

ACTIVITY: Escaping from Alcatraz

CASE: [GSAF 1962.06.11.b](#)

DATE: Monday June 11, 1962

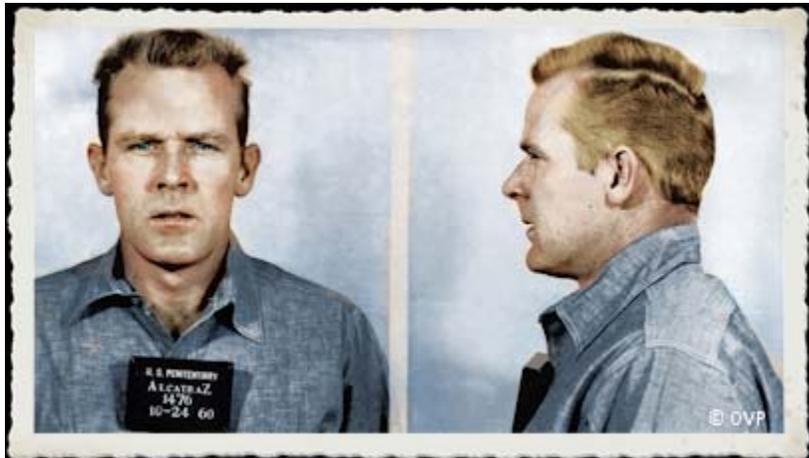
LOCATION: San Francisco Bay, California, USA. It was called The Rock — the country's only escape-proof prison. The federal penitentiary at Alcatraz was a cell house built on an island surrounded by the frigid waters of the San Francisco Bay. Only the worst of the worst were sent there, lifers like Frank Morris and John and Clarence Anglin. But from the moment the three men arrived, it was clear they did not intend to stay.



Alcatraz

NAME: John William Anglin

DESCRIPTION: Two brothers, John and Clarence Anglin, were serving sentences at Alcatraz for bank robbery, having been convicted along with their brother Alfred. All three had been incarcerated at the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, and John and Clarence were eventually sent to Alcatraz following a series of attempted escapes.



John William Anglin - Alcatraz Inmate # 1476

On the night of June 11, 1962, 32-year-old John and 31-year-old Clarence Anglin and 35-year-old Frank Lee Morris escaped. They jumped in a rubber raft and paddled away. In the morning, police searched for the escapees on Alcatraz and Angel Island without success. In 1962 the three were put on the FBI's Most Wanted List. Morris and the Anglin brothers subsequently disappeared without a trace and are still wanted by the FBI. There appeared considerable evidence that the Anglins and Morris didn't survive. A wallet containing money and important phone numbers belonging to one of the Anglin brothers was found on a beach. Surveillance of the relatives and friends of the missing prisoners never turned up any contact. There apparently was a Coast Guard report (unverified), after the Morris and Anglin escape, of three bodies in some kind of uniform being seen by a fisherman off Bolinas (outside the Golden Gate -- where bodies would logically have been sucked by the tide.) kind of uniform being seen by a fisherman off Bolinas (outside the Golden Gate -- where bodies would logically have been sucked by the tide.)

Nevertheless, Clarence Anglin claims his grandfather successfully escaped from Alcatraz. Anglin says his ancestor, Clarence Anglin, survived the icy waters of San Francisco Bay and

settled in Iowa, where he died a free man more than a decade later. But he adds, "Two of the guys did die. They were eaten by sharks," said Clarence Anglin. "My grandfather had two toes of his right foot bitten off.

INJURY: Fatal

SOURCES: <http://www.alcatrazhistory.com/alcesc1.htm>; San Jose Mercury News, May 3, 1986; The San Francisco Chronicle, May 3, 1986.

Grandpa Escaped From Alcatraz, Con Claims

Rawlins, Wyoming: Clarence Anglen says federal officials are mistaken if they think that all three men who busted out of Alcatraz Prison on the night of June 11, 1962, died in the treacherously chill waters of San Francisco Bay.

Anglen, a prison inmate in Wyoming, says one of the three was his grandfather, who died a free man in Iowa more than a decade later.

"Two of the guys did die. They were eaten by sharks," said Clarence Anglen. "My grandfather had two toes of his right foot bitten off, but he made it."

If his account is true, it means his grandfather, Clarence Anglin, was the only man ever to escape from the fortresslike island that was a federal prison from 1933 until 1963.

Joseph Bossett, one of the National Park Service employees who gives tours of Alcatraz Island, now part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, said that 31-year-old Clarence Anglin, his brother, John, 32, and Frank Morris, 35, were able to widen an air vent in their cells to gain access to a utility corridor.

The three climbed the plumbing pipes to the roof and climbed through fences to reach the rocky western shore of the island. Using a how-to article in Popular Mechanics magazine, they assembled a raft, using an accordionlike musical instrument to inflate the craft, Bossett said.

"They hopped on that raft and disappeared forever," he said.

Pieces of the raft were recovered some miles away. Bossett said authorities determined the three died by drowning in the tides in the bay or were eaten by sharks.

Clarence Anglen, serving a 10-year sentence for armed robbery at the Wyoming State Penitentiary, said in a copyright interview earlier this week in the Rawlins Daily Times that his grandfather reached Iowa and changed the spelling of the family name.

"I remember when we were kids, grandpa would disappear. When I'd ask why, my parents would tell me that he was off on a drunk. But he was actually in the hills hiding out," the inmate said. "Relatives (in local law enforcement) would tip him beforehand."

Anglen, scheduled to be released this summer, said he did not find out about his grandfather's criminal history until he was released from the Utah State Penitentiary in 1975 and told the older man about serving time.

"I guess it must run in the family," the old man said. Anglen said that's when his grandfather said he had escaped from Alcatraz.

SOURCE: The San Francisco Chronicle, May 3, 1986, page 5