

THE CAMPBELL MUSEUMS PRESENT:
THE MCGLINCY MASSACRE:
A WALKING TOUR OF
OAK HILL CEMETERY



WARNING:

**THERE ARE GRAPHIC IMAGES AND
MATURE SUBJECT MATTER
THROUGHOUT THE TOUR.**

VIEWER DISCRETION IS ADVISED.

OUR TOUR TAKES PLACE IN
OAK HILL MEMORIAL PARK

LOCATED AT:

300 CURTNER AVE.

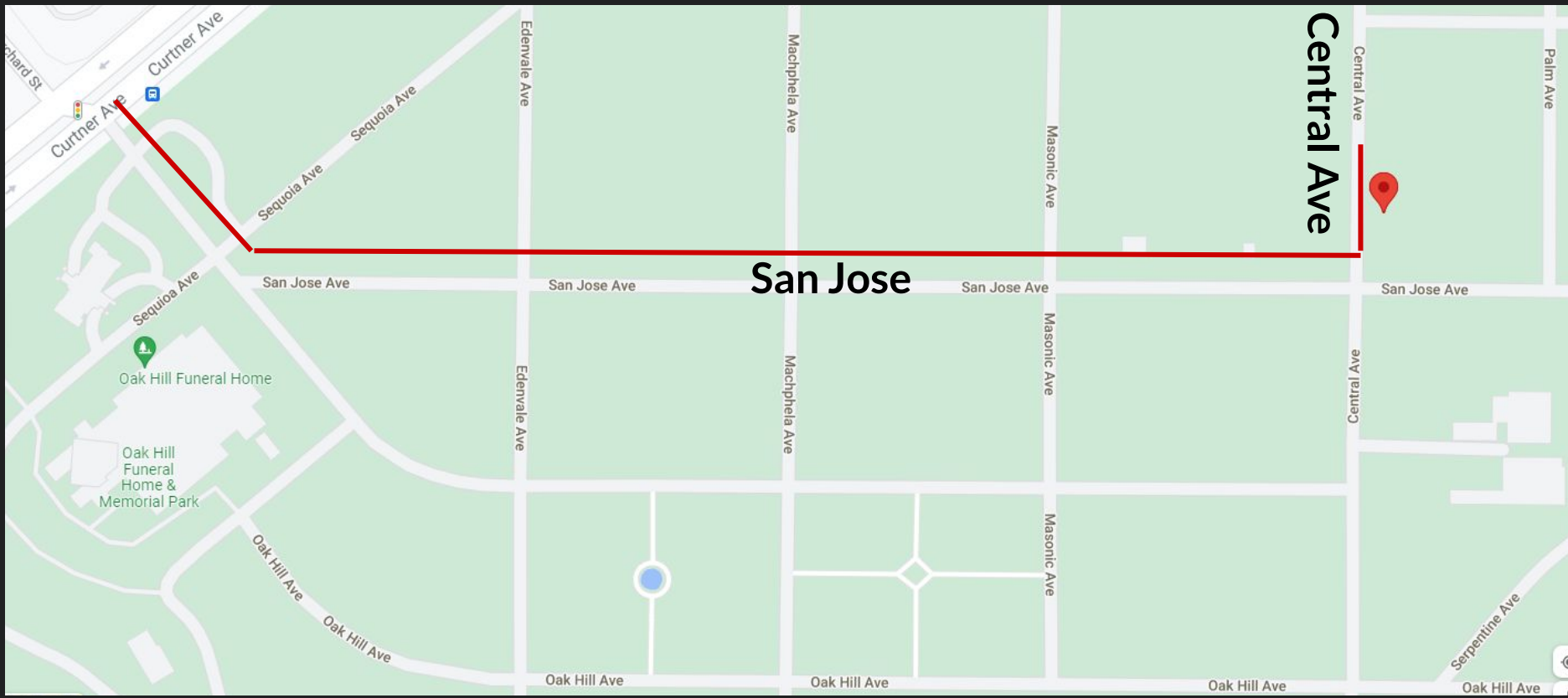
SAN JOSE, CA 95125

This is an active cemetery, so please
be respectful of those around you.

ONCE YOU ARE IN THE CEMETERY, HEAD DOWN SAN JOSE AVE AND MAKE A LEFT AT CENTRAL AVE. PARK HERE. AT THIS CORNER YOU WILL FIND THE GRAVES OF THE MCGLINCY FAMILY & ROBERT BRISCOE. MAP ON NEXT SLIDE.

MIRANDA "MINNIE" SHESLER'S GRAVE IS ROUGHLY 30 YARDS AWAY, BUT THE EXACT LOCATION IS UNKNOWN.

TIP: THEY ARE BURIED BETWEEN THE MAUSOLEUMS FOR
"BENEDICT" AND "NAPOLI"



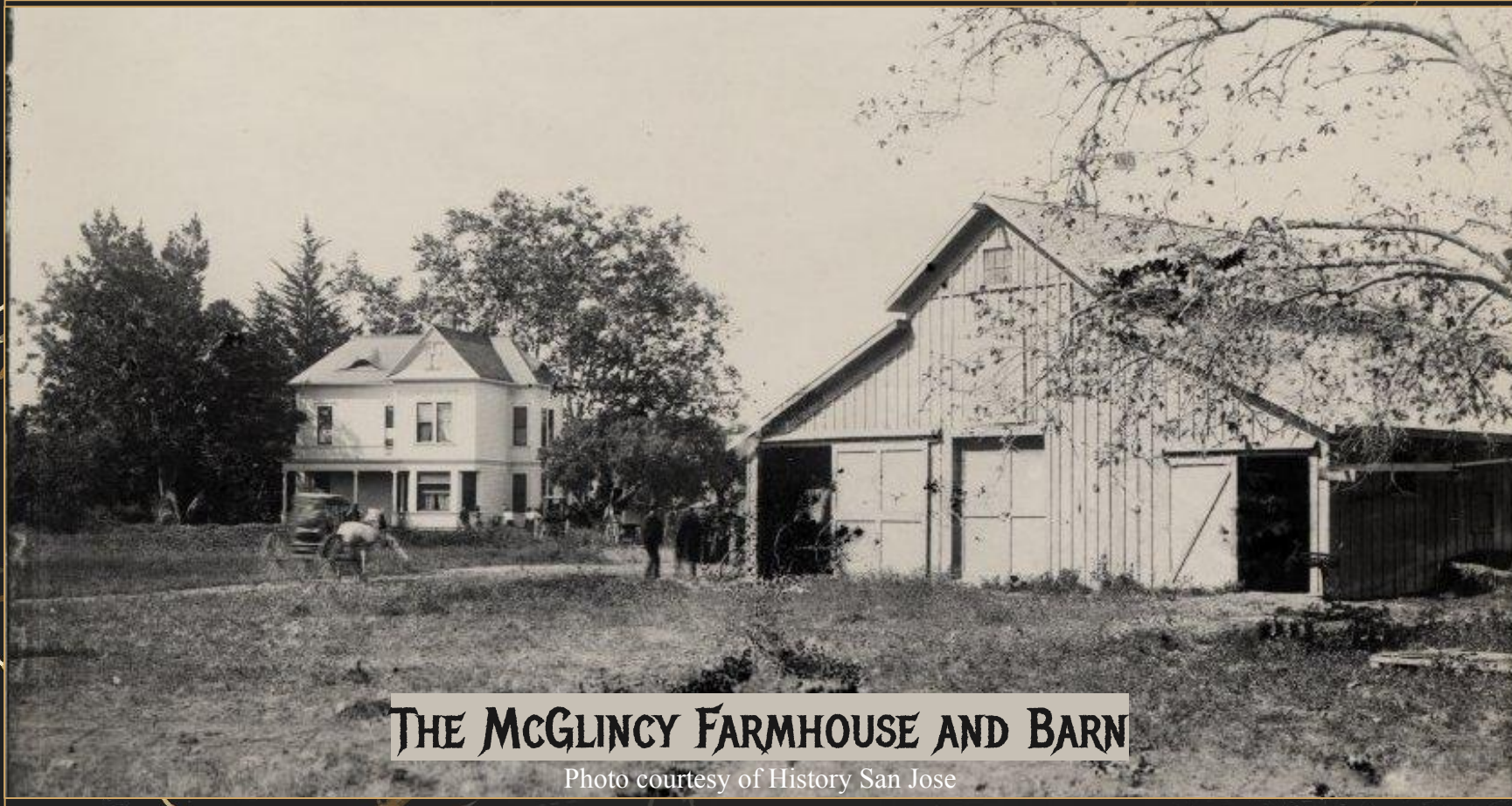
THE GRAVESITES YOU ARE STANDING ABOVE,
BELONG TO THE VICTIMS OF JAMES DUNHAM. HE
MURDERED SIX PEOPLE THE NIGHT OF MAY 26,
1896.

