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Seven Cents

McLimans Confesses Calkins Killing



Slain Police Chief

O'Neill's beloved Police Chief Chet Calkins, 51, veteran peace officer, was slain in the early hours on March 7, 1952, by an assailant whose identity remained unknown for one year, three months and 17 days.

Killer of Calkins An Adopted Boy

Joseph Emmett McLimans was born in a Hot Springs, S.D., hospital and when only 24-hours-old was taken from the hospital by his foster mother, Mrs. Lillian McLimans, 713 South Third street, Norfolk.

Authorities following the February 16 break-in at Norfolk, was kept in the Madison county jail at Madison and later removed to the Norfolk state hospital "for observation."

Jokingly Accused at Bonesteel

Joseph McLimans had a habit of sleeping in the caboose of his train at Bonesteel and always parked his car near the depot, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Meyers, Bonesteel depot agent and his wife, live in an apartment on the second floor of the depot and the McLimans vehicle invariably is parked in easy view of the Meyers'.

High Gale Snaps Poles; Little Rain

Dark clouds brooding over the O'Neill region — and most of north-Nebraska — Tuesday sent hundreds of folks to their subterranean storm shelters.

Atkinson Blackedout; Frightened Citizens Scurry for Shelter

Although the wind mounted to more than 60-miles-per-hour, the turbulence in the sky did not inflict much damage. Most residents are tornado-conscious because of the punishment dealt several dozen midwestern communities in recent weeks.

Consumers Public Power reported general storm conditions from Valentine to Ponca.

Several homes in O'Neill reported local power service interruptions because of tree branches blown down.

Northwestern Bell Telephone company fared better than the power grid.

No phone line trouble was reported at the O'Neill office.

Sobotka . . . memento from Arcadia tornado 30 miles away.

INMAN—While glowing last week in a cornfield on land two miles west of Inman, Lewis W Sobotka, veteran farmer, glanced down and saw an innocent-looking piece of paper. Just beginning to acquire a greenish fade, the little piece of paper bore an interesting story.

"I could tell by the looks of it the paper hadn't been there very long," explained Mr. Sobotka. He picked it up, investigated and found it was a cancelled check issued to Waterbury's store at Arcadia and signed by Ruth G. Lutz. The amount of the check was \$11.53.

Mr. Sobotka reasoned the check on the Arcadia State bank must have been picked up by the infamous tornado that killed 11 people in that community on Sunday, June 7.

He promptly contacted the Arcadia bank and asked if the twister could be blamed. The bank responded: "We would be pleased if you would send us the check . . . and we can see that the right party gets the check. We are sure that Ruth G. Lutz would like to have the check if it has been paid to Waterbury's."

"We think this check has been carried by the disastrous tornado that hit about three miles east of Arcadia. It was so damaging and didn't leave a thing that was in its path. The lives that were lost was the saddest part."

Mr. Sobotka had made an inquiry through a nephew concerning the Lutz family and he was informed the Lutzes had lost heavily in the storm. This prompted him to write the bank.

Joseph Emmett McLimans, 33, orally confessed Wednesday afternoon to the sadistic slaying of O'Neill's Police Chief Chet Calkins. The chief was killed in the early morning hours of March 7, 1952, when his body was riddled with five bullets at point-blank range.

McLimans is being held in Holt county jail after preliminary hearing in which he made his confession in the presence of County Sheriff Leo Tomjack, County Attorney William W. Griffin, Capt. H. D. Smith of the Nebraska safety patrol, and others. He admitted his guilt and said, "I killed Chet Calkins."

Larceny was McLimans' undoing. He was arrested in Norfolk following a February 16, 1953, robbery of a hardware store. Holt county authorities learned he was driving a 1948 model green Kaiser sedan. Madison authorities were asked to hold him and from that point the investigation began to unfold. Not until his foster mother, Mrs. Lillian McLimans of Norfolk, arrived Wednesday and urged him to "tell all" was the confession gained.

McLimans' verbal confession substantiated most of the evidence which had been baffling the investigators since that fateful morning when fresh snow covered the tracks and Walt Calkins, brother of Chet, found the chief's body slumped against the steering wheel of the cruiser car.

