

# OUTLAWS AND FUGITIVES ON PALOMAR MOUNTAIN

Peter Brueggeman, 2024



Postcard with 1906 postmark

In her book *Palomar from Teepee to Telescope* Catherine Wood writes [1]:

Surrounded by lawlessness, Palomar, lying along the route to the border below which criminals were safe, became notorious as a retreat for cattle and horse thieves. Cattle raising was the chief industry of the southern counties, which became known as "cow counties." ... Bunches of stolen animals could be hidden and fed on Palomar until their brands could be changed, or until they could be safely disposed of, probably across the border. If searchers came near, the rustlers, notified by lookouts, quietly slipped their stock over familiar trails to safely hidden valleys, dragging the trails with brush to obliterate the tracks.

In July 1865, the O'Brien gang murdered George Williams and Cyrus Batey Kimble (1820-1865) who were camping with their families at the Santa Ana River on their way to Los Angeles [2,3]. Kimble was the proprietor of the adobe Kimble Station store which was built in 1862 and located east of the Warner-Carillo Ranch House along the Southern Emigrant Trail [2,3]. Palomar Mountain was known as **Smith Mountain** for several decades after the 1868 murder of Joseph Smith on his farm. In 1898, Stanley Wilson wrote the following about the O'Brien gang hiding out on Smith Mountain which would have occurred around 1865 (before Smith's 1868 murder and the subsequent renaming of Palomar Mountain to Smith Mountain) [2].:

... In those days a notorious band of cutthroats ranged that section, stealing and killing. Their depredations would fill a book. They were headed by Jack O'Brien, Jim Henry

and a fellow named Mason. ... The gang kept shifting its rendezvous from one place to another to evade discovery. They used to hide on **Smith mountain**. For a time they were in the hills east of Oak Grove, on the edge of Chihuahua. ...

## 1870

The San Diego Weekly Bulletin published on August 20, 1870 [28]:

A HEARTLESS MURDER. – A man named Castro was killed at his residence in the vicinity of **Smith's Mountain** in this county recently, by a horse thief who was returning to his home in Sonora with 8 fine American horses he had stolen in Los Angeles County. After committing the murder he fitted himself out with such traveling apparatus as he required for his journey and went on his way untouched, notwithstanding the affair occurred in the presence of several of Castro's friends.

## 1877

A San Diego Union news story on March 11, 1877, mentioned escaped convicts passing through George Dyche's ranch on the east side of Palomar Mountain [14]:

### A NEAT CAPTURE – TWO ESCAPED CONVICTS TAKEN

The readers of The Union will remember that a few days ago we chronicled the fact that Sheriff Coyne was on the track of a couple of escaped convicts from San Bernardino, and expected to get them. When Joe Coyne and Ned Bushyhead go after these gentry, they generally *do* get them, -- as they did on this occasion.



**George V. Dyche** undated Joanna Gunther photo

Two of the most desperate ruffians in the country, who had been brought down to San Bernardino from the State Prison, as we understand to testify in some case, broke jail there two or three weeks ago and set out on their way to Lower California, through this county, robbing as they went. They first raided **George Dyche's** place on **Smith's Mountain**, where they got a Henry rifle and six-shooter; then they came on to Bear Valley [PB: Valley Center] and robbed a sheep camp; next, they robbed Sikes' house at Bernardo; then they came on down through Poway past El Cajon, and reached the Otay on Sunday last, where they robbed some Frenchmen, and then made their way across the line into the Frontier of Lower California.





**Joseph A. Coyne** undated [www.sdpolicemuseum.com](http://www.sdpolicemuseum.com)

Meanwhile intelligence of the escape and of the robberies in the northern part of the county had been received at the Sheriff's office, and arrangements were promptly made to effect their capture, if it was a possible thing. We are not at liberty to mention certain details of the plan; that it resulted in entire success is enough. Coyne dropped down to the line on Wednesday and ascertained that his men were on the other side of Wild Cat Station. They had information direct from the robbers' camp. On Thursday night, the two villains arranged a plan to come up and rob Lane's store in Tia Juana Valley, on this side of the

line. Their conversation was fully overhead; and it was diabolical enough to make the blood chill. They proposed to surprise Lane and tie him up, and then make him tell them where his money, etc., was by applying slow torture in the shape of a lighted candle to his bare feet, puncturing his flesh with the point of a knife, etc. Lane was posted, and all was in readiness for business on Friday but it was subsequently found that the plan had been changed, and that the store was to be robbed on Saturday evening.



**Edward 'Ned' Wilkerson Bushyhead** undated  
[www.legendsofamerica.com](http://www.legendsofamerica.com)

Yesterday morning Sheriff Coyne and Deputy Sheriff Bushyhead got into their buggies and drove down to the Tia Juana; putting their teams up at Dranga's, they footed it over to Lane's and there made themselves comfortable in a place where they could see and not be seen. The time passed slowly on. At last, a little after five o'clock in the evening, along came the two gentlemen and walked boldly up to the house. Both were heavily armed, each having a Henry 16-shooting rifle, six-shooter, and knife. Entering the store, they called for liquor and drank, and then began to look around the premises, pretending to buy provisions, and talking about prices. They said they wanted barley, and asked Lane to step outside and show them some –

exchanging glances as they went to the door. They little knew that Ned Bushyhead's keen eyes were following their every movement. Lane accompanied the scoundrels, who placed themselves on each side of him – and then Bushyhead and Coyne softly crawled out. The robbers were closing up on Lane, when they suddenly stopped. The biggest one looked around and looked right into the muzzle of New Bushyhead's long revolver. Joe Coyne had the other one similarly covered. The game was up. They only said: "You played it mighty fine on us; we're sold!" The handcuffs were promptly applied, and in a few minutes Coyne and Bushyhead were spinning along homeward, each with his prisoner by his side. They got in and locked their men up about half past eight last evening.

# 1878



**Procopio**, undated

Procopio, a notorious bandit in California, was twice convicted of cattle theft and twice served time in San Quentin prison, but never convicted of murders in which he was suspected [5]. Procopio has various names reported in newspapers: Procopio Bustamante, Thomas Rodundo, Procopio Murietta, etc. [5].

The San Diego Union reported on September 7, 1878 [6]:

Mr. D. Geary, who had 31 horses run across the line by Procopio's band of horse thieves some three weeks ago, returned from Lower California to his ranch day before yesterday with 28 of the stolen animals. ... Twenty-three of the horses were found in one band in a small canon where they had been corralled and left by the banditti. Three more were found in Tecate, also corralled; and near Tia Juana on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 more, together with one of Wescott's grays. These latter horses had been ridden hard, and were covered in sweat; the thieves had hastily broken camp and abandoned them, taking fresh horses and continuing their flight across our county around via Pala and **Smith's mountain**, and back again to the border, as they have since been traced. Procopio and one of his men are known to have passed one night in this city after they left Tia Juana August 25<sup>th</sup>. ....

The Los Angeles Herald reported on September 19, 1878 [4]:

The San Luis Rey correspondent of the San Diego *Union* says that Procopio, or "Bustamente," the horse thief, is now somewhere in Los Angeles county. He passed through from **Smith's mountain** by way of Digger Canon.

Edward Davis writes in *Palomar and the Stars* [11]:

Cattle stealing and horse stealing in those days was a regular and profitable business. Palomar was a popular place for horse thieves, but they only stayed long enough to rest the stock, for they knew the sheriff would soon track them here, so they only made one-night stops and hit the trail before daylight in the direction of Arizona or Mexico. "Hidden Cabin," well-named, a small log cabin concealed in heavy timber, was said to be the rendezvous of horse thieves in early days. It was located near the old-saw-mill, and when I visited it in 1890, there were only a few logs left. [PB: old saw mill was in Pedley Valley] People on the mountain, not interested in these night visitors so long as their stock was not molested, left them severely alone.