SOON AFTER THE MURDERS, HE WAS NEVER SEEN
NOR HEARD FROM AGAIN...



ON MAY 26, 1896, AROUND 11PM, A MCGLINCY FAMILY RANCH HAND, GEORGE SCHAIBLE, HID INSIDE HIS EMPLOYER'S HAYLOFT AFTER HEARING GUNSHOTS.

AFTER HIDING FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES, HE HEARD THE VOICE OF HIS BOSS' SON-IN-LAW, JAMES DUNHAM, CALLING OUT TO HIM "GEORGE? WHERE ARE YOU GEORGE?"



THE MCGLINCY FARMHOUSE AND BARN

Photo courtesy of History San Jose

WHAT GEORGE SCHAIBLE
DID NOT YET KNOW WAS THAT
SIX MEMBERS OF THE MCGLINCY
HOUSEHOLD HAD BEEN BRUTALLY
MURDERED BY AXE AND PISTOL,
AT THE HANDS OF JAMES DUNHAM.

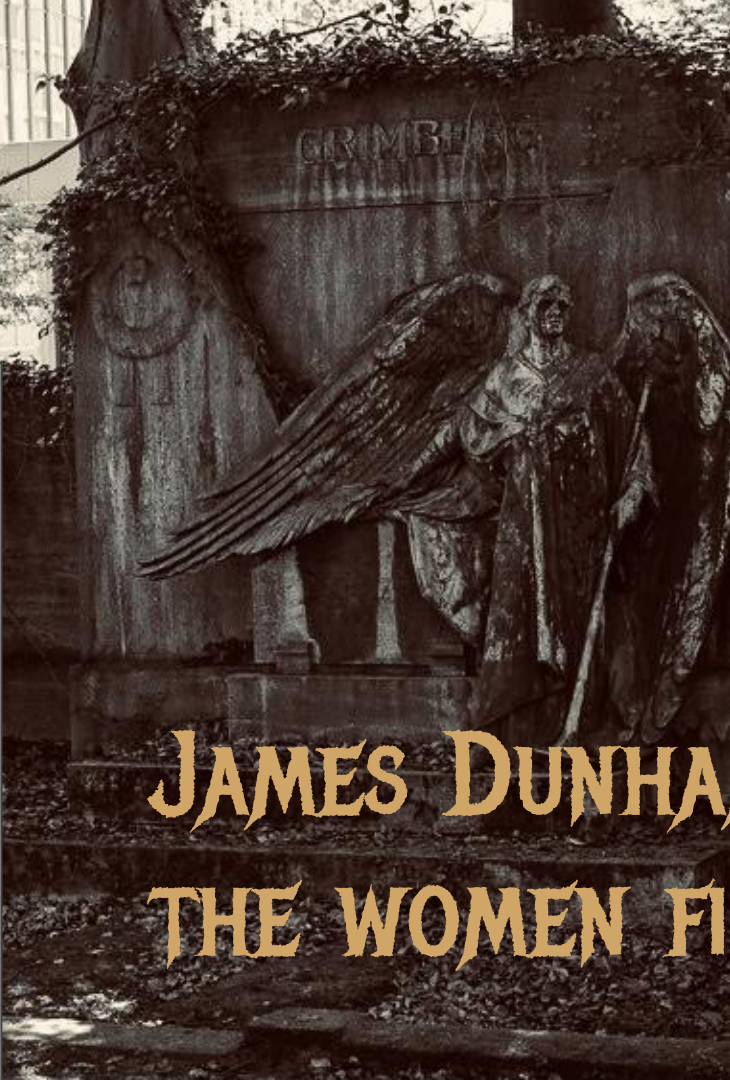


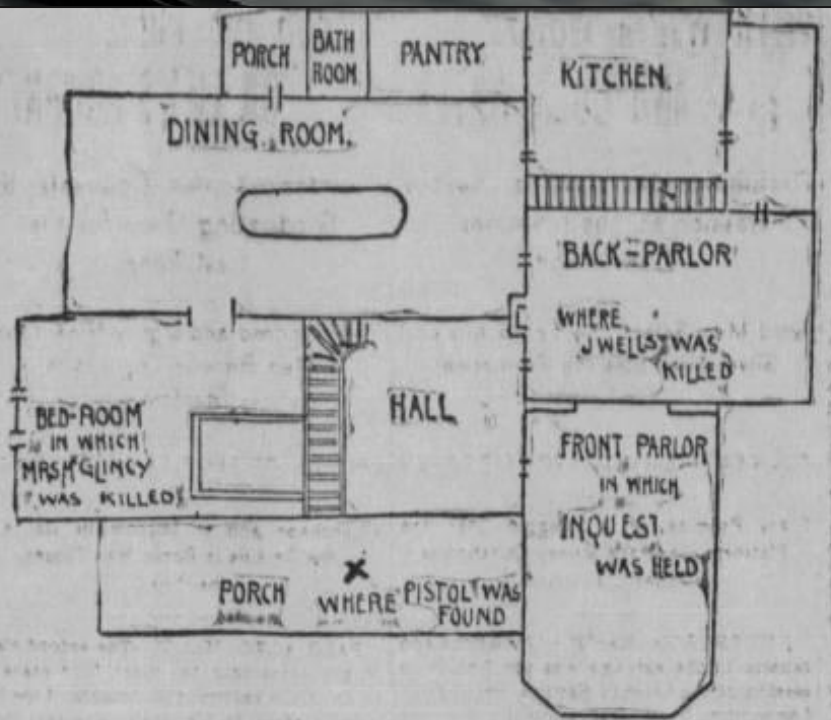
SF CALL'S RENDERING OF
HATTIE DUNHAM, JAMES' WIFE

JAMES DUNHAM MURDERED THE WOMEN FIRST.



ADA WELLS MCGLINCY,
JAMES' MOTHER-IN-LAW





PLAN OF THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF DEATH.
 A diagram of Colonel McGlinchy's house, in which the murderer killed his wife, his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law and the maid servant.

and his victim back to the bedroom where the old woman gave up her life under the blows of the ax.

Killing the Three Men.

At last the murderer could rest. Evidently he sat in the darkness with the murdered bodies of the dead around him until toward

is as hot as elsewhere. A price has been set upon his head, and to-day bloodhounds will follow on his track.

THE TRAIL OF BLOOD.

Discovery of the Bodies and of the Infant by His Mother's Corpse.

J. C. Ross, whose capture states that of

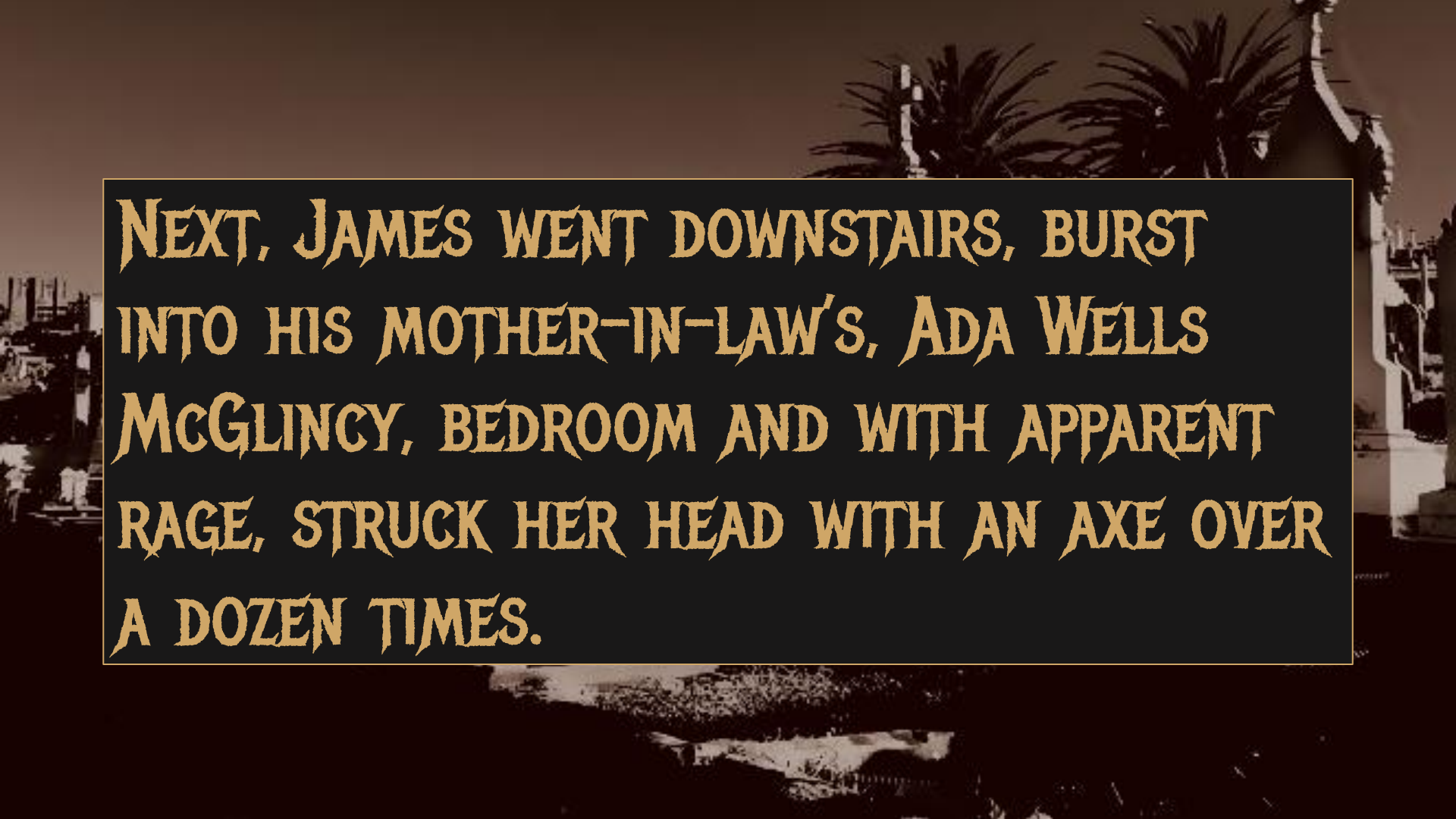
JAMES DUNHAM BEGAN HIS ASSAULT AROUND 9PM. FIRST HE WENT INTO THE BEDROOM WHERE HIS WIFE HATTIE AND THEIR THREE-WEEK-OLD SON, PERCY, SLEPT PEACEFULLY. DUNHAM SHOVED FABRIC DOWN HATTIE'S THROAT TO STIFLE HER SCREAMS, AND THEN STRANGLERED HER TO DEATH.