A railroad brakeman with residence at Long Pine, McLimans said he had been doing a day's work on the Bonesteel to Winner branch of the Chicago & North Western railroad and had pulled into Bonesteel from Winner for the night. He drove to Spencer "looking for a poker game." He spent an hour or two, he recounts, drinking beer in several Spencer taverns.

Still itching for a poker game—he frankly admits he likes to gamble—McLimans drove on south to O'Neill. He visited at least three O'Neill beer taverns, as he remembers.

Emerging from a tavern on South Fourth street, he went across the street to get into his car. Another vehicle had parked in such a manner he couldn't back out immediately. He peered inside, saw the blue "D.D." suitcase, transferred it to his own car and proceeded to free his own vehicle. McLimans told how he drove out to the edge of O'Neill, took some money out of the suitcase, removed the clothes. He put the suitcase back in his car and returned to town and then he dumped the clothes on the floor of the back seat of the car from which the case was stolen.

The theft had been reported to O'Neill police shortly after it happened by Delores Dobrovolny, a telephone operator.

About 1 a.m., Chief Calkins turned west on Everett street, near the corner of Fourth and Everett (Dr. L. A. Carter's office corner), Calkins suspiciously McLimans' activities. The chief queried, "What are you doing?"

"Drinking a can of beer," replied the voice in the dark. McLimans had emerged from one of the taverns with two six-packs.

"Let me look in the trunk of your car," Calkins ordered. McLimans said he reluctantly opened the trunk.

It was at this point at least four witnesses said they saw Calkins "shaking down" a blue or green Kaiser, a late model, or some similar car. Those witnesses were Mrs. Mary Fleming of O'Neill and three Ewing youths—Richard Spittler, LeRoy Boies and Bill Sisson.

McLimans said Calkins readily spotted the "D.D." case and ordered him to get into the cruiser car and accompany him.

Calkins got into the cruiser car first, according to the testimony, and McLimans went around the car and started to get into the front seat alongside Calkins. It was at that point he pulled his .32-caliber revolver and emptied it into Calkins' right side. The first bullet is believed to have killed the chief instantly.

McLimans, who professed to be "hazy about the details" because he had had too many beers, got into his own car and drove west five blocks on Everett street.

"I got to wondering if anyone was going to find the car," he said. He left his car parked in the residential district and walked east down an alley, coming to the rear of the Shelhamer implement store. He explained, "From there I could see the police car. I stood and watched the car for 'quite awhile.' Still nobody came and investigated."

Finally he decided to break into the implement store. He gained entrance into the building forcibly by breaking a glass in the rear door, scooped up \$10 or \$15 change from the cash register, and emerged from the building. He said he could still see the cruiser car and there was no activity.

He then walked to the scene of the slaying and peered inside the car to make certain that Calkins was dead. He then returned to his own car and drove out of town. He continued on to Bonesteel that night and spent the night in the caboose—his normal sleeping place.

McLimans, who was a gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress during World War II, avoided O'Neill after that and started a mustache. Occasionally he'd go through O'Neill with trainmen but wouldn't circulate.

On the side he indulged in plenty of gambling and, apparently, thievery. Ostensibly, Holt county authorities brought him here in connection with the breaking and entering of the Galven Motor company office in Atkinson several months ago, and now he has admitted doing the Galven job.

McLimans is a sharp-featured fellow with a pointed nose. He weighs 140 pounds, stands about 5 feet 6 or 7 inches, and normally would be considered on the light complexioned side. But the burdens of the Calkins slaying and the larceny problems were weighing heavily and aging him fast.

The bout with the Norfolk police on February 16, 1953, cost him his railroad job. He was in line to become a conductor but his nocturnal maraudings interfered with his rail career.

