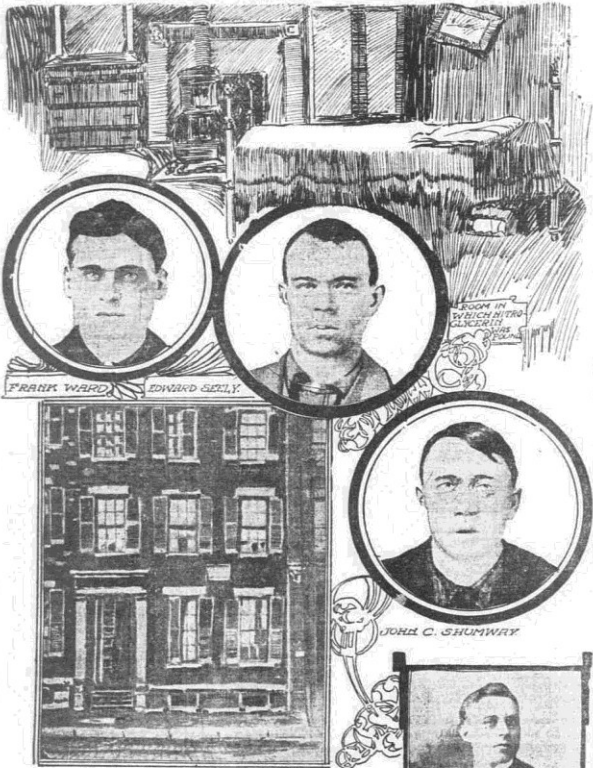


What Are Yeggmen? The Intersection of Building History and True Crime

ALLEGED SAFE-BLOWERS HAD RENDEZVOUS IN HOUSE WHERE EUGENE FIELD WAS BORN.



House at No. 24 South Broadway, which was raided by detectives. It is supposed to be the house in which Eugene Field was born, as shown by the tablet above the front-door windows. Gelly, Shumway and Ward were arrested in the raid.

Detective James Moran, Garbed as a Tramp, Associates Three Days With Accused

tered the house and rushed into Ward's room. "Hands up," they shouted, as they covered the prisoners with their pistols. Ward and Gelly, despite the show of arms, tried to get to a dresser. Shumway, whose leg is broken, sat still in his chair. ENOUGH EXPLOSIVES



DETECTIVE JAMES MORAN

In the Penitentiary at Port Madison, Pa., for safe-blowing.

By Ken Zimmerman Jr.

**What Are Yeggmen? The Intersection
of Building History and True Crime**

Copyright 2025 by Ken Zimmerman

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced except for brief quotations in printed reviews without the prior permission of the publisher.

This booklet is published in St. Louis, Missouri by Ken Zimmerman Jr. Enterprises. Excerpts were previously published in 2014 and 2021.

First Edition: April 2025

Cover photo from the *St. Louis Republic* coverage of the arrest of the safe burglars from the public domain.

Table of Contents

A Short Bio	3
Case 1 – 2912 Washington and Arthur Huddleston	4
Case 2 – Wabash Railroad Safe Burglary	9
Case 3 – Shootout on Pine Street	15
Case 4 – Detective Catches Cracksman at Field House	23
Contact Me and Signed Copies	34
St. Louis History Books.....	36
Combat Sports Books.....	37

A Short Bio

Ken Zimmerman Jr. is the author of twenty-two non-fiction books on combat sports, politics, and St. Louis history. Ken fell in love with St. Louis history listening to his grandparents, Gilbert and Alvina Ellis, talk about Old St. Louis.



Figure 1- Gilbert and Alvina Ellis in 1938 (Author's personal collection)

Case 1 – 2912 Washington and Arthur Huddleston

(The following is an excerpt from 2912 Washington and the Murder of Arthur Huddleston)

On Sunday, November 17, 1912, shortly after midnight. Albert Whitefield shot St. Louis police officer Arthur M. Huddleston in the alley behind 2912 Washington Avenue.

Arthur Huddleston and his partner, William J. Kelly, responded to a woman's scream in the rear alley of 2912 Washington Avenue. Albert Whitefield, a long-term convict, who the state released on holiday parole in 1908 after Whitefield served half of his sentence for an earlier murder, had broken into the house of his partner, who the newspapers referred to as Whitefield's common-law wife. The house may have been an

alley house that adjoined the main house.

