

FIND BODY OF VICTIM IN RIVER

Despondent Man Fired Shot on Bank and Body Topped into Water

FIANCEE IS PROSTRATE

Juanita Nicholson, Mollie Sweetheart, Feared He Would Kill Self.

The tragedy of a man broken in health and spirit was revealed this morning when a government launch, churning the waters of the Mississippi near the Mollie Lock on the Rock Island Arsenal, brought to the surface the body of Dr. Horace H. Smead, 50-year-old Davenport dentist, with a bullet hole thru his head.

He stood on the bank of the river last Thursday evening and blew out his brains, the body toppling into the water.

His body was found by the launch on the rocks of the old boat house and was taken to the morgue at the Arsenal.

Dr. Smead went to the Arsenal Thursday evening in a car driven by Harry Brown, 2004 Tenth street, a negro youth whom he told to leave him by the boat house as he was "to meet his fiancée" there.

It was Sunday before the girl in question, Juanita F. Nicholson, 2303 South Avenue, Moline, became acquainted and began to make inquiries concerning Smead who has been despondent since he had a paralytic stroke some time ago and has been struggling to take his own life.

She got in touch with Brown, who frequently drove for Dr. Smead, and found he had left the dentist on the Arsenal Thursday. She immediately notified Dan Shiro, chief of the Arsenal fire department, and the search for the body that ended early this morning began.

Dr. Smead resided at the St. James hotel. He was employed by John H. Hays, dentist, with offices in the Hays building, until about 12 years ago when he disabled his foot and was forced to give up his practice. Fear of permanent disability and despondency over the fact that he could not marry Mrs. Nicholson were given as the reasons for the suicide.

Was Despondent. When the paralytic stroke which he suffered, Dr. Smead had been

DR. H. H. SMEAD ENDS OWN LIFE

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despondent and frequently threatened to take his life. "If only he doesn't get better, I'm going to end it all," he frequently told his fiancée.

As a result Mrs. Nicholson kept close watch on him, coming to Davenport to take his automobile with her almost every evening and occasionally looking to snare him in broad daylight.

Thursday evening about 8:30 o'clock the boat was taken down to take him riding. They went to the Arsenal and drove along the lower rail course toward the lock. When they came near a deserted boat house the dentist told the negro that he was to meet his lady friend there and that she would take him home.

After Brown had driven away, he climbed up on the bank and fired thru his head and the body toppled some eight feet into the water. The gun fell into a crevice between two rocks and gave the blood stains on the rocks their warning signs of the tragedy. The place is about a quarter mile from the lock and seldom visited.

Fiancee Worried. Sunday morning Juanita Nicholson, fiancée of Smead, became worried at his absence from his hotel and caught out Brown whom she knew frequently drove for the dentist.

"I took him to the Arsenal Thursday evening to meet you. I took him by an old boat house down near the lock," the negro youth told her.

Instantly the woman knew that Dr. Smead had taken his own life. She hurried to the Arsenal and notified Dan Shiro, chief of the fire department.

The chief Shiro immediately got in touch with J. H. Gardner, superintendent of the Mollie lock, who declared that he had found a straw hat with a hole in it floating on the water Friday night. The hat had the letter "S" cut in the brim and was of a well known and expensive make having been purchased at a local clothing store.

"That's his hat all right," Shiro and Gardner agreed.

Body is Found. Superintendent Gardner and Dan Wedel, assistant superintendent of the lock, took a launch early this morning and began a search of the shore and water near the old boat house. Waded down the launch while Gordon went along the bank.

As they neared the old boat house the churning of the water by the motor boat forced the body to the surface. There was a bullet hole thru the head.

Coroner John T. Moberly of Rock Island was notified and came to examine the body. The remains were then taken to the Earlshall funeral parlor in Moline to be prepared for burial.

Dr. Smead has an abster of Dubuque, Ia., and his funeral arrangements will be made until word has been received from his fiancée who is a member of the Elks. She was not admitted with the local lodge.

Body of Dr. Smead Arrives in City

The body of Dr. Horace H. Smead, Davenport dentist, who met death by drowning at Davenport Monday, arrived in Dubuque Tuesday evening and was taken to Hoffmann's Mortuary where it will remain until the hour of burial Thursday afternoon. Members of the Elks lodge at Davenport of which he was a member conducted funeral services before the body was sent from there to Dubuque.

Burial will head the Epworth cemetery at 7:30 Thursday afternoon. The body will be taken from Hoffmann's at 1:30 Thursday.

Dr. Smead was born near Peoria May 1, 1876, a son of the late John E. and Mary Smead. Prior to studying dentistry at Iowa University he lived in Dubuque where he was employed by the River-Wallis company. He practiced dentistry at Epworth, Marshalltown, Grinnell and Davenport.

Surviving are a daughter, Ruth of Los Angeles, a brother, John H.

Smead, of Boise, Idaho, and a sister, Mrs. E. J. Delaney, 643 Jefferson St., Dubuque. His brother will arrive in Dubuque Thursday to attend the funeral services.

Florists are speeding the growth of flowers by the use of electric lights.

Alamac
Broadway and 5th
New York

The perfect selection the Man

600 Rooms and showers and

Renowned COB
Kitchens, Cook

Residence of America's

Smead practiced dentistry in Epworth and Marshalltown before moving to Grinnell in 1919 or 1920. Records show that in April 1920 he bought the property at 816 Tenth Avenue, and the 1920 city directory lists him as living there and practicing dentistry above the Strand Theater (921 1/2 Main). A notice in the Iowa City Press-Citizen (15 Mar 1923) reports that in 1923 Smead sold his Grinnell practice to Dr. William Molsberry, who was said to take possession of the practice April 1, 1923. So Smead practiced here apparently for only three years or so, but Molsberry had a longer run (and his obituary is part of the library database: <http://www.grinnell.lib.ia.us/Obit/M/MolsberryDrWilliamI.pdf>).

I attach here a few newspaper articles, the names of which indicate the newspaper source and date; the story in 2 parts comes from the Davenport Democrat-Leader 20 Jun 1927; "Body of Dr Smead Arrives" is from Dubuque Telegraph, Herald & Times, 22 Jun 1927 (Smead was buried in Dubuque); "Body of Davenport Man Found" comes from Fairfield Daily Ledger 21 Jun 1927.

Body of Davenport Man Is Found in River Lock

DAVENPORT, June 21—The body of Mr. Horace Smead was removed yesterday from the government lock adjoining the Mississippi. A bullet wound indicated that Smead had first shot himself and then fell from the high walls of the lock into the water. He had been missing since last Thursday.

Smead was a dentist, 51 years old. He was engaged to be married to a Mohican girl, Gladys Nicholson, but the wedding was indefinitely postponed when, a month ago, he sustained a stroke of paralysis. Since that time he has been unable to follow his profession and has been in a melancholy mood.

Only one in every twenty-five of the Parialah girls attending trade schools train to be stenographers or secretaries. They prefer dressmaking, millinery and similar women's work to these 'dressed-up' jobs.