

The David and Romie Hodell Murders

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From the Newaygo County Historical Society archives

Edited by Andrew Whitlock



Meda (Meady) Hodell at the Detroit House of Corrections

I spent all my summers as a child with my grandparents, Frank and Marie Keippel at their place on 3 Mile Road, now owned by Don and Marie Maxson. My exploring of the woods and my bow hunting took me many times into the area that was referred to as the "Swamp". I never remember it being called the "Dudgeon Swamp" although I recall hearing a little of the story from my grandparents. It was not until I was an adult that Don and Marie Maxson related what they knew of the Hodell murders, which sparked the curiosity to research the 1922 incident. I knew two of the "lynch mob", Fred Nestle and Fred Anderson. William J. Branstrom was my grandparent's attorney.

I remember in the early sixties, before I entered the military, reading and seeing pictures of the trial in a magazine. I thought it was either "Look" or "Life", but after many hours at the library, I was unsuccessful in finding this article.

I am not a writer, and I have not attempted to write this as a story of what I have discovered, but rather list in chronological order the event that took place taken from newspaper articles and prison records. I have transcribed what I have read, not changing wording or spelling or inserting my opinion. I have satisfied my curiosity and have typed out this "outline" for friends, who wanted to know what I had discovered.

I would be very interested in the opinions of readers who may have a different slant on what took place.

1903

The Dudgeon Family came from Allen County, Indiana and settled near the town of Holton, Michigan before arriving in White Cloud, Michigan in 1905. Where they traded their Holton farm for two parcels of land equaling 1280 acres, 5 miles northeast of White Cloud in Goodwell Township, Newaygo County, which at one time was called "Big Bear Swamp". The Dudgeons reported seeing many bears on their property (Sections 21, 29, and 30). Charles H. Dudgeon and Alice Dudgeon had five children: Lee, Wilmer, Herman, Lola, and Meady. A sixth child, a daughter called "Z" had died earlier.

1905

The Dudgeons began to raise breeder livestock for income on their property, which they referred to as "The Ranch". Their neighbors, who found the Dudgeons hard to deal with and bullish, called the property "The Dudgeon Swamp". There was a certain amount of resentment and jealousy in the rural community caused by the Dudgeon attitude and being able to purchase such a large parcel of land. The Dudgeons were one of the first to own a new electric truck.

Since there were no buildings on the land, they occupied a shanty a few miles from the property while they built their house. Charles and Alice Dudgeon with their son, Lee, built a two-story house with a porch containing four rooms, two downstairs and two upstairs. The floors were made of rough ash boards and the partitions between the rooms were very crude and covered with sheets of newspaper. The stairs leading upstairs were so steep they could be considered a ladder. The rough boards outside were covered with tarpaper and strips of lathe. The family moved into the house before the windows or doors were installed. The house was never finished.

The washboard road that ran past the property was a corduroy or log road covered with dirt and had many chuck holes. The old stagecoach road from Grand Rapids to Big Rapids crossed the Dudgeon property diagonally. There were remnants of the burned out Graves lumber camp near the Dudgeon house. The White River originated on the property.

Only eight hundred of the twelve hundred acres were fenced when Dudgeon occupied the land, so when he fenced the remaining four hundred acres, the neighbors, who had been using it to graze their cattle, were incensed and cut the wires to let the Dudgeon stock out.

Charles Dudgeon mortgaged part of his land for \$350 down payment on Fred Riblet's eighty acres, which was a quarter mile west of the Dudgeon property, for his daughter Lola and her husband, Frank Priest.

Without telling the Dudgeons, Frank Priest sold his contract for the land to Jake Terwillegar, who was caught dragging logs off the land by the Dudgeons. A fight ensued in which Terwillegar took a severe beating. The Dudgeon men were convicted of assault and served ninety days in the White Cloud jail.

A neighbor, Tom Scott had a dispute with the Dudgeons over Scott crossing their property. Although Wilmer and Lee Dudgeon were both badly hurt by Scott, they were again arrested, convicted and served more time in jail.

After Charles Dudgeon's death, Alice Dudgeon had an altercation with the teacher of the school across the road from her house, for which she was taken to court and fined.

She also was accused of having, an altercation with Jake Terwillegar at which time she broke a few of Terwillegar's ribs.

1918-1921

Meady (Dudgeon) Hodell's education ended in the eighth grade at the age of 16, at which time she worked locally until she married Romie "Doc" Hodell at the age of 20. Meady, for a time worked in the telegraph office in White Cloud and a chair factory in Big Rapids. It was during this time span that Meady gave birth to two children that were fathered by her brothers. Upon their births, the infants were taken to the Dudgeon barn, clubbed to death and buried.

1920

Romie "Doc" Hodell was born and raised in Ensley Township, north of the town of Grant, Michigan, about a half-mile on Trunk Line 54. His four brothers, Gayle, Forrest, Wayne and Hollis still lived at home with their mother, Nina. His two sisters, Lila and Lola, were married. Lila Siegel lived in Comstock Park, Michigan and Lola Cook lived in Goodwell Township, White Cloud, Michigan. In 1920 Romie moved to Wilcox Township, White Cloud, Michigan where he lived on property on 2 Mile Road. (He was in the process of buying the property from Fred Anderson at the time of his death.) He later rented a house in Goodwell Township from J.E. Terwillegar. This was the same property which Charles Dudgeon's son-in-law, Frank Priest had sold behind his back. (At the time of his death, Romie and Meady were living, with Meady's mother, Alice Dudgeon and her two brothers, Lee and Herman.)

The majestic white pine forests, for which the region was famous, had been laid to waste. The lumber barons had sold off their holdings to farmers and were steadily moving north. They left in their wake, vast areas of clear cut land, dotted with pine tree stumps, blackened scars of forest fires, and a barren wasteland of sand.

Romie became a "stumper" who would remove tree stumps in the farmer's fields. Stump removal was a common profession of the times. He had been "stumpin" in the Grant area where the stumps were very difficult to remove because of the clay in the soil. He found his job much easier in the White Cloud area because of the sandy conditions.

Romie met the Dudgeons when he contracted to buy a load of cedar fence posts from them. It was at this time that Romie first met Meady.



Lee Dudgeon

APRIL, 1920

Lee Dudgeon, Meady's brother, who was 22 years old at the time, 5'9", 178 lbs., brown hair, hazel eyes, and a dark beard, spent 90 days in the White Cloud jail for assault and battery. He did not drink or smoke and only attended school until the sixth grade. (THE AFORE MENTIONED ALTERCATION WITH JAKE TERWILLEGAR)

MAY 20, 1920

The head of the Dudgeon family, Charles H. Dudgeon, died at the age of 68. He was buried at the Goodwell Township Cemetery, across the road from the north three-quarter section of his property.

MARCH 29, 1921

Romie "Doc" Hodell, age 26, and Meady Dudgeon, age 20, were married. Meady's brother, Lee, gave Romie the money for the marriage license. Romie was aware that Meady had kept company with Carl Sailors, a man who her brother Wilmer worked for. Romie was very jealous of Sailors when he would show up at the Dudgeon's house.



The grave of Charles Dudgeon

JANUARY 20, 1922

Romie and Meady received a letter from Romie's mother, Nina Hodell, telling them, they would be visited by Romie's father, David Hodell, who was a carpenter and barn builder. David and Nina Hodell were having marital problems, so David Hodell left his wife running a rooming house in Detroit, to stay with his children.

