

# The Coquille Valley Sentinel

THE PAPER THAT'S LIKE A LETTER FROM HOME

VOL. XX, NO. 3.

COQUILLE, COOS COUNTY, OREGON, FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 1923.

\$2.00 THE YEAR.

## TELLS AT LAST

### Pearse Makes an Unexpected Disclosure This Morning

From 11 o'clock for three-fourths of an hour this morning the defendant L. W. Pearse was being cross-examined by state's attorney Neuner, of Douglas county, and Pearse during this time came across with an entirely unexpected feature of the case and one of which there had not been heretofore the slightest intimation. Mr. Pearse had been before examined by his own attorneys, and it was during his cross-examination by District Attorney Neuner, of Douglas county, for the state that he disclosed conditions that had existed in his home before the killing of his wife, which would, if anything could, explain his homicidal frenzy and the laceration of his wife and James Culver.

What Pearse said about his moonshine, his still and his spree would fill several columns of the Sentinel and just at the hour of going to press we can touch but very few points before getting to the astonishing developments that came before he left the stand.

He told about a quarrel with his wife three years ago in which he nearly killed her. "We sat up all night," said he. "She had been drinking and so had I." They had been drinking mash and "drank all night long."

At this time they had a quarrel and he nearly killed her. It seems that for a while he thought she was dead; and they were so thoroughly scared by what happened.

"Why did you again make moonshine after it made so much trouble when you thought you had killed your wife," he was asked.

"I didn't make any more moonshine for a long time," was the answer. "I agreed that I wouldn't drink any more until she told me that I could." He added this rather significant statement, "I wouldn't have said anything about Culver and my wife now except for the advice of my attorneys."

"Who was the first you ever mentioned it to?"  
"I don't remember about telling any one." He "told it to his attorneys."

He "didn't want to tell about it but they told him to tell the truth." "That's the only time I ever had any serious trouble."

He had before detailed being struck on the head and knocked senseless by the limb of a fir tree, but didn't know how long it was before he recovered consciousness. He had never had a doctor in his life when he was sick.

Before leaving the stand he went over to the jury box and let every juror who wished to put his hand on his head about three inches back from the center of his forehead and feel of his skull where the fir limb struck him.

It took all day Monday and Tuesday and until afternoon Wednesday to secure a jury to try L. W. Pearse on the charge of first degree murder in killing James Culver. One panel after another was exhausted before 12 men satisfactory to both the prosecution and defense could be secured and 93 veniremen were catechised before that result was accomplished.

For the first time in the ten year the writer has lived in Coos county, there is a murder trial where the penalty if the defendant is found guilty will be death, as it is also the first time since capital punishment came back by the vote of the people that the death penalty has been invoked in this county.

The following are the jurors before whom this case is being tried:  
Ralph D. Moore, Bandon, lumberman.  
P. J. Rooney, Marshfield, machinist.  
Albert Besosky, Gravel Ford, farmer.

E. H. Harnden, Coquille, farmer.  
Hugh J. Lawhorn, McKinley, logger.  
Paul E. Bauer, Myrtle Point, shoemaker.

W. L. Finnie, North Bend, merchant.  
Roy A. Mercer, Marshfield, restaurant man.

Richard A. Felter, Bandon, dairyman.  
P. J. Devereux, Bandon, dairyman.  
L. L. Sumerlin, McKinley, farmer.

witnesses Stephen and others about the day the killings occurred and whether their testimony was not substantially correct he said.

"Yes, with a few exceptions." Asked about his allusion to relationship between his wife and Jim Culver he said he "told it to very few people; if I had talked about her I wouldn't have lived with her."

He said the relationship "had been going on for some time. After I commenced forming that opinion I became more and more sure."

Urged to tell what he saw between them he said:

"I didn't see very much." "First Culver used to come to my house sometimes three or four times a week. After that written notice he never came. I didn't form all this conclusion until the last year."

It had been in his mind "eight or ten years, perhaps longer than that."

"What was the first time you called your wife's attention to it?"

"Didn't for a long time. It grew thicker as the years went on. The last time he talked with my wife was right in my presence. In the eight years they had met hundreds of times. My wife sometimes went over to his house. She went over there to get him to come when I was sick."

"You and your wife were dear to each other?" was another question.

"Sometimes and sometimes not so much," was the answer.

"Did you tell any one what you thought was the relationship between your wife and Culver?"

