

# Hangings

## June 7, 1859

John Moore and Robert Over were hanged on June 7, 1859 for the murder of Launcelot Adams, a Brantford to Paris mail coach driver. Mr. Adams was killed on April 14, 1859 at a deserted spot on the Paris Road, a few miles west of Brantford. He was shot in the head and the mail bags were stolen for the letters containing Canadian and American money. Launcelot Adam's body was discovered the next morning with the horse and buggy and mail bags nearby (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, April 15, 1859, p. 2). Joseph Armstrong was one of the men apprehended for the crime and when questioned he implicated not only himself with his confession but also John Moore and Robert Over (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, April 22, 1859, p. 2). Initially sentenced to hang, Joseph Armstrong's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in the Kingston Penitentiary (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, June 3, 1859, p. 3) but he was pardoned twenty years later, on the condition that he leave the country, after helping guards quell a prison uprising. The trial of John Moore and Robert Over started on April 29, 1859 with both men pleading not guilty. According to Armstrong's testimony, Robert Over was the one who shot Launcelot Adams. The jury deliberated for an hour before finding both men guilty of murder and Chief Justice Draper sentenced them to death (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, May 6, 1859, p. 2). A double gallows was built outside of the Brant County Court House on Wellington Street and more than 8,000 people witnessed the only public execution ever held in Brantford (**Brantford Weekly Expositor**, June 10, 1859, p. 3). **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

For more information:

- [History of the County of Brant Warner, Beers, and Co. \(p. 179-182 of PDF\)](#)
- [Reville's History of the County of Brant Volume 1 \(p. 174 of PDF\)](#)

## June 11, 1880

Benjamin Carrier lived with his wife and five children on a farm in Tuscarora Township. On April 16, 1880, Mr. Carrier and his wife, who were known to have arguments, went into the woods to cut material for baskets. When he returned home alone he told his daughter that her mother had drowned in the creek after having a fit. After a brief search the woman was found lying in the stream with a gash in the back of her head and an axe lying nearby. Benjamin Carrier was immediately arrested but he pled not guilty and retained the services of Mr. Smyth to defend him (**Brantford Expositor**, May 5, 1880, p. 4). His daughter Eliza was one of the witnesses called to testify. After a one day trial the jury only took about fifteen minutes to find him guilty of murder (**Brantford Expositor**, May 6, 1880, p. 4). The Governor General refused to stop the execution (**Brantford Expositor**, June 7, 1880, p. 4) and Carrier was hanged on June 11, 1880 at the Brant County Jail (**Brantford Expositor**, June 11, 1880, p. 2). The Pagan Temperance Hall in Tuscarora Township was filled with people for Benjamin Carrier's funeral service before he was interred in the burial ground near the hall (**Brantford Expositor**, June 14, 1880, p. 4). **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

## December 15, 1905

Betsy Jacobs was found dead in her house on the morning of July 9, 1905 (**Brantford Expositor**, July 10, 1905, p. 1). She lived on the Six Nations Reserve and her choked and beaten body was found by David Davis, a mail carrier on the Reserve, who had come to her house to pick up some laundry. The Crown claimed that Joe Bennett, who also lived on the Six Nations Reserve, went to Jacob's house while he was drunk and committed the murder. Investigators found a letter written to Bennett next to the body, a stub of a cigar, and a set of horse's hoof prints from a horse that Joe Bennett had ridden the night before. Mr. Bennett fled when the police tried to arrest him but was apprehended on a farm near Dunnville a few days later (**Brantford Expositor**, July 14, 1905, p. 1). There was enough evidence provided at his preliminary trial on July 20th to send Joe Bennett's case to a higher court (**Brantford Expositor**, July 20, 1905, p. 1). He retained Louis F. Heyd as his lawyer and the trial, starting on September 27th, was conducted before Justice Anglin at the Brant County Court House. The jury didn't believe Bennett's defence that the circumstantial evidence wasn't enough to prove that he committed the murder and he was sentenced to death on September 30, 1905 (**Brantford Expositor**, September 30, 1905, p. 1). Joseph Bennett exercised his right to appeal for a new trial and in early December his lawyer went before a five Judge panel of the Ontario Court of Appeal but the

case was dismissed (Brantford Expositor, December 14, 1905, p. 1). Bennett did not confess before he was executed at the Brant County Jail (**Brantford Expositor**, December 15, 1905, p. 1). His body was claimed by relatives and was buried on Six Nations Territory. **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

