

Charles Bounce Helmer

1889 – 1956

—Spring Creek
(Continued from Page 1)
The incident was the final action in the Ten Sleep part of the "wars."
Mr. Helmer's known survivors include a brother, Bush Helmer, Seattle, Wash.; two sons, Richard Helmer, Kansas City, Mo.; Merton Helmer, address not given; and a sister, Mrs. Myrtle Godfrey, Ten Sleep.

**'Spring Creek Raid'
Survivor Dies Here**

Charles D. (Bounce) Helmer, 67, allegedly one of the last survivors of the Spring Creek raid, died Monday morning in his trailer home on north 19th street.

Mr. Helmer died of a heart attack. He had been ill for several months prior to his death. Funeral services are pending word from survivors. Velle's mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

The Spring Creek raid, an incident in the cattlemen-sheepmen "wars," took place in 1909. Three men were killed in that raid and Helmer was wounded.

—SPRING CREEK
(Continued on Page 6)

The famous "Tensleep Raid" which 30 years ago Sunday brought to a bloody climax bitterness between cattlemen and sheepmen, was recalled this week by Charles (Bounce) Helmer, shepherd who was in the raid but escaped with his life.

Three sheepmen were murdered and the bodies of two of them burned in their wagons in the famous affair, at the mouth of Spring creek, and Helmer believes a cattleman was also killed in the battle.

Of the nearly two score persons involved in the famous affair, as principles, witnesses, law enforcement officers, attorneys, or other connection, as least 11 are still alive.

The triple murder, bloodiest in the history of this area, happened April 2, 1909, on the Nowood river near the mouth of Spring creek, about seven miles from Tensleep. It climaxed a long-growing feud between cattlemen and sheepmen, a bloody chapter in the history of all Wyoming; as well as Washakie county. Less than a week before cattlemen had set a new deadline beyond which sheepmen

were not to pass, but no serious trouble had been expected.

MASKED MEN ATTACK SHEEP CAMP

On the night of April 2, two sheepmen and three herders were driving a flock of 6,000 sheep to their ranch for shearing and (continued on Page 8) lambing. Joe Alleman and Joe Emge were partners in the herd, Jules Lazier, Pierre Cafferal, and Charles Helmer. They reached the mouth of Spring creek near the ranch and placed their wagons several rods apart in preparation for the following day.

The sheepmen were aware that there was danger. H. L. Bonine, now justice of the peace, said the men stopped at his harness shop that day and told him they were going to try the drive in spite of the deadline set by the cattlemen.

That night a group of masked men --- eight were first reported in the group, but only seven were arrested --- attacked the sheep camp. Cafferal and Helmer, accosted first, were ordered to leave.

Charles (Bounce) Helmer, 50, one of the two herders who escaped, is now working for Myron Tolman. He said he this week that the raid occurred between 1 and 2 a. m. the morning of April 2.

I was asleep on the ground when the party rode up and fired through the wagon," he said. "I started to run away, and ran into Alexander and Eaton, who with Dixon took me back to the wagon."

"The men then fired through the wagon where the others were, killing Emge and Lazier. Allemand came out, with a bullet wound in his arm. Someone shot through the stomach. I don't know who, but it could have been either Brink or Ferris."

Helmer said that Ferris is now a preacher at Bozeman, Mont.

One cattleman was killed in the raid, Helmer believes. A man named Wash Olson, a hired rider, was with the group, he said, but was never heard of afterwards. He believes he must have been killed.

Until the trial, Helmer said he was taken to Dungeness, Wash., for safekeeping, where he stayed with an aunt of Sheriff Alston.

The next morning the charred bodies of Emge and the herder Lazier were found in the remains of the burned sheep wagon, while the body of Allemand was found a short distance away with two bullet holes in it.

SHEEP MEN PUT UP FIGHT

Sheriff Felix Alston, Deputies Ed Cusack of Basin and Al Morton of Tensleep, Coroner A. Dana Carter, and Prosecuting Attorney P. W. Metz investigated the crime. Empty cartridges near the burned wagon indicated the sheepmen had put up a fight before they were killed.

While proposals were made in various communities in Big Horn county to organize vigilance committees to handle the affair, a grand jury began an investigation. The present counties of Washakie, Big Horn and Park included in Big Horn county, the jury met at Basin in a public hall, there being no court room.

William Garrison, a cattleman, testified before the jury an entire day, and the next day was found shot to death. His death was termed suicide, acquaintances believing he was remorseful over being forced to tell truths damaging his friends.

Shortly afterwards seven cattlemen were arrested in connection with the

affair. George Saban, Milton A. Alexander, Thomas Dixon, Edward Eaton, Herbert Brink, Albert Keyes, and Charles Farris were taken into custody and placed in the tumbledown jail at Basin which had been condemned as unsafe. Keyes (whose name was pronounced Kize) and Farris were removed to Sheridan after it was reported they had confessed and would turn state's evidence. Meanwhile national guardsmen were called in as threats to dynamite the jail were reported.

