

## Fish and Game Report and Newspaper articles regarding the death of Warden James White.

### James S. White

March 27, 1863- October 17, 1923

James S. White was the Deputy Fish and Game Warden based in Castella. He was born in March of 1863, according to his death certificate he was divorced. Warden White was well liked with many friends in community. He was a big man and spent time in Montana where he came to know Theodore Roosevelt, President Roosevelt invited White to the White House and waved to White when passing through on the train. His death certificate says he was divorced but newspaper articles say he survived by his wife in San Francisco and a stepson

On the day October 17, 1923 Officers enforcing the prohibition laws came to Castella to visit the Shasta View hotel. They were John Vail, Jim Murphy, and C. G. Powell. When the officers entered the hotel the owner, Jack Mattos, asked who they were and stated that he would knock down the first fellow who to search the place and run him out of town. One thing led to another and Vail and Mattos were fighting. Vail removed his gun and he and Mattos continued their "rumpus" but called it off and the atmosphere was clearing. During the fight someone went and got Warden James White who came in and asked Jack Mattos what the problem was. After an explanation White pulled his gun and said "this has gone far enough" and swinging his gun side to side covering the "dry" agents he asked Charlie George to pull his gun. George stepped up and asked Warden White to put his gun away. White continued to hold his gun and severely censured the "dry" officers. Scott says he walked up to Warden White and told him put his gun down. Scott thought that he was going to put the gun away when two shots rang out in rapid succession. The first hit Officer Vail in the left breast and the second hit Vail in the right arm and lodged in the shoulder. Vail pulled his gun with his left hand and shot twice. ( question, How did White pull a gun when previous statements had him putting it down ) Witness accounts differ significantly, indeed stating that it was Vail who shot first. Warden White was shot in the breast near the heart. ( question, How could White have shot first if indeed he was shot near the heart? )

The District attorney declined to file charges against Vail.

Warden White's death certificate does not state one way or the other if he was on duty.

# es Killing of White

## Jack Mattos Places Blame For Shooting Jim White on Vail

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**John Vail Rushed Up to White and Shot Him Twice, Says Proprietor of Shasta View Hotel in Official Testimony of Coroner's Inquest Filed With County Clerk Monday; Testimony of Ira Engle Is Given for First Time**

The official report of the coroner's inquest at Castella last Wednesday inquiring into the death of "Jim" White was filed at the court house Monday morning.

The report gives in detail the sworn statements of Officers Murphy, George and Scott and also the testimony of Jack Mattos, proprietor of the Shasta View hotel, which was being raided at the time, and also of Ira P. Engle Sr., former Copper City merchant, who recently moved to Castella.

**Jack Mattos' Testimony**  
Q. Just go ahead and state what transpired, as you did a while ago to me.

A. Well he said—Mr. Vail said to Mr. White "Who are you?" or "What right have you to butt in?" Something like that. Mr. White said "I am an officer." He set his packages down here in this chair (indicating) previous to that time. Mr. Vail said "I am too." And he showed his star. Mr. White said "I don't make any difference. Let me tell you fellows something. You have gone too far." And he pulled his gun and swung it like this, just like that (indicating).

**Asked to Put Gun Away**  
Charlie George and Mr. Scott came this way. (Indicating.) And both had their hands like that. (Indicating.) And they said, "Jim, put your gun down. You have no right to have your gun like that. Put it down. Put it down. Put it down." And Jim dropped the gun down—to the best of my knowledge like that. (Indicating.) And he held up his hand. (Indicating.) Previous to that time he was talking to Mr. Vail and myself. And then, when they kept telling him to put down his gun, and he hadn't any right to have his hands out in that manner, he dropped his gun out in that position, and he held it out in this manner. (Indicating.) He (White) said, "Let me explain. I will tell you fellows something. Now keep still and let me explain and I will tell you something." And at that he turned like this—I would say just about the position I am

the gun clear to the clothing, so it must show the powder marks—right at the heart I would say—there was not that much space between where the gun and clothing were. (Indicating.) He was not crouched. He was standing more like this. (Indicating.) He just grabbed that gun and just shoved it into his clothing and started to pull the trigger. I honestly believe, if he is examined, that his clothing, it must be powder burned. The gun was up against his clothes when he pulled the trigger.

