

Joseph Phelps 1909 – December 1, 1934

(From - Hinton Daily News - December 4, 1934)

BODY FOUND ON SIDEWALK EARLY TODAY

**Discovery Of Body Is Made
By Patrolman E. L.
Briers Shortly Af-
ter 1 O'clock**

**FUNERAL SERVICE
TO BE HELD MONDAY**

**Was Honor Student Of 1931
Graduating Class Here;
Former Football
Star**

While patrolling the lonely and darkened streets in the downtown section of the city shortly after 1 o'clock this morning E. L. Briers, city policeman, found the lifeless body of Joe Phelps, 25 years old, lying in a pool of blood on Third avenue in front of the Hinton Hot Dog Stand his head crushed by a fall from the window or door of his room on the second floor of the building.

The officer made his gruesome discovery a minute or two after the accident occurred as Mr. Briers heard the young man take his last gasp for breath as he arrived on the scene.

The body was lying crosswise of the sidewalk with the feet extending toward the curb, and the head next to the building resting on a section of iron grating, which the young man's head apparently struck as he hit the sidewalk. Young Phelps' body was clad only in a pair of shorts when found.

Finds Body

Walking up Third avenue Mr. Briers noticed the body at some distance, but did not distinguish what it was until he drew closer. The officer first thought someone had left a large piece of white paper on the sidewalk. Flashing his night light the officer then recognized the young man and, noticing the open window above went upstairs and notified Mrs. Ross Bricker, Phelps' sister. Members of the family were unaware of the accident until notified by Mr. Briers as it was said that Phelps had gone to bed in the front room of the apartment some time before.

A physician was called, but Phelps was dead before his arrival. Magistrate J. E. Briers and Police officers conducted an informal investigation a short time after the accident, and from the position of the body when found it was thought at that time that the young man had fallen from a window in the room about 20 feet above the sidewalk. A more careful inquiry later this morning by Prosecuting Attorney T. L. Read and Magistrate Briers led to the almost positive belief that Phelps had fallen out a door in the room which opens above the sidewalk, and that the body had rolled to the position where it was found beneath the window. This theory was supported by the fact that some electric wires beneath the second floor door had evidently been broken when young Phelps fell.

Walks In Sleep

It could not be determined why the young man opened the door. Members of the family state that he often walked in his sleep and on several occasions had walked some little distance before awakening. It is possible that he may have been walking in his sleep when he plunged to his death to the sidewalk below.

Mr. Phelps for some time past had been living with his sister, Mrs. B. R. Bricker, and had come to the apartment about 6 o'clock Friday evening after getting off from work near the tunnel at Talcott where he was employed by Boxley Brothers, contractors on a railway construction job. He did not leave the house, but remained there with members of the family and friends who were visiting at the home.

The time of the accident has been set at 1 o'clock and it was said by members of the family that Mr. Phelps went to his room about 20 minutes before that time to retire. Other members of the family also retired.

High School Graduate

Mr. Phelps, who is a son of J. S. Phelph, was widely and popularly known in this city where he had resided since infancy. He was born at Ronceverte, but came to Hinton when 18 months old with his parents.

He was a graduate of the Hinton High School with the senior class of 1931, and at the time of his graduation was presented with a loving cup for his scholastic accomplishments. During his high school career he made an enviable reputation as an athlete, having won his "H" in football for three consecutive years. He was a member of several of Hinton's strongest football teams, playing in a backfield position. He possessed considerable ability as an open-field runner.

Following his graduation here Mr. Phelps enrolled at Concord College where he studied for one year. He was prominent on the campus at Athens and was a member of the Phi Sigma Phi fraternity, an honorary social organization. He planned to enter a Charleston business college next month.

In addition to his father Mr. Phelps is survived by the following sisters, all well-known residents of Hinton: Mrs. P. M. Waldo, Mrs. E. N. Farley, Mrs. C. E. Pierce and

Mrs. B. R. Bricker.

Funeral Services

Funeral services will be held Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at the Central Baptist church with the Rev. H. P. Hackney and the Rev. D. L. Snyder officiating. Burial at the Hilltop cemetery will follow the church service.

Members of his high school graduating class will act as active pallbearers, while members of his fraternity at Athens will serve as honorary pallbearers.