## LATE 1870s

Edward Davis writes in *Palomar and the Stars* about stolen horses being driven up to George Dyche's ranch on the east side of Palomar Mountain, and then on to Arizona and Mexico [11]:



**John W. Slankard, c1913** Los Angeles Times, August 4, 1913, page 9, column 6

Once a tough hombre, named Slankard, and Dick Culp, his brother-in-law from Temecula, drove forty head of fine saddle horses up to the **Dyche ranch** and put them in the fenced pasture, telling Dyche they had bought the horses and were driving them to Arizona to sell. They slept in the barn and early next morning they ran the horses off the mountain and took them to Arizona and Sonora and sold them. In a few days, Mr. Pryor, the owner of these horses, came to the Dyche ranch and said forty head of his fine saddle horses had been stolen from his ranch at San Juan Capistrano, by Slankard and Culp, and he had tracked the band this far. He was too late to catch the horse thieves, so he offered a reward, but nothing came of it.

This same Slankard later became a deputy sheriff in Yuma and was the same one who shot and killed young Frank Fox at the Carriso stage station, a piece of plain murder. Frank was only sixteen years old and was accused of being one of a gang of horse thieves in Arizona and so, this old-time, dyed-in-the-wool horse thief, risen to the dignity of a Deputy Sheriff with a badge, shot this boy as he was going for water. He accused him of trying to escape.

Edward Davis spelled the tough hombre/deputy sheriff's last name as Slankert. His name was John Walter Slankard [12,13]. Ancestry.com and ancestors.familysearch.org records state that Slankard was born October 25, 1857, and died May 6, 1931 [3]. His early years with his parents were in California in Contra Costa County (1860 census) and Monterey County (1870 census) [3]. Slankard had three brothers living in Phoenix, Arizona, and at age 21, he married Mary E. Kolb there on April 2, 1878; she died in 1879 [3].

Slankard and Culp's stop at George Dyche's Palomar Mountain ranch with Paul Pryor's horses would have been in the late 1870s. George Dyche moved up onto Palomar Mountain in 1869, and Slankard went to prison at age 23 in 1880 for two commits of grand larceny [3,12,13]. Paul Pryor of San Juan Capistrano appears in various Los Angeles Daily News items from the 1860s to the early 1870s [15].

Slankard's thieving career came to an end in 1880. On June 21, 1880, the Sacramento Daily Record-Union reported [21]:

#### Raiding a Heard of Sheep

FRESNO, June 19<sup>th</sup>. –On Tuesday night last three men went toward the Cany Ranch, at Summit Lake, and tied down two herders in charge of Sutherland's sheep, put them in a wagon belonging to the Canys, loaded up the camp equipage, took three horses and drove off, taking with them the herders. After taking the men southward about fifty miles they released them, and they returned and gave information. As the sheep, about two thousand in number, have not been seen since, it is supposed that they took them along also.

On June 29, 1880, the San Diego Union reported [16]:

#### ARREST OF THREE DESPERADOES

About ten days ago a postal card was received here at the Sheriff's office from the Sheriff of Fresno County, offering a reward of \$200 for the arrest of three desperadoes, named Clarke, Davis and Slankard, charged with horse stealing, highway robbery, etc. On Thursday last Sheriff Coyne received dispatches from Deputy Sheriffs Barham of Los Angeles county and Thomas of San Bernardino, stating that the three men were coming this way, and requesting Coyne to procure their arrest if possible. Parties were sent out in various directions to intercept them, as they were believed to be making their way to Lower California. In the meantime it was known that Slankard had a wife living with her father, a man named Culp, at Vallecitos, near Temecula, and it was thought the party of horse thieves were likely to go there on their way, albeit Mr. Culp and family are highly respectable people. Accordingly, full particulars were telegraphed on Friday to Constable Libby at San Luis Rey, who replied that Slankard had passed through alone that morning on his way to the ranch of his father-in-law at Vallecitos. Libby, not being at home when the dispatch for him was received, the other two men – Clark and Davis – also passed through in the meantime, and inquired the way to Culp's ranch. On telegraphing the Sheriff these facts, Constable Libby was instructed to form a posse and proceed to Culp's to arrest the whole party. Libby did so, gathering a posse of twelve men, and after riding all night, reached their destination at daylight on Saturday morning. The two men, Clarke and Davis, were found asleep in a haystack, while Slankard was asleep in the house. The three were all well armed, but were taken wholly by surprise and offered no resistance.

On reaching home the night before, Slankard told his father-in-law, Culp, that he "had met with a streak of luck up country" –having won two or three horses and buggy in a foot-race, and that two men would be along soon with the property. Culp and his daughter had no intimation of anything to the contrary until the officers appeared at daylight and arrested the three men as stated, when Mrs. Slankard exhibited intense grief on learning of her husband's crimes and arrest.

After securing the prisoners, Constable Libby and his party returned to San Luis Rey where they found the two officers named had arrived in pursuit of these three men. The officers demanded the prisoners, but Libby rightly refused to give them up without consulting the Sheriff here. Instructions however were telegraphed him to surrender the prisoners upon payment of expenses incurred by the Sheriff here and the expenses for Mr. Libby and his men, which was done, and the men turned over to Sheriff Barham and Thomas.

Davis is one of the two men who broke jail at San Bernardino two or three years ago, and was so neatly captured by Sheriff Coyne and Deputy Bushyhead at Tia Juana, whither the men had come from their retreat in Lower California, for the purposes of cleaning out Lane's store. It will be recollected that Davis and his "pard" in this affair had been brought from State Prison at San Quentin to San Bernardino to testify in Court there in some important matters therein pending, and while being so held to testify they broke jail and escaped to Lower California, but were recaptured as stated by Messrs. Coyne and Bushyhead. Both men were subsequently returned to San Quentin, and Davis finished his sentence there only a few months ago, since which time he has been operating with much boldness in the upper part of the state, and been implicated in several highway robberies and house-stealings enough to send him to state prison for the remainder of his worthless life.

Slankard also has an unsavory record, and was confined in jail here in San Diego some three years ago on a charge of horse-stealing but escaped conviction. ...

Vallecitos is on the west side of Palomar Mountain, south of Temecula. The Los Angeles Herald gives the names of Slankard's two companions as Davis and Red Saunders, with no mention of Gray [17]. Davis is Charles Davis, who Coyne and Bushyhead had captured in 1877 after a San Bernardino jail break [18].

Slankard attempted a jail break in Fresno in July 1880 [19]:

Last week, Deputy Sheriff Whitlock, while making an examination of the jail, discovered that an effort had been made by Sanders, Slankard and Gray, the Summit Lake robbers, to break jail. They had sawed off one of the bolts that holds the lock on one of the cells, when the discovery was made. Slankard complained of being ill and was permitted to exercise for a short time in the corridor of the jail. The officer returning rather suddenly, the sick man was found to have recovered sufficiently to get on top the cells where his companions were confined, this eccentricity caused an examination of the jail to be made, with results as above stated. The sawing was done with a piece of the blade of a table knife, which they had in some manner obtained. Parts of a wooden key were also found. The prisoners appear to be desperate cases.

Slankard was sentenced to prison on October 15, 1880 [20]:

Last Monday Judge Holmes sentenced E.C. Burke and Charles Davis, to ten years each on the first, and five years each on the second conviction, and John Slankard to five years imprisonment in the State Prison on each conviction. These are the parties that robbed Sutherland's sheep ranch at Summit Lake early last Summer.

At age 23, Slankard was registered as a convict for two commits of grand larceny on October 12, 1880, with a sentence of ten years [3]. In December 1880, he was received into Folsom Prison and then pardoned and discharged in 1883 [3].

