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FUNERAL 'GRAB' TACTICS LAID TO CORONER

'Rush' Embalming System
Arouses Complaints
Against Vehling.

OWN BUSINESS THRIVES

Bodies Hurried to Morgue
of Official, Extra Fee
Charged Relatives.

BY DICK MILLER

The body was sent to Coroner Fred W. Vehling's own undertaking establishment.

This statement of fact, oft-repeated in The Times, has aroused the wrath of Coroner Vehling. It also has resulted in an investigation of public records that reveals Vehling has sent sixteen bodies from the scenes of accidents and tragedies to his establishment at 722 Virginia avenue in the city ambulance.

In many other cases, Vehling's undertaking equipment has been moved from his south side address to near the county line south of Indianapolis and bodies brought turned to the Vehling establishment.

Some instances of removal of bodies from the scenes and also from the city hospital have brought complaints from persons who have had bodies of relatives involved in transactions with Vehling.

FORCED TO PAY FEES

In at least one case, it was revealed, the body was taken from the death scene and embalmed before members of the family and friends were able to get to Vehling's place.

Consequently, they had to pay \$25 for the service, under threat of litigation if they refused, they charge.

Since Vehling took office, Jan. 1, he has handled 265 death cases. Of the 108 of these that went to city hospital, Vehling obtained the bodies of fifteen victims from the institution.

Because Vehling's own records—ostensibly public—are incomplete, (not having been touched since March 1, an investigation Tuesday showed), it is impossible to give an accurate and up-to-date account of the disposal of the other 157 bodies. Vehling admitted his records were "behind."

Denies Students Embalm Bodies

If his records were in proper shape, it would be possible for The Times to state the number of bodies that have been sent to his establishment from other Indianapolis hospitals and homes.

The coroner also was presented with the charge that much of the embalming on bodies was done by students of the Indianapolis School of Embalming, who are serving internships at his establishment. This, he denied, declaring that only experienced embalmers did the work.

The practice of rushing bodies to his morgue and removing them from the city hospital, which, outifted with the latest type of morgue equipment, is not maintained by county officials and has not been the practice of former coroners, unless such action was ordered by relatives or friends of victims, it was learned.

Vehling said he removed bodies to his morgue after preliminary investigations, so that relatives, when they do find where the body was, would find it in good condition. He denied employees of his establishment urged patients to permit the coroner to carry out the embalmed and burial, although several instances of this and the \$25 charge for embalming were based in The Times inquiry.

UNDERTAKER GIVES VERSION

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HEROINE OF FAMOUS HOOSIER NOVEL DIES

Mrs. Maggie Johnson, 51, Was "Alice of Old Vincennes."

VINCENNES, Ind., April 9.—Alice of Old Vincennes is dead.

Alice—Mrs. Maggie Johnson—died after several months illness here. She was 51 and a direct descendant of Colonel Francis Vigo, one of the pioneers of northwestern territory. She was the heroine in the famous novel of early Indiana life written around Vincennes by Maurice Thompson, Hoosier author.

Father of Five Killed

KOKOMO, Ind., April 9.—Charles Rogers, 45, employed by the Kokomo Waste Material Company, was killed when a fragment of metal struck him as he was working on a cutting machine. He leaves a widow and five children.

Vehling recently suggested that one of his heirs be used to obtain bodies outside the city limits, when county and city officials were discussing the plan to assess the county \$4 each time it was necessary for a city hospital ambulance to go outside the city limits.

Warned by Snider

George Snider, county commissioner, said he was warned Vehling against charging more than \$4 and also stated he believed Vehling eventually would be criticised for his activities.

According to Snider, Vehling said that if he were given the burial privileges, he would add the \$4 fee to the funeral bill. If relatives insisted on having the burial conducted by another undertaker, Vehling said he would bill that undertaker for the fee.

Auto Kills Pedestrian

GARY, Ind., April 9.—Luther Harkrider, 22, Calumet City, Ill., died of injuries suffered when struck by a hit-and-run motorist. He was found unconscious in a street here by police, who are seeking the driver.