AT THE TIME THE MAYHEM BEGAN, THE McGLINCY'S HOUSEMAID, MIRANDA "MINNIE" SHESLER, RECENTLY HIRED BY THE FAMILY, WAS CHANGING INTO HER NIGHTCLOTHES IN HER ADJOINING BEDROOM. WHEN MINNIE HEARD THE COMMOTION SHE CAME INTO HATTIE'S BEDROOM, AND DUNHAM STRUCK HER ACROSS THE HEAD WITH AN AXE. TO ENSURE MINNIE WAS DEAD, DUNHAM STRADDLED HER LIMP BODY, AND CRUSHED HER SKULL WITH THE BLUNT END OF THE AXE. IN A CONFUSED FRENZY, HE THEN STUFFED MINNIE'S MOUTH WITH CLOTHING AND THREW HER BODY ON THE FLOOR, NEXT TO THE FRESH CORPSE OF HIS WIFE.

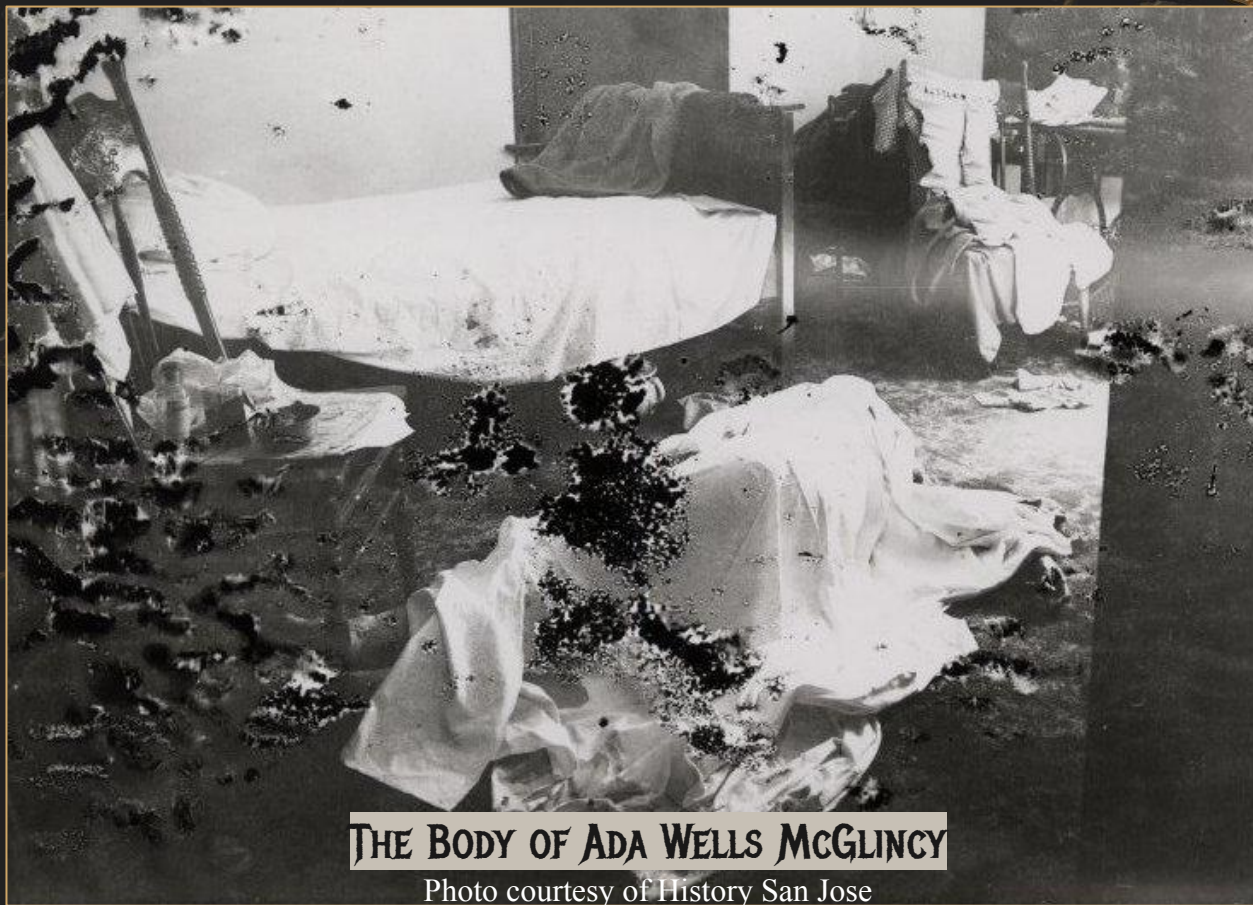


THE BODIES OF HATTIE DUNHAM, ON THE BED, AND MINNIE SHESLER, ON THE FLOOR

Photo courtesy of History San Jose



NEXT, JAMES WENT DOWNSTAIRS, BURST INTO HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW'S, ADA WELLS MCGLINCY, BEDROOM AND WITH APPARENT RAGE, STRUCK HER HEAD WITH AN AXE OVER A DOZEN TIMES.



THE BODY OF ADA WELLS MCGLINCY

Photo courtesy of History San Jose

AFTER MURDERING THE THREE WOMEN, DUNHAM AWAITED THE RETURN OF THE MEN OF THE HOUSE. WHILE HE WAITED, HE PACKED ALL PHOTOS OF HIMSELF, INCLUDING A LARGE PORTRAIT WHICH HUNG ON THE WALL OF THE McGLINCY HOME. HE ALSO PACKED ALL THE LETTERS HE HAD WRITTEN, INTO HIS LUGGAGE, PROBABLY TO BE DESTROYED.

MEANWHILE RANCH HAND, ROBERT BRISCOE, SLEPT IN A SMALL SHACK ON THE McGLINCY PROPERTY, COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF THE CARNAGE THAT HAD UNFOLDED IN THE FARMHOUSE. WHILE DUNHAM AWAITED THE RETURN OF HIS REMAINING IN-LAWS, HE ARMED HIMSELF WITH A 38 CALIBER PISTOL AND A 45 CALIBER REVOLVER.

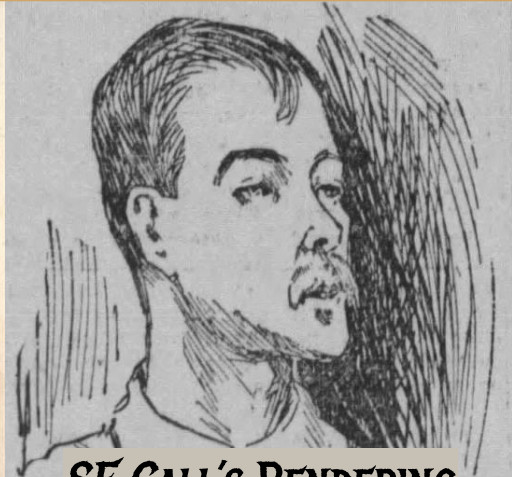
COLONEL MCGLINCY, HIS STEP-SON JIM WELLS, AND RANCH HAND GEORGE RETURNED HOME FROM A TOWN MEETING AROUND 11PM. NO LIGHTS SHONE FROM THE LARGE BAY WINDOWS OF THE FARMHOUSE. THE NIGHT WAS STILL AND QUIET. AS THE COLONEL OPENED THE FRONT DOOR A LOUD "CRACK" RANG OUT AS AN AXE SPLIT THROUGH HIS SKULL.