**Shot With Right Hand**  
Q. He pulled the gun with his right hand?  
A. Yes.  
Q. Standing there? (Indicating.)  
A. Standing there.  
Q. You could see he didn't pull it with his left?

**Gun Against White**  
A. Oh, positively. He was standing right here. (Indicating.) He just went like that. (Indicating.) I am positive of that—and shoved it square against his heart, pulled the trigger twice, and then the next shot—it seemed like a pause, and during that pause, I think between Mr. Vail's two shots—I think White shot two, then Vail shot the third one. I was standing, I think, right here when those shots came (indicating) and I think that Mr. Vail shot two and then Mr. White shot one or two, and then the other came out of his gun as he fell. He shot two quick shots right up against his clothing, against his shirt.  
Q. I think that is all. Any questions, Mr. McGuinness?  
Mr. McGuinness: No.  
Mr. Weekly: Maybe some of the jury would like to ask some questions. (no response)

**Testimony of Ira Engle Sr.**  
Asked to tell what happened after White came into the room Ira P. Engle said:  
Mr. White came in. Mr. George and Mr. Vail were standing here (indicating); the others were standing around here. They had a little racket, and Mr. White came in and said to Mr. Mattos, "What's the

## CASTELLA SHOOTING IS FIRST JOB FOR NEW BODY

**M. F. Eldridge is Appointed Foreman of Jury Selected in Superior Court Monday morning**

The new grand jury was selected in the superior court Monday morning and M. F. Eldridge appointed as foreman. William Yank is the sergeant-at-arms.

As soon as the organization was completed the jury began an investigation of the shooting at Castella last Wednesday when James S. White, deputy fish and game commissioner was shot and killed. It was expected that the investigation would take at least two days.

Following are the members of the grand jury:

- Charles H. Stevens, Igo.
- William Yank, Bella Vista.
- Albert C. Miller, Whitmore.
- Andrew Jensen, Anderson.
- Clara E. Fountain, Bella.
- A. G. Green, Cottonwood.
- Harrison A. Swoyer, Redding.
- J. J. Miller, Ono.
- John L. St. John, Fall River Mills.
- M. F. Eldridge, Redding.
- Sadie M. Kelly, Buckeye.
- Stanley Jacob, Redding.
- Arthur McMurry, Anderson.
- George Geider, Wengler.
- Roderick McArthur, McArthur.
- Louisa M. Finnegan, Lamone.
- W. F. Marston, Cottonwood.
- James T. Burton, Palo Cedro.
- Christine Glover, Redding.
- Robert Duke, attorney for the fish and game commission, arrived in Redding Monday morning with Commissioner Ludlum to investigate the shooting of White. They spent some time calling on the district attorney.

## GREEK ROYALIST

## REPORTS INDICATE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN IS GETTING RESULTS

Miss Genevieve Lane, secretary of the Shasta County Promotion and Development association who returned Monday from the meeting of the United Chambers of Commerce of the Sacramento valley, held in Sacramento, October 26, says "reports given at the meeting show that we are now coming down to know facts and truly accomplishing the work of advertising California to the world."

"Secretary Brooker said he was satisfied that we are going at the work in the right way and although each chamber of commerce in the valley is doing its own direct results, they are a reality by the reports that he has received from the railroad companies, which show that their air advertising, our prospects are either coming by automobile buying tickets or contemplating coming in the near future so busy as soon as they can dispose of their property. Our advertising started last year will bring results this year and next to come."

"Hastall, the principal speaker at the meeting, said that the advertising of the California, Inc. was tried out the past year just as an experiment, and as such good results come of it, they feel justified in planning a larger advertising campaign, the coming year and expect still better results. He outlined in detail the work to be accomplished the coming year, stating that California, Inc. expect to advertise their eastern potato farms, journals, magazines, motion pictures and placing small pamphlets in all eastern railroad offices. Mr. Hastall said all the eastern railroad companies are back of this movement and will cooperate in every way. In speaking of the future work of the united chambers, he seemed very well pleased to find such good results being obtained and offered the cooperation of the California, Inc. by supplying lists of prospects to the United Chambers. "Under the plans of the United Chambers' house up campaign, every house is held down to a real prospect and then turned over to the various chambers and organizations in the valley."