Register and Descriptive List of Convicts under Sentence						of Imprisonment in the State Prison at Folsom.										21
NAME	NATIVITY	CRIME	WHEN CONVICTED	WHEN SENTENCED	Term Expires			COUNTY SENT FROM	AGE	OCCUPATION	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COMPLEXION	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR	REMARKS
					Months	Days	Years									
James Lopez 261 1889	California	Drunk to murder	Transferred from State Prison December 4, 1888					1	San Diego	25	Laborer	5' 7 1/2"	Dark	Brown	Black	Discharged Sept. 30th, 1888
James Martin 262 1888	South Carolina	Grand Larceny						2	San Joaquin	28	Printer	5' 11 1/2"	Blond	Gray	Brown	Discharged Dec. 21, 1888
Charles Melvin 263 1888	Maryland	Drunk to murder 2nd degree						14	San Francisco	22	Laborer	5' 7 1/2"	Dark	Black	Brown	Discharged Sept. 22, 1888
George Mitchell 264 1888	England	Drunk to murder 2nd degree						6	"	22	Tailor	5' 7 1/2"	Dark	Brown	Brown	Discharged May 19, 1888
James Morley 265 1888	Pennsylvania	Barflogging						18	"	22	Carpenter	5' 7 1/2"	"	"	"	Discharged for 1st trial Aug. 22, 1888
John Muldard 266 1887	Holland	Grand Larceny						2	Alameda	25	Tailor	5' 7 1/2"	"	"	"	Discharged July 12, 1888
Andrew Mjais 267 1888	Mexico	"						5	Freemont	28	Laborer	5' 5"	Dark	Black	Black	Escaped July 1st 1888 discharged May 28, 1888
Thomas O'Neil 268 1888	Ireland	Barflogging						8	Alameda	23	"	5' 10 1/2"	Blond	Brown	Brown	Discharged June 8, 1888
John J. Reynolds 269 1888	New York	Drunk						10	San Luis Obispo	23	"	5' 10 1/2"	Light	Gray	Gray	Discharged April 27th 1888
T. A. Ricketts 270 1888	Massachusetts	Barflogging						1	San Joaquin	29	"	5' 10 1/2"	Blond	Black	Brown	Discharged Sept. 19th, 1888
Jim Robinson 271 1888	Massachusetts	Barflogging						6	San Francisco	29	Cox	5' 10 1/2"	Blond	Gray	Black	Discharged January 22nd 1888
John Slankard 272 1880	California	Grand Larceny 2 commits						10	Freemont	23	Carpenter	5' 11 1/2"	Blond	"	Brown	Pardoned by Governor Francisco Discharged March 11, 1883
Michael Miller 273 1888	Sweden	Drunk to murder						2	San Francisco	35	Laborer	5' 10 1/2"	"	Black	Black	Discharged July 15, 1888

Folsom Prison register, with John Slankard listed second from the bottom

John Slankard married Anna Liza Tomkinson in Utah in 1885, and at some point moved to Phoenix, Arizona and became a constable [3,22].

Deputy Sheriff John Slankard killed Frank Fox at Carrizo Creek on April 1, 1890, while Fox was trying to escape arrest [12,13]. Ed H. Vail led a cattle drive from the Vails' Empire Ranch east of Tucson to their Warners Ranch. Will and Frank Fox joined the Vail cattle drive under false names, after stealing horses in Arizona. Sheriff John Gray, deputy sheriff John Slankard and others met up with the cattle drive undercover, and as they were arresting the Fox brothers, Frank Fox ran off unarmed, going nowhere in the desert with Slankard in close pursuit. Slankard shot him needlessly in the back.

## 1887

The San Diego Union reported on April 10, 1887 [27]:

A jury yesterday convicted Pedro Rossas, who borrowed horse at **Smith's mountain** and whose memory failed him so completely that he sold the horse and pocketed the coin. This was his second trial.



The Oceanside Blade Tribune reported on November 16, 1895 [8]:

Francisco Olivares, who is generally supposed to have been the murderer of Antonio Dutra, the Portuguese laborer who was shot last April, near Vista, is to the front again with another crime to his credit. While out hunting near Vista Wednesday, in company with Desidero Ardillo and two other Indians named Antonio and Santiago, and while going up a little canyon, Santiago in the lead, Ardillo next, Olivares third and Antonio behind Olivares, it is claimed by Ardillo that Olivares deliberately raised his gun and fired at the back of Ardillo's head, causing him to stagger about and fall to the ground where he was left by the trio for dead. The wound, though ugly in appearance, only penetrated to the skull from which the shot or bullet glanced. Olivares, it seems, went over to the Vista store and said he had killed a man, but on going back with others found Ardillo far from dead. He was brought to town the next day and his wound dressed by Dr. Nichols. He swore out a complaint against Olivares for attempt at murder and a warrant was issued by Justice Nugent. Officer Ben Hubbert is out looking for him, but up to Friday morning had seen nothing of him.

The San Francisco Call reported on November 17, 1895 [7]:

## HOUNDS IN PURSUIT

Officers and Dogs on the Trail of Desperado Olivares

The Hunted Outlaw Followed to the Fastnesses of **Smith Mountain**

## HE WILL FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE

Constable Hubbert, Who Killed Bandit Renterias, Heads the Posse in the Chase

SAN DIEGO, CAL., Nov. 16. – Francisco Olivares, the San Luis Rey desperado, has taken to the fastnesses of **Smith Mountain**, and two constables and a posse and two bloodhounds are on his trail. Olivares was once in the custody of officers and was placed on trial for murder, but through slipshod methods he escaped the meshes of the law and was turned loose to kill again. This he promptly tried to do.

Olivares tried to kill an Indian named Ardillo at Vista Wednesday night. He placed a shotgun so close to Ardillo's head that pieces of his soft hat were blown into the scalp, and only the thickness of his skull prevented the shot from penetrating the brain. Ardillo lives, but Olivares believes he is a murderer and is making for the hills, where another tragedy is likely to occur when the officers overtake him.

After shooting Ardillo Olivares procured a rifle and ammunition and fought his way through a small knot of angry ranchers to San Luis Rey River, going thence up toward **Smith Mountain**, which is the wildest part of the county. He is believed to have been assisted by Indians living on the rancherias on the river. He has the advantage of the officers in knowing every foot of the country, and being young and agile he is likely to make a better attempt to escaped than did Renterias, the old outlaw who was cornered at

Mesa Grande some weeks ago and killed, after shooting one of his pursuers. Constable Hubbert, who is pursuing young Olivares, is the man who laid Renterias low.

The officers were on Olivares' trail all day Thursday and yesterday, returning last night to Oceanside for fresh horses, and striking out this morning direct for **Smith Mountain**. They are likely to come upon the outlaw to-day, as bloodhounds are being used, while in the former case only the keen eyes of trailers were employed. Constable Hubbert said before leaving that he would bring back Olivares alive or dead.

The San Diego Weekly Union reported on November 21, 1895 [9]:

### TRAILING OLIVARES

#### The Outlaw's Cold-Blooded Attempt to Murder Ardillo

Francisco Olivares, the young Indian who shot another Indian named Desidero Ardillo at Vista, near Oceanside, last Wednesday, has not yet been captured. He is reported to be in the mountains sixty miles northeast of Oceanside, and will probably within a few days meet the fate of Isidro Renterias, who was killed by officers at Mesa Grande a few weeks ago while he was trying to get out of the country. It is reported that the bloodhounds recently procured by officers at Oceanside were put on Olivares' trail, but with poor success, as the animals become confused when one trail crosses another.

It is now considered very probable that Olivares was the real murderer of Antonio Dutra, the Portuguese laborer who was shot from ambush while walking on the railroad near Vista one night last April. The cold-blooded manner in which he assaulted Ardillo last Wednesday shows him to have no regard for human life. He and Ardillo with two other Indians, were out hunting in a little canyon, and were walking single file along the trail when Olivares, without cause or warning, deliberately fired at Ardillo's head. Ardillo staggered and fell, and his companions left him for dead.

