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The Brutal Murder of George J. Bushman

Abstract
In the fall of 1918 there occurred in Adams County a singularly brutal murder that brought the County and the town of Gettysburg to a shocked standstill. The tentacles of this event would reach into four Pennsylvania counties: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, and Philadelphia, and eventually the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The investigation of the crime and the trial of the perpetrators involved so many public officials and families, as well as the extended judicial system and geographical locations within and without the County, that we have included a Cast of Characters and Locations to assist the reader in following this convoluted tale.

Keywords
Clarence Collins, Murder, Charles Clinton Reinecker, George Bushman, Licensed Battlefield Guide

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THE BRUTAL MURDER OF GEORGE J. BUSHMAN:

The Death of a Battlefield Guide

Conrad B. Richter and Dale J. Molina

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1918 there occurred in Adams County a singularly brutal murder that brought the County and the town of Gettysburg to a shocked standstill. The tentacles of this event would reach into four Pennsylvania counties: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, and Philadelphia, and eventually the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The investigation of the crime and the trial of the perpetrators involved so many public officials and families, as well as the extended judicial system and geographical locations within and without the County, that we have included a Cast of Characters and Locations to assist the reader in following this convoluted tale.

Dramatis Personae

Baker, Rev. Joseph Baer Baker: Pastor, St. James Lutheran Church, Gettysburg.
Barkley, Rev. T. J.: Pastor, Reformed Congregation, Mark's Church.
Bender, H. B.: Gettysburg mortician whose son Milton retrieved the victim's body from Harrisburg.
Bentley, Detective Harry J.: Cumberland County Detective.
Biddle, Anne M. E. (Lizzie): Mother of Carrie Biddle-Collins.
Biddle, Carrie M.: Young Wife of Clarence Collins.
Bushman, Clarence E. T. L.: Son of the victim.
Bushman, George Joseph: *Murder victim; Licensed Battlefield Guide, Class of 1915.*[1]
Bushman, Mary L.: Wife of the victim.
Camp Colt: US Army tank training post, World War I, Gettysburg.
Campbell, Robert J., MD: Attending Physician, Western Penitentiary.
Coe, 1st Lt. Watson W.: Headquarters, Camp Colt.
Collins, Charles C.: Father of Clarence.
Collins, Clarence Raymond: Murderer.
Collins, Ida Martha Virginia Eckenrode: Mother of Clarence.
Collins, William Eugene: Son of Carrie and Clarence Collins.
Decker, Paul A., MD: Pathologist who assisted Harvey Miller with the Bushman autopsy.

Duncan, Charles S., Esq: Counsel for the Defense.
Eck, Alice A. Reinecker: Sister of Charles Reinecker.
Eichinger, Jacob: Coroner, Dauphin County.
Eisenhower, C. H.: State Highway worker who discovered the body.
Foramen magnum: Large opening in the base of the skull which transmits the spinal cord.
Francis, John: Warden of Western Penitentiary.
Hams, H. P.: Attending Mortician, Western Penitentiary.
Hartman, H. John: Sheriff of Adams County.
Herst, William, Esq.: Counsel for the Defense.
Hill, John L.: Justice of the Peace, Gettysburg.
Holder, Mary Margaret Bushman: Daughter of the victim; wife of Sgt. Charles Holder.
Holder, Sgt. Charles: U. S. Soldier; husband of Mary Margaret Bushman.
Keith, John D. Esq.: Counsel for the Defense.
Lucknow: Unincorporated community north of Harrisburg along the Susquehanna River.
Mauk, C. H.: Harrisburg mortician who held the victim's body for autopsy.
McCormick, John J.: Assistant to C. H. Mauk; he first examined the body.
McPherson, Judge Donald P.: President Judge, Adams County courts.
Miller, Clara: Stenographer for Dauphin County DA, and for the confessions of the murderers.
Miller, Harvey, MD: Forensic Pathologist who autopsied the victim.
Neine, Ben: State Highway worker and co-discoverer of the body.
Oyer and Terminer: Historical term for Criminal Courts in Pennsylvania.
Plank, Charles: Brother of Mary Bushman; he identified the body.
Plank, Eddie: "Gettysburg Eddie", Hall of Fame pitcher, 1st cousin of Mary Bushman.
Prima genitor: First born son, and generally the heir apparent of the estate.
Reinecker, Annie: Mother of Charles Reinecker.
Reinecker, Charles Clinton: Murderer.
Reinecker, Samuel: Father of Charles Reinecker.
Rhine, Paul F.: Carrie Biddle Collins' second husband.
Rod: Historical unit of measure equal to 16.5 ft., or one pole, or one perch, or 5.5 yards.
Sentz, Arthur: Constable, Mt. Joy Township.
Shealer, John C.: Gettysburg mortician.
Stock, Guy M.: Farm owner along the Carlisle Road north of Idaville.
Swope, J. Donald: Assistant DA, Adams County.
Topper, Raymond F.: District Attorney, Adams County.
Walter, Detective James: Detective, Dauphin County.
White, Harry: Detective, Harrisburg City, Pennsylvania.
Williams, James Lawrence (J.L.): Mary Bushman's attorney.
Wilson, Charles: Detective, Adams County.
Zimmerman, "Mr.": Passerby who helped to retrieve the body.

The Murderers

Ida Martha Virginia Eckenrode Collins was a busy woman, and a very practical woman at that. She had to be, she raised eleven children, and her son Clarence Raymond Collins was just about in the middle of the pack. Born in Mt. Joy Township in Adams County on March 5, 1900, no time was lost getting Clarence baptized on April Fool's Day in Mark's Church where the Collins family worshipped. The Rev. T. J. Barkley, Reformed minister for the Union Congregation, poured the Holy Water on the infants head, and drew a cross on his forehead with ash, marking him forever as a Child of Christ.[1a] Also called St Mark's, and the "White Church", and now known as Evangelical Holiness Church, the tiny house of worship stood in Mt. Joy Township at the corner of White Church Road and the Littlestown Road just outside of Gettysburg.

Raised on a farm in a large family, Clarence had few choices except to learn as many practical skills as he could, and to then move on to establish his own life. He was indeed a fast mover for a young man, and at 17 years of age in 1917, on May 11, he was married quietly to Carrie M. Biddle of Gettysburg, at St. Marks Church parsonage by Rev. Paul R. Pontius, pastor for the Reformed Congregation. She was only 18, but she was five months pregnant. On September 11, she would be delivered of a son, William Eugene Collins.[2] There is no record of the marriage in the Parish Register for the Reformed Congregation at St. Mark's Church, but the Gettysburg Compiler reported it from courthouse records,[3] and as far as it went, the marriage may well have been Clarence's only recorded decent act in his truncated life. There is also no entry for William Eugene's birth or baptism in the St. Mark's Parish Register, but there is a record of it on September 29, 1918, in the unbound Book 3 of the St. James Lutheran Church in Gettysburg where Carrie

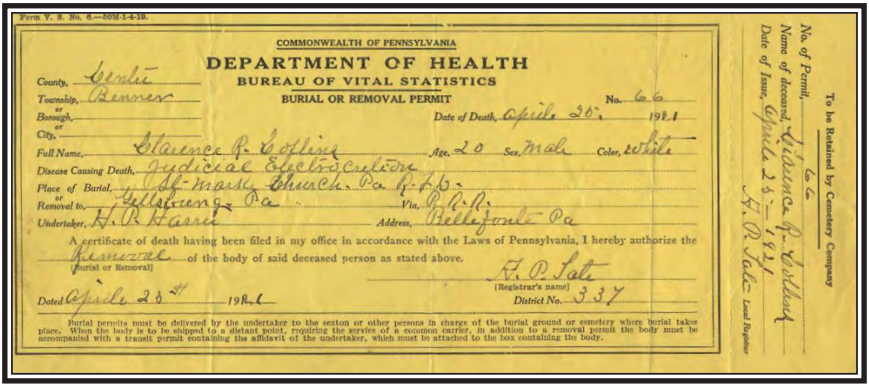
and her family worshipped.[4] William's baptism took place barely two weeks before the terrible events in this story. The words were said by the Reverend Joseph B. Baker, Pastor at St. James,[5] a man who would soon become involved in the soul-searching events that followed. Little did he realize at the time how much he had yet to do for Carrie and her misguided young husband.

Carrie would not live in a "newly furnished home in Hagerstown where the bridegroom was employed" as the newspaper reported, but would instead go back to live with her mother, Anne M. E. Biddle (Lizzie), in Straban Township.[6] Her father was dead, and life would not be easy for her. Clarence seems to have had no concern for her welfare or for his son; it was as if they did not exist at all. For them it was probably better that he stayed out of their lives.