Homeowners kept alley houses for servants during the neighborhood's more affluent days. After new owners converted the houses to rooming houses, the alley house would become one more room to let. Whitefield's girlfriend Anna "Annie" Williams lived at 2912 Washington Avenue when Whitefield surprised her and a gentleman caller about 12:30 a.m. on November 17, 1912.

Huddleston and Kelly heard Annie's screams and ran to the scene of the attempted murder. Anna Williams screamed as she tried to escape the room while Whitefield tried to slash her throat.

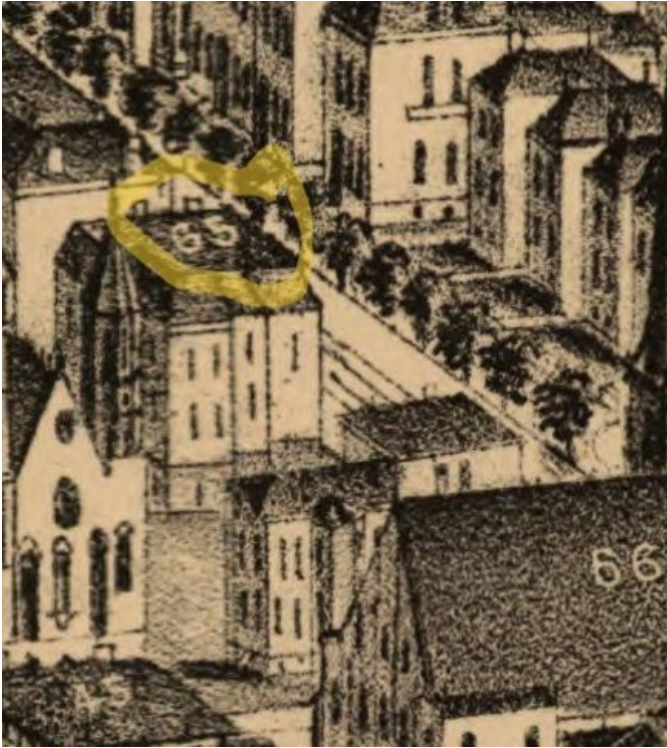


Figure 2- Leete mansion, 2912 Washington Avenue, from Compton's and Dry's Pictorial St. Louis 1875 (Public Domain)

Huddleston and Kelly separated at Washington and Ewing avenues to look for the suspect. Whitefield ambushed Kelly and took Kelly's service revolver. After escaping Whitefield, Kelly rapped his

nightstick on the sidewalk, which was the policeman's signal of distress. Officer Huddleston ran to Kelly's aid with his flashlight on. Whitefield aimed at the flashlight in the darkness and fired one shot. The bullet struck Huddleston in the heart killing him instantly.

During his escape, Whitefield shot another officer and a security guard before escaping on a train into Illinois. A local sheriff captured Whitefield in Gorham, Illinois two days later. St. Louis Detectives returned Whitefield to Saint Louis, where the Circuit Court tried Whitefield for Huddleston's murder. The jury convicted Whitefield, and the judge sentenced Whitefield to life in prison.