Olivares went to the store at Vista and calmly remarked that he had killed a man, and offered to lead the way to the scene. Two or three men accompanied him to the canyon, but Ardillo was far from dead, and with not even a fractured skull. The charge had passed through his heavy felt hat, carrying a piece of it under the scalp. It is not believed that the gun contained more than powder. Olivares disappeared immediately, and has not since been seen.

The Oceanside Blade Tribune reported on November 30, 1895 [10]:

Francisco Olivares, the Indian thief, suspected murderer and known would-be murderer, was at San Diego Sunday, but escaped Constable Hubbert who went down after him. He recently stole a saddle near the Mexico line and is also wanted by the officers for that.

The Riverside Enterprise reported on April 7, 1897 [23]:

## FLEE FROM JUSTICE

### Two Murders Discovered by Sheriff Johnson Near Temecula

A Fierce Running Fight Ensued in Which Sixteen Shots Were Fired. More Trouble Feared.



**Sheriff William B. Johnson**, undated

A telegram was received from Sheriff Johnson yesterday about noon, from Temecula, conveying the information that he and posse had come upon Jose Morales and Antonio Supulveda and several other Mexicans at 9 a.m. and that a running fight resulted in which sixteen shots were exchanged. The shots were ineffective, however, and the outlaws separated into two parties, the one headed by Supulveda going in the direction of Banning and the other, headed by Jose Morales, going in the direction of Gavilan.

As soon as the dispatch was received Deputy Dickson and Constable Singletary started towards Moreno with a view to intercepting the fleeing fugitives. Constable Burrell and Marshall Wilson also left, going in the direction of the tin mine country in the hope that they might possibly intercept the Morales party. Sheriff Johnson gave instructions in his telegram to notify the officers at Colton, Banning, Beaumont, Corona and other towns to be on the lookout for the Mexicans, and this Deputy Cressman did at once.

Jose Morales is the bloodthirsty Mexican who shot and killed an officer named Wilson at San Gabriel some weeks ago, and there is a reward of \$500 for his capture. Morales is a desperate criminal and yesterday's fight shows that he does not intend to be taken if he can help it. Supulveda, who is another desperate man, and also a jailbird with a record of fifteen years spent in the pen, is wanted in Los Angeles county for horse-stealing. He too will fight before being taken. Morales and Supulveda are at the head of a gang of thieves who have made their headquarters in the Gavilan country for some time past. The band of outlaws are doubtless responsible for the stealing of the cattle and horses that have been stolen hereabouts during the past few months. In fact the officers have pretty positive evidence that they are the thieves, and every effort will be made to break up the gang.

No additional word was received from Sheriff Johnson to the telegram mentioned, and it is not known whether the pursuers came up with the fleeing Mexicans again during the day. Sheriff Johnson has with him Deputy Hamilton and several other determined men, and if the Mexicans are overtaken again there will surely be a hot skirmish.

George Wilson was shot and killed by Jose Morales. Later newspaper reports have Supulveda's name as Andronico Sepulveda. The Riverside Enterprise reported on April 8, 1897 [24]:

## A RUN FOR LIFE

### How Johnson and Hamilton Encountered Supulveda and Morales

Sheriff Johnson returned yesterday at noon after a two days unsuccessful chase after Jose Morales and Antonio Supulveda, the murderers and highwaymen. Sheriff Johnson in relating his encounter with the outlaws says that himself and posse came upon the outlaws in a small valley south of Temecula and in the direction of **Smith Mountain**. When the two parties met they were going in opposite direction on the same road. When they first seen the Mexicans, Supulveda, who was some distance in advance of the rest of his gang, was only about 150 yards away from the officers. Johnson and Henry Hamilton got out of the wagon and after Supulveda had come up some closer he was told to surrender. Instead of halting Supulveda swung his horse out of the road and started south at full gallop.

Johnson and Hamilton then began firing at the fleeing man. This caused the latter to redouble his efforts to get away, and to further aid his escape he turned a horse he was leading loose, which was later captured by the officers. Before Supulveda got out of range the officers had fired sixteen shots at him from Winchesters but without avail. At the first sign of hostilities Supulveda's partners fled back into the hills and were soon lost from view. Johnson and his party were handicapped in not having saddle horses with which to pursue the fugitives, but they did the best they could, and carried forward the pursuit as best they could. Further chase proved unsuccessful however, for the Mexicans were not seen again.

When last seen the outfit was headed south and are many miles from the Temecula section by this time no doubt. Sheriff Johnson captured two horses, one other beside the one turned loose by Supulveda. The other animal was saddled and bridled, and had evidently been abandoned by the Mexicans because it had been injured by a fall. The saddle on the animal has been identified as one stolen from Jose Jensen, of West Riverside, some time since.

The Los Angeles Herald reported on events of April 9, 1897 [25]:

RIVERSIDE, April 8. — (Regular Correspondence.) Sheriff Johnson has returned from his chase after Supulveda and Morales. He brought with him two horses abandoned by the men in their flight. One of them had a saddle and bridle on which were last Monday night stolen from Robert Jensen of West Riverside, at which time a valuable horse was stolen from Peter Peters of the same locality. The sheriff and his posse were in a wagon when they discovered Supulveda several hundred yards away. Supulveda, who was in advance, turned and started off at right angles and the sheriff opened fire on him. The others, Morales and two Mexicans, were a considerable distance in the rear, and they turned and took the back track. It was impossible for the sheriff to get saddle horses to follow them, and the fugitives being on horseback rode rapidly away. The sheriff followed as best he could for several miles and captured the abandoned horses. This was in the country above Temecula. He then returned to Temecula and sent out telegrams to all points she could reach throughout the surrounding country. Today he received a telegram from Pala, San Diego county, saying that Supulveda was at that place last



night. There is little doubt that both men will be captured. Sheriff Johnson is of the opinion that Sepulveda and Morales and their companions are now headed for **Smith mountain** in San Diego county.

The Los Angeles Herald reported on events of April 16, 1897 [26]:

SAN DIEGO, April 16. – (Regular Correspondence.) Information was received yesterday by Sheriff Jennings of this county that Jose Morales and the young boy, Antonio Sepulveda, charged with murder and grand larceny at Riverside, crossed over the line into Mexico last Tuesday night. Each rode a horse and led another, and the entrance of Mexico was made at the Siempreveino ranch about eighteen miles north of Tia Juana. The men were recognized by the ranchers from the general description sent out and Morales was particularly recognized from the scar on his face. Two officers have been watching the line for some time past, but the men eluded them.

The San Diego Union reported June 16, 1897 [29]:

### ON A HOT TRAIL

#### Sheriff Johnson of Riverside After Horse-Thief Sepulveda

Sheriff Johnson of Riverside county was a passenger to Ensenada last night. He carried papers from Governor Budd to Governor Sangines of Lower California, making a requisition for Antonio Sepulveda, the Riverside county horse-thief who has been located in the lower country. Johnson has been at work on the case ever since Sepulveda left Riverside county with the murderer Jose Morales, who killed Deputy Sheriff Wilson at Acoma, in Los Angeles county, some months ago.

The desperadoes were trailed down into this county, past Temecula, where the officers had a lively brush with them. For several weeks the two Mexicans hid at a rancharia back of Oceanside, and when located by the Oceanside officers, changed their quarters to the Black mountain country, thirty miles northeast of this city. There they were practically inaccessible, but for unknown reasons they decided to proceed southward. The horses that Sepulveda stole were located in this county, near the border line, by Sheriff Johnson, who recovered them. But Sepulveda was not so easy to recover. He and Morales know every foot of this country, having lived here in boyhood, and they easily got across the line. The Los Angeles officers refused to go to any expense in capturing Morales, though Sheriff Johnson gave them good evidence that he was on his trail. So the sheriff went ahead to secure the extradition of Sepulveda, leaving Morales to escape, so far as Riverside county was concerned. Word has been received by the sheriff from Governor Sangines to the effect that he is glad to co-operate to rid the country of these desperadoes, and he will place a squad of rurales at Johnson's disposal today.