Tucked away between the pages of the original Parish Register for the German Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran Congregations at Mark's Church at the Adams County Historical Society, is a small yellow Burial or Removal Permit for the body of Clarence R. Collins (Fig. 1). Removal was to be from Centre County, PA, to the place of burial, or to Gettysburg via the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Parish Register contains a listing of funerals from September 13, 1884, to May 31, 1914, but then there is a gap until February 14, 1923, and it is within this gap that Clarence Collins died and was returned to the church of his baptism, and to the cemetery of his family. It was this document that aroused our curiosity.

Fortunately, Rev. Baker kept a private register of his pastoral acts while he was at St. James, and it is there that we find entries for the burials of Clarence and Charles Clinton Reinecker, who was the co-conspirator with Clarence in the dreadful events of this story. The Burial Permit was issued

by the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, dated April 25, 1921, and lists the cause of his death: Judicial Electrocution. Somewhere, perhaps now permanently lost, is another similar Permit for Reinecker. Charles was the son of Samuel and Annie Reinecker, both dead at the time of these events. He was born in Highland Township in Adams County, the 11th, or maybe the 12th, it's hard to tell from the records[7], and last child in another large rural Adams County family; the year was 1901. Samuel Reinecker died when Charles was 9; his mother, 51 years old and still young by modern standards, would follow a year later.[8] This left Charles a 10 year old orphan to live under the roof of his 22 year old brother Cornelius, with three sisters and another brother.[9] By 1918, when Charles was 17, and registered for the Draft, he listed his address as 214 Chambersburg St., Gettysburg, living with his married sister Alice A. Eck.[10]



Form V. S. No. 6.—20M-1-4-19.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

BURIAL OR REMOVAL PERMIT

No. 66

County, Cente

Township, Benner

or Borough,

or City,

Date of Death, April 20, 1921

Full Name, Clarence R. Collins

Age, 20 Sex, Male Color, White

Disease Causing Death, Judicial Electrocution

Place of Burial, St. Mark's Church, Pa. R. R.

or Removal to, Gettysburg Pa Via, P. R. R.

Undertaker, H. B. Hann Address, Bellefonte Pa

A certificate of death having been filed in my office in accordance with the Laws of Pennsylvania, I hereby authorize the Removal of the body of said deceased person as stated above.

[Burial or Removal]

F. P. Tate

[Registrar's name]

Dated April 25th 1921

District No. 337

Burial permits must be delivered by the undertaker to the sexton or other persons in charge of the burial ground or cemetery where burial takes place. When the body is to be shipped to a distant point, requiring the service of a common carrier, in addition to a removal permit the body must be accompanied with a transit permit containing the affidavit of the undertaker, which must be attached to the box containing the body.

To be Retained by Cemetery Company

No. of Permit, 66

Name of deceased, Clarence R. Collins

Date of Issue, April 25 — 1921

F. P. Tate Local Registrar

Fig.1. Pennsylvania Bureau of Vital Statistics Burial or Removal Permit for the body of Clarence R. Collins. St. Mark's Church Register, ACHS collection.

Early in the fall of 1918, Clarence Collins, who was a year older than Charles, received a notice to report for a pre-induction physical for the United States Army. The United

States was at war. He listed his address as 138 Watter [sic] Street, Gettysburg. He was of medium height and build with blue eyes and brown hair according to his registration card.[11] The notice to report was dated September 12, 1918; the war had barely two months to run until it would grind to an uneasy halt on November 11. Unfortunately for Clarence and two other men, he would not make it to the Army, which might well have saved the lives of all three of them had he done so.

The murder he and Charles Reinecker were to commit was the product of sketchy planning that hatched out following an attempt that failed because Clarence lost his nerve.[12] It was probably his faint heart that brought Charles Reinecker into this awful crime in the first place. Several nights before the actual crime, Clarence hired George Bushman (Fig. 2), jitney operator and Licensed Battlefield Guide in Gettysburg, to take him and another young man, the mysterious "third person" of interest in the murder that followed, to Chambersburg on a scouting mission where they consorted with several young women before starting back to Gettysburg in Bushman's car. On the way back it was Collins' plan to smash Bushman's head with a hammer so they could rob him and abscond with his car and money. Rumor in town had it that Bushman carried a large sum of money on his person -- possibly as much as $2,700 or even more -- and that because of this he was going to "get it" sooner or later,[13] but this time nothing happened. Collins' companion on the Chambersburg ride was never identified publically, and there the record for him fortunately ends.

Clarence already had at least one brush with the Law. He had been held in Charlotte, NC, in November, 1917, on charges of violating the Mann White Slave Act, a federal law making it illegal to transport women across state lines for purposes of prostitution. He and a buddy, Elmer Marsh, had transported two women from Gettysburg to Camp Green just outside Charlotte

where the two women had been caught in flagrante delicto with two soldier boys. Because the girls had paid Collins for the transportation, the charges were dismissed,[16]



Fig.2. George Joseph Bushman. Date of the photograph is uncertain. Photograph by Mumper Studio, Gettysburg. Permission to use granted by Ancestry.com., and William T. Collins.

The record is silent on where and when Clarence Collins and Charles Reinecker first met, but Gettysburg was a small town, and they were of similar age with similar backgrounds so it would be unlikely that they would not meet. They were two young men largely adrift with few plans for the future, little guidance, and an ill-advised spirit of adventure. Like Clarence, Charles was also of medium height, but of slender build with brown eyes and black hair. He had registered for the draft the same day as Clarence, and had given his date of birth as April 4, 1900;11 it was not, it was a year later. He may have falsified

his age out of loyalty to his "mentor", and a desire to serve with him, or it may have been inadvertent. He listed his place of employment as a laborer in Weinman's Grocery Store, 28 Carlisle St., in Gettysburg.

There are many discrepancies in the personal data for these two young men, and since both were born before the January 1, 1906, Adams County official beginning date for birth, death and marriage registration, we must rely on church records and personal records.[14] Both young men had missed out on the role and benefits of prima genitor in their families, a role that was still customary in law and practice at that time of our history, and a role that would have given them stature, responsibility, respectability and perhaps most important, a certain nurturing that was typical of the position. Now, it seems, that word-of-mouth around town, and later the newspapers, reported their reputations as "generally disorderly."[15] "Disorderly" is a long way from being a murderer, and just how much the description meant is difficult to tell.

THE MURDER

Clarence Collins' Scheme

We do know that Clarence and Charles met in Gettysburg on Monday, October 14th, to discuss a plan that would be more certain of success than Clarence's first plan, and as it turned out, also relieve Clarence of the role of executioner.[17] This plan would see them out of Adams County and off to new horizons and adventures; it was simple in design and relatively easy to execute if horribly brutal in its concept.

It was only two days later on Wednesday evening, October 16, sometime between 8 and 8:30 in the evening as George Bushman was "running his car into his garage for the

night", that the two men approached him and asked what he would charge to take them to Carlisle to visit the YMCA and to cruise around the town. He wanted $12, $5 when they got into the car to go to Carlisle and $7 when they started back.[18] They accepted. No surprise that in the small town of Gettysburg there were people on the street at that time in the evening, and some of them saw Clarence leave town in Bushman's car with a "woman" in the back seat. Bushman's car was an important element in the plot**.** He had a large, seven passenger 1916 Hudson Super Six Town Car (Fig. 3), a rather expensive vehicle by the day's standards, and besides, he was an experienced driver who knew the area well. The car was worth about $2,500 new, and had all the amenities that one would want: a slanted permanent windshield, beautiful flowing lines, heat finished paint, grained leather upholstery, and a 76 horsepower engine capable of 75 mph. It had 11 inch parabolic headlamps with a dimming switch, tail and instrument lights, and maybe best of all, electric self-cranking.[19] The list goes on, but in short, it was a car almost anyone could envy. On the way to Carlisle they paid Bushmen the $5 they owed him, but as it turned out they never got around to paying him the additional $7 for the return trip to Gettysburg.[20] They did not tary long in Carlisle. At the YWCA they dismounted, and the two of them left Bushman with his car while they strolled a short distance around town. It was during this stroll that they decided where they would kill Bushman, and even more important, Clarence gave Charles a pistol he had purchased "in or near Gettysburg."[21]

They left Carlisle well before midnight, starting back toward Gettysburg with Collins in the front seat with Bushman, and Reinecker alone in the back seat. Near Idaville which is just south of the Adams County - Cumberland County line, Reinecker pulled the pistol from his pocket and shot Bushman in the back of the head. It was a singular cold-blooded and remorseless act.[22]



Fig.3. Photograph of the murder car, a 1916 Hudson Super Six Town Car, from the 1920 Short Movie High and Dizzy. Used by permission of IMCDb (Antoine Potten).