JANUARY 21, 1922

On an errand to his sister's house, Mrs. Roy Cook, Romie found his father, David Hodell, who accompanied him home to his house on 2 Mile Road at 2:30 p.m. Romie, Meady, and David Hodell ate supper at the Dudgeon's house that night.



The Dudgeon House, as it appeared around 1922

FEBRUARY 4, 1922

David Hodell, age 67, died at 2:45 p.m. while Romie was at work in Woodville, Michigan. He died on his return from the woodpile, at which time Meady ran across the road for help from Mrs. Fred (Cornelia) Anderson. Dr. Price T. Waters and Undertaker Alex I. McKinley were summoned from White Cloud. Dr. Waters attributed Hodell's death to apoplexy. Lee Dudgeon donated the coat from his suit for David Hodell to be buried in. Romie gave his blue serge pants and Undertaker McKinley provided a shirt.

FEBRUARY 8, 1922

David Hodell was buried at the Ashland Center Cemetery in Grant, Michigan.

FEBRUARY 10, 1922

Romie and Meady, who had previously lived on 2 Mile Road in Wilcox Township on property owned by Fred Anderson, rented a house from Jake Terwillegar in Goodwell Township. Romie had been in the process of purchasing the land from Anderson when his stumping business faltered and he moved to Terwillegar's place. He was \$1800 in debt.

APRIL 28, 1922

Romie and Meady Hodell accompanied Meady's brothers, Lee and Wilmer Dudgeon to Fremont, Michigan in the Dudgeon brother's new Chevrolet truck. (White Cloud Eagle / East Wilcox Township May 4, 1922).

MAY 5, 1922

Besides Robert Bennett, Elzie Priest was another man who hired on to work for Romie. Being short of money, Romie sent Priest to Clarence Rittenhouse's farm to ask him to buy one of Romie's horses, but Rittenhouse refused. Romie was so mad at Rittenhouse for not being interested in purchasing the horse, he grabbed his .22 rifle and started after him, but Meady stopped him.

Romie contracted to do a "stumping" job on the Dudley Smith farm in Wooster, 17 miles away and planned on taking Meady with him to live in a shack. Meady had accompanied him on other jobs and disliked living in a shack away from family and friends. Lee and Herman had agreed to drive Romie and Meady's furniture out to the shack in their truck, when Carl Sailors showed up. Romie had suspected Sailors of seeing Meady while he was at work, and had a fit when he saw him. Words were exchanged between Romie and Herman which developed into a fist fight. Lee joined in, and Romie took a bad beating from the both of them. Romie forced Meady to walk down the road ahead of him in the rain. He talked at length of them both dying together and finally told Meady that he wanted her to go to White Cloud to see Attorney Harold Cogger about a divorce.

Meady, in a letter written in prison to the county historian, H.L. Spooner, said that on this day, Romie confided in her that twelve years earlier he had helped bury a woman named Nellie Reynolds in Ensley Center, Michigan. Romie had heard that men working on a road had uncovered a skeleton and had taken it to the local undertaker and that authorities were investigating.

Romie and Meady spent the night at the Dudgeon house, where Romie slept with Lee and Meady slept with her mother, Alice Dudgeon.



Terwilleger Barn

MAY 6, 1922

Romie, who had decided not to work that day because it was raining, went to his rented barn on the Terwilleger place to feed his horses. He was told by Alice Dudgeon that his breakfast would be ready upon his return. Not returning for breakfast, Lee and Robert Bennett (another of Romie's hired hands) went to the barn where they found Romie hanging by the horse harness. Meady and her brothers, Lee and Herman drove to White Cloud to notify the authorities shortly after noon. Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley, Deputy Sheriff Winfield E. Patterson, Justice Of The Peace / Undertaker Walter B. Reed, and Prosecuting Attorney Harold J. Cogger were told of Romie's death. Romie's body was found by the officials hung with his feet touching the ground and his knees flexed. In addition, one eye was blackened, his lip was cut, and there was a cut over one eye and another on his cheek. It was also noted that there was evidence of mud or sand on his shoulders. The authorities had a difficult time putting the body in the rear seat of Sheriff McKinley's car because Romie had a stiff leg. Attorney Cogger rode in the back seat with the body, while McKinley, Patterson, and Reed were in the front. Romie and Meady were only

married fourteen months at the time of his death.

Carl Sailors took Meady, Lee, Wilmer, and Robert Bennett to White Cloud in his car so Meady could deliver some underwear she had purchased to the undertaker for Romie's body.

At the inquest before Justice Of The Peace / Undertaker, Walter B. Reed, the postmortem examination by Drs. Weaver, Waters, and Turner concluded that the cause of death was not hanging, but a blow on the back of the neck, two inches below the right ear. The doctors also testified that the blow caused instant death. Romie was buried at the Goodwell Cemetery in Goodwell Township.



The grave of Romie "Doc" Hodell

MAY 7,1922

Because of the hard feelings between the Hodells and Dudgeons, Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley attended Romie's funeral at the Goodwill Township Cemetery, where he frisked the participants for weapons.

MAY 8, 1922

Robert Bennett, Romie's hired hand, was arrested, but later released for the murder of Romie. The inquest that started on May 6, 1922 was continued on May 8, 1922. (Robert Bennett was born in London, England and emigrated with his parents to Canada at the age of 7. He moved to Newaygo County in the fall of 1921. In 1922, Mr. Ward, a man that

Bennett had lived with in Canada moved to Newaygo County. It was at Ward's house that Bennett first met Romie. Robert Bennett had only known the Dudgeons about a month before Romie's death.) He would later be arrested again and would spend approximately eleven months behind bars. Bennett received letters daily from his mother, who had moved back to London, professing her belief in his innocence.

MAY 14,1922

Meady and her brothers, Lee and Herman had Romie's body exhumed by the sexton of the Goodwill Cemetery because of rumors that the body had been taken away on the night of the funeral.

MAY 15,1922

The inquest held on May 6th and May 8th was concluded on May 15th.

It was determined during the inquest, that the "suicide notes given to the authorities by Lee Dudgeon were not in Romie's handwriting

"Dearest Meady: I can not write words to the effect that I want to but tell my mother not to feel bad for me or you either. I left a note in my book for you but my emotions has changed since then so I am writing you this. Please don't marry Carl Sailors, my last request. One who give his life for you."

"Doc"

The above note was written on a calendar. The following was written on a leaf of paper from a note book.

"Mada: When you read this I will be no more. Don't look for me as you will never find me until it is too late. You know I told you I would rather be dead as see you go wrong. One who loves you. "Doc"

Mrs. Nina Hodell, Romie's mother and Roy Cook, Romie's brother-in-law testified that the "suicide" notes were not written in Romie's handwriting. Later confessions stated that Meady wrote the notes. In newspaper reports during Meady's trial it was stated that there were not two but three "suicide" notes.

