

The DIVORCE COURT MURDER

By MILTON PROPPER

THIRTEENTH INSTALLMENT

When Rankin reached the Central Detective Bureau, a special delivery letter had come from the State Hospital for Women. In the press of complications, he had almost forgotten his inquiry to Allerton, Indiana, about the empty medicine bottle he had found in Mrs. Keith's medicine chest, that had once contained pyramin. Whatever her connection with the hospital, it predated her marriage; and the slender link had appeared relatively insignificant.

Tearing open the envelope, Rankin perused the message. And as he read his brows slowly wrinkled in astonishment.

Friday, June 9

Mr. Thomas Rankin
Central Detective Bureau
Philadelphia, Pa.
My Dear Sir:

In reply to your inquiry about a Barbara Keith or Webb who was a patient in this hospital between 1924 and 1928, I would advise you we can locate no record of treating her. Appreciating the importance of your search, I have thoroughly questioned our staff of doctors, nurses and matrons without result. Since we serve only inmates, I would suggest Mrs. Keith might have served a term under another name in which case we would have her records. If you could send us a more complete description, including her photograph and fingerprints, I will examine our files personally and try to identify her for you.

Very truly yours,

Martha Anderson,
Superintendent of Wards
and Matrons

But it was not these contents, startling as they were, that so amazed the detective. For on the letter-head, in large black type, he read, with a tremor of excitement, "State Penitentiary for Women, Allerton, Indiana," and only underneath in smaller print the words "Women's Hospital Department."

He gave vent to a low whistle of surprise and satisfaction. If, as the message suggested, the hospital was not public and treated only patients incarcerated in the prison, there was just one conclusion.

"But a jailbird!" Rankin marveled under his breath. "Barbara Keith sentenced to a term in the pen! If she was really at Allerton under another name, how long did she serve? And what, in Heaven's name, for?"

Late the next day the Superintendent of Wards and Matrons at the State Penitentiary for Women at Allerton, Ind., produced a sheaf of papers from her desk and passed them to Rankin. "I've collected all the information I could about . . . Ellen Trent," she stated, "in anticipation of your arrival. Here is all the data we have about her—offense and confinement here."

"Thank you, Mrs. Anderson," Rankin returned, "I appreciate your cooperation greatly; it will spare me a good deal of trouble."

Mrs. Anderson indicated the records. "There, you can see for yourself how her prints coincide with those of Mrs. Keith." She placed the prints Rankin brought beside a sheet from the files. "The descriptions tally too; and these pictures settle it that Ellen Trent and Mrs. Keith were the same woman."

Worried, Rankin studied the prison photograph of the woman he had seen only after she died. She did not look a hardened criminal and it bothered Rankin that she should be involved in that sordid existence.

"No, there's no mistake about her identity, Mrs. Anderson," he agreed. "It tells you here that she was really slated for concealing as well as disposing of stolen goods," the woman read on. "They were found in her rooms, in Fort Wayne. And the fact that she lived there with a man

not her husband increased the penalty for a first offense as a moral delinquent. We have no further account of her crimes in this state."

The detective shook his head perplexed. "That isn't a bit like my impression of Mrs. Keith. She began her term, according to this, on March twentieth, nineteen-twenty-seven?"

"It was in the summer of '28, in Detroit," he recalled from Mortimer Keith's account, "that she met her future husband."

"That's right, over six years ago," Mrs. Anderson pointed out the dates. "She was sentenced only a few days after she was caught—about March tenth or so; and by pleading guilty, saved the expense and time of a trial. She finished her imprisonment one year later, in March, twenty-eight."

"You say the girl dealt in stolen goods in Fort Wayne, Mrs. Anderson?" he now inquired of the matron. "What made the authorities suspicious of her?"

Mrs. Anderson shrugged. "She didn't do it herself, I suppose," she admitted grudgingly, "and it wasn't her fault they traced her. The man she snared the apartment with was the thief—or rather, one of a pair—and her sweetheart. When they caught him, they got his address and found her there with some of the loot."

