

The North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune

THIRTIETH YEAR.

NORTH PLATTE, NEB., JANUARY 29, 1915.

No. 3

Roy Roberts on Trial for Murder of Vern Connett

Two Days Consumed in Getting Jury

After working for two days on selecting the jury to sit on the case of the state vs. Roy Roberts, charged with the murder of Vern Connett, the case was opened at the night session of court Wednesday after supper. The taking of testimony was begun yesterday morning and before noon Coroner Maloney and Mrs. Vernon Connett, wife of the missing man, were both put on the stand.

The selecting of the jury was the hardest task. The entire panel called for the January term was examined and only one of them was accepted as a juror. In addition to this forty-one talemans were examined before they succeeded in getting through with the pre-emptory challenges. Twenty-three men were selected from which the jury was drawn by lottery and the attorneys drew the jury just before supper Wednesday evening. The following men were drawn on the jury: Louis Carlson, T. E. Burgner, Homer Weliver, Jacob Bristol, George Macomber, Hugh Songer, Biring Baker, Louis Refior, John Snyder, Scott Shaner, F. E. Kronquist and Orson Covell.

The Opening Statements

At the opening of the case Wednesday evening both attorneys made their opening statements to the jury. Attorney Gibbs speaking for about twenty minutes and Attorney Keefe, who appears for the defense, speaking about seven minutes. After this court adjourned until yesterday morning on account of the illness of one of the jurors.

In the opening statement Attorney Gibbs told briefly what they would attempt to prove, dwelling largely upon the sudden disappearance of a young man of twenty-four years of age who left a wife barely eighteen years old and a five-months-old baby. He gave the facts up to their coming to this city and going to the Sund place in company with Roberts, later coming back to North Platte where Vern Connett for the last time kissed his young wife good bye as she took the train for Mason City. Also some facts following this.

Attorney Keefe dwelt upon the defamatory statements made in the newspapers and through gossip and of the small chance Roberts had with public opinion against him. He stated that Roberts is a young man of barely twenty-two years and pleaded for justice, admonishing the jurors to lay aside all prejudice and to decide in favor of right upon the facts brought out in testimony.

Coroner Maloney First Witness

Yesterday morning before a crowded court room with people assembled in the halls rapping for admittance Coroner W. R. Maloney was called on the witness stand. Before him sat Roy Roberts and his attorney, James T. Keefe, on one side of the table and County Attorney Gibbs and President Maggi on the other side.

The first evidence introduced was the finding of the body on January 13th and the care it had been given. After this the gaping skull with the teeth partly missing was introduced as evidence. The clothes which were found on the body were also introduced and the coroner testified that they were the clothes which were found on the body. He also told of the three fractures in the skull, one in front, above and between the eyes, and the others on either side of the head above the ears and back of the temples.

Mrs. Connett on the Stand

Mrs. Vernon Connett was then called. She stated the facts of their coming here in a covered wagon, leaving Bird City, Kansas, July 25 and arriving in North Platte on July 31st. She told of their meeting Roy Roberts and of his accompanying them to the Sund place, of their camping there over night and of her return to this city and departure for Mason City.

She was then asked to identify the clothes that were found on the body and identified them as having belonged to Vern Connett. She stated that she had last seen them when her husband was wearing them and that she was positive they had belonged to him. She was then handed the skull and lower jaw and identified them with the teeth. Coroner Maloney was then called back and produced as evidence the hair found with the body and stated that it was human hair and had been in his possession since he had picked it up. Mrs. Connett later identified it as being the same as her husband's in both color and texture.

Mrs. Connett testified that she had visited the morgue on Tuesday and had carefully examined all the exhibits produced and knew them positively as those having belonged to her husband. She was then handed the blanket, gun, trousers and hat as those which had been in the wagon, the property of Vern Connett. The post

card was also produced as evidence. She testified that she had received it on August 3rd and that it was not in her husband's hand writing. The post card read as follows: "Dear Girls—I have got a job teaming and will be here for some time. I will be moving around and do not know what my address will be. Don't write to me until you hear from me again which may be several days. I hope you and the baby are well. VERNON."

Mrs. Connett later introduced as evidence a vest which had belonged to Vern Connett and testified that it had belonged to the same suit as the trousers which were found on the body. She stated that they belonged to Vern's wedding suit and that she had first seen the suit when they were married.

Her testimony in the trial was quite pitiful. She bore up bravely through the ordeal, not breaking down once. When the worst testimony was introduced she would bite her lip and give a short hysterical laugh and would then be composed and able to go on with her testimony.

