

THE "DUCKY" STORY

Aug. 13, 1891. This was a two and a half column article that really shows the way it was in the "old days". Remember, Willie Chalfant, the editor of the Register was known to be a friend of the local Indians, this isn't adversary reporting, it is just the way it was.

Headline - IN SELF DEFENSE

Sub. . . . DUCKY, CHIEF OF INDIAN POLICE, SHOT IN TOWN - HOW IT OCCURRED

The Sabbath of quiet Bishop was disturbed at about 9 o'clock last Sunday evening by loud talk, followed by a pistol shot, on a back street. Fred W. George, watchman, soon appeared and said that he had killed an Indian, and surrendered himself to Officer Drake. A number of whites at once repaired to a point north of the school house where was laying the dead Indian, and found the corpse to be that of Ducky, ex Chief of the Indian police officers. The body was searched, upon it being found a small pocket knife, some pieces of candy, and an eight ounce prescription bottle bearing the flavoring label, containing alcoholic liquid, with an inch or so fluid in it. The dead mans coat was on fire at the left shoulder having caught from the pistol which shot him. Blood was freely flowing from the wound in the shoulder about an inch above the left armpit. He was dead when found. An inquest was held at the Justice's Courtroom by J.E. Dunlap, acting coroner. A jury was summoned consisting of Chas. Wonacott, Don Burdick, M.C Hall. Jas. McBride, F.G. Powers and George Hall. The testimony taken is given almost in full. No material facts being omitted.

L.W. Allingham sworn: My name is L.W. Allingham, occupation physician, residence Bishop; am a graduate of Trinity College, of Toronto. Have examined body of Ducky; found wound made by bullet or other missile, within one inch of left axillary border. Course of wound is forward and downward, and a little inward. Am not satisfied to further course of missile. There is no aperture of exit. Did not examine the wound sufficiently to ascertain that it would produce death. From the absence of other injuries would think this caused death. Probed the wound about five inches.

Jake Garrison (Indian) called, Ben Webster as interpreter. My name is Jake Garrison, live at Jasper Williams place, one and half miles north of Bishop. Was in town Sunday at two o'clock, and afterward about dark. Saw Ducky in town about four o'clock, also at dark. He was walking on the street. He said, "I'll drive off Indians and go with you". This was on street by Hill's. A white man came up and told him (Ducky) he had better get on his horse and go home. The white man was Dr. George's boy, (Fred W. George). Ducky said he was Sheriff too, and George told him he had better go home, at the same time hitting him with a stick. George kept backing around and Ducky following him. George shot him then, and his horse scared and ran and Ducky ran too. I was ten or twelve feet from Ducky when he was shot, was on horseback. Couldn't, see their positions--- my horse ran off when the pistol was fired. Next saw Ducky in ditch outside of schoolhouse lying down.

Didn't get off my horse. Besides George, Ducky and myself, Peeper Wildasinn (an Indian) was there when the shot was fired. He was ten or twelve feet from Ducky, on horseback. There were lots of white men at the body when I was there, and I went to American Joe's. When I went to where the body was Peeper Wildasinn was with me. He got off his horse, but didn't get too close to Ducky. Don't know whether Ducky was drunk or had been drinking. I was not drunk. Came back to town the second time for some eye medicine; I got it at Wright's. Didn't see other Indians in town. Was on my way home when I saw Ducky. Ducky didn't say anything to George when he followed him up before the shooting. Peeper Wildasinn was not drunk. Saw some Lemon taken from Ducky after he was dead. Did not see the bottle before. Don't know whether Ducky had any weapon; didn't see any. Don't know where George got his club (?). It was dark and I couldn't see, only it was white. (That isn't copy error).

Tom Hutch (Indian) sworn; My name is Tom; live at Bishop. Was with Ducky yesterday. Saw him buy a bottle of lemon from medicine man this side butcher shop (pointing to south). Ducky drank the lemon and walked up and down the road. This was at eight o'clock. I didn't buy any lemon; the man wouldn't give it to me. We were in the front part of the house.

J.H. Bulpitt sworn; my name is J.H. Bulpitt, occupation merchant, residence Bishop. Was at home in Bishop 9 o'clock P.M. August 9th. Heard loud talk and went out to the gate to see what the trouble was. There seemed to be a drunken row at the northwest corner of Hill's lot. There was considerable talk. I couldn't understand it but heard somebody say "Get on your horse and go home, " accompanied by two or three blows, followed almost immediately by a pistol shot. I stepped into the street to see what the trouble was, and a horse followed by a man, or two or three of them ran by me. The Indian, as it proved to be, fell down opposite my gate. Then Fred George came by me and I said, "There's a dead Indian ". He answered me and said, "Yes, I shot him". I went with him then toward the Indian and he got up and ran or staggered a short distance and fell again. I then left and did not go near him. Had not seen Ducky all day, and did not know it was Ducky. Couldn't distinguish the men when I heard the row, it was so dark that I could just see that there were a number of men and horses together. When they came by me there were two or three Indians. Was about 50 feet distant from the place where the shot was fired. It was the loud shot that brought me out to the street; there wasn't much after I got there. The shot followed immediately after. All the talk I could distinguish was in English. Did not hear Ducky or any other person say, " I will kill you. It is about two hundred feet from where the shooting occurred to where Ducky fell. Think Dr. George was first white man to reach the body.