Since the Town Car had a manual transmission, we can easily imagine Collins, who was a "machanist" according to the 1920 census,[23] and who listed his occupation on his WW I Draft Registration Card as a "Schoffer" (chauffer),[11] frantically trying to subdue, steer, and control the bucking vehicle as the dead Bushman's foot interfered with his efforts to get gas to the engine before it stalled out traumatically. Even though Bushman had been driving slowly,[18] the Hudson engineers may have already lent a helping hand to his battle to stop the car by installing a sophisticated "oil bath cork clutch system that was smooth and durable."[19] Or it may have come to a bucking, bruising stop with a clatter as Collins "drove the car in." In any event, he succeeded, and the two young men then wrested Bushman's body from the front seat into the back seat, or "tonneau." [24] Around this time Reinecker shot Bushman again, this time in the chest, a sort of *coup de grace*. Collins professed later not to be able to recall this shot, but the wound would be found on autopsy, and besides, Charles Reinecker readily

admitted it.[25] They searched his pockets, probably nervously and certainly very poorly, and recovered their $5 fee plus 80 cents. They missed $25 that was in a purse separate from his wallet, which contained no money.[26] They also missed a number of other pocket items that would identify George Bushman and his soon-to-be-missing car. Their terrible crime had netted the murderers little cash, but they did indeed have the Hudson Super-Six Town Car, and they thought it was worth somewhere around $1000-$1200. If they could find a buyer, they could flee to Detroit, a possibility in their minds, and settle in there, get jobs, and start a new life.[27] For now they covered the body with a lap robe and headed back to Carlisle. There was still the small matter of what to do with the body.[28]

Clarence Collins had already worked out a rather crude plan in his head before the previous failed venture began, so he turned the car around -- possibly in the driveway to Guy M. Stock's farm just south of the county line (Fig. 4A) -- and headed back toward Carlisle. In Carlisle he discovered that they were nearly out of gas, so he stopped and spent most of their $5.80 for gas. This was done with Bushman's body lying covered by the lap robe in the tonneau. Then he headed toward Harrisburg, crossing the Susquehanna River on the Walnut Street Bridge. As they crossed the bridge, Reinecker threw the murder weapon and Bushman's wallet into the Susquehanna.[29] Somewhere that night Bushman's watch and ring disappeared and were never seen again.[30] Could one of them have gotten greedy? Collins would later claim that it was Reinecker who had searched the body.[31]

On Front Street in Harrisburg Collins turned left, going north along the river until they reached Lucknow near the present-day junction of the Linglestown Road, modern Route 39, and River Road.[32] There they stopped, took Bushman's body from the tonneau and carried or dragged it; he weighed

about 180 pounds,[33] and the effort must have taxed both of his killers. They placed it near the river among the weeds, still wrapped in the lap robe, and then they left. They had made enough noise in the process to awaken Steven Gruben who lived in a house across the road from the river, and who got up and saw "two machines" standing along the road, but no one moving about outside. He was unable to see anything else and went back to bed, dismissing the event as meaningless.[34] The second "machine", if there was one, remains a mystery.



Fig 4A. Google Earth satellite photograph of Idaville, Adams County, showing the Cumberland-Adams County line, the approximate murder site location and the Stock Farm lane relationship. Google Earth Imagery, 9/16/2013.

The two murderers drove further north along the river for about a mile before turning back, but where to go from here was unclear in their minds. They re-crossed the bridge over the Susquehanna, and headed back to Carlisle. When they got back

to Carlisle, they headed toward Gettysburg, probably more by instinct and uncertainty than anything else. Sometime along that road reality dawned; they could not go back to Gettysburg in George Bushman's car no matter what time of day it was. So when they reached the Hunterstown Road, modern-day Route 394, they turned east through Hunterstown and then on to York where they stopped briefly, and finally all the way to Philadelphia.[35] We do not know if they shared the driving, but we can only imagine the growing remorse and uncertainty that must have ridden silently beside them that awful night as the reality of what they had done began to sink into their minds.

In Philadelphia they decided to sell the car, and Collins went alone to Gorson's salesroom and garage on Broad St., and made arrangements to have them sell it. Collins gave his name as George J. Sherman, 22 Carlisle Street, Gettysburg[36]. He was told to return the following day to make final arrangements, but he lost his nerve and they had in fact, abandoned the car. The Hudson would remain there until it was reported to the Philadelphia Police by Gorson's personnel who were suspicious about the matter. The police examined the vehicle, identified its real owner, and notified Detective Charles Wilson, who attempted to use it for bait by leaving it there in hopes the "owner" would call for it.[37] As it turned out, events moved faster than Wilson's trap.[38] In the mean time, after parking the car, Collins went from Philadelphia to York by train, and then to Gettysburg by hitching a ride, arriving there Thursday night, October 17th. He slept that night in an automobile in the parking lot at Licensed Battlefield Guide Thad S. Warren's Garage at 242 Chambersburg Street.[39] On Monday October 21st, he went to Waynesboro and got a job at the Landis Tool Company Works. He was there when Detective Wilson caught up to him on Thursday evening, October 25th, with a warrant for his arrest for automobile larceny. The case for murder had not yet

been made by Wilson, but Collins' freedom was about to end forever. Wilson turned Collins over to Sheriff John Hartman, and Collins spent the night in the Adams County Jail.[40]

In the mean time, Wilson had investigated an alleged conversation between several young men that had been overheard in a cab in Gettysburg several nights before the murder, "that _____ (Bushman) came pretty near getting it the other night, and he'll get it yet before long". This conversation was reported to Lt. Watson Coe of Camp Colt, but just why is uncertain. Coe may have served in the Provost Marshal's Office for the Camp, but all we know is that he was assigned to Camp Headquarters.[41] As a result of this information Wilson thought that three Gettysburg young men had committed the murder, and informed Dauphin County Detective Harry White of Harrisburg, who had the body of a murdered man on his hands. White issued circulars for Clarence Raymond Collins, William J. Eckenrode, and Raymond Oscar Staley, all aged 20.[42]

Fellow traveler and first degree murder accomplice, Charles Reinecker sought his own solace; he came back to Gettysburg by a route and by means that are unclear from the record, arriving late Thursday evening, and went back to work at Reichle's butcher shop at 39 Baltimore Street.[43] While at work the following week he was suddenly accosted by "officers" in Gettysburg, who charged him with failing to pay a boarding house bill in Hanover! The Officers were perplexed by his obvious nervousness over what seemed to be a minor matter, and we can only imagine that Reinecker took a deep breath and did not contest the charge, thinking he had escaped by the skin of his teeth.[44] But he hadn't. Four days later, October 25th, as he was loading his delivery wagon for the butcher shop, Detective Wilson approached him.

"I want you" he said.

"What for?" Reinecker responded.

"You know very well what for!" replied Wilson,

"Collins has told me the whole story."[45]

For him too, the jig was up.

A Dead Body

On Thursday morning, October17th, C. H. Eisenhower and Ben F. Neine, state highway workers, who were assigned to this section of River road about four miles north of Harrisburg, were discussing the possibility of finding "wood" (firewood?) along the bank of the Susquehanna. In 1918 as now, the shores of the river were rich in driftwood that came down the river in high water each spring, and it was available to anyone who was willing to collect it.[46] Eisenhower decided to walk along the shore to see what was available. He had not gone far when he discovered, to his dismay, a body wrapped in a blanket! Stunned, he went back to Ben Neine and told him what he had found, and the two men went back to the river to re-examine Eisenhower's finding. They climbed back to the road where they stopped a "huckster from Halifax," and then a mailman. Three of them went back to the body and lifted the blanket off the face, but all they could determine was that it was bloody about the head. Eisenhower then went back over the road to a "Mr. Grouer's" (could this have been Steven Gruben who would later testify in court?) house, and telephoned the coroner and the police.[47]

About an hour later, 9 AM, Dauphin County Coroner Jacob Eichinger arrived accompanied by John J. McCormick, assistant to C. H. Mauk, Harrisburg mortician. Eisenhower, Eichinger, and McCormick carried the body about 50 ft to the

road where the Coroner searched the pockets. He recovered a number of items including several business receipts and a Gettysburg National Park Commission license, all with George Bushman's name.[48] The Dauphin County District Attorney. was notified and the body was removed to Mauk's morgue.[49] At this time McCormick undressed the body and found both bullet wounds.[50]