Tell of the Sale of Team

After the cross-examination of Mrs. Connett, Friend Carpenter, proprietor of the livery barn at Hershey where the team was sold, was called to the stand. He testified that Roberts came to his livery barn on Monday morning about eight-thirty and left his team for feed. That Roberts then left to get breakfast and upon his return asked if he (Carpenter) would not purchase the team. Upon Carpenter's refusal he asked for a buyer and that several men came to look at the team. That Mr. Jenkins later purchased the team.

After this he told of Roberts throwing the bed springs, blankets, gun and other things from the wagon and offering them to him. He accepted the blanket and a lantern but refused the other things. He stated that others came along and picked up the gun and springs from where they had been thrown on the ground. He then brought Roberts and a trunk and suitcase to North Platte and they left the baggage in the depot. Roberts then, he stated, gave him a five dollar gold piece for selling the team and asked him to dinner. They went to the Palace cafe and had dinner after which Roberts bought him a cigar and paid him three dollars, two and a half for livery work and fifty cents for feed. He stated that Roberts asked for a train to Grand Island and then stated that he wished to see a man and left. That was the last seen of him by Carpenter. Carpenter pointed out Roberts in the court room to the jury and identified him as the man. Heretofore he has claimed to remember nothing of the man and repeatedly has failed and refused to identify him.

O. H. Eyerly, president of the Hershey bank was the next witness called. He testified that Roberts came to the bank during the forenoon of August 3rd and asked him to make out a bill of sale for the team to Mr. Jenkins. He stated that he made out the bill of sale and that it was signed by the man representing himself as Connett. He also told of the man endorsing Mr. Jenkins check and presenting it for payment and that he paid the man \$250 in gold.

The cancelled check and the bill of sale were introduced as evidence and identified by Mr. Eyerly. He identified the hand writing on the bill of sale as his own and the check as Mr. Jenkins'. He also pointed out Roberts to the jury and identified him as the man who represented himself to be Vern Connett at the bank.

After dinner Mr. Eyerly was again called to the stand for a few minutes and he was followed by George McIntire. Mr. McIntire identified Roberts as soon as he saw him. He testified that Roberts had approached him at Hershey and had offered him the team for \$250. He stated that he offered \$200 and that Roberts then offered to come down to \$225. He refused and left and later came back and found that Roberts had sold the team to Jenkins. He also testified that Roberts gave him the bed spring and the gun and that he had kept them until they were taken by the officers in the fall.

Mr. Jenkins was then called to the stand and told of buying the team. He stated that he could not identify Roberts as he did not remember him. He told of purchasing the team and asking for the bill of sale and of taking the team home. He stated that he left the wagon stand in the yard for possibly three weeks before examining the contents and he then found several cooking utensils, an oil stove and some patchwork quilts and a bed ticking in the wagon. He also told of finding some letters but stated that he did not remember to whom they were addressed.

Mrs. Connett was then recalled and

identified some of the clothing which had been found at the Saunders home at Brule. The clothes had been given to Sheriff Beal as those of Roberts and some of them she identified as having belonged to Vern Connett.

Move to Keith Theatre

Sheriff Beal was then called to the stand and the court then adjourned to move to the Keith theatre building. The crowd around the doors of the court house was so large that people could scarcely get in and out. When the court arrived at the theatre building it was already comfortably filled down stairs and he instructed the bailiff to let only enough in to fill the seats and send the rest up stairs. In a very few minutes the upstairs was crowded and many were standing in the aisles.

Sheriff Beal was the first to be called to the stand in the theatre building. He testified to getting Roberts' clothes from the Saunders home in Brule and expressing them to Mr. Maggi at Lincoln. He stated that he knew Roberts by sight previous to this time, he having been paroled to Mr. Saunders and been employed at Brule on a day line. He identified the clothes as those he had collected by reason of some red ink marks he had made on them.

Chairman Maggi on the Stand

E. G. Maggi, of Lincoln, chairman of the board of pardons, was then called. He went over the facts of Roberts' incarceration in the penitentiary, his parole from that place and the revoking of that parole. Upon cross examination the attorney for the defense put him through a hard grilling regarding certain data and matters touching his qualifications as an attorney and as a member of the board of pardons. The state then again took the witness and questioned him regarding the statements which he had taken from Roberts at the penitentiary and at the county jail here. Mr. Maggi told of the first statement made at the prison and of the change of testimony Roberts gave here and of his exonerating Clayton while he was in the county jail here. He also told of the conflicting statements that had been made by Roberts since the investigation first began.

Regarding the post card presumed to have been written by Roberts from Hershey and signed with Connett's name he related that Roberts had at first denied having written it but the comparison of the writing thereon and of Roberts' monthly reports was such that it was easily identified and that Roberts later admitted having written it. That he also first denied having sold the team and executing the bill of sale but that he later acknowledged it when a facsimile of the signature on the bill of sale was produced.