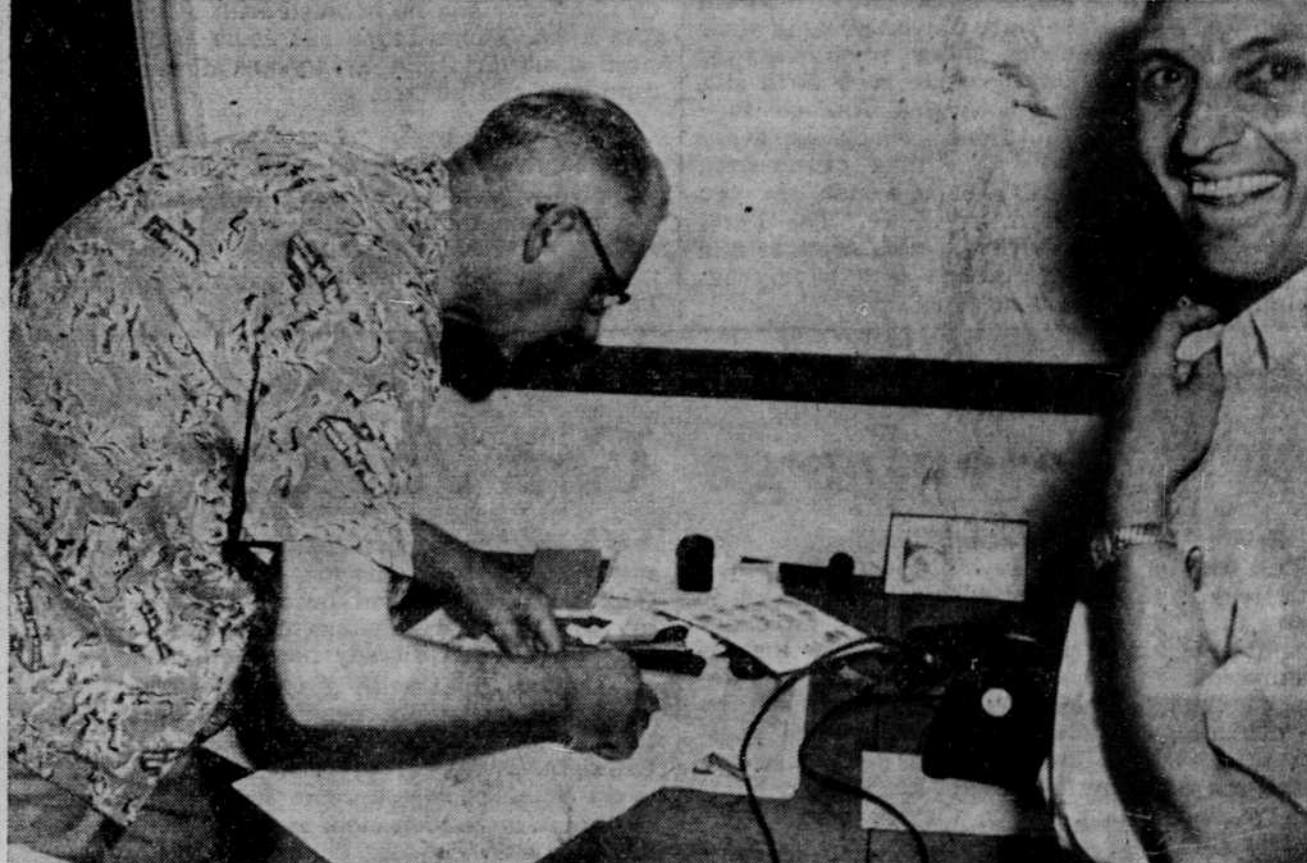


The Confessed Slayer

These are Nebraska safety patrol and police photos of Joseph Emmett McLimans, 33, the confessed slayer of O'Neill's Police Chief Chet Calkins. After the killing he raised a brown, scraggly mustache. "I had been drinking too many beers . . . it's all hazy," was about the only comment he offered. McLimans is not the talkative type.



