

Ales investigation continues  
By Jason C. Mattox

Detectives with the Batesville Police Department continue to work on a missing person case that is almost a decade and a half old.

Det. Paul Shivers said the department is presently awaiting analysis of an anonymous message written across a newspaper clipping and sent to Police Chief Roger Vanlandingham earlier this month. The name "Claire Ales" was written across a news story announcing the upcoming retirement of Vanlandingham.

Mrs. Ales disappeared from her home on Kyle Street in January, 1991, and has not been seen since.

"It could sometimes take as much as six months to get evidence back from the crime lab," Shivers said. "Even then it doesn't mean that will have anything to do with the original case.

"This could just be someone trying to remind chief that there is some unfinished business," he added.

Vanlandingham previously indicated that he does not feel like the mail was a threat in any way.

The case of Claire Ales still receives attention from investigators.

"We didn't just start looking at this case again when that mail came in," Shivers said.

"We have been talking to possible suspects and constantly investigating this matter for as long as I can remember.

"We will keep working this case," he added. "We have had the Mississippi Bureau of Investigations Cold Case Unit up here working the case along with several other law enforcement agencies.

"We remain hopeful that something will turn up," he said.

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## Mystery mail raises new questions about Ales

By Jason C. Mattox

After 14 years, the disappearance of a Batesville woman still haunts the Police Department.

An anonymous letter sent to Police Chief Roger Vanlandingham last week was an ominous reminder that the case remains unsolved since the day in January, 1991 when Claire Ales disappeared from her home on quiet Kyle Street.

Vanlandingham told members of the city board of aldermen about the letter at their meeting last week.

"When I opened the envelope, it contained the (newspaper) article on my retirement," he said. "Written across my picture was the name Claire Ales."

Vanlandingham said he does not feel like the mail was a threat in any way.

"I honestly don't feel like it was a threat," he said. "If anything, I believe it was a reminder that the case still wasn't solved."

The case of Claire Ales still receives a lot of attention from investigators, according to Vanlandingham.

"As some people may recall, her disappearance was reported to us by a postal worker," he said. "We have been looking for any clues to Mrs. Ales' whereabouts ever since."

"I would like people to know that I am retiring, but that will not keep me from assisting with the Ales investigation in any way possible," Vanlandingham added.

The chief said the department still has no leads or suspects in the matter.

"We would like to encourage anyone who might have information they have been holding back from us to call," Deputy Chief Gerald Legge said.

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Missing 01-14-1991

Date of Birth: 10-20-1912

5'8"

170 LBS.

Grey hair

Blue eyes

Very quiet person who wore prescription glasses

no sign of violence or a struggle at residence. Her house was locked. She lived alone.

Last seen Jan 14th about 11 AM walking near her home

NCIC# M065227733



Claire Ales

Missing Jan. 19, 1991 from Batesville

Age: 78

White Female

Claire Ales disappeared from her home on Kyle Street in Batesville January 19, 1991. Lunch still cooked on the stove, and dishes still sat on the table. The mailman called police when he saw that Ales' mailbox was getting full. Investigators went into the home thinking the elderly woman fell or had been injured, but they found everything in its place. Ales didn't have a car and her family hadn't heard from her.

Contact:

Batesville Police Dept.

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Source: Doenetwork