

# Pete Sullivan, After 23 Years In Pen For Scandia Murder, Seeks Pardon

By HALE SCARBROUGH

Pete Sullivan, who has spent 23 of his 54 years in the Oregon penitentiary at Salem, wants a pardon, and the yellowed files of a 1925 Klamath Falls murder are being probed to see if the Irishman deserves complete freedom.

The chances seem very slim. Sullivan was sentenced to life imprisonment for the first degree murder of Oscar Erickson during a poker game stick-up in the basement of the Scandia hall (present Eagles lodge site). Nine years later he was released on conditional pardon, got into more trouble and was returned to prison.

He's there now and eligible for parole.

A few days ago Attorney Ed C. Kelly of Medford contacted the county clerk's office here with a request that he be allowed to look into the files of the old Sullivan case and the record of proceedings of the Irishman's trial. A three-inch stack of old, ruled stenographic notepaper—the shorthand notes of trial testimony—was dug out of the courthouse vault and forwarded to the Medford lawyer.

Never Transcribed

The shorthand notes were made by Grant Richmond, circuit court reporter in those days, and had never been transcribed. Richmond is reported to be living in Los Angeles now, and Kelly told a reporter for The Herald and News he would send the notes down there for Richmond to transcribe. Testimony of Sullivan's trial used up about 800 pages of stenographic paper and the transcription—after almost 25 years—is bound to be expensive.

Sullivan himself requested that the transcript be made and is paying for it, Kelly said. The convicted slayer has been allowed to make fishing files in prison and has saved up a little pile of money from sale of his product. He reportedly has had other convicts helping in his fly-tying business.

The transcript will be a starting point only in Sullivan's bid for pardon. Maybe it will yield some proof of the Irishman's claim of innocence and maybe it won't. Kelly admits he knows little of the Scandia hall murder and Sullivan's trial except what he has heard from Sullivan himself.

"But he contacted me for help and wants to go through the expense of getting the transcript," the Medford lawyer said. "I'm willing to help him on the chance that he might have been wrongfully convicted or just on the probability that I can extend him a little hope and encouragement."

It's not as though a man with flawless reputation was cast into prison on shoddy evidence, however.

Klamath Falls was a pretty wild town back in the middle twenties and Sullivan was known as an underworld character, a moonshiner and general rouser.

The Scandia Killing

The Scandia hall murder story—well remembered by older citizens—is this:

About 12:10 a.m. January 4, 1925, six men were sitting around a poker table in the basement of the hall, playing cards. Three armed men came in and reportedly started firing almost as soon as they entered the room. One bullet hit the table top, ricocheted and struck 33-year-old Oscar Erickson in the chest. Erickson was one of the card players. He died a short time later.

The bandits are supposed to have gotten about \$400 in the robbery. The slaying was sensational news, of course. Several suspects were jailed, questioned and released before the big break in the investigation came.

On January 11, W. H. Perkins, news editor of the Evening Herald, got a confession from a young man named John Taylor, the confession naming the bandits as Taylor himself, Pete Sullivan, Sin Pate, Char-

ley Smith and John O'Shea as the bandits.

Taylor had been arrested at a farmhouse 17 miles west of Medford by Fred Morley, an ex-constable, Perkins and T. B. Malarky, an Evening Herald reporter. Morley had been hired by the newspaper as a special investigator, and he followed an underworld tip to the arrest of Taylor.

The young man was questioned for several hours by William Gannon, then district attorney and now a prominent Klamath Falls attorney, but didn't break down until, in conversation with Perkins, he suddenly asked:

"Tell me, and for God's sake tell me the truth, what sort of bullet was it that killed Erickson?"

"It was a .32-caliber bullet," he was told.

"Thank God," Taylor murmured. Then he poured out the story of the cardroom robbery, told of two days of plotting and his own subsequent horror at the recollection of the slaying.

Taylor declared Sin Pate framed the robbery. At the hall Pate watched the door, O'Shea drove the getaway car, Sullivan, Smith and himself went into the room. All three were armed but only Sullivan had a .32.

Low Captured Sullivan

Sin Pate was picked up on the street a few hours after Taylor's confession. O'Shea was picked up in Cottage Grove.

Pete Sullivan was captured January 15—nine days after the murder—at a sheep camp in Modoc county, Calif., below Malin. Lloyd Low, appointed special deputy to work on the case, and Constable Gary Conrad captured Sullivan without a struggle.

Charley Smith, known as an underworld character, was never captured.

The four prisoners were indicted for first degree murder and pleaded not guilty, but Taylor subsequently changed his plea to guilty and was the principal witness against the other three. Judge C. M. Thomas of Medford presided for the trials, and Pate, tried first, was convicted on Taylor's evidence.

O'Shea was tried next and offered defense witnesses who swore he was at a pool room at the time of the stick-up and murder. He was acquitted.

Trial

Sullivan's trial started February 9, and Taylor's testimony was the chief instrument against him. Friends of the Irishman testified he was at a pool hall on the evening in question, and Sullivan took the stand himself to give a minute-by-minute account of his time the evening and early morning of the Scandia hall robbery.