"I didn't, I wouldn't go about the country and talk about my wife and still live with her."

"I can't remember about the talk I had with Fisher. I will accept what he says about it as the truth. Ask him."

District Attorney Fisher, Coroner Wilson and a stenographer, he said, were present when Fisher advised him of his rights not to testify against himself.

It seemed that when Fisher asked about having any trouble with Culver and his wife he said, "No," and talked about trouble with the stock.

He added this rather significant statement, "I wouldn't have said anything about Culver and my wife now except for the advice of my attorneys."

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## PICKING JURORS HANGS HIMSELF

### A Topsy Turvy Case That Reverses the Usual Rules of Selection

The writer spent a couple of hours in court Tuesday afternoon very interestingly in listening to the examination of men summoned in the special venues called for the trial of L. W. Pearse for the murder of James Culver. The jury box was full when we went in, but although six or eight men were examined "touching their qualifications" for service on the jury while we were there it still lacked one when court adjourned that evening. No sooner had a juror been accepted than the defense made a pre-emptory challenge of some one that had already been "passed for cause" and the net result of the two hours work was two more jurymen seated—perhaps temporarily—one of them being our friend, J. E. Montgomery, of Marshfield, former superintendent of the Coos and Curry Telephone company and an experienced newspaper man. (Mr. Montgomery afterward fell by the wayside under a pre-emptory challenge.)

The defendant was, of course, the center of interest, though, he listened to the proceeding with apparent stolidity and if he realized the gravity of his position and the fate that might await him at the hands of the jury which was being impelled, he did not manifest it. He is apparently about sixty years of age, though his dark brown hair is not even tinged with gray and he is growing bald at the crown. However, he has an entirely grey mustache and his rugged face at least looks careworn. There was nothing "horny handed" about him, but the fingers that so recently handled a rifle with such deadly effect looked soft and white as those of a dry goods clerk.

His attorneys are John D. Gage, one of the leaders of the Marshfield bar and C. F. McKnight, who is perhaps Coos county's best known criminal lawyer, whom every one who attended the successive Harold Howell trials here three or four years ago, will remember. His associate counsel in one of those trials was John C. Kendall, who is now the presiding judge.

Harking back to those Harold Howell trials now the thought intrudes that his defense, like Pearse's now, ought to have been insanity rather than an alibi, for the passing years only serve to reinforce the conviction that those trials resulted in a miscarriage of justice.

District Attorney Ben S. Fisher represents the state in the pending case, and associated with him is District Attorney George E. Neuner Jr., of the Douglas county district, who has been retained by the murdered man's friends to assist in the prosecution. So the stage is set for a battle of the giants here this week.

Between the attorneys of the state, and intently watching every move in the case, sat Peter Culver, a brother of the murdered man, who will leave no stone unturned to see that Pearse gets his deserts. Another brother, George Culver, of Roseburg, came in Wednesday to be present at the trial. From its very start on Monday this murder case has been developing exceptional, we may even say unique features. Indeed, to the Sentinel man it seemed a topsy turvy one.

There are to be no surprises in this case. The defense begins by placing its long trump card on the table face up, admitting without question that Pearse shot James Culver to death and announcing that it claims that he was insane when he did it. It follows that the burden of proof is shifted from the prosecution to the defense, the presumption of law being not only that every man is innocent until he is proven guilty, but also that every man is sane until he is proven insane. Beyond this the state is not slow to claim, even before the trial has begun that the "reasonable doubt" proposition enters into the case in what is to us an entirely novel way—that if the testimony as to the mental condition of the defendant leaves in the mind of any juror the least doubt as to the mental status of the accused, that doubt must be resolved, not in his favor, as would be any doubt about his committing the murder, but on the contrary in favor of the state; that is, unless the defense, with the burden of proof upon it, fails to satisfy every juror

## CARL O. WIDEBORG, ROBBER, TAKES HIS LIFE IN JAIL TUESDAY MORNING

Carl Oscar Wideborg, a Swede, and a prisoner in the county jail, committed suicide Tuesday morning by hanging himself. He was discovered by Jailer Kern who notified Sheriff Ellingsen. The latter called up Coroner Wilson, but he did not think it was a case for investigation, so Arthus Ellingson was notified to come and get the body. He is still keeping it at the undertaking parlors.

