

Was Victim of Murder Lured Off on Joy Ride Before She Met Death?

Evidence obtained by Detectives Black and Rosser Monday afternoon has led the detective department to suspect that little Mary Phagan was lured away by her murderer Saturday afternoon by the pleasures of a joy ride, during which she was drugged or made drunk with whisky.

This new aspect of the case came from R. B. Pyron, telegraph operator at the signal tower on the Central of Georgia railroad at the Whitehall street crossing.

Pyron told the detectives Monday afternoon that about 10 o'clock Saturday night he was standing at the entrance to the signal tower when an automobile came from the direction of West End and stopped on Whitehall street just after it had crossed the railroad.

Sobbing and Pleading.

In the rear seat he saw a young girl, answering the description of Mary Phagan. She was sobbing and pleading while a man sitting beside her and another man standing on the running board were talking to her earnestly and apparently trying to quiet her. A third man was at the steering wheel.

"I see many machines pass here, of course," said Pyron, "and never pay any attention to them. But the fact

that a young girl was alone in an automobile with three men, and was crying and apparently in trouble, struck me as being so unusual that when the machine stopped I started nearer to it to investigate. But as soon as the occupants saw me they started the machine again, and disappeared in the direction of the city.

"I had thought about it several times since, but not seriously until I read in the papers of the murder of Mary Phagan, whose description tallies with that of the girl I saw."

Mr. Pyron stated that he did not believe he would be able to identify any of the occupants of the car should he see them again.

Man on the Running Board.

The only description of any of the occupants he could give was that of the man on the running board, who, he declared, was of rather slender build and medium stature, wearing a dark suit and a low-crowned straw hat.

The car, he said, was apparently a five-passenger touring car and was black in color.

The detectives late Monday night had been unable to identify the car or any of its occupants.

Mr. Pyron said that the girl was hysterical and appeared to be either drunk or drugged.