

DID MURDERERS PLAN CREMATION?

Detectives Believe That They
Intended to Burn Body of
Little Mary Phagan in the
Furnace of Factory.

Did the murderers of Mary Phagan lower her body into the darkness of the pencil factory basement with the intention of cremating the corpse in the furnace of that plant?

Such is the belief of detectives. The dead girl was discovered only a few feet from the furnace. Her body had been dragged first to the fire box, circled around its base, then abandoned in the desolate recess in which it was found.

Investigation revealed that the fire-box was in condition to be lighted. It was littered with shavings and paper, and, to all appearances, in readiness for a new fire. The door was open. The aperture was hardly wide enough to admit a body the size of the victim's.

It is the detective's theory that the slayers were frightened from their original plans. The prized staple from the rear door indicated a hurried exit. Detective John Black told a Constitution reporter Monday of his belief:

"When the murderers swung the body through the trap door, they dragged it through the sawdust to the door of the furnace. The opening, probably, was not wide enough to admit a corpse of her size.

"Either that, or the men became frightened. If such were the case, they hastily dragged the dead girl to the hidden corner and deserted her. They either feared discovery, or were overwhelmed with fear that was inspired by the atrocity of their own crime.

"If it was intended to cremate the body, it was proposed by some one well acquainted with the building and basement. The negro nightwatchman often fired the furnace. He knew the basement from the elevator shaft up front to the rear entrance. He carried the detectives through every nook and cranny."

If the girl's body had been cremated the crime probably never would have been discovered. Mary Phagan would have vanished.