

SUNBURY MYSTERY.

New Inquest Commenced
on Remains of Thos.
Wooden.

SUSPECTED WIFE GIVES TESTI-
MONY SOMEWHAT CON-
TRADICTORY.

Dr. Dundas Draws Damaging
Deductions from Wounds in
Deceased's Head.

Investigation into the cause of the death of the late Thos. Wooden, ordered by the attorney-general, was commenced at Taylor's Corner, Sunbury county, Monday morning.

Wooden's remains were exhumed from its resting place in Blissville cemetery at ten o'clock and a post mortem examination was then performed by Dr. M. G. Dundas. Considering the eight months' interment the remains were in a good state of preservation. They were those of a man of medium height, slim, with thin greyish hair, brownish grey moustache and pointed beard of the same color.

The body was placed upon the upturned casket and the doctor did his gruesome work in full view of a crowd of men and small boys who clustered with fearful curiosity around. The sun shone hotly across the unkempt little country graveyard, with its weed grown walks and straggling monuments. The air was filled with the sickening odor of the dead. The only sound was the rasp of the surgeon's saw and the insistent buzzing of constantly increasing swarms of huge flies.

Within the cavity of the skull and imbedded on the brain tissue two dented 32 calibre revolver bullets were found, one of which had penetrated inward from the right temple and the other upward through all the lower bones of the skull from under the jaw.

These were kept for evidence and the stomach, liver, kidneys and parts of the intestines were bottled carefully and will be sent to Official Analyst M. V. Paddock of St. John for chemical examination.

The New Inquest.

The inquest began in the Agricultural Hall at Taylor's Corner shortly after one o'clock. Coroner H. H. Pride officiated. The jury was composed of David H. Smith of Fredericton Junction, foreman; Benjamin Tracy, Fenwick Pride, A. L. Duplisea, O. S. Mersereau and Wm. Tracy of Fredericton Junction and P. E. Seely of Blissville.

Geo. W. Allen, M. P. P., of this city, appeared for the crown and J. B. M. Baxter of St. John, on behalf of Mrs. Wooden, who is suspected of having been the cause of her husband's death.

Of the evidence received the most important was that of Dr. Dundas and Mrs. Wooden. The latter is a rather tall woman of about 45 years, spare and muscular, with a countenance unprepossessing and of wonderful composure. She gave her evidence with distinct, clear and unfaltering voice, and maintained outward calmness throughout, though under the searching examination of Mr. Allen her replies became hesitating and inconsistent. In more than one instance she contradicted herself damagingly.

Mrs. Wooden's Testimony.

She was the first witness called. "I was the first person to see my husband after he was dead," she said. "I had no previous knowledge that he possessed a revolver. I knew that my youngest son John owned one. At the time of my husband's death John was down at his uncle's, Mr. Charlton, where I had sent him to tell his aunt that her father was sick. My husband was no worse that morning than he had been previously. I have the revolver still in my possession."

The weapon was produced in evidence. It is a well built weapon of the Iver Johnson make, 32 calibre and self-cocking.

"My husband had not been in the habit of handling a revolver," she resumed, "but for a week or two back he used to take it off the shelf where it lay and look at it." I never heard him make any threats of putting an end to himself.

I did not know of any poison being in the house at that time, but previously there had been some which he himself had procured, for what purpose I do not know. I know of him attempting to poison foxes and suppose he had the poison for that. When I first saw him dead I turned right about and went out of the room and called some of the neighbors. The first I went for was Geo. Kirkpatrick.

Examined by Mr. Allan—I have been

married 20 years almost. We never had any trouble whatever. My husband had been ailing for some time before his death. He was hurt in the woods some time in October. After that he complained of trouble in his head and lost the sight of an eye where he had been struck by the limb of a tree. He was in Hospital in Fredericton about ten days. This did not do him any good, but he took no more medical advice, and he never would take any medicine. The poison I spoke about had been in the house for more than ten years. It was strychnine, or was so marked on the bottle. When his head began hurting him so bad and he was talking about getting out of the world, I put the bottle in the stove.

I first saw the bottle of poison in a trunk. I never touched it and said nothing about it to anyone. He never mentioned having it to me. I never saw it again until I put it in the stove the last of last November. I found it in the trunk in the same place where I saw it first. The trunk was always kept locked and the key was left in the drawer in the sewing machine.

The day I first found the poison I was looking in the trunk for the deed of the place out of mere curiosity. I think the deed is in the house yet. My husband did not know I was looking there. When I threw the bottle away it appeared to have as much in it as when I saw it first. I did not tell my husband when I destroyed it. To the best of my knowledge I destroyed all the strychnine that was in the house. My reason for destroying it was because of his talk about getting out of the world. He talked this way shortly after coming out of the hospital. He used to say he was no use in the world and might as well get out. He was afraid he was going to starve. I never knew him to make use of this strychnine all the years he had it.

Mr. Allen here asked the witness what she meant by previously stating that the deceased had attempted to poison foxes, and in spite of her former statement insisted that she never saw him use the bottle mentioned and never knew of him having any other.

