

July 29, 1893  
Missing

# The Daily Morning Astorian.

EXCLUSIVE TELEGRAPHIC PRESS REPORT.

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ASTORIA, OREGON, SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1893.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

## BOMBSHELL!

Has Struck the Town.

Big Betsy of the  
"Monterey,"  
Fired into Cooper's Store  
And Knocked  
The Bottom out of

### FINE DRY GOODS AND CLOTHING

### First Class Goods Slaughtered

The Greatest Reduction Sale  
Ever Known in Astoria.  
Positively, You Will Get  
Bargains. No Humbug. At the  
Midsummer Sale now in Progress.

#### HANSEN DID IT.

#### Mystery of the Bear Creek Crime Is Cleared Up.

#### THE MURDERER CONFESSES

#### An Indifferent, Cold-Blooded Fiend.

#### HE IS UTTERLY REMORSELESS

#### He Says He Struck His Wife With a Club and Left Her Body Lying in the Bushes.

The Astorian's theory was correct. John Hansen has confessed to the murder of his old, fragile, unoffending wife, and, as declared by Dr. Belt at the inquest, and pretty conclusively demonstrated by The Astorian reporter, the terrible deed was done with a blunt instrument, with which the murderer struck her from behind.

There was no other solution, of what, under ordinary circumstances, might have been a mystery; or explanation possible which would account for the nature of the wounds. The position in which the body lay when found, and the actions of the uxoricide from the minute he announced the murder to Nyland until he made his confession today. His manner and bearing, all along, and especially his conduct at the funeral of his murdered wife, stamp him a man of iron nerve, reckless of means and careless of consequences. No horror was visible in his face when he bent over the body of his victim at the morgue and kissed the cold clay; no remorse seemed to move him except as a passing cloud, when he heard the clouds fall upon her coffin in Greenwood. Men with such unimpressible natures and absolute self control are the most dangerous in the criminal class.

There was hardly need for him, to have confessed, for Sheriff Smith and his aides, and Prosecuting Attorney Curtis, were weaving an unbreakable web of circumstantial evidence around him. So close and connected is the testimony which those officers have secured that conviction, in case of trial, would have been certain. There has never yet been a man hanged in Clatsop county for murder. Let us see what will be the outcome of this crime and confession.

#### THE CONFESSION.

On Wednesday, July 26th, last, Hansen says, he was sober all day. He left the Burnside scow about 9:30 a. m. and went home, and met his wife coming from Svenson's. When he got in the house he lay down on the sofa, his wife remarking: "If you don't go to work I will kill you." He said to her: "I have been out fishing all night and I now want to rest." Then, Hansen says, he went upstairs to bed, and slept until the steamer Miller whistled, about 3:15 in the afternoon. He then got up, went down stairs, and sat down in front of the house. Shortly afterward he returned to bed, and he remained there until about 10 p. m. that he

house picking berries, and he assisted her. "While we were picking berries," Hansen continued, "she (his wife) said: 'If you don't leave this place I will kill you.'

"I don't want to leave," I replied. She then picked up a rock and threw it at me. I had a stick and an ax in my hand, standing by the chicken house. I placed it there with the intention of driving the stick out in the pasture to tie the calf to. The stick was about three feet long with a knot close to the end. I struck her with that stick, and the knotty part hit her on the head. I was standing a little behind her to the left, and she was stooped down a little, picking berries. She never said anything after she fell in the place where she was found.

"I stayed there then with her until she was dead. I then went back to the house and stayed there about two minutes, and then went back again to where my wife lay, and looked at her, and I then went away again. It was then about 4:45. I then went to the tide land and notified John Nyland, and told him the same that I testified to at the coroner's inquest. After I came back from the tide land and before Nyland got to the house, I chopped up the stick I killed my wife with and put it in the wood box, and that same evening burned it up in the stove."

Signed in the presence of H. A. Smith and F. I. Dunbar.

JOHN HANSEN.  
Saturday, July 28, 1893, 9:30 a. m.