JUNE 29,1922

Meady visited her sister-in-law, Lola (Hodell) Priest in Big Rapids, Michigan with her nephew, Cecil Robinson. (White Cloud Eagle / East Wilcox Township July 6, 1922

JULY 30, 1922

Lee and Herman Dudgeon are met on the road near the Fulkerson School on a threshing outfit they were moving for a neighbor by nineteen vigilantes. (The Fulkerson School was located on the corner of Thornapple and 1-Mile Roads in Wilcox Township). They were ordered to get down, but they refused. Roy Cook climbed on the separator and pushed Herman, who fell against Lee and they both jumped to save themselves from

falling. Lee and Herman were separated and ropes were placed around their necks. They were told that if they did not confess they would be lynched. Paul Andrews, Superintendent of Schools, a member of the "lynch mob" stated that when the rope was pulled tight around Lee Dudgeon's neck he said he would confess. When the rope was loosened, he refused to confess. This took place twice, when Forrest Hodell, Romie's brother, tied the rope to his motorcycle and pulled out all the slack. The rest of the mob got nervous over Forrest's move knowing he had a "suicide clutch" and any attempt to stop him could cause his foot to slip. Herman was ready to confess almost immediately, and this final ploy by Forrest convinced Lee to confess. All concerned, later testified that the Dudgeon brother's feet never left the ground and that the ropes were just pulled tight. The tree used to "lynch" the brothers was a maple that sat between the Jake E. Terwilligar house and barn. **(The "lynching" tree was cut down in the late 1980's by the county who claimed it was a road hazard.)** Later testimony revealed that it only took the mob five minutes to get the confession. The Dudgeons received black eyes, Lee, a broken nose, not to mention the rope burns on their necks.

I, Lee Dudgeon, don't know how R.D. Hodell was murdered, but I do know that he was murdered by Robert Bennett. My brother, Herman and myself helped hang R.D. Hodell in the upper story of Jake Terwilligar's barn after he was killed. Bennett came to our place and asked us to go with him. I asked, "What for? And he said he wanted us to hang "Doc" in the barn. I told him that I didn't wish to do anything of the kind, and he said, If you don't I will put you fellows in the same place. " He had his hand in his coat pocket where his gun was concealed and we went with him. After hanging "Doc" up, Bennett said, "By God, he won't bother anybody else. "

The confession was signed by Lee and Herman Dudgeon and several witnesses and presented to Justice of the Peace / Undertaker Walter B. Reed, who was summoned to the schoolhouse from White Cloud. He left almost immediately because he was conducting a funeral that afternoon. The Dudgeons changed their confession and this was recorded by Justice Guy Merrill. Since Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley was out of town, Deputy Sheriff Winfield E. Patterson was summoned. Patterson released the Dudgeon brothers and arrested Robert Bennett for a second time at the home of Frank- James in Goodwell Township. Bennett was kept in a dungeon containing no cot or chair and was compelled to sleep on the floor with only a blanket. He received as little as four meals per week. Patterson later arrested Lee, Herman, and Wilmer Dudgeon at their home.

Newly appointed special Prosecutor William J. Branstrom requests help from Roy C. Vandercook of the Michigan State Police in Lansing after Alice Dudgeon requests protection for her family. **(Branstrom later becomes an attorney for Gerber Baby Foods in Fremont, Michigan.)**

AUGUST 1, 1922

Sergeant George E. Karkeet of the Michigan State Police arrived in White Cloud from Lansing, Michigan. The Dudgeon boys, their mother, Alice Dudgeon, and their sister, Meady are taken to Fremont, Michigan for questioning by Special Prosecutor, William J. Branstrom.

AUGUST 2, 1922

Trooper Ernest G. Ramsey of the Michigan State Police arrived in White Cloud from Lansing.

AUGUST 4, 1922

Prosecuting Attorney William J. Branstrom and Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley sent the "suicide" notes to a handwriting expert in Detroit with Attorney H.J. Cogger. The expert declared the notes genuine.

AUGUST 5, 1922

Sergeant John Palmer of the Michigan State Police arrived in White Cloud from Lansing. The three policemen arrived at the request of White Cloud's Special Prosecuting Attorney, William J. Branstrom to protect the Dudgeons and investigate the actions, of the vigilantes. Almost immediately they turned their investigation on the Dudgeons.

AUGUST 8, 1922

Sergeant Palmer and Trooper Ramsey borrowed two white sheets from Mrs. Beatrice Hurst, wife of Big Rapids' sheriff.

Lee and Herman are driven to Big Rapids by the three policemen and grilled till they confess to knowing that their sister, Meady killed her husband and father-in-law. They are left in the Big Rapids jail.

AUGUST 9,1922

Meady was also driven to Big Rapids and grilled by the police where she confessed before Prosecuting Attorney Arthur J. Butler to the poisoning of her father-in-law and the murder of her husband. Meady was also left in the Big Rapids jail.

AUGUST 10, 1922

After being driven to Big Rapids for interrogation, Alice Dudgeon confessed to the murder of Romie and knowledge that her daughter, Meady, poisoned her father-in-law, David Hodell. She was left in the Big Rapids jail. Confessions by Lee, Herman, Alice, and Meady were taken by A.W. Bennett, notary public.

Alice Dudgeon and Meady told officers that they were bothered by ghosts until the time of their confessions.

AUGUST 11, 1922

The quartet was brought back to White Cloud where they were arraigned before Justice of the Peace Walter B. Reed. Each waived examination and were bound over to the circuit court. Wilmer Dudgeon, who was away at the time of the crime, was detained for a few days but not charged.

Prosecuting Attorney William J. Branstrom called the newspaper men and gave them the details of the confessions. "Branstrom further told the family affiliations which had taken place of a repulsive nature, which cannot be printed." (This was probably the incest committed between Meady and her brothers previously mentioned.) *Editor's note: The Dudgeon family strongly denied this accusation, and this editor has found no evidence or hard fact to confirm the occurrence of any such incest.*

Lola Cook visited her mother, Alice Dudgeon in the Big Rapids jail.

AUGUST 12,1922

Sergeant Karkeet and Palmer, and Trooper Ramsey returned to Lansing, Michigan.

AUGUST 15, 1922

David Hodell's body was exhumed, by order of the court, from Ashland Center Cemetery in Grant, Michigan.

AUGUST 17,1922

Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley, who had been criticized by the residents of White Cloud for his handling, of the case, made a statement to the newspaper that he wished the public to know he had been working quietly behind the scenes.

Alice Dudgeon was visited in jail by her attorney, A.A. Worcester.

AUGUST 18, 1922

The "lynch" mob was arraigned before Justice of the Peace / Undertaker Walter B. Reed where all the defendants pleaded guilty and were fined \$25.00 plus court costs. This was reduced to a fine of \$1.00 each. (It was said that if any fines were levied against the mob, the people of White Cloud would take up a collection for them. There was also talk of presenting medals to each of the vigilantes, but this never came about.)

AUGUST 24,1922

Alice, Lee, and Herman Dudgeon, Meady Hodell and Robert Bennett all reputed their confessions. Alice Dudgeon used the deed to her farm to secure the service of Defense Attorneys Alpheus A. Worcester of Big Rapids, Michigan and Arthur W. Penney of Cadillac, Michigan. The defense attorneys were secured by Alice Dudgeon's daughter, Lola Priest.

An article written by Gayle Hodell appeared in the White Cloud Eagle defending the investigation being conducted by Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1922

The vital organs of David Hodell's body which had been exhumed on August 15th and sent to the State Chemist, Charles Bliss in Lansing, Michigan, were reported to contain sufficient strychnine poison to kill a dozen men.