Johnson told officers here that he had Sepulveda located to a nicety, and added that the Mexican who brought him the information was to accompany him on the trail. The location of the outlaws, as nearly as can be learned, is twenty miles southeast of Tia Juana, in an unsettled country, where the few settlers and cattlemen are all supposed to be friendly to them. The sheriff expects to take the saddle this morning.

The San Diego Union reported June 21, 1897 [30]:

## SEPULVEDA CAPTURED

### THE OUTLAW CAUGHT BY MEXICAN RURALES AT ALAMO.

Sheriff Johnson and J. McCool Set the Rurales On -- Sepulveda in Ensenada Jail ...

Andronico Sepulveda, the horse-thief and desperado who terrorized Riverside county for several months last year, and who escaped across the Mexican line in company with Jose Morales, the murderer of Deputy Sheriff Wilson of Los Angeles county, is safe in jail at Ensenada, after a lively chase on the part of the Mexican rurales and Sheriff Johnson of Riverside county, who went to Ensenada the other day to secure the assistance of the Mexican authorities in pursuing Sepulveda. Sheriff Johnson carried papers from Gov. Budd to Gov. Sangines at Ensenada, and on this showing the Lower California officials granted to the American officer the assistance of a squad of mounted rurales, knowing the country, who effected Sepulveda's capture at the mining town of Alamo, 75 miles southeast of Ensenada. Sheriff Johnson accompanied the rurales, and with him was J. McCool, of this county, who knew something of Sepulveda's movements, and was acquainted with the country.

Through Mexican friends, McColl learned that Sepulveda and a companion, afterward known to be Morales, were at Alamo, engaged in mining under assumed names. He notified Sheriff Johnson, and the chase was the result. The rurales left Ensenada fully armed, and made their way quickly to Alamo, the telephone wire being temporarily cut to prevent any alarm being given to the desperadoes. But in spite of this precaution, somebody warned Sepulveda of the approach of the officers, and he tried to get away. He stole a horse, as was his custom, and was striking out for the pineries when overtaken. He showed fight, but through the strategy of the captain of the rurales, who sent part of his force around a little knoll and got the drop on the fellow, the fight was a short one. Morales was found to be at Alamo, but Sheriff Johnson had no papers for him, and did not molest him. Sepulveda was taken in chains to Ensenada, and temporarily placed in prison. ...

The San Diego Union reported July 5, 1897 [31]:

Sheriff W. B. Johnson of Riverside county arrived yesterday morning from Ensenada with Andronico Sepulveda, the horsethief, in custody. Sepulveda was surrendered by the Mexican authorities after satisfactory proof had been given that he was an American citizen. The officer proceeded to Riverside on the morning train with his man.

# 1919

A murderer escaped from prison in 1919 and made his way on the run onto Palomar Mountain. The story starts with the Santa Ana Daily Register reporting on November 6, 1918 [32]:

## SLAYS MEXICAN IN FUSS OVER A PET CAT

Because Joe Morales, an aged Mexican, kicked his pet cat, William Oliver, a fisherman at Anaheim Landing, fired at Morales with a rifle, and from the wound Morales bled to death in the yard of a neighbor's house. Oliver has not been arrested. "I shot him, and I'm going to leave for a few days," said he. The evidence gathered by Under Sheriff Iman of Santa Ana and City Marshall Mayer of Seal Beach, indicates that Morales was murdered in cold blood as he sat on a box in front of a fire at which he was cooking his supper. Morales lived in a hut at the end of the group of houses farthest from the Anaheim Landing pavilion. For several years he has been making a living fishing. He was known as Mexican Joe. About fifty yards from Joe's hut, William Oliver lived in a boat. He arrived at the Landing three or four months ago from Oregon. Relatives live in Texas. A stray cat, black and white and lonesome, took up its abode at Oliver's place, and soon became a pet of the fisherman. The cat that was welcome at Oliver's boat was not wanted at Morales' hut, and as Oliver grew fond of the pet, Morales developed a hate for it. When Morales kicked the cat because it got under-foot and into his grub, Oliver became angry, and quarrels ensued. A few days ago, Oliver drew a knife and threatened to stab Joe. Whether or not there was some act that brought about last night's shooting is not known. About 6 o'clock a shot was fired. A few minutes later Joe staggered into the yard of Timothy Carroll's place, where his cries brought Mrs. George Field, the housekeeper, to him. Joe told Mrs. Field that "Bill" had shot him. Joe was bleeding profusely. An artery in his left arm was severed, and from that he bled to death. Oliver came to the back of the house with some keys that he wanted to leave for a man who was sick at the Carroll place. Mrs. Field said she asked Oliver if he had shot Joe, and at first Oliver said he did not. Then he said he did, and that he was going to leave for a few days. He disappeared in the darkness. Under Sheriff Iman happened to be at Seal Beach, and he and the city marshal were soon on the case. [PB: John H. "Jack" Iman] No trace of Oliver would be found in the darkness. He is a man of 45 years of age. The rifle he used was an old, rusty Winchester, 1876 model. The shell stuck in the barrel.



Anaheim Landing, 1914 California State Library



William Oliver.

### William Oliver, undated [33]

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on November 30, 1918 [34]:

#### MAN WHO FIRED FATAL BULLET OVER CAT IS ARRESTED

‘Had About Made Up My Mind to Give Myself Up,’ Says Bill Oliver

William Oliver, charged with the murder of Mexican Joe Morales, a fisherman, at Anaheim Landing on the night of November 5, was arrested at the Anaheim dumping grounds, east of Anaheim, last night, and is now in jail here. “I had just about made up my mind to give myself up anyhow,” said Oliver when he was taken in custody by Under Sheriff John Iman and Deputy J.R. Fowler. [PB: Joseph Fowler]

Oliver shot Morales through the arm, and Morales bled to death. The two quarreled because Oliver’s pet cat ate some of Morales’ grub. The two men lived a few rods apart, Morales in a shack and Oliver in a boat. Morales was evidently near an open fire cooking his supper when he was shot. He barely had time to reach a neighbor’s home before he died. Oliver disappeared. That, in brief, is what occurred on the night of November 25. Early the next morning Oliver arrived at the home of Peter Letien, whom he

knew, at the dumping ground. He gave an order to a boy for his horse at Anaheim Landing, but said nothing of the shooting. He went away at once and did not return until last night. In the meantime Under Sheriff Iman had heard of Oliver’s visit at the dumping grounds, and he instructed Letien to notify him should Oliver return.

A message that Oliver had returned came last night. Iman and Fowler went in one machine. Sheriff Jackson and Deputy Holbrook in another [PB: Calvin E. Jackson]. Iman and Fowler arrived first, and were told by a little girl at the front of the house that Oliver was in the barn with her father. The officers went to the barn, and before Oliver knew of their presence they had seized him. Oliver had no weapon excepting a long-bladed pocket knife. He offered no resistance. He said that he had been chopping wood at Elsinore. He says he will offer a defense of self-defense. His story of the shooting is that he and Morales had had a number of disputes over the pet cat. Morales broke up some glass and was going to feed it to the cat. The night of the shooting Morales got Oliver’s ax, and was going toward Morales’ shack when he turned and shook the ax at Oliver. Oliver said he thought he would shoot near Morales just to scare him. He had no



intention of killing him. This morning Oliver's preliminary examination was set by Justice Cox for December 17 at 2 p.m.