Peeper Wildasinn (Indian) sworn: My name is Peeper Wildasinn, live in Round Valley. Was with Ducky four or five minutes before the shooting. George hit Ducky with a stick and then shot. Ducky wanted me to help him to drive the Indian out of town; I said, "All right, I'll help you." George had just come up. George wanted him to go home. Ducky said he was Sheriff too. George hit him with a stick Ducky said, "What you hit me for?"

George didn't say anything. Didn't see Ducky go after him, only stand around. Was about twenty feet away on horseback. Heard the pistol; George fired it. He was two or three feet from Ducky. He was on south, Ducky on north, and I was east. It was dark and I couldn't see very well. Didn't see Ducky have any weapon. He just stood up, that's all. Didn't see him drunk. Saw bottle when boys took it out. Ducky and George were both on same side of horse.

Dr. W.H. George sworn; My name is W.H, George; reside at Bishop. Was in town at 9 o'clock P.M. August 9th. Visited the place where Ducky was living. No white men were present when I arrived; two Indians were there; believe they were both on ground by their horses heads. Ducky was turned over; among articles taken from his person was a bottle containing about an inch of some flavoring extract, pronounced to be alcohol by bystanders. Indians were alone with him and could have taken anything from his back pockets.

Fred W. George sworn; My name is Fred W. George; occupation laborer; residence Bishop. Was in Bishop August 9th, 1891. Am employed as a night watch man by the citizens of Bishop. About a Quarter past nine o'clock I went up the street that runs from Hill's, and two Indians on horseback passed me about the northeast corner of Hill's corral. I watched them to see if they were going to ride on, but they stopped north of the northeast corner of the schoolhouse lot. I went up to see what they were doing there and found that another Indian had joined them; he was on foot, leading his horse. They commenced loud talking in the Piute language, and I told them they must keep Quiet or leave town. He and the other two Piutes talked together for a minute or so, and the Indian that was on foot said he would leave town when he got ready. He stooped down as though to pick up something from the ground and to the best of my belief picked up a stone or a stick. It was too dark to see what it was. I told him to drop it but he raised his hand as though to throw, and I struck him with a stick that I carried-- a broom handle. He looked at me a moment without speaking and then said, "You, , - - ' r'll fix you, I've got a gun. He put his hand in his back pocket as though trying to draw something out and walked toward me, and as he came towards me the shot was fired. Immediately after the shot I received a blow on the head from some heavy weapon. The Indian walked up across from Bulpit's gate; still leading his horse, and fell. I walked towards him; he got up from there and went west. I suppose thirty yards and fell close to the schoolhouse fence on the north side. I went within ten feet of him, and could hear his heavy breathing. As soon as I found that he was alive I went for medical assistance, then sent for Constable Drake. Before he said he would fix me I had been retreating for half the width of the street till I could get a weapon. The weapon was in my pocket and was hard to get out. As soon as the shot was fired they started their horses on a gallop west on that same street and went out of sight. The Indians were about sixty feet from Ducky and myself when the shot was fired. The shot was fired about four or five feet west of the northwest corner of Hill's fence. I understood from the Indians words that he intended some injury to me. I was about four feet from Ducky when the shot was fired. I understand my duties as night watchman to be to look after property. As it was an

express wish of a majority of citizens to have the Indians out of town by dark, I considered it my duty to keep them out. Was acting as night watchman when this difficulty occurred. Considered my life in danger when the shot was fired. Did not know who the Indian was. I believe the blow I received when the Shot was fired came from the deceased. Believed deceased to be drunk from his thick voice and the smell of his breath. Think weapon I was struck with was a pistol, from him saying he had one, and from his position, but do not positively know what it was. The blow was very painful, and has been hurting me since. No one was present when I approached the body; I had just spoken to Mr. Bulpitt. Couldn't say what because of Ducky's weapon, unless he carried it with him. I sent for Constable Drake to voluntarily surrender myself.

THE VERDICT

Following is the verdict rendered by the jury after hearing the preceding evidence.
Bishop, Calif., August 10th, 1891.

We the jurors empanelled to investigate the cause of death of Indian Ducky, find

The deceased name is Ducky, a resident of Bishop Creek

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That deceased came to his death on the evening of August 9, 1891 in the town of Bishop.

That deceased came to his death by a gunshot wound in while inflicted by Fred W. George while in the discharge of his duty as night watchman.

That we believe Fred W. George was acting in, self – defense when the fatal shot was fired.

Charles Wonacott

F.G. Powers

Jas. McBride

Don Burdick

George Hall

M.C. Hall

SOME COMMENTS

By Willie Chalfant

Ducky, the Indian who was killed, was one of the leading men of the Piutes, and was their chosen peace officer till recently, when owing to dissensions among themselves he was deposed. He commanded largely the confidence of both whites and Indians, particularly while an officer; but of late he had become more dissipated and generally Piute like than before, and the native nature was certainly strong when he met death. For all that, he was one of the best of the tribe. This unfortunate affair is to be deplored, for many reasons as well as this.

The Indians are resentful, not however toward the whites as a class. With reasonable caution, nothing need be feared from them. As in the Messiah scare sometime back, there is more danger from imaginative whites than from the Piutes. While sufficient opportunity might encourage them to vengeance upon those they hold responsible, it is safe to say they will not try open force, nor come into open collision with armed white men.

Some citizens talk of steps to conciliate them. Advocates of a mere show of procedure, To pacify the Indians, and it looks like to us, behind the times. There is no partnership between the Indians and the whites in local government. The whites are in governing power, and the Indians should be allowed to entertain any...' (The print of the next half column is lost. It is on microfilm at the Hunington Library.) (Inyo Register)