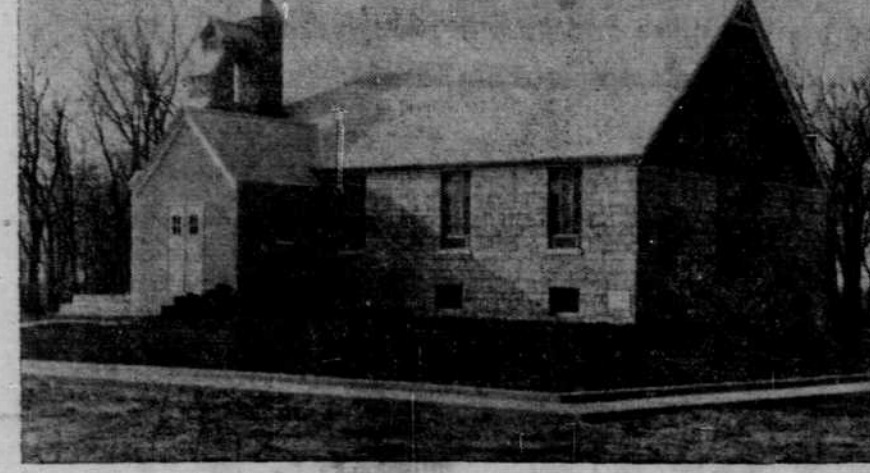
The slayer's foster mother, Mrs. Lillian McLimans, tearfully explains to Holt County Attorney William Griffin: "The man in the cell is not the boy I raised." Mrs. McLimans, who lives in Norfolk, thanked Holt authorities for being considerate. "I adopted Joe when he was 24-hours-old. I had my hands full after my husband died in 1932 . . . I was proud of him in the air force . . . he was in a horrible German prison camp 15 months.—The Frontier Photo.



Holt Sheriff Leo Tomjack (right) wore a wide grin after the confession suspense was over. Capt. H. D. Smith, chief of the criminal investigation bureau of the Nebraska safety patrol, assembles McLimans' file after the preliminary hearing. The slayer will face second degree murder charges.—The Frontier Photo.

Under Observation in Hospital

The confessed slayer of Chet Calkins, having been arrested by



Bethany Dedication June 28

Dedication services of the Bethany Presbyterian church near Ewing will be held on Sunday, June 28. Services for the day will include Sunday-school at 10 a.m., and morning worship at 11 o'clock. Following the morning services, everyone is invited to share in a basket dinner. The afternoon service will begin at 2 o'clock. Visiting ministers will include Rev. Ralph Gerber, pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Lexington, formerly of O'Neill. He will bring the morning message. Rev. George S. Bancroft of Omaha, Nebraska synod executive, will preach the afternoon sermon. Rev. A. P. Kidwell, pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Pender, and Rev. Oliver Proett, D.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian church at Wayne, will also be present.

Vocal, Home Ec Teachers Contracted

Two O'Neill high school teaching vacancies have been filled, it was announced this week by Board of Education Secretary Ira H. Moss.

Mrs. Patricia B. French of Page has been signed to teach vocal music, and Miss Mildred McNutt has been hired to teach home economics during the 1953-'54 term.

The latter is attending summer school at Avoca, Wisc.

W. S. Devall to Sell Farm, Personal Property

W. S. Devall, farmer residing in the Midway community north of O'Neill, will offer his 80-acre farm and personal property at public auction on Tuesday, July 7, starting at noon.

Thorin & Bowker real estate agency is handling the land sale, and it is pointed out the improved farm is one of the best-producing 80 - acre tracts in Holt county.

Mr. Devall's wife died three weeks ago. (For details on real estate and personal property, turn to advertisement on page 4.)



Sergeant McLimans . . . Flying Fortress gunner, who was in England only a month when he became missing in action over Germany.

Promoted at Goodfellow—

Arlean Miles, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Miles, has been promoted to airman second-class and Donald Sausser has been upped to staff sergeant at Goodfellow air force base, San Angelo, Tex.

Venetian blinds, prompt delivery, made to measure, metal or wood, all colors.—J. M. McDonald's.

8 O'Neill Men to Be Inducted

Thirteen Holt county selective service registrants will report today (Thursday) for induction in the military service, according to Mrs. W. H. Harty, chief clerk of the draft board. Five of the group are "volunteers," Mrs. Harty explained.

Being drafted are: Allen H. Martin, Paul W. Moseman, jr., Patrick E. Hickey, Francis B. Flood, Donald E. Beckwith, John E. Wallen and Theodore P. Lindberg, all of O'Neill, and John D. Langan of Spencer.

Volunteers are: Donald D. Kloppenberg of Emmet; Robert R. Pruden, Melvin L. Pruden and Marvin D. Carl, all of Ewing, and John Joe Uhl of O'Neill.

This is the largest group of "volunteers" in a single group since the outbreak of the Korean war, Mrs. Harty explained. Holt county selective service records are credited when volunteers enter the service through the draft organization.

Frontier for printing!