COLONEL RICHARD P.
MCGLINCHY



JAMES "JIM" WELLS



SF CALL'S RENDERING
OF GEORGE SCHAIBLE

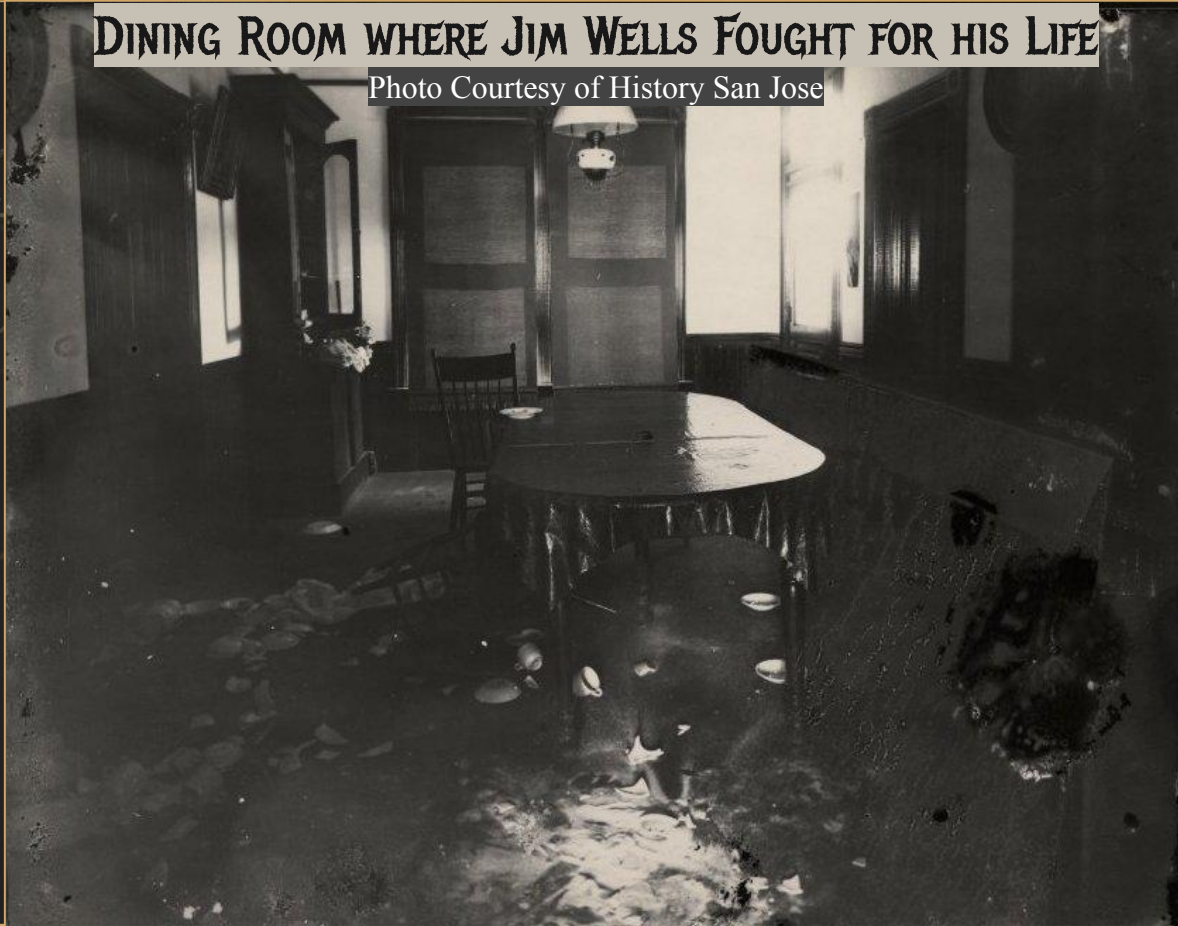


AFTER PLUNGING AN AXE INTO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW'S HEAD, DUNHAM BEGAN FIRING HIS PISTOL INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT, TOWARD HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, JIM.

IN A PANIC JIM TRIED TO ASSIST HIS STEPFATHER, AND THEN RAN INSIDE THE FAMILY FARMHOUSE. DUNHAM CHASED AFTER JIM WITH A MAD FURY. HE SWIPED AT JIM WITH HIS AXE, BUT MISSED AND PLUNGED IT INTO THE WALL INSTEAD. THE TWO MEN FOUGHT DESPERATELY. DUNHAM MANAGED TO GET AHOLD OF ONE OF HIS GUNS, AND SHOT JIM FIVE TIMES, WHICH EVENTUALLY KILLED HIM.

DINING ROOM WHERE JIM WELLS FOUGHT FOR HIS LIFE

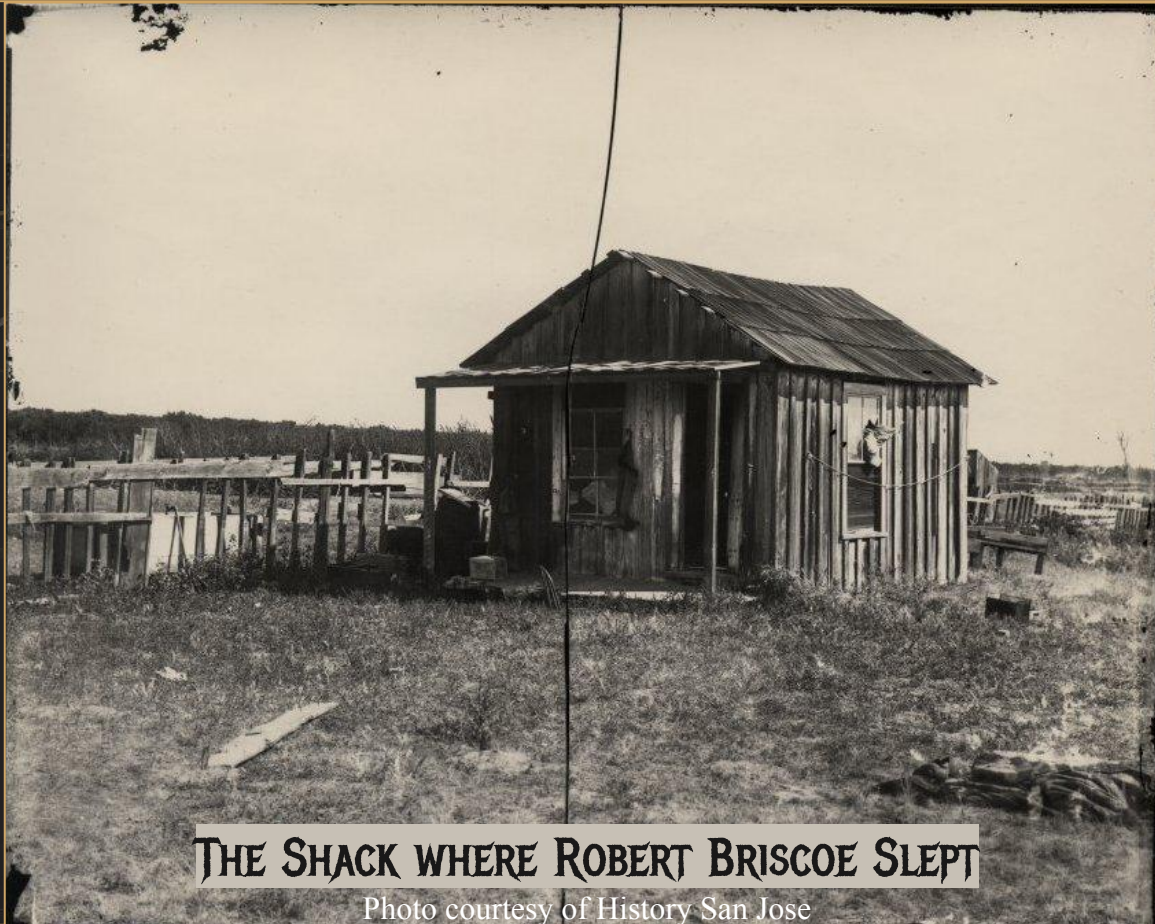
Photo Courtesy of History San Jose



AS DUNHAM WAS BRUTALLY ATTACKING JIM, THE COLONEL, WHO WAS STILL ALIVE, MANAGED TO PULL HIMSELF THROUGH THE HOUSE, AND OUTSIDE TO RANCH HAND, ROBERT BRISCOE'S, SHACK.