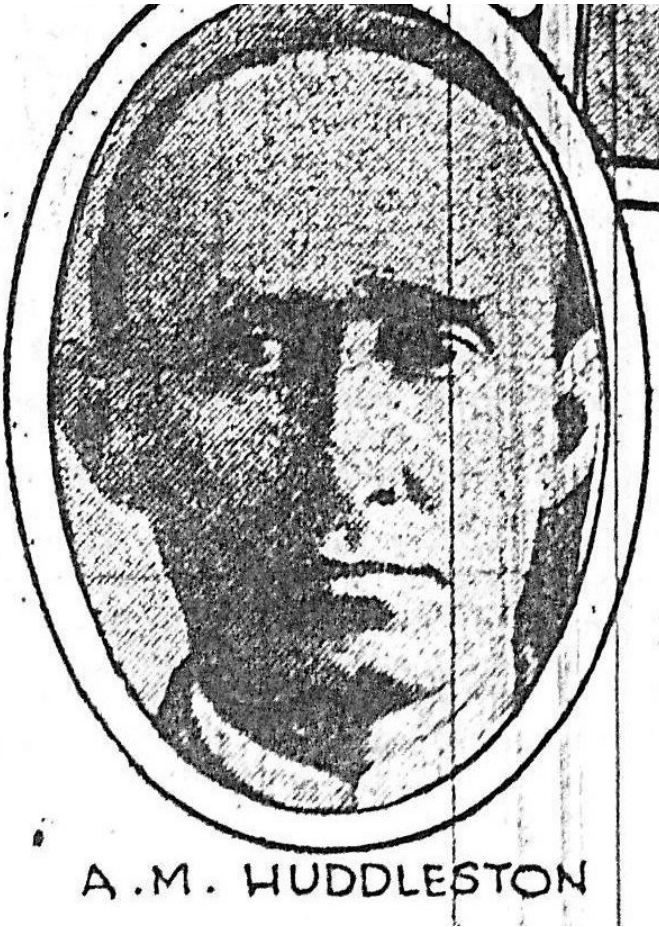


Figure 3- St. Louis Police Officer Arthur Huddleston circa 1912 (Public Domain)

Case 2 – Wabash Railroad Safe Burglary

*(Excerpt from Deadly Decades: St. Louis Police Tales
from 1910-1927)*

On a chilly night, January 9, 1915, Sgt. Michael Gibbons stepped off the westbound Delmar owl streetcar about 3:00 a.m. Sgt. Gibbons walked towards the Wabash Railroad's Delmar Station, which was in complete darkness. Sgt. Gibbons saw an outline of two men in the normally quiet station.

Gibbons kneeled and wrapped his nightstick on the platform to signal any nearby beat officers to report to him. Patrol officer Arthur J. Saxy heard the night stick and started for the area.

Besides Patrolman Saxy, Gibbons rapping on the platform attracted the attention of two

burglars preparing to blow the safe in the Wabash Delmar Station. Sgt. Gibbons did not realize a crime was unfolding inside the station. Gibbons did not unbutton his coat, which prevented Gibbons from getting to his revolver. Sgt. Gibbons was one of the best sharpshooters on the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department. His buttoned coat would soon lead to tragedy.

One of the safe burglars called for Sgt. Gibbons to throw up his hands. 73-year-old Phillip Koerper, a guard the burglars held at gunpoint, heard Sgt. Gibbons reply, "Well, I guess not."

Before Sgt. Gibbons freed his revolver from inside his coat, the burglar shot Gibbons through his right arm into his heart. Gibbons died instantly and fell on the

platform with his head hanging over the edge.

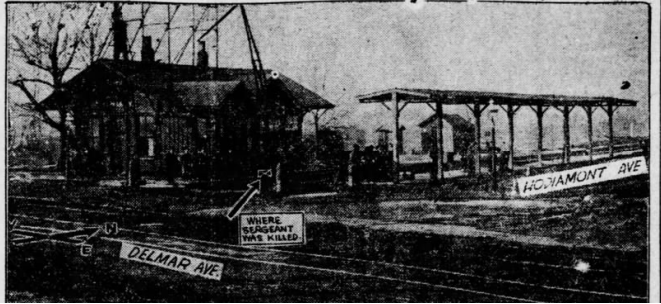


Figure 4- Wabash Station at the time of the safe burglary (Public Domain)

Patrol Officer Saxy was two blocks north at Clemens Avenue and the Wabash tracks. Saxy started running towards the station when he heard the shots. When Saxy arrived, he initially did not see Sgt. Gibbons lying on the platform as it was a foggy night.

Saxy engaged the shooter, who started a running gun battle with Saxy. As the safe burglar ran around the station and shot at Saxy, the

other burglar blew the safe with bullets flying around him. The burglar emptied the safe, which held about \$4.00. As Saxy came back around the north side of the station, he found Sgt. Gibbons lying on the platform.