REGISTRATION CARD									
SERIAL NUMBER 3776		ORDER NUMBER A3248							
1. <i>William</i>		2. <i>Oliver</i>							
3. <i>Anaheim Landing Seal Beach Orange Cal</i>									
Age in Years 45		Date of Birth May 22 - 1873							
RACE									
White <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Negro		Oriental		Indian		Citizen	
U. S. CITIZEN									
Native Born <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Naturalized		Citizen by Father's Naturalization Before Registrant's Majority		Declarant		Non-declarant	
15. If not a citizen of the U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?									
16. <i>Laborer</i>					17. <i>City of Seal Beach</i>				
18. <i>Seal Beach Cal</i>									
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William Oliver's World War One draft registration card

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on December 18, 1918 [35]:

## TWO ACCUSED OF MURDER ARE IN COURT HERE

Two men accused of murder were in justice's court yesterday before Justice Goepper, sitting for Justice Cox. ... In the other case, William Oliver was held to answer for trial in the superior court. He is charged with the murder of Mexican Joe Morales at Anaheim Landing. The two men got into a feud over a kitten. Oliver, who seems to be rather an ignorant man, has no attorney. Deputy District Attorney Menton placed six witnesses on the stand at the preliminary. It appeared that Oliver lived in a boat and Morales in a shack a few rods away. Morales kicked Oliver's cat, and the row began. George Morales of Newport Beach, a fisherman, was the first witness. He stated that the dead man was his brother. G.W. Ball said that a few days before Morales was shot the two men quarreled over the cat, and Oliver rushed at Morales with a knife. Morales got a club and told Oliver if he came closer he would brain him. Afterward, Oliver told Ball he would kill Morales if Morales did not leave his cat alone. Mrs. George Field testified that the night of the shooting Morales came to Tim Carroll's yard, and there bled to death. He said Oliver shot him, and to her Oliver admitted the shooting. City Marshal Mayer and Tim Carroll of Seal Beach and Under Sheriff Iman testified to finding the rifle and to other facts in the case. Oliver was held for trial without bail.

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on January 27, 1919 [36]:

### WM. OLIVER, WHO SHOT MAN IN QUARREL OVER A CAT, MAY BE INSANE

William Oliver, awaiting trial upon a charge of murdering Joe Morales at Anaheim Landing, may be insane. Today he was transferred from the county jail to the county hospital, where he will be under the observation of Dr. Zaiser. ... Oliver is an uncouth individual, and seems to have been a heavy drinker. Recently, in jail, he became moody. He got a notion that Mexicans were laying in wait for him outside his cell door.

The Santa Ana Daily Evening Register reported on January 29, 1919 [37]:

### MURDERER, INSANE, IS AT LARGE

#### William Oliver Breaks From Cell at County Hospital; Posses Hunt Him

William Oliver, murderer, supposed to be insane, escaped from the County Hospital last night and has not been captured. His tracks were followed from the hospital across the Santa Ana river into walnut orchards north of the end of North Main street. Oliver was taken to the County Hospital on Monday for observation as to his sanity. Last night, with the side bar of his bed he beat a hole in the wall of his cell, crawled through the hole into the hallway and escaped from the hospital through a basement window. Dozens of men under Sheriff Jackson's direction have been looking for Oliver, but without success. When Oliver left the hospital he was clad only in pajamas and socks. There is a possibility that Oliver is a maniac. There is also the possibility that he has been shamming insanity, and that he is a cool, calculating criminal seeking escape. In either case, he is a dangerous man.



Orange County Hospital and Farm, undated Orange County Archives

Little is known about the man's history. It is supposed that he has led a hard life, part of the time as a homesteader in Oregon. In the latter part of last summer he appeared at Anaheim Landing, where he did some fishing for a living. ... Oliver never denied the shooting of Morales. He appeared to be an uncouth individual, possibly more used to huts and wayside camps than to napkins and tablecloths. His preliminary examination was held, and he was ordered held for trial in the superior court for the murder of Morales. For some times Oliver's actions have been strange. Jailer Lacy and Deputy Holbrook say that he has refused to get out of his cell and mix with other prisoners. He said Mexicans were laying in wait to kill him. His conversation was all in whispers lest the Mexicans overhear him. Dr. Domann, county physician, looked the man over, and he agreed with the jailers that Oliver was not in his right mind. In order that the man might be given better medical attention than was possible at the jail, and for observation, Oliver on Monday was moved to the County Hospital. He was placed in a cell in the basement of the hospital. Last night the night nurse, Miss Anna Voel, heard a noise in the basement. She went there, but everything was quiet. She returned to her work on another floor.

Again she heard a noise. She went to the dormitory and aroused the orderly, Adam Webber, and had Webber go to Oliver's cell to make a careful inspection. This cell had an iron door and barred windows. Webber heard no noise but he discovered that a hole about the size of a dollar had been knocked in the wall between the cell and the basement hallway. Webber recently suffered a severe strain of his back in lifting a patient at the hospital, and he knew that he was not able to cope with Oliver should he enter Oliver's cell to try to subdue him. So he went for the porter, David Hauser, at the dormitory. He was gone just a few minutes, just long enough for Hauser to dress. When the two men reached the basement they found that the small hole had been enlarged. Oliver had gotten out through the hole into the hall, opened a basement window and was gone. He had used the side-bar of the bed to punch a hole through the wire-mesh of the plastering.

Sheriff Jackson was immediately notified, and soon he, Under Sheriff Iman, Motorcycle Officers Ballard and Carr and other officers were out searching for Oliver. A watch was put at the dumping ground, but Oliver did not go there. This morning Iman took Oliver's trail at the hospital and followed it across a walnut orchard east of the hospital, across the river and on in an easterly direction. Oliver wore nothing but pajamas and socks. The trail was lost on hard soil in an orchard. The country is covered with orchards. Along the river for miles are willows and other trees. There are thousands of places where Oliver may be hiding. This afternoon with bunches of men, the officers are searching the entire country. It is the sheriff's opinion that Oliver will try to get up the Santa Ana canyon and into the Elsinore country. Oliver may have secured clothing. ...

In its news coverage on Oliver's escape on January 30, 1919, the Los Angeles Times reported [33]:

...Oliver is 46 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches in height and weighs 168 pounds. He has gray eyes, brown and gray hair, is light complexioned and has a three-weeks' growth of beard. He has a deep scar on the left cheek and is heavily tattooed on both arms. He is powerfully built, and is expected to put up strong resistance when officers overtake him.

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on February 6, 1919 [38]:

## OLIVER MAKING WAY SOUTH IS SEEN AT SAN ONOFRE

### On This Theory, Fallbrook Hills Being Searched For Murderer

William Oliver, escaped murderer, was seen in the San Onofre canyon Monday morning. He started across the hills toward Fallbrook. Of that, Deputy Sheriffs Roy Ballard and O.K. Carr are satisfied, and today they are in the Fallbrook section horseback, and with other riders the section is being scoured for information that may lead to the capture of the murderer. ... Word that a man believed to be Oliver had been seen at the south line of Orange county came yesterday to the sheriff's office through Fidel Sepulveda of San Juan Capistrano. It was late in the day, and the two motorcycle officers, Ballard and Carr, had but little chance to get under way in their search for Oliver yesterday.

What they learned was substantially as follows: In the canyon two miles above San Onofre is a camp. Sunday afternoon a man came down from the hills to the north, and asked for something to eat, saying he would cut wood for his supper. He was given his supper and he chopped some wood. The men at the camp suggested that he stay there all night, but the man said he must move on, he was anxious to reach the Red Mountain Ranch, which is the Fallbrook country, as soon as possible. He said he had been three days coming across the mountains from Elsinore, and had had nothing to eat. He left camp late Sunday evening. The next morning he appeared there again, and was given breakfast. He appeared sane. When the men at the camp tried to direct him how to get to Fallbrook by the highways, the man said he preferred to cut across the hills. He left Monday morning. When Dolores Yorba, who was in the camp, happened to be in San Juan Capistrano yesterday he told Sepulveda and others about the affair. He said the man had tattoo marks on his arms. A description of Oliver was secured, and Yorba said it fitted the man.

