

Carlinville Democrat

Carlinville, Illinois, Wednesday, November 17, 1926

Number 12

Officer

Geo. Staats is Murdered

A frightful tragedy occurred early Wednesday morning in Carlinville. George Staats, one of the night policemen of this city, was shot and killed by a negro. The facts as nearly as we are able to gather them at this time are as follows:

"A robbery was committed or was attempted at Godfrey during Tuesday night. The agent at Carlinville received a wire to notify the police of Carlinville to search trains and to apprehend the Godfrey offenders, who were described as two negroes—one tall and large and black, and the other short and of light color. The first train which came in following that message was at about 2 o'clock. Night Officers George Staats and John Kaufman were at the station and proceeded to search the several box cars. They had difficulty in opening the door of one car, but when it had been slightly pushed aside Mr. Staats with his flashlight saw two negroes inside. He called to Mr. Kaufman, who was working at the door and said "Here they are." The shorter one was in front, as they approached the door. When they neared the door the tall negro from the rear pushed a gun around the side of the smaller one and fired one shot. The negroes then leaped through the door on the west side of the car which was wide open and Mr. Kaufman seeing that, ran forward until he could find a place to get under the train, but too late

for he saw them disappearing in the distance in the pasture east of the high school building. He then returned but Mr. Staats was not at the place he had left him and in searching for him found him lying down in the road east of the depot building. He was yet conscious and described the negroes and said that he had been shot. He was quickly taken to the hospital where it was discovered that he was shot in the abdomen and the bullet had penetrated the liver. He lived only an hour, passing away at about 3:15. The officers of the city were aroused and under the direction of Mayor Hemphill a systematic effort was organized to apprehend the murderers. Officers in all the cities up and down the C. & A. were advised, farmers out west of Carlinville were called by telephone because the murderers were thought possibly to be going in that direction; the bloodhounds were ordered from Springfield. Among those notified was Rye Hampton, of Macoupin Station. Along about 6 o'clock he telephoned that he had seen two negroes near Macoupin Station and had fired at them and that they had gone through the fields east of the station. A C. & A. engine was secured, a box car attached and about twenty officers went to Macoupin. The bloodhounds from Springfield were some distance out in the country but they were hastened down to Macoupin Station and as we go to press are now scouring that country for the murderers.

The awful tragedy has cast a pall over the entire city. Mr.

Staats has served as night officer for many years. He was one of the most efficient this city or any other city ever had. His hosts of friends are grieving over his sudden and untimely departure. He died in the performance of his duty. He leaves surviving his wife, a daughter, Vera, who is a student in the high school. Unto them goes out the sympathy of the people of the whole city and community.

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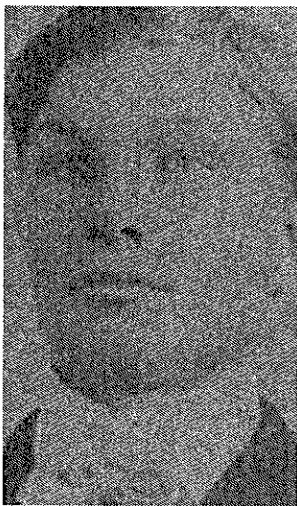
Carlinville, Illinois, Wednesday, November 24, 1926

Number 13

Funeral Services For George Staats

Murdered Police Officer Was
Buried Friday

Business Suspended and Flags
at Half Mast—Eloquent Tribute
Paid to Deceased



George A. Staats

Business in Carlinville on Friday afternoon was suspended; flags were flown at half mast. In every way a silent but eloquent tribute was paid by the people of Carlinville to the memory of George Staats, an efficient public, spirited servant who was murdered in the discharge of his duties. The funeral service was a most impressive one. A short service was held at the family residence in the First ward and the remains were taken to the Evangelical church at 2 o'clock. They were escorted by Mayor Victor Hemphill, members of the city council, other city official and police officers. The active pallbearers were the following: Walter H. Dey, George C.

Schoenherr, Bert B. Wilson; J.P. Denby, W.C. Slagel, Dr. J. L. Lewis.

The church edifice could only accommodate a small part of the great number who desired to attend the services. Rev. Ott, the pastor, was in charge and read the biographical sketch of the deceased. George Staats was born July 6, 1881, and was the son of Julius and Hannah Staats. He was married Jan. 6, 1908, to Mrs. Margaret Monday. Two children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Staats—Vera and Leon, the latter preceding his father in death five years.