"The morning of his death," she continued in answer to Mr. Allen's questioning, "I was up just about daylight. I left him in our room lying on the bed with his clothes on, as he had lain all night. When I left the room to go out he told me not to be in a hurry milking. I had had my breakfast but he would not eat any. My son John had gone to his uncle's just about five minutes before I went out to milk, to bring his aunt down, as his father was sick."

"Was your husband worse that morning?" asked the counsel.

"No, sir, he didn't seem to be, but I wanted his sister to come up and see him. I wanted to send for a doctor. John was gone about an hour. His father was dead when he came back. I had five cans of milk and was out about half an hour I think. After I got through I returned to the house. I smelt powder when I opened the door and went at once to my husband's room. He was lying dead. He was on the bed with the quilts over him, covering all but his hands and face. I went up to within reaching distance of the bed.

"How did you know he was dead?" was asked.

"I saw blood on his face and the revolver lying on his breast outside the bed clothes. He was on his back with his hands on his heart. I noticed that his right hand partly covered the revolver. I did not see his left hand." When I left him to go out milking he seemed to be in the same position in which I found him when I came back, only his right hand was rubbing across his forehead when I went out. I did not see any revolver then. When I came back his eyes were fast shut.

I hardly know what I did after that, but I remember walking around outside the house until Mr. Kirkpatrick came. When my son came back I don't know whether I told him his father had shot himself or not. He did not go in the house but went and got Mr. Patterson. He went into the house. I was in the kitchen then and had not visited the room where the body lay. I don't know whether Mr. Patterson went in the room or not, but shortly after he came he went away for others. The next person I saw was Fred Wallace. He went to the door and looked in and went out again.

Mr. Allen questioned the witness closely regarding others who had come to the house at that time, their actions and what they said, but Mrs. Wooden's memory was at fault and she could not be certain of many things counsel seemed to deem important. Among the visitors she mentioned Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mersereau, Chas. Charlton, Mrs. Mersereau, Mrs. Charlton and others.

The barn where I was milking is quite a ways from the house (about a hundred yards). While I was there I heard no unusual sounds. As soon as I smelt the powder I went directly to my husband's room. I don't know why. I had no particular reason to do so."

Questioned further about what she had said to her son, she was not sure whether she had told him his father was dead or not.

"Didn't you say anything to him about this dreadful occurrence?" queried Mr. Allen.

No, sir, not to my knowledge. My husband left the farm on which I am living. There were five head of cattle and one horse. No money that I know of. He left no will as far as I know of.

The Doctor's Revelation.

Dr. M. G. Dundas of Blissville, who held the post mortem upon Mr. Wooden's body told of finding two bullet wounds and two corresponding bullets.

"These bullet wounds were certainly sufficient to cause death," he said: "Either one alone would have done so. One was in the right temple, midway between the ear and the outer angle of the orbit, piercing directly inward. The other was about half an inch below the chin, in the centre line, going upwards and backwards to the base of the brain.

I do not believe a man could have fired both of those bullets himself. The one at the base of the brain would certainly have caused instantaneous death, and the other wound also, though I could not decisively locate the bullet on account of the decomposed state of the brain.

Wounds Not Self Inflicted.

To Mr. Allan—The body I examined was to be decomposed for me to ascertain whether the bullets had been fired into a living or dead body. Assuming that Mrs. Wooden's evidence regarding the position of her husband's body to be true, I would not think the death wounds could be self-inflicted. As a rule the eyes of a man from gunshot are partly open. If the bullets were fired into a dead body the hemorrhage would be much less than if the victim were alive at the time.

Cross examined by Mr. Baxter—The wound through the temple might cause considerable hemorrhage. There need not be considerable effusion from the wound in the brain. It would be difficult to tell the difference between wounds inflicted before and immediately after death. The bullet which entered at the lower wound had pierced the base of the brain. This would inevitably cause paralysis and instantaneous death. With the other wound it would depend upon the parts of the brain it penetrated. I could not determine these on account of decomposition. As a supposition it might be possible for the wounded man to fire a second shot after the one inflicted in the temple, though such action would be impossible after the wound below the jaw. But in my opinion either would cause immediate unconsciousness.

(Conclusion to-morrow).

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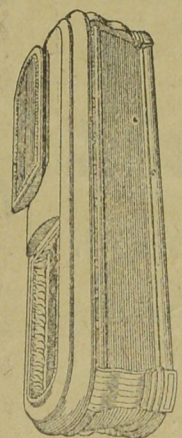
Nearly every person you meet is looking for "encouragement," but the most successful men have found it necessary to encourage themselves.—Atchison Globe.

A Prescription.

A schoolteacher in Frome, England, sent this to the father of one of his pupils: "I beg to inform you that in my opinion your son is suffering from myopia, and his case requires prompt attention." The next day the boy brought back this written request: "Mister, please knock it out of Jim, as I ain't got time."

The Samoan Language.

Speaking of the flexibility of the Samoan language, Mrs. Isobel Strong says that the little word "ta" means: I, we too, to beat with a stick, to play on a musical instrument, to reprove, to tattoo, to open a vein, to wash clothing by beating and to turn a somersault.



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