* DENOTES MEADY (DUDGEON) HODELL TRIAL IN WHITE CLOUD, NEWAYGO COUNTY, MICHIGAN

** DENOTES ALICE DUDGEON TRIAL IN WHITE CLOUD, NEWAYGO COUNTY, MICHIGAN

***DENOTES LEE AND HERMAN DUDGEON AND ROBERT BENINTETT TRIAL IN BIG RAPIDS, MECOSTA COUNTY AND HART, OCEANA COUNTRY, MICHIGAN

**** DENOTES ALICE AND LEE DUDGEON RETRIAL BY ORDER OF MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT IN WHITE CLOUD, NEWAYGO COUNTY, MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 10-25, 1922

* The trial of Meady (Dudgeon) Howell came before Circuit Judge Joseph Barton in White Cloud, Michigan.

* The jury of twelve men were chosen from sixty-seven interviewed during a two day process. All were farmers with at least ten years in their occupation.

* A.H. Courtney was deputized to attend the door of the courtroom to see that no one entered after the room was filled.

* "The sentiment in Newaygo County was very bitter against the defendants, and motions were made in this case by the attorneys for the respondents for a change of venue, on the grounds that the defendants could not receive a fair and impartial trial in Newaygo County. These motions were all denied by Judge Joseph Barton."

* "Judge Barton made the statement that of about 100 murder cases which he had conducted, this case had the most angles and ramifications of any he had ever heard. His experience included having had charge of all the criminal cases in Wayne County for a period of six years and several cases in the Upper Peninsula. Both places had a large foreign element among whom murders were not very common."

* The opening statement of Prosecuting Attorney William J. Branstrom, stated that he would prove Meady had killed her aged father-in-law, David Hodell, by poisoning, and that she said to a woman at the funeral "*I am afraid they will have me arrested, I think they believe I killed the old Man.*" Branstrom said he would prove that Meady admitted to six persons she poisoned Mr. Hodell.

* The Defense Attorneys, Arthur W. Penney and Alpheus A. Worcester made a request, which was granted, that all witnesses except the one being used on the stand be excluded from the court room.

* Meady sat expressionless, apparently unmoved by what was taking place. She had thick dark hair which was combed over her narrow forehead and a rather wide mouth, closed in a straight line over a pointed chin. Also in court was David Hodell's wife, Nina, who was accompanied by two of her sons, Forrest and Gayle, members of the "lynch" mob.

* Judge Barton admonished the jury not to discuss the case among themselves or read the newspapers. The jury was locked up at night at the Wayside Inn under the charge of Deputy Sheriff Patterson. Judge Barton also cautioned the jury about over-eating and insisted that they take a long walk twice a day in custody of the Sheriffs officers.

* Mrs. David Hodell testified she was in Detroit with two of her sons receiving medical treatment at the time her husband died.

* Mrs. Fred (Comelia) Anderson, wife of Fred Anderson, a member of the vigilantes, was called to testify. She testified that Romie and Meady lived across the road from the Anderson farm in Wilcox Township. She stated that she had seen David Hodell, working on the woodpile at 10:00 am on February 4th apparently in good health. Mrs. Anderson testified that Meady called her over to the Hodell house at 2:00 p.m. that afternoon where she saw David Hodell lying dead.

* Dr. P. T. Waters next testified that he was called to the Hodell house at the time of David Hodell's death and stated that he had pronounced death due to apoplexy.

* Undertaker A.J. McKinley testified about the embalming of David Hodell's body. The defense suggested that the poison found in the body could have been embalming fluid.

* Forrest Hodell testified that he was called to the Hodell home following the death of his father and was told by Meady that his father had fallen two or three times.

* David Hodell's daughter, Lola Cook testified that her father and brother, Romie had walked two or three miles to her house and how healthy her father had looked just a couple of days before.

* Sergeant George E. Karkeet of the Michigan State Police testified that he and Sergeant John Palmer were driving Meady to Big Rapids when they abruptly stopped the vehicle at the Cobb School, mile from town and asked her what she put in her father-in-law's coffee. Meady made no reply until Karkeet suggested that Hodell was a lot of trouble for her. Meady said, "*Yes, the old man was lots of care.*" She also stated some of the reasons she thought Hodell was a burden to her. Once again, Karkeet asked what she put in his coffee, to which she replied, "*Some poison someone left in the house before we moved there.*" Upon arriving in Big Rapids, Palmer called Prosecuting Attorney Arthur J. Butler to notify him of the confession. They later went to Butler's office where a verbal confession was made. A statement made by Meady that the old man would still be alive if he had not drank his coffee coupled with a clue given by Herman Dudgeon, gave the police the theory that Meady poisoned her father-in-law.

During Karkeet's testimony, the jury was removed from the courtroom, while Attorney Penney attempted to convince the court that the confessions were obtained through fear and mistreatment. Penney charged that the trio from the Michigan State Police took Meady from the county jail late one night to a lonely schoolhouse where they threatened that unless she confessed, she would be taken to the Terwillegar barn to be confronted by the spirits of her husband and father-in-law. Penney also claimed that she was so frightened, that she confessed. It was also alleged, that Lee Dudgeon was taken from jail late at night to the Terwillegar barn where he was confronted by a "ghost" who pointed an accusing finger at Dudgeon naming him as one of the conspirators in his death. The troopers then took Dudgeon to the ground and placed a rope around his neck, threatening him with hanging unless he confessed. Penney also stated that Alice Dudgeon, Herman Dudgeon, and Robert Bennett's confessions were obtained in the same manner (Complaints by the defendants in all three trials of "strong arm tactics" by the three policemen were prominent. It was reported that when a defendant was taken to the Terwillegar barn, they were interrogated by one policeman while the other two tried to "spook" them. The two policemen wore sheets, made noises, and spoke from the shadows trying to convince the defendants that the "ghosts" of David and Romie Hodell wanted them to confess).

The statement made by Alice Dudgeon and Meady Hodell on August 10th that they confessed because they had been bothered by ghosts probably gave the idea to the police to coerce confessions from the defendants with fear of reprisals from the ghosts of David and Romie Hodell. Lee Dudgeon had stated that he had seen ghosts in the fields before he was arrested.

The jury was returned to the courtroom and upon direct examination by Penney, Karkeet told about Meady's written confession before Justice of the Peace Walter B. Reed and Prosecutor Branstrom.

Attorney Penney, considering Karkeet was sidestepping his question, turned to the people in the courtroom and said, *"He is too cute for me."* Later Penney asked Karkeet *"Do you get a commission on convictions?"* Branstrom objected and the court ordered the question stricken from the records.

Karkeet also testified that Meady told him that she had written the "suicide" notes.

* The signed confession which was identified by Sergeant John Palmer, was read to the jury. Attorney Penney began snapping his fingers at Palmer and Branstrom and Penney go into an argument over his actions. Branstrom complained that Penney was trying to intimidate the witness. Sergeant Palmer further testified that he had accompanied the other two policemen when the defendants were removed from jail, but that at no time were they mistreated or were "ghosts" used.

* Trooper Ernest G. Ramsey's testimony was a repetition of Sergeant Karkeet and Sergeant Palmers'.

* Sheriff Nobel A. McKinley testified of the arrival of the three State Policemen from Lansing and that Trooper Ramsey had installed a Dictaphone in the jail.

* Miss Fern. Miller, stenographer for Prosecutor Branstrom, told of receiving the confession of Meady on August 11th. *"The old man was sick and miserable. He asked me to put him out of the way, and I thought it would be better for him and better for us if he were over there --- so I did it"*.