Mr. Staats lived on a farm in Bird township, after which he held the position of superintendent of the county home. Then he was farm advisor at Blackburn prior to the last five years, during which he faithfully executed all the duties of night policeman. He leaves to mourn his death, his wife, a daughter and three sisters, namely: Mrs. Albert Kasten, of this city; Mrs. Meier, of South Otter, and Mrs. William Kraft of Aurora.

Beautiful and appropriate music was rendered by the quartette, composed of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Gowin, Laura Luebman and Fred Ruegg. A special choir also sang.

"Let not your hearts be troubled, Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." Those were the words of the text selected by Rev. Ott and from this he preached a sermon comforting to the bereaved ones and abounding in high tribute or the character and services of the man who was so cruelly murdered.

At the conclusion of the very impressive sermon, Mayor Hemphill, on behalf of the city delivered an address relating to the official work of the departed officer. High tribute was paid to Mr. Staats' valor and faithfulness and punctuality and ever present desire to serve the people faithfully and well.

At the conclusion of the mayor's address, opportunity was afforded to many friends to view the remains, after which the body was borne to the city cemetery, where it was tenderly laid away.

**NEGRO SUSPECT
MAKES PARTIAL;
CONFESSION**

Prisoner Admits He Was in Box
Car When Officer Was Killed

**George Dennie, an Escaped
Convict, Apprehend at Bunker
Hill-Corner's Inquest Held Soon.**

The day following the murder of Night Officer George Staats, of Carlinville, was the day of the unprecedented November snow storm, and it made the efforts of the officers and citizens very difficult. A large number scoured the hills and public roads in the vicinity of the place where the two negro suspects were seen at Macoupin Station. A blanket of snow quickly covered the ground, thus obliterating all traces of the negroes. On Wednesday evening, however, a negro appeared in Dorchester, bought a ticket for Bunker Hill, and after that he had tarried at the station in the latter city, Deputy Sheriff Roy Stone was called and arrested him, and took him into custody. Sheriff Russell was notified, and Chief Deputy Frank Fries, and others, departed by automobile at once for Bunker Hill. They brought the prisoner to Carlinville late that night. He gave his name as George Dennie, his age as 25, and his home as St. Louis. He told many conflicting stories. James Steiner, the C. & A. special agent, who saw the negroes at Godfrey, and who was held up by them when he sought to question them, positively identified Dennie as one of the negroes wanted. Night Officer John Kaufman likewise said to the best of his knowledge and belief this was one of the negroes who were in the box car at the time Officer Staats sought to take them into custody, and when one of them shot him to death. Dennie told conflicting stories when questioned by State's Attorney Harlan. When seized Dennie had upon him a revolver of the caliber of

the bullet which killed Staats. In a pocket was also found a glove which matched perfectly the glove found on a barbed wire fence located in the general direction taken by these two negroes when they ran away after having shot Officer Staats. These facts taken in connection with the fact that the negro tells so many stories, lead the officers to believe that he is one of the two men who killed the officer. On Sunday night Dennie admitted to the sheriff and other officers at the jail that he was in the box car with two other negroes when the officer threw the flashlight on them and ordered them to come forward. He says he put up his hands, and that one of the other two opened fire upon Mr. Staats. He denies that he did it. He says that after the shots were fired that they leaped from the west door of the car and separated; that he went south and took the first road that he found going east out into the timber; that he sought to get food at one farm house and employment at another and that he continued on until he reached Dorchester, and that there he boarded the train for Bunker Hill. It is understood that the reason he did not buy a ticket further is because he did not have enough money to purchase a ticket beyond Bunker Hill. He maintains that he has not seen anything of the other negroes who he now admits were with him in the box car at the time of the killing. Dennie likewise admits that he is an escaped convict from the Michigan penitentiary.

On Thursday night a negro surrendered himself to the authorities at Litchfield, and said that he was wanted in Iowa on a charge. Officers of Macoupin county brought him to Carlinville, and it was ascertained that he was not one of the men wanted for the killing. He was held however, for the Iowa authorities who are to come after him.

Another negro was arrested at Taylorville whose description seemed to correspond with that of the shorter and lighter colored negro who was with Dennie. Sheriff Russell and Agent Steiner, of the C. & A., went to

Taylorville, and found that the man held there was not the man they were looking for.