The next witness to be placed on the stand was George L. Mudd of Hershey. He testified to having met Roberts in Hershey and to Roberts offering the team to him for \$250. He said that Roberts represented that his mother was in Iowa and he was trying to get back. He described the team and identified Roberts in the court room.

Warden Fenton was next put on the stand and testified to Roberts having been an inmate of the penitentiary. He also told of the statement that Roberts made on January 13th at the prison to him, Mrs. Fenton, Mr. Trout and Deputy Harman, telling of the crime and of the location of the body. Also of the fight that Roberts stated occurred at the Sund place. He stated that Roberts' testimony implied that he and Clayton engaged in a quarrel over Mrs. Clayton and that Clayton threatened to kill her. That Connett then "buted in" and a fight ensued between Roberts and Connett in which he was knocked down and was being choked when he called for help and Clayton came up and struck the fatal blow with a hammer.

Mrs. Fenton was then called and gave practically the same testimony, stating that she had taken Roberts' statement on a typewriter.

Sheriff Salisbury was then called and told of his various conversations with Roberts regarding the case and of the finding of the body on January 14th. He identified the clothing and the skull, also a picture of the place where the body was found. Court was then adjourned for supper.

After supper the first witness called to the stand was Roy Connett, brother to the murdered man. He identified the clothes of his brother and in later testimony identified the skull and jaw as those of his brother. Upon cross-

Burns Stacks to Keep Warm

With determined farmers lying in ambush around him armed with loaded rifles and a burning hay stack on either side of him an unknown "Weary" of about sixty years of age peacefully slept in comfort Tuesday evening at the Trovilo farm in the Nicholsa vicinity.

Sheriff Salisbury was aroused about midnight Tuesday night and asked to come out and stop a man from burning the country and such was the spectacle he and Deputy Wilson found upon arrival. The man was arrested and brought to this city where he refused to give his name. He stated that he hoped to get twenty years for the offense. He had set fire to one stack and fearing that it would not send him for the required time he set another. He is being held at the county jail to await trial and the officers do not know if he is mentally unbalanced or simply plain "nutty."

Elks Have Fine "Feed"

About seventy members of the B. P. O. Elks assembled last evening at 6:45 in the banquet room at their home to enjoy the supper which was given by the losing side in the recent billiard tournament. Captain Rincker and all his re-inforcements contributed cheerfully toward furnishing the excellent supper which was served by Steward Smith.

The supper was of the real oyster variety and oysters were much in evidence in various costumes. They were first served raw, then a fine stew was served to each present and this was followed with oysters of the fried variety, and coffee. In all it out-smiled all the previous feeds given by the jovial steward.

Sheriff Beal of Ogallala, and Warden W. F. Fenton, Chairman E. G. Maggi and Secretary J. W. Shahan of Lincoln were guests of the club at the supper. After supper Mr. Smith asked all who wished to enter the next tournament, which begins tomorrow evening, to leave their names with him. The spoils of battle for the next tournament will be a steak fry at the New Vienna Cafe.

Deprived of Another Sensation

Now that the body of Vern Connett has been found intact, with the exception of natural deterioration, what about the jawbone that played such a mysterious part during the search for the missing body. The man claiming to find this jaw bone was only recently arrested and taken to Colorado on a charge of removing mortgaged property from that state, and we understand, received a ten year sentence. His real name was George Alley, but he had two aliases, Allison and Ellis. There would be some satisfaction in having this mysterious "find" cleared up. Too bad he was taken away so suddenly—we might soon have got a thigh bone, arm bones, skull and finally a whole skeleton—and then you know the doctor said that jaw bone was green, and that of a young person, also it had been through fire. It is somewhat mysterious, isn't it?—Hershey Times.

Do You Want to Buy

A coat, suit skirt or dress at the greatest saving ever offered? At less than one-quarter the real value? Tomorrow is your last chance this season. Our "Last Call" sale closes tomorrow, Saturday, January 30th. Hurry if you want to get in on it. BLOCK'S, The Store That Keeps the Prices Down in North Platte.

No Musicale This Evening

The musical program which was to have been presented by the music department of the Twentieth Century club this evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Seeberger has been postponed on account of Mr. Seeberger's illness. It will be held at a later date. A nice program was prepared for this evening and it will probably be given later.

Saturday Only—2 lbs spare ribs and 1 quart sauer kraut 25c cash. MARTI MARKET.

Writing from Arrow Rock, Idaho, R. R. Royer, formerly of this city says "Had a ten-inch snow yesterday, making fifteen inches for this season, but notwithstanding this our boy killed the last of the flies this week with his Christmas pop gun."

Mrs. L. W. Walker and daughter Margaret left last night for Sioux Falls, S. D., to visit Mr. Walker who is producing the Buffalo Bill Indian picture shows.

