

CHIEF OF POLICE STURGUS FOUND DEAD

JURY RETURNS VERDICT THAT STURGUS CAME TO HIS DEATH AT HANDS UNKNOWN PARTIES

TESTIMONY AT CORONER'S INQUEST FIXING HOUR OF DEATH—EVIDENCE OF CORROBORATIVE NATURE—NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS; RELIABLE WITNESSES TESTIFY TO HEARING SHOT—CASE Baffles OFFICERS.

That "the death of John J. Sturgus was due to a gunshot wound, injuring the heart and other organs, and that the shot which caused his death was fired from a gun in the hands of parties unknown, with intent to kill" was the verdict rendered by the jury that heard the testimony in the coroner's inquest held yesterday afternoon.

No New Developments.

With Judge Leopold David presiding the inquisition upon the body of Sturgus was called at 2:30. The following were impaneled and sworn in as jurors: Jack Callin, Charles Cadwallader, R. O. Albritton, H. J. Emard, Carl Martin and Lyle Larson.

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney J. S. Truitt represented the government. Testimony of the various witnesses brought out no new developments and the verdict rendered was freely predicted.

McNutt's Testimony.

John McNutt, special night watchman and fire patrol, paid by the merchants, was the first witness and the evidence divulged did not vary particularly from former reports.

McNutt told of finding the body of Sturgus near the foot of the stairway leading to the second story of the Kyvig building, occupied as living quarters. He explained that in his duties of patrolman he watched the fires in the different buildings and occasionally "stoked up." Leaving the Hewitt building, where he had fixed the furnace fire McNutt, on his rounds passed at the rear of the Kyvig building where he noticed a man lying prone in the path which leads from Fourth avenue to the premises. McNutt testified that he presumed the man was an ordinary drunk whom he did not recognize as Sturgus from the fact that after failing to get a response to his efforts to get the man up McNutt started after Sturgus, as was his custom in previous cases of a similar nature. McNutt testified that the

man was groaning and was lying prone on his back with arms extended. He told of noticing Sturgus' hat near the body but did not see the gun, which was afterwards found by Deputy U. S. Marshal Casler.

McNutt immediately started for Baxter's news stand, where Sturgus was in the habit of frequenting, and about half way between the stairway and Baxter's he met Mrs. Baxter, whom he told of the occurrence. McNutt said that he then continued his journey in quest of Sturgus and went even so far as the Crescent hotel. McNutt testified that the body was lying in the snow near the foot of the stairway with his head pointing east; the man's coat was open but McNutt said he did not remember about the condition of the vest. The snow was well packed and McNutt said he saw no signs of a struggle in the vicinity. He practically fixed the hour of finding the body at 9:15 Sunday night and said that two hours previously he had heard a shot but could not locate the direction. Following testimony proved conclusively that the shot he heard had no bearing on the case.

Mrs. Baxter's Testimony.

Mrs. Henry Baxter was the next witness called and she told of returning from the first show with her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Larson, at about 9:15 Sunday night. The two families occupy apartments on the second floor of the Kyvig building, first floor occupied by the Anchorage Drug store. At the Fourth avenue entrance Mrs. Baxter stated

(Continued on page 2.)

CORONER'S JURY RETURNS VERDICT

(Continued from page 1)

that Sturgus addressed them but none of the party understood his words. Mrs. Baxter said she noticed that Sturgus acted peculiarly and after going up stairs and fixing the fires she said she got to worrying about the incident and again went down stairs to ascertain if anything was wrong with Sturgus who was a friend of the Baxters of many years standing. Not finding Sturgus in Baxter's News Stand she said she went to the Sturgus home and not finding him asked Mrs. Sturgus where he was.

Returning to town Mrs. Baxter intended to call on Mrs. Felix Brown, living at the Anchorage hotel, and later changed her mind and walked across from E street, at the rear of the Baxter store, to the rear stairway leading to the Baxter apartments above referred to. The witness told of meeting McNutt as corroborated in

his testimony. When told of the man lying on the snow at the foot of the stairs Mrs. Baxter immediately went to him and recognized Sturgus, who she said was groaning audibly and throwing his head from side to side. The witness said she knelt at the side of the body and saw he was badly hurt. Sturgus recognized her and called her "Ma," a name she is known by to other Anchorage friends. Seeing that she could do nothing alone Mrs. Baxter rushed to the Baxter store and notified her husband and other gentlemen who immediately went to Sturgus' assistance.

Mrs. Baxter said she heard no report of a gun, nor any disturbance. The witness corroborated other testimony relative to the position of the body, condition of clothes, time of shooting and other details. During her testimony Mrs. Baxter mentioned that she noticed Sturgus had acted peculiarly during the early part of the afternoon when he made a friendly visit to the family, as was his custom.

Saw Flash of Gun.

Mrs. Lillian Keely, employe at the government hospital, followed Mrs. Baxter, and testified that she saw the flash of a gun Sunday night while walking east in the alley, between Third and Fourth avenue, on the way to the hospital. Mrs. Keely described her location at the time at a point in the rear of the vacant lot, fronting on Fourth, between the Kyvig and Shaw buildings. Also she fixed the location of the flash at the rear of the Kyvig building and the time about 9:15 Sunday night. Mrs. Keely said she heard

no disturbance nor any evidence of a scuffle. She heard the report, which she said was muffled. The witness saw no one in the vicinity of where the report came from and particularly said she watched for movements. Later she met and talked to Mrs. Ernest Richter and saw a man at the rear of the Liberty cafe, who it later developed was Louis Poppas. Mrs. Keely said the flash was about on the level with her eyes.

Mrs. Richter Testifies.

Mrs. Ernest Richter, of the Richter hotel, testified that as she and her young son were returning from the first show, about 9:15 Sunday night she heard the report of a gun. Mrs. Richter, at the time, was near the southeast entrance of the hotel, which is situated on the alley off of E street and across from the Hewitt building. Mrs. Richter testified that she heard no commotion of any kind, nor did she see anyone running away from or in the vicinity of the place where the report came from, although the lights from the Richter hotel illuminate considerable space in the rear of the business houses frequently referred to. The witness in the main substantiated Mrs. Keely's testimony in reference to time, location of the report and other points connected with the case.

Louis Poppas Testifies.

Louis Poppas, proprietor of a coffee house located on the alley corner fronting E street and in the same building with the Liberty cafe, testified that he heard the report but could not locate the position. Poppas said he went to the rear of his place at the time he heard the report, which he said sounded like the report of a .22 calibre rifle. He mentioned having seen Mrs. Richter and Mrs. Keely and said that he saw no one other than the two ladies in the vicinity of the shooting.

Corroborative Testimony.

Archie Adams, affiliated with the Alaskan Engineering commission, testified that as he was returning from the first show Sunday night he heard the report of a gun and fixed the location at the rear of the Kyvig building. Mr. Adams said at the time of the report he was walking along the north side of Fourth avenue and between the Shaw and Kyvig buildings. He also fixed the hour at about 9:15 and said that he saw some one in the alley, which was proven to have been Mrs. Keely. Adams said he did not hear any sounds of a struggle nor see anyone running away from the spot, although he listened and looked intently for such signs.

(Continued on page 5.)