

A POLICEMAN MURDERED

OFFICER FOWLER SHOT DEAD BY A NEGRO ROUGH IN DISCHARGING HIS DUTY.

Fatal Attempt to Re-Arrest an Escaping Member of the Chain Gang Yesterday—How the Crime was Committed—The Murderer a Man of Bad Character.

John Langster, alias "Guinea," a negro member of the chain gang, sat yesterday morning on the curbstone of First street, near D northwest. Apparently he was pulling grass out of the gutter; in reality he was working at his leg irons with a little piece of wire he had picked up in the street. His efforts were at last successful, and quietly ridding himself of his shackles, he stood up. Nobody was noticing him, and he moved slowly up First street and stood for a moment under the awning of Holmes' grocery store, at the corner of First and E streets, as if undecided what to do next. Then he spied the alley running from First to Second streets, between D and E, and hastily retraced his steps to it. As he disappeared in the alley Officer Fowler, in charge of the gang, caught sight of him and started in pursuit. When about half way up the alley the man stood at bay.

"Will you come back to work?" said the officer.

"No," was the dogged reply.

The policeman advanced a step further, pistol in hand, and the negro made a movement as if he would assault him. Quick as thought, knowing the desperate character of the man with whom he had to deal, the officer fired a shot into the air, hoping to intimidate him. The action had the opposite effect. Langster, enraged and furious, sprang upon the officer, who attempted to handcuff him. "Help me," shouted the officer to two colored men standing near by, but they refused their aid. In the struggle which followed and which only lasted a few moments, Langster wrenched the pistol from the officer's hand and pointed it at him with an oath. Twice he fired without effect, and then placing the muzzle of the revolver so close to the policeman's side that the powder burnt the vest, he fired the third time. The ball sped on its fatal errand. The wounded man walked a few steps, the blood gushing from the gaping hole in his side, while his murderer ran up the alley into Second street. Sergeant Boyle, who lives near by, and who had been roused out of bed by his wife and had run half dressed into the street, came upon the scene a moment later and found Fowler standing up, supported by a gentleman named Henry Houck.

"I am done for, Sergeant, I am dying," was the remark of the wounded man.

"Who did it?" said the Sergeant.

"Guinea," was the reply.

The sergeant made a cheering remark, but the officer shook his head.

Officer Coghili, arriving at this juncture, was sent to arouse the reserve at the station-house.

"Come," said the sergeant, then, "we can't let this man die in the streets; let us take him to the station and send for a doctor. Here, Will Atkinson, help us," said he, speaking to a man standing near by. The man addressed picked up the wounded officer as if he were a baby and the party moved slowly to the station, carrying him as tenderly as possible.

"Oh, put me down and let me die here," he groaned, ere a hundred yards had been passed.

He was taken into the station house, laid on a mattress and Drs. Bayne and Magruder, police surgeons, summoned. When they arrived, ten minutes later, Fowler was dead.

In the meantime the vicinity of the sad affair had become wild with excitement and officers and citizens were searching yards and dwelling houses for the murderer.

Lieut. Kelly, who was at police headquarters, was immediately notified and with Officer Slack hurried over to the scene. He found the square, bounded by D and E and Third and Fourth streets, surrounded by officers and was told that Langster had been followed to that square and that he was now hiding somewhere within it. The lieutenant climbed a fence near Ward's dairy, being joined almost immediately by Sergt. Boyle, and both looked into the adjoining yards.

In a few moments Officer Boland ap-

peared at the door of the rear basement of

No. 311 D street and beckoned to the of-

ficers on the fence: "I have got him," he

said, as they approached; "he is here

under a bed." The officers entered, and

there, on the floor under the bed, crouched

Langster with Fowler's pistol still in his

hand. He had stripped himself of all of

his clothes except his undershirt, and was

wrapped in a quilt. His striped pants and

shirt were on the floor near the foot of the

bed.

He made no resistance when ordered to

come out, and obeyed Lieut. Kelly's com-

mand to put up his hands. While doing

this, Sergt. Boyle picked up the pistol and

remarked, as he examined it, that an-

other load remained. Langster turned to

Boland, and with a savage grin, ex-

claimed. "If I had known that I would

have put you in hell, too!" While being

taken to the station house the officers

were informed that Fowler was dead. At

this Langster burst out in a loud laugh.

Afterwards, when the widow of the mur-

dered man arrived at the station, Lang-

ster brutally mocked her grief.

When first locked up in his cell Lang-

ster was seen by a Post reporter. He

maintained an obstinate, sulken silence,

but the gift of a cigarette induced him to

speak.

"Had you any intention of killing Fow-

ler when you left the workhouse this

morning?" queried the reporter.

"No," was the reply, "but I had made

up my mind to escape, no matter what

stood in my way."

"I want to pay my fine."

"How did you get possession of the

pistol?"

"Well, the officer was going to shoot

me, and I caught hold of the pistol and

wrenched it away and fired. I then

ran away."

Later in the day, however, Langster,

began to shamefacedly, looked in a dazed

way at his questioners, and if he remaked

towards night he abandoned this sham-

ing, and said he was sorry for what he

had done. When first looked up he ex-

pressed a wish to be hanged at once, so as

to show how game he would die, but his

spirit of bravado did not last long.

During the afternoon there was an in-

tense throng of persons around

Lieut. Kelly at a crowd. A man asked Lieut.

Kelly if a crowd would be fired upon

should the station be attacked. He was

assured it would, but Lieut. Kelly having

heard other significant rumors thought an

cure. He waited upon Dr. Dye about 4

o'clock and asked for an extra detail of

four or five men at his station. The re-

sult of the conference was an order for the

removal of Langster to the Fifth precinct

station. When the officers went to un-

lock his cell at 7:30 o'clock they found

that he had stuffed the key hole of the

lock with chewed meat, paper, etc.

Planned in with a match. Afraid that

he might be taken by force, he had done

this in the hope that it would prevent

entrance to his cell. After half an hour's

work the keyhole was cleared. Langster

brought out, handcuffed, placed in a cab

and Sergt. Boyle and Privates Boland

and Kelly drove away.

The autopsy at 3 o'clock revealed the

fact that the ball had entered the body

between the tenth and eleventh ribs,

passed through the liver, severed the

vena cava, one of the principal veins in

the body, and then lodged in the spine,

from which it was chiseled out. The

body was then turned over to the family

and the deceased will be buried to-day.

At 10 o'clock, the jury summoned being

Daniel Sheehan, Fred Kelly, Henry H.

Ellis, C. P. Sheehan, W. O. Patton and

Charles Speight. The witnesses summoned

are John Hamilton, W. D. Atkinson, Joseph

Parson, W. W. Clark, Alfred S. Wilson,

W. Parson, W. L. Clark, Holmes, Robert Jack-

son, Thomas Miller, Henry T. Houck and

Thomas Smith Jr. Fowler was born in this

District on October 22, 1842, in the police

station on October 22, 1842, in the police