N. Y. Street Paving Fight Is in Court

Protest against widening and paving of East New York street from Gale street to Emerson avenue today was carried into court with the filing of an appeal bond in superior court five by attorneys for remonstrators.

At the same time, City Clerk Henry O. Goett filed a copy of the project together with a copy of the remonstrance filed with the board which the board overruled Monday.

The remonstrance, Attorney Merle N. A. Walker said, represented 40 per cent of the abutting property owners.

Estimated cost of the project, which is part of proposed widening and improving of the street to provide a through artery from the business section to Irvington, is \$124,760, of which the city would pay 75 per cent and abutting property owners 25 per cent.

FREE BOYS OF DEATH BLAME

Dismiss Charges Against Parents in Shooting.

Charges will be dismissed against parents and six boys involved in the fatal shooting of William Ruthart, 32, of 5006 College avenue, a huckster, who was killed under the Delaware street bridge at Fall creek a week ago.

Prosecutor Herbert Wilson made this announcement today following an investigation.

Wilson declared he could find no violation of the state law in the case and pronounced the shooting as "excusable homicide."

"Investigation of reports that merchants in the city were selling ammunition to minors has revealed no violations," Wilson said.

HELD AS STRANGLER

Racketeer Is Charged With Vivian Gordon Killing.

NEW YORK, April 9.—A Broadway racketeer was booked by police today as the alleged slayer of red-haired Vivian Gordon.

Harry Stein, 32, whom the authorities know as a dope peddler and petty thief, was accused and police said they had evidence to show he strangled the adventuress to rob her of a fur coat, a ring and a wrist watch.

With him, they held three other men as material witnesses.

Stein, they said, already had served a prison term for strangling a woman, and they claimed to have evidence that he had in his possession, after the mysterious killing articles of the slain woman.

LOVE IS DEFINED BY THREE ARTIST JUDGES

Its "Season Pass on Shuttle Between Heaven, Hell," They Decide.

By United Press

NEW YORK, April 9.—Three distinguished artists, called upon to select from a list of several hundred, a fitting definition for the word "love," paced the floor of a Manhattan studio Wednesday night at length, after much hemming and hawing, announced today they had hit upon a winner. It was:

"Love—A season pass on the shuttle between heaven and hell."

The winning definition was submitted by Don Dickerman, artist and night club owner.

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EX-PRISONER DECLARES HE 'BOUGHT' JOB

Printing and Tailor Shop Heads at Pendleton Are Accused.

BOTH DENY CHARGES

Suits of Incoming Convicts 'Peddled,' Assertion of Former Inmate.

BY DANIEL M. KIDNEY
Times Staff Correspondent

PENDLETON, Ind., April 9.—Bribery charges, brought by a former prisoner, were denied flatly in writing today by two veteran officers of the Indiana state reformatory.

Having read the charges to them on Wednesday, Superintendent A. F. Miles of the institution ordered them to give their answer in writing to him "within twenty-four hours."

They presented the denials at noon today, Miles said. Both are highly incensed over the allegation, he declared.

The charges have been made by Walter Arnold, former Ft. Wayne police officer, discharged from the reformatory July 6, 1928.

They involve several officers who no longer are at the institution and two who still are in service here.

The latter are L. A. Allen, who has a twenty-five-year service record with the Indiana penal institution, and Fred Phelps, superintendent of the reformatory print shop for the last six years.

He also alleges Allen was in a frame-up to sell prisoners' clothes and received commissions on sales of shoes to prisoners.

He accuses Phelps of intercepting a smuggled letter containing two \$10 bills and alleged Phelps kept one and spent the other for him for contraband goods.

The officers' explanations and the Arnold charges will be taken before the prison trustees, meeting Friday, Miles explained.

Arnold made his charges public in a recent issue of the Indiana Journal of the Hoosier Observer, a Ft. Wayne publication. They appear under the heading "Politics at Pendleton," and the Arnold story is the second of a series.

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