The detective hitched forward. "Then the police know all about her companion?" he asked, eagerly. "Was and where he is—whether he's serving a term now?"

"Yes, his name, in the accounts, was Dave Garrett; they had no previous record of him either." The matron spoke bluntly. "And it's pretty certain what's become of him, Mr. Rankin, you see, he's been six feet under for over six years."

Rankin's features dropped in disappointment. "Dead?" he repeated blankly. "How did that happen? Are you positive of your information?"

"It was in all the papers at the time of his last robbery. It's a long story and I can give you only the main details; the rest you'll have to get from them or the police records in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. For about a year around nineteen-twenty-six, both towns suffered from an epidemic of robberies, to which there were no clues. In this last business the robbers were masked and used a stolen car, which they later abandoned in the country. After the Munson robbery, it was known that two youngish men were the thieves."

Mrs. Anderson paused to clear her throat. "Finally, they made an attempt on a shipment of negotiable bonds lodged in the American express office in Indianapolis," she related. "That was a different matter altogether; they were worth seventy thousand dollars, and were guarded by a burglar alarm and by armed men who could shoot straight. It isn't known how the burglars learned of the shipment. Because of the guards, it wasn't even put in the company safe, but kept in a suitcase behind the counter. . . . Anyway, they pried open a window leading into a back alley at the rear of the buildings and set off the alarm. The guards, warned of their approach, waited for them to reach the main storeroom before they opened fire. Both men were fairly trapped, but only one returned the fire; no gun was found on Garrett—he was little more than twenty-one when they searched his body afterward."

"That's pretty tough," Rankin commented glumly. "What about the other chap?"

"He made a getaway, though of course without the bonds," the matron replied. "Garrett had a pawn ticket in his pocket that gave away his own name and address. The police went there the same night and found the Trent girl in bed and held her. Only a little of the loot from the Chanley and Ordway robberies were hidden there; but still, it was enough to implicate her."

"I suppose the police found a way to make her talk about Garrett's confederate?" asked Rankin.

"She did it without force, almost eagerly, she was so bitter: as if she hated him for leading her man astray. She told his name, where he lived, where he kept the rest of the booty."

"What happened when they went after the other thief?" Rankin asked eagerly.

Mrs. Anderson hesitated and shook her head. "I'm not certain whether he was captured or not. I was only concerned with Miss Trent's story and didn't follow up later develop-

ments. You can learn about him from the Fort Wayne police."

"I'll see them shortly," the detective promised. "And Miss Trent, as she was then, served her sentence?"

"Naturally," the woman returned uncompromisingly. "After all she must have helped the robbers in some way; and it was shown she sold a few articles for household expenses. Besides, she had lived with Garrett for over a year, but could produce no marriage license. And she was pregnant. The court had no choice in sentencing her, since she admitted her guilt and offered no defense."

Rankin nodded. "Now with regard to her baby? What can you tell me about that?"

"There isn't much to tell Mr. Rankin. It was a girl. And it died, as it states here, within three days."

"Young Garrett was the father, I suppose? There's not much doubt about that?"

"Yes, his name went on the birth certificate."

"And what caused the baby's death?" Rankin inquired.

"Convulsions. It was after her delivery that Ellen Trent began to suffer from headaches and needed regular treatment in the hospital. Miss Stafford could say more about that than I; she was the matron who attended her. Later she was transferred to take charge of the corridor in this building where Ellen was a prisoner."

"Then I had better speak to her," the detective said. "If they had much contact, she should know more intimate details about her than these formal records give. Especially, if she won her confidence."

"I'll get hold of her at once; she has charge of the cells again."

The superintendent pressed a buzzer at the side of her desk, summoning to the office door a slatternly prisoner in gray. Through the iron bars, she ordered her to summon Miss Stafford, and the woman shuffled away.