* Undertaker Alex J. McKinley testified that he embalmed the body of David Hodell February 7th and disinterred the body on August 15th for the State Chemist, Charles Bliss. McKinley stated that he gave Bliss a 14 ounce bottle of embalming fluid he used when embalming David Hodell.

* Charles Egolf, sexton of the Ashland Center Cemetery in Grant, testified that the grave of David Hodell was undisturbed from the time of the funeral until the body was exhumed on August 15th.

* State Chemist, Charles Bliss testified to conducting, the autopsy on David Hodell. He stated that he removed the stomach, kidneys, liver, and spleen which he tested for and found strychnine poison. Attorney goes into minute details on the analysis of the chemist. Penney, who had shown a remarkable knowledge of chemistry in court, had studied chemistry at the University of Michigan and later taught the subject in high schools in Iowa and Illinois. Mr. Bliss described the symptoms of strychnine poisoning. He stated that at first there was a feeling of uneasiness, followed by a gradual tightening of the muscles and then intermittent convulsions until death. The defense attempted to have the testimony excluded when the witness admitted he had never studied or practiced medicine, but it was allowed to stand. Attorney Penney attempted to lead the witness into the discussion of medical subjects until the court intervened.

The defense brought out that Mr. Bliss and a member of the state police visited Big Rapids drug stores in an effort to ascertain if any of the Dudgeon family had purchased strychnine poison at any time previous to Hodell's death.

Contention of the defense that a person would be unable to swallow a cup of coffee containing a spoonful of strychnine on account of its extreme bitterness was refuted by the witness who testified that he had known of persons who had swallowed the substance.

* Undertaker McKinley was recalled to the stand to testify that there was no strychnine in the embalming fluid he sent to the chemist.

* Sexton of Ashland Center Cemetery in Grant, Charles Egolf was recalled to the stand, where the defense attempted to show that Egolf's advanced years prevented him from keeping a close vigil on the cemetery. The defense was suspicious that Hodell's body had been tampered with and that poison had been placed in it before the exhumation on August 15th.

* It was at this point that the defense attorneys went into the life history of Meady and pictured her as the victim of a plot on the part of certain authorities who wanted a "goat" on which to pin the crime. *"Our little sister here,"* said the attorney, pointing to the defendant, *"is the under dog. She has been made to seem vile and criminal."*

Describing the dinner which the prosecution contended ended fatally for David Hodell, Mr. Penney said it was a simple country meal of bread, potatoes, beans, tea, and some cookies brought to the Hodell home that morning by a neighbor, Mrs. Fred Anderson. David Hodell slept for a while following the meal and awakening appeared anxious to help Meady with her household work. Meady was starting to the pump for water, when Hodell begged her to let him help. He filled the pail and returned to the house. He complained of feeling cold and went to the woodpile and split some wood. It was while returning to the house that he fell and Meady rushed to him and asked, "Dad, what's the matter?" He replied that he felt blind. She then wiped the snow from his face with one of his mittens which had fallen from his hand. Helping him towards the house, he fell again and she lifted him to his feet. He fell a third time near the door of the house and Meady became frightened. Mr. Penney asked the jury if they thought Hodell would have been able to draw water and split wood if he had swallowed a large dose of poison only a short time before.

* The witness that Sergeant Karkeet had testified had given the police the theory that David Hodell was poisoned, Mrs. Neva Crawford of Grant was called to the stand. Mrs. Crawford stated that about a week after David Hodell's funeral, Romie and Meady visited her and her husband at their home in Grant. After dinner, the quartet walked to town when Meady said, "We may get arrested for the old man's death." "Just what did Mrs. Hodell say?" inquired Prosecutor Branstrom. The witness repeated her statement and added, "she said she didn't want Mr. Hodell in her home, that her husband got him to come there to spite her and her neighbors had been saying that she killed him."

Attorney Worcester, on cross-examination, asked Mrs. Crawford if he and Attorney Penney had not visited her home a few days ago and asked her what she knew about the elder Hodell's death. She replied that they had. "You didn't tell me anything about your talk with Mrs. Hodell, did you?" "You didn't ask me." "Didn't I ask you if you knew any more about the case after we had discussed Mr. Hodell's death?" "I don't remember that you did." "Had you ever been told that the elder Hodell had suffered a stroke of apoplexy?" "I had heard so, but I don't know who told me."

On redirect examination, Mrs. Crawford was asked by the prosecutor if Meady or she had started the conversation on their walk to town. "She began it."

*Branstrom, who had held the "suicide" notes in his possession, did not offer them as evidence after having received the report that the notes were genuine. The defense did offer the notes as evidence when Meady identified her husband's signature.

OCTOBER 17, 1922

* David Hodell's body was exhumed for a second time. His brain was examined by two Fremont, Michigan physicians, Drs. William H. Barnum and Charles B. Long.

On direct examination by Branstrom, Drs. Barnum and Long testified that they opened David Hodell's skull to determine if there were any abnormal condition of the brain or presence of strychnine poison.

Attorney Penney questioned both physicians long and arduously in an effort to establish that Hodell died from apoplexy. He showed a surprising knowledge of pathology and toxicology, demonstrating his versatility. Penney also queried the physicians regarding the extreme bitterness of strychnine and asked if a person could swallow a cup of coffee containing a spoonful of the poison. Doctor Barnum declared that the person would "know if he swallowed it."



He asserted his belief that a single swallow of the strychnine-dosed coffee would be sufficient to cause death.

Questioned by Prosecutor Branstrom regarding the amount of strychnine which State Chemist Bliss testified he found in Hodell's organs, Dr Barnum declared that if it was the poison that passed in the circulatory system, rather than that found in the vital organs after death, that usually "*did the trick.*"

Doctor Long on cross-examination, clashed several times with Attorney Penney over the symptoms of apoplexy and as to the number and duration of convulsions a person so afflicted might have. The physician seemed quite positive as he described apoplexy symptoms in patients that he had attended.

* For the greater part of the day, Meady answered the questions of her own chief attorney, Arthur Penney and then went without rest under the grueling cross-examination of Prosecutor Branstrom. Branstrom was unsuccessful in breaking down her story. Meady spoke in a voice so low that her words often were difficult to understand, but she answered questions of her own lawyer and those of the prosecutor with frankness.

* On David Hodell's death she said, "*Last January my father-in-law, David Hodell came for a visit with us. He was 67 years old, feeble and sickly, but I always liked him. He was something of a care to us, but I never minded that.*" "*You are charged with putting poison in his coffee. Did you do that?*" asked Branstrom. "*I did not.*" "*We did not have coffee in the house for several days before his death, and I had no poison of any kind in the house. I never bought any poison for any purpose,*" replied Meady.

Meady testified how the aged Hodell, on the last day of his life, had complained of the cold, but had brought water and wood into the house for her. She described his fall near the door on his last trip out for wood, and how she tried to help him into the house. Frightened, she ran to the nearest house for help. Then she sent for a doctor and tried to get word to her husband, who had gone to Woodville.

For a second time, Prosecutor Branstrom was unsuccessful in breaking down Meady's story in the cross-examination.

OCTOBER 23, 1922

* Prosecuting Attorney Branstrom indicated that the body of Meady Hodell's father, Charles H. Dudgeon, who died in May 1920, may be exhumed. Branstrom claimed he had evidence that Mr. Dudgeon had died under mysterious circumstances.

* It was stated in court that it was Meady's brother, Lee Dudgeon who started the ghost aversion to the family by reporting to them and his neighbors that he had seen his father's spirit running across the field of his farm, long before the Hodell's deaths were to have revived it.

