

**ROCK COUNTY MURDERER  
TO BE TRIED SOON**

Floyd Wick, Rock county boy murderer, will go on trial for his life, in the district court of Rock county, at Bassett, sometime the latter part of November. If he is convicted by a jury and the jury imposes the death penalty he will be the youngest person in Nebraska ever to receive such a sentence. He was eighteen years of age Thursday, October 14.

Wick, who was residing on the ranch of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Wick, near Malvern, an inland postoffice of Rock county, shot to death Clyde Patterson, a bachelor neighbor, sometime in August, buried the body beneath some steps leading to a dug-out on the Patterson place, then drove the Patterson cattle to the Wick place, on which he also was "batching" while his parents were away in western Nebraska and Wyoming, and was removing the feed from the Patterson ranch when the crime was fastened upon him by Sheriff Joe Leonard of Rock county and by a brother of Wick's victim. He later confessed.

The Wick and Patterson ranches are located in the Malvern flats, thirty miles southeast of Bassett, the nearest town, and are in the heart of the great cattle country of north central and western Nebraska. Habitations are miles apart in the district. Patterson disappeared sometime in August, but neighbors thought nothing of it until a brother from Oklahoma came to visit him. Then it developed that he had been gone about six weeks and that young Wick had driven his cattle away. The brother and Sheriff Leonard questioned young Wick and he stated that he had pur-

chased the cattle and later the feed, that Patterson had gone to Colorado, from which state he had received a letter from him. He couldn't find the letter then, but produced one some days later purporting to be from the missing man. It was in the handwriting of young Wick, however. Sheriff Leonard, believing Patterson to be the victim of a bunch of cattle rustlers of which young Wick might be a member, went to the Patterson place with Patterson's brother and young Wick to search for evidence and the boy Wick was the most unconcerned of the three.

An empty shotgun shell was found at the corner of the Patterson cabin about twenty feet from the cabin door and out of direct view of the same. Then the search for the body began and it was the poorly concealed attempt of Wick to keep the searchers

away from the old stairway to the dugout that eventually led to the discovery of the body, buried beneath earth and old hay. A large wound in the breast told how Patterson had died. Wick when closely questioned finally came through and admitted the killing, at first contending that he and Patterson had been out hunting together and that on their return to Patterson's the latter had suddenly attempted to kill him, and that he had shot in self-defense. Later, at Bassett, he confessed to the murder and signed the confession. After his preliminary hearing he was brought to O'Neill and placed in the custody of Sheriff Peter Duffy for safe keeping. He is now in the Holt county jail.

Mr. and Mrs. George Wick, the parents of the boy murderer, are among the most esteemed and respected residents of Long Pine, Ne-

braska. Young Wick went to the county high school at Bassett when they resided upon the ranch, and "batched" it while going to school. Last spring he was implicated in some petty stealing and at a hearing before the county judge of Rock county was paroled on good behavior, in May, because of his youth.

His appearance is not at all that of a vicious or degenerate person. He affects the costume, the big felt hat and the handkerchief of the cowman, but not of the Deadwood Dick type. He is soft spoken and quiet and causes the sheriff no trouble. Occasionally he dines with Sheriff Duffy at a downtown restaurant. But with all of that neither Sheriff Duffy or Sheriff Leonard take any chances with him. They consider him of the most dangerous type, a lone killer. One who does not need the stimulus of a gang, and

who is not a bully like some gun men. Young Wick does not like the confining solitude of a jail. He is not given to moralizing, but in a letter to a boy friend several weeks ago strongly advised the latter not to do anything to get behind the bars.

"Being in jail is hell," he wrote, "and I sometimes think that if it is prison for life, or the chair, for me, I would sooner take the chair."

His extreme youth, however, makes it extremely unlikely that the latter fate will be imposed upon him if he has a jury trial, and he evidently has modified his own views about jail somewhat, because he is seriously considering taking a plea of murder in the second degree and a life sentence. If he does not change his mind he will probably be sentenced at Bassett November 20.

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