AFTER MURDERING JIM, DUNHAM PURSUED HIS FATHER-IN-LAW TO THE SHACK, YELLING FOR THE COLONEL TO COME OUT. DUNHAM SHOT THROUGH THE DOOR WHERE MCGLINCY HAD BRACED HIMSELF. THE COLONEL EVENTUALLY CAME OUT, HOLDING A CHAIR IN FRONT OF HIM IN A FEEBLE ATTEMPT AT SELF-DEFENSE, AND BEGGED FOR MERCY, BUT DUNHAM SHOT HIM DEAD, AND THE COLONEL FELL TO THE GROUND.

DUNHAM HEARD BREAKING GLASS AS ROBERT LEAPT OUT THE BACK WINDOW AND TRIED TO ESCAPE, BUT ROBERT WAS GUNNED DOWN BEFORE HE REACHED THE FENCE.



THE SHACK WHERE ROBERT BRISCOE SLEPT

Photo courtesy of History San Jose

AFTER THE MASSACRE, DUNHAM CALLED OUT FOR RANCH HAND, GEORGE SCHAIBLE, SHOUTING THAT HE WOULD BE NEXT. FOLLOWING THE TOWN MEETING, GEORGE HAD BEEN BALING HAY IN THE STABLE, AFTER THE HORSE AND CARRIAGE WERE UNHITCHED. ONCE HE HEARD GUNSHOTS, HE MANAGED TO HIDE HIMSELF IN THE HAYLOFT. FROM THE HAYLOFT, HE HAD WITNESSED THE MURDER OF COLONEL MCGLINCY. DUNHAM ENTERED THE BARN, AND CALLED OUT AGAIN.

MUCH TO GEORGE'S RELIEF, JAMES DUNHAM CLIMBED ATOP A HORSE, WITHOUT SADDLING IT, AND RODE OFF INTO THE NOW PEACEFUL NIGHT. THE ONLY OTHER PERSON LEFT ALIVE ON THE MCGLINCY PROPERTY WAS THREE-WEEK-OLD PERCY DUNHAM, SLEEPING BESIDE HIS MOTHER'S CORPSE.



THE BODIES OF COLONEL MCGLINCY, ROBERT BRISCOE, AND JIM WELLS (FRONT TO BACK)

Photo courtesy of History San Jose

But why?

Why did James Dunham murder his wife, in-laws, and their employees? Let's have a look at who they were before the night of the murders.

There are all sorts of theories; Perhaps after this tour you will have your own.

Colonel Richard McGlinchy was a prominent member of Campbell's society. He was born in Jefferson County, west Virginia, in 1841. He fought for the Confederate Army under Stonewall Jackson. The Colonel had moved to Elgin, Illinois after the Civil War. He worked as an editor for the Elgin Gazette, was elected the secretary for the Elgin Board of Trade, and served as the local Democratic Delegate for the national convention. At the time, the Democrats were the party that opposed civil rights, were Pro-Slavery, and anti-large government. The Colonel had been married once before, and that marriage ended with his first wife filing for divorce due to "marital infidelity and cruelty". He had been having an affair with his sister-in-law, Ada Wells, a wealthy widow with three children.

To likely escape the reputation that came along with a divorce, and to be closer to Ada, the Colonel moved to San Jose in 1887.



SF Call's Rendering
of Colonel McGlincy

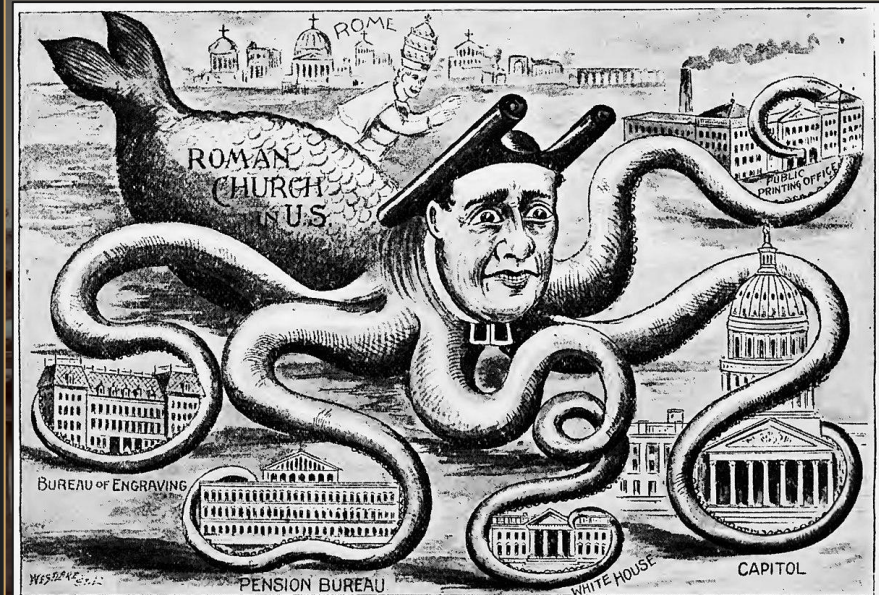
The Colonel quickly climbed the local social ranks. He became the Elected Officer of the Campbell Horticulturalists and the first president of the Campbell Fruit Growers Union. He was given a prominent position in the local Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In 1894, he represented the Santa Clara County area Democratic Party at the State Democratic Convention in San Francisco. McGlincy was elected to take charge of Santa Clara County's agricultural exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair, in Chicago. (The same World's Fair where, notorious serial killer, H. H. Holmes lured his victims into his "Murder Castle").

After he was established in Santa Clara county, the Colonel and Ada Wells were married. With their combined wealth, they built an imposing, three-story, farmhouse in Campbell. Soon after they were married, Ada's eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, moved out and her younger daughter, Hattie, married James Dunham. Eventually, Hattie and James moved into the family home, along with Ada's son, and youngest child, Jim Wells. The McGlincy family had a large orchard on the property requiring a small staff. The family barn, larger than the farmhouse, signified to the townspeople that the McGlincy family was quite prosperous.



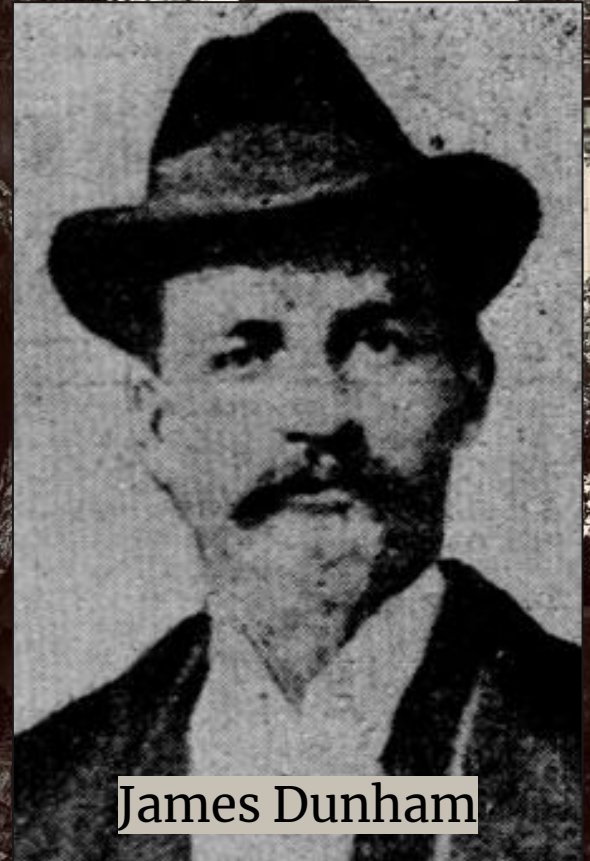
Photo courtesy of History San Jose

On the night of the murders Colonel McGlincy, along with Jim Wells and George Schaible, had been at a town meeting for The American Protective Association, which was an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant organization that played upon the fears of rural Americans about the growth and political power of immigrant-populated cities.

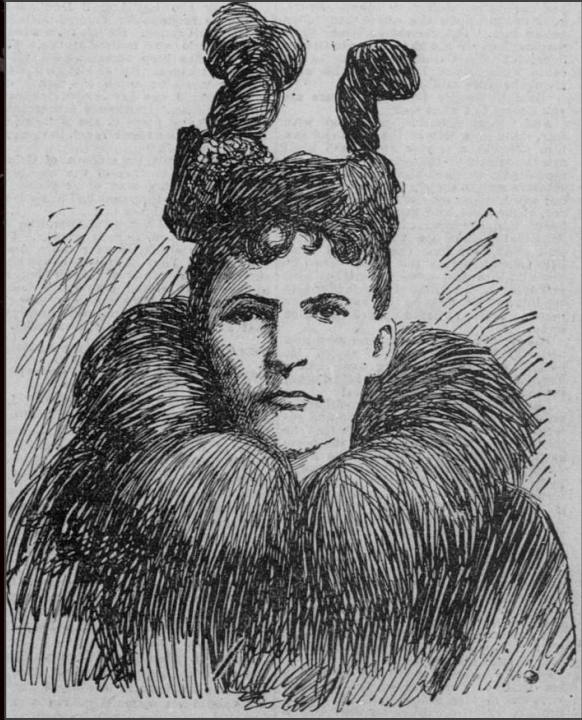


Anti-Catholic Propoganda put forth by the APA

James Dunham, born in Dulzura, San Diego county, in 1865, was the eldest of three children of wealthy ranchers. As a young man James worked on various ranches throughout Southern, California, but returned home periodically to get money from his parents, often under threat of violence. On one such occasion, Dunham strangled his mother's chickens, one after the other, until she paid up. During one of his stints as a ranch hand, Dunham strangled his employer, and told his coworkers that he had wished he could have killed him, had the man not shouted for help.

