

Murder on Summer Street

It was a mild spring evening in 1932. My mother and I were walking home from a Women's State Relief Corps meeting which had been held at the old G A R (Grand Army of the Republic) meeting house, which used to sit to one side and to the back of the Town Hall. We were nearly home when my father came hurrying to meet us.

He greeted us with "Come on-hurry up home! Lew Babcock just shot "Marmee Goodale and Effie! He's still loose!"

I was eleven years old and didn't really comprehend what was going on, but I was scared-fearing that a crazed gunman was coming to kill us all! We spent the evening in our darkened living room, watching people running about, hearing shouts, not knowing what was really going on, until at last, around ten o'clock we heard someone call: "We've got him!" One of the young men had found him hiding in a camp down by the river.

Lew Babcock seemed to be a mild mannered individual-not overly bright-but never causing any trouble. He boarded with Bertha Smith, a rather hefty widow, who lived in the last house on the left on Summer Street. Mrs. Goodale lived halfway up the hill on the left on the other side of the street. Her daughter, Effie Gibbons, who was quite voluptuous, came down from Bangor to visit her often. Lew liked the looks of Effie and stopped to visit. After having some drinks, Effie and her mother apparently started to tease Lew about his landlady, bertha. Lew, being "lickered up", went home and got his gun. He came back, shot and killed Mrs. Goodale and wounded Effie, thought not seriously.

Lew was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in Thomaston. To bertha's credit, she used to make the trip to Thomaston by bus once a month or so to visit him until she got married to Ora Robinson-but that's another story.

Hampden, Maine