Shortly afterward Hansen made a short additional statement to the effect that after she was dead, he took the keys out of her pocket and went in the house and opened the lower drawer of the bureau, with the intention of looking for papers. He found a bottle with kummel, in which there was about one good swallow. This he says he drank, and then put the keys in the upper drawer, but never opened it. He was duly sober, he says, and in good humor.

#### A CORRECT FORECAST.

All this bears out the conclusions arrived at by the Astorian reporter, who went with Sheriff Smith to the scene of the murder. The sharpened stake for tethering the calf, the advent of the murderer through the gate at the chicken coop, the blow, delivered downward and from the left, the search of the body for the bureau keys, and the motive, to get money for drink, were all set forth in the Astorian of Friday and yesterday.

#### THREATENED LYNCHING.

At ten o'clock last night information was conveyed to Sheriff Smith that a large number, estimated at 300 or over, of Finns and Scandinavians were gathered in Uppertown, and only waiting the appearance of a leader to make a raid on the jail, drag Hansen out and hang him. Although he was at a loss to believe that such a lawless element existed in the city, or that such a foolhardy attempt would be made, the sheriff quietly completed arrangements to meet the mob and avenge the matter, and in the event of not being able to pacify them, then to meet force with force and protect his prisoner at all hazards.

#### SHERIFF SMITH'S WORK.

Since Hansen's arrest Sheriff Smith has not slept a moment, fully believing that the murderer would not long withstand the terrible strain, and that he was liable to break down at any moment. As Friday night advanced the sheriff's convictions grew stronger,

and several times he was led to be relieved from Hansen's manner that the time had come when the clear light of day would be thrown on one of the most horrible murders in criminal annals. About 2:30 yesterday morning the prisoner weakened perceptibly, and he appeared as if about to faint. In fact, he staggered, and the sheriff saw that the strain was fast becoming too severe to last much longer. But with a mighty effort Hansen recovered his self control, and nerved himself to the terrible task of keeping his dread secret. Not yet was he prepared to disclose his awful part in the tragedy, and remove what little doubt remained of the identity of the author of the crime. But Sheriff Smith did not despair, and remembering that the chain of evidence, which was being woven, was purely circumstantial and still far from being completed, he continued his efforts, and at 7:30 yesterday morning was rewarded with success. About 5 o'clock Hansen lay down on his bed, and remained silent for some time, during which the sheriff talked to him on the subject of the funeral and the peaceful appearance of the murdered woman's face; and as Hansen's memory was carried back to the affecting scene in the morgue where so much emotion was shown by the friends of Mrs. Hansen, and to the moment at Greenwood when the body of the woman who had been his faithful helpmate for over thirty years, was about to be closed from his sight for ever, he was for the first time struck with remorse and indicated a desire to speak. Turning to the sheriff he said: "I can't stand this any longer," and proceeded to tell the whole of the dreadful story. The sheriff listened to the recital without interrupting the murderer, and as soon as the story was completed sent for Recorder Dunbar in order that a written confession might be secured. What followed is published above. When Hansen had finished, he broke down completely and cried for the first time since his arrest.

Sheriff Smith was highly complimented on all sides for his success in securing the confession without resorting to coercive measures, or offering inducements of any kind. Recorder Dunbar remarked in this connection, that Hansen appeared to find great relief in allowing others to share his terrible secret, and that no offers of clean earth had been made or unfair strategy resorted to by the sheriff in persuading Hansen to speak.

#### HAS A BAD MEMORY.

An Astorian reporter called at the jail last evening and saw Hansen with a view of learning if any additional information could be got from him. When the reporter had announced his business, Hansen said: "No, I have nothing else, but all I can remember I have said already. My head has not been clear for three weeks, but as soon as I feel better there may be something else that the Astorian can have for publication." He still stuck to the story of having used the club and reiterated his assertion that after the murder he had chopped the weapon up and burned it.

#### WHAT THE DEFENSE WILL BE.

It is possible, judging from the murderer's desire to appear dazed, that insanity will be pleaded in the defense, and it is apparent that his reluctance to say anything more on the subject of the murder was the result of a caution from his attorney, Hon. C. W. Fulton. Hansen was perfectly rational, and he answered the reporter's questions with a readiness that did not lend color to the insanity dodge.

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