* Dr. W.T. Dodge of Big Rapids, President of the Michigan Medical Society, and widely know as a surgeon and physician, was an especially valuable witness for the defense. He declared flatly, that the symptoms of death, as detailed by Attorney Penney from his testimony, did not indicate strychnine poisoning. "The man would have died in a convulsion had it been strychnine poisoning as related" he said. "*The convulsions would have been practically continuous and it would have been impossible for him to have walked around and do the work described, after the first convulsion.*" "*What would the symptoms described, indicated to you?*" asked Penney. "*They point to apoplexy, embolism, blood clot, or an acute dilation of the heart, In fact, it might be almost anything except strychnine poisoning.*"

Referring to the findings and conclusions of State Chemist Bliss, in his examination of the stomach and other organs of David Hodell, Dr. Dodge said, "*In certain forms of ptomaine or proteid poisoning, the suspected substances might be so broken up in the body that some parts placed in the hands of a chemist would be impossible to distinguish from strychnine.*" He also said that the amount of strychnine indicated in the body and organs of Hodell, as reported by the state chemist, would not be sufficient to cause death.

*Dr. Glenn Graves of Big Rapids testified that he agreed with Dr. Dodge in practically all points, and seemed, sometimes to place an added emphasis upon his conclusions.

*Professor Ernest J. Parr, Head Of The Department Of Chemistry, Pharmacy, Toxicology in the Ferris Institute at Big Rapids, also took issue with the testimony and findings of Chemist Bliss, as previously given for the prosecution.

His description of the tests necessary to positively prove the presence of strychnine poison in stomach and other organs went much further than those reported by Bliss. He also thought that in the case of an autopsy, after six months' burial when the process of embalming had followed death, the second day, the natural poison in the tissues of the body produced by probable decomposition would handicap the results of the chemist's test for poison.

The attorneys made their closing statements.

OCTOBER 26, 1922

*After a two hour deliberation, the jury found Meady guilty in the first degree of the murder of her father-in-law, David Hodell. Meady sat emotionless as the verdict was read by the jury foreman, Jesse Garlough, of Dayton, Michigan. She was wearing a dark dress with a red coral necklace. On her third finger was her wedding ring.

Meady was sentenced to life in the Detroit House of Corrections.



Alice Dudgeon

NOV 2, 1922

*Romie's body was exhumed by order of the court and under the supervision of Dr. Barnum. State Chemist Charles Bliss found strychnine sulfate in the viscera.

NOV 13, 1922

**Meady's mother, Alice Dudgeon went on trial in White Cloud before Judge Barton. A change of venue was requested by the defense, but denied by Judge Barton. Sentiment towards the Dudgeons had become extremely hostile and the attorneys were having a difficult time choosing a jury.

**Alice Dudgeon did not seem to be as composed and uninterested in the proceedings as her daughter, Meady. She appeared nervous with her chin quivering and occasionally held her handkerchief to her eyes. Much of the testimony became repetition of her daughter, Meady's trial.

DEC 7, 1922

**Alice Dudgeon was found guilty in the first degree for the murder of her son-in-law, Romie "Doc" Hodell. It was claimed that Meady Hodell had put strychnine poison in her husband Romie's coffee and since he did not die immediately, she clubbed him with a rolling pin. The blow did not kill Romie,

so Alice finished the job with the same rolling pin. She instructed her sons, Lee and Herman to hang the body in the Terwillegar barn while she and Meady wrote "suicide" notes. The jury deliberated for an hour and forty-five minutes before reaching their verdict. She was sentenced to life in the Detroit House of Corrections as her daughter was six weeks before. Alice Dudgeon spent one year in prison before returning to Newaygo County jail to await retrial ordered by the Michigan Supreme Court.

DEC 12, 1922

*Meady Hodell arrived at the Detroit House of Correction. She became a housekeeper for the Superintendent of The Detroit House of Corrections, A. Blake Gillis. Meady was a model prisoner, who constantly professed her innocence. Although she had no previous religious background, Meady attended religious study sessions.

FEBRUARY 22, 1923

***The trial of Lee and Herman Dudgeon and Robert Bennett began after a change of venue from White Cloud to Big Rapids, Mecosta County, Michigan, before Judge Barton.

The trial proceeded very slowly due to the difficulty in selecting a jury and a severe blizzard prevented some jurors from arriving at the courthouse.

The trial was a repetition of the Meady Hodell and Alice Dudgeon trials.

MARCH 5, 1923

*** Circuit Judge Joseph Barton declared a mistrial in the Dudgeon/Bennett murder trial due to the sickness of a juror J. William Turk, a grocer from Big Rapids, contracted pneumonia.

MARCH 6, 1923

*Meady Hodell writes a thirteen page letter containing, the story of her life and a fifty-nine page letter containing the story of how David Hodell died to her defense attorney Fred R. Everett.

MAY 10, 1923

***The venue for the trial was changed one again from Big Rapids to Hart, Oceana County, Michigan.

MAY 12, 1923

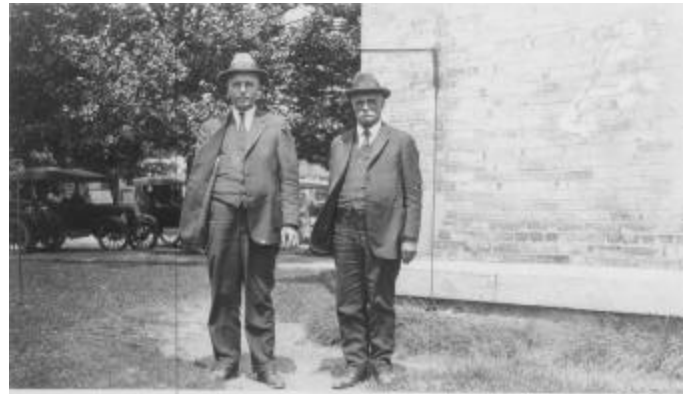
*** The Defense Attorneys, Worcester and Penney withdrew from the Dudgeon/Bennett trial and returned the deed to the Dudgeon property.

JULY 9, 1923

***The trial of Lee and Herman Dudgeon and Robert Bennett resumed before Circuit Judge Joseph Barton with Fred R. Everett and F.E. Wetmore of Big Rapids as the new defense attorneys in Hart, Michigan.

JULY 26, 1923

*** Lee Dudgeon was found guilty for complicity in the murder of his brother-in-law, Romie "Doc" Hodell. Herman Dudgeon and Robert Bennett were found not guilty. For the crime of manslaughter Lee Dudgeon received three consecutive terms of 2 1/2 - 15-5 years in Ionia State Prison.



Fred R. Everett, Frank E. Wetmore

AUGUST 6, 1923

***Lee Dudgeon arrived at Ionia State Prison, Ionia, Michigan.

JANUARY 10, 1924

****Circuit Court Judge Joseph Barton appoints Special Prosecutor William J. Branstrom to represent the People VS Alice and Lee Dudgeon in the Michigan Supreme Court.

MAY 1924

****Lee and Alice Dudgeon's cases were appealed in the Michigan Supreme Court. Meady's case was never appealed to the Supreme Court because her attorneys failed to file exceptions to the charge of Judge Barton within a specified time.

