

SUNBURY MYSTERY

Foul Play Alleged in Connection With Thomas Wooden's Death.

BODY TO BE EXHUMED AND INVESTIGATION MADE.

Suspicion Directed Towards Widow of the Deceased.

(St. John Sun.)

Thomas Wooden a fairly prosperous and widely known farmer of Patterson Settlement, Sunbury Co., died on January 7th last, apparently from the effect of two bullet wounds in his head. He was 62 years old.

A jury empanelled by two justices of the peace of Blissville parish made investigation and gave it as their opinion that the deceased was a suicide.

The proceedings were hastily and, it is alleged, somewhat irregularly carried out and the body was buried. But instead of the circumstances dying out and being forgotten, the gossip of the little community gathered around certain peculiar incidents connected with the tragedy, and suspicion arose and grew and spread until to satisfy the demands of the people of that and adjoining parishes, it has become necessary to take action that shall decisively clear up the mystery.

A son of the deceased, who has never believed that his father's death wounds were self-inflicted, is the prime mover in the affair, and has declared his intention of immediately having the body exhumed and expert medical examination made of the remains. When this is done it is the belief of many conversant with the story that facts will be brought to light which will show that Thomas Wooden's death was not due to suicide, but to murder, treacherous and cruel, at the hands of one whose every care should have been to preserve his life and minister to his comfort.

For the suspicion of his eldest son, of many of the neighbors and of others who have looked into the matter, rests—with what justice it is yet impossible to state—upon his widow, a buxom, stalwart woman, about twenty years younger than her husband and his second wife. Mrs. Wooden is perfectly aware of the suspicion directed to her, and is apparently anxious that thorough investigation shall be made. Indeed it was at her request that the crown authorities a short time ago were asked to look into the matter, which, in view of the verdict at the inquest they considered beyond their province to do without some more valid reason than rumor.

The death, around which has gathered so much of grim mystery occurred on the morning of the seventh of January last, when Thomas Wooden was living on his farm with his wife and a son, Frank, about eighteen years of age. Another son, Harry Wooden, about twenty five years old, who was a child of his first wife, and who is now moving for the exhumation of his father's body, was away in the lumber woods. For some time Mr. Wooden had been unwell. The fall before he had had one of his eyes badly injured in the woods, and at this time was just recovering from the effects of the wound.

On the morning of the tragedy, according to Mrs. Wooden's story, she arose and went out to the barn to milk the cows, she being a woman fully capable of looking after all the barn work, which she did the most of the time. Her son Frank was sent on an errand to the house of a relative a few hundred yards away. When Mrs. Wooden returned to the house, she says she smelt powder smoke, and going to her husband's room, saw him lying dead, with one bullet wound just below the right side of his jaw bone, and another through his right temple.

The neighbors were informed of the alleged sad suicide, and those who viewed the body say that it lay on its back, turned slightly over toward one side. The hands were lying across the body and the revolver which had fired the fatal shots lay on the breast, just above the hands. It struck some of them at the time that it was a peculiarly deliberate suicide who could so carefully arrange things after inflicting two such terrible wounds upon himself. They also state that a feather tick which belonged on the bed had been removed and that the body lay upon a straw mattress.

But nothing was said, and the next day the inquest was held. H. B. Pride, of Gladstone is the coroner for that parish and also for Blissville. Instead of sending for him, the jury was empanelled by John Murphy and George Seely, two justices of the peace for Blissville.

No autopsy was made and no medical

evidence produced as to the cause of his death. The principal witnesses and the only ones whose testimony was of direct value were the widow and her son. Mrs. Wooden's evidence was substantially as told above, and as far as can be learned she was inflicted with no searching examination. It is stated that Frank Wooden in his testimony told of hearing sounds from his father's room the night previous to his death, as if he was sick and in agony. He had made no enquiry as to the trouble and had not been near the house when the shots were fired.

So the jury after the due deliberation usual with juries brought in a verdict to the effect that Thomas Wooden had come to his death by two shots from a revolver in his own hand.

But there were many who were not satisfied and those were not wanting who insinuated that motives of economy had something to do with the verdict. Suspicion turned toward the widow as knowing more about her husband's death than she had told at the inquest. Reasons were whispered why she should wish him out of the way and the names of other men were mentioned in connection with the affair. Then Harry Wooden returned from the lumber woods early in the summer and he also refused to be satisfied with the verdict. After learning the details of the death it is stated that he did not hesitate to accuse his step-mother openly of complicity in the tragedy. He wished to investigate the matter further, but did not know how to go to work at it. He refused to live home and has since been working with other farmers in the neighborhood.

One of the accusations made by rumors was that poison had been used on Thomas Wooden previous to the infliction of the bullet wounds.

About the middle of July Mrs. Wooden produced a letter which she said she had just found in the pocket of a pair of trousers formerly belonging to her husband.

It read substantially as follows:

Dear Wife—I am no use in the world and I intend to get out of it. I am going to take something, and if what I take does not work, I know another way. You have been a good and faithful wife to me, but as I am no use in the world I guess I better get out of it. I have put this where you will not find it for a long time.

