

MERCHANTVILLE HAS A MYSTERY

And the Authorities Are Doing
Almost Nothing to
Unravel It.

A Man Seen Covered With Blood
Disappears and All Trace of
Him Is Lost.

Special to The Inquirer.

MERCHANTVILLE, N. J., July 19.—There has been little attempt made by either Prosecutor Jenkins or Acting Detective John S. Smith (ex-police lieutenant) to unravel the mysterious disappearance of Tony Croggle in Pensauken township. The man had been employed on the farm of George Starn, near the Burlington pike, about equal distances from Merchantville and Riverton. Mr. Starn occupies half the house and rents out the farm to a farmer named Richmond, who, on and before the 4th of July had in his employ four men as farm hands, named Tony Croggle, Earnest Koehler, Joseph Smith and Christian Weldemeyer.

The morning after the Fourth Mr. Starn arose about 3 o'clock and went down stairs. Passing through the outkitchen he saw Croggle lying on the floor, his face covered with blood, and apparently asleep. Mr. Starn thought there was no use of waking the man, so went to bed.

At 5 o'clock, upon hearing Richmond going down stairs, Starn opened his door and told the farmer of the condition of Croggle. After this both men went down stairs, and upon reaching the shed found Croggle had disappeared, leaving his coat and hat torn and covered with blood.

Koehler and Smith were found in the barn and Smith confessed to having hit Croggle with a hoe-handle. Both men have consequently been housed in jail since then awaiting the reappearance of the missing man, who has not yet turned up.

Yesterday a representative of THE INQUIRER visited Farmer Richmond and found that with the exception of a visit from Smith every evening, who drives out from Camden to ask if "there's anything new," and a little walk by that gentleman one evening on the shores of the creek near by, no action has been taken whatever to find the missing man.

On July 10, when the details of the tragedy first appeared in print, the papers all stated that ex-Police Lieutenant John S. Smith, of Camden, under instructions of Assistant Prosecutor Ridgway, visited the scene of the alleged assault and commenced a search for the body. Pensauken Creek was dragged, but no trace of the body could be found.

Near the farm house the acting detective discovered an unused clay pit, which was very deep and contained some water. One side has the appearance of having caved in recently.

The creek has not been dragged, nor has the clay-pit been dug up. Constable Miller says the Prosecutor told him that "if the body was in the creek it would soon rise to the surface and so would be easily seen."

There are a number of facts which warrant the supposition that Croggle met with foul play and was perhaps murdered. Croggle had been in the employ of Farmer Richmond since May 25, and his employer has some of the man's wages which he has not sent for. Nor has he ever absented himself before while in his employ. He had no reason to leave in so mysterious a manner, as there was no bad feeling between Croggle and any of the neighbors.

It has also come to light that there has been bad feelings between Croggle and Koehler for several months, the first disagreement having taken place on Decoration Day. It seems that in 1876 these men fought on opposing sides in a European war, and that Koehler's side won.

The most recent development in the case was the discovery yesterday of a piece of brown paper in one of the pockets of the blood-stained coat, containing the following address, 1426 North Sixth street.

At 1426 North Sixth street, the address written on the slip of paper found in the pocket of the missing man, Mrs. Klippen says she has lived there with her husband and children for more than a year, but knew nothing of the man. She had not had boarders while in her present home and none of her family had gone away. She had never heard of Tony Croggle.