

MISSING CAMDEN BOYS MURDERED IN A FIELD



Young John Coffin and Price Jennings Believed to Have Been Poisoned—Compan- ion Arrested and Commit- ted to Jail

The discovery of their bodies cold in death, the victims of an atrocious double murder, yesterday solved the mystery surrounding the disappearance from their homes in Camden on Wednesday of John H. Coffin, the 11-year-old son of William Coffin, division freight agent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Price Jennings, his chum and playmate, the 13-year old son of Joseph Jennings, leader of Jennings' Third Regiment Band, of Camden.

Paul Woodward, 18 years old, a companion of both the boys, is charged with their murder and is locked up in the county jail awaiting the further action of the authorities. There are no evidences of external injuries and the only theory to which the police can attribute the cause of death is that the assassin of the boys administered poison to them, and it is along this line that County Physician Jones and Prosecutor Lloyd are conducting an investigation.

The details surrounding the atrocious crime makes it one the like of which has never been known in the criminal history of this section of the country. The youth of the boys, their heretofore relations of good companionship, and many other circumstances make of it an almost unparalleled crime, and while there is said to be every evidence of a motive for the murder, in the opinion of those who are in close touch with the case, it is an instance in which the work is that of a degenerate boy in whom all sense of right and wrong have long since been dead. Certain it is that the crime has stirred the people of Camden and vicinity to a feverish heat to which it has not been stirred since the day following the murder of Annie Leoney.

Found in a Field

The bodies of both the lads, were found yesterday morning in a field near the Haddon Heights Station of the Reading Railroad on what is known as the Lippincott farm, about a quarter mile from Station Avenue. The body of young Jennings was found lying in a clump of bushes and less than forty yards away lay the remains of Coffin. Both bodies were stiff and in a state of decomposition. Coffin's body was the first discovered, and it was not long after when that of his companion was found.

No sooner did the news of the discovery become known than the greatest excitement prevailed through the city of Camden and its suburbs. All sorts of rumors began to circulate, some of them hinting that the bodies were in a horribly mutilated condition and that the work was that of a negro. In a short time, however, whatever element of mystery there was about the case, so far as present indications go, was dissipated when the identification of the bodies was made and the arrest of young Woodward was accomplished soon afterwards.

Then the mystery began to clear somewhat. Both boys disappeared from their home on Wednesday afternoon. When they failed to return that night the police were notified and a description of them was sent around the country adjacent to Camden and also to Philadelphia. Some persons said they had gone to Trenton to the fair, while others told of having seen them in the vicinity of Haddon Heights Station. Nothing came of these statements at the time, and meanwhile the boys failed to return home. Coffin's father was of the opinion that the boys had been kidnapped, but this theory was not held by the police.

First Body Discovered

Late Friday night, Clarence Kreuson, whose home is at Haddon Heights, and a friend of his, Frank Johnson, who lives in this city, were returning from an after-

double murder. Of that much we are certain. Death was not due to external injuries. What we suspect you will have to conjecture. The organs of both the boys have been sent to a chemist for examination. More than that I cannot say, except that we have arrested Paul Woodward on suspicion and that he is charged with the murder. The same man that killed one of the boys no doubt killed the other: All I ask now is that judgment be suspended for a few days, when I believe all will be cleared up."

Woodward Visited Mr. Coffin

Mr. Coffin, whose home is at 305 North Third street, yesterday said: "It's an awful blow that has come to me and I hardly know what to say. It does seem to me that Paul Woodward exerted an evil influence over my boy. I remember now that on Thursday he came to the house and wanted me to hire him to look for John. He then said that he thought he could find him."

At the Woodward home it was stated that the mother and father of the boy had gone to Philadelphia. Charles May, a boarder, said there would be no trouble in proving that Paul was home all day of Wednesday, as well as the day following. He said that on each of those nights the boy had been in bed by 8 o'clock. This testimony, he said, would be corroborated by the boy's mother, father, sister and himself. The only time Paul was out of the house, he said, was when he went several errands for his mother.

Late yesterday afternoon Coroner Litchfield empaneled the following jury: David Kaighn, George Leathrite, Isaac Toone, George J. Pechin, Elmer E. Cox and T. L. Bear. At 5 o'clock they viewed the remains, after which the bodies were sent to their respective homes. No date for the inquest has been fixed.

