JUSTICE MEAD MAKES A REPLY

RAYMODNVILLE PRECINCT JUSTICE WRITES HIS VERSION OF PEACE OFFICERS WORK IN RECENT ROWELL MURDER AND ROBBERY.

ANSWERS CRITICISMS

TELLS CONDITIONS SURROUNDING FINDING OF ROWELL'S BODY, AND WHY THERE WAS DELAY IN NOTIFYING SHERIFF.

To The Brownsville Herald:

Having read varying accounts of the Rowell murder and robbery, and heard some criticism of the sheriff's department and of myself, I write this to put things correctly before those who seem interested.

Last Wednesday evening after five o'clock being then sixteen miles from Sebastian, I learned that a man had been killed at Sebastian and I was wanted there. I reached there at sundown and found Rowell's store unlocked in the rear, but the front was locked. House adjoining was not locked. Safe door stood open and a few papers on the floor and safe empty. Money drawer all right with about four dollars in it. I closed the place and left a man in charge for the night, as it was getting too dark to see anything.

Thursday morning I was again on the ground with a deputy sheriff, who I was lucky enough to run across and my son, L. W. Mead, and they together with others to the number of about twenty five or thirty started a search around the town through the brush for Rowell's body, while I examined the premises.

The place was not unlike it would have been if Rowell had just walked out, except for the safe being open and empty, and a very small spot of blood of the counter above the safe and a smear of blood of the rear door knob, and a pair of kakhis lying on the floor near where a pile of them were kept.

There was no sign of a struggle nor any blood on the floor. His pistol I found in a drawer, and his shot gun, rifle and a head light were in the hopse apparently where they belonged, and the bed looked about as a bed generally does in a bachelor's apartments.

At about eleven o'clock the body was discovered a little more than a quarter of a mile southeast of the store and on the opposite side of the railroad track, lying on its left side with a pool of blood under the head from a shot in the right ear, and the left side of the face was very badly swollen and left eye closed by swelling from a blow on the left side of the top of the head, which had been from a blunt instrument that had cut to the bone a gash about two and one-half inches long, but which had apparently not bled very freely. The neck and upper chest seemed congested with blood as though he had been choked. The throat was not cut as has been reported, but the cut was made by me just below the ear on the left side to get the bullet that had been fired in at the right ear and lay a little beneath the skin where I made the cut, which was not more than three quarters of an inch long, and was witnessed by many people. One shot had also been fired into the body at the waist back of the right hip.

The body was taken to the house, and that afternoon was prepared for burial by Undertaken Pease from San Benito, and buried at the Lyford cemetery, Rev. Mr. Phipps in attendance.

These last arrangements were made by me, as the only relative of whom I can learn is a brother, W. H. Rowell at Delhi, Illinois.

Now for the criticisms:

The reason I did not "impanel a coroner's jury" is because the laws of Texas do not provide for one, but does say that "all inquests shall be held by the justice of the peace without a jury." (1058). Also that "should the justice deem proper the inquest may b eheld in private." (1066)

The reason I did not notify the sheriff was because I had one of his deputies with me, and we were too busy to go to another station to telephone or wire him.—and there is neither at Sebastian—and we knew we were able to do all that could be done and did not want any assistance until we had the case ready for arrests, at least for one day.

Sheriff Ryan was on the ground Friday morning to see what could be done, and returned to Harlingen and sent up three more officers who were anxious to make some earnest, but I prevailed on them to take only one man, who had "rabbit blood" on his overalls, and Haley said "looked good to him."

On Saturday morning I sent Deputy M. A. Saldana with warrants for six more men, and he with Mr. Wood of Sebastian,—who I had asked to assist him in the event of the other deputies not having yet arrived—and Haley and Longoria and an officer from Harlingen gathered in the six men and "went south."

The two men I "let get away" because I did not have them arrested the first day on account of their being camped not far from the store, finished their work in Sebastian and moved camp to Rolfe's place and are clearing for him two miles from town.

Two men from the section gang at Sebastian, one from a clearing gang west of Sebastian, and seven from Combe station went north on the early morning train after the murder.

The sheriff of Matagorda county has their description and a few other facts from me, and is undoubtedly working on the case.

One of the section men did not get his time from the foreman, Mr. Holland, because he is said to have gone with the man from the clearing gang west of town to help him carry in his few belongings to take with him the next morning, but this man only had about $9 due him and owed $6 of that to the foreman for groceries for which he had stood good at the store, so he did not run away from a month's wages.