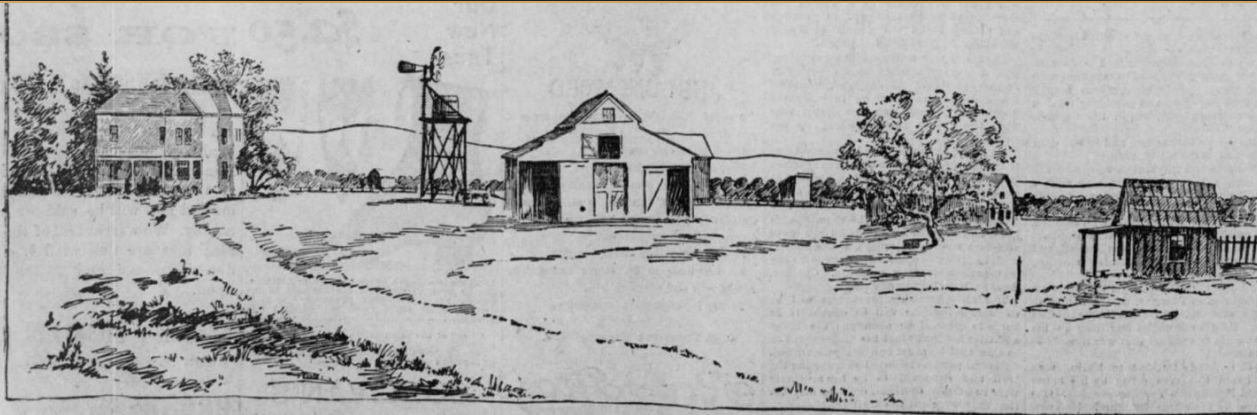


James Dunham



Hattie Wells Dunham had been engaged to James' younger brother Charles, and he broke off their engagement for another woman, leaving Hattie heartbroken and bitter. It is possible she married James Dunham out of spite. Hattie's friends thought James was beneath her and her family's social standing.

Once married, Dunham made some attempts at improving his standing. He tried his hand at various business ventures, such as; opening a lemonade stand, candymaker, and working in a plant nursery. The Dunhams moved from one city to another, all over California. Hattie became pregnant. When Hattie's pregnancy was far along, and Dunham had no real financial prospects, the couple returned to the McGlincy home in Campbell. Back at the ranch, Dunham worked for his father-in-law, and enrolled in Santa Clara University to study pre-law.



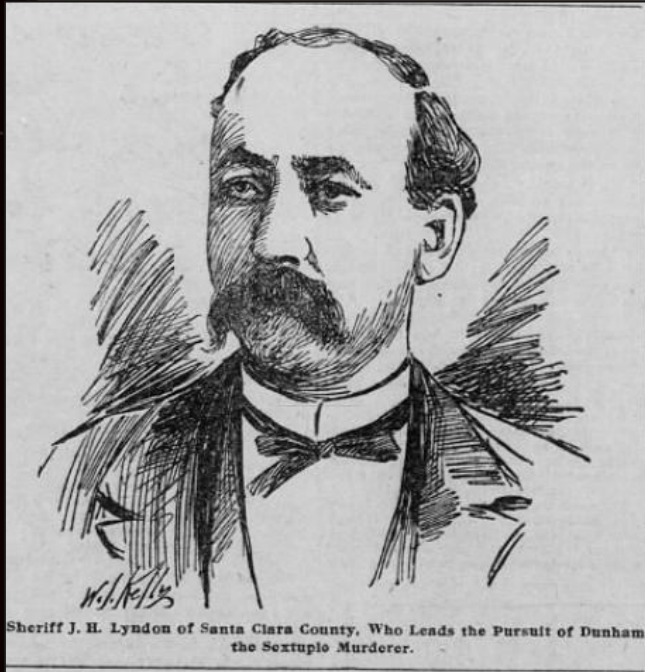
SCENE OF THE FEARFUL CRIME COMMITTED BY JAMES B. DUNHAM, THE SEXTUPLE MURDERER, NEAR SAN JOSE, CAL.



SF Call's Rendering
of Ada Wells McGlincy

James Dunham's relationship with his wife and her family appeared congenial on the surface, but behind closed doors relations had become increasingly tense. While working on the McGlincy ranch, Dunham fell from a ladder, and threatened his father-in-law with punitive damages of ten thousand dollars. During this time, Ada Wells McGlincy had been documenting all of Dunham's abuses in her diary, possibly as future evidence for her daughter to file for a divorce.

Even the Dunhams' midwife noted how James had been cruel to Hattie, but that he had always treated their son with kindness.



SF Call's Rendering
of Sheriff J. H. Lyndon

The night of the murders, Sheriff Lyndon made it to the McGlincy Ranch around 1am, after Schaible and a neighbor, Mr. L. C. Ross (a friend of Jim Wells), who had heard gunshots and seen Dunham ride off on horseback, reported the murders to the police. As the police, led by Lyndon, scoured the farmhouse they quickly learned James had prepared carefully prior to fleeing the scene of his crimes. The only photograph that remained of James Dunham was an old tintype that he had overlooked during his planned escape. It was enough to create wanted posters. Later, another photo of James surfaced in his mother's possession.

PLEASE POST THIS IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE.

ARREST FOR MURDER!

\$1000 REWARD.

Will be paid by the Governor of the State of California for the arrest and conviction, and the citizens of Santa Clara County are now soliciting subscriptions for an Additional

REWARD OF \$10,000

a considerable portion of which is already subscribed, for the capture (DEAD OR ALIVE) of

JAMES C. DUNHAM



TAKEN IN 1895.



TAKEN IN 1890.

On the night of May 26, 1896, near Campbell, Santa Clara County, California—James C. Dunham brutally murdered Mrs. R. P. McGlinchy, Mrs. Hattie B. Dunham, Miss Minnie Schessler, Col. R. P. McGlinchy, James K. Wells, and Robert A. Brisco.

He is a bicyclist and may be on a wheel. About 32 years of age, 5 feet 11½ inches high, weight 165 or 170 pounds, has sharp features, dark hair and mustache, blue eyes, medium complexion; when last seen he wore black suit, cutaway coat, black soft hat, number 9 shoes, sharp pointed toes. Walks very erect, chin recedes when he laughs. May have shaved and changed clothing and shoes. One eyelid droops slightly. Last seen in mountains near San Jose, May 28. No reliable clue since. Was not a drinking or sporting man; had few intimates but was studious and associated with reputable people. American, well-educated, speaks Spanish. Has followed various occupations, nurseryman, drummer, bicycle agent, confectioner, orchardist and farm hand. Motive supposed to be, desire to obtain control of property.

The undersigned will assist any person knowing the whereabouts of said James C. Dunham, in taking him into custody, and will waive all right to claim the rewards offered for said arrest to and in favor of the person giving to me the information which will lead to the capture of the said James C. Dunham.

Wire all information to me at my expense.

J. H. LYNDON, Sheriff.

San Jose, Santa Clara Co., California.

Please say good
bye for me to
my dear Mother
Brother^{and} Step
Father.
Hattie

Words Written on a Card by Mrs. Dunham When Told by the Murderer to Prepare for Death.

The note was published in the *San Francisco Call* three days after the gruesome murders. It reads “Please say good bye for me to my dear mother Brother and Step Father -Hattie” the newspaper statement reads “Words Written on a Card by Mrs. Dunham When Told by the Murderer to Prepare for Death.”