## January 23, 1914

The body of Charles Dawson, a thirteen-year old boy from Echo Place, was found in a ditch on Blossom Road near Cainsville on September 9, 1913 (**Brantford Expositor**, September 9, 1913, p. 1). The police retraced his steps to Leslie Anguish's livery stables on Clarence Street. They learned that James Taylor had rented a rig there on the evening of the murder and when he returned he had stains on his hands and his clothing which he had tried to remove. The police wanted to talk to him about his movements on that night and arrested him on Colborne Street. After being questioned for a time Taylor confessed that he had assaulted Dawson and then slit his throat (**Brantford Expositor**, September 10, 1913, p. 1). It was noted by the **Expositor** that the prisoner did not appear to be upset by what he had done since he had no trouble sleeping and eating while being held in jail. After the evidence was presented at the inquest into the death of Charles Dawson the jury came back with a guilty verdict. Taylor didn't have a lawyer for the murder trial so A. M. Harley was appointed by the court. Although James Taylor took the stand and denied that he had previously confessed to the murder, it took the jury only a short time to reach a guilty verdict (**Brantford Expositor**, November 13, 1913, p. 1). An unsuccessful attempt was made to get the Minister of Justice to appoint a commission to see if the execution would be stayed (**Brantford Expositor**, January 10, 1914, p. 1). The hanging took place on January 23, 1914 (**Brantford Expositor**, January 23, 1914, p. 1). His aunt, Mrs. Parker, and a stepbrother took the body for burial. **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

## February 6, 1918

Carmelo Calleja was a fifty-seven year old married man who was supporting his wife and family in Malta. He was employed at the American Radiator Works and boarded at 100 Dalhousie Street. Gio Batta Bornello, who worked at Waterous Engine Works, was last seen alive in Victoria Park in the company of Calleja. Bornello's body, with a fractured skull, was found in D'Aubigny Creek near the Grand River on July 30, 1917 (**Brantford Expositor**, August 7, 1917, p. 1). At the preliminary hearing a witness stated that in the days after the body was discovered Carmelo Calleja had travelled to Toronto and Toronto Island and had sent a large sum of money to his family in Malta (**Brantford Expositor**, August 14, 1917, p. 6). The victim had been known to keep his money in his belt rather than in the bank. Calleja denied that he had been with Bornello but a witness had seen him walking away from where the body was found on the day of the murder. He couldn't afford an attorney so A. H. Boddy was appointed to represent him. The trial started in November with a number of witnesses providing evidence against Calleja who had pleaded not guilty (**Brantford Expositor**, November 21, 1917, p. 10). The jury came back with a guilty verdict after several hours of deliberation (**Brantford Expositor**, November 22, 1917, p. 1). Carmelo Calleja was originally sentenced to hang on January 3, 1918 but a temporary reprieve delayed the execution until February 6th (**Brantford Expositor**, February 6, 1918, p. 7). Calleja's body was taken to the Roman Catholic cemetery for burial. **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

## December 2, 1920

George Jones' affair with Elizabeth Giles ended when she went back to her husband. Even though Jones had a history of violent behaviour and threatened to shoot Mrs. Giles, a warrant for his arrest was never executed. After she didn't show up for an arranged meeting on October 27, 1919, Mr. Jones went to her house at 117 Market Street near Nelson and was seen chasing her down the street with a large knife. He stabbed her several times and she died within minutes. Jones tried to flee but he was knocked unconscious by two men who held him until the police arrived. George Jones was taken to the hospital for treatment before being moved to the hospital ward at the jail (**Brantford Expositor**, October 28, 1919, p. 1). After his arrest the newspaper reported that Jones was feigning lunacy so that he wouldn't have to answer any questions about the murder (**Brantford Expositor**, October 29, 1919, p. 1). A. H. Boddy, who had only been appointed as Jones' lawyer the day before, asked for the trial to be postponed until the fall (**Brantford Expositor**, February 17, 1920, p. 1). When the trial began on September 20, 1920 the defence used the insanity plea with the accused saying that he suffered lapses in memory when he was angry (**Brantford Expositor**, September 21, 1920, p. 1). The victim's fourteen year old daughter was one of the witnesses called to testify. Two days after the trial started, the jury found him guilty of murder after deliberating for just over an hour and

he was sentenced to death (**Brantford Expositor**, September 22, 1920, p. 1). George Jones was executed on December 2, 1920 and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Brantford (**Brantford Expositor**, December 2, 1920, p. 14). **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.