DEC 24, 1924

**** Lee Dudgeon was released from Ionia State Prison for a new trial. Lee Dudgeon's sentence was reduced to three years. Upon his release, he settled in Muskegon, Michigan, where he married and had a son named Lee.

MAY 1925

**** By order of the Michigan Supreme Court, Alice Dudgeon and her son, Lee were retried in White Cloud before Harry I. Dingeman of Detroit, Michigan.



Judge Harry I. Dingman

It came out in this trial that besides borrowing sheets from Mrs. Beatrice Hurst, the three policemen rented automobiles from Mr. Wakeman and Mrs. Sarah Montague on the nights of August 10th and 11th, 1922. They used them to drive the defendants to different locations late at night.

MAY 28, 1925

E.S. Hitchcock, Commissioner on the board of the Detroit House of Correction, sent a letter to Judge Harry I. Dingeman stating that Meady Hodell is a model prisoner and his belief in her innocence.

JUNE 4, 1925

The Dudgeon house, which had stood unoccupied for three years, had its windows and doors removed, the exterior walls of tar paper had been shredded by the weather, some of the floor boards had been removed by skunk hunters, and the newspaper covered walls had yellowed, burned to the ground.

JUNE 11, 1925

**** Judge Harry I. Dingeman gave a direct verdict freeing Lee Dudgeon. It was determined by the judge that it was not a crime under Michigan law to dispose of a body.

The jury could not agree on a verdict for Alice Dudgeon and recessed with a vote of nine to three for acquittal. She was held in the White Cloud jail until she was released to the care of her son, Lee in Big Rapids, who had fallen off a train boxcar and was in serious condition. She was never brought back to trial.

JUNE, 1925

Harry L. Spooner, reporter and county historian, who had reported for the local newspaper on the Hodell/Dudgeon murder trials became a crusader on the behalf of Meady Hodell. Even though he was a close friend of David Hodell he was convinced that Meady was innocent and spent the next 24 years sending letters to the leading officials of the time trying to get Meady paroled.

NOVEMBER 1, 1925

Sergeant John Palmer resigned from the Michigan State Police.

1925

Lee and Herman Dudgeon brought a damage suit in Newaygo County Circuit Court against the nineteen members of the vigilantes. Judge John Vanderwerp of Muskegon, Michigan returned a verdict of no cause of action. A motion for a retrial was made, but denied by Judge Vanderwerp. The Dudgeons contemplated approaching the Michigan Supreme Court, but by this time it was financially impossible.

FEBRUARY 15, 1927

Trooper Ernest Ramsey resigned from the Michigan State Police.

NOVEMBER 9, 1927

Alice Dudgeon sent a letter to the Commissioner of the Detroit House of Correction:

619-Rose Ave.
Big Rapids, Mich.

Nov-9-1927

*Dear Mrs. Campbell
Commissioner of Detroit House of Corrections Board in regard of my poor little
Daughter Meady Hodell Dear ones of the Board I hope to see my Daughter home
on a Parole to stay with her old mother that cant hardly get around more the Poor
Child is their for something that she is not guilty of god bless you Dear Mrs.
Campbell I do think it is wicked to keep her there oh How glad I am the Poor Child
is clear of everything that was put on the Poor girl Pleas do let her Come home oh
god the Board will Be reward in the other world with_____ hes to my heart each
for his to think she has to suffer for something that she is not guilty of oh How
grand it is that We Can Say that an say truth god know that she is an
innocent Child Pleas Parole her to me god Will be with You Dear ones of*

DEC 23, 1927

An article appeared in the Big Rapids Pioneer written by Dr. William T. Dodge of Big Rapids, the former President of the Michigan Medical Society, who had testified at Meady's trial declaring that he was convinced that she was innocent.

"From the standpoint of simple medicine Dr. Dodge declared, it would have been impossible for Meady to have poisoned the aged man and his opinion is based upon the state's own testimony. Dr. Dodge believes that Charles L. Bliss, State Chemist, who examined Hodell's vital organs and found a substance which he said was strychnine, could easily have mistaken some other substance for the deadly drug,"

Even if he actually did find strychnine, the 30-100 of a grain which he testified he found was hardly sufficient to have killed a small animal, let alone a man even in the weakened condition that the aged Hodell was said to have been in at the time of his sudden death. Also, pointed out, the autopsy performed upon the body was limited to a search for poison only and no effort was made by the prosecution to find out if death was the result of natural causes.

DEC 21, 1928

Harry L. Spooner received a letter from Governor Fred W. Green who replied that he had received Spooner's letter and was looking into the case.

JANUARY 4, 1929

Spooner received a second letter from the Governor stating that the Commissioner of Pardons and Paroles was making a trip to Big, Rapids to investigate the case of Meady Hodell.

AUGUST 12, 1929

Spooner received a third letter from the Governor stating Spooner's letter inquiring on the findings of the Commissioner of Pardons and Paroles was forwarded to Commissioner Arthur D. Wood of the Pardons and Paroles of the Detroit House of Correction.

AUGUST 21, 1929

Spooner received a letter from Commissioner Wood stating that he was still investigating the Meady Hodell case and was trying to arrange a meeting with Judge Joseph Barton.

AUGUST 24, 1929

Spooner received a second letter from Commissioner Wood stating that he would meet with Spooner the next time he was in Detroit.

Governor Green and Commissioner Wood were not convinced of Meady's innocence and parole was denied. Spooner spent the 20's, 30,s and 40's keeping up correspondence with the Hodell/Dudgeon defense lawyer, Fred R. Everett and numerous other people who could, if not help get Meady paroled, help him get information on the story of the case he was attempting to write.

APRIL 27, 1934

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

JANUARY 1935

Alice Dudgeon died at her son, Lee's house in Muskegon, Michigan.

JANUARY 10, 1935

Meady Hodell, on guarded release, attended the funeral of her mother, Alice Dudgeon, in Muskegon, Michigan. Meady paid for her mother's funeral with the money she had saved from her \$.10 a day prison salary.

APRIL 30, 1936

Sergeant George Karkeet resigned from the Michigan State Police due to ill health.

OCTOBER 29, 1936

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

DECEMBER 10, 1937

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

MARCH 30, 1938

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

FEBRUARY 12, 1948

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

FEBRUARY 2, 1948

Meady Hodell was denied parole.

JUNE 16, 1949

Meady Hodell's parole is considered.

JULY 26, 1949

Meady Hodell's sentence was commuted by Governor G. Mennen Williams.