At noon a luncheon was served in the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce banquet room at which time Dr. Hastall honored the members by showing the reels of northern California taken by the California, Inc. These pictures were shown for the first time. These reels are to be shown through the east during the next few months and will be a big card in the advertising campaign of the California, Inc. to be undertaken the coming year.

### FAIRBANKS IN 'ROBIN HOOD'

**ROBIN HOOD—TOMORROW**  
Douglas Fairbanks in "Robin Hood" is at the Redding Theater today and tomorrow, giving a matinee each afternoon and but one evening performance each evening. "Robin Hood" on the screen is an achievement. No tremendous was its success when first presented in the United States at the Grauman Theater in Hollywood that it ran for over six months at roadshow admission prices. Its first run in San Francisco was for eight weeks also at popular roadshow prices.

Local people have heard of "Robin Hood" on the screen for months and doubtless know what to expect. They will have their expectations far more than satisfied by the big picture itself.

Everybody should arrange to get in early to see the picture from the beginning. Those who wish to avoid the crowds should attend the matinee.

FILES read come with each order of business or calling cards at Courier-Free Press. Get yours before the supply is exhausted.

## MATTOS BLAMES JOHN VAIL FOR DEATH OF WHITE

(Continued from Page 1)

Q. Did you see Mr. Vail reach for his gun?

A. No, I seen him make a quick move.

Q. Across the floor?

A. Yes, I was close to him.

Q. What did Mr. White do?

A. I don't know. I was moving across that floor.

Q. Who fired first?

A. You left. So that you would not be able to say which gun fired the first shot.

A. No, I would not be able to call it.

Q. Mr. White had his gun in his hand?

A. He had backed like this, (indicating to get back and started to put it away).

Q. At the time Mr. White came into the room you saw him continuingly, and you were in the room for some time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. From the time the gun was pulled?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. No Other Guns Out

Q. When Mr. White pulled the gun was there any other guns in evidence at that time?

A. I don't think there was.

Q. Did Mr. Vail have a gun in his hand?

A. No, he didn't have a gun in his hand.

Q. I believe you said you didn't see Mr. Vail pull his gun?

A. I didn't see him.

Q. You saw him make a forward motion?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he come toward Mr. White?

A. He came toward Mr. White.

Q. At that time you turned to leave?

A. I turned to leave, made up my mind to leave. I seen Mr. White put his gun away. And I seen Mr. Vail move. I felt something was coming.

In answer to cross-examination by Attorney Henry McDouglas, Eagle said "White was not looking toward Vail at the time Vail made the forward motion."

The testimony at the inquest covers 26 typewritten pages. Other witnesses were Mike Padula, James Murphy, John A. Derby, traffic officer of Siskiyou county, Charlie George, W. B. Scott, Henry McDouglas.

The jury consisted of E. L. Kibrick, L. R. Chase, L. Hatt, C. G. Jensen, G. F. Crawford, R. H. Rupe and William P. Baseman.

**"CAT AND CANARY"**

**HERE NEXT SUNDAY**

An early season visitor of the theatrical world will be "The Cat and the Canary" which Kilkourin Gordon, Inc. are to present at the Redding Theater, one night, Sunday, October 21. This play abounds in entertainment of the best sort and should receive the heartiest kind of welcome. Disinterested critics and local folk, who have seen "The Cat and the Canary" elsewhere, report it as one of the best entertainments they have ever seen. There is comedy and thrill in "The Cat and the Canary" for it is one of those highly excited melodramas which have been given the term of thrillers.

This play, however, is unlike any other. An exceptional company made up of the best players of all companies which appeared last season, is to enact "The Cat and the Canary."

**REDDING THEATER**  
Sunday, October 28, One Performance Only