As soon as tentative identification of the body was made, Dauphin County Detective James Walter was on the phone to Charles Wilson who, in turn, notified Mary Bushman of the grim news.[51] Up to that time Mary had not been very concerned about her absent husband; he was frequently away on business trips to places she knew not where, and from which he returned at highly irregular hours. That afternoon, Charles Plank, Gettysburg liveryman and brother to Mary Bushman, was on his way to Harrisburg to identify the body to be certain that it was Mary's missing husband. Charles was also a Licensed Battlefield Guide, and he knew immediately that it was George.[52]

That same night, Coroner Eichinger engaged Drs. Harvey Miller and Park A. Decker to conduct the autopsy on the body to establish the cause of death.[49] Dr. Miller was an experienced forensic pathologist, and would later testify at the trial, but for now their autopsy would last into the wee hours of the morning. They noted that one bullet -- the first as it turned out -- had entered the skull just behind the left ear, coursing downward through the cerebellum and the medulla, and then down into the spinal canal, destroying the upper spinal cord. They did not retrieve this bullet. The second shot, fired from very close range leaving large powder burns on the coat, had entered the breast just to the right of the mid-line, and just below the inter-nipple line, passing through the right lung and part of the liver before lodging against one of the ribs. This

bullet they recovered. In their opinion either bullet was fatal, with the head shot causing instantaneous death.[53]

The next morning the Harrisburg *Patriot* wondered in bold headlines: "Who Killed George Bushman, and Why?" And "what had become of the man and woman seen leaving Gettysburg with Bushman on Wednesday evening?"[54] That same day there was a Coroner's inquest in Dauphin County, and Coroner Eichinger issued a Death Certificate. With the issuance of the certificate, Milton Bender, son of H. B. Bender, Gettysburg mortician, left for Harrisburg to bring the body back to Gettysburg. By evening the well-traveled body of George Joseph Bushman was home again.[55] But where was the missing Hudson Super-Six bearing PA license plate I20315, and Gettysburg Special License Plate red tag #22, authorization to conduct tours of the battlefield, and engine # 5739? That mystery was about to end.[56]

Arrest and Interrogation: The Detectives Turns

There can be little doubt that there was much consternation and much gossip in Gettysburg, as well as much desire to be part of "bringing to justice" the perpetrators of this awful deed. First in line after Detective Wilson was J. L. Williams, Esq., practicing attorney and now Mary Bushman's attorney. J. L. had already published "A REQUEST" in the *Gettysburg Times* on October 24, 1918, "seeking the man and woman who went with Geo J. Bushman to Harrisburg last Wednesday evening to communicate confidentially with him."[57] Williams had his office in the National Bank of Gettysburg building, and had served briefly as District Attorney for Adams County from 1899-1902. That was fifteen years ago and now he had no official position in the County law enforcement establishment.[58] How and why he got into the act remains a mystery, but if anything, being Mary Bushman's attorney should have disqualified him

completely from even being present let alone participating in what was to follow. That nicety was overlooked, and he became an important figure in the interrogation of the two suspects.[59]

The day after he apprehended Clarence Collins, Detective Wilson took his prisoner to J. L.'s office for reasons that are now lost, to be confronted by J. L., Detective Wilson, Harrisburg Detective Harry White, and Clarence Edward T. Lewis Bushman, Mary's son who had been called home from the Army upon learning of the murder of his father![60] It was Williams who "grilled" him, "sweating him out" as the newspaper called it – without any legal authority that we could determine - and no lawyer was present to counsel Collins[61]. Williams would later be called to testify in the trial that followed, but he was clearly an inappropriate advocate for the people under almost any circumstances.

As the grilling proceeded it became apparent that Collins was under severe stress, and "his head bobbed in synchronization with his heart beat."[62] We have no idea about what was said, and what pressures were put on Collins, but there is no evidence that physical means were applied. Under Williams grilling Collins soon broke down and confessed not only to the car theft, but more importantly, to the murder. Not only that, he implicated Charles Reinecker.[63]

Immediately Detective Wilson left to find Reinecker and bring him to J. L.'s office, where the two murderers confronted each other for the first time since their parting in Philadelphia. At first they attempted to blame each other, but that soon failed and both of them admitted their guilt. Collins also told Wilson where the missing car was, and he contacted Philadelphia Police to confirm their findings.[64] These "statements" would later be used during additional interrogations in Harrisburg to induce the signed confessions that were to follow. Why

Raymond F. Topper, who was currently the District Attorney was not involved in these "grillings" we do not know.

When the grilling ended, Detective Wilson placed the two prisoners in the hands of Harrisburg Detective Harry White who handcuffed them. The four of them got on the 3:30 PM train to Harrisburg, arriving at Detective James Walter's office in the Dauphin County jail at about 6:30 PM. [66] After removing their handcuffs, Walter began his interrogation of the two prisoners almost immediately. He was aware that the prisoners had made an informal statement in Gettysburg, so after explaining what a "formal statement" was, Walter asked Collins if he wanted to make a voluntary statement. He warned him that it would be used against him at his trial, but assured him that it would "ease his mind, and make him feel better". Collins, who was again without legal counsel, was uncertain at first, but with further reassurance from Walter that there would be no coercion, he said "Yes." Walter then lead him through the statement with questions about the crime while Dauphin County DA Stenographer Clara Miller made a shorthand record.[67] Collins was not certain if they shot Bushman in Cumberland County or Adams County, but it was close to Idaville, and he said that he would know the spot if he saw it. He further said that they rode "about a mile" after the shooting before they turned around. But were his words and memory accurate? We shall see. After the shooting, he continued, it was about 2 O'clock in the morning when they got to Harrisburg. The place they selected for George Bushman's body was purely by chance even though Collins had been along that road previously.[68]

In Philadelphia they "took it (the Bushman car) in the garage (Gorson's) and told the man I wanted to sell it". Then, Collins said, he went back home: "We caught a ride home on automobiles", and "we got there on different cars." It was more complicated than that, but that was his statement. In fact, he

got back to Gettysburg on Thursday night, October 17, one day after the brutal murder. All we know from the confession is that he then went from Gettysburg to Waynesboro the following Monday and got a job.[69] Finally the short interrogation ended and Detective Walter stated: "now you make this statement voluntarily, knowing and realizing it will be used against you when you are tried for this crime?" "Yes sir." It was signed: Clarence Collins.[70]

Next it was Charles Reinecker's turn with Detective Walter. This order of procedure would follow the younger man the rest of his short life, up until its final moment, a seemingly unstated recognition of Clarence Collins seniority in this terrible business. As best he could recall it was on Monday, just two days before the murder, that they first planned the crime, and it was about midnight on that awful night when they started back to Gettysburg from Carlisle. It was "on the other side (from Carlisle) of Mt Holly I shot him. I shot him both times, and we went up the road to a mill (there was no mill along the Carlisle Road near Idaville at that time) and turned around ----." As for the revolver, Charles "throwed it away in the river" as they crossed the bridge. He also threw Bushman's "pocket book" into the river as they crossed the bridge. And then, Charles Reinecker, like Clarence Collins, signed his statement. The interrogation did not last long, or take much paper; it took away his young life.[71]

With that Detective Wilson left the two prisoners in the Dauphin County jail where they would remain until the legal niceties were straightened out, and he went back to Gettysburg. It would not be until November 13, 1918, when some of the facts in the case became clear, that he filed a formal complaint with Justice of the Peace John L. Hill, Gettysburg, requesting that an Adams County warrant be issued for the two young men. The warrant for Collins states the following: "*One Clarence R.*

Collins did feloniously, willfully, and of malice aforethought shoot, kill, and murder one George J. Bushman." Thus there was now the legal authority to bring the two prisoners back to Adams County, and the stage was set for their trials.[72]

THE TRIALS

Raymond Topper's Turn and The Matter of *Vicinage*[65]

Raymond F. Topper had been District Attorney of Adams County since 1915, and nothing quite like the Bushman murder had happened here before. He had to be especially thorough in his briefing of the judge and counsel on the matter of a trial by jury for the defendants, citing the Constitution of the United States, especially the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania. Topper was assisted in his brief by Assistant DA, J. Donald Swope, who would play a major role as Prosecuting Attorney throughout the trial.[73] The nagging question was, just where did the murder take place, and who had jurisdiction? To guide them he cited Minnesota, Massachusetts, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania and other state codes on the matter of *vicinage,* legalese for vicinity. Did it really matter exactly where the crime took place as long as it was in the "vicinity" of the jurisdiction bringing the charges? In his brief, Topper argued that technically it did not matter whether the crime actually took place on the Adams County side of the line with Cumberland County or not, just that it took place within the vicinity of the line. He cited the Hon. Charles A. Dewey, Massachusetts judge*:*