A few minutes later the matron appeared in the corridor, and her superior pressed another button, a click unlocked the door, permitting her to enter. She was surprisingly different from Mrs. Anderson, or from what Rankin expected, though just as efficient looking. Revealing little of the hardness that inevitably develops from dealing with incorrigibles and delinquents, her eyes were deep and understanding and her chin firm but gentle. She was about thirty-five, and she had smooth brown hair and a resonant, soft voice.

"You really think Miss Trent was innocent and that Garrett's confederate instigated the crimes?" Rankin asked.

(Continued Next Week)

RESIGNS FROM HIGHWAY GROUP

Luther H. Hodges, of Spray, former district Rotary governor, has resigned as a member of the State Highway and Public Works Commission after service of two and a half years because of increased personal duties as a textile executive. Governor Ehringhaus, who is expected to appoint his successor soon, wrote him expressing deep regret at his resignation, saying he had rendered a valuable and unselfish service to his state and section and at great personal sacrifice had labored in "fine conscience and intelligence."

NOTICE OF SUMMONS

North Carolina, Watauga County, In the Superior Court Before the Clerk; Mrs. Myra Ruff Mebane, vs. Myra Sloan Mebane and Robert S. Mebane Jr., heirs at law of Robert S. Mebane Sr.

The defendant Robert S. Mebane Jr., will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Watauga County, North Carolina to enable the petitioner, Mrs. Myra Ruff Mebane, borrow money and to be able to secure the repayment of the same in order to be enabled to protect and secure to her the life estate which she now has in certain lands in the City of Blowing Rock, N. C., in which the defendant is a remainderman, and the defendant will further take notice that he is required to appear at the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of said County in the Court-house in Boone, N. C., on the 23 day of December, 1935, and answer or demur to the complaint of the plaintiff petitioner in said action, or the plaintiff petitioner will apply to the court for the relief demanded in said petition.

This 26th day of October, 1935.
A. E. SOUTH,
Clerk of the Superior Court.
10-31-35.

NOTICE OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

State of North Carolina, County of Watauga, In the Superior Court. The Federal Land Bank of Columbia vs. W. J. Hampton and Wife, Ada Hampton, J. A. Sproles, Albert Watson, Watauga County Bank, and Charles Rogers.

The defendants, W. J. Hampton and wife, Ada Hampton, and J. A. Sproles will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Watauga County, North Carolina, to foreclose a mortgage executed to the plaintiff by W. J. Hampton and wife, and the said defendants will further take notice that they are required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court for said county, in the courthouse in Boone, N. C., within thirty days from the completion of this advertisement, as required by law, and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the said complaint.

This 21st day of October, 1935.
A. E. SOUTH,
Clerk of the Superior Court
for Watauga County.
10-24-35.

NOTICES OF SERVICE OF SUMMONS

On defendants specially named below in tax foreclosure suits for Watauga County, North Carolina:

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County Plaintiff, vs. Mrs. Chas. Lambeth and Husband, Mr. Chas. Lambeth, Defendants. Defendants Mrs. Chas. Lambeth and husband, Mr. Chas. Lambeth, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lots Nos. 6, 7, 8, & 9 in Block "D", Subdivision of the Blowing Rock Development Co., Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes, for the year 1928, of record in Deed Book 32, page 140, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of Mrs. Chas. Lambeth.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County Plaintiff vs. H. W. Harris and wife, Mrs. H. W. Harris, Defendants. Defendant H. W. Harris and wife, Mrs. H. W. Harris, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of lands adjoining the Caldwell and Watauga Turnpike, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1929, 1930, 1931 & 1932, of record in Deed Book 30, page 5, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of H. W. Harris.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County Plaintiff vs. Thomas Gemmel and wife, Mrs. Thomas Gemmel, John Fox and The American Trust Company, Defendants. Defendants Thomas Gemmel and wife, Mrs. Thomas Gemmel, John Fox and The American Trust Company, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of lots Nos. 83 & 84, in Mayview Park, Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1927 & 1932, of record in Plat Book 25, page 163 & Deed Book 27, pages 527 & 530, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of Thomas Gemmel.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga county, Plaintiff vs. Forrest Eskridge and wife, Mrs. Eskridge, Defendants. Defendants Forrest Eskridge and wife, Mrs. Eskridge see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lot No. 69 as shown in the Mayview Manor property, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the year 1927, of record in Deed Book 25, page 163, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of Forrest Eskridge.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. J. Carl Wolfe and wife, Mrs. J. C. Wolfe, C. A. Critcher and wife, Mrs. C. A. Critcher, Defendants. Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lot No. 58, in Mayview Park, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the year 1929, of record in Deed Book 37, page 373, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of J. Carl Wolfe.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. M. W. Dixon and wife, Mrs. M. W. Dixon, David J. Craig and wife, Mrs. David J. Craig, Defendants. Defendants M. W. Dixon and wife, Mrs. M. W. Dixon, David J. Craig and wife, Mrs. David J. Craig, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of lots 11 & 12 in Block "C" in Subdivision No. 2 of the Blowing Rock Development Company, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the year 1930, of record in Deed Book 32, page 27, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of M. W. Dixon.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. A. W. Dula, Estate, Defendants. Defendant Mr. A. W. Dula, estate see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of tract of land containing 7 acres, more or less, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the year 1932, of record in Deed Book 34, page 270, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of A. W. Dula, estate.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. J. M. Deaton and wife, Mrs. J. M. Deaton, J. A. Deaton and wife, Mrs. J. A. Deaton, Defendants. Defendants J. M. Deaton and wife, Mrs. J. M. Deaton, J. A. Deaton and wife, Mrs. J. A. Deaton, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of lots Nos. 18, 19, 20, & 21 in Block "E" of the A. S. Abernethy Subdivision, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1931 & 1932, of record in Deed Book 38, page 108, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of J. M. Deaton.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. E. T. Beatty and wife, Mrs. E. T. Beatty, Defendants. Defendants E. T. Beatty and wife, Mrs. E. T. Beatty see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on tract of land bounded on the east by W. A. Merchant; on the south by Ranson Street; on the west by Merchant; on the north by Merchant; and conveyed to said E. T. Beatty, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1927, 1928, 1930, 1931, & 1932, of record in Deed Book 24, page 238, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of E. T. Beatty.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff, vs. George Burnett and wife, Blanche L. Burnett, R. L. Greene, G. T. Burnet Jr., T. T. Horne, Trustee, and John H. Daniel, and Town of Blowing Rock, Leinholder, Defendants. Defendants George Burnett and

wife, Blanche L. Burnett, R. L. Greene, G. T. Burnet Jr., T. T. Horne, Trustee, and John H. Daniel, and Town of Blowing Rock, leinholder, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lots Nos. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, & 17 Block "E" of the A. S. Abernethy property, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1929, 1930, 1931 & 1932, of record in Deed Book 36, page 21, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in name of George Burnett.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. F. A. Earnest and Wife, Mrs. F. A. Earnest, Defendants. Defendant F. A. Earnest and wife, Mrs. F. A. Earnest see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of tract of land containing 595 acres, more or less, in Bald Mt. T. S., for unpaid County taxes for the years 1922, 1929, 1930, 1931, & 1932, of record in Deed Book 21, page 59, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in name of F. A. Earnest.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. June Page and Husband, Defendants. Defendants June Page and husband see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure of lots Nos. 8, 9, 10, & 11, in Block "G", Subdivision No. 2, of the Blowing Rock Development Co., in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1929, 1930, 1931, & 1932, of record in Deed Book 324, page 552, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of June Page.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. J. H. Lineberger and Wife, Mrs. J. H. Lineberger, Defendants. Defendants J. H. Lineberger and wife, Mrs. J. H. Lineberger see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lots Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13, in Block "A" Subdivision No. 2, of the Blowing Rock Development Co. in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1928, 1931, & 1932, of record in Deed Book 32, page 106, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of J. H. Lineberger.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. A. O. Orvis and wife, Mrs. A. O. Orvis and Homer W. Orvis and wife, Mrs. Homer W. Orvis, Defendants. Defendants A. O. Orvis and wife, Mrs. A. O. Orvis, and Homer W. Orvis and wife, Mrs. Homer W. Orvis, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lots Nos. 1, 70, 71 & 72, of the Mayview Manor Division, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the year 1932, of record in Deed Book 40, page 199, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of A. O. Orvis.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. T. H. Coffey & J. H. Deal, Admr. of Estate of W. L. Alexander, G. E. Bryan and J. W. Whisnant, Trustee, Defendants. Defendants J. H. Deal, admr. of estate of W. L. Alexander, G. E. Bryan and J. W. Whisnant, trustee, see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on the Mayview Manor property in Blowing Rock, in Blowing Rock T. S., for the unpaid county taxes for the year 1928, of record in Deed Book 36, page 640, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in name of T. H. Coffey.

