

BOY TELLS SORDID STORY OF CRIME

St. Petersburg Boy Killer Discusses Crime Calmly; Shows Lack of Feeling.

Special to Hickory Times-Mercury.

CLEARWATER—A victim of the sordid crime.

These are the grim alternatives faced by Frank McDowell, boy slayer today.

McDowell, 17 years, radical and terrorist, shot and killed his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. McDowell as they slept in their home in St. Petersburg.

A year ago to the day he sat on the bed of this young slayer, with his senses fixed in, and waited motionless for the blow to fall.

Both crimes, albeit without parallel in criminal records, were impelled he said today, by the command of the Holy Ghost to avenge for an "unpardonable" which he committed when he was a boy of nine.

Free to Explain.

A word pronounced by the mouth of 17, underlined and underlined, McDowell, sitting on the bed, sat in the shadows, far here, in between two windows, for the first time, and attempted to explain the weird, morbid, and unaccountable crime.

McDowell, a commission of doctors was never reported to, examine the boy. They will probably determine whether he is to spend the rest of his life in an insane asylum or one scrupulously in the electric chair.

Did the mother know that her son had slain his two sisters?

This was the chief puzzle of the mystery today. For if she did, another motive might be established for the remarkable murders of last week.

Extols Father.

"No one could have had a truer father than I had," McDowell said simply.

"And your mother?" he was asked. "She was not sympathetic to my religious views," he replied a little wearily. "She was devoutly religious and I was not, but I can't be a Christian, I am an atheist."

The reporter said McDowell that a hell in it removed that his mother knew it, killed the girls, and helped him for it.

"Is that your way of saying that you will help her to commit your own crime?"

McDowell, started his only, "I was fair to the mother and repaid with a pistol."

"Who could have thought such a horrible thing as that?"

Then he replied boldly, "But I think you are telling me so, isn't that right?"

Not Bright Looking.

A slight, weary youth of slanting features, McDowell, for all his unusual interest in religious and social questions did not appear to be particularly bright. His eyes, thin, sunken, and full blue eyes, hardly suggested the last for death which again through his soul and brain he had against his nearest and dearest.

"I never thought of them as relatives, when I was in that mood," he said. "They were then the tormentors of Anti-Christ and were to be annihilated. I knew nothing of time or space. I only knew I was to kill."

Remorse.

"We were via unappreciate my position. I was horrified," he returned in a matter of fact tone.

When McDowell was nine, he said and living with his parents and sisters in Decatur, Ga. where his father was a respected newspaperman, he blasphemed the Holy Ghost.

Cursed Holy Ghost.

"I said blasphemy was at his house, and he was trying to put a shirt on. It had come back from the laundry without the buttons."

"I don't know what mind is served me," he said today. "But I was blindly furious. I cursed the Holy Ghost. Later the thing seemed so obvious. You can't imagine my state of mind. In church a member, during a sermon, said that to curse the Holy Ghost was the unpardonable sin. For years that tortured me."

The boy was silent for a few moments. Then he added as a sort of after thought, "Of course those things don't worry me now. I'm not a Christian any more."

McDowell went on to tell about the dreams that preceded the murder.

"I'm going to tell you the one that I had before I killed my sisters," he began. "But I think it was much like the one I had last Sunday night."

Resembled Rabbit in Profile.

"There it seemed to me that the Holy Ghost hovered over me, immense, terrible, like a sheet in the form of a rabbit in profile."

"I remember only its command and its booming voice. It said 'Go, kill the followers of Anti-Christ.'"

"And I did. I shot my father and mother as they slept, my father first and then my mother."

"Then for a while I was dazed and afterward horrified. I was struck by the disgrace of the thing and smash-

ed in the screen and bumped my head to give the appearance of a struggle with a stranger and I tried to lay the blame on him."

McDowell said that his mother herself advised him to buy the revolver with which he later murdered her.

"I bought it two weeks ago. There had been problems about the house and she was afraid," he explained.

Discuss Crime Calmly.

The strange thing about Frank McDowell is his apparent lack of feeling. He sat here without emotion, almost impassive. His terrible crime he discussed calmly, not with a shrug, but as a duty that had to be done to a state-slave murderer.

His greatest worry, he admitted, has always been the fate of Frank McDowell.

"I've always been introspective and morbid," he said. "My parents told me that I should mingle with other people. I never had much to do with girls. I'm not a man of the world or anything like that, you know."

"All my life I've been interested in religion, in sociology and psychology. I've tried to learn what was going to happen to me why I was different from others."

"It's a horrible thing to think of doing, you know, thinking that is an execution and there's no afterlife. But my experience shows me that."

McDowell said that he had read many books on religion, but he could not recall the names of them. Of the books of the Bible he was most fascinated by Genesis and Revelations, he added.

Left College.

"I skipped three grades in school," he said in reply to a question. "I left the high school when I was a junior, and by examination obtained entrance to Emory University. But I didn't like college and left." He could not explain why.

McDowell said that he knew of no instances of insanity in his family.

