

RANCHER'S BODY FOUND IN WELL

Discovery Climaxes Weird Mystery More Baffling Than Fiction.

San Francisco, Calif.—As a climax to one of the weirdest murder mysteries that ever baffled fiction detectives or flashed on the movie thriller screen, the body of Frank Roderick, forty-year-old prosperous rancher of San Mateo county, has been removed from the bottom of a well 26 feet deep on his ranch on the Alpine road, one mile south of La Honda.

As a result of the discovery of Roderick's body, his crushed skull showing how his life had been ended by a powerful blow from behind, the rancher's wife, Minnie Roderick, thirty-three, and the "hired hand" of the ranch, William Woodring, forty-four, were in jail at Redwood City.

A "Red-Haired Gal." Although the Roderick ranch is only a few minutes by automobile from the heart of sophisticated San Francisco, and in the center of a vacation and summer home territory, the history of the disappearance of Roderick and the events preceding and following it are such as might be expected of the days of 50 years ago when California was frontier land and life was held cheaply.

Cattle rustling, in which a nine-year-old son of Roderick's helped him drive off steers from neighboring ranches—jealousy of a wife over a "red-haired gal"—glances of affection exchanged between the boss' wife and the cowboy from distant parts—battle to the death—betrayal by confederates in crime—the astute sheriff who solves the mystery—all the requirements of the "western thriller" are present in copious quantity!

Cattle Rustling Hinted. The story dates back eight months when Sheriff James J. McGrath went into the Alpine country to investigate reports of "cattle rustling."

There had been complaints from the Gallagher & Zink ranch and the Lillcote ranch near the Roderick ranch that cows and steers had mysteriously disappeared on dark nights. A dozen head were missing altogether. The sheriff was unable to pin anything on anybody, but he closely questioned Roderick and Woodring at that time.

The next chapter came May 20 last, when Mrs. Roderick came to visit District Attorney Franklin D. Swart at Redwood City. She said her husband had beaten her severely, had dressed up in his "store clothes," had put \$2,800 in his pockets, and had disappeared with a "red-headed gal."

Swart's Complaint. On Swart's advice she swore out a warrant for her husband on a battery charge. But Sheriff McGrath, remembering his suspicions of a few months before, questioned Mrs. Roderick closely when she asked him to serve the warrant.

McGrath finally elicited information from the wife which led him to visit the Mindigo ranch, also in the Alpine district. Buried under the floor boards of a ranch outhouse he found many steer hides—unmistakable signs of cattle rustlers who had run off steers—had butchered them, had sold the beef, and had hidden the evidence of the branded hides.

Again the sheriff questioned Woodring—Roderick of course was missing—but again he was baffled.

Sheriff McGrath continued to brood over the story. He was nonplussed, and McGrath is a man who likes things open and above board. So he returned to the Roderick ranch and found young Filbert Roderick, nine-year-old son of the rancher, alone. He adroitly engaged the lad in conversation.

A few minutes later the sheriff had drawn from the boy the information that he had accompanied his father "and another rancher" when they drove off a big roan steer from the Gallagher and Zink ranch one dark night.

Father Killed Steer. They had taken the steer to the Mindigo ranch, where the father had killed it with a .22 rifle, left it to dry in the ranch house, and the next day had sold the beef.

After his talk with the boy, McGrath arrested Ernest Hildebrand, owner of a nearby ranch, and took him to Redwood City for questioning. Hildebrand was not charged, and was released after a few hours. But that afternoon the sheriff confided to Undersheriff Edward Farrell that he "had a tip" Roderick had been murdered and his body buried in a well near his home.

The two went to the Roderick ranch and found Woodring busy in the vicinity of the ranch house with a borrowed scraper. He had been plowing and scraping several acres of land near the house which was not used for agriculture, although grain in the fields, according to the sheriff, was in need of attention.

The sheriff looked for the well. It was nowhere to be seen. All the land near the ranch house had been plowed and scraped, and showed no signs of a well ever having existed.

But McGrath was determined to find the well. By searching through county records, he discovered that Roderick had purchased the ranch several years ago from George Steinberg, now a road superintendent with the county. He took Steinberg out to the ranch in his automobile and asked him where the well had been.