AUGUST 8, 1949

Meady Hodell was released from the Detroit House of Correction after serving 26 years, 7 months, and 23 days. The Superintendent of the prison, A. Blake Gillies, gave Meady the \$400 in cash and \$850 in bonds she had saved from her \$.10 a day prison salary. She became a housekeeper for four priests at the St. Matthew's Roman Catholic rectory in Grosse Point, Michigan. Meady died just a couple of years after being released from prison. She was buried in Muskegon, Michigan.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE HODELL/DUDGEON MURDER TRIAL - 1921/2

Dudgeon Family (Meady (Dudgeon) Hodell's Family):

Meady (Dudgeon) Hodell	age 20
Charles H. Dudgeon (father)	died May 20, 1920 at age 68
Alice Dudgeon (mother)	died January 1935 at age 67
Lee Dudgeon (brother)	age 25
Wilmer Dudgeon (brother)	age 22
Herman Dudgeon (brother)	age 18
Lola Dudgeon (sister)	

Hodell Family (Romie "Doc" Hodell's Family):

Romie "Doc" Hodell	died May 6, 1922 at age of 26
David Hodell (father)	died February 4, 1922
Nina Hodell (mother)	
Gayle Hodell (brother)	
Forrest Hodell (brother)	
Wayne Hodell (brother)	
Hollis Hodell (brother)	
Mrs. Lila Siegel (sister)	

Mrs. Lola Cook (sister)

Hodell's Hired Hands:

Robert Bennett

age 24

Elzie Priest

Sheriff of White Cloud, Michigan:

Nobel A. McKinley

Deputy Sheriff of White Cloud, Michigan:

Winfield E. Patterson

Justice of the Peace / Undertaker of White Cloud, Michigan:

Walter B. Reed

Undertaker of White Cloud, Michigan:

Alex J. McKinley

Post Mortern examination of the body of Romie "Doc" Hodell:

Dr. Weaver, Dr. P.T. Waters, and Dr. Turner

"Lynch" Mob:

Fred Anderson, Paul Andrews, Charles Burkett, Roy Cook, Willie Cook, Preston Denton, Forrest Hodell, Gayle Hodell, Frank LeBotte, Orson Miner, Fred Nestle, Clarence Rittenhouse, Nate Ryter, Arthur Snyder, Jim Stoner, Leo Stutt, Carl Watkins, William Watkins, and J.F. (Deek) Wood

Michigan State Police (Detroit, Michigan):

Sergeant George E. Karkeet, Sergeant John Palmer, and Trooper Ernest G. Ramsey

Circuit Court Judge of White Cloud, Michigan:

Joseph Barton

Circuit Court Judge of Detroit, Michigan:

Harry 1. Dingeman

Prosecuting Attorneys of White Cloud, Michigan:

William J. Branstrom of Fremont, Michigan Arthur J. Butler, and Harold J. Cogger

Defense Attorneys:

Alpheus A. Worcester of Big Rapids, Michigan, Arthur W. Penney of Cadillac, Michigan

Defense Attorneys after the change of venue to Oceana County, Hart, Michigan:

Fred R. Everett of Big Rapids, Michigan and F.E. Wetmore of Big Rapids, Michigan

Newaygo County Court House Deputy:

A.H. Courtney

State Chemist, Lansing, Michigan:

Charles Bliss

Stenographer for Prosecuting Attorney William J. Branstrom:

Fern Miller

Sexton of the Ashland Center Cemetery in Grant, Michigan:
Charles Egolf

Witnesses for the Prosecution:

Mrs. Cornelia Anderson of White Cloud, Michigan
Mrs. Neva Crawford of Grant, Michigan
Dr. William H. Barnum of Fremont, Michigan
Dr. Charles B. Long of Fremont, Michigan
Dr. P.T. Waters of White Cloud, Michigan

Forrest Hodell of White Cloud, Michigan
Mrs. Lola Cook of White Cloud, Michigan
Undertaker Alex J. McKinley of White Cloud, Michigan

Witness for the Defense:

Dr. William T. Dodge of Big Rapids, Michigan
Dr. Glenn Graves of Big Rapids, Michigan
Professor Ernest J. Parr, Ferris Institute in Big Rapids, Michigan

Information Sources

Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
P.O. Box 10003
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Attn: Linda Wittmann

Request for prison records for Meady Hodell and Lee Dudgeon was forwarded to:

Department of State, Bureau of History, Archives
Section Library and Historical Section
717 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48918-2100
(517) 373-1408
Attn: Leroy Barnett
(Prison records of Meady Hodell and Lee Dudgeon. Nothing found on Alice Dudgeon)

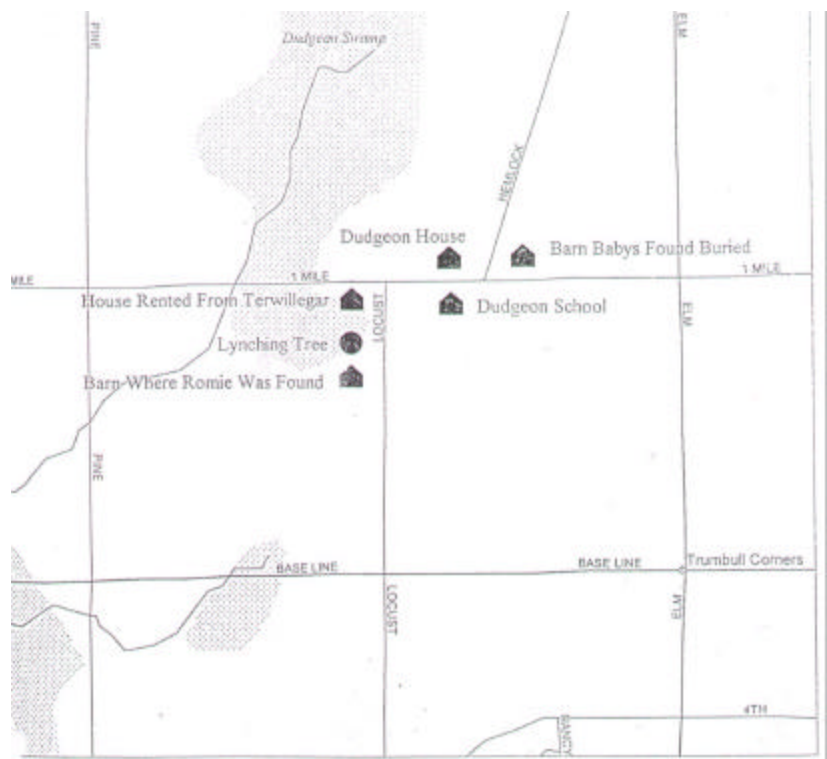
Fremont Public Library
104 E. Main Street
Fremont, Michigan 49412
(616) 924-3480
Attn: Judy McNally
(Historian H.L. Spooner's account of the Hodell/Dudgeon murder trial)

Hodell, Forrest (son of Forrest Hodell)

(Hodell) Addis, Marie (granddaughter of Forrest Hodell)

Maxson, Don and Marie

Mecosta County Court House
400 Elm Street



The "Dudgeon Swamp" area of Goodwell Township, Newaygo County, MI

Big Rapids, Michigan

(616) 592-0780

(Court transcripts of Lee and Herman Dudgeon and Robert Bennett's murder trials)

Michigan Supreme Court

315 W. Allegan Street

Lansing, Michigan 48933

(517) 373-0120

(Court transcripts of Lee Dudgeon's appeal to the Supreme Court)

Newaygo County Society of History and Genealogy

P.O. Box 68

White Cloud, Michigan 49349

(616) 689-663 1

Attn: Virginia Steele

(Newspaper accounts of Hodell/Dudgeon murder trial)

Newaygo County Court House

P.O. Box 885

White Cloud, Michigan 49349

Attn: Kim Werner

(Court transcripts of Hodell/Dudgeon murder trial)

Oceana County Society of History and Genealogy

114 Dryden Street

Hart, Michigan 49420

(616) 873-2600

Attn: Ruth Ann Kelley

Oceana County Court House

Hart, Michigan 49420

(Missing court transcripts of Lee Dudgeon murder trial. Possible these documents were sent to the Michigan Supreme Court on his appeal)

Oceana County Treasure

County Building

Hart, Michigan 49420

(Newspaper accounts of Hodell/Dudgeon murder trial)

Richards, Ted (Grandson of Fred Nestle, one of the vigilantes)