

Missing Missouri woman reportedly sighted

**Angela Hammond disappeared in April.
Man says he saw her in Canada in September.**

By LANE BEAUCHAMP
Springfield Correspondent

An unconfirmed sighting of a missing Missouri woman has sparked new — but cautious — hope that she may be alive.

A Canadian resident says he saw Angela Hammond leaving a drugstore in Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada, in September. She got into a pickup truck.

Hammond, 20, has been missing since April 4, when she disappeared while talking to her fiancé from an outdoor telephone in Clinton, Mo.

Russell Smith of Libau, Manitoba, said in a telephone interview Friday that he is positive that he

saw Hammond.

"I know that I saw the girl," Smith said. "I know that for a fact. I may not remember someone's name, but I never forget a face."

Smith said he saw Hammond get into a green truck, which had a white top and a mural in the rear window. The truck's description is nearly identical to one seen near Hammond minutes before she disappeared.

Authorities in Clinton and in Canada said Friday that they do not doubt Smith's sincerity but have been unable to confirm his sighting.

"Whether it's good or not, who knows?" Clinton Police Chief Bob

Pattison said. "It was good enough to alert the Canadian authorities, but so far nothing has turned up."

Sgt. Bob MacQuarrie of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in a telephone interview Friday that his officers followed up on the tip without success.

"We're at a dead end," MacQuarrie said. "We've tried about everything we can do here."

Hammond was four months pregnant when she vanished and would have already given birth when Smith believes he saw her. Canadian police showed Hammond's picture everywhere, from hospitals to infant-clothing stores, motels to social-service agencies, but came up empty-handed.

Smith, 41, said he stumbled into the case in October while visiting relatives in Urich, Mo.,

which is about 15 miles from Clinton.

Smith noticed a missing persons poster featuring Hammond and thought she looked familiar. He later remembered he had seen a woman resembling Hammond leaving the Selkirk drugstore. Smith then went to Clinton police.

Selkirk is near Winnipeg, Manitoba, about 850 miles north of Kansas City on Interstate 29.

Hammond's mother, Marsha Cook, said Friday that the possible sighting was encouraging, but "I try to take it all with a grain of salt."

Police continue to look for possible links to at least three other apparent abductions that occurred this year within an 80-mile radius. So far, no connection has been established. The three:

■ Trudy Darby, 42, who disappeared from the Camden County, Mo., convenience store where she worked. Moments earlier during a telephone conversation, she had told her son of a suspicious-looking man outside. Darby's body was found two days later. She had been shot to death.

■ Cheryl Ann Kinney, 30, who vanished after locking up a Nevada, Mo., convenience store where she worked. Her car, parked about 50 feet from the store, appeared to be untouched. She has not been found.

■ Karol M. Sullens, 18, who was last seen sitting in a pickup with two men on the parking lot of a Galena, Kan., bar where she was a dancer. Sullens left about \$300 in cash and her street clothes in the bar.