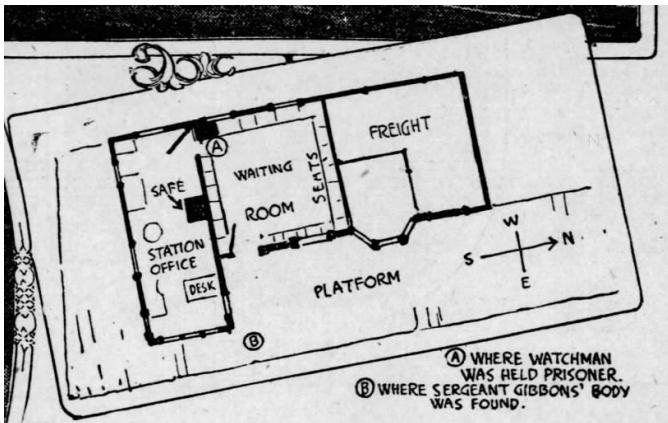


Figure 5-Floor Plan of the Wabash Station showing the progress of the burglary and murder (Public Domain)

Saxy checked on Gibbons, but it was obvious Gibbon had died. Grief overcame Saxy as he worked for Sgt. Gibbons for years. Saxy looked up to and admired Gibbons.

In the confusion caused by the discovery of Gibbons, the two safe burglars escaped running north from the station. It was the last time anyone saw the burglars. The police never captured the burglars. In the years prior to the widespread use of fingerprints, criminals left town after such an incident and set up somewhere else.

Chief of Police Young believed the men to be professional safecrackers or "yeggmen". Young believed due to the skillful way the shooter led Saxy away from the safe breaking showed the men were professionals. The other burglar blowing the safe, while a gunfight raged around him was the mark of a professional criminal.

60-year-old Michael F. Gibbons was laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery

on January 11, 1915. Sgt. Gibbons left a widow and children.

Sources: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 9, 1915, p.1 and January 10, 1915, p. 21. Missouri Death Certificate Database 1910-1965



Figure 6- Sgt. Michael Gibbons (Public Domain)

Case 3 – Shootout on Pine Street

(Excerpt from Shootout on Pine Street: The Deadliest Shootout in St. Louis Police History)

On Friday, October 21, 1904, five St. Louis Police Officers raided a rooming house at 1324 Pine Street, site of today's Soldier Memorial, to arrest three men suspected of an Illinois train robbery in August 1904. The attempted arrest of the three train robbers resulted in the most storied shootout in St. Louis Police history.

During the World's Fair, St. Louis Police added extra officers to the city's detective force. The detective force patrolled the Fair and still investigated crimes. The workload required the St. Louis Police Board to hire extra officer. Two of these officers, Special

Officer Harry James, and Kansas City detective Edward Boyle, received information that three men suspected of robbing a Pullman car on the Illinois Central were staying at a rooming house on Pine Street.

St. Louis Chief of Detectives William Desmond sent Detectives John J. Shea, Thomas Dwyer, and Thomas McCluskey with the two officers to arrest the train robbers.

As the detectives approached 1324 Pine Street, they recognized one of the robbers, Harry Vaughn, exit the house. The officers arrested Vaughn, who fought the ferociously. The officers struck Vaughn in the head four or five times, but Vaughn kept fighting. Dwyer, McCluskey, Shea and Boyle went for the other robbers, while

James tried to keep control of
Vaughn.

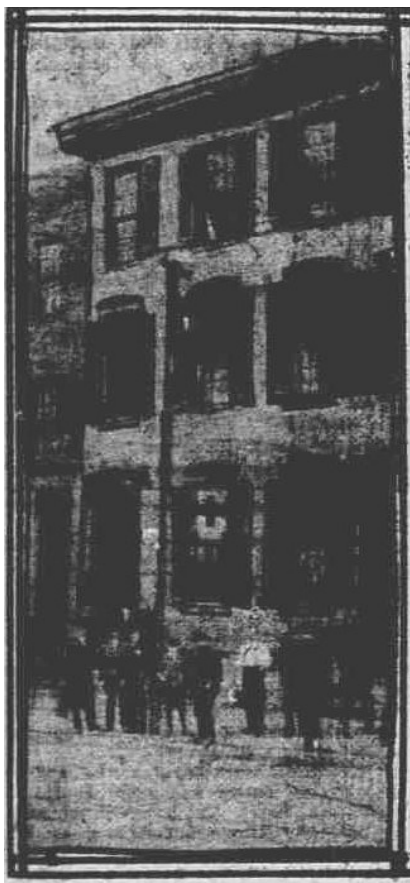


Figure 7- 1324 Pine Street. The window with the cross on the first floor is where the gunfight occurred. (Public Domain)

The commotion outside the building alerted the other robbers, William Morris and Alfred Rosenauer aka Rose, to the detectives descending on their small room. Preparing for the police raid, Morris stood with his revolver pointed at the door. As soon as the detectives entered, Morris started shooting.