> *"The purpose ---- being to secure the full operation of our criminal laws, and more effectually to enforce punishment for breach thereof, by avoiding embarrassing questions of the precise limits or boundaries of county lines, or a possible conflict of testimony whether the act complained of was*

perpetrated within the established limits of the county in which the trial was had, or at some short distance without those limits although substantially on the boundary line--."[74]

In practice, many state laws, but not all, adopted a rule of 100 rods (530ft) from the actual line, as appropriate *vicinage*. Pennsylvania is an acceptor state, tracing its argument back to a rape case that occurred on the bridge between Milford, NJ, and Upper Black Eddy, PA, in the year 1786, and the PA Act of September 25, 1786. This act accepted that it did not matter which side of the bridge the rape took place on even though the midstream of the river was the legal dividing line, just as long as the case was tried by either state. Thereby the principle of *vicinage* was established for the Commonwealth.[75,76] More specifically, Pennsylvania's law defined *vicinage* as 500 yards, not 100 rods. Consequentially, on this basis, it did not infringe the rights of the defendants to a fair trial no matter whether the murder actually took place in Cumberland County or Adams County, as long as it was in the vicinity of the line. For the purpose of the Bushman murder trial, the matter would rest there for the time being, but the Pennsylvania legal code definition of 500 yards as accepted *vicinage* would be the matter of much debate during the trials and subsequent appeals.[77]

How to solve the mystery of the site where the murder actually took place? A car ride to the site seemed the best bet, and on October 31, Clarence Collins, accompanied by Detectives Charles Wilson, Harry J. Bentley of Cumberland County, and Harry Walter of Dauphin County, all chauffeured by William J. Eden of Gettysburg, did just that. Charles Reinecker was excused at his attorney Charles S. Duncan's request, but we are uncertain why since the location of the crime was an important factor in determining the trial venue. After all, it was he who had pulled the trigger. The motor tour took them over the entire

route, and must have lasted most of the day. Collins showed where the pistol was thrown into the river, and later recanted his original location of the crime as just south of Mt. Holly, finally indicating that "Here is the place it was done." "Yes, I am positive." After repeated challenges by Detective Wilson, Collins insisted that he now had the actual place where the murder took place.[78] It was about 643 feet *north* of the Adams-Cumberland County line. They then drove on for about ¼ mile to a lane where Collins said he turned the car. It was probably Stock's farm lane which is about 295 feet south of the line and 940 ft south of the murder site, but we cannot be certain.

After the tour they went back to Harrisburg to the jail. The two prisoners were still guests of Dauphin County, a fact that was causing friction within the Dauphin County law establishment because of the expense associated with their incarceration. One Dauphin County Alderman threatened to release them out on the street if they were not soon moved![79]

In the car on the way back to Harrisburg were two detectives pleased that the crime would not be tried in their counties, and one facing the reality of a sensational trial. And one strangely pleased prisoner, Clarence Collins, who said he was "happy to get back to Adams county!" The murder charges preferred in Dauphin County would now have to be re-preferred in Adams County.[80]

The trial could not begin without an indictment, and that was now a matter for the Adams County Grand Jury. We do know that a Bill of Indictment on Collins and Reinecker was not handed down by the Grand Jury until January 27th, just a little over a day before the trial began. Accordingly, Defense Counsel complained that the Bill was so late they had inadequate time to prepare, and furthermore, the Bill contained too few particulars. In summary, the Bill stated that Clarence

Collins did "willfully and ---- (with) malice aforethought did make an assault ---------- did kill and murder ----- *against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."*[81] (Italics added.)

The search for jurors had begun on Thursday, January 23, 1919, and it was not easy.[82] Most of those selected for jury duty were farmers, and in accordance with the laws, all were men. Both of the defendants were from rural families that were well known in the county, and just about everybody was reluctant to be impaneled for the trial.

The court where felonious crimes were tried in Pennsylvania at that time was called a Court of Oyer and Terminer, and there were legal requirements to establishing such a court. Unless it was so established, the results of the trial would be dismissed, no matter what the outcome. By law the jury was to be formed from a Jury Wheel containing the names of 48 qualified citizens of the county**.** If the 48 names in the Wheel were exhausted without finding a suitable panel, the Sheriff could conscript jurors from the county at random as long as they were "*qualified.*" That meant that they had to be "free and lawful men and not be kin (to the accused)," and by location of their residence be of the vicinity (of the crime). That is precisely what happened, repeatedly, as Sheriff Hartman went to that well at least three times. It took 90 jurors to find a panel of 12 acceptable members in Collins' case, and 131 in Reinecker's case.[83] Because of the extended time necessary to find jurors, each was sworn as he was selected:

> *"You do swear by Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts that you will well and truly try and a true deliverance make in the issue joined between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the prisoner at the bar (italics added) whom you shall have in charge*

and a true verdict give to the evidence, and that you shall answer to God the last great day."[84]

But knowledge of the defendants and their families was not the only reason for reluctance to serve. There was a world-wide influenza pandemic in 1918-1919, and several persons selected had to be recused because their presence at home to attend sick family members was vital. Still others who were selected had to be recused because they themselves became victims of the illness: at least one died. So dire was the epidemic that in the first 18 days of October in 1918, 14,805 Pennsylvanians would die, and the *Gettysburg Times* of October 19 reported nine deaths in Adams County in that single edition.[85] At one point during Reinecker's jury selection proceedings a frustrated County Sheriff John Hartman addressed the audience in the courtroom: "We have exhausted our pool of jurors therefore I shall have to draft jurors from the courtroom." Not surprising, a mass and hasty exodus from the courtroom followed; nobody, in spite of burning curiosity, wanted this onerous task. By this time the flu specter had already made the grieving Mary Bushman's life even more unbearable.

Finally, on Wednesday, January 29, 1919, at 3:20 PM with a jury impaneled, the trial of Clarence Collins began with District Attorney Raymond Topper opening the case for the Commonwealth. When asked what his plea was, Clarence Collins remained mute and a plea of "not guilty" was entered for him. Since it was late in the day, court was adjourned at 5:20 PM, and the jury was sequestered in a "leading Gettysburg Hotel" for the night (the Eagle).[86] Testimony resumed the next day, largely by witnesses whom we have already met, and at each opportunity Defense objected on the grounds that: 1) the confession was not voluntary, or had been made under duress, and hence was inadmissible; 2) the murder took

place in Cumberland County, therefore Adams County had no jurisdiction to conduct the trial; and 3) no adequate Bill of Particulars was presented to Defense. With each objection the Court just as obstinately overruled the objection.[87]

During his testimony, Detective Walter told the Court that Collins informed him that he bought the murder weapon, a .38 caliber revolver, at a "Gettysburg area" store whose storekeeper's name began with the letter "B." At that time, J. P. Bingham was General Manager of Adams County Hardware, a short-lived enterprise on Baltimore St., whose initial bond offering listed John D. Keith as the founding President of the company.[88,89] It is likely this was the same John D. Keith, Esq., who acted as Defense Counsel for Collins and Reinecker during the trial![90] Could it be that his store had sold the fatal weapon that his client used to kill George Bushman? We cannot be sure.

With a break for lunch, testimony continued until 5 PM when Court adjourned for the day. It resumed the next day, January 31, 1919, at 9:07 AM, but only a few minutes later at, 9:20 AM, the Commonwealth rested.[91]

Defense opened its case almost immediately, with attorney Keith, once again arguing that "because the Bill of Indictment did not furnish him with sufficient particulars for him to prepare a defense" the trial could not go forward; furthermore, the Bill of Indictment was handed down barely twenty-four hours before the trial began, and this did not give Defense adequate time to prepare for the trial. This was promptly denied once again by the Court on the grounds that Defense Counsel was present at the preliminary hearing when the case for the Commonwealth was submitted, and the DA had then stated the particulars as alleged by the Commonwealth, hence they were fully known to the Defense: "We overrule the motion: exception by defendant and bill sealed."[92]

The Defense continued their case which lasted until 11:07 AM, with adjournment at 11:30 AM. Although court reconvened at 2:15 PM, it immediately adjourned for the remainder of the day. On Saturday, February 1, the Defense rested its case immediately after opening at 9:15, and Assistant DA Swope began his summary for the Commonwealth 10 minutes later, closing at 9:30. Because both men had confessed, and there were no *Miranda Rights* in 1918, it was an open and shut case.