"Of course an uncle, my father's brother, Eugene McDowell, committed suicide in Atlanta several years ago," he went on. "Probably he was insane. Although that county suicide is, I never heard what his reason was for killing himself."

McDowell said that his parents, particularly his mother, knew that he was an amphetamine.

McDowell was earnestly dressed with the colors of the Times. He said this morning. He was calm, his eyes were clear, and most of the day he sat under heavy chains.

He complained of a pain in the forehead and said he was often troubled by it. At such times, he added, he would become dizzy and uncertain.

Troubled by Dreams.

Troubled by other strange dreams. Last night for instance he said, he dreamed that he and a girl gathered a pack of Russian rubles and tried to feed them to a horse which he saw coming down the road.

Last night he slept with the first time since the double murder in St. Petersburg, he told the reporter.

His religious beliefs are rather vague.

"There is no personal God, no intelligent God," he asserted. "The idea of a hereafter is childish; I don't believe in a smart city throne and be a Christian. I'd be more comfortable than that."

McDowell denied that he was a socialist, although he confessed that he had some theories of government. He could not explain them.

"Do you think you will ever want to kill again?" he was asked.

The boy's face puckered and he raised a hand wearily over his eyes. "I don't know. I hope not," he said.

Talked Freely.

At no time did he become angered or guarded in his statements.

He talked of mother rather calmly, it appeared, but he professed to have a high regard for her. It was evident, however, that he did not greatly esteem her.

"I think I live entirely in my head," he explained. "I think I have no feelings."

While McDowell was being interviewed a number of curiosity-seekers peered through the heavy bars of his cell. He paid not the slightest attention to them.

He was not anxious to talk. "I've been over this so many times I wish you could get your information some other way," he explained. "But if you must hear me, I'll try to help you."

Folks, unbalanced, self-centered, torn by strange doubts and at times swept away by subconscious forces that he cannot understand, forces that cause him to maim and kill, that's Frank McDowell, one of the queerest figures that ever set in the Pinellas Jail.

THANKS

We are in receipt of a letter from Mr. George Lowrance of Clifftop, W. Va. containing seven new subscribers to the Democrat and a post-office order to cover. We appreciate the addition of this office to our list. Thanks.

MOTHERS AID IN STATE GOING WONDERFUL WORK

A Fine Work Being Done Under the Act of 1923.

It is not merely dollars from the State and county that the beneficiaries of Mothers Aid in North Carolina receive, but an ever-growing and increasing interest in their welfare.

Something like 200,000 homes, it is estimated, are suffering from some other ways leading to the general improvement of the mother and child.

According to Miss Emma Tuttle, director of mothers aid for the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, Mothers Aid made possible by the General Assembly of 1923, is appreciated in North Carolina since the first of July 1923.

Since that time 18 counties of the state have received assistance, it was stated.

Miss Tuttle cites several cases showing the human interest side of Mothers Aid. One of the most typical cases where Mothers Aid has benefited the members of a family is that of a woman who already had two children in an orphanage and had been forced to make application for institutions for her other three.

It was the situation when she applied for aid. Now she is able to keep her three children with her and hopes eventually to see her whole family gathered.

Before receiving the aid she had not money enough to secure treatment for one of her children who had defective eyes, it was stated, but now the little boy is being treated by a specialist.

Housing has been a problem in practically every case of Mothers Aid, according to Miss Tuttle. One county superintendent of public welfare found a family living down in the woods in a one-room house. The woman had seven other days with her first husband. Her second husband had deserted her. The first Mothers Aid check was used by this woman to buy furniture for another house which the welfare superintendent had provided for her.

The woman keeps the house spotlessly clean and there is a nipped contract with her former abode, Miss Tuttle said. The superintendent has asked the cooperation of the local home demonstration society in the visiting of the oldest girl, a capable, industrious and brave, so that she may live in the surroundings of the family.

Another woman aided it was pointed out was one who for some time had needed an operation for appendicitis, but "could not take time for it" as she had to work in a store to support her children.

Mothers Aid made it possible for her to have the operation and thus her better physical condition to work for her children.

In another case the superintendent of public welfare, administering Mothers Aid has been a promoter of good reading in the home. She found a cheap magazine, the only piece of reading matter in the house.

She bought it and gave it to the mother in the case with good reading matter and has only supplied them with good books of real worth.

"The idea behind the Mothers Aid," says Miss Tuttle, is "not to keep the wolf from the door, but to wolf from even coming on the path. We want to help those people before they have come to dire poverty and with its resulting loss of morale. Mothers Aid is friendly help. The county superintendent of public welfare and through him the State Board of Charities and Public Welfare keep in touch with each case which is thoroughly investigated before the aid is granted. It is required that recipients be women of good moral, moral and physical character. Mothers are asked to send a strict monthly account of expenditures of the funds received from state and county. The ultimate object of Mothers Aid is to bring the family to a state where it is self-supporting and where the aid is no longer necessary. Miss Tuttle herself has visited and investigated Mothers Aid cases in 31 of the 48 counties where it has been granted.