When Oliver escaped he wore nothing but pajamas and socks. He was fully dressed when he was at the San Onofre camp. Inquiry at the camp last night further convinced Ballard and Carr that the man who was at the camp was none other than Oliver. He may be heading for Mexico. If he has stopped at some ranch house in the Fallbrook hills doubtless he will be found. He may have gone on. Officers at Escondido and other places to the south have been notified to be on the lookout for the man. ...

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on February 7, 1919 [39]:

## OLIVER GOING SOUTH IS REPORT TODAY FROM OFFICERS

... This morning Motorcycle Officers Roy Ballard and O.K. Carr reported to the sheriff's office by telephone that they are continuing their search south from Fallbrook. They learned that a man believed to be Oliver stopped at the Red Mountain ranch near Fallbrook, to which place the man seen at the San Onofre camp Monday morning said he was going. He was there only a short time and Ballard and Carr hope to be able to get some further word of the man. ...



The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on February 10, 1919 [40]:

### TODAY HUNTING FOR MURDERER OLIVER AT **SMITH MT.**

#### Elsinore Man See Man He Says Fits Description Left By Officers

Today the hunt for William Oliver, murderer of Joe Morales, was transferred to the **Smith Mountain** section in San Diego county. A. Keith, a garage man of Elsinore, telephoned late last night that he saw a man at Smith Mountain yesterday who exactly fitted the description left of Oliver by Santa Ana officers who were in Elsinore last week looking for Oliver, who escaped from the County Hospital here Jan. 30. Keith said that he was on a trip to Smith Mountain, forty miles south of Elsinore, and in an out of the way place came upon a man wearing rubber boots, an old slouch hat, and tattered trousers and carrying an old pack, fitting the description of the man seen at San Onofre Monday morning of last week. Keith suspected that the man was Oliver, but being unarmed, he did not care to attempt to take him. He asked the man what he was doing there, and the man said he had been prospecting there for quite awhile. Keith said it is not a prospecting country. He asked a negro in the section if he had seen anyone prospecting around there, and the negro replied that he had seen no one. Acting upon the information given by Keith, County Motorcycle Officer Roy Ballard, City Motorcycle Officer Steward and L.M. Ballard, father of the motorcop, left at midnight last night for Smith Mountain.

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on February 11, 1919 [41]:

### OLIVER MAY BE DEAD IN SNOW OF **SMITH MT.**

#### Officers Follow Tracks of a Man Thought to Be Escaped Murderer

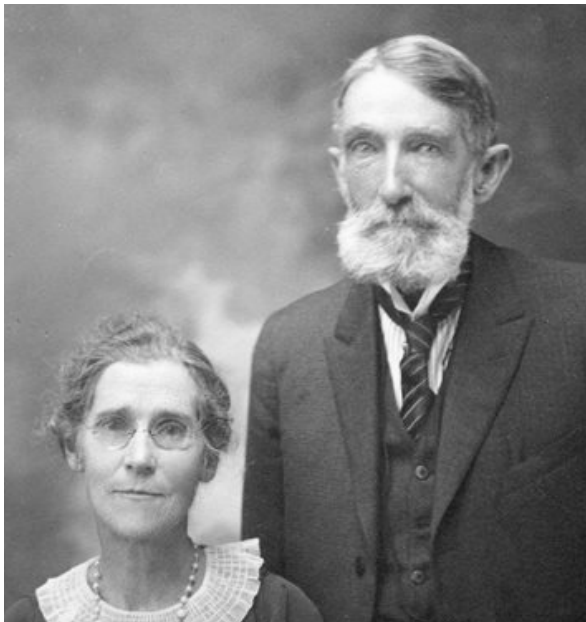
William Oliver, murderer, who escaped from the county hospital insane cell on January 30, may be frozen to death in the snows of **Smith Mountain**. Tracks believed to be his, were followed yesterday by Motorcycle Officers Ballard and Stewart to three feet of snow. The officers went to Smith Mountain on a report from Elsinore to the effect that a man fitting Oliver's description had been seen in a secluded canyon Sunday evening. Yesterday the officers got trace of the man, who was reported to them as having said he was going over the ridge to Warner's ranch. The tracks were easily followed. So far as could be determined, the man had several hours, possibly a whole day's start of the officers. It was getting late in the afternoon, and the officers concluded it was advisable for them to return and get in touch with Warner's ranch. A telephone message was sent there this morning, and a watch will be kept for Oliver, if the man is Oliver. It stormed on Smith Mountain last night.

## CHOPPING WOOD OLIVER TAKEN UPON TOP OF **SMITH MT.**

### Murderer Remembers Nothing of Escape, Asks If He Hurt Anyone

William Oliver, murderer, who escaped from the County Hospital January 30, was returned to jail Saturday evening at 6:30 o'clock. He was taken into custody Friday evening at the top of **Smith Mountain**, where he was at work chopping wood. He made no resistance. Almost his first question was as to whether or not he had hurt anyone in getting away. He says his mind was a blank from some day while he was at jail until he recovered his senses somewhere in the foothills.

Oliver was in the county jail here in January awaiting trial on a charge of murdering Joe Morales ... In jail he developed what appeared to be signs of insanity. He feared that Mexicans were at his cell door awaiting a chance to kill him. That he might be observed, he was transferred to the County Hospital. There, on the night of January 30 he used a sidebar of an iron bed to beat a hole through a cell wall, and out of this hole he escaped. ... Tony Keith of Elsinore reported that he had seen a man on Smith Mountain who fitted Oliver's description. Motorcycle Officers Ballard and Stewart went to the canyon, but returned when they were satisfied that Oliver had gone over the mountain to Warner's ranch. But Oliver did not go on to Warner's ranch. He stopped at the Hayes & Roberts ranch at the very top of the mountain. [PB: Alonzo Hayes and son-in-law Jack Roberts.] There is a little post office there called Nellie, located in the ranch barn, and there are two or three buildings where summer boarders sleep. Hayes and his son-in-law have an apple orchard, and it was in this orchard that Oliver got a job chopping wood. He arrived there last Monday in eighteen inches of snow, and was given a bed in the post office and was eating at the table with the family.



**Alonzo and Carrie Hayes, undated.**

Barbara Anne Waite photo

A few days ago Mr. and Mrs. Hayes drove down off the mountain on their way to Long Beach for a visit. Arriving at Elsinore they first heard that it was supposed that there was an escaped murderer, probably insane, somewhere on Smith Mountain. From the description he had no doubt that the man chopping wood at Nellie was Oliver. Word was sent by telephone to Santa Ana, and Thursday night Under Sheriff Iman and Motorcycle Officer Ballard went to Elsinore, where they were joined by Tony Keith. The three

men rode in a machine to Palomar Indian reservation [PB: Pauma Indian reservation], where a team was rented from an Indian and the nine-mile trip to the top of the mountain was started. The last four miles was in snow. The ranch at the top of the mountain was reached about 5 o'clock. Oliver was chopping wood about 100 yards away.

Iman, Ballard and Keith approached him.

“Hello, Bill,” said Under Sheriff Iman.

“Hello, Jack,” responded Oliver.

“How are you feeling, Bill?”

“Pretty bad,” said Oliver, “but I can tell you better if you’ll tell me something.” His voice trembled and tears were close to the surface.

“What is it?”

“I’ve been worrying for thinking I might have hurt someone. Did I hurt anyone getting away? I don’t know how I got away. Did I hurt anyone?”

“No, you didn’t hurt anybody at all, Bill.”

Oliver gave a great sigh of relief, and his face brightened up and he smiled as though a great load had been lifted from his mind.

“I didn’t know,” said he. “The last I remember was when I was in jail. Where’d I get these clothes? These aren’t my clothes, Jack.” He opened his shirt and held his fingers on the pajamas, which with a pair of socks was all he had on when he broke out of the hospital.

Iman told the man what have occurred here. “And after we lost your tracks,” said Iman, “we don’t know where you went.”