The two section men were known to be very poor, not even owning bedding sufficient to cover them, and one of them had a wife and three-year-old girl, and slept on the ground in a shack without a floor.

Some of the men arrested are under arrest for something in no way connected with the Rowell case, but may know something of it.

I think Mr. Rowell was struck on the head in his store and probably when standing at the safe, and rendered unconscious. The safe was robbed, then he was carried by three or four men out of the rear door and to the place where his body was found, but on the way there he began to recover and show signs of life and then was chocked till he was again unconscious and when they finally laid him down they fired one shot into his head and one into his body as he lay there from a 38 calibre pistol, and that the shot heard up town earlier in the evening had nothing to do with his death.

One of the men under arrest bought 30 cents worth of 38 short pistol cartridges the day of the murder, and gave me a few different stories of what he did with them finally finishing up with the statement that he gave them to a total stranger who no one but he had seen, though he claimed at first that the man had worked for him one or two days.

Mr. Rowell undoubtedly had nearly $500 in his safe, because a reliable citizen states that he had helped Rowell count his silver a couple of days before and that he saw him count the currency.

Rowell's pockets were not robbed, nor was a glass nickel slot machine that stood on the counter.

The citizens of the neighborhood are very much worked up over the case, and I think, more alarmed for their safety than is necessary, because when a man lives alone, no one living within a block of him, he partly crippled, known to keep what to some people seem a fortune in his safe and known to open it in the presence of people wanting checks cashed or to change a large bill, when under those circumstances such a crime is committed, it does not follow that everyone is in danger.

Everything will be done to clear this up, and the sheriff was heard to offer one hundred dollars for the conviction of the guilty ones, and men in Sebastian and Lyford have ofered to raise a like amount if they thought it would do any good.

We have Mexicans around and among us that are as anxious to stop such things as is any American, so it does not follow that because the ones suspected of this are Mexicans, that there is any reason to fear them.

A man could not run a store as that was handled, if it were in any large city, without being held up long before.

Do not put too much temptation in anyone's way and remember that what seems temptation for one class of people may seem great to another class. Don't be alarmed.

And to the women and girls of Sebastian—you are safer here than any part of the south, for Mexicans are not like niggers.

W. H. MEAD.
Justice of the Peace of Precinct No. 5.
Raymondville, Texas, February 21.

MR. MEAD IN THE CITY.

Justice of the Peace W. H. Mead of Raymondville, who is in Brownsville today, stated that contrary reports, no arrest was made following the killing of Genaro Garcia in January, and that the only action that was taken was the holding of an inquest. He stated that he expected to withhold all action until the next grand jury, but that following the murder of J. H. Rowell he decided to issue several warrants. These warrants were against the six men who were given a hearing before Justice of the Peace Eaton at Harlingen, waived examination and were bound over to the grand jury. The warrants were served by Deputy Sheriffs Haley and Saldana of Brownsville.

Justice Mead stated that it was not within his province to release a prisoner on a murder charge, and that it was his duty to hold such prisoners for action by the grand jury.

QUADRENNIAL WEIGHING OF MAILS BEGINS

The quadrennial weighing of the United States mails on every railroad route in the country is in progress, and will continue for one hundred and five days. This great work is undertaken by the post office department every four years for the purpose of ascertaining the growth of the mail handled by the railroads, and upon its outcome depends the price contracts for handling that will be made by the government with the railroads the coming year.

In some sections of the country weighers are allowed by the department to assist the railway mail clerks in the work. However, none has been authorized for the mail service in this section.

According to local post office officials, the mail traffic on the branch train returning from Sam Fordyce is so heavy that the one clerk on the route often finds it difficult to handle it, and is forced to transfer his "stuck," or left over mail to the main line train for "working." It oftens happen therefore that mail from branch points that should reach Brownsville in the early evening, does not reach here until midnight which explains why local people often received delayed mail from Valley points.

The towns up the Valley are so near each other, and furnish such a heavy amount of mail, that it is claimed that it is impossible to be worked by one clerk. Three or four miles between towns affords the clerk little time, and he often reaches Harlingen with from eighty to one hundred bags of mail. There are additional duties besides the distributing including reports on the individual sacks, time of receipt, and the time "worked," and the weighing of the sacks singly on hang scales.

Since this work of weighing is to continue through more than three months, it is expected there will be considerable complaint from delayed service.

CLASSIFIED ADS

NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION.