## November 24, 1922

On April 25, 1922, Phillip Knight and Lewis Christie saw a man throw a large pail from the G.T.R. bridge into the canal. When they pulled the pail out of the water and looked inside they found a man's head and two forearms. Later that night the police arrested Harry Dent and found more body parts in a large suitcase that he was carrying. Other body parts and several bloodstained tools were found in the rooms that Dent and his wife rented at 148 Darling Street. This house was owned by the victim, Dent's landlord Peter Egopian (**Brantford Expositor**, April 26, 1922, p. 1). Harry Dent, a war veteran and butcher by trade, claimed that a man from Toronto had asked him to get rid of the contents of the suitcase. Additional body parts were discovered in the canal when it was dragged by the fire department. The police determined that the murder took place in the kitchen of the house and that the body was dismembered in the cellar (**Brantford Expositor**, April 28, 1922, p. 1). The exhibits presented at the inquest included the large pail found in the canal, bloodstained steps from the home on Darling Street, a bloodstained axe, saw, knives, and hatchets (**Brantford Expositor**, May 5, 1922, p. 1). Harry Dent's wife, Margaret, was also charged with murder but when she was declared insane, the murder charge against her was dropped and she was sent to the Hamilton Insane Asylum (**Brantford Expositor**, June 26, 1922, p. 8). The Dents' three young children were placed in the custody of provincial child welfare authorities. At the trial, Harry Dent's claim that another man was responsible for the crime was dismissed because that man had an alibi. The jury deliberated for an hour and a half before returning with a guilty verdict (**Brantford Expositor**, September 21, 1922, p. 1). Mr. Dent was executed on November 24, 1922 (**Brantford Expositor**, November 24, 1922, p. 17). **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre and **Peacemakers & Lawbreakers: a 125-year history of the Brantford Police Service** by Heather Ibbotson provide more information about this case.



## November 28, 1930

On August 26, 1930, George Lim was stabbed with a butcher knife by Bob Wong in the American Cafe at 96-98 Dalhousie Street where they both worked. The two men were said to have argued over the amount of a gambling debt that Wong owed Lim. After Lim was stabbed his attacker ran out the back door of the restaurant. George Lim lived for a short time after the stabbing but refused to name his attacker. However, while policeman Charles Kellas was accompanying the victim to hospital he saw a Chinese man walking along Brant Avenue towards Paris. He drove his car along Brant Avenue, stopped the man, and took him into custody (**Brantford Expositor**,

August 27, 1930, p. 1). At the preliminary hearing on September 6, 1930, Jim Wong, who was the only other person in the kitchen at the time of the murder, said that he didn't see the accused stab Lim (**Brantford Expositor**, September 6, 1930, p. 1). Bob Wong took the stand at his trial and claimed that he had attacked Lim in self-defence but the jury did not believe his story. The jury only deliberated from 12:30 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. before returning with a guilty verdict (**Brantford Expositor**, September 24, 1930, p. 1). After the execution on November 28th (**Brantford Expositor**, November 28, 1930, p. 7) Wong was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery with a brief funeral notice appearing in the newspaper on November 29th. **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre and **Peacemakers & Lawbreakers: a 125-year history of the Brantford Police Service** by Heather Ibbotson provide more information about this case.

## December 8, 1932

Thirty-eight year old Joseph Bomberry lived with his forty-five year old, common-law wife Lily Johns on Sour Springs Road. On April 2, 1932 while Bomberry's mother and his wife were away, Joseph borrowed some shotgun shells from a neighbor, telling the man that he wanted to shoot some pike. When Lily Johns returned and went outside to get some water from the well, Joseph followed her and shot her at the front of the home where she died instantly (**Brantford Expositor**, April 4, 1932, p. 1). No one else in the family actually witnessed the crime but when Bomberry's mother and a couple of Johns' children rushed outside they found Joseph standing near the body with a shotgun. He immediately left home but was later arrested without incident by the Mounties at his father's house (**Brantford Expositor**, April 5, 1932, p. 1). Witnesses at the inquest included the neighbor who had given Bomberry the shells, two of the dead woman's children and Joseph Bomberry's mother (**Brantford Expositor**, April 5, 1932, p. 3). Joseph Bomberry wasn't represented by a lawyer at the preliminary hearing because he didn't have any money (**Brantford Expositor**, April 8, 2011, p. 1). His trial started on September 23rd right after R. Bruce Robertson, accused of murdering his wife, was found not guilty by reason of insanity. In his statement given to the police after he was arrested, Joseph Bomberry had said that he had been provoked by his wife saying that he was lazy and unfaithful. He said that when he pointed the gun at his wife, everything went dark, and then he heard the gun go off (**Brantford Expositor**, September 23, 1932, p. 1). Bomberry's lawyer, W. S. Brewster, did not call any witnesses for the defence, contended that the evidence was all circumstantial, and that the accused was not in a proper state of mind when he gave his statement. Mr. Bomberry was found guilty of murder with the jury deliberating only from 11:15 a.m. until 1:15 p.m. before coming back with their verdict (**Brantford Expositor**, September 24, 1932, p. 1). When a petition, signed by about 3,000 local citizens, appealing for the sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment failed, Joseph Bomberry was executed on December 8th (**Brantford Expositor**, December 8, 1932, p. 18). He was the last man to be hung in Brant County. **Felons of Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant: an anthology of murder and executions in three Ontario counties, 1828-1953** by John D. Ayre provides more information about this case.