

THE VALENTINE DEMOCRAT.

I. M. Rice, Editor and Proprietor

VALENTINE, NEBR., THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1909.

Volume 24, No. 8

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Mysterious Murder of Last October Cleared.

The murdered man proves to be Fred Smith of Geneva, Nebr.

Samuel L. Story has been arrested and is now in the Cherry county jail charged with the murder.

J. A. Smith and wife of Geneva came up to Valentine about four weeks ago after some correspondence with Sheriff Rosseter regarding the man found in the Niobrara river near Valentine last October and identified the clothing worn by the murdered as that worn by their son, and also identified the picture taken after his death. The mother picked up the silk purse which she made with her own hands, that was found pinned on the murdered man's shirt.

Last Friday morning they returned to Valentine again and had the body of Fred Smith taken up and they, together with a neighbor, J. G. Swails, who had known Fred since he was born, positively identified the body as that of Fred Smith.

Fred Smith left his home near Geneva March 9, 1908, going to Douglas, Wyo., where he worked for a dray or transfer company until Oct. 9, 1908. Fred was industrious and a good worker, saving about \$30 a month out of his wages, which he deposited in a Douglas bank. On Oct. 9, 1908, he wrote a letter to his parents, stating that he was going to Oakdale, Nebr., to husk corn. That was the last heard from him until the parents read in the State Journal of the mysterious wild man being found in a claim shack north of Cody, and in that article the mysterious murder was referred to of the previous October, which caused the parents to write to our sheriff for particulars. After receiving a picture of the murdered man they immediately came up here and gave such particulars and data as they knew, connecting their son with a comrade or associate who started out from Douglas, Wyo., with him. They had shipped Fred Smith's suit case to Oakdale containing a pair of shoes and some other wearing apparel belonging to Samuel Story, and together they bumped their way to Valentine, giving a "brakey" \$2 to carry them from Chadron to Longpine, but the conductor discovered them and put them off at Valentine. Here they came up town and stopped at the Chicago house to wash up, then came up to a restaurant to get breakfast. They started out of town afoot together, but Samuel Story arrived at Woodlake alone and instead of going on to Oakdale made a circuitous route down the road and headed for Cheyenne, Wyo., and thence to LaGrange, Ore., where he was located, arrested and brought back Monday morning by Sheriff Rosseter and lodged in the county jail.

The evidence will probably be largely circumstantial, but they were known to have left Douglas together and that they arrived in Valentine together.

Story is known here by a number of people, he having worked here for D. A. Hancock, P. H. Young and several others. Story was recognized at Valentine upon his arrival here last October and he has a brother, it is said, working for John Ormesher, six miles south of town.

The body of Fred Smith was taken by the parents to Geneva Saturday morning for interment. He was born January 27, 1885, and was past 23 years old.

The parents opened a letter which was addressed to Fred Smith at Geneva after having it forwarded to Oakdale and it returned, being uncalled, and this letter was from Samuel L. Story, accusing Fred of taking a pair of Story's shoes and other things, which, it is supposed, that Story thought he would have to account for and stated that he would get even with Fred some time and hoped they would do him lots of good. The chain of evidence may not be all complete yet, but already there is considerable, and enough to cause sleepless nights for Story, if he is guilty.

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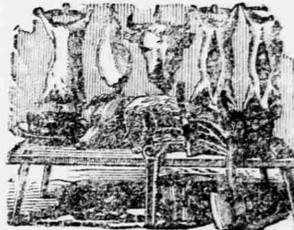
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