

Portland Maine.

May 31, 1950

10:25PM DST

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Statement of Morris Earl Hackett ,of 20 Lancaster Street Portland Maine

I, Moris Earl Hackett do hereby make the following statement of my own free will and accord to Capt Paul Lavin of the Conn, State Police Dept. and Capt, Paul Beckwith of the Hartford Conn, Police Department.

I was born in Portland Maine on Sept, 30 1928 ,and I will be 22 years of age on my next birthday. and I live at the present time at 20 Lancaster Street Portland with my Mother In Law ,Mrs Dot Mathews. I am married to Ethel Mathews on Jan, 17 1949 and my wife is with me at the above address. I am employed at the Pine Tree Beverage Company located 202 Anderson Street Portland and am employed as a Truck Driver and Warehouse man by this firm. I have been employed by this firm for a period of two years.

I have attended the Public Schools in the City of Portland and attended North School on Congress Street, and I graduated from this school in 1945, after leaving school I started to work on odd jobs and labor work.

In 1946 I enlisted in the United States Army in Portland and was sent to Boston Mass, at Fort Banks Mass where I underwent the final examination, and was shipped to Fort Dix New Jersey where I got my basic training. after completing this training and securing my leave I was then assigned to the Transportation Corps at Stoneman Calif where I remained for a period of two Months, and I was later shipped over seas to Japan and Korea. remaining seventeen months on this assignment, and was later shipped to the States where I was discharged in Camp Stonham Calif. immediately after my discharge I was shipped East and came to my home in Portland where I have been ever since.

In June 1944 the Ringling Brothers Circus was playing in Portland Maine at Bayside Park, and in company with one Frank Romagno of 45 Hancock Street Portland we went to Park

the Circus lot where we went to work tearing down the show, and was paid one Dollar

an hour for our labor, during this time both Frank and I made up our mind to go with the circus and we secured employment and was assigned to the Cook Tent, I was assigned to waiting on the tables in the Mess Hall. We left Portland at this time and went to Providence R, I where the show played for either a one or two night stand, after this engagement the Show went to the city of Hartford Conn, arriving late for the afternoon show set up for the evening performance, the show remained at Hartford Conn the following day. After finishing up our work in the Mess Hall and Cook Tent Frank and I went to a Riding Stable located a short way from the Circus lot where we hired a couple of horses and went for a ride, after we completed our ride we returned the horses to the stable, and went back to the Circus Lot where we went to a wagon that was showing a two headed baby, and I think that this act had just joined the show in as much as we had a pass to go anywhere on the lot with the exception of this one act. after looking over this act, we noticed smoke coming from the direction of the Big Top, and Frank and I ran in that direction, the tent at this time was collapsed and burning and people were coming in all directions to get away from the fire, when I arrived at the tent to assist in helping rescue the people, the sight that I saw and the stench of burning bodies I became deathly sick and left the Big Top area and went back to the Cook Tent at this time the Steward of the Mess Hall ordered me back to assist in the rescue ~~but I could not, and left~~ I returned to the Big Top and remained there for a while until the fire was out and I left the Big Top area, Frank was with me at this time, it is possible that we both went to the sleeping cars. We continued to work at the mess hall on our regular job, during this time we both were trying to get money enough to get home unable to get any money from the Circus and having received no pay I decided to see the Travelers Aid at Hartford Conn and get assistance

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Not knowing any dates or time I went to the Travlers Aid Bureau located in the Rail Road Station in Hartford and there requested assistance in getting to my home in Poatland Maine, as I remember this incident the lady at the Bureau asked me if there was anyone else at the Circus from Portland that was in the same fix as I was and I stated that there was, I was told by this worked to bring the Portland boys to the Station, I returned to the Sleeping cars and told Frank and we both went to the Bureau on the following day and we were interviewed by this lady. To the best of my knowledge I do not know any one that was on the Circus by the name of Robert Segee that was from Portland Maine and I cannot remember in taking this boy to the Travlers Aid Office for assistance, However after all the arrangements were made by this lady she came to the Station and see that we got on the train for Poetland Maine. Frank Romagno and I was together at this time and came home together, I cannot place any one else that came home with us at this time.

While I was with the Circus and was assigned to the Mess Hall I never knew any one by the Name of Robert Segee from Portland Maine, or any one by the Name Little Bob and I never see any of the boys that I remember at the station severely burned.

All the boys that were from Portland Main were Frank Romango, Ray Lavengie,

I have read the above statement and find it to be true and correct

Signed Carl Hackett

This Statement Typed by Capt. Paul Lavin at Portland Maine Police Hdqt's May 31 1950 at 10:29 PM DST.

Signed Capt Paul Lavin

Witness

Capt. P. Lavin