

WELCOME BACK FROM THE ATTIC

YESTERYEAR AROUND CALEDONIA STATION

No. 17

1978

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, September 12, 1921.

EX-SOLDIER ATTEMPTS SUICIDE AFTER KILLING OFFICER AT CALEDONIA

Charles Forward Victim of Hubert Delaney After Theft

American Legion Post Veteran Robbed, Corners Him

Charles Forward, 56, prominent Caledonia township resident and deputy sheriff for many years, was shot through the heart and instantly killed about 8:30 Sunday morning, September 11, 1921, at the home of L. Russell Beeler, farmer at Davis Lake, five miles east of Caledonia when he sought to arrest Hubert Delaney, 25, also known as Morris Simmons, employed by Beeler as farm hand.

The shooting came as a result of the theft of a war trophy, a sniper's 45 caliber automatic revolver, which Delaney is said to have taken from a display at the Caledonia American Legion fair Saturday night, officers investigating the murder and Coroner J. B. Hilliker say.

The weapon was owned by Lieutenant Herman Hale, commander of Arthur C. Finkbeiner Post No. 1 American Legion.

An intimate story of the fatal shooting was related last night by Beeler, employer of Delaney, beginning with his learning at the fair Saturday night that Delaney was being sought for theft. "I saw Forward at Caledonia Saturday night and he said he was looking for Delaney," Beeler said, "I also saw some small boys who told me they had seen Delaney with another gun, the description of which tallied with one I own."

"When I came home from the fair, I looked into my drawer and found my revolver, a .32, was not there. Sunday morning at milking time, Delaney showed me the gun missing from the exhibit. Delaney said he won it on a raffle at the fair. He expressed surprise when I told him in the course of our conversation, that the show was run by the Legion. He maintained it was only a traveling show. He told me at the same time that he and Clarence Freeman, an acquaintance, were going for a two-hour automobile ride. I thought he planned on going to Kalamazoo, where he had stayed for a time just after his discharge from the army.

"After breakfast, I demanded that he give me my automatic and also the gun taken from the fair. He turned over both of them. He was carrying them on his person at the time the big gun stuck in his belt and the other in his coat pocket.

"I told Delaney a deputy sheriff was looking for him, and he left my house with his automobile, which he secured a short time ago from Herbert Thompson, who lives across Davis Lake. He traded in an old motorcycle for the car and gave, as security for \$20 unpaid on the machine, a Spanish automatic which he carried when he came here.

"When Delaney left, I telephoned Hale telling him I had recovered the gun stolen at the fair, which he valued highly as a souvenir. I also telephoned Forward to come over and get Delaney. I knew Delaney must have ransacked the house to get my gun, and I decided that the place for him was where he couldn't do things like that."

"Forward came down in his truck and, while he and I were talking in front of the house, I noticed Delaney returning on foot from Thompson's. I believed his car must have become out of order. He walked right up to us and said 'Hello' to Forward."

Forward said, "Hello, is your name Delaney?"

"Yes sir," said Delaney.

Forward took Delaney by the arm and told him he was under arrest. Delaney said, "No son of a . . . can pinch me." As Delaney spoke, he fired a shot from a revolver carried in the right pocket of an army coat he was wearing.

The bullet struck the deputy's right side, pierced the lungs and heart and was found lodged in the skin on the left side of the body by Coroner Hilliker.

Forward fell to the ground, apparently killed instantly, Beeler said.

The only witnesses to the shooting were Beeler and his wife, who were watching from a front window of the home. Forward had brought his truck to a stop on the lawn in front of the Beeler home, and the three were grouped about it when the shot was fired.

After the shooting, Beeler said Delaney instructed him to not turn in an alarm until he reached the woods west of the home, but Beeler immediately entered the house to telephone for a physician. In the home, Beeler again met Delaney, who had entered by a kitchen door. He again told Beeler not to call for aid and then ran down a lane at the Beeler home.

As Delaney was making his escape Beeler phoned for aid and members of the American Legion Post responded from Caledonia. Sheriff Peter Viergever and Deputies Johnson, Bolt and Oshinski left the city by automobile. Deputy Sheriff Wyman left later with Coroner Hilliker.

