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Westfield 350th

A Murder on Western Ave

In the whole history of the city of Westfield there exists only one unsolved murder. The murder of this Westfield Normal School professor is a chilling case with many twists, turns and dead ends. Lewis B. Allyn was born in 1874 in Montgomery, Massachusetts to David and Delea Allyn. Despite attending country school, high school, Westfield Normal School, Lawrence Science School, and taking special courses at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Allyn did not actually have a formal degree. That being said, in 1903, he was hired as a chemistry instructor at the Westfield Normal School and soon thereafter became the head of the chemistry department.



Lewis B Allyn

It was during Allyn's time at Westfield that he made many advancements in the food and chemistry industry while simultaneously making many enemies. After extensive chemical testing of local food samples from grocery stores around town, he would then would publish weekly lists exposing the impure products as well as the stores that sold them. He then created "The Westfield Standard" which effectively forced grocery store owners to stop selling the products he deemed to be "cheap, miserable frauds". The work of Lewis Allyn made Westfield a city that set a high standard for other cities and towns to observe and hopefully emulate. Allyn's work within the pure foods movement led to Westfield adopting the new nickname of "The Pure Food Town" (Trant).

By the end of his career, Allyn had become an adversary of many organizations. The Nazi Government, who he refused to give his military concentrated food formula to, the Mafia, who were upset with the fact that he had developed a test to detect the doping of racehorses, and even Coca Cola, who he refused to give his sugar substitute to. Allyn was unfortunately also "sharing" his mistress with Westfield Chief of Police, putting him at odds with his frail and often ill wife.

At 69 Western Avenue on the night of May 7th, 1940, Allyn's wife, who lay upstairs in bed, was abruptly awoken when Allyn presumably opened the front door for someone and was then shot four times (Peddle). The investigation turned up no evidence concrete enough to determine a culprit, leaving the murder of Lewis B Allyn to be the only unsolved murder in Westfield history (Republican).

While the death of a man like Lewis Allyn is a sad occurrence, it can aid us in realizing why old places, and people, have importance. Knowing the history of a place such as Westfield helps us to learn from mistakes and observe how things have changed, whether it be for the better or for the worse. It is always important to have pride in where you live, and Lewis Allyn has left a legacy that we should all be extremely proud of. Next time you go to the store and buy lollipops, remember that because of Lewis Allyn you will not be consuming a lollipop made with sulfuric acid and arsenic.

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