NOTICE OF SERVICE

Watauga County, Plaintiff vs. J. M.

Deaton & Sons, Defendants. Defendant J. M. Deaton & Sons see notice hereafter set out.

Subject matter of the above action: Foreclosure on lots Nos. 7 & 8, in the R. L. Fox Subdivision, in Blowing Rock T. S., for unpaid county taxes for the years 1931 & 1932, of record in Deed Book 39, page 279, in the Registry of Watauga county. Listed in the name of J. M. Deaton.

(Continued on Page 7)

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Prices subject to change without notice. State sales tax additional.

HODGES TIRE COMPANY
Boone, N. C.

First Round For Taxes

I will be at the following places on the dates named for the purpose of collecting 1935 taxes for Watauga County:

- NORTH FORK TOWNSHIP**
A. E. Ellison, 9 to 12 a. m.; Tracy 1 to 3 p. m. November 5
- MEAT CAMP TOWNSHIP**
Will Winebarger Mill 9 to 12; Stephens Store 1 to 3 November 6
- BALD MOUNTAIN TOWNSHIP**
E. E. McGuire's Store, 9 to 12 November 7
- ELK TOWNSHIP**
C. C. Triplett, 1 to 3 November 7
- STONY FORK TOWNSHIP**
Cook's Store, 9 to 12; Deep Gap 1 to 3 November 8
- BLUE RIDGE TOWNSHIP**
Aho, 9 to 12 November 12
- BLOWING ROCK TOWNSHIP**
W. L. Holsbouser Store 1 to 3 November 12
- WATAUGA TOWNSHIP**
Collins Store, 9 to 12; Harbin's Store 1 to 3 November 13
- SHAWNEEHAW TOWNSHIP**
Clyde Tester's Store, 9 to 12 November 14
- LAUREL CREEK TOWNSHIP**
Rominger, 1 to 12 November 14
Henry Hagaman's Store, 9 to 12 November 15
Victor Ward's Store, 1 to 3 November 15
- BEAVER DAM TOWNSHIP**
Clyde Perry's Store, 9 to 12 November 19
Don Hagaman's Store, 1 to 3 November 19
- COVE CREEK TOWNSHIP**
Mabel, 9 to 12 November 20
Sherwood's Store, 1 to 3 November 20
Sugar Grove, Clyde Mast Store, 9 to 12 November 21
Valle Crucis, W. W. Mast Store, 1 to 3 November 21

I will be at the Tax Collector's Office in the Courthouse in Boone each Monday and Saturday.

Let me insist that everyone come out and pay their taxes early, and I must urge those who have not paid their taxes prior to 1935 pay these at once. We must get our taxes up to date. However, we do not want to force collections, preferring rather that all the people voluntarily pay their taxes. All taxes must be paid.

A. D. WILSON, Tax Collector,
WATAUGA COUNTY, North Carolina.

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| Fifty to Sixty-five Years | .60 | 2.40 |
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| | | 100.00 |
| | | 100.00 |
| | | 100.00 |