Steinberg stood at a corner of the

house, squinted a sight on alignment with a tall tree, and walked 100 yards from the house.

"The well should be right here," he said.

McGrath returned to the ranch, bringing with him Farrell, Deputy Clarence Wyckoff, Constable F. B. Grill, Eddy Chalmers and Charles Roberts. Armed with shovels, they attacked the spot where Steinberg said the well had been.

At dusk they had dug down six feet, and there they found unmistakable evidence the earth had been freshly disturbed. Unrusted pieces of iron, bits of automobile tires and tin cans showed that anything and everything had been used to fill in a hole.

Find Man's Foot. They again attacked the job the next morning. Down and down they went. Chalmers and Roberts were at the bottom of the hole, while McGrath and Farrell were at the top lifting out the earth. Suddenly came a shout from the bottom:

"We've found a man's foot!" The two diggers were just twenty six feet in the earth.

"Come up a minute," ordered McGrath. When the two men—gladly enough—had arrived at the surface McGrath went to the ranch house and placed Woodring and Mrs. Roderick under arrest. Then they returned to the well.

It was 8 o'clock—past dusk—when the body had finally been freed from the soil and brought to the surface. It was that of Roderick. It was plain enough how he had come to his death. A heavy blow from a bludgeon had crushed his skull from the back.

He wasn't dressed in his "store clothes," as his wife had said. He was wearing his overalls and rough shirt and shoes. There wasn't any \$2,800 in his pocket, and the "red headed gal" also remained a mystery.

Questioned Long Hours. Sheriff McGrath took the body to Redwood City for a postmortem investigation. In another car came Woodring and Mrs. Roderick, guarded by the guns of the deputies. In a third car rode Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Anderson, neighbors of the Rodericks, who volunteered to take care of little Filbert, the boy rustler, and his six-year-old brother, Donald, until the children could be turned over to their grandfather, John Fayall, Redwood City rancher, at whose home Roderick courted and won Minnie Fayall.

There was no charge placed against Mrs. Roderick and Woodring at the county jail. Deputy District Attorney Richard Bell and Edmund Scott questioned them into the small hours in the morning, but volunteered no information as to what their inquiries had disclosed.

U. S. Firm to Finance Costly German Canal. Berlin.—An American project for an \$80,000,000 inland canal linking cities of the old Hanseatic league, and which might help to bring them again into some measure of the commercial alliance which they enjoyed nearly seven centuries ago, has been submitted to the German government.

The proposed Hansa canal would extend from the Mittelland canal near the town of Rheine in Westphalia to Minden, where it would join the River Weser, linking Hamburg and Bremen, two of the most important Hansa cities, with Germany's richest coal producing areas in the Ruhr.

The name of the American firm proposing to build and finance the waterway has not been revealed.

The project, if realized, would greatly curtail large scale British coal deliveries along the German seaboard, since the German coastal cities could then buy domestic coal much more cheaply.

French Plan to Spend \$4,000,000 on Bourse. Paris, France.—France's stock exchange, known as the Bourse, is going to be enlarged at a total cost of \$4,000,000, the municipal council has just decided.

The work will not be started until 1931 and will insure adequate space for those dealing in stocks and bonds at the financial center of France.

The Bourse was a project of Napoleon, although not finished until 1826. In 1900 the building was enlarged, but France's growing interest in international finance has made necessary another enlargement.

Nonspinning Airplane About to Make Bow. Washington.—A new type of airplane, claimed to be nonspinning, is about to be demonstrated in Montreal, the Commerce department has been advised. The nonspinning feature is achieved by special wings so designed that they resist air currents and maintain the craft in a position in which a dangerous spin is impossible.

12 Cents Reward to Finder of \$12,000. Missenden, England.—A little boy found a woman's handbag containing money and jewelry, amounting to between \$10,000 and \$12,000. The boy's mother, finding a name and address in the bag, traveled eight miles by bus, paying 16 cents for fare, and walked a further three miles to return the bag to the owner in a remote part of Amersham. She was rewarded with a six-penny piece (twelve cents).

Boy Inventor Routs Fire With Own Device. Philadelphia.—It took the emergency of a fire at his home to apply the acid test to the chemical genius of a Philadelphia boy inventor.