Taylor testified Sullivan was one



Photographic History

**MAIN STREET SCENE**—Yes, this old-time (1909) picture was taken at about the site of the present-day Main street underpass. The Southern Pacific had just built into Klamath Falls at that time, and the woman standing at the end of the sled is Mrs. H. P. Hoge, wife of the S. P.'s chief engineer. Driver of the sled was the late Fred Wing. Picture belongs to Ed Cross, Klamath Falls.

## Royall Recommended One Air Force In Final Report

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27 (AP)—Former Secretary of the Army Royall believes that the air force should be transferred to the navy or else it should take over the naval air arm.

This was one of the recommendations for unification contained in the report Royall made to Secretary of Defense Johnson when he left the Pentagon April 27. The report, supplementing his annual one for 1948, was released yesterday by the department of defense.

Royall said it seemed to him that the secretary of defense should have the right to prescribe and change the functions of the army, navy and air force.

He said this seemed of special importance in regard to the air functions of the air force and the navy.

He said it was his "convention that the most efficient type of unification will come about only when there is one air force."

If unlimited power to assign air functions is not given the head of the defense department, Royall said then "the air force should be transferred to the navy or, if not, the naval air arm should be transferred to the air force."

Royall made other recommendations to strengthen unification and the powers of the secretary of defense.

Some of these, such as provision for an under secretary of defense and assistant secretaries, were contained in the unification act since passed by congress.

This act specifically forbids secretary of defense to reassign or consolidate combat functions. At

the time the bill was pending there were rumors that Johnson planned to transfer the marine air arm or possibly put the marines in the army. Johnson denied it.

## Volunteers Sought For Shasta Project

Volunteers are needed Sunday to work on the Shasta community building which is being constructed entirely by donations of work and funds.

The Shasta View Building association is sponsoring a dance at the fairgrounds September 2, the proceeds from which will go into construction costs of the community building.

Bases for concrete foundations will be dug Sunday and forms built. Volunteers are asked to bring picks, shovels and hammers and roll up their sleeves.

Women of the Suburban league and the Shasta grange will serve a potluck luncheon at noon.

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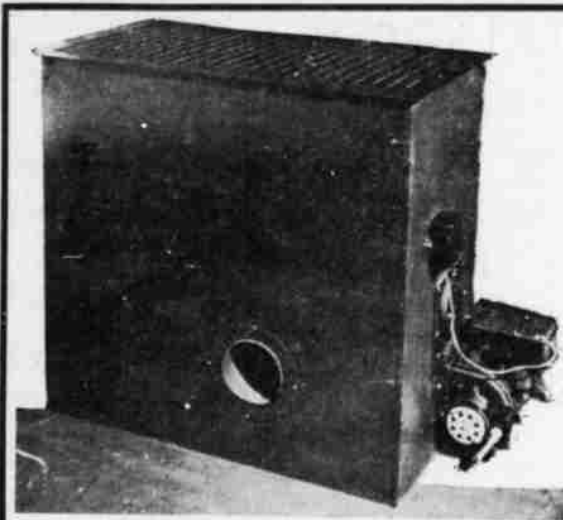
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## College Fall Term Dates Announced

EUGENE, Aug. 27 (Special)—Fall term college classes at the institutions of the state system of higher education will begin in Eugene and Corvallis September 26, and in Ashland, LaGrande and Monmouth, September 27. Deadline for registering at the schools is October 8. All will have Thanksgiving vacations November 24 to 27, and terms will end December 20.

Some University of Oregon students will begin arriving on that campus September 11 for rush week. New student week and registration is set for September 19 to 24.

Oregon State college will have registration and orientation week September 19 to 24, with registration the last three days. First rush week is set for September 22 to 25, and second rush week September 26 to 29.

Southern Oregon college, Ashland, and Oregon College of Education, Monmouth, have set September 22 to 26 for freshman days and registration of entering students, and September 26 for registration of returning students; Eastern Oregon College of Education, La Grande will have freshman days and registration of entering students September 22 to 24, with September 26 for registration of returning students only.

Vancouver extension center, Portland, will have a similar schedule, operating as follows: September 19, placement examinations for new students; September 20, advisement for new students, and September 21 to 24, freshman week and registration.

The University of Oregon medical

and dental schools, also in Portland, will start a little later. Registration at the dental school is October 3 to 4, and classes will begin October 5. The medical school schedules examinations for removal of deficiencies on October 1, registration October 3, and classes, October 4. Both will have November 24 as Thanksgiving holiday, and terms ending December 23.

**TWO KILLED**

BALTIMORE, Aug. 27 (AP)—Two persons were killed and a third was critically wounded last night in an East Baltimore apartment shooting. Police said Robert B. Netherland, 41, shot his wife to death with a .32 caliber automatic pistol, wounded Mrs. Pearl Botehrer, 29, then turned the weapon on himself.

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