The letter was written with lead pencil and enclosed was a lock of hair.

This did not tend to allay her stepson's suspicions and a few days later he drove her into Fredericton Junction to confer with Dr. Murray. The doctor read the letter and remarked that suicides did not usually leave locks of their hair around in that way, especially as he was leaving a whole head of hair for her to clip from. He asked the son if that was his father's writing, but Harry was unable to say. In answer to further queries, Mrs. Wooden said that there were no other samples of his writing around the house with which to compare the letter. She appeared very anxious to clear herself of the suspicion, and Dr. Murray advised her to write to Attorney General Pugsley, asking for a further investigation into the circumstances of her husband's death. She assented and the doctor wrote the letter for her.

Mr. Pugsley yesterday said he had received such a letter a short time ago, but under the circumstances felt that the crown had not sufficient cause to take such action.

Since that time nothing definite has been done in the matter. Harry Wooden has endeavored to get samples of his father's handwriting to compare with his alleged farewell letter, but as far as is known has not been successful.

He was in Fredericton Junction Wednesday afternoon and in conversation with Albert Duplisea, blacksmith, of that place, said he intended to have the body exhumed and examination made of the stomach to see if there might be any poison there.

Mr. Duplisea told a Sun reporter of the conversation last night. "I asked him why he had waited so long," he said, "and when he intended to dig the body up. He said he was making arrangements then and intended to do it next week."

The results will be awaited with eager interest by a large part of the population of Sunbury county.

A. O. H. CONVENTION.

Officers Elected for the Current Year—
Chatham Next Place of Meeting.

Woodstock, Aug. 28.—The delegates to the A. O. H. convention gave Wednesday afternoon up, with the exception of a little routine business, to a drive, to which the visitors were treated by the members of the Woodstock division. They were in buckboards and formed a very jovial party. They drove up the river and out the Jacksonville road, then over to town and across the river bridge and through Grafton. After returning to town again, the party took

the pretty drive down the west side of the river to the "Watering Trough."

The following officers of the Provincial A. O. H. were elected at last evening's session.

Prov. Chaplain, Rev. J. J. Ryan, St. Mary's.

Prov. President, John Morrissey, Newcastle.

Prov. Vice-President, W. T. McManus, Halifax.

Prov. Secretary, Ed. O'Brien.

Prov. Treasurer, M. Purcell, Chatham.

It was decided to hold the next convention in Chatham in 1904.

The banquet at the local A. O. H. rooms was a great success. The hall was prettily decorated. The chair was occupied by R. F. Waddleton, County President. The particular guests were the mayor, the warden and U. S. Consul Denison. The clergy present were Rev. W. F. Chapman, Rev. J. J. Ryan, Rev. W. C. Gaynor and Rev. M. Murphy. After a capital menu had been discussed a bright lot of speeches followed such as would naturally be looked for. The banquet was furnished by the ladies auxiliary of the Woodstock Division, and reflected much credit on their good taste.

Most of the delegates returned to their homes this morning.

Genuine Castoria always bears the Signature
of Chas. H. Fletcher.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria.
When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

Oxford Sausages

T. MURPHY

will commence to-morrow to manufacture his famous Oxford Sausages. He tells us he will give the public the best Pork Sausages made in Canada, made fresh from day to day.

Watches and Rings.

If you have not seen our large stock of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Watches, (Gold, Gold Filled and Silver), and Rings, (Plain, Engraved and Set), it will pay you to see our stock, if thinking of purchasing in that line of goods. Beautiful stock of Souvenir Spoons, Brooches, Stick and Hat Pins, etc., etc.

F. E. BLACKMER.

Elect Lemonade Powder.

Makes delicious LEMONADE in a few minutes. Price 15c. per bottle.

C. FRED CHESTNUT,

Apothecary, 308 Queen St., F. Ton.

Vinegars.

A full assortment of

Wilson's Celebrated Vinegar

In White Wine, Cider and Malt. Undoubtedly the finest goods manufactured in Canada. Wholesale only.

A. F. RANDOLPH & SONS

Red

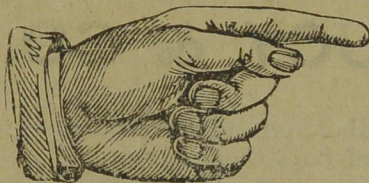
Clover

Salmon!

Finest quality on the market.

Wholesale only

JAS. HODGE



A GREAT OFFER.

PHOTOS of King Edward VII. . . .

GIVEN AWAY

. . . AT . . .

LOTTIMER'S SHOE STORE

Having secured a large quantity of Photos of King Edward VII., of about Cabinet size, we will give one to every customer purchasing one dollar's worth and upwards of goods from us. This offer will continue good as long as our supply of them lasts. Now is your chance to secure a handsome Photo of the King

FREE OF CHARGE.

Come early if you do not want to miss your chance, as we expect they will GO LIKE HOT CAKES.

LOTTIMER'S

CASH SHOE STORE, - - - 210 Queen Street.