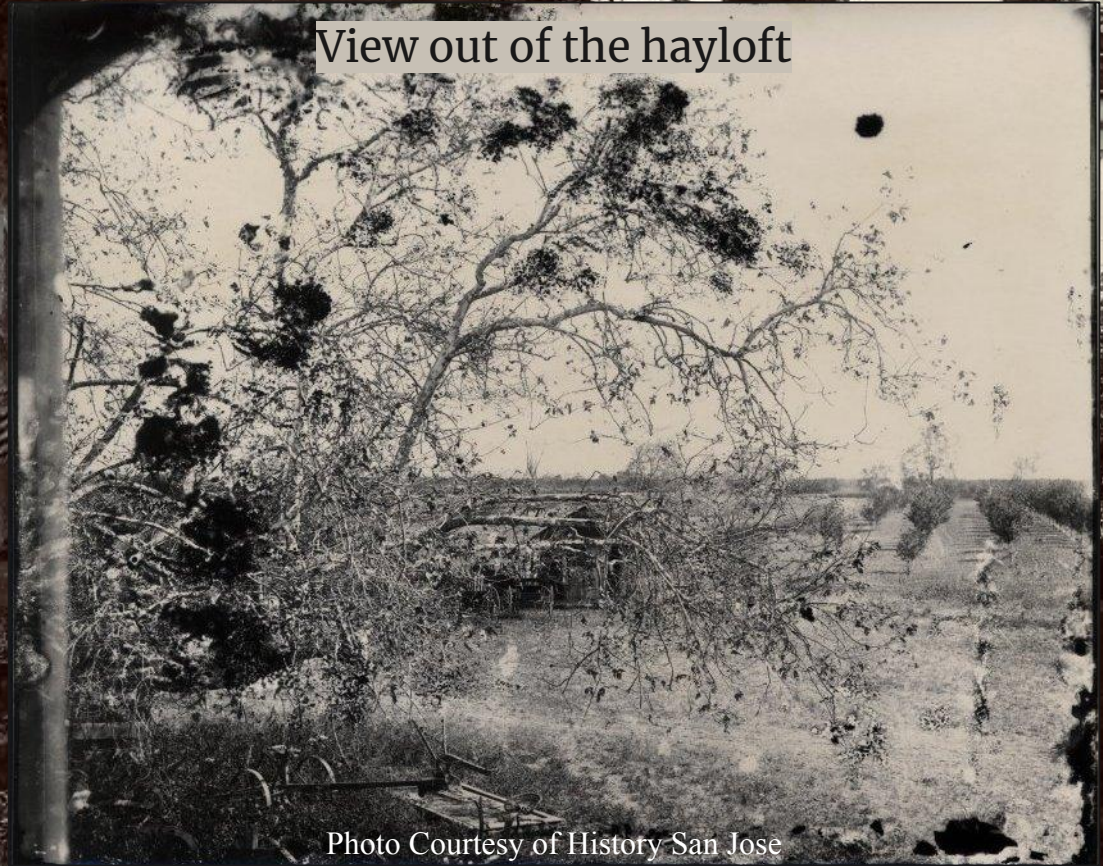
During their initial investigation, the police found a small note scrawled on the back of a business card atop Hattie’s dresser. It caused confusion among the police. Had Dunham allowed her to write a note prior to his fatal attack on her? The police later confirmed it was a forgery written by James Dunham himself. Had Dunham intended to make her murder look like a suicide? Had his plan gone terribly awry?

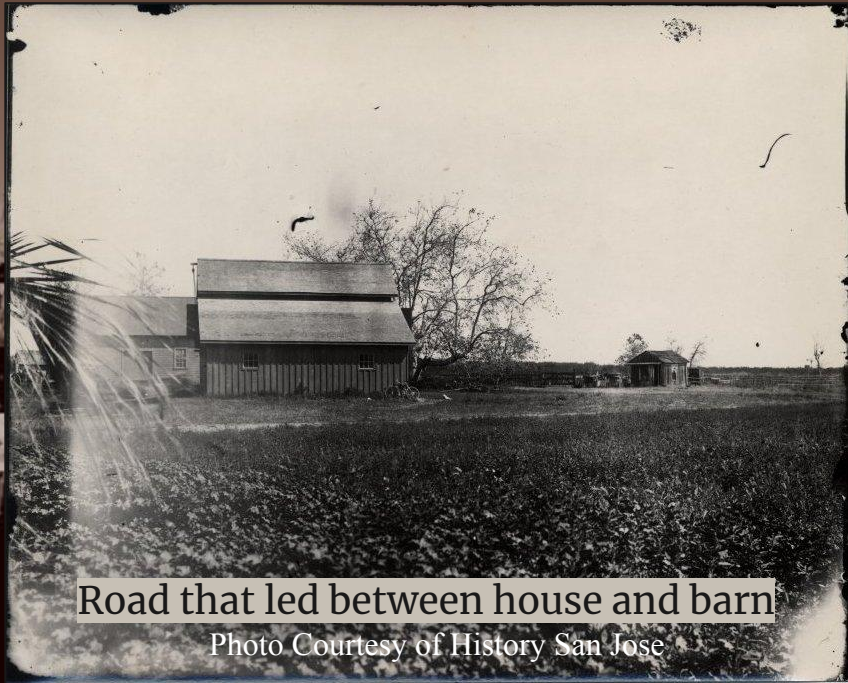


SF Call's Rendering
of George Schaible

An inquest was held, inside the McGlinchy home, less than twenty-four hours after the murders. George Schaible and neighbor, Mr. Ross, were the main witnesses. They gave their testimonies of how the night had unfolded, but nothing they said provided any explanation for a motive. The prevailing thought was that James Dunham had murdered his wife, her family, and their two employees because he hoped that his son would inherit the ranch, and by default, due to the boy's young age, Dunham himself would take ownership.

Dunham had been studying pre-law, and not long before his brutal attack on the McGlincy household, he had reportedly asked an attorney whether Percy Dunham would indeed inherit the ranch should all the other family members perish.





Road that led between house and barn

Photo Courtesy of History San Jose

The morning after the murders, the police found Dunham's bicycle stashed in the bushes, near the road leading to the farm house. It confirmed that Dunham had premeditated his crimes. It was well known amongst the McGlincy ranch, and neighbors, that Dunham was an excellent bicyclist. He had once run a bicycle shop in Stockton. He could be seen tinkering on his bicycle frequently, and would use it to get to and from Santa Clara University. The theory was that the bicycle was his backup mode of transportation, had a horse not been available.

James' brother, Charles Dunham, who lived in San Jose, came to the ranch the morning after the killings, and had the following to say of his brother,

“Don't talk to me about insanity. He was as sane as you or I, but a natural-born villain, a murderer. He did not act like an insane man. There was a method in his madness, from start to finish. He wanted the property. By killing off the whole family, he could secure it. He planned cleverly, and he executed well up to a certain point, when the merest chance, you might say, undid him. He cared not a snap-of-your-fingers of human life. Affection for wife or babe was, to him, a thing unknown. He has gained a property, but will forfeit his life for it if justice is meted out to him.”

Later in the day, Sheriff Lyndon got word that Dunham was spotted at the Smith Creek Hotel in the foothills of Mt. Hamilton. Everett Snell and Oscar Parker, two ranch hands, were on their way home from working at the hotel, when they crossed paths with Dunham riding an unsaddled horse, with burlap sacks over his feet, and a severely scratched up face. Snell had known Dunham prior to the murders. The two also knew of the handsome reward the sheriff was offering for Dunham's capture. When Dunham asked the two for directions to the San Joaquin Valley, Snell directed him back to the main road into town, in the hopes Dunham would be caught.

Parker offered Dunham a place to stay for the night, but Dunham declined and told the two he wanted to avoid the main road. Snell and Parker then hurried home, phoned the sheriff, told him about their attempt at diverting Dunham from his path, and which direction he had been heading when they parted ways with him. The Sheriff immediately formed a posse.



