



## Greetings from the Morrison Police Department

During a recent conversation between Chief George Mumma and a friend of his who works for the Secret Service, revealed that one of their agents was killed in Morrison in the "twenty's". Sparking interest, information was forwarded to us as etched in his memorial plaque at their headquarters in Denver and what appears to be an incident report from their files. Additionally, from internet research, I uncovered over a dozen newspaper articles documenting the event from the moment it happened through its final trial and conviction. Enclosed is that story, a story that should have never been forgotten, a story of a Law Enforcement Officer killed in the very heart of Downtown Morrison. Operative James W. Hair (July 12, 1928)

"On Thursday July 12, 1928, Secret Service Operative James W. Hair (34) was engaged in an outdoor shooting match in Morrison, Colorado. Hair had joined the Service two years earlier and was a WW1 Army veteran and was on vacation at the time. His match opponents were James Knoll, a farmer, and his brother Perry Knoll, a local mechanic. An antagonist and known bootlegger from Denver, John F. Anderson (23), approached Hair and retrieved a pistol from his pocket. Anderson, considered a "crack-shot", approached Hair and said, "I'll shoot you a round." Perhaps knowing Anderson was on parole awaiting trial for operating an illegal still, Hair asked, "Why do you have a gun? I'm an officer, and I have a right to know." Anderson leveled his pistol and shot one round into Hair's chest killing him. Anderson used his pistol to cover the Knoll brothers as he disappeared into the crowd emerging from Pike & Perry Mercantile (& dance hall) and Peinze's Grocery Store on Bear Creek Avenue. A posse later arrested Anderson, his wife Inna Anderson, aka Irma Parent, (19) from Maryville Missouri, and a male companion, William C. Wyscarver (36), on a highway outside of Morrison in a disabled vehicle. On July 16, 1928, Operative James W. Hair was interred at the Fairmont Mausoleum, Section 10-tier C, in Denver Colorado. Secret Service Chief William H. Moran stated that he left behind a wife and two children and that he "was of good record" with the agency. His name is engraved on the Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington DC, Panel 21-W-7.

Hair was also a graduate of the University of Colorado; member of the American Legion; and a Mason. On December 7, 1928, in Jefferson County District Court a jury convicted John F. Anderson of 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Murder and he was sentenced to life in prison in the Colorado State Penitentiary as inmate # 15119."

Editor's notes: to the best of my ability, Pike and Perry Mercantile was 301 Bear Creek Avenue, now Morrison Inn. Peinze's Grocery Store also Deans Grocery was 215 Bear Creek Avenue, now Tony Rigatoni's. I have found no address for the shooting gallery but a November 22, 1928 of the Colorado Transcript article names the Proprietor as Leonard Edwards who is quoted in the trial as a witness stating " that they had (in the past) both been in my place" and that " Jonny Anderson drove up and came in". It is also reported that this was shortly before midnight and that several shots were fired during a struggle grappling over the pistol that followed an argument that was proceeded by Anderson taunting Operative Hair who was an expert marksman himself. Approximately two weeks later, eight Secret Service men arrived in Colorado from Washington to conduct a thorough investigation. Anderson was held at the, what was at the time, the Jefferson County Jail where he almost escaped when another prisoner did. He was then transferred to Denver fearing that he would "break out of the local jail." November 21, 1928, Anderson is found guilty of first degree murder with life in prison. Between January and February of 1929 Anderson is granted a new trial on insufficient evidence. May 30, 1929 Anderson is sentenced to three years in the penitentiary found guilty of having operated a still. The sentence running concurrently on the still charge is more severe by 2 years than the penalty imposed upon him for the killing of Hair. Hair's widow, Mrs. R. Hair, and her two children, 7 and 8 are left fatherless along with the mother who lost a son, Mrs. George Scheer, at the onset of the Great Depression.

If you have any corrections or additions to this history important to Morrison, please let me know.

Sergeant Leo



James Hair  
undated photo