Monday evening a crowd gathered around the jail and started the report that some one had committed suicide there but the hanging did not take place until about six the next morning, for the body was still warm when cut down at nine o'clock.

Wideborg had been shot in the heel and captured by Marshal Smith at North Bend on Friday night while attempting to rob the Woolen Mills Store, and had endeavored to take his life in the North Bend jail, but the necktie he used in the attempt tore, and he was brought over to the county jail the next day.

Monday evening a demented man in the same cell with Wideborg, kept calling for Mrs. Price, who furnishes the board for the prisoners, and when she finally opened the wicket he declared he was sick and wanted a doctor, but in a whisper added, "He's trying to break jail." Mrs. Price sent up to the sheriff and when he went up to the sky parlor the insane man whispered the same words to him.

Hunting around Mr. Ellingsen found a case knife, badly knicked, and later found where the prisoner had endeavored to cut through the ceiling around the ventilator and around the walls. The sheriff moved the mentally deficient man out into the main room, made Wideborg undress and left him.

Nothing more was heard of him through the night, but the insane man told Ellingsen next morning that Wideborg cursed him for an hour and called him "stool-pigeon" and "spy."

In removing the man without a name from the cell, Sheriff Ellingsen failed to take his boots along, and from these Wideborg removed the leather lacing with which he made a noose to place around his neck. He fastened his belt to the iron slats of the upper bunk, placed a mattress on the floor, wrapped a blanket around him, attached the lacing to the belt and lay down on the mattress. The weight of his body choked him to death. When found he was in this reclining position, the blanket still around the body and his chin on a level with the lower bunk. He apparently died without a struggle.

It has been stated in the Bay papers that there were two other men engaged with him in the attempt on the Woolen Mills store, and that they had just previously robbed the noodle joint at Marshfield of over \$40, but the other two got away.

There is also strong reason for believing that two of the three were the ones who robbed J. L. Holycross' cigar store last Friday morning, and also attempted to get into Hudson's Drug Store, but none of the cigars were found in Wideborg's room at the Coos Hotel in Marshfield.

Sheriff Ellingsen told Wideborg that he was wanted for a job at Eugene, and that his finger print was to be sent out for identification, but whether these statements had anything to do toward inducing him to take his own life will of course never be known.

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## To Let Contract March 27

Until 10 o'clock Tuesday, March 27, bids will be received by the state highway commission at Room 520 Multnomah county court house for the grading of that portion of the Roosevelt highway on the river road from Coquille to Bandon between Fat Elk and Lampa. For a large portion of the way this will involve cutting a roadway into the rocky shore of the river to widen the present road. This work will be so expensive that the estimate of the cost of this piece of work is about \$200,000. Of course, while this work is in progress the Bandon road will be absolutely closed to travel. To what extent it will be possible to use the old road over the mountain from Fat Elk to Lampa during the summer as a detour we are unable to say.

There are 7.75 miles in the stretch to be graded and the excavation is estimated at \$18,000 cubic yards.

Judge Mast this morning received a copy of the blank proposal, maps, data, etc., which anyone contemplating submitting a bid may see at his office in the county court room.

## PAID A BOOZE FINE OF \$100

Sunday afternoon about 5:30 Maynor Noleser, Councilman Skeels, Willey and Gregg and Water Superintendent Faustman went out to inspect the Rink Creek dam. Coming in just before reaching Second street at W. W. Gage's barn they found a very happy couple, a man and what looked like a little girl singing merrily. The car in which they were sitting was in a mudhole and there was some wonder as to the cause of their jollity until on close approach it was seen that they were passing a bottle back and forth and imbibing its contents. This was so evidently a violation of the city ordinances, that as they were inside the city limits Night Marshal Gage was sent for and took them in charge. The girl, it developed, though not the man's wife, was old enough to be the mother of two children.

Gage placed the man in jail and the woman was taken in charge by C. L. Willey Jr. and E. O. Faustman, who went over to the Bay with her, that being the place from which the couple had come. She wasn't a spring chicken by any means.

Monday afternoon the man was taken before Recorder Lawrence, with the stuff found in the car, two bottles of beer and a few teaspoonful of something which is said to be moonshine in the other. He gave his name as Fay Elliott and said his residence was at the Bay. The recorder asked him if he wanted a lawyer and he said no. He was ready, though, to plead guilty to violating the ordinance, having been found drunk with liquor in his possession. The recorder had no option but to fine him heavily, the minimum fine prescribed by the city ordinance being \$95 and the maximum \$100. He got the latter and said if he was over to the Bay he could get the money in five minutes.