The stomach and other organs of both the youthful victims are in the possession of George M. Beringer, a druggist and chemist, at Fifth and Federal streets. Last night he said he had begun his examination, but it would take him probably a day or two more to complete his analysis.

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noon of blackbird shooting. While crossing the field they came across the body of a boy. It was lying in the bushes, half concealed, and when they made a closer examination they discovered that life was extinct. In alarm Kreuson and his companion ran to the home of A. H. Wood, nearby, and communicated their intelligence. Wood immediately sent a telephone message to Coroner Litchfield in Camden, apprising him of the discovery. That official, through some misunderstanding, thought it was a man named Brown who had been talking to him. He hitched up his horse and drove to Haddon Heights, but was unable to locate the body. He was also unable to locate anyone named Brown. Further investigation was, therefore, postponed until yesterday morning, when the Coroner again visited the scene and found the body in the bushes.

From the clothing worn it was thought at first it might be Coffin's, and after it had been brought to the Morgue, William Coffin, the lad's father, was sent for. He was accompanied by Kingston Jennings, elder brother of the other missing boy. Mr. Coffin when nerved to look at the remains, exclaimed, "My God, it's Price. Where is my boy. He must be found." The identification was then made complete by the dead boy's brother.

Meanwhile a number of persons had been going over the field where the body had been found in the search for clues that might lead to a discovery of the murderer of the boy, when one of them chanced across the remains of the other lad lying under a dead tree. This body was identified on the spot by Detective Curtis, of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The lad's body was also taken to the Morgue and laid on a slab alongside of his chum.

Police at Work

The police in the interim had not been idle, and after scouring the vicinity of the place where the bodies had been found, came across Lillian Martin, the 15-year-old daughter of J. Wilson Martin, who conducts a "Cyclers' Rest" at Collings avenue and the White Horse pike. She remembered having seen two boys answering the description of the dead lads in their place on Wednesday. They were accompanied by an older and a taller boy. Jennings seemed to have considerable money and purchased three pies and three bottles of soda water. After that they left the place and she never saw them again until she looked upon their bodies.

Prosecutor Frank Lloyd at once set to work, and Detective Hart was sent in search of young Woodward. Inquiry at his home, at 221 Benson street, brought the response that he was not at home. His mother learned what he was wanted for, and about 2 o'clock sent for Detective Hart and turned the boy over to him. She accompanied him to the Prosecutor's office and, talking to the newspaper reporters, said that beyond being addicted to the use of cigarettes Paul was a good boy. She persisted that he could not have committed the crime as he was home all of Wednesday, Thursday and yesterday until the afternoon, when he went to Philadelphia to visit relatives. What the police are reported to view with importance is a statement that the mother is also alleged to have made to the effect that on Wednesday he had bothered her a great deal about money for a hat and shoes. While the authorities will make no admission, it is intimated that the motive they ascribe for the crime is robbery, and that the fact that Jennings had \$10 when he disappeared was what led to his murder, and the murder of the other little fellow followed as a necessity for hiding the crime, as well as to get possession of a silver watch he is said to have had.

Identified Woodward

After young Woodward was taken into the Prosecutor's office, besides the Prosecutor there were present Assistant Prosecutor F. Morse Archer, Court Stenogra-

pher Berry, Chief of Police Foster, of Camden; Chief of Police Linderman, of Merchantville, and Detectives Painter and Hart. In a few minutes Detective Cherry arrived with Lillian Martin. The latter had been cautioned not to say anything to anybody, either in or out of the room. She was inside for less than thirty seconds, and when she came out she is reported to have said that Woodward was the young man whom she had seen with the boys on Wednesday in her father's place. She was taken back a second and a third time, and after the latter, it is said, she told the detectives that she was certain he was the person. She then left for her home, where she resisted all attempts to interview her.

In the meantime Recorder Stackhouse issued a commitment for Woodward on the oath of Detective Cherry, charging the young man with the murder of Coffin. Jennings' name was not mentioned, as Coffin answered the same purpose.

While this was going on County Physician Jones was holding an autopsy in the basement of the jail, where the morgue is located. A personal examination showed that there were no external marks of violence, and in order to clinch the result of the autopsy he summoned from Philadelphia Professors Copeland and Roenberger, of the Jefferson Hospital. Dr. Copeland performed the autopsy, and was at work until nearly 6 o'clock, when it was announced that no results other than that death was not due to external injuries, had been accomplished.

Prosecutor Lloyd said: "There' was a