

Coroner's Jury Finds Japanese Girl in Furnace Was Murdered

Verdict Rejects Police View Emiko Yamada Killed Herself

Seventeen Witnesses, Including Members of Family, Testify But Throw No Light Upon Tragedy.

AFTER deliberating for more than two and one-half hours a coroner's jury indicated that Emiko Yamada, 17, the Japanese girl whose body was found in the furnace of her home two days after Christmas, had been murdered.

"She came to her death as a result of suffocation, same having been brought about by some person or persons unknown to us," the verdict read, after an inquest which occupied eight hours on Friday afternoon and evening.

Despite the fact that Detective Inspector A. S. Hann and Detective A. Gibb, who worked on the case, expressed their personal convictions that the girl had committed suicide, the jury rejected the theory and reopened the mystery death.

A succession of seventeen witnesses, some of them Japanese who could not speak English, were able to throw little new light on the case. No motive for either murder or suicide was adduced during the hearing.

FAMILY TESTIFY.

Seven other residents of the house at 736 West Seventh, including four members of the Yamada family who slept in the same room as the girl, agreed that she had gone to bed about 11 o'clock on the previous evening, but none could recall hearing her arise. They declared the girl was normal and healthy, had no enemies and no apparent reason for doing away with herself.

Evidence of Inspector J. F. C. B. Vance, police scientist, and detectives indicated the furnace was cold when the girl's body entered it through an aperture measuring 13 inches by 10. They noted that the victim's chest and shoulders, where her clothing contained rapeseed oil, were severely burned, while the remainder of her body, including her hair, was not touched by the flames.

Dr. W. A. Hunter, coroner's physician, who conducted the autopsy, said he found the cheekbone and left arm fractured. To the jury, he expressed the opinion this could have been self-inflicted while the girl struggled in the heat of the furnace.

EXPERT HEARD.

Inspector Vance explained that analysis of oil found on the girl's red sweater showed it to be similar to a half-gallon can of rapeseed oil, used by Japanese for cooking and religious purposes, which was later found in the house. He said unburned matches found below the body in the furnace were of the same type as other matches in the home, and that a safety pin used to tie a sheet of oil-soaked paper to her sweater were similar to other pins in the house.

Running shoes worn by the dead girl had slight traces of rust on the soles, the rust corresponding with that on the top of the water pot below the furnace door, he said.

he insisted, she was in good health and normal mentally.

When he was called to the furnace, he said, he tried to pull the girl out, but only succeeded in taking off her shoes. The body was wedged so tightly in the firebox that the furnace had to be partly dismantled.

Kiyomatsu Kobayashi, landlord, who occupied a room above the Yamada family, declared he awoke at 6 a.m. and left for his work at the B. C. Lumber Co. at 6:45 a.m. on the morning of the death. He did not go to the basement, he said, and noticed nothing unusual about the house. He did not know if the girl was still in bed.

Jine Yamada, the girl's cousin, who slept alone on the third floor, explained he went to bed about midnight and awoke at 8 a.m. He left the house about 8:10 a.m. for his work as pin boy in a bowling alley. He was late, he said, because his alarm clock did not wake him.

HAD SOME SAKI.

He declared he had drunk two or three small cups of saki with the girl's father the previous evening. Inspector Hann later testified that enquiry of the youth's employer confirmed his evidence of being late for work.

Although Japanese witnesses were unanimous in describing the girl as cheerful and in the habit of playing with other children, Inspector Hann said his investigation indicated the girl was not allowed out of the house except to go to the Buddhist church and that she could read nothing but Japanese books. He suggested that she had to work in the household from 7 in the morning until late at night. After she prepared the dinner and washed the dishes, he said, she had to knit sweaters and other clothing.