Or so it seemed. The single most contentious issue was the argument by the Defense that the concept of *vicinage* was not constitutional, that the actual county line must be accepted as the geographical limitation of jurisdiction, and that therefore the trial could not legally take place in Adams County.[93] Secondly, there was the matter of proper constitution of a Court of Oyer and Terminer, the Defense claiming that in this case it was not properly formed because a confusion of names had resulted in the seating of a wrong person in the jury panel.[94]

Since all agreed the murder had taken place 643 feet from the county line inside Cumberland County, this was well within the "*vicinage*" limit of 500 yards accepted in Pennsylvania law, and under that interpretation the trail in Adams County was constitutional. President Judge Donald P. McPherson, who was assisted throughout the trial by Associate Judges E. P. Miller and Howard Dicks, again quoted Massachusetts Judge Charles A. Dewey, "At what point do political lines drawn in the sand become exact determinants in matters of jurisdiction for a crime that might be of uncertain location in detail?"

If we accept the 643 feet distance from the county line as the location of the murder site, modern technology allows us to locate the approximate site on Route 34 just north of Idaville and the county line, as it appears today. We can also probably

locate the farm lane where Collins turned the car back to Carlisle (Fig. 4B).



Fig. 4B. Google Earth satellite photograph showing detail of the murder site. Google Earth Imagery, 9/16/2013.

In spite of District Attorney Topper's review of the matter of *vicinage* in detail for Counsel and the Judge before the trial, it would still be a point of contention in both trials. Because the argument that Pennsylvania's law accepting the 500 yard inclusive zone on the outside of the county line as *vicinage* had *never been previously challenged*, it was inevitable that ultimately the argument would go to the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court to decide. As it turns out, such laws have never been declared to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.[95]

Judge McPherson began his charge to the Jury almost immediately after the Defense rested, and it lasted until 10:35 AM. The jury retired at 10:48 AM, and at 12:18 PM, one and a half hours later, they came back into the courtroom to deliver their verdict: "Clarence R. Collins – is guilty—as he stands indicted – of murder in the first degree". The jury was polled,

and each affirmed his verdict.[96] Immediately Counsel for the Defense moved for a new trial and was given 4 days to prepare a motion. The entire trial of Clarence Collins, from opening statements to the Jury's verdict, lasted a bit over two and one half days.

The Court lost no time bringing Charles Reinecker before his peers. Jury selection began on Monday, February 3, but it was a slow process, eventually arousing the ire of Sheriff Hartman. It took 5 days to find a panel, fast by modern standards but slow by 1919 standards, and promptly on Friday the 7th the trial began.[97] Most of the witnesses in the Reinecker trial were repeats from the Collins trial with one interesting exception: Ben Carter. Carter was a "well known Gettysburg colored resident" who sometimes lived in a tent at the "State quarries near town", and Charles Reinecker sometimes stayed there with him. Several days after the murder, Reinecker, who was with him then, "showed great nervousness and agitation," even babbling, according to Carter. Upon questioning by Carter, Reinecker told him much of the story, including his part in the murder. Carter was subjected to rigorous cross-examination by the defense, but none of this slowed down events.[98]

Reinecker's trial was also fast, almost lightening speed by modern standards, and on Saturday, February 8, the case went to the jury. On Monday, February 10, they returned with the same verdict: guilty of murder in the first degree.[99] Justice had been swift, but there were still the matters of sentencing, appeals, review, incarceration, and finally and most importantly, implementing the sentence.

On April 10, 1919, a motion to dismiss the trial and arrest judgment was filed by Counsel for the Defense John Keith and William Herst on behalf of Clarence Collins on two grounds: 1) The trial was unconstitutional because Adams County had

no jurisdiction to conduct a trial for a crime that was committed in Cumberland County, and 2) The Court of Oyer and Terminer was not properly constituted because there was a mix-up on the name of one of the jurors who was impaneled. The Brief filed by Counsel for the Defense was nineteen pages long. In it they cited law from 18 states that interpret "vicinage" as "county," and a lengthy technical argument over the confusion of the name of the juror they claim was not the man whose name appeared on the court records.[100] Judge McPherson handed down his denial of the request for dismissal and arrest of judgment in a nine page brief on August 25, 1919. He reaffirmed his position on the matter of vicinage – it did not mean "county," and that the jury impaneled was of the "vicinity." Finally, he reinforced his position on the juror in question, showing that the right person had indeed been impaneled. Hence, the Court of Oyer and Terminer had been properly formed, and the trial was legally within the jurisdiction of Adams County.[101] At this time Judge McPherson also handed down the sentence for Clarence Collins. The Judge asked him to stand, and asked him if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be imposed according to law. Collins made no comment, and the Judge proceeded:

> *"The sentence of the Court upon you is that you shall suffer death by having passed through your body a current of electricity of sufficient intensity to cause death, and the application of such current must be continuous until you are dead, and the said punishment shall be inflicted as directed by the Act of June 19th, 1913."*[102]

That was certainly short, explicit, and final enough, but it would not meet the form and style of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, as we shall see.

The Defense appealed the case to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on October 13, 1919, basing their appeal on the same argument that they had submitted to Judge McPherson: 1)*Vicinage* was an indeterminate limit that had no bounds. If the crime took place 643 ft on the Cumberland County side of the line, could it have potentially have taken place much further inside the Cumberland County line and still be tried in Adams County? Hence, what was the physical limit of Adams County jurisdiction in Cumberland County? 2) *The Court of Oyer and Terminer* had not been constituted as required.[103]

The Prosecutor and the Defense Counsels agreed that in the interest of cost savings only Collins' case would be appealed, and that any decision pertaining to Collins would also affect Reinecker.[104] The case went before the State Supreme Court, and on October 13, 1919, that Court denied the appeal in a six page brief that presented nothing new beyond Judge McPherson's denial.[105] On November 6, Collins was re-sentenced to the same fate in accordance with the State Act of June 19, 1913, PL 528, by Judge McPherson.[106] Nevertheless, because of recent changes in sentencing policy it would be necessary to repeat the sentencing yet a third time in order to meet the Court requirement that the sentence state specifically the time and place of the execution. So on March 1, 1920, as Clarence Collins stood before him once again, Judge McPherson wrote the sentence in accordance with the language of the Act of June 19, 1913, PL 528, which now required that all Pennsylvania executions be by electrocution, and take place in Western Penitentiary:

> *"And now, March 1st, 1920, the sentence of the law is that you, Clarence R. Collins, be taken hence by the sheriff of Adams County to the jail of that county from whence you came, and from thence in due course to the Western Penitentiary in Centre County,*

Pennsylvania, and that you there suffer death during the week fixed by the Governor of the Commonwealth, in a building erected for the purpose on land owned by the Commonwealth, such punishment being inflicted by either the warden or deputy warden of the Western Penitentiary, or by such person as the warden shall designate by causing to pass through your body a current of electricity of intensity sufficient to cause death and the application of such current to be continued until you are dead. May God in His infinite goodness have mercy on your soul."[107]

BY THE COURT
Donald P. McPherson
President Judge

Incarceration

Charles Reinecker and Clarence Collins were model prisoners. At least there is no known record of their causing problems during their incarceration, and their prior history as troublemakers seems to have ended with their arrest. Reinecker was a fan of *Leslie's Weekly Illustrated* newspaper, and decorated the walls of his cell in the Adams County Jail on High Street in Gettysburg, with hand-framed covers of the magazine. At Christmas time he festooned his cell with paper chains (Fig. 5). The walls of the cell were decorated with paper stars, photographs, mostly of women, a baseball player, and a religious cross near the head of his bunk bed. Beneath the cross was an oval-shaped portrait of a woman. Could it have been his mother who died when he was only ten years old?

Could the baseball player have been the great Eddie Plank, "Gettysburg Eddie"? Eddie had won more games pitching than any other left-hander in the history of major

league baseball, save one, and was the star of Connie Mack's champion Philadelphia Athletics. Amazingly, he was the 1st cousin of Mary Louise Plank Bushman, wife of the murdered George.[108]



Fig 5. Charles Reinecker's cell, Adams County Jail, High St., Gettysburg, decorated, possibly for Christmas. The iron restraining ring is visible on the floor. Photo by William Tipton, ACHS collection.

Two chairs, the bed, and a small table laden with books made up his spare furnishings. Ominously, the wooden floor contained an iron ring about 6" in diameter, held to the floor by a grommet bolted to the wood. We can surmise that violent prisoners would not be tolerated, and chained if necessary.



Fig. 6A. Clarence Collins cell in the Adams County Jail. The rear wall is dominated by Collins' painting of Mark's Church. Photo by William Tipton, ACHS collection.



