

With Revolver, in Their Home Friday

June 3, 1934 J. W. Richart, Apache Pioneer Merchant Slays Wife / Shotgun, Ends His Own

Using the same shotgun that he used 21 years ago to kill Deputy Sheriff Ed Miller, J. W. Richart, pioneer resident and merchant at Apache, killed his wife in their home on Friday night about 9:30.

Having killed Mrs. Richart, the aged man then turned a heavy calibre revolver upon himself and died upon the bed where he was sitting when he fired into his own head.

The tragedy was discovered by relatives of the Richarts early yesterday morning. Call was immediately made to Douglas for officials and the word was relayed to Bisbee. In short order, Sheriff Tom W. Voelker and an office deputy were on their way from Bisbee while Coroner Omar A. Ash and a number of officers from Douglas hurried to Apache.

When the call first came through it was thought that Richard possibly had killed Mrs. Richard and had not ended the tragic chapter. Accordingly the officers prepared for such emergency by taking tear gas bombs and other such features. However, when they arrived at the scene, they found this not needed.

Coroner Ash made the required investigation and immediately impaneled a jury to determine upon a verdict. The jury made up from bystanders soon signed a verdict setting forth what was evident to all, that Mrs. Richard had been murdered by her husband, using a shotgun which was on the bed beside him and he had used a 38-calibre revolver to kill himself.

The building in which Richard made his home stands across the railroad track from U. S. highway 20, as it passes Apache. The building originally was constructed for a store and he conducted a mercantile business there for many years. He came to Apache 27 years ago. In recent years he had been enfeebled by age—he was 83 when he died—and the change in business methods had caused him to fall behind in the pace and he had practically retired from commercial activity.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Richard, who was a woman of college education and but 51 years old, had continued to carry on her profession as a teacher. She came to Apache originally as the wife of Edward Ball, a soldier in the World war who later died from effects of the flu. She taught school at Apache and was an efficient teacher. Some years after her first husband's death, she married Richard.

Twelve years ago, Mrs. Richard became a teacher in the school at Benson and had taught there every year since. She recently closed her school work and returned to her husband's home at Apache. She was to return to Benson to teach there again next winter. But she was planning, within the next week, to start on a vacation trip to Cornelius, Ore., where her son, Edward, has his home. She was to have been accompanied by her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Logan of Apache. Mrs. Logan is one of the Apache teachers.

Friday evening, after she had visited with Mr. and Mrs. Logan for a time Mrs. Richard returned to her husband's quarters. Mr. Logan recalls that shortly after her leaving their home, he heard what he now is convinced was the discharge of the shotgun that killed Mrs. Richard. But it sounded far off and he thought nothing of tragedy at the moment.

At 7 o'clock on Saturday a call to the

Yesterday morning, a call to the Richard quarters revealed the body of Mrs. Richard resting in a pool of her own blood a little way from the rear door. It had not fallen at that point. When she was shot, Mrs.

Richard was moving toward the rear door. She was shot from the rear and the charge of shot took away the left side and upper portion of her skull, the evidence being plain upon the door and wall and ceiling of the room. She had fallen into the screen on the door and had broken the screen loose from the frame. But her body had been pulled back into the room and left away from the door.

Having gotten the body back into the room, Richard had gone to the bed and sat upon the edge of the bed with his feet upon the floor. He had merely dropped the shotgun down upon the bed and then had taken the pistol and placed the muzzle against the right side of his head and fired. The heavy ball had plowed through his head.

The bodies were brought to the Porter and Ames mortuary where they were prepared for burial. Mrs. Richart will be buried in Benson tomorrow (Monday). The disposition of Richart's body had not been determined last night. Decision will be made by his daughter, Mrs. John Ellis, of Garnet, Kansas.

Richart was a native of Illinois. He had resided in Apache for 27 years. He came there as a pioneer merchant and for many years did a thriving small business. When certain telephone improvement was being made there 21 years ago, Ed Miller, a deputy sheriff in the service of the late Harry Wheeler, then sheriff of the county, had some portion of the work in charge. There was a clash in interest between him and Richart. It involved the placing of a telephone pole. Finally, the matter reached a climax when the two met and the outcome was the slaying of Miller by Richart. A jury acquitted Richart, apparently upon the grounds of justifiable self-defense.

Richard is survived by two daughters, one, Mrs. Ellis, in Garnett, Kansas, and the other, "Meg" Richard, living in California. There are two sons, Roy and Harry, one in California and the other in Nevada, if it is understood.

Mrs. Laleah Richard was born a daughter of Rev. and Mrs. J. J. Read, of Wapanucka, Indian Territory, now in the state of Oklahoma. Her father was a well known missionary among the Indians. She was educated at the normal school in Norman, Okla., and in the University of Arizona, receiving her bachelor of arts degree from the university in 1927. She had since been doing work upon her master's degree at the university.

Survivors of Mrs. Richard are her three children from her first marriage, Edward Ball, of Cornelius, Oregon; Douglas Ball, Maney, Colo.; and Mrs. Logan of Apache; her mother, Mrs. J. J. Read, and a sister, Mrs. T. M. Binnion, both of Dallas, Texas; four brothers, Theodore Read, Wapanucka, Okla.; David L. Read, Beron; Rev. J. L. Read, Norman, Okla.; Eugene Read in Mexico.

During her life at Apache and also at Benson, Mrs. Read had taken active interest in all affairs of concern to women. She had been a worker in the woman's auxiliary to the American legion, coming to membership through her first husband, and she was a member of the Presbyterian church in Benson where she took active interest.

The tragedy at Apache was not a surprise to persons acquainted with Richart. - His temper had been a matter of neighborhood comment for a considerable period. It is recalled that when certain road improvement was being made there about two years ago by a crew of highway employes under supervision of the late Porter Morris, Richart went on the rampage and ordered the crew to leave. He appeared upon the scene at that time again armed and told them that if they did not get off of his land he would treat them to a dose of lead. Morris talked him out of his mood and put the road through the land it had been planned to use, but Richart was far from friendly to the plan.

It was said that there had been no evidence of bad temper toward his wife, however, although it is said that for a time he was not easily reconciled to her being away as a teacher at Benson. It is one of the theories that he possibly became irritated to find that she was going to return to teach there next year and also to learn that she was soon to leave on a vacation trip and that these facts aroused some of the temper which he had, on former occasions indicated he possessed, and that on the impulse of the moment he committed the tragic deed of shooting his wife. That being done, his only out was to kill himself.