Delaney ran to the farm of William Vollwiler, north of the Beeler farm, and induced Vollwiler, who was ignorant of the shooting, to take him to the farm of Nicholas Pitch. At the point of his gun, Delaney ordered Leander Pitch, 13, to drive him to a swamp on the Colby farm, a mile east. He told the boy, it was said, to return, then continued alone into the swamp. He ran more than a mile to the farm of Emmett Sheehan and bargained with Sheehan for a job asking also for a change of clothing according to information gained by Beeler.

He admitted, Sheehan said, shooting a deputy. He showed Sheehan the Spanish weapon with which the crime was said to have been committed. Delaney immediately left the Sheehan farm and made his way to the Kraywaki farm a short distance away, where it is said he planned borrowing an automobile but was told there was not a machine on the place.

Sheehan telephoned members of the searching party, and Delaney was trailed south across fields toward woods on the west shore of Barber Lake. His escape was cut off by Deputies Bolt and Johnson who fired at him to make him stop, and as the fugitive passed over a hill, he found himself facing Lieutenant Hale and Ira Hammond of the Legion Party.

As the two ex-service men pointed rifles at him, the prisoner fired at himself. The deputies and Legion men rushed forward and reached him as he fell unconscious. They placed him in a boat and rowed him across the lake to an automobile by which he was rushed here.

The body of the murdered deputy sheriff was taken to the Williams undertaking rooms in Caledonia where it will remain pending arrangement of funeral services.

Forward came to this country more than 30 years ago and had for many years been engaged as string butcher in Caledonia Township. He served as deputy sheriff under the regimes of Sheriffs O'Donnell, Berry, and Viergever. He leaves a widow, one son, Tommy, age 6, and one brother, Thomas Forward, who is roadmaster on the Michigan Central and resides at Jackson.

Coroner Hilliker said last night he had learned Delaney had admitted shooting Forward and that no inquest would be held if this was true, arraignment on a murder charge being the next action in the case in the event of Delaney's recovery.

Hubert Delaney, held for the murder of Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward, was "gun crazy."

This was the assertion last night of those who were acquainted with the young ex-service man who is in a serious condition at Butterworth hospital from gunshot wounds he inflicted upon himself to evade capture alive.

"Delaney was always talking about guns," L. Russell Beeler, with whom he made his home for over a month, said.

"When Delaney first came to work for me, he carried the automatic of Spanish make which he fired at Forward. I told him not to carry it any longer. He was a crack shot and was always practicing shooting about the farm. He often brought in hawks he had shot down "for practice."

Delaney served during the war with the 317th engineers and spent about a month overseas, according to a discharge paper he carried. He was released from service at Camp Sherman in 1919.

He worked for a time for an uncle named Simmons, who operates a farm near Caledonia and was known under the name "Morris Simmons." When Beeler recently asked him if his right name was not Delaney, he said it was officers were told. After his discharge, he spent a short time in Kalamazoo and then started in on farm work, officers learned.

"He was a hard worker and the best-hearted fellow I ever knew," his employer said yesterday. "I believe the shooting can be traced to a craze he possessed for weapons."

At the hospital, Delaney appeared in a dazed condition last night. He failed intelligently to answer questions put by officers concerning the crime. He spoke with great effort. He said his parents resided in Richmond, Georgia, and that he came to Michigan after the war.

PRINCIPALS AND SCENE OF CALEDONIA DEPUTY'S KILLING



Left:
Deputy Sheriff and long-time Caledonia resident Charles Forward, slain while trying to arrest Hubert Delaney.



Right:
L. Russell Beeler, prominent Caledonia Township farmer, who witnessed the Forward killing, and was instrumental in the capture of Delaney.



The Beeler farm home, located on the northwest corner of 84th Street and Snow Avenue, where the killing took place.

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, September 13, 1921.

OFFICER'S SLAYER, SEEKING OWN LIFE, IS HUNGER STRIKER

Hubert DeLaney, With Bullet Hole Through Skull, Stubbornly Refused Food and Drink — Condition is Serious.

Hubert DeLaney, Caledonia Township farmhand, who sent a bullet through his forehead when he faced capture Sunday by a posse of Deputy Sheriffs and American Legion members seeking him as the slayer of Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward, is now a hunger striker.

