, he was Past County Master, and a member of St. John County Socialist Chapter, and a Past Master of G. O. L. O. L. No. 7.

He is survived by a wife, two daughters and two sons. The daughters are Maud and Bertha at home. The sons are Walter, who resides on Chester street, in the employ of the city water works department, and Freeman, living in Portland, Maine.

It has not yet been decided whether or not an inquest will be held.

Who Owns All These.

The police on their rounds Saturday night report finding some harness in a yard off Union street; a half barrel of flour on Ward street; a cross cut saw in an ally off Smythe street; an electric light bulb and socket on the King square, and a pair of reins on Union street. The owners of these articles can obtain the same on application at the central police station.

A Wild Runaway.

About 5:30 o'clock Saturday afternoon a horse owned by Thomas Wisland and driven by Ernest Boyd, ran away on St. Patrick street. The driver was thrown off the wagon to the street and was quite badly injured. He was conveyed to his home on Charlotte street in a coach. The wagon was considerably damaged before the frightened animal was captured.

In Critical Condition.

William H. Davis, who was found by the police a few nights ago in the entry of the Bricklayers and Plasterers' hall in an unconscious condition and removed to the General Public Hospital, is still in a critical condition, but he has gained consciousness and shown signs of slight improvement. Hopes are now entertained for his recovery.

Lost Boat and Nets.

One of the harbor fishermen was yesterday mourning the loss of his motor boat and nets. He claims to have left the boat tied up at a wharf Saturday and yesterday morning when he visited the wharf he found that some person had taken both the boat and the nets. He has reported the matter to the police, who have taken the case in hand and will try and locate the missing property.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

Members of Queens R. R. Preceptory, No. 62, are requested to meet in their hall, Market Building, on Tuesday afternoon at 2:15 o'clock for the purpose of attending the funeral of Sir Knight Worthy Preceptor C. W. Stockton. Full regalia. Members of Sister Preceptories are invited to attend. By order, R. GOODRICH, Registrar.

DIED.

PATTON—In this city on the eleventh instant, Thomas Patton, aged 79 years.

Funeral from Trinity church on Monday. Service at 2:30 o'clock. No flowers by request.

CAMPBELL—On July 12th, at the residence of his father, 114 Winslow street, Harry Garfield Campbell, leaving five brothers and six sisters besides his parents to mourn his sad loss.

Funeral at 4 p. m. on Monday, 14th inst. (Boston papers please copy.)

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