Rewards totaling \$500 have been offered for the apprehension and conviction of the other man who was a party to the killing, and the hope is that sooner or later the desperado will be apprehended to be tried along with Dennie for the brutal murder which was committed.

The coroner's inquest has not yet been held. Investigations are yet in progress and when all information available has been secured it will be submitted to a coroner's jury.

It may be that State's Attorney Harlan will ask the recall of the grand jury to the end that an indictment may be returned at the earliest possible moment.

It is hoped that the rewards which have been offered may result in the apprehension of the other negro who is at large.

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Carlinville, Illinois, Wednesday, December 1, 1926

Number 14

CORONER'S JURY RENDERS VERDICT

Makes Finding in Case of Officer
Staats Slaying

**Recommends That Dennie, the
Negro, be Held Without Bail-Several
Officers Testify.**

Coroner Walter Jacoby conducted the inquiry into the death of George Staats, who was killed on the morning of November 17th, while endeavoring to apprehend some colored men in a box car at the C. & A. depot. The inquest was held on Friday. The jury was composed of John Novak, Frank E. Wilson, George Wilson, James Gleason, John Leibig and Jacob Ullmer. Testifying before the jury were Night Officer John Kaufman, who was present with Staats on the night of the killing; City Marshall Clarence Rasor, Sheriff John Russell, and James Steiner, C. & A. special agent. The latter was the officer who was held up by two negroes on Tuesday evening at Godfrey and who positively identifies the prisoner now in jail as one of the two men.

At the conclusion of the evidence which was introduced, the jury found that George Staats was killed by a bullet fired from a thirty-eight caliber revolver and recommended that George Dennie, negro, be held without bail to await the action of the grand jury.

**NEGRO CONFESSES
HE KILLED GEO.
STAATS**

Makes Sworn Statement That
He Committed the Deed

**Tells State's Attorney Harlan
and Others Story of the
Killing- Wants to Enter Plea
of Guilty.**

George Dennie, the negro apprehended at Bunker Hill, and charged with the murder of Night Officer Staats, and who has been in the Macoupin county jail since two days after the killing, is the one who committed the crime. Dennie has made a sworn statement that he fired the shot. The confession is in two parts: one was secured on December 6th, and the other on December 17th, made in the presence of State's Attorney L. M. Harlan, Judge Alfred A. Isaacs, Sheriff E. M. Stubblefield and Jailer Charles Slagel. Since receiving this confession the state's attorney's office and the sheriff's office have given not publicity to it, but with the information therein contained, have worked industriously in the effort to apprehend the other two negroes when were with Dennie at the time of the murder. Thus far they have been unsuccessful, but a systematic search continues to be made. Dennie's sworn statement in is as follows: My name is George Dennie and I live in Mississippi and I am 26 years old and I was in Carlinville on the 16th day of November, A. D. 1926, with a boy by the name of Frisco, and was at the Chicago & Alton station, and Petsy Reese. We come in from, Godfry-- we was laying in this box car sleeping and

the train stopped here at Carlinville, so we heard a man opening the door and he said "Hey, Hey, Hey," about three time and we all jumped up and my gun went off and I shot him. We ran and I got split up from the two boys about one mile from here and I do not know what way they went.

I know I am making this statement to the State's Attorney of Macoupin County, Illinois. I have no promises of immunity nor any promises of any help but I am making this statement so that I might ease my mind and the other stories that I have told in connection herewith partly are true and partly are false and I know that I am under oath when I am making this statement and I know that I am making this statement in the presence of Charles Slagel, who is the jailer of Macoupin County, Illinois in the presence of Judge Isaacs, County Judge of Macoupin County Illinois.

I further state that I have not been put in fear and am not afraid to make this statement as I feel that under the conditions the State's Attorney of the county should know all the acts in the case.

Q. George, just what did you do?

A. I just jumped up and shot toward the door.

Signed: George Dennie.

Witnesses: L.M. HARLAN
ALFRED A. ISAACS
CHARLES SLAGEL

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of December, A.D. 1926.

(SEAL)

CORDELIA FAHRENKROG
Notary Public.

