

MATE ON AGARISTA KILLED SUICIDE

Aberdeen Officer, After Investigation, Gives Verdict.

WARRANTS ARE NOT SERVED

Frank J. Sales, Evidence Shows, Fired Four Shots in Effort to End Life in Own Cabin.

ASTORIA, Or., June 21.—(Special.)—Frank J. Sales, mate on the Emergency Fleet steamer *Agarista*, committed suicide. That was the decision reached by Elmer L. Gibson, deputy sheriff of Aberdeen, Wash., who arrived late last night to make an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the man's death. As a result of the investigation, which was completed today, no arrests have been made or will be made, notwithstanding the fact that Gibson carried with him warrants for Captain Jacob Nielsen and members of the crew.

About 1 o'clock this morning, Nielsen, accompanied by Deputies Henshaw and Bakofsky from the local sheriff's office, visited the steamer, where an examination of the mate's room where the tragedy occurred, and interviewed the officers. Concluding from this examination that Sales had killed himself, Nielsen decided to make no arrests but summoned the captain, three sailors, the boatswain and steward to report at the courthouse this morning, when their testimony was taken for submission to the Washington courts.

Evidence Shows Details.
The examination on board ship showed conclusively that Sales had been shot with one of the ship's pistols, four of which had been in his possession and locked in a desk to which he had the only key. He had gone into a locker about two feet square, shut the door and fired the fatal shots, as there was a pool of blood on the floor and one bullet had gone through the door. Two empty shells and two bullets were found on the floor of the locker.

After that, Sales apparently staggered out of the locker into the cabin, where he fired two more shots; and when found he lay on his back across a chair with his head hanging under his chin. That he was dead was evident from the fact that a cartridge clip covered with bloody finger-marks was found lying close to his right hand.

Letter Left for Widow.
In the letter which he had written to his wife, Sales made no mention of contemplating suicide, but said he was not feeling well, was greatly exhausted when he finished his work, and wished he could take a long rest. The testimony adduced at this morning's hearing was practically the same as the captain's and second officer's stories, published in today's Oregonian; and these statements were substantiated by the members of the crew.

J. S. Michael, steward, in answer to the finding of the ship's doctor, said: "After I was sent by Captain Nielsen to search for Mate Sales, I went to his room and on opening the door, I found him lying on his back across a chair, his head hanging under the desk. He appeared to be struggling, and I reached over to help him when I saw the blood. Then I reported to the captain, and we carried the man on board the tug and carried him ashore. I intended to return to the steamer but she had gone to sea, so the tug landed me at Westport and I came over to Astoria."

"I did not even know the mate's name, as I was busy all the time in my own department attending to the crew and the other officers' meals. He always was pleasant, but rather quiet, and I had never seen anything strange in his actions."

"I shall leave the steamer here and return to my home in Portland, but I decided on that several days ago."

Mate Held Peculiar.
Some light was thrown on the character of the mate when Arthur Guthrie, east 30th street, Portland, a member of the crew, was examined. Guthrie testified that the mate was considered "crabby" by the men who worked under him. "He was a very cranky," said the boy. "He got riled up at all little things. If you didn't do the work just right he would push you away and he would be very peculiar. When he would up some rope he didn't seem to care how close his hands came to getting caught in the rope. He thought he would hurt himself. He walked the deck a long time and didn't answer anyone's questions."

Leonard Peters, 16 1/2th street, Portland, testified that after the captain told the mate he should not have turned the *Agarista* loose until the tide rose, the mate was very moody. "He put his hands behind him and walked the deck," he said. "Then he bit his fingernails and talked to himself. That was the last I saw of him until we put him on the tug. He was still breathing then."

Captain Explains Departure.
When Captain Nielsen was interviewed he told the sheriff why he left Grays Harbor. "I did not tell the steward to come back to the vessel," said the captain. "I didn't make the decision to keep on out over the mate back to the hospital. Then the pilot told me that I couldn't wait and get out on that tide. The tide in the morning was low, and I took lower one. I took advantage of a high tide and a smooth bar to get out of the harbor and on to Astoria. I sent a wireless to our headquarters at Westport with funds to make the trip to Astoria."

When asked concerning the alleged row with the mate, the captain said there had been no row. "When I came back from town I found that he had turned the boat loose on a low tide, and I told him I thought he had enough sense to turn the ship loose on the tide turned."

No Fuss, Says Skipper.
"Did you have any words then?" asked the sheriff. "No, he didn't reply and I didn't say any more about it, as the ship was in no danger from him. After we had put out at his lack of judgment. Maybe he had misinterpreted my orders."

John Jackson, boatswain, bore out the testimony of the other officers and added that the first mate was not much of a navigator, and did not take hold of things with the firm hand that a first mate should use.

J. N. Judah, collector of customs, testified that no drugs were found in the dead man's effects. He had been on the watch for this he said. After examination he was convinced that the death was straight suicide.

CAPTAIN NIELSEN IS LAUDED
—
Offer on Vessel Believes Frank Sale Killed Himself.

Charges originating at Bogueham against Captain Jacob Nielsen of this city, master of the wood steamer *Agarista*, that he was responsible for the death of Frank J. Sales, mate of the vessel, found with two bullet wounds in his head as the vessel was making her

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