LOCAL AND PERSONAL

The record keeper of the Lady Macabees will be at Newton's store all afternoon tomorrow, Saturday, January 30th.

FURS AT HALF PRICE AT BLOCK'S.

Editor Fred Rasmussen of the Hershey Times arrived in the city yesterday afternoon to attend the trial of Roy Roberts.

Miss M. J. Stewart, deaconess of the Church of Our Saviour returned last evening from a trip of several weeks visiting relatives and friends. She was called home by the illness of a brother in Texas.

Misses Minnie Sieman and Lillian Hoppe of North Platte were the guests of honor at a party at the Sudman home on Thursday evening of last week. The evening was spent playing progressive 500. Refreshments were served during the evening.—Chappell Register.

Fresh Frozen Fish from now until after Lent at TRAMPS GROCERY STORE.

Jas A. McMichael and Chas. Boyce returned Tuesday from a two weeks' stay at Excelsior Springs Mo. This is a trip Mr. McMichael has taken for five or six consecutive years, and he says he always feels benefited. While at the springs he met Mrs. J. H. Hershey and daughter Helen, both of whom are looking fine.

Next Tuesday is ground hog day and the old saw is that if he sees his shadow he will retire to his burrow for six weeks to escape the cold and stormy weather. Whether the hog sees his shadow or not, this far in advance we are willing to wager a year's subscription to The Tribune that the weather for the coming six weeks will not be so severe as that of the past six weeks.

FURS AT HALF PRICE AT BLOCK'S.

Eugene Johnson and Howard McConnell of route 1 both won second prizes of \$5 each for their exhibits of ten ears of corn at the Annual State Contest of boys' and girls' clubs held during Organized Agriculture week at Lincoln. The prizes were offered by the Union Stock Yards Co. Howard also won the third prize for the western division for the best single ear of any variety.

Weather forecast for North Platte and vicinity: Partly cloudy tonight and Saturday; slowly rising temperature. Highest temperature yesterday 31, a year ago 43; lowest last night 2, a year ago —2.

Some of our farmer friends who sought admission to the trial while it was in progress at the court house and failed, were ready to admit that a new court house is needed. It is certain that a new court house will be built if the legislature passes the bill now before it providing that upon petition of fifty-one per cent of the taxpayers the commissioners levy an annual tax for four years, instead of holding an election to vote on the issuance of bonds.

Arranges for Denney Meeting.

Dean J. J. Bowker returned last evening from a trip through the northwestern part of the North Platte deanery where he had been arranging for the meeting which will begin next week at Bridgeport. The final arrangements were made and everything is in readiness.

The meeting will begin Saturday evening, February 6th, with a banquet and musicale in the I. O. O. F. hall at Bridgeport. The choir from the local Episcopal church will furnish music for this meeting, some of them leaving Saturday morning and others in the evening. Delegates will be in attendance from all over the deanery which extends from Lexington west to the state line.

Ask for More Clothing

The residents of this city are asked to again donate clothing to the Associated Charities for the use of the needy. The liberal donation which was made the fore part of the season was much appreciated and was put to good use but is now all used. Calls come in daily for clothing where it is really needed and there is none to give.

Anyone having clothing to donate can leave it at the library building on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday afternoons of each week and it will be given to the needy. If you have clothing to donate and do not have time to take it to the library building, notify one of the members of the committee and they will call for it. From the response at the first of the season the committee feels that North Platte people will again rise to meet the needs. Don't wait for some one else to act.

Closing Out Sale

ON

Hardware, Stoves,
Galvanized Steel Stock Tanks
Gasoline Engines,
All at Cost or Below Cost

AT

HERSHEY'S
Opposite Post Office.

Why Not Have a Gas Stove in Your Home?



Every Woman will appreciate the quick hot fire at a moment's notice. No coal or ashes to handle, no dirt. A Clean Kitchen All the Time

North Platte Light & Power Co.,
C. R. MOREY, Manager.

NOTICE!

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1ST

All purchases of \$1.00 or more will be delivered free to any address within the city limits.

The Ten Cent Store.



TOWN FARM

The above 350 acres of fine alfalfa valley land adjoining Hershey, Neb. (Pop. 600), one-third under plow, 10 acres in grove, balance in good hay; all like a Turkish rug. No wet swales or sand dunes, no buildings. The land set to alfalfa is well worth \$150 per acre, plus town lot feature. The land is under the oldest canal in the state, and irrigation with a pumping plant is practicable from water 3 feet down. The town is growing, two new mills, and an Electric Light and Water Works, built in 1914. The above land must be sold to pay debts, and the price has been reduced to \$22,000. One-half cash, or near \$60 per acre. Will divide. Write D. C. PATTERSON, Trustee, 1625 C. Patten Street, Omaha, Neb.



COL. M. L. McDERMOTT
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