Fig. 6B. Enlargement of Collins' painting titled "Rock Creek Valley". It is dated April 10, 1920. ACHS collection.



Fig. 7. William H. Tipton's portraits of the murderers. Taken approximately one month before their execution. Reproduced from the Gettysburg Times dated March 28, 1921, ACHS microfilm collection. Original negatives have not been located, and the Microfilm copy is in very bad condition.

Clarence Collins was much more conservative with his cell decorations: small pictures, a calendar, a small wall shelf, and what look like some 8"x10" magazine covers. Nearly the entire wall at the head of his bed was covered by a painting by him, titled "Rock Creek Valley." It was dated April 10, 1920, and depicts St. Marks Church as the central theme (Figs. 6A&B). Regrettably, the painting, which shows native talent, was destroyed in 1947 when the cell block was torn out to remodel the old prison as the Adams County Free Library (now Gettysburg City Hall).[109] The black and white photo of the painting and the two prison cells are in possession of the Adams County Historical Society, and are the work of

William H. Tipton, locally famous Gettysburg photographer. Both young men posed for their semi-formal photographs by Tipton sometime around March 7, 1921, in the prison yard of the Adams County Jail (Fig. 7), and their faces as they appeared in the March 28, 1921, *Gettysburg Times* are the only visual records that we were able to find of them. Regrettably, although the original negatives are probably part of the ACHS Tipton Collection, cataloguing of that voluminous work is not yet complete, and the negatives are as yet untraceable.

Without Flinching[110]

Following the trials, Governor William Cameron Sproul treated the difficult matter of the execution date with understandably skillful neglect. Letters poured into his office and to the Board of Pardons from citizens who protested the death sentence for two such young men as extreme, and these no doubt contributed to the Governor's indecision.[111] Letter writers sought commutation to a lesser penalty, but without success. On December 15, 1920, the Governor set the week of January 31, 1921, as the time for their execution. Later he then moved the date back to February 28. In the meantime the Board of Pardons reviewed the case and refused to commute the sentence. Governor Sproul then issued successive respites to March 28, April 15, and finally April 25.[112] On April 20, the Board of Pardons refused to re-hear the case, and the fate of the two prisoners was sealed. Public Law 528, the Act of June 19, 1913, required the Governor to issue the warrant for the execution. The warrant commanded the Warden of Western Penitentiary to order the officer having custody of the prisoners to deliver them to him on the specified date, Friday, April 22, 1921. Sheriff Hartman did.[113]

Gettysburg undertaker John C. Shealer left town for Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, April 24. It was his task to bring the bodies of Clarence Raymond Collins and Charles Clinton Reinecker back to Gettysburg, for burial.[114] It had taken over two years since the juries reached their verdicts in early February, 1919, -- far longer than it had taken them to decide the fate of the two young men -- but now both were to die in the Western Penitentiary electric chair in Rockview, just outside of Bellefonte. The dying would be swift, perhaps almost as swift as George Bushman had died. They would be the 5th and 6th Adams Countians to be executed for crimes they had committed.[115]

In accordance with the Governor Sproul's instructions and the law, the two young men were delivered to John Francis, Warden of the Penitentiary on Friday evening, April 22nd, by Sheriff Hartman, Detective Charles Wilson, and one Horace E. Smiley, whose role is uncertain. They had left Gettysburg on the early train that morning for Harrisburg, and from there to Tyrone, and finally on to the Penitentiary on the *Bellefonte, Nittany and Lemont Division* of the Pennsylvania Railroad.[116] It was a long train ride, but the only practical way to get the prisoners there. Upon their arrival and in the presence of the prisoners, the Warden immediately queried the Sheriff about the caskets for their charges, reminding the Sheriff that the bodies are usually shipped out the same day as the executions. As soon as their delivery mission was completed the Sheriff and his colleagues left immediately for the train ride back to Gettysburg.[117]

They were not the only ones busy that weekend. Rev. Joseph Baker, spiritual guardian of the two young men was also busy. He had gone to Williamsport to preach a sermon that Sunday, and from there on to the Penitentiary at the request of the Collins and Reinecker families to support the two prisoners

in their last hours on earth. Joseph Baker had taken his adopted responsibility as shepherd for their wounded souls with earnest sincerity. He had spent countless hours with them during their incarceration in the Adams County Jail, and now his heart-felt task was nearing its end. To the extent that he succeeded in his mission, we must accept their stoic behavior in their final moments. Had they come to realize that by their terrible act their lives were forfeit?[118] At least it seemed so. They had sent a message to the boys of Gettysburg through the newspaper, urging them to avoid "bad company." [119]

The end for them started at 7:06 AM that Monday morning of April 25, 1921, when Collins was strapped into the electric chair; by 7:13 AM he was pronounced dead by Dr. Robert J. Campbell, Attending Physician at the execution. Clarence Collins was twenty-one years, one month, and twenty days old.[120] Eight people plus newspaper reporters stood in witness to this death. Only one, Arthur Sentz, the Mt. Joy Township Constable, was from Adams County, and he was there at his own request. Neither Reverend Baker nor John Shealer witnessed the executions, whether by choice or by regulations, we do not know.[121] Charles Reinecker followed Collins to the same chair at 7:20 AM, and when told that Clarence had "gone home", he replied "I'll soon be there too". At 7:25, he too was pronounced dead.[122] He was twenty years and twenty-one days old.[123] Neither young man expressed emotion, or anything but resolve as they approached their final moments. Could it be that the remorse of the wee hours of that awful night of October 17-18 over two years ago had finally been expunged? Perhaps so, but we will never know. Executions at Western State Penitentiary were, "an everyday duty and little attention was paid to the feelings of prisoners,"[124] or no doubt likewise, to the feelings of those who had to orchestrate such executions.

John Shealer had to wait until H. P. Hams of Bellefonte, the Official Mortician at the execution,[125] had received the bodies on behalf of the Commonwealth before they were his to claim for the families. The next morning he brought the bodies to Gettysburg by train, but he was a day late for more than 300 morbidly curious onlookers who had gathered at the train station the evening before to watch the unloading of the caskets. In spite of that, about 100 still curious citizens were there when Shealer and his sad burden got there on the morning of April 26. [126,127]

WHERE THEY LIE

George Joseph Bushman left a grieving wife, Mary Plank Bushman, and two children: Clarence E. T.L Bushman**,** and Mary Margaret Bushman Holder. Mary Margaret lived in New Mexico, the wife of First Sergeant Charles Holder. They had met when Sgt Holder was stationed at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, and been married in the spring of 1918.[128] Mother Mary would not decide on the date of the funeral for her husband until she heard from her two children, but Mary Margaret was ill with pneumonia and would not be able to travel to Gettysburg. She too was a victim of the flu. So on Monday, October 21, 1918, with Reverend Baker presiding, George Bushman was finally laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery at 1:30 in the afternoon after a private service at the Bushman home on Carlisle Street.[129] George Joseph Bushman was 57 years old.

Alas, Mary Margaret's illness proved fatal, and on November 4, 1918, barely two and one half weeks after her father's murder, she succumbed to the dreadful pandemic.[130] She was 22 years old, and we can only imagine the anguish and heartache that Mary Bushman suffered through on those awful days in the fall of 1918. Mary Margaret's body was brought to Gettysburg, and she lies beneath a red granite stone next to her

father and mother in Evergreen Cemetery. Etched on the top of her stone, facing the sky, are the endearing words of a young soldier: "My Wife," as though to tell the angels looking down from above that a broken heart beseeches guardian angels to look over the person who lies buried here (Fig. 8). Once again, the good Reverend Baker presided at the interment.[131] Her young husband, Master Sergeant Charles Holder, 22nd Infantry, 11th Division, WW I, died in 1948, and lies buried in Marietta National Cemetery, GA.[132] Mary Bushman's only remaining family member, her son Clarence, was serving as a recruiting officer at Ft Slocum, NY, at the time of the murder. After the war, he would spend his life as a stock broker in Detroit, the same powerful city that had seemed attractive to his father's murderers**.** He would die in his 95th year, leaving behind a second wife.[133]



Fig. 8. Mary Marguerite Bushman Holder's tombstone, Evergreen Cemetery. Photo by the authors.

The value of the George Bushman's estate, after deductions for costs of settlement was $4,465.76.[134] It was not much money for a widow to plan her future on, even in 1918. Most of the estate was destined for Mary's son, Clarence, but $400 went to the estate of daughter Mary Margaret Holder, and $300 went to J. L., for his attorney fee. George's tombstone cost $175, and stands in Evergreen Cemetery, (Fig. 9) the work of L. H. Meals, monumentalist in Gettysburg. Mary lost no time in putting her large double house, which still stands at 22-24 Carlisle St., on the market on November 12, 1918, with the help of J. L. Williams.[135] After the sale she would live with her younger brother Jere Plank and his wife Fanny on south Washington Street until later in her life when she returned to her old neighborhood on Carlisle St.[136] She died there in 1933, and is buried beside her husband in Evergreen. Nothing on the tombstone indicates that anything out of the ordinary lies buried with George or the terrible act that placed him here well before his time.