Dwyer was the first in the door. The concealed and cornered criminals shot Dwyer in the abdomen. Dwyer fell to the floor breaking a chair. Rosenauer left his concealed spot in the room to attack the downed officer, which proved a fatal mistake. Dwyer fatally shot Rosenauer from the floor.

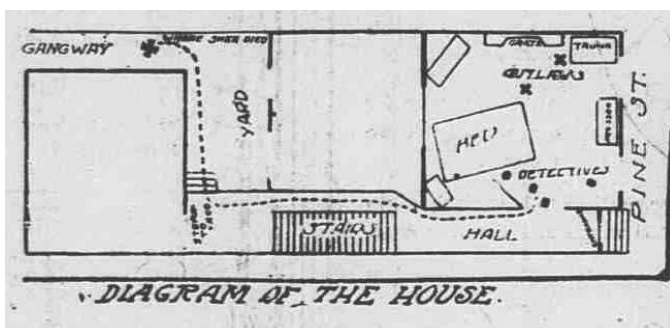


Figure 8- Floor Plan of 1324 Pine Street showing the shootout (Public Domain)

McCluskey was next in. Morris shot McCluskey in the abdomen also. McCluskey slumped over the bed with his revolver underneath him taking McCluskey out of the fight. Morris shot Shea in the chest, but Shea continued firing. Dwyer also fired at Morris from the floor. Morris finally collapsed after Shea and Dwyer shot Morris four times.

Shea, the only one still on his feet, staggered from the room and fell into Boyle's arms. Boyle took Shea to a safe area in the backyard

of 1324 Pine Street, where Shea died. Boyle helped James with Vaughn, who was putting up more resistance. James and Boyle clubbed Vaughn into insensibility.

Alerted by the gunfire, other officers began to descend on 1324 Pine Street. Rose and Shea were dead. Dwyer, McCluskey, and Morris were in grave condition. Morris was the only one who could speak. Morris bragged about shooting the officers and said he would shoot more if he had more ammunition.

Dwyer died during surgery on October 21st. McCluskey died the next day. Morris, who the *St. Louis Republic* described as an impressive physical specimen standing six feet, one inches tall and weighing 190 pounds, lived two more weeks. When Morris' victims from the train robbery identified him, Morris

swore at them and said they better hope he died. Morris died swearing at the police officers guarding him.

During Vaughan's trial, testimony showed that Vaughn led a crew that robbed a train in 1898 and shot a brakeman. After serving time for this crime, the state paroled Vaughan and Morris in June 1904. Within days, Vaughan and Morris started a new crime spree.

The St. Louis Circuit Court sentenced Harry Vaughn for the train robbery and other robberies in St. Louis after the train robbery. According to *In the Line of Duty: St. Louis Police Officers Who Made the Ultimate Sacrifice* by Barb Miksicek, et. al, the state executed Vaughn in 1907 for leading a 1905 prison break and killing a corrections officer.

In only one other incident did so many officers lose their lives. Electricity was the killer in that case.

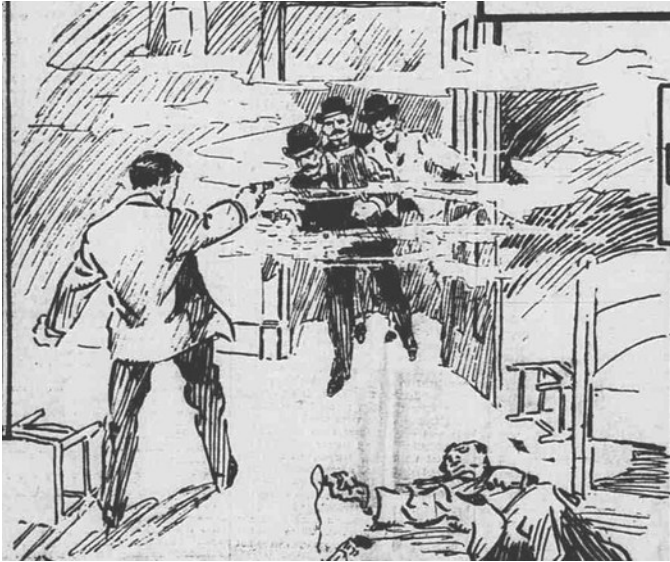


Figure 9- Artist rendering of the shootout (Public Domain)