FIRST JURY ILLEGALLY DRAWN

On May 6, 1909, little more than a month after the crime, the grand jury returned three indictments of murder and one of arson against the cattlemen. But on Oct. 18 District Judge C. H. Parmelee granted a motion of defense on ground the grand jury was illegally drawn. New charges were filed, and the trial proceeded. Sheepmen and cattlemen mingled peaceably, their strife brought to an end by the killings.

Handling the state's side of the case were the young prosecuting attorney, P. W. Metz, 26 years old; E. E. Enterline of Sheridan; W. S. Metz of Sheridan, and W. L. Simpson of Cody. Nine lawyers handled the defense, H. S. Ridgely, R. B. West, C. A. Zaring, W. S. Collins, Thomas M. Hyde, J. L. Stotts, C. F. Robertson, J. T. Jones, and W. L. Walls.

BRINK FIRST TO BE TRIED

The trial of Herbert L. Brink for the murder of Joseph Allemand began on Nov. 4. Testifying were Sheriff Alston, Deputy Morton, Prosecuting Attorney Metz, and Keyes and Farris. Throughout the trial Mrs. Allemand, widow of the murdered sheepman, sat inside the railing dressed in mourning and holding her nine months old baby, which by its gurgling drew the attention of the jury. On Nov. 11 the jury returned a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree and Brink was sentenced to hang.

Dixon was to go to trial next, but in the mean time a overpromise was reached. Two of the others would plead guilty to second degree murder and two to arson, on condition Brink's sentence be commuted to life imprisonment. Keyes and Farris were not tried in return for their testimony.

Saban and Alexander were sentenced to from 20 to 26 years in the state penitentiary on second degree murder charges, and Dixon and Eaton were sentenced to from three to five years on arson charges, and the bloody chapter of Washakie county history was closed, less than eight months after it began.

STATE MILITIA GUARDS PRISONERS

Under guard of state militiamen, the five men were taken to the state penitentiary and began serving their terms. Keyes and Farris discreetly left, and their whereabouts are unknown.

Of the five convicted cattlemen, three are known dead. Eaton died in prison only a few months before his term would have expired. Dixon served his three-year term, was released, and was killed a number of years ago in a gas well explosion in Oklahoma. Alexander served his term, and died two or three years ago.

Saban was made a trusty at the prison and assigned to a road gang in the Big Horn basin. It was reported he played baseball for Worland's team while working

on the road gang. Later he escaped.

Brink was paroled in 1914, and went to Canada, where it is reported he lived with his sister. In 1917 he was returned to the state penitentiary as a parole violator. Helmer says he died last fall in prison.

SIX ATTORNEYS STILL LIVING

Of the 13 attorneys involved in the trial, six are living. The youthful prosecutor, P. W. Metz, went on to become Wyoming's youngest district judge, and still hold that position. Enterline is practicing law at Casper, and Simpson is practicing law at Jackson and is a member of the state game and fish commission. W. S. Metz is dead.

Of the defense attorneys, Zaring is practicing law at Basin, Hyde is Big Horn county attorney, and Robertson, who was mayor of Worland at the time, is living at Forreston III.

West, who succeeded Metz as county attorney and handled the state's case when Alexander appealed unsuccessfully to the supreme court in 1912, died 12 or 15 years ago. Ridgely died at Cheyenne about two years ago. Jones, a Worland lawyer, died about four years ago on a trip to Iowa. Collins, Stotts, and Walls are also dead.

Others still living include Coroner C. Dana Carter, now a practicing physician at Thermopolis, and Sheriff Felix Alston, who later became warden of the state penitentiary where the men he arrested were sent, is believed in California. The Greet brothers, Fred and Frank, who were met by a fusillade of bullets and ordered to stay away, still live at Ten Sleep. Ed Cusack, deputy sheriff, is at Greybull.

SOURCE: Newspaper clipping in Edna Greets scrapbook in possession of George Greet in 2012.

World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 about Charles David Helmer

Name: Charles David Helmer

County: Washakie State: Wyoming

Birthplace: Wyoming Birth Date: 2 Mar 1889

Race: Caucasian (White)

FHL Roll Number: 2022323 Draft Board: 0

1930 United States Federal Census about Charles D Helmer

Name: Charles D Helmer

Gender: Male Birth Year: abt 1889 Birthplace: Wyoming

Race: White

Home in 1930: Election District 2, Washakie, Wyoming

Marital Status: Divorced

Relation to Head of House: Boarder

Father's Birthplace: Iowa Mother's Birthplace: Colorado

Household Members:

Name Age

Frank Buckle 42

Charles D Helmer 41

Herbert L Kibby 49
Walter Richardson 24
Duncan Macleod 26
Norman Morrison 31
John Morrison 24