Fig. 9. George and Mary Bushman's tombstone, Evergreen Cemetery. Photo by the authors.

Clarence Raymond Collins is buried next to Ida and his father, Charles, in St Mark's graveyard, marked by a stone that carries all three of their names (Fig.10). The stone stands along White Church road facing the morning sun, and is one of the newer and more elaborate stones in an old cemetery, now badly in need of loving care. Ida would find her way to St. Marks long after her wayward son Clarence, dying in 1944 at 79 years of age. In the mean time, Ida Collins was not quite finished with her wayward son, and when his body arrived back in Gettysburg on the morning of 26th of April, 1921, it was placed in Garlach's hearse and rushed to St. Mark's Church. At 11:15 AM, a brief and private service was held in the church with Rev. Baker and Rev. P. R. Pontius officiating.[137] It was Rev. Pontius who had married Clarence and Carrie Biddle in the parsonage at St Mark's, less than 3 years earlier.



Fig. 10. Tombstone for Clarence R., Ida M., and Charles C. Collins, St. Mark's Church graveyard. Littlestown Road. Photo by the authors



Fig. 11A & B. Tombstones of Annie and Samuel Reinecker, Evergreen Cemetery. Photo by the authors. The 9's on Samuel's tombstone appear as 3's in the photo.

Charles Reinecker's body was rushed to Evergreen Cemetery as soon as it could be arranged for Rev. Baker to go to Evergreen from St Mark's that same day to finish his sad double duty and officiate at Charles' funeral. There is no record of a church service for him, and there Charles Reinecker disappears into the soil of Adams County and is now untraceable. No tombstone marks his grave, and Brian Kennell's Evergreen Cemetery records are silent on his whereabouts.[138] When Naomi Reifsnider Hett did her remarkable recordings of names and dates of those buried in Adams County cemeteries, including Evergreen, in the 1930s and 40s, she recorded no grave for Charles.[139] His parents, Samuel and Annie, lie there side by side under two simple stones (Fig.11A&B), but there is nothing above ground to confirm Charles whereabouts. Annie's stone has fallen, and there is much space around their stones. Could Charles lie, unmarked, near his parents? Samuel and Annie Reinecker did not follow the footsteps of Samuel's family in

the Marsh Creek Church of the Brethren, making only a brief appearance in the Brethren Parish Register before disappearing from it.[140] They emerge later in the parish register for St. James Lutheran Church, and it is from that document that we gain much insight into the Reineckers and Carrie Collins.[141]

Carrie, Clarence's young wife, meant little to him to say the least, and the record is silent on just about everything on her relationship with Clarence until later in her life. When Clarence was imprisoned, she was left a single mother with no means of support, and was forced to return to her widowed mother and work as a day laborer to support herself and her son.[142] Ten years later, when she lived in Straban Township and had begun to feel the burden of her own personal estate, she petitioned the Adams County Orphans Court, under the guidance of Paul F. Rhine, for her 14 year old son William's share of the income from the estate of his grandfather Charles Calvin Collins, Ida's husband.[143] In her will dated September 8, 1930, Ida specifically excluded her grandson William from any inheritance for the practical reason that her dead son Clarence was already in debt to her estate for an amount greater than the value of his inheritance.[144] Was this because she had paid Clarence's legal fees during his incarceration and trial? Besides, she charged all of her other children's debts to her against their share of the estate, and Clarence and his son William would be no exception.[145] Carrie sought redress through the Court, and the President Judge, Donald P. McPherson, the same Judge McPherson who had sent her misguided young husband to the electric chair on April 25, 1921, presided. The judge approved her petition. Perhaps he empathized with her predicament, or had some sense of responsibility, and she was awarded the munificent sum of $12.00 annually. This was achieved by leasing William's share of the estate back to Ida until William reached 21 years of age. The money was to be held in trust by

the National Bank of Gettysburg.[146] Soon after, Carrie would marry Paul, the father of her second child born in 1930.[147] Carrie died in March 1967, and Paul died in 1972 from heart disease and the lingering effects of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Both lie in the Bendersville Cemetery.[148]

James Lawrence (J. L.) Williams, Esq., the "griller" and Mary Bushman's attorney, died in 1937, having served on the Board that re-founded the Adams County Historical Society in 1934, [149] after a lapse of 42 years. ACHS would falter again, briefly this time, but would re-energize in 1939, with the association of Robert Fortenbaugh and Charles Glatfleter with the enterprise. J. L. was also an active member in the Pennsylvania Historical Society. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.[150]

Rev. Joseph Baer Baker, the good shepherd of Clarence and Charles, left St. James Church in 1922, and became the Pastor at St. Michael Lutheran Church in York, PA. He wrote and published a history of St. James Lutheran church, and became an outspoken supporter of prohibition and a vocal opponent of the sale of cigarettes to minors. He became a radio evangelist and had his sermons broadcast over Radio WORK, York, PA. He wrote the service for his own funeral just before he died in 1946.[151] He is buried in Machpelah Cemetery in Lititz, PA.[152]

Charles Wilson, perhaps the hero of our story for his diligent work in tracking down the murders, died at 75 on August 14, 1936, and lies buried in the Old Cemetery in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. One of the Honorable Pall Bearers at his funeral was none other than J. L. Williams, Esq. The position of Adams County Detective was soon afterward abolished,[153] but subsequently reinstated.

Judge Donald P. McPherson, intellectual Yale graduate and accomplished jurist, died on March 16, 1937, in his 67th year. He lies buried in Evergreen Cemetery along with the murder victim, and one of his assassins.[154]

The bullet that killed George Bushman lies buried with him in Evergreen Cemetery. By an odd set of forces and vectors it passed through the *foramen magnum* at the base of his skull, and down his spinal canal where it probably lodged somewhere in the bony structure of his backbone. Too difficult to remove from his body at autopsy, there it remains. The pistol that fired that fatal bullet probably still lies on the bottom of the Susquehanna River where Charles Reinecker threw it, somewhere not far south of the old Walnut Street Bridge, where it will rust into nothingness if it has not already done so.

FINIS

Our story ends there, a tale of thoughtless brutality, much sorrow, and much time-tempered anguish, all of which is now history. It is difficult to find forgiveness for the singular and brutal act of the two young men in our story, or even where to look for it; some acts must simply stand by themselves for what they are. Like the seeming indifference of these two young men as they approached their end in Western Penitentiary, this story is now largely expunged from the corporate memory of Adams County and Gettysburg.

When we began this study we believed that we could complete it in a month's time; little did we appreciate the tangled web of the story and its numerous references. Numerous trips to three cemeteries, the marvelous archive at the Adams County Court House, newspapers, the internet, census records, the Adams County Historical Society collection, including the personal papers of Judge McPherson, and the unparalleled collection of parish registers all demanded our attention. We have tried to confirm all of the facts herein presented with repeated verification, but in spite of that there may still be errors, and such as they are, we claim ownership with apologies. We beg your indulgence.

The Authors

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NOTES

The following abbreviations appear in the endnotes and biography.

ACCOT Adams County Court of Oyer & Terminer.
ACCR Adams County Court House Records.
ACD Adams County Directory.
ACHSC Adams County Historical Society collection.
AN Ancestry.com.
CC Clarence Collins.
Comm Commonwealth (of Pennsylvania).
Confession The signed confessions of CC and CR obtained by Dauphin Co. Det. Harry Walter.
CR Charles Reinecker.
CRI Collins-Reinecker interrogation.
FAGM Find A Grave Memorial, Internet.
GBC Gettysburg Compiler newspaper.
GBT Gettysburg Times newspaper.
HBG Harrisburg.
HBT Harrisburg Telegraph newspaper.
IN Internet.
MF Microfilm.
MP Papers of Judge Donald P. McPherson, ACHSC.
NOI New Oxford Informer newspaper.
Oyer & Terminer/O&T Historical name for PA Criminal Courts.
PA Pennsylvania.
PL Public Law.
PR Parish Register/Registry. Church records of ministerial acts. ACHSC..
RR Research Room, ACHS
USC United States Census.

Ibid. As used in the references means the immediate preceding reference.
Ibid. #10 Ex: means the same reference as Reference #10.

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