This was the assertion of attending physicians at Butterworth hospital last night after having watched the conditions of the man held as the murderer of the deputy who sought to arrest him for the theft of a revolver on display as a trophy at the American legion fair at Caledonia Saturday night.

DeLaney yesterday morning began the hunger strike by stubbornly refusing food or drink. Attempts to feed him through the day was without success, and his condition became noticeably more serious. Physicians said last night the young man's condition was "not favorable."

Officers Keep Vigil

At Delaney's bedside, Deputy Sheriff C. F. Kennedy of Beverly, detained by Sheriff Peter Viergever to watch the wounded man is keeping vigil. The officer was relieved during the day by Arthur Viergever, the sheriff's son, who also had been stationed at the hospital.

DeLaney continues to remain morose and does not talk. While he complained of pain Sunday night, he became silent Monday and lies motionless for hours, apparently unconcerned with activities about him. The bullet wound, which extends completely through the skull, has caused a swelling of the right eye and the optic is closed by the inflammation. There remains a possibility of cerebral hemorrhages, physicians stated yesterday, Delaney's condition is regarded as critical.

With officials awaiting the outcome of Delaney's condition, there is much speculation as to the motive of Forward's slayer in returning armed Sunday morning to the home of L. Russell Beeler, Davis Lake farmer, where he was employed. It is improbable that Delaney expected to meet Forward so soon after having been warned by Beeler, his employer, that an officer was looking for him. This theory has given rise to the suggestion that Delaney returned from the home of Hubert

Thompson across the lake, where he secured the gun for the purpose of "getting" Beeler.

Death Unnerved Slayer

Beeler, a short time before the shooting had deprived Delaney of two guns. One of them Beeler identified as having been taken from the Legion fair exhibit and asserted the other weapon was his own property and was stolen by Delaney from the Beeler home. Beeler's act, it was said, and his intimation that he would not aid Delaney escape prosecution, afforded Delaney ample reasons to become enraged at his employer, it was said.

Confronted by the deputy, Delaney became angered when the officer placed him under arrest, it was stated yesterday, and fired the fatal shot. If he had harbored a desire to take the life of Beeler, the shooting of Forward unnerved the slayer, and Beeler probably escaped death at Delaney's hands for this reason, officers said.

Funeral services for Forward, a citizen of Caledonia for 30 years, will be held in the Methodist Church in Caledonia Wednesday at 1 and will be attended by Caledonia businessmen and members of the Sheriff's force. Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery, Caledonia.

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, September 14, 1921.

HUNGER STRIKE BROKEN BY SLAYER OF DEPUTY; CONDITION IS IMPROVED

Edward Simmons, alias Hubert E. Delaney, confined to Butterworth hospital where he is recovering from self inflicted wounds in an attempt to end his life, yesterday broke his hunger strike and partook of food.

Deputies investigating the case, verified the prisoner's claim that his name is Simmons, and not Delaney, as indicated on his army discharge papers.

A warrant charging first degree murder as a result of the slaying of Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward of Caledonia, has been issued by Prosecuting Attorney Hoffius and is being held by Sheriff Peter Viergever who swore to the warrant.

Simmon's condition showed improvement yesterday, and shackles were placed about his feet and attached by his bed with a chain to insure against attempts to escape.

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, September 15, 1921.

CALEDONIA PAYS TRIBUTE TO SLAIN DEPUTY SHERIFF; CROWDS ATTEND FUNERAL

Caledonia business places were closed yesterday and the entire town paid a last tribute to Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward, slain Sunday morning when he attempted to arrest Edward Simmons, alias Hubert E. Delaney, farm hand.

Hundreds attended funeral services at the Methodist Church in the village and many were unable to gain entrance. Members of the Odd Fellows Lodge marched en masse to the services which were attended by a delegation of Grand Rapids officers. Included in those present were Sheriff Peter Viergever, under Sheriff Edward O'Donnell, and Deputies Jannenga, Bolt, Johnson, Oshinski, and King. Burial was in Lakeview Cemetery.