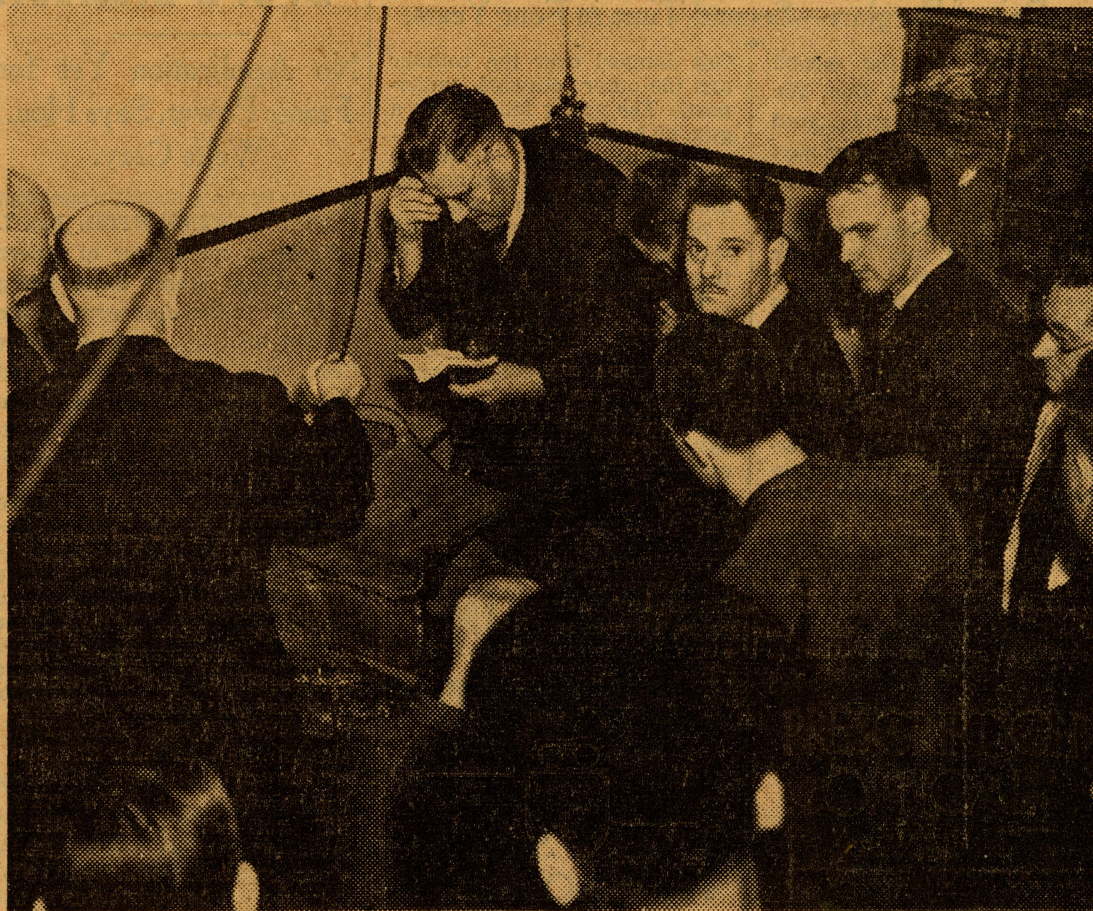
Today in Police Court

Stanley Niles was fined \$50 for keeping a gaming house at 414 Columbia avenue. Six inmates were fined \$10 each.

A charge of attempted suicide, laid against Dell Evans, was withdrawn.

Gus Lorange was fined \$25 for keeping a betting house.

Robert E. Shore was fined \$20 for dangerous driving. It was recommended that his driver's license be suspended for three months.



RETURNED MURDER VERDICT—Here is the coroner's jury inspecting the old, rusty furnace in which the body of Emiko Yamada, 17, was found partially burned on the morning of December 27. Inspector A. S. Hann, Coroner J. D. Whitbread and other officials pointed out the door, measuring only 13 inches by 10, through which the girl's body passed. After listening to witnesses for nearly six hours, the jury decided the girl had been murdered.

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Rapeseed oil, the inspector declared, is not a volatile oil but is a substance which burns slowly with intense heat. Marks of burning on the body followed the course of the oil on her clothing.

Eiichi Yamada, the girl's fifteen-year-old brother, a pupil of King Edward High School, described in meticulous English the family's anxiety on the morning that he discovered the body.

SLEPT IN SAME ROOM.

He said he went to bed in the same room as the girl about 11 p.m. the previous night, approximately the time when she retired, but he said he did not hear her get up in the morning. When his mother called him about 9 a.m., however, he noted that her bed was empty.

He went outside to look for footprints in the snow, thinking she might have gone to the store, and then downstairs to a woodpile in the basement to see if she was gathering wood.

"I took a circle around past the furnace and happened to glance at it as I passed," he recalled. "I saw flames in the furnace and I thought that is funny because we never light it in the morning. I opened the door and saw the shoes and recognized them. I didn't look any more. I called any father."

The father, Jinzaemon Yamada, speaking through an interpreter, admitted the girl had been told by a doctor more than a year ago that she had "some trouble in her chest" and had been despondent about it. Apart from that,

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