Case 4 – Detective Catches Cracksman at Field House

(Excerpt from True Crime, Disasters, and Police Tales of Old St. Louis)

On Saturday, March 12, 1904, St. Louis Detective James J. Moran led a team of detectives to a room in the row house at 634 South Broadway on St. Louis' Near South Side. Frank Ward, a suspected safe cracker, rented a room in the row house. Besides Ward, the detectives arrested Edward Seely and John Shumway. Moran and the detectives suspected the three men of being "yeggmen" or safe crackers.

The arrested men knew Detective Moran as "Kid" Moran, a local tramp and robber. Under his disguise, Moran successfully

infiltrated the gang over two or three weeks. When Moran arrested the men, the St Louis Police Officers found enough nitroglycerin to blow up the Four Courts Building in Downtown St. Louis.



Figure 10- Four Courts Building circa 1900 (Public Domain)

Moran and his fellow detectives took the men to the same Four Courts Building, where St.

Louis Chief of Detectives William Desmond and St. Louis Chief of Police Matthew Keely would "sweat" the safe burglars.

Chief Desmond accused the men of blowing open the safe of the Ruecking Construction Company on Tuesday, March 8, 1904. The burglars did not find any valuables in the safe on this job. Two nights later, Thursday, March 10, 1904, Ward and Seely blew open the safe at W. H. Warren Coke Company. The men made off with \$20 in this burglary.

Chief Keely did not believe Shumway took part in the recent burglaries due to Shumway having a broken leg. However, Keely did suspect a botched safe burglary led to Shumway's injury.



Figure 11- Eugene Field House in 1904 at the time of the arrests (Public Domain)

Keely interviewed Frank Ward's wife of three months and her friend, who was caring for her during a recent illness. Ward's wife did not

know of Ward's criminal past when she married him at the end of 1903.

After speaking to the women, Keely interviewed Ward. When Keely accused Ward of being a safe blower, Ward betrayed himself by saying, "No; why, I couldn't blow a 'cracker box'." Criminals at this time referred to easily broken into safes as "cracker boxes". The public did not use the term.

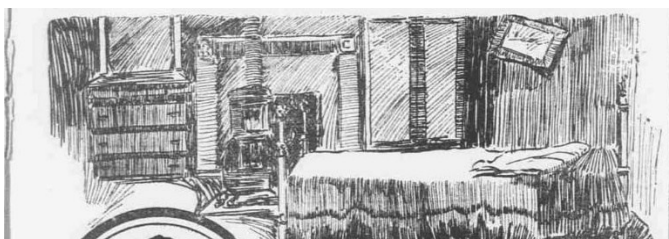


Figure 12- Artist rendering of the room where the detectives raided (Public Domain)

Frank Ward initially denied his criminal record. When Chief Keely presented him with his record from the Bertillon System including

his term in the Fort Madison, Iowa penitentiary for safe blowing, Ward confessed the record was correct. He continued denying his role in recent safe burglaries.



Figure 13- Artist rendering of Frank Ward and Edward Seely (Public Domain)

Edward Seely also denied his involvement with the safe blowing. Seely claimed he lived in Cleveland; Ohio and his wife was staying at a hospital in Cincinnati. Mrs. Ward said Mrs. Seely was staying in the Mullanphy Hospital in St. Louis.

Ward and Seely were hardened criminals. When Detective Moran raided the Eugene Field House at 634 South Broadway, the superior force of six detectives ordered the men to throw up their hands. Ward and Seely attempted to retrieve their weapons from a dresser drawer, but the cocked pistols of the detectives dissuaded them from their suicidal mission. St. Louis Police could have experienced another deadly police shooting like the Shootout on Pine Street.

Shumway also served time in the Illinois penitentiary for burglary. After an investigation, St. Louis Police determined Shumway to be Edward Alexander of Taylorville, Illinois.

The men wasted little time accepting their punishment. On March 22, 1904, Ward, Seely and

Alexander pled guilty to blowing safes. Judge Taylor sentenced all three men to two years in the Missouri Penitentiary.