At Butterworth hospital, the condition of Simmons continued to improve and the injured man, guarded by officers continually, pleaded to be removed to the county jail. Physicians have not believed his removal advisable.

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, October 11, 1921.

SLAYER OF CALEDONIA DEPUTY IS GIVEN LIFE TERM AT MARQUETTE

Morris E. Simmons, 19-year-old murderer of Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward, of Caledonia, whom he shot through the heart on the morning of September 11, 1921 when Forward placed him under arrest for the theft of a war trophy at the American Legion fair at Caledonia, today is en route to the state prison at Marquette to serve a life term.

Simmons clad in mud-stained overalls worn on the day of the slaying, red house slippers and a blue shirt, his feet devoid of socks, his face unshaven and hair unkept, appeared before Judge Willis R. Perkins yesterday and after pleading guilty was sent to prison for life.

Deputy Sheriff Ralph J. Bolt and Special Deputy James Kurtz left with the prisoner on a north-bound train at 10:30 last night.

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald, October 10, 1921.

DEPUTY'S SLAYER MUST SPEND HIS LIFE IN PRISON

Morris Simmons Pleads Guilty to Charge of Killing Charles Forward

Morris Simmons, alias Hubert E. Delaney, who was held for the murder of Deputy Sheriff Charles Forward at Caledonia September 11, 1921, pleaded guilty to that charge Monday morning when arraigned before Judge Willis B. Perkins in circuit court.

Simmons shot and killed Deputy Forward as he was being placed under arrest for the larceny of a revolver. The prisoner, it is alleged, fired the fatal shot without drawing his revolver from his coat pocket. He was apprehended after a thrilling chase by a posse and deputy sheriffs.

Deputies Kennedy, Johnson, and Kirch, who have had charge of Simmons since his arrest, testified to his general lack of regret over having committed the crime. Sheriff Peter Viergever also testified to the conditions under which Simmons was captured.

In the absence of any witnesses of the crime, Judge Perkins ordered that more details of the shooting be had before he would pronounce sentence. Examination of the remaining witnesses was held up until Monday afternoon.

Simmons maintained a stoic demeanor throughout the arraignment. Clad in muddy overalls and red house slippers without socks, he appeared to be less interested than the spectators in his fate. His uncombed hair, two days' growth of beard and his shuffling walk from weakness due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound in his head may have added to the appearance of indifference.

Judge Perkins Monday afternoon sentenced Simmons to serve life in Marquette Prison. Simmons had nothing to say.

For a final footnote to the life of Hubert E. DeLaney, see the Editor's note, following page.

Editor's Note:

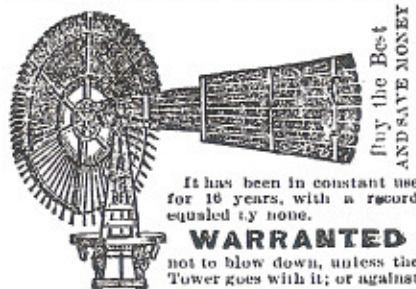
His real name may have been Ed of Morris Simmons, but he was sentenced as Hubert Edward DeLaney. Circuit Court Judge Willis B. Perkins of the 17th Judicial Circuit in Kent County sentenced him October 10, 1921. The order reads as follows:

"To the Sheriff of the County of Kent—
Greeting: Whereas, Hubert Edward DeLaney alias Morris Simmons has lately, in our Circuit Court for the said County of Kent, having duly pled to the crime of murder and sentenced therefor to imprisonment in the Branch Prison at Marquette, in this State, at hard labor, for the period of his natural life from and including the day of his said sentence, as more fully appears by a certified abstract from the minutes of the said Court of such conviction and sentence, herewith delivered to you, and accompanying the warrant; you are therefore commanded to cause the said Hubert Edward DeLaney alias Morris Simmons without needless delay, to be removed from the jail in the said County of Kent, to the Branch Prison at Marquette, in this State."

In an interview with the head person of the records department at Marquette State Prison on July 6, 1978, I was able to learn that Hubert DeLaney was imprisoned under that name and that he died there on November 8, 1934.

A further search in the office of the Marquette County Clerk, where a death certificate is recorded, gave the following information. Hubert DeLaney died November 8, 1834 in the Branch Prison of acute encephalitis. Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain.