It is desired that while receiving this aid, the mother contribute as much as possible to the support of her family through her own efforts without neglecting her children, according to Miss Tuttle. To this end several forms of employment which can be followed in the home have been suggested, such as sewing, mending, raising chickens, and laundry work. Several superintendents have arranged for motions to buy washing machines on the installment plan.

In the administration of the Mothers Aid the co-operation of other State agencies, like the division of home demonstration and the State Board of Health is sought by the public welfare forces. The director wishes to get a physical examination of every child or woman receiving Mothers Aid. It is also the effort of the county superintendents of public welfare to put the children in good physical condition by seeing that they get the right sort of food and

LENOIR HOPES FOR N. & W. RAILWAY LINES

Norfolk and Western Reported as Considering Line to Eiland and Lenoir May be Terminus.

Lenoir, March 2.—That serious consideration of building a railroad to connect the Abingdon Branch of the Norfolk & Western with Lenoir, via the southern terminus at Lenoir is being given by the officials of the N. & W. is a certainty.

H. I. Harris, Norfolk and Western division freight agent and of the best known traffic experts in the Norfolk & Western, has spent a week in Lenoir checking up on the possibilities of Lenoir and the section. He was accompanied by H. S. Jones, of New York City, representing the Elk Creek Lumber Co., owners of vast timber boundaries in this section.

If it is decided by the Norfolk and Western to develop this line, the road will be extended from Bowie through Deep Run to Lenoir. Five miles of this route has already been built and is now in operation. The road will pass through a large portion of the Elk Creek Lumber Company land and open up a direct route for the five hundred rail car load of standing timber owned by the Elk Creek interest.

In discussing this project, Harris said the building of the road would cut freight rates on lumber shipments between Lenoir and West Virginia and Ohio points from three to four dollars per thousand. This same relative saving may be applied to furniture shipments going into the Maryland territory as well as to the coal shipments coming this way.

The savings to be afforded will be very material to the Elk Creek Lumber Company's land. It will make it possible to manufacture this timber and place it on the market much more favorably than could be done under present conditions. There are different grades of lumber going into the mining districts, the present and more timber take a different class of lumber than is used in the manufacturing centers. The building of the road through this section will make it possible for the lumber to be made of any of these markets.

The matter of this extension, Mr. Harris said, was first taken up with the directors of the Abingdon-Eiland line, which was taken over a few years ago by the Norfolk and Western. It was after a number of conferences that Mr. Harris was sent here to go over the field and make an estimate of the freight possibilities to be developed along the route.

to keep them in school. The individual needs of each child in the Mothers Aid families are studied, it was explained.

ELECTRIC IRRIGATION HELPS WESTERN FARMS

Provides Artificial "Rainfall" Whenever Needed for "Basic Industry" of Agriculture.

Progress in agriculture, particularly as applied to the western farmer, is symbolized by one thing, prosaic enough in itself—the irrigation ditch. The farmer no longer blames the weather for crop failures, and "hopes especially the farmer with small holdings."

What electric power can mean is evident when it is realized that agriculture is a great "basic industry"; that hard times invariably follow crop failures; that irrigation is the solution of the western farmer's problem; and that electric power for irrigation pumps is making irrigation easier, more efficient, more reliable and less expensive.

It has been found, incidentally, that in most cases the farmer wants to install the large irrigation system. The ideal plan is the one that operates continually and has a storage reservoir so that a large, expensive pump is not needed.

When a small installation of this sort is at work, a storage reservoir capable of holding all the water pumped over a period of twelve hours, the plan could be run all night, and in the morning the farmer would find a full reservoir, from which he could water his land as needed through the pipe and at night the reservoir would thus completing the cycle.



Desert Land from Lack of Rain for better conditions next season. Nowadays, if the rainfall does not suit him, he produces his own rainfall by a twist of the wrist, or the push of a button, in exactly the quantity he desires, and at precisely the time it is needed. Furthermore, he puts it on the particular piece of ground which he wishes to cultivate.

The application of electric power to irrigation, through the rugged terrain of the west, has simplified the process for the farmer.

Protection From Poison Gas

The following four rules for protection against deadly effects of poisonous gas, carbon monoxide, always present in exhaust from gas driven engines, issued by the United States Bureau of Mines, are:

Never run an automobile engine in closed garage; open doors wide.

Never crawl under car with engine running, even if car is in open air.

Never sit in closed car with engine running and all windows shut.

Never sit in the open air, always have windows open.

So many deaths from carbon monoxide have occurred in the country in the past few months that the Pittsburgh station of the Bureau of Mines has been prompted to call the attention of the public to its danger. If the engine is to be kept running in the garage, the garage must be ventilated. Drivers are warned never to crawl under a car when the engine is running no matter how good the ventilation.

NORTH CAROLINA

Annie Smith Bowie, Blowing Rock, Our beautiful Carolina is in the limelight.

The young lady in the center of the stage; The eyes of her admirers are fixed upon her; Her attractions are becoming the rage.

She has won her station and laurels, fair; And merits her encores and applause; She has toiled hard to surmount her handicaps; And now rules by model laws.

The roads by which she achieved fame; Are understudied by her sister states; Her beauty is as renowned as the Queen of Sheba; She welcomes the stranger within her gates.

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