

An officer's murder rocked the town

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Editor's note: this week, Chelmsford residents were shocked with the news that a 37-year-old North Chelmsford man allegedly confessed to brutally beating and strangling his 29-year-old wife in their Sherman Street home.

But, it is not the first time such a heinous act has touched the town. Just six years ago, two psychiatric professionals were gunned down by a former patient in Village Square. And, 60 years ago this summer, Constable Donald F. Adams became the only Chelmsford officer ever slain in the line of duty.

Sixty years ago, the citizens of Chelmsford were saddened by the murder of their constable and police officer while in the performance of his duty.

Constable Donald F. Adams was mortally wounded as he attempted to place a former Lowell man under arrest on July 19, 1927.

A.G. Saab admitted to Lowell police that he had planned to kill A.G. Pollard, wealthy banker and owner of the A.G. Pollard department store in Lowell, when he visited him at his summer home at 62 Bartlett Street, Chelmsford.

Saab had ridden to Chelmsford on the street car, then walked to the Pollard residence. Previously he had written threatening letters to Mr. Pollard, e.g. "My glass horoscope tells me you owe me \$50,000. I want you to pay this. (signed) Aisard G. Saab." For that reason Mr. Pollard was suspicious when confronted by the stranger.

The way it was

By George A. Parkhurst



The following conversation took place:

"You're Mr. Pollard?"

"Yes," said Mr. Pollard.

"You own a department store on Merrimack Street?"

"Yes."

"Have you any money?"

"That's my business," replied Mr. Pollard.

"Who are you I never saw you before in my life."

"That's my business," said the stranger.

"What are you saying things about me for?"

"I never said anything about you. I never saw you before in my life."

Mr. Pollard then called to two men who worked for him. His chauffeur faked a pistol in his pocket aimed at Saab, who became alarmed and, after muttering a few words, hurried to the Center to get the street car back to Lowell.

Mr. Pollard, after trying unsuccessfully to contact Officer Adams, called the Lowell police, who agreed to meet the car at Lincoln Square, and found someone who reached Adams by phone.

The streetcar stopped at the railroad cross-

ing on Chelmsford Street and the motorman, Joseph J. Powers, went to the crossing tender and got a glass of water. When he returned to the car, Officer Adams arrived on his motorcycle. He asked Saab to step out but he refused, whereupon Adams entered the car followed by Powers.

Saab pulled a revolver from his pocket and fired several shots point blank at the officer, two of which hit him in the chest. A struggle ensued in which a passenger, Harold H. Davis, restrained the murderer.

Adams had drawn his club but was too weak to use it, so Powers grabbed his iron switch stick and hit Saab over the head several times before he could subdue him. Even after being shot, Officer Adams continued to struggle with his assailant.

During the struggle an off-duty Lowell policeman drove by with his family, stopped, and placed the murderer under arrest and took him to the Lowell police station where he was questioned and booked.

A passing motorist took Officer Adams to St. John's Hospital in Lowell where he died of his wounds shortly after arriving at the hospital.

Saab was found to be insane and was sentenced to a state mental hospital.

George Adams Parkhurst is a Chelmsford historian whose family has lived in town since 1654.