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SHE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Caledonia News, April 11, 1902.

Mrs. Jacob Fulweiler took an overdose of Paris Green is now very ill at her home near town, 9761 Cherry Valley. Mrs. Fulweiler, wife of Jacob Fulweiler living about a quarter of a mile east of town, took an overdose of Paris Green with suicidal intent last Friday evening at the supper table.

The facts in the case as near as we can get at them are as follows:

It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Fulweiler have not lived together as happily as might be for some time on account of a "Man in the case" instead of a woman, as is usually the case. Friday the husband had been busy getting evidence sufficient to accuse his wife of improper conduct. That evening he went home, accompanied by his friend, Joe Gless. At the supper table, the husband brought up the matter for discussion and a wordy battle ensued. Finally Mrs. Fulweiler grabbed a cup full of Paris Green which she had evidently previously prepared for the occasion, and, with the exclamation that they would never see her alive again, drank a part of the contents and immediately rushed out the door and threw herself upon the ground in the yard. Mr. Gless examined the balance of the contents of the cup and exclaimed, "See Jake, your wife has taken Paris Green; run for a doctor," to which the husband replied, "Let the . . . die if she wants to." Finally the two went to bed leaving Mrs. Fulweiler to fully enjoy the fruits of her rash act.

Mr. Fulweiler had been drinking some during the day and this might have dulled his sense of right and wrong to such an extent that he cared not, for the time being, what became of his wife. In the morning she was found upstairs in bed, but how she got there probably no one but herself knows.

At this writing she is reported some better, but her stomach is in terrible condition.

Schemes to grow wealthy working in the comfort of your own home are not new. The following ad, as well as the glowing description of Perkins Wind Mills at the left, appeared in the Caledonia News, February 11, 1887.

\$200,000

in presents given away. Send us 5 cents postage, and by mail you will get free a package of goods of large

value, that will start you in work that will at once bring you money faster than anything else in America. All about the \$200,000 in presents with each box. Agents wanted every where, of either sex, of all ages, for all the time, or spare time only, to work for us at their own homes. Fortunes for all workers absolutely assured. Don't delay. H. HALL & Co., Portland, Maine.



Shown above is the first picnic held in Caledonia's new Lakeside Park, the Caledonia M.E. Church Sunday school picnic, in 1927.

At left is another M.E. Church gathering at Lakeside Park, this picture taken in August 1933 by the pastor, E. A. Armstrong. Those in the picture are:

Top row, left to right: Ruth Fowler, Beatrice Kaechele, Barbara Porritt, Jessie Schroeder, Rose Snyder, Nancy Turkhurst, Yvonne Hale, Thelma Schantz, and Leroy Shook; lower, left to right: Margaret Tolan, Florence French, Loraine Kraft, Sarah LaFever, Marie Schroder.



The youthful participants of the 1905 May Day Party of the Caledonia M.E. Sunday School included those shown here: Blanche Brock Viergever, Ethel Wilson Therrien, Ruth Williams Wernette, Marian Clark Terkelvurst, Gladys McConnel Carrer, Mildred Phillips, Edith LaFever Slater, Maude Phillips Robertson, Jenniebelle LaFever DeLano, Seward Brock, Leonil Hoover, Margaret Wilson Nolan, Rhea Kinsey Cronin, Arline Wilson Wenger, Clayton O'Brien, Kate Wenger, Roy Smith, Charlotte Olleg Smith, Alden O'Brien, Helen Hale, Mary Hale, Warren Hale, Millie McConnel Newell, Lloyd Wenger, Flora Judson, Mary

Brown, Eliza McConnel Roberts, Pearl Parker Crumback, Mrs. Phillips, Ivy Smith, Glen Henderson, D. O. Doyle, LaRue Bergy, Russell Beeler, Laura Bell Parker Crumback, Ila Detwiller, Minor Kinsey.

In the back ground is visible the steeple of the Liberal U.B. Church, which once stood on the northwest corner of Main and Maple Streets, where the Caledonia United Methodist parsonage now stands. This party was apparently held in the front yard of the M.E. parsonage, then located at 320 Main Street.