“I don’t know either,” said Oliver. “When I came to, I was walking in the foothills somewhere. I was barefooted and didn’t have anything on but these pajamas. My legs were cut and scratched up, and I was cold and nearly starving. First, I thought I’d lay down and die. I was afraid I’d hurt somebody in breaking out of jail. Then I decided to go on. Finally I came to a cabin where there was an old prospector, and I told him some kind of a story. I don’t know what, and he gave me something to eat and these old clothes and these rubber boots. I just kept going. Over at Elsinore I got some blankets I had left there in November, and then I went on. I was afraid that I had killed somebody, and so I kept going. I worked in this country sixteen years ago, so I came down here.”

“You’d better put down that ax,” said Iman.

“Jack, I wouldn’t hurt you for anything in the world.”

“I know you wouldn’t, but I think you had better put it down.”

Oliver obeyed, and returned to the house with the three men. Their explanations were soon made, and Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, hospitable in the extreme, made provisions for the over-night stay. The visitors were tired and hungry. Climbing hills and walking through snow raised an appetite. The supper that was served will never be forgotten. Hayes and Oliver had killed a pig that day, and pork without limit and apple cider fresh from the

press were served. Friday night Iman and Ballard took turns staying up. Oliver slept. Saturday the trip to Santa Ana was made.

Oliver told Iman and Ballard that years ago he was a cowboy in Texas. He was breaking horses one year when he was kicked in the head by a horse. A silver plate was put in to piece out his skull. About a year later he had a spell of insanity, and he came to his senses in an asylum somewhere in Delaware or Massachusetts, a part of the world he had never known. After recovering his senses, he went west. That was sixteen years ago. He said he had had a number of spells in which for days or weeks he knew nothing of what he was doing.

In her diary, Elsie Roberts, the daughter of Alonzo and Carrie Hayes and husband of Jack Roberts, wrote about William Oliver's visit to the Hayes-Roberts family on Palomar Mountain [46]:

My Journal 1919, February 10 – A peculiar tramp appeared today, despite snow on ground, with an ax on his shoulder and began to work for us as a woodchopper. William Oliver said he was a professional woodcutter, and wouldn't we like him to cut some for us? Wood is our only fuel for heating and cooking, so although we had already a great stack just the length for either a big kitchen range or the heating stove in the dining room, we were always glad to have more ready, cut the proper length. Jack left and went down to Lone Fir for wagon. Papa, Mother, and Hyllinda are getting ready to start for Long Beach tomorrow [PB: Elsie's aunt Hyllinda]. We have another storm, so the family is still here, unable to travel as planned. Papa, Mother and Hyllinda left with team and a light wagon bound for Long Beach. Jack and the woodcutter went to the snow line to help dig out drifts, etc. ...

This has been an exciting week! Jack and woodcutter killed a pig. In the afternoon, Jack had planned to butcher our one hog but he and the newcomer and perhaps others had a great deal of trouble trying to catch it. Finally, in disgust he shot it. Then the sharp butcher knives flew. I baked bread. The woodcutter was using his ax and when it was lunchtime, I fed him at a table in the kitchen. He looked up at me with a sort of leer and asked, "Aren't you going to sit down and eat with me?" I refused and he ate alone. I was frying hog meat and at the same time baking bread in the big wood range when at dusk there came a knock at the door. Aunt Mamie with baby Catherine in her arms opened the door. [PB: Elsie's aunt Mamie and Elsie's daughter Catherine.] Aunt Mamie said afterward, she almost dropped the baby. Two big uniformed men stood there. The Sheriff of Santa Ana then arrested our woodcutter as a murderer !!! Another sheriff and Mr. Keith of Elsinore came, too. Got dinner for them all and felt so odd serving the murderer.

As hospitality was somewhat obligatory on the mountain those days, I did not sit with the men at dinner. Jack, the two sheriffs and their prisoner, whose face was then a deep red said little or nothing, but every time I passed about the tables serving them, I had the feeling that man might suddenly reach out and grab me. Fortunately we could give the Sheriffs and the man a place to sleep that was not in the house. Mr. Mack, the first owner of the place, had built a large barn and stable. The walls separated the stable from the front two rooms in the barn. The next day the officers left with their prisoner and Mr. Keith after breakfast. ...

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on March 19, 1919 [43]:

### TEN WOULD HANG HIM, (TWO) HELD FAST TO GIVING HIM LIFE

With ten men voting to hang William Oliver and two voting to give him life imprisonment, and not one of the twelve men willing to budge an inch, the jury that tried Oliver on a murder charge was discharged last night at 12:15 o'clock. The jury was out over fifteen hours. Judge West kept it out long after the members of the jury were convinced that there was no chance of an agreement. The testimony against Oliver showed that he deliberately and maliciously fired with a rifle at Joe Morales ... The defense was that he was insane. Oliver will be tried again. The date of trial has not yet been set. ...

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on April 5, 1919 [44]:

### NOW CONVINCED THAT SLAYER OLIVER IS OF UNSOUND MIND

Some of the court officers have come to the conclusion that William Oliver, charged with murder, is not shamming. They believe he is insane, and yesterday Under Sheriff John Iman swore to a complaint charging Oliver with insanity. Judge West is to conduct the investigation next Thursday. ... Owing to the manner of Oliver's escape and flight, it was believed he was shamming insanity. After several weeks' close observation of the man, it was decided to take Oliver into court upon an insanity charge and have the condition of his mind determined by experts. ... Oliver's second trial for murder has been set for May 14.

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on April 10, 1919 [45]:

### Oliver, Who Shot Fisherman, Sent To Insane Asylum

That William Oliver, who killed Joe Morales, a fisherman at Anaheim Landing on Nov. 6, is insane was the conclusion of several physicians who were in Judge West's courtroom this morning when Oliver was up for hearing upon a charge of insanity brought by Under Sheriff Iman. Oliver was ordered committed to the insane asylum at Norwalk, where he will be guarded and watched carefully [PB: now known as Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk]. Should the authorities there conclude that the man is shamming or if he returns to sanity, he will be returned here for disposition by the local courts. ... Oliver has been talking constantly of the loss of a lot of horses. He says Mexicans rushed his ranch in Texas and stole the stock, and during the raid he was injured.



**Norwalk State Hospital, 1927** Dick Whittington Studio, USC Library

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on May 7, 1919 [47]:

### Wm. Oliver, Murderer And Lunatic, Escapes From Norwalk Asylum

William Oliver, murderer of Mexican Joe Morales at Anaheim Landing last November ... and committed to the Norwalk state hospital as an insane person, is being sought today by officers of Southern California, having escaped from the hospital last night. Oliver is barefooted, clean shaven, and when he escaped wore only a pair of drawers and an undershirt, according to a message from the hospital superintendent to Sheriff C. E. Jackson. He escaped by breaking a window and going through the bars of his cell. It is believed Oliver will attempt to remain in hiding during the day and that he will shun closely settled neighborhoods. It is thought he may head back this way, and Orange county residents are asked to keep a lookout for him. This is Oliver's second escape, he having broken away from the Orange county hospital while under observation several weeks ago, being captured a short time later at Smith mountain, San Diego county. He was brought back here, adjudged insane, and committed to the Norwalk asylum.

The Santa Ana Daily Register reported on May 15, 1919 [48]:

### ARE SEARCHING FOR WM. OLIVER, INSANE

#### Reported As Seen at McKean Ranch at San Juan Capistrano

Today a search is being made at San Juan Capistrano for William Oliver, who escaped from the insane asylum at Norwalk a few days ago. Oliver was awaiting trial in Santa Ana on a charge of killing Joe Morales ... This morning at 9 o'clock, the sheriff's office received a report stating that Oliver had stolen some food at the McKean ranch and had been hanging around in a manner that left no doubt in McKean's mind but that the man is insane and that he is Oliver. Under Sheriff Iman and Constable Elliott went after him.

William Oliver's California newspaper trail then goes cold after a similar report the following day.

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