Figure 14- Artist rendering of John Shumway (Public Domain)

Frank Ward only served a year. He died in the prison hospital on March 23, 1905, at 29 years-old from an undisclosed illness.

Prison officials released Edward Seely (Seeley in

penitentiary records) in September 1905. Prison officials released Alexander, who prison officials listed as John Shumway in the penitentiary records, in September 1905.

Frank Ward and his wife rented a room at 634 South Broadway, which would become the Eugene Field House and Toy Museum. Roswell Field owned the house in 1850, when his son Eugene Field was born. Roswell Field represented Dredd Scott in the famous anti-slavery case.

While a plaque on the building says Eugene Field was born there, historians believe he was born under medical care close by. Eugene Field did live at the house from 1850 to 1856, when his mother died. Roswell Field sent young Eugene to Massachusetts where an aunt raised Eugene.

Built in 1845, the former home of Roswell Field and his poet son Eugene Field deteriorated between the time of this case and 1936. Walsh's Row was a place of affluence in the mid-Nineteenth Century, but it faded over the years as the wealthy continued moving westward.

Faced with potential demolition in 1936, concerned citizens formed the Eugene Field House Foundation to protect the property. Today, it is the only row house left on the block. It is a historic monument and toy museum.

Detective James Moran would rise to the rank of Captain of St. Louis Police before retiring. Moran made important arrests over his career, but few had the historic connection that his arrest of the cracksmen made.



Figure 15- Detective James Moran (Public Domain)

Contact Me and Signed Copies



Figure 16- Ken with his parents, Ernest and Patricia Diaz, in front of his grandparent's flat (Author's personal collection)

If you would like to contact me, you can send me an email at kenzimmermanjr@kenzimmermanjr.com
After May 1st, it will be ken@kenzimmermanjr.com.

You can check out my work at www.kenzimmermanjr.com. You will find over seven hundred posts,

mostly about history, and links to my books on Amazon.

Finally, if you would like a signed copy of one of my books, you can send me an email. I will invoice you for a signed copy. The cost is \$10-15 based on printing costs for the paperback or hardcover.

St. Louis History Books

The Sherlock Holmes of St. Louis: St. Louis Chief of Detectives William Desmond (Published April 2024)

Deadly Decades: St. Louis Police Tales from 1910 to 1927 (Published December 2021)

True Crime, Natural Disasters and Police Tales of Old St. Louis (Published November 2021)

The Union Missouri Bank Robbery (Published September 2018)

The Jobbing of Andrew J. Gordon: St. Louis Police's First Black Detective (Published February 2015)

Shootout on Pine Street: The Illinois Central Train Robbery and Aftermath (Published November 2014)

St. Louis Civil War: The Streetcar Strike of 1900 (Published July 2014)

2912 Washington and the Murder of Arthur Huddleston (Published April 2014)

1920: The Most Dangerous Year for St. Louis Police (Published March 2014)

Theodore Roosevelt's Effect on the 1912 Presidential Election (Published January 2014)

Combat Sports Books

Divided Championship: Joe Stecher and Ed "Strangler" Lewis after the Double-Cross (Tentatively scheduled for June 2025)

Shooter in a Worked World: John Pesek and the 1920s Promotional Wars (Published September 2024)

Origins of a Legend: The Making of Ed "Strangler" Lewis (Published January 2024)

Wayfarer in a Foreign Land: Sorakichi Matsuda Wrestles in America (Published July 2023)

Shooting or Working? The History of the American Heavyweight Wrestling Championship (Published October 2022)

Gotch vs. Zbyszko: The Quest for Redemption (Published February 2022)

Double-Crossing the Gold Dust Trio: Stanislaus Zbyszko's Last Hurrah (Published August 2021)

Masked Marvel To The Rescue: The Gimmick That Saved the 1915 New York Wrestling Tournament (Published September 2020)

Gotch vs. Hackenschmidt: The Matches That Made and Destroyed Legitimate American Professional Wrestling (Published May 2016)

Evan "The Strangler" Lewis: The Most Feared Wrestler of the 19th Century (Published March 2015)

Morrissey vs. Poole: Politics, Prizefighting and the Murder of Bill the Butcher (Published January 2015)

William Muldoon: The Solid Man Conquers Wrestling and Physical Culture (Published October 2014)