Just then Traffic Officer Williams came along and said he had to be over to the Bay as a witness at 2 o'clock, so Elliott was turned over to him and taken to the Bay with him, where he got the dough and turned it over to the officer.

Mr. Lawrence told Williams to see the district attorney about the case and he did so. The question whether the auto in the case can or should be confiscated is still under advisement.

## Annulled Beyond Myrtle Point

Station Agent W. E. Bosserman received notice this morning that Southern Pacific trains would not cross the bridges between Myrtle Point and Powers until further notice. An inspector recently examined all the bridges between those two points and this cancellation of service resulted. Mrs. Bosserman does not know whether it will require but a few days to make the repairs or whether the cancellation will be for a longer period.

Harry Sargent was brought down from Powers the first of the week to serve a sentence of about 33 days in jail to liquidate a fine of \$50 and \$15 costs imposed by Justice Zimmerman, on the charge of being drunk in a public highway.

Dance at Oaks Pavilion, Myrtle Point, Saturday, March 17. Eula Perrott's Orchestra will furnish the music.

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## BABY WELFARE

### Exhibit at Setaspell Very Interesting—Visited by Hundreds

The Baby Welfare Exhibit at the Setaspell here Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon was not only entirely novel but both interesting and instructive. It was also well attended, fully a hundred mothers, fifty of whom brought babies with them, having been in attendance; and being very glad to secure the information here available as to the care of infants. Indeed fully half of them had questions to ask. This exhibit was under the auspices of the educational committee of the Coquille Health Association, consisting of the following ladies: Mesdames C. A. Gage, Helen Sperry, Edwin Ellingsen, A. A. Selander and H. E. Rossell, but we judge that the credit for the initiative and development of the exhibit is primarily due to Mrs. H. W. Irwin, wife of our county health officer.

Five churches also co-operated in the movement, the Christian, Episcopal, Presbyterian and the two M. E. churches. Besides, our city merchants did all they could in furnishing material in the way of baby necessities for the exhibits and the considerable number of dolls needed for purposes of illustration were loaned by the Hub at Marshfield.

The fact that seven out of every hundred babies die from causes (mostly preventable) during the first year of their lives, was very forcibly emphasized by a large glass globe filled with white beans to the extent of 93 per cent, with seven in a hundred of dark ones scattered through them.

The baby was shown in one section while being washed, in another as being dressed, with a large display of appropriate garments to select from; in a third as being fed; and in another at play. In the latter section playing was not only represented in approved methods but also by some emphatically disapproved. Among the latter was the baby walker in which the baby is taught to stand up before the muscles of its legs are sufficiently strong to support it. A pair of scales enforced this condemnation, showing how a Coquille baby in walker had lost two pounds in a short time.

Thirty-four different pamphlets containing worth while instruction as to the care of the little tots were being distributed and eagerly received. The attendance and interest was very gratifying to the ladies who prepared this exhibit; and it is hoped there will be even more mothers seeking light on this very vital subject of Baby Welfare when another exhibit is held two months hence.

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### Hotel Plans Adopted

The directors of the hotel company met with A. C. Jenkins, architect of Albany, Ore., on Wednesday evening, and after suggesting minor changes in the tentative plan for a hotel building submitted by Mr. Jenkins, accepted his plans and engaged him as supervising architect.

The work Mr. Jenkins has done heretofore has been temporary only, but he will now proceed to complete the drawings and specifications. He assured the directors that the building would come within the funds available. Until Mr. Jenkins' plans are completed we can give no definite information as to the appearance and arrangement of the new building, but it will have the kitchen in the northwest corner, a dining room, restaurant, lobby, barber shop, a store room on the corner of Front and Taylor and another in the southwest corner, opening on Front street.

It will probably require a month to get ready to advertise for bids, but it is hoped to have the basement plans completed in ten days so that the excavation can be made whenever the weather appears to be settled.

### Repairing Thompson Building

The Thompson building on Front street, occupied by the Maybelle Ford Millinery, has been undergoing a complete remodeling and decorating this week. New show windows have been built, the front and interior painted, new paper hung, and Mrs. Ford has new display cabinets coming, which will make the room a very attractive one.