

Unsolved Slayings Climbing in Iowa

By Pat Curran

DES MOINES (AP)—The stabbed body of a Guthrie Center woman is found stuffed in the trunk of her car...

A high school girl disappears after an Easter shopping trip and is found knifed to death nearly three days later...

A middle-aged woman is found beaten to death in a house where a small fire is starting to burn...

A town marshal is gunned down as he interrupts two safecrackers inside a packing plant...

The remains of a teen-age girl are found near a lover's lane more than two months after she vanishes...

These are among Iowa's unsolved murders which have defied the investigative efforts of experts.

No Apparent Connection

There is no statute of limitations on murder.

"We never close a murder case until it has been solved," said T. A. Thompson, chief of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

Police have said there is no apparent connection between the slayings of a woman and a teenaged girl, both found stabbed to death in Des Moines since April 15.

The body of Mrs. Lillian Randolph, 57, of Guthrie Center, was discovered May 11 crammed into the trunk of her car, which was parked at the Des Moines Municipal airport.

Stabbed 12 Times

The slayer of Mrs. Randolph, estranged wife of a wealthy poultry and egg processor, stabbed her 12 times in the chest with a small pocket knife. Police have described the killing as the work of a professional, and have sought information on a mysterious white Cadillac seen near Mrs. Randolph's plush home the day she disappeared.

Police have questioned more than 850 persons, some of them five or six times, since the body of Janice Snow, 17, was found in a thicket in southeast Des Moines April 15.

Janice, a popular high school senior, vanished after a shopping excursion with two girl friends. When discovered nearly three days



WHO WERE THEIR KILLERS?—That question remains unanswered as more years go by. Marlene Padfield, 17, of Lisbon, left, was found dead in May of 1959. Romona Cox, 24, of Des Moines was killed in her near downtown apartment in April of 1962. Their killers were never found.

later, she was dead of 17 stab wounds. Her books, shoes and purse have never been found.

Slain by Transient?

Police believe she may have been slain by someone passing through Des Moines. Neither Mrs. Randolph nor the Snow girl had been raped.

These two killings came just about three years after the body of Ramona Cox, 26, a pretty, party-loving secretary, was found in her apartment in Des Moines. Her throat had been cut with a linoleum knife.

Neighbors heard screams, and saw a man jump from her window and run down an alley. So far, the alley has been a dead end for police.

Mrs. Katherine DeKora, 48, died at a Sioux City hospital last Dec. 14 after a savage beating the night before. She had attended a drinking party, and later returned to the house for help.

Police and firemen discovered Mrs. DeKora on a cot inside the house when they answered a fire alarm. Police said someone started a kerosene stove to keep her warm, but it exploded and started a small fire.

Padfield Case

Still unsolved is the case of pretty Marlene Padfield, 17, of Lisbon, whose skeletal remains were found April 29, 1959, near a lover's lane southeast of Cedar Rapids. The young man who was

the last known person to see her alive told authorities he was driving Marlene home from a Cedar Rapids tavern the morning of the previous Feb. 19 when she became

angry, and got out of his car between Cedar Rapids and Marion.

How she met death has never been determined. William L. Meadows, 36,

marshal at Plainfield, was shot down as he investigated an attempted safe burglary Jan. 23, 1961, at the Hartman Packing plant there. The two men robbing the safe got no money, but escaped in a burst of gunfire.

counted receipts at the Waterloo filling station where he worked. His killer took \$179 in cash.

The county medical examiner never officially called the death of Mrs. Hilda Fletcher, 53, of Sioux City a murder, but she is listed as a murder victim on police records.

Her body was found beneath a blood soaked bed in her home Dec. 15, 1958. She died of a brain hemorrhage, but there were abrasions and contusions over much of her body.

Shot in Head

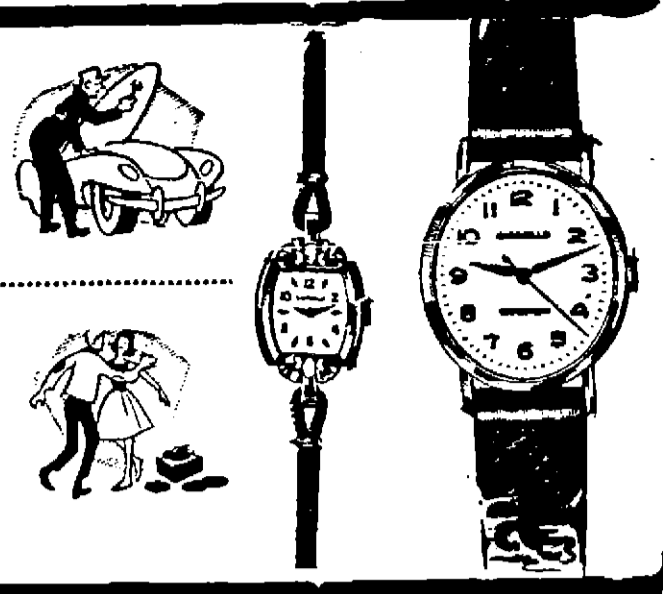
Mrs. Rose Grandenette, 33, was shot in the head Sept. 14, 1959, as she stood in the doorway of her Des Moines home. Her husband told police the shot was fired by one of three gunmen who met him as he returned home from work.

Iowa's most famous unsolved murders are the Vil-lisca ax murders of 1912, in which a family of six and two neighbor children staying with them were brutally

backed to death while they slept.

Many persons have confessed to the still unsolved slayings, but none of the professions has ever been verified. Chuck full of values. Gazette want ads.

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