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A Shot in the Dark Near Tragedy Follows Snollygoster Parade

William Trickett's nerves were wound tighter than a clock spring. Halloween on a college campus could make the most intrepid night watchman jittery. It certainly wasn't real ghosts and goblins the staunch William feared; it was those young rascals from Maple Hall who believed that Halloween was a good night for pranks. Or perhaps even worse, troublemakers from off campus. Trickett patted his gun nervously.

In the village of Berrien Springs exuberant crowds began to disperse after "Berrien County's biggest festive event": the annual Snollygoster parade.¹ A few thousand people had gathered that Halloween to watch hundreds of masked marchers parade through town, led by the "famous" Snollygoster band. Three hundred costumed revelers competed for the coveted prize money: "... best-dressed lady, best-dressed man, most hideous costume, best couple, best group, etc."² Mrs. Ewalt won the first prize of \$5 for her costume "made of thousands of kernels of corn—red and yellow, arranged in most showy festoons covering her entire garment."³

Young Forrest Crandall, a local boy and a student at Emmanuel Missionary College, rounded up his five buddies after the parade to head for home. It was chilly that October night, and the boys were lucky to have the luxury of a car for their short trip. But spirits ran high, and it was much too early to turn in on a Halloween's night. Someone suggested that they go home by way of the college.⁴

Trickett, night watchman for EMC, paced the campus anxiously. He knew it couldn't stay this quiet. Sure enough—he heard the sound of running feet and then the College bell began to peal, shattering the peace. Trickett ran toward the administration building, where the bell hung inside the onion-shaped dome. But the pranksters were too quick for him. Down the fire escape, and they were gone. Thoroughly annoyed, Trickett pelted after them, toward the road.

The rogues were in luck. Just as they reached the road, with Trickett in hot pursuit, the headlights of a Ford full of young men came toward them. The perpetrators swung themselves onto the running boards for a quick getaway. But

Trickett was right behind them, his .32 now in hand: "Mr. Trickett darting across the lawn headed the car off near the printing office and ordered the driver to stop."⁵ The headlights swung out to go around him. William Trickett took aim at the windshield and fired.

"College Youth Shot; May Die" read the headlines on the front page of the *Berrien Springs Era* the next day. As the paper reported the story, "Mr. Trickett stepped to the machine and asked if he had hurt anyone, whereupon Forrest

der" and "assault with a revolver . . ." ¹⁰ Emmanuel Missionary College paid Trickett's \$1,000 bond. Trickett continued to insist it was an accident and pled not guilty.

The college board met, filled with concern for Forrest Crandall and his future. The prosecuting attorney was suggesting that Forrest's wound "could not allow the further mental development of the young man . . ." ¹¹

In the end, the college, Trickett, and the Crandall family settled out of court. Forrest continued to heal. The school, in cooperation with the Tricketts, offered to pay all physician, hospital, and court expenses plus \$500 to the Crandalls. In addition, they offered Forrest free tuition for as long as it took him to finish his program and a summer job "in the poultry department" and elsewhere on the farm.¹² No doubt the administration and the board breathed a collective sigh of relief that the near tragedy had turned out so well.

But the school had learned a grim lesson. On November 27 the Emmanuel Missionary College board passed a terse resolution: "Voted: That it be the sense of the college board that

any man employed by the college as night watchman be forbidden to carry fire-arms."¹³



The Battle Creek College bell hung inside the onion-shaped dome of South Hall.

replied, 'I am shot in the head, get a doctor quick.' He was immediately taken to Dr. Miller in Berrien Springs and later to the St. Joseph Sanitarium where X-Ray revealed the bullet embedded 2¹/₂ inches within the skull and near the brain. Slight hopes are held out for his recovery by Dr. McDermet [sic] who is in charge of the case." The terrible accident plunged the campus into "gloom."⁶

Even a week later, the local paper gave a dire report, quoting the doctor as saying that Forrest had a "slight chance to recover." The doctor decided not to risk the dangerous surgery to remove the bullet.⁷

Despite the widespread pessimism, however, Forrest survived. He did not even lose sight in his eye, as had been feared.⁸ By November 12, he was home again, "well on the way to recovery."⁹

But the college had not heard the last of the unfortunate incident. Two days after Forrest arrived home, the sheriff arrested William Trickett on charges of "assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than the crime of mur-

¹ *Berrien Springs Era*, 4 October 1923.

² *Berrien Springs Era*, 25 October 1923.

³ *Berrien Springs Era*, 1 November 1923.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Berrien Springs Era*, 8 November 1923.

⁸ *Berrien Springs Era*, 15 November 1923.

⁹ "The Campus News," *Student Movement*, Dec 1923.

¹⁰ *Berrien Springs Era*, 15 November 1923.

¹¹ EMC Board Minutes, 27 November 1923, 196.

¹² "Contract," EMC Board Minutes, 5 Dec 1923, 202-203.

¹³ P. 196.

Andrews historian and professor of English, Meredith Jones Gray (BA '76, MA '77) is author of As We Set Forth.