A. I want to tell you what I want to do in regard to this matter that occurred at the Chicago & Alton station. Mr. Harlan, I want to enter my plea of guilty to the charge of shooting the officer in Carlinville on November 16, 1926. I want to go before the Judge and place myself at his mercy and ask that sentence may be pronounced upon me. I know that when I do this that the punishment is either imprisonment in the penitentiary for my life or that I may have the death penalty inflicted upon me. I have received no promises from any one to do this. The other statement that I made to you, Mr. Harlan on the 6th day of December, A.D. 1926, is true and correct and I want to be taken before the Judge at the first opportunity that it may be done. I also want you to keep in communication with my mother and tell her just what has been done in my case. I am anxious that his matter be taken care of, as my mind and my conscience dictates to me that this is the only proper course to take.

I want to further say that Mr. Slagel, the jailer and Mr. Stubblefield, sheriff of Macoupin county, have treated me with the utmost kindness, and I appreciate everything that these men have done for me.

Signed: GEORGE DENNIE.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of December, A.D. 1926.

(SEAL)

CORDELIA FAHRENKROG,
Notary Public.

Witness: E.M. STUBBLEFIELD
CHARLES A. SLAGEL.

Q. George do you want to say something more to me?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What do you want to say to me?

Communications

The clerk read a communication from Mrs. Margaret Staats and Daughter expressing appreciation for the expressions of sympathy tendered by the city officials in the hour of bereavement. The Communication was ordered. The clerk read a communication from the Department of Public Health setting forth the condition of water furnished by the Carlinville Water supply Co. The analysis showed water fit for drinking purposes Nov. 1st -1926. The same was ordered placed on file.

Mayer Hemphill appointed John F. Novak, Charles Sheppe and Edward O'Neil as a special committee to draft resolutions communicating the untimely death of Police Officer George Staats, said committee to be assisted by City Atty. J.A. Snell.

Alderman Novak from special committee offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption.

Whereas: Death inflicted by the and of the assassin was taken from us one of our most faithful officials and one who for many years has filled with great credit to himself and the community the position of Night Policeman.

Now therefore on behalf of the City and all its officials we do deeply express our sympathy and deplore the happening which ended in the tragic death of our fellow officer, George Staats, His position may be occupied but it can never be better filled.

He was as fair as he was fearless and every man, women and child in the City of Carlinville held him in high esteem and join with us in these resolutions of respect. While the people slept he watched but now he sleeps forever.

Be it further resolved that this resolution be entered upon the permanent records of the city at Carlinville Illinois, that a copy be sent to the bereaved family and that they be published as a mark of honor and respect to the deceased.

John F. Novak Jr.

Charles Sheppe

Edward D. O'Neil

(Committee appointed on Resolutions)

On motion the foregoing resolution was unanimously adopted.

State of Illinois

County of Macoupin

} SS.

At the January Term, A. D. 1927

of the Macoupin County Circuit Court.

Be it remembered that the Hon. Frank W. Burton, Presiding Judge at the said term of said court, and the Hon. L. M. Harlan, State's Attorney in and for the said County of Macoupin, for INFORMATION concerning George Dennie sentenced on the 28th day of January, A.D. 1927, by the Hon. Frank W. Burton, Presiding Judge as aforesaid, to be confined in the Southern Illinois Penitentiary of Chester, Illinois, for the crime of Murder as by Statute in such case made and provided, give the Prison Board of said Penitentiary to understand and be informed as follows, to-wit:

NAME (in full) George Dennie Alias (if any)
NATIVITY Colored Age 26 years
MARRIED, single, divorced Single Number of children, if any
OCCUPATION (industrious or idle) Laborer-Idle
EDUCATION Never went to school
RELIGION, (What Denomination, if any) Methodist
FAMILY HISTORY Father dead-mother living-two sisters, in Memphis, Tennessee
Reputation Bad
Disposition Good
Associates Bad
Habits (as to drink, etc.) Drinker
Convicted by a jury or plead guilty Plea of guilty

Former Conviction (if any) Escaped convict from State Penitentiary in Michigan. This man entered a plea of guilty to the killing of night-Policeman, George Staats in the City of Carlinville, Illinois on the Night of November 17th, 1926. This man with two companions were fleeing from Godfrey, Illinois and were in a freight car attached to a train belonging to the Chicago & Alton Railroad Company. Officer Staats was at the station when train arrived and in searching through the cars for these men was shot by Dennie. Upon the plea of guilty the Court fixed his punishment at imprisonment in the penitentiary for and during his natural life. The man with Dennie has never been captured. The other companion of Dennie was found dead at Gillespie on January 1, 1927.

Frank W. Burton, Presiding Judge
L. M. Harlan, State's Attorney in and for said Macoupin County