

BOY'S SKELETON IS IDENTIFIED

YOUTH DIED IN AIR SHAFT OF
MUNCIE SCHOOL EIGHT
YEARS AGO.

MUNCIE, Ind., July 10.—The skeleton of a youth found in an abandoned air shaft of Central high school was identified almost conclusively today as that of Perlie Guelshy Hogg, 16, who went to school on the morning of December 16, 1922, and never again was seen.

Authorities said the boy either had fallen into the shaft from the second or third floor or had been killed and his body hidden there to be undiscovered for more than eight years.

Charles Cooper, an uncle with whom Perlie lived, looked at evidence found in the bottom of the dark shaft and said he was convinced the victim was his nephew. He said he recognized a pair of heavy work shoes and a jackknife found near the skeleton as having belonged to the youth.

"Perlie was carefree and happy when he started out to school that morning," Cooper said. "He was thinking of Christmas vacation only a few days away and the good times he could have hunting.

"He didn't have any enemies that I knew of, and I don't believe anybody could have killed him. It must have been an accident.

"I worried for weeks about his disappearance but finally became convinced he had run away, despite the fact that he seemed to be happy."

Some of the investigators, including an assistant coroner, believed, however, that the boy might have been slain.

Four years ago school authorities sealed up all entrances of the air shaft, which extends upward about 75 feet from the basement. It was closed because boys were found to have used it as a place to smoke forbidden cigarettes.

"I have the opinion that the boy was killed," Deputy Coroner Henry Bilber said today. "The only other explanation is that he may have fallen while standing on a ledge on the second or third floors and smoking.

"Beside the body was found a pocket knife, indicating the possibility that he may have been stabbed to death. In addition, the victim's shoes had been removed and were found some distance from the body.

The boy's skull was crushed as if from a fall or heavy blow but physicians said it was possible he had regained consciousness after the injury was received.

Perhaps, it was said, the youth awoke in the dark, cool shaft during a time of day when the school building was empty. His calls for help would be unheard and he could have spent Saturday and Sunday, or a longer period during vacation time, shouting for help.

The pocket knife he may have used in an attempt to make an opening in the walls of the shaft. He might have removed his shoes in an attempt to climb out.

In any event, he must have either lost consciousness from his injuries or became weak from lack of food and water before attention was attracted.

1922 Dec mine shaft fall victim recovered
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