

THE WRIGHT MURDER CASE.

On Tuesday afternoon the Wright murder trial commenced before Judge Judd, the prosecution calling Lee Cropper, who testified that he lived in Deseret and was well acquainted with the deceased, Soren Christensen. After the killing Wright came to my house and said, "Here's the man who killed Soren Christensen." I said, "I guess not," imagining he meant his boy who was with him. He said, "Yes; I shot him, and I have come to give myself up." I am justice of the peace in Deseret; I went up to where the wagon was; my brother, Wise Cropper, was there; he heard the shooting when it occurred; on lifting up a quilt in the wagon, my brother saw a pistol; Christensen was lying across a spring seat, on his back; he was shot in the left side of the head; I saw Mrs. Christensen, the murdered man's wife; she had blood and brains in her hair; there were two little children with her; one of them was an infant.

Wise Cropper was next called and stated that Wright went to his house on the morning of the killing and asked him for some powder; that a man had threatened his life, and he proposed to be ready to defend himself; I heard the shooting subsequently the same day, and went to the wagon; Mrs. Christensen was sitting on the spring seat crying, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" the body of Christensen was on the seat; I helped the woman out of the wagon and then got into the wagon to raise up the body; saw a Texas bulldog there on the bottom of the wagon; the shot entered the left cheek and had blown off the top of the head; saw some of the blood and the hair of the dead man in the hair of Mrs. Christensen.

G. W. Cropper was called and deposed to seeing the tragedy, and then telling Wright to give himself up; helped the woman out of the wagon; the pistol my brother picked up was not loaded; I was 125 yards from the wagon when the shooting occurred.

Christina Christensen, the wife of the deceased, testified as follows—I am the wife of the dead man; am 23 years of age; my husband was 67; we went to church the day of the shooting; on our return, while going down the road, on the way home, we met Wright; he told my husband to stop the team, and wanted him to take back what he said in the morning; my husband said, "I ain't going to," and added, "It's a shame for you to come with a gun when I have got my family with me. Shoot away, if you darst." Wright then shot, and my husband fell down on the seat; he was standing the last time I noticed him; he didn't have anything in his hand that I noticed, but I was fearfully scared.

Cross-examined—I turned my head away when Wright shot; I was so excited I don't remember just what was said; they had a quarrel that morning at Ed. Walker's; after that quarrel my husband went and got a pistol; we did not return home by the same way we went; we went

by Wright's in the morning, at which place my husband stopped and went in; at Ed. Walker's my husband spoke first; my husband said he was going to make Wright pay the debt, but did not say he would kill him if he didn't; my husband had two wives besides me, and several children.

This closed the testimony for the prosecution, and the defense being taken by surprise at the brevity of the People's case, they asked for a recess. They were granted ten minutes' respite, at the termination of which they opened their case by calling Joseph A. Ray, who was sworn and said: I resided at Deseret several years, and know Wright; his reputation for peace and quiet was good. On the other hand, Sorensen was a quarrelsome and dangerous man; never heard of his shooting anybody.

Lee Cropper testified to the good reputation of the defendant and the bad reputation of the deceased.

Wise Cropper, Henry Rogers, Joseph Blach, Thomas Cropper and Hans Petersen, all testified to the same effect.

Mr. Petersen said: I had a conversation with the deceased on the day of the shooting. He asked me for a pistol; he said he had jumped a man for a debt he owed and the man had refused, and he wanted the pistol "to fix him;" he also asked for some cartridges; Black told deceased that he wouldn't sell him the pistol, and he said, "Well, I can get one somewhere else."

Cross-examined—It was Black's pistol he wanted; deceased said he wanted the pistol in order that he might be prepared for any emergency; he was a dangerous man—a man that would draw an ax or a pistol on a man.

W. R. Black said: I was in Deseret the day of the homicide; deceased was at Rogers'; he asked me if I had the pistol, which he knew I had; I told him yes, and that I would sell it; when he told me that a man had quarreled with him and he wanted to be prepared I told him that altered the case, and I then refused to let him have it; He then said, "Oh, I don't want to kill anybody." So I then let him have the weapon; he threw it in the bottom of the wagon.

Cross-examined—There were no cartridges in the pistol; never heard of deceased shooting anybody; did see him once try to hurt a man named Dewson, but Dewson ran away and escaped injury; have heard of him drawing a pistol on a man; I didn't have much love for the deceased.

At a quarter to five the court adjourned until Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock.

On the reassembling of court Wednesday, the Wright murder case was resumed by the defendant taking the stand. He said—I am 53 years old; was born in Missouri; lived there till 1864; went to Colorado; lived there seven years; came to Utah about twenty-one years ago; worked for Bishop Snyder of Wanship, logging and running a saw-mill; got married and then went to Provo Valley, where I stayed six or

seven months; this was about eighteen years ago; then went to Corn Creek, where I farmed for three years; then went to Deseret, where I have lived ever since, farming and doing canyon work; I have a wife and five children; they live in Deseret; never was arrested until this trouble occurred; never was in a quarrel even until this affair; have been acquainted with deceased ever since I lived in Deseret; I worked for him, hauling wood, hay, and doing other things; he was considered by everybody as a hard man to get along with; had worked for him for a year before the killing; there was an unsettled account between us; I saw deceased about nine o'clock on the day of the affair near the schoolhouse at Deseret; it was on a Sunday; I was sitting down at the door, herding my horses; there were others present. (Here the defendant described the scene and surroundings of the tragedy on a map hanging alongside the jury box.) He came up and said he had made a mistake in what he had said a few days before about his account with me—that it was not as much as he had said it was; I asked him how he came to make such a mistake; he said he didn't know; he could not agree on the account he wanted to come to my house to settle; I refused, and offered to leave it with anybody to arbitrate; he grew warm, and finally said I could do what I pleased with the posts (over which the trouble arose) and said, "I will kill you, you g— d— s— of a b—;" I then stepped aside, and told him I was unarmed; he left, still repeating, "I'll kill you, you s— of a b—;" after he went I started out for Cropper's place, and asked him for some powder, which I got and took home; when I got there I laid down and went to sleep; I then got up and ate dinner; after that I told my boy to go and get the horses; his mother told him to take his gun and shoot a duck or goose on the way, as he had seen some nice ones the day before; the gun was a double-barreled shotgun; it was loaded; I am accustomed to hunting; make my living partly by it; I started from home with the intention of going to Mr. Cropper's, the justice of the peace, to get his advice as to having deceased bound over to preserve the peace; I then went to Joshua Bennett's, to see him about getting some water right in the canal transferred to me; Mr. Bennett was secretary and treasurer of the canal company; I called in at Long Ike's on the way, to effect a settlement of a debt he owed me; it was five o'clock in the afternoon when my boy and myself started from home; I was on the mule and my boy was on the horse; I had the shotgun with me; I took my boy with me to help drive some goats home that I calculated getting from Ike if I could not get any money; we went along the road; had no thought of meeting deceased that day; when Christensen left me in the morning he said he was going to Oasis; the road we took when we left the house was