

MURDERED ON DUTY

Dubuque Herald

Thursday, 10/01/1896

OFFICER MEISSNER KICKED UNDER A TRAIN BY TRAMPS. WAS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE AN ARREST—SIX CARS PASSED OVER AND DISEMBOWELED HIM.

Policeman Albert Meissner went on duty at 7 o'clock last night and in less than an hour was dying on the platform of the Chicago Great Western depot, from terrible injuries received by being run over by a freight train in front of the depot. He was a victim of a tramp's assault, and the murderer escaped and is still at large, with not much prospect of being apprehended.

The details of the terrible and dastardly crime are very meager as only two eye witnesses are known and the statement of the dying man was somewhat inarticulate. It seems that about 7:45 o'clock the officer, who was standing on the depot platform, saw three tramps board the second section of freight train No. 62, bound east. They got in between two cars to ride on the bumpers as the train started, and as the cars they were between came along the officer boarded them and swinging in where the tramps were, ordered them to jump off. They refused, and the officer grasped on by the coat collar with the intention of pulling him off onto the platform. At the same moment one of the tramps kicked the officer in the face with great force, and the latter had to release his hold of the fellow and use both hands to keep from falling to the track. Then one of the tramps dealt the officer a blow with his fist and also pushed him, forcing him to release his hold and drop between the cars onto the track.

Six cars passed over the officer's body, across the hips, disemboweling him.

Two men standing on the platform who had witnessed most all of the affair called assistance. Capt. Raesli heard of the accident almost immediately and was soon beside the unfortunate man. A physician was summoned, but when he arrived the end was very near and he could do nothing. When Capt. Raesli arrived Officer Meissner, fast sinking away, endeavored as best his condition would allow to tell his superior the circumstances. It was hard work for him to talk and his words were hardly intelligible. Yet enough was gleaned which, with what was seen by the two men mentioned, gives the facts stated. The patrol wagon was summoned and the maimed body tenderly laid on a mattress and placed in the wagon. He was unconscious when this was done and died before reaching his home, 1037 White street, which he had left so short a time before in the best of health and spirits, with a loving wife bidding him goodbye and happy children kissing him good night. He was about forty-eight years of age and leaves a widow and nine children, eight daughters and one son, the latter, Otto, being in the employ of Geo. Salot. He was a member of Schiller Lodge, I. O. O. F.; Germania Lodge, A. O. U. W.; and Dubuque Camp, M. W. A. He was employed at Richardson's shoe factory for many years and last June was appointed a police officer by Mayor Duffy. He was an efficient officer and highly esteemed by all the members of the force.

SEARCH FOR THE MURDERERS.

As soon as the police learned of the particulars and could obtain a description of the men wanted work for their capture began at once. Telegrams were sent to stations between this city and Freeport, Ill., giving a good description of two of the men. They are described as follows:

One—Height, 5 feet 6 or 8 inches; dark complexion, dark chin whiskers and mustache, side of face covered with about two week' growth of beard; weight, about 160 pounds; wore dark clothes, black slouch hat and carried a bundle.

One—Aged about 35 years; height 5 feet ten inches; weight, about 200 pounds; stout build, light hair, sandy mustache, small piercing eyes, work dark gray clothes and white felt hat.

The third man's description was imperfect, but he had a rubber coat.

The men were not observed to get off the train, as it passed the depot and moved out to the Y junction, and it was thought that they might have jumped off at East Dubuque. It was reported that an Illinois Central conductor had trouble with three tramps at the junction shortly after the affair, and put them off his train. It was also reported that three men answering the descriptions of those wanted were seen in East Dubuque about 8:30 o'clock. Marshal Morgan and Capts. Murphy and Raesli went over to East Dubuque and thoroughly searched every nook and corner of the railroad yards there, but they had their trouble for their pains, and returned empty-handed.

SUSPECTS ARRESTED AT FREEPORT.

When Marshal Morgan returned from East Dubuque a telegram awaited him from the chief of police of that city who said he had arrested three men answering the description sent and asking what disposition to make of them. Marshal Morgan answered to hold them and find out if they would return without requisition papers. If they will do so they will be brought here this morning. The police say that the right men can be identified when captured, and it is to be hoped the guilty ones will soon be in the toils, if those at Freeport should prove to be not the ones wanted.

THE INQUEST.

Coroner McDonald was notified of the affair, and after empanelling a jury postponed the inquest until today, when the facts will be learned if possible in regard to the sad event.