

JOHNSON SAID TO HAVE CONFESSED MURDER DETAILS

Portland Officers Return From Nome With Ex-Convict Charged With Killing of Mrs. Freeman.

ESCAPE THREAT BLOCKED

Culprit's Boast That He Would Not Be Brought Back Causes Use of Keenest Surveillance.

Arrested in Nome, Alaska, by United States Marshal Emmett Jordan, after being identified by elaborate bridge work on his teeth, Clarence Johnson, ex-convict from San Quentin, charged with the murder of Mrs. Eunice Freeman, 424 Fourth street, his benefactress, arrived in Portland at 5 o'clock Monday afternoon in custody of Inspector Jack Goitz and Patrolman H. Phillips, in spite of the boast made to have been made that he would not be brought back to the state by anyone.

"I didn't want to kill her, but I couldn't help it. I was afraid she would send me back to prison." LONESOME SLEEP.

Emotionless, but with a show of bravado, Johnson thus explained why he killed Mrs. Freeman, prominent Portland W. C. T. U. worker, on the afternoon of August 15.

After repeatedly refusing to give an explanation of his crime, Johnson, who was returned Monday night to Portland from Alaska, where he was apprehended two weeks after the murder, finally threw light on the mysteries which have puzzled police officials for more than two months.

"People are making a lot of fuss over this thing," said Johnson, "but I haven't been losing any sleep over it." "There was another woman in the case and I intended to get her before I left town, but after waiting an hour and a half at her hotel and making two visits to find her, I finally left."

"Mrs. Freeman was jealous and wanted me to take her everything that I took another woman that I was going with. That was all right once in a while, but I considered her as more of a mother to me. The stuff about me being in love with her and making improper advances was all wrong." Questioned as to the identity of the

CONFESSED SLAYER RETURNED



Clarence Johnson, confessed slayer of Mrs. Eunice Freeman of Portland. Johnson was returned from Alaska by local officers Monday evening.

other woman, Johnson refused to divulge any information.

"The morning of the day that I killed her I asked her three times to promise me that she would not say that I was violating my parole. I knew that the San Quentin authorities would believe her, she being a woman."

"She wouldn't promise and then I went completely crazy and killed her by striking her over the head with a piece of pipe. I went to pack my things and was afraid that the job wasn't done, so I went back and struck her again, but I guess the first blow finished her."

Johnson explained how he moved away from Mrs. Freeman's house "so she wouldn't be jealous" and how he feared for several days that she would tell the authorities that he had violated parole which would return him to prison. Johnson says, according to Inspector

Goitz, that he struck only two blows with a short piece of pipe. After the first blow, which he thinks resulted in almost instant death, he left the body lying in the kitchen where it fell, and going into another room rifled Mrs. Freeman's pocketbook, taking \$40, a gold watch and several other pieces of jewelry. To be sure that he had completed the work, it is reported, he returned to the room and struck the second blow.

According to Johnson's story, he arrived in Seattle on August 16, and worked as a laborer at the Coleman dock. Several days later, he shipped as a baker on the steamer Victoria, the same boat that carried the police officers to Alaska and back. Arriving in Nome, Johnson went to work almost immediately under Captain Foss of the life saving station, where he was employed as a sort of handy man. Chief of Police Johnson had wired a

description of Johnson to all cities along the coast, and acting on a theory that the wanted man had gone north, since he attempted to make known his intention of going to Mexico as a "dope," a telegram was sent to Marshal Emmett Jordan in Nome.

On the third day after Johnson's arrival in Nome, Jordan happened to mention to Captain Foss that the Portland authorities were looking for a man. Johnson requested the captain's cooperation in watching for any new arrivals, since the captain was in the habit of hiring new men quite often. Foss suggested that the marshal come over to look at a man he had hired several days before as he answered the general description given in the telegram.

Johnson was at work painting the life saving station, when the marshal appeared. Clinging in a friendly way, the officer called him down from the top of the ladder, and the two sat down on the curb. After a few minutes' conversation, the marshal was almost but not quite, convinced that this was the man he wanted.

Suddenly he thought of a plan to complete the identification. Pointing up to a place near the top of the building, he asked Johnson if he didn't think he had better put on a second coat of paint up there.

"Where?" inquired the suspected man, opening his mouth wide as he craned his neck around to see the spot indicated by the officer.

TELLS STORY OF CRIME. Satisfied then, after seeing the elaborate bridge work in Johnson's mouth, which answered the description given in the telegram, Jordan invited Johnson to his office, and asked his name. Johnson claimed his name was Harry Burns, and at first refused to admit anything. When confronted with the telegram, and told that he was Clarence Johnson, he finally broke down and it was confessed to the Nome official.

When told that officers were on the way from Portland to conduct him back, it is reported that Johnson made a boast that he would not be taken back by anyone. Threats were made to the Nome authorities that as soon as the ship was under way he intended to shove the officers overboard. Although no

violence was attempted, it was thought best to have an extra guard night and day during the time Johnson was kept in the Nome jail.

Johnson's plan, as he told it to Inspector Goitz, had been to make his way to Siberia at the first opportunity. He knew the Alaska country thoroughly, he said, having been there in 1908, part of the time employed as a bell boy in the Golden Gate hotel, the same place the Portland officers patronized while in Nome.

"We had a bully trip," said Inspector Goitz, who brought back many curios and photographs. "It took us 19 days going up and 16 days on the boat coming back. In Nome there was a light snow, but the water had not frozen over yet. The sea was terribly rough just before we got to Nome, and we were forced to stand off in Sullivan bay between St. Michaels and Nome for three days loading lighters. While we were there a gale swept down and all the ropes and decks were sheered in two from the spray. The storm was so furious six of the barges we were loading broke loose and were beaten to pieces on the rocks along the coast. Among other freight on our return trip the Victoria brought in 125 reindeer, which were being shipped to Minneapolis, and \$45,000 in gold bricks—real ones, not the carpet bag kind—billed for San Francisco."

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