Under and by virtue of, and in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas in such cases made and provided, and pursuant to an order of the City Council of the City of Brownsville, Texas, made at its regular session, Monday, February 23, A. D. 1914, ordering and providing for a general election to be held in and for the City of Brownsville, in County of Cameron, State of Texas, notice is hereby given that a General City Election in and for said City of Brownsville, Texas, will be held on the First Tuesday in April, A. D. 1914, the same being the 7th day of said month, for the purpose of electing the following officers in and for said City of Brownsville, to-wit:

Mayor, City Secretary, City Attorney, City Engineer, City Marshal, City Treasurer, City Tax Assessor and Collector, one Alderman in and for the First Ward of the City, one Alderman in and for the Second Ward of said City, one Alderman in and for the Third Ward of said City, and one Alderman in and for the Fourth Ward of said City.

That said Election shall be held in each of the Four Wards of this City in accordance with and as prescribed by the Laws of the State of Texas in such cases made and provided, and as provided in said order of said City Council.

The following places designated as polling places, in said order of said Council, and the persons hereinafter named are hereby appointed election officers, in and for each of the respective Wards of this City, to-wit:

FIRST WARD.

Polling Place—The one story frame building used by one Romulo Garcia, as a bakery, on the corner of Fourth and Adams Stret in said City.

ELECTION OFFICERS.

C. H. More, presiding officers; M. Fernandez, judge; Frank Slavitcheck, judge; Sam Bell, judge.

SECOND WARD.

Polling Place—The frame house known as the Obreros Hall, situated on the northerly side of Adams Street, between 9th and 10th Strets, of this city.

ELECTION OFFICERS.

R. B. Rentfro, presiding judge; Richard Morris, judge; W. E. McDavitt, judge; J. F. Steele, judge.

THIRD WARD.

Polling Place—At the old Council Chamber in the City Hall building on the Market Square, being the room over the city jail.

ELECTION OFFICERS.

W. B. Linton, presiding officer; John Bonis, judge; Fidel Falcon, judge; Aaron Turk, judge.

FOURTH WARD.

Polling Place—The brick house, known as McClintock's garage on Elizabeth Street, between 13th and 14th Streets in said City.

ELECTION OFFICERS.

Emile Wise, presiding officer; T. J. Clay, judge; Geo. Reyes, judge; Grant McMichael, judge.

Done by order of the City Council of the City of Brownsville, Texas.

In testimony whereof, witness my hand and the official seal of said City hereon impressed, at the office and in the City of Brownsville, Texas, this the 24th day of February, A. D. 1914.

A. B. COLE, Mayor.

Attest:
CRISANTO VILLARREAL.
City Secretary.

—Adv.—tf

NOTICE.
SHERIFF'S SALE.

The State of Texas, County of Cameron:

By virture of an order of sale issued out of the Honorable District Court of Cemeron county, on the 28th day of January, A. D. 1914, by the clerk thereof, in the cause of the City of Brownsville, Texas, versus Mrs. E. W. Champion and George Champion No. 113, and to me as Sheriff directed and delivered I will proceed to sell for cash, within the hours prescribed by law for Sheriff's Sales, on the First Tuesday in March, A. D. 1914 it being the 3rd day of said month, before the Court House door of said Cameron County, in the City of Brownsville the following described property, to-wit:

Lots eleven (11) and twelve (12) in block ninety-two (92) and lots twelve (12) and eleven (11) in block one hundred and fifteen (115) according to George Lyon's map and plat of the City of Brownsville, Texas levied on as the property of Mrs. E. W. Champion and George Champion to satisfy a judgment amounting to $180.70 in favor of the City of Brownsville, Texas, and costs of suit.

Given under my hand, this 28th day of January, 1914.

C. T. RYAN,
Sheriff Cameron County, Texas.
By P. D. HALEY, Deputy.
2—4-14-18-25.

A WORKING PRESIDENT.

President Wilson is one of the hardest workers who ever occupied the White House. Day and night hardly leaving himself opportunity to eat or sleep, he has devoted himself to the tremendous task of the government. This unremitting personal attention of the President to the details as well as the large policies of the government, is one of the chief reasons of the immense amount he has been able to accomplish since the 4th of last March. Tariff reform, the currency law, the income tax, the formulation of an international doctrine which ranks with that of Monroe, definition of the policy of the government with regard to business, the messages delivered to Congress and the vast mass of other matters of importance which necessarily come under the scrutiny of the President, form a stupendous record of achievement for the few months in which President Wilson has been in office at Washington.—National Monthly.