

# Gilbertsville Boy Confesses Killing Mother

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**James Webb, 15, Faces Axe Murder Charge Saturday Night**

BINGHAMTON Press Democrat — Charged with murder in the first degree for the alleged slaying of his mother, James Webb, 15, of Gilbertsville, is held in the city jail at Conoverston while officers prepared for his arraignment Saturday night.

Possibility that the youth was temporarily insane from the shock when the killing took place was being investigated by officers.

The victim of the murder, Mrs. Michael M. Webb, 35, was killed in bed by blows of an axe. Her husband, Isaac B. Webb, 44, was found from home at the time.

"The boy was in a dazed condition when he was taken to the city jail," says Sheriff Charles W. Getman.

The youth, it is alleged, was brought to the killing after being questioned in vain by officers. The motive for the crime has been found, however, through the efforts of officers.

"Webb has killed my mother," Webb informed neighbors, one Friday, they told police.

Several of the neighbors rushed to the home and discovered the body of the victim. Blood stains were scattered all over the floor.

Officers were rushed to the scene, Sheriff Attorney Daniel and Constable Arthur also being summoned.

Officers pointed to the axe from the first, according to officers, but a wide search was made on the theory that the knife might have been done by a tramp or burglar.

Charles Daniel R. Fox and Lieutenant Charles Fox, were in charge of the investigation in the house and after questioning the Webb boy for three hours said he confessed the crime.

The youth was reconstructed by one police officer.

Early Friday the boy and his father went to the Frank Gilbert farm, where the father was employed. The youth returned home about 6 o'clock and started working in the garden and his mother told him that the mother should be in bed to rest. The boy returned to his work in the garden and about 7 o'clock he said the kitchen and "killed" it by the way Webb had killed the mother.

The boy then told the axe against his mother which she was sitting in the chair, being all in the dark. He then noticed neighbors still asleep but killed mother.

Sheriff Attorney Daniel told today that the "boy apparently is honest as indicated by his record in school."

According to the confession, he questioned about the boy:

"Did your mother see you before you struck her with the axe?"

"I don't recall." "Yes, I think so. I think she said, 'No, James.'"

"This would show some one who had been in the kitchen before you struck her?"

"I was not and my hand hurt. I was not in the kitchen, and the axe did break in back of my head against it. My mother's room. She was reading a book as a magazine. I hit her three or four times."

"Did you see the mother after you struck her?"

"No, she was lying on the floor under the quilted bed. Several times during the questioning, she told me she was in the kitchen."

"When I left the house I looked the door to be sure."

"The outside door" one of the officers interrupted again.

"No, the inside door."

"At another point he said he had found the axe on the floor."

"The village square" he was asked.

"No, the square was the village square. He returned, Isaac, father asked him if he was hungry and when he would like to go to bed he said, 'Yes, I'll take to bed. I don't think I can sleep now.'"

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