And Frederick Williamson, Jr., sixteen, of 1712 Moore street, was found not wanting.

For weeks he had been trying in vain to convince employment officials of chemical plants of his ability. But, though his confidence was not infectious, he lost none of it. He kept on working on the model of a fire extinguisher.

When the fire was discovered in a sofa on a porch outside his room on the third floor, his parents, who had smelled smoke from their second floor room, snatched up carpets to beat out the blaze.

When young Williamson advanced with his simple little device, his parents kept on swinging their rugs—but not for long—for the fire didn't last long after Frederick turned his extinguisher on it, and Engine Company No. 24 went back to its station at

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Youth Plans Great Things After Being Named Beneficiary of Dad's Will.

Memphis, Tenn.—A nine-year-old heir to the \$50,000 estate of his father claims 15 girl admirers and is "going to spend lots of money on them."

The youth, Miller Jameson, Memphis, is planning great things after being named principal beneficiary in the will of his father, Wylie Miller Jameson, literary writer, who died in New York City recently.

The will, filed for probate in New York, provided that young Jameson should receive the major portion of the \$50,000 estate, but if he had died before execution of the paper Col. Charles A. Lindbergh and Gene Tunney, former heavyweight boxing champion, would have received the money to "use as they see fit," according to the stipulations of the will.

The Jameson lad was reluctant in permitting newspapers here to publish his announcement about the girl friends, for "I don't want to get in Dutch with 'em," he explained.

Likewise he plans to be independent in business. "I'd go down to the drug store and buy six boxes of torpedoes to make plenty of noise. Then I'd buy three boxes of soda water and a refrigerator and go into the soft drink business," he speculated from his bed at his home here.

Miller was sick when the joyous news reached him. He had closed his drink stand the day before because, as his mother explained it, "he was sick from drinking the excess stock."

He will enter the fourth grade when school opens this fall. "Between now and then," Miller said, "I'm gonna spend some of my time riding my bicycle, going to parties and dancing."

Twentieth and Federal streets without having to get into action.

The boy's home made device is a gallon jug containing water and baking soda and four tubes of sulphuric acid, which are affixed inside the neck of the jar. The mixture is poured from an L-shaped tube in the top of the container, and the chemical reaction of the ingredients smother the flames, Frederick explained.

Ruling Strikes Gyp Car Sale; Protects Buyer

Washington.—Even though the purchaser of a used automobile enters into a contract which states that the car is purchased "as is," he may recover damages in an action for deceit, according to a decision by the Massachusetts State Supreme court reported by the legal department of the American Motorists association.

Thomas J. Keefe, general manager of the motorists association, said the decision was of great importance because more than three and a half million used cars are sold annually.

The court ruled that the purchase could recover damages if it was shown that the sale was made through misrepresentations as to the condition of the car.

Slave's Burial Rites Held in White Church

Statesville, N. C.—The funeral of "Uncle" Richard Wood, respected slavery-day negro, set a precedent in Statesville. "Uncle" Richard's funeral service was held in the \$200,000 First Presbyterian church.

When white residents heard of the aged negro's death, his family was offered use of the church.

When the congregation of the church was solicited subscriptions for the new church, Wood was among the first to contribute and to pay his subscription in full.

French Youths Start Round-World Auto Trip

Paris, France.—Driving a tiny six-horse-power French automobile, two French youths, Pierre Martineau and Antoine Bertin, said good-by to Paris on July 16 on their departure for a trip around the world via French Cochinchina.

Having been refused permission by the Soviets to cross Siberia, the two motorists are en route to the United States via Austria, Roumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India, Burma, Saigon, thence to San Francisco and back to Paris.

Light Stops Trains

Demonstration of a method of halting trains by the action of a beam of light, was made with a small model recently. A small hand lamp casts a ray which strikes a light cell on the front of the engine. The cell then causes the brakes of the train to be applied through the action of relays set in operation by the effect of the light upon the cell.

Will you save, or speculate?

A savings account is not a quick rich road to wealth. But it is a sure road. Which one will be ahead in ten years? The man who saves - or The man who speculates. There is not much doubt about the answer. Methodical, persistent saving will win.

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