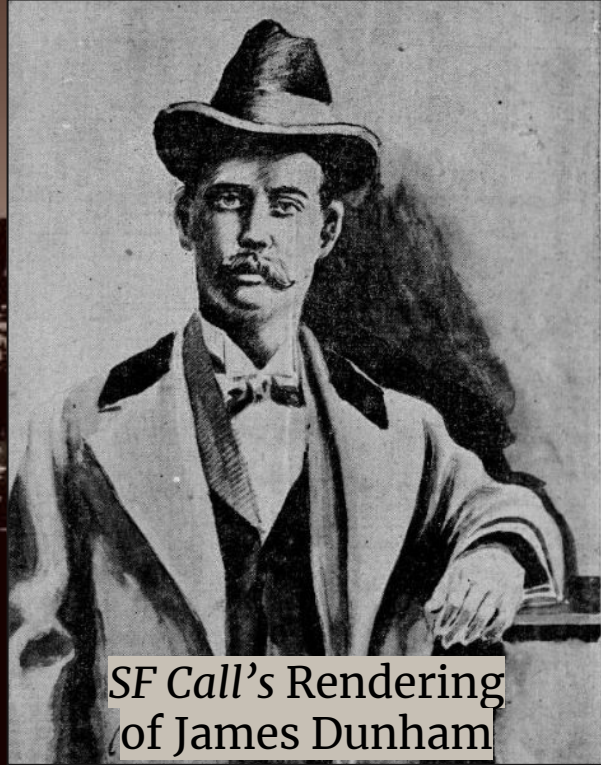
Smith Creek Hotel, in 1897

Photo from San Jose Public Library - California Room

Sheriff Lyndon Seated in His Office



Photo from Los Gatos Library - Monte Sereno Police Department Collection



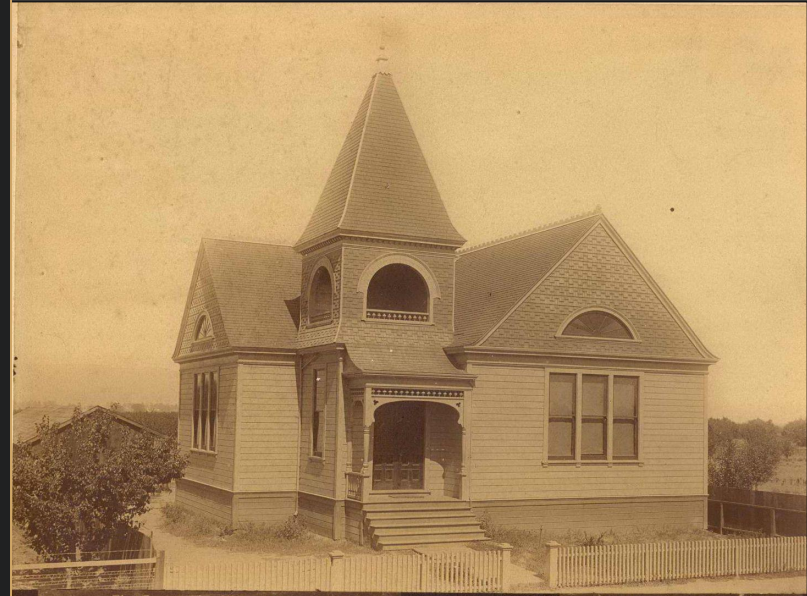
SF Call's Rendering
of James Dunham

No posse, nor bounty-hunter ever turned up with the true James Dunham. For years to come there were James Dunham sightings all throughout the world. Many claimed to have seen him, and numerous times men were brought into custody for the resemblance they bore to Dunham.

Whilst many of the facts point to his motive to takeover the McGlincy Ranch, it does not explain why he would then proceed to eliminate the entire household with such brutality and then flee. It is possible that his rage for them was stronger than his desire to own and operate the ranch. Perhaps he *only* ever intended for his son Percy to inherit the ranch, and his murderous rampage did not interfere with his plans after all. Only one person knows the truth, and he is long gone.

What are your theories?

Minnie Shesler was the first victim to be buried, on May 28, 1896. Shesler had been using her paychecks to help her father, retired doctor, Jacob Shesler, to pay the mortgage on their home. After her burial, the townspeople of Campbell raised money to help Dr. Shesler, who was living on a meager Veteran's Pension, make his mortgage payments. The remaining five victims were buried May 29th, three days after their deaths. Their bodies were moved from the McGlincy farmhouse to the Congregational Church, on Central Ave, in Campbell. The Colonel had been one of the founders of the church.



First Congregational Church of Campbell, Cal.

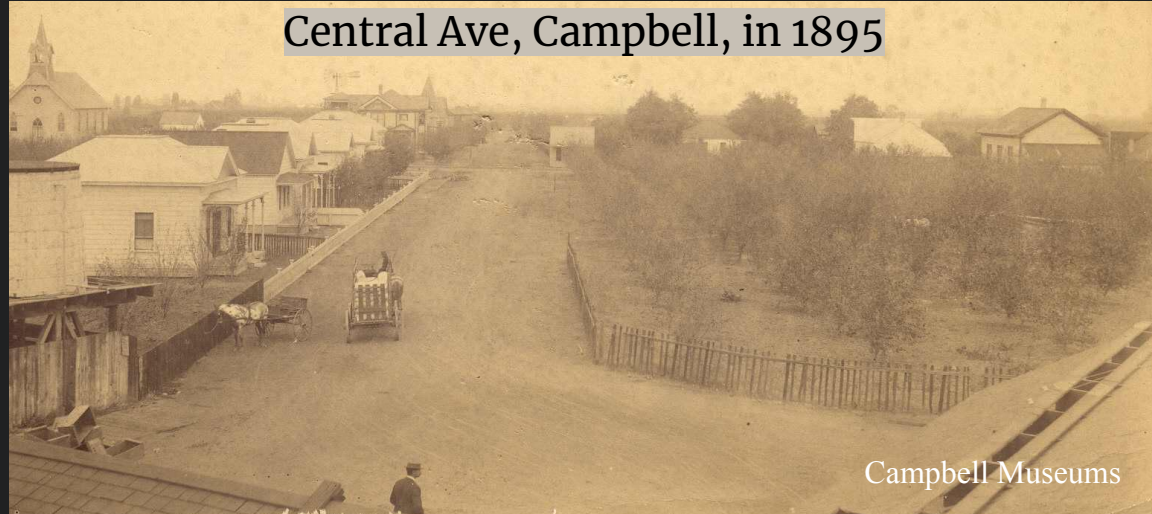
F. A. Blaine, Photo., San Jose, Cal.

Congregational Church in 1891

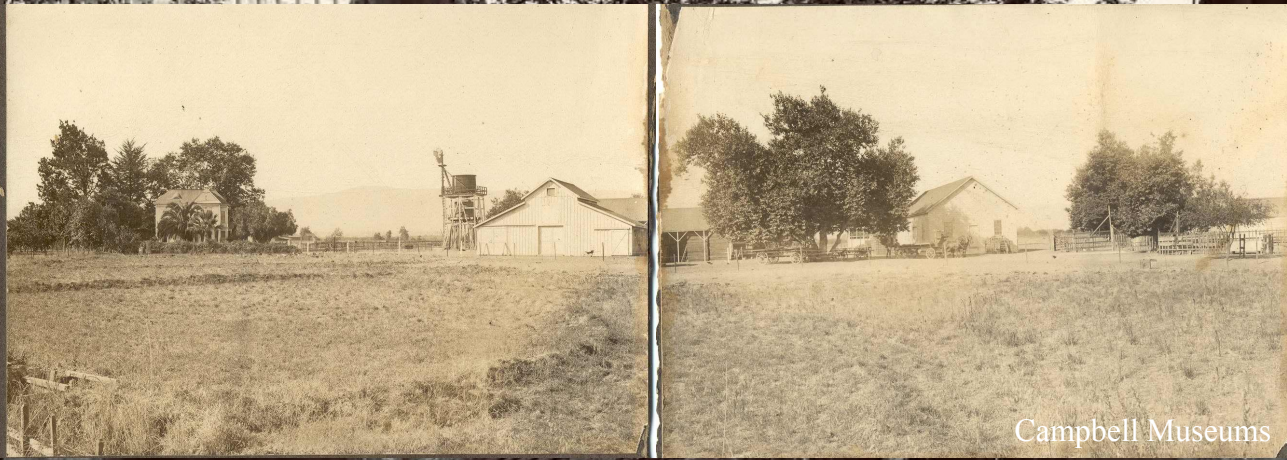
Campbell Museums

By high noon, carriages came from all directions, and every street in the town was crowded to capacity. The funeral service began at 2pm. The church was awash in flowers, and the air was filled with their sweet perfume. The Odd Fellows contributed a large arrangement of roses that spelled out “Vengeance is mine, I will Repay, Saith the Lord.” All thirty pallbearers were members of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The procession to Oak Hill cemetery consisted of five horse-drawn hearses, followed by a crowd of 1,500 mourners. The burials took place in the Wells Family plot.

Mrs. McGlincy was buried between her first and second husbands. Hattie’s gravestone read “Hattie B”. “B” for Brewer, her middle name, which was given in honor of her aunt Harriet Brewer.



The Odd Fellows had the family members' gravestones engraved with the same message that the rose arrangement in the church had spelled out. It is a truncated version of Romans 12:19, from the bible. The full quote reads, "Do not take revenge my dear friends, but leave room for God's Wrath. For it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will Repay' saith the Lord," Which you can see written on the gravestones at Oak Hill Memorial.



The McGlincy Ranch was taken over by Ada Wells McGlincy's parents. Ada's sister, Harriet Brewer, adopted her great-nephew, Percy Dunham, and changed his name to Percy Osborn Brewer. The Brewers were the only parents he ever knew. He grew up in San Francisco and graduated from Stanford. He died in 1969, a retired Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, who fought in both World Wars. A Campbell based women's auxiliary chapter of the Odd Fellows named their hall after Ada. Finally, the McGlincy Ranch was demolished in 1955, but McGlincy Lane, in Campbell, marks the road on which it stood.

If you would like to know more about the murders you can read the books:

- *Cold Wrath* by Barney Terrell
- *The McGlincy Killings in Campbell, California* by Tobin Gilman
- *A Silent Man: The Dunham/McGlincy Murders* by Douglas MacGowan

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US ON OUR CEMETERY TOUR!

COME VISIT OUR MUSEUMS AND EXPLORE OUR ONLINE COLLECTIONS.

SINCERELY,

THE CAMPBELL MUSEUMS



