



10-10-62

Burns to death in parked auto here

Lucille Elaine DeVries, 22, 607½ 3rd NE, was found dead early Wednesday in her blazing and fire-gutted auto beside her home.

An investigation is being conducted by police, firemen and Dr. J. E. Christopherson, county medical examiner. State fire marshals were coming to Mason City to assist in determining the cause of the fire.

VICTIM—Lucille DeVries, who died in her burning car Wednesday morning, in June 1957 represented the Thornton American Legion Auxiliary at Hawkeye Girls State. This picture of her was taken at that time. Now 22, she was employed by the Iowa Company, Mason City insurance firm.

Dr. Christopherson said that on the basis of medical examination so far, death probably was due to burns. However, an autopsy was planned to determine if any other sort of injury could have been responsible. It was known that death was not from carbon monoxide and blood-alcohol testing showed an

alcohol level well below intoxicating amount.

Major questions remaining were why the fire started and why the body—burned beyond recognition—was in the back seat portion of the two-door car.

One explanation would be a slow buildup of fire from a cigarette or similar cause. Dr. Christopherson said there was paper in the rear seat that could have speeded the fire process.

It is possible, he said, that one could awaken confused in a fire situation and go the wrong way for escape, or that one might inhale fumes and become unconscious while attempting to get to a fire in hope of extinguishing it.

One person from the neighborhood who drove by the scene only about 15 minutes before fire was reported believed that the car then was parked with a door open and dome light on.

However, Miss DeVries' roommate, Judy Siskow, reported to officials that she had awakened and smelled smoke some 45 minutes earlier and returned to bed after failing to locate the source.

Firemen received three calls in succession reporting the fire, with the first call coming at 4:12 a.m. Miss Siskow was one of the callers. By that time she was aware of more smoke and could see from the upstairs apartment that the car was burning completely.

When firemen arrived, the entire inside of the car was ablaze. Heat had smashed out the closed car windows and caused the metal car roof to sag. Firemen were unaware that anyone might be in the car until Miss Siskow told them at the scene that her roommate was not at home and could still be in her car.

The interior of the auto was so badly burned that only the springs of the auto seats remained except in a rear seat portion protected by part of the body. Parts of the dash were melted.

The car was parked in a drive only a few feet from the house, and soaring flames scorched the edge of a porch roof.

The investigating officers were attempting to learn where Miss DeVries had been in the time just before the fire, partly to tell definitely if there was opportunity for a slow building up of fire in the auto.

Police were told that she drove from the Frontier Ballroom alone about 1:30 a.m. She was employed there on a part-time basis. It was not determined immediately whether she went to her home at once.

Miss DeVries was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald DeVries, Thornton.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete at the Wartnaby-Grarup Funeral Home at Sheffield.

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Wednesday p.m.
5:00 Yogi Berra
5:30 Bart's Clubhouse
5:45 CBS News
6:00 Regional News
6:10 Weather Watch
6:25 Markets

rate political appearances in
Iowa Tuesday night.
Sen. Bourke B. Hickenlooper,
who seeks re-election, addressed
a GOP rally at Grinnell and criticized the Democratic Party for
what he said was a drive for bureaucratic control that would undermine American traditions.