

## Abandoned Well Is Reopened in Search for Body

Statement by Son of New  
Hampshire Farmer Tells of  
Seeing 'Father Strike  
Down Stepmother.

Langdon, N. H., Nov. 12.—An abandoned well on the farm of William B. Whitney, which had been filled with rock and debris, was reopened today by county authorities in a search for the body of Whitney's second wife.

The search was ordered by County Solicitor Henry N. Hurd, as a result of a declaration made to him by John Whitney, 15-year-old son of William B. Whitney, by a former marriage, that he saw his father strike down his stepmother in their home four years ago, take her body to the haymow and later bury it in the well.

Whitney disappeared on October 30, after eight years of residence here, in which he gained a reputation as a solid citizen. In his wake came bankruptcy petitions against him, and charges that he had duplicated mortgages on his home. The son went to county authorities with the story which he said, he had kept secret under threat of death by his parent.

The family was originally named Doolittle, according to the son, and lived at Madison, Me., where the mother died. The father was charged with passing a worthless check, his son said, and calling his children to him, told them he was leaving for the west and that their names thereafter would be Whitney. He went to Montana and lived there several years, returning east in 1912

with a second wife and settled here. On the night of June 30, 1916, Whitney and his wife went to a lecture, returning late. John told the county solicitor that he was awakened in his bed over the kitchen by a dispute and looked through the hot air register into the room below. He said he saw his father grasp a stick of firewood and beat his stepmother with it.

The woman was apparently killed by the repeated blows, the boy said, adding that he saw his father next take the body out of the house to the haymow in the barn. There, according to his story, it lay for several days before Whitney buried it under rocks in the well. He told his son that if he ever told anyone what had been done he would kill him, the boy said.

Whitney told neighbors that his wife had gone to Ohio on a visit. There was an official inquiry in the summer of 1917. County authorities went to the farm to investigate. After they left, young Whitney said, his father built a haystack over the well.

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