

WELLIN MURDER 1903

June 6, 1903 Independence News Wave

JOHN WELLIN MURDERED

Shot down in cold blood by Oluf Aabakken with a Shotgun—Murdered lodged in Jail at Whitehall

One of the most atrocious crimes ever committed in this section took place last Saturday evening about 2 miles southwest of here, when John Wellin was shot down in cold blood by Oluf Aabakken at the hosue of Mrs Isabel Borst, where Aabakken has been staying since February.

Even Anderson ,one of the neighbors, came over here early Sunday evening to notify the authorities and a number from here went to the scene of the murder. An inquest was held under Justice J W Runkel which resulted in the arrest of Oluf Aabakken and he was taken to Whitehall and lodged in the county jail to await a preliminary hearing before Judge R A Odell on June 10.

John Wellin was here in the village Saturday afternoon and left for home about dark: when he reached the Borst place he tied his horse to the fence on the main road and started for the house which is about 20 rods off the road, for what purpose the evidence did not bring out. The shooting occurred about 10:00 PM Saturday night and the body was about 125 feet from the place he (Aabakken) claims to have shot him. The evidence of the doctors goes to show he fell where shot and was unable to move and death was almost instant. The shooting was done with a shotgun loaded with about No. 4 shot at close range, and to exceed three feet at the hole made was only an inch in diameter and the wadding was found in the body and the clothing was burnt from gun powder.

The only reason Aabakken gives for the shooting is that he though it was Ole Brown with whom he has had some trouble. The shot went in below the heart penetrated the stomach and lacerated the liver. Aabakken has a family in Norway, his birthplace, and it is reported that in this old country for abuse and failure to provide for his family he was gotten rid of by his relatives contributing a sufficient amount to pay his passage to America.

The autopsy was conducted by Dr Stack of this place and Dr Hutchins of Whitehall. Mr Wellin was about 66 years old and the family is highly respected in the community. The funeral was held at Whitehall Wednesday afternoon , the service was conducted by Rev Gulbrandson from Blair. Wellin leaves a wife and five sons and two daughters.

CORONERS' INQUEST

TESTIMONY OF OLUF AABAKKEN—"I live at the house of the widow Borst in the Town of Lincoln. I was at the place the night of May 30, 1903. I did not see anybody approaching the house. I heard a noise outside of the house—I think it was about 10:00 PM but did not know for sure. I first heard a noise, pounding on the north and west side of the house and rattling the fish poles hanging on north side. I was in bed when I first heard the noise and then I got up and dressed myself. Mrs Borst got up and lit the lamp thinking that it was rats that made the noise. I then laid down again after undressing myself. Mrs Borst went out doors and looked around and she returned to the house and said that she saw nothing and went back to bed. After a little while I heard the noise again . I then got up and put my pants on again

and went out doors and looked around and asked who was there. I asked the question in both English and Norwegian and I received no answer. I then said. "If you do not answer I will shoot", having at that time a gun in my hands. I saw something back of the house but could not tell whether it was a man or anything else, but thought it was Ole Brown. I received no answer and I then fired a shot. The object that was back of the house and about three rods from where I stood when I fired the shot. Whatever it was that I shot at went back into the brush. I was bare footed at this time.

I have lived at this place since February 1903. Mrs Borst and her son Rastus Borst beside myself live at the same place. Rastus is around 13 or 14 years old. Rastus Borst was not at home that night. Was married in Norway but my wife died two years ago in Norway. My daughter was married to Ole Brown living in this town about three years ago. I boarded with Ole Brown before I came here. The reason I thought it was Ole Brown is because he used to come around here and throw stones at the house and last March he shot a dog that stayed around the home of Mrs Borst. A couple of times I had a quarrel with Ole Brown and at one time he told me he would split my head. I thought it was Ole Brown that I was shooting at. I saw something white back of the house and thought it was Ole Brown and shot at it. Then I heard footsteps back of the house in the trees. I then went in the house and went back to bed. Mrs Borst was in the house when I went in. I never knew of John Wellin being in this house. This gun I shot with belongs to Rastus Borst. Mrs Borst went to Albert Bringsosen's after I came in the house."

TESTIMONY OF ISABEL BORST-" My full name is Isabel Borst. I was at home last night; I was working for A. Bringsosen yesterday and got home after 6:00 PM. Mr Aabakken was here when I got home. I went to bed between 9 and 10:00. Mr Aabakken went to bed about the same time. I got up to fix the mouse trap and heard something rattling about the house. Somebody walked around the house for quite awhile and then I heard a terrible noise slamming against the house. Aabakken got up and was saying something about Ole Brown and those Thompsons: then he dressed himself and took the gun and went outdoors and about 5 minutes after I heard a shot and when he came in, I asked him for mercy, almighty you did not shoot anything. He said he did not know whether he hit anything or not. He said he guessed that they could stay away now. I then went over told Bringsosens and Albert Bringsosen came down with me. Mr Aabakken was in the house when I got back. Bringsosen and I looked around the place to see what had happened but did not look down this way at all (indicating where the body now lies). The first thing I noticed this morning was a horse and buggy standing out by the main road. I kept looking to see who might own the hose. I came out to take some clothes off the line and saw the body laying where it is now. Mr Aabakken was just up dressing when I told him this. He went out to see then came back in and said there was a gray whiskered man laying there. I said, who can it be? He said he did not know. I said it looks like Palmer Back's rig. I know John Wellin, I have known him for ten years. The last time I saw him to speak to was about 3 years ago. John Wellin had never been to my place that I know of. The shot that I heard seemed to be pretty close to the house. I am 52 years old. I have lived here 8 years next fall in October. The shot sounded as though it was right in back of the house. Aabakken has been boarding here since last February. I slept in the bed on the south side of the room and Aabakken slept on the north side. The windows were open. I blew the light out when I went to bed. Ole was in bed at that time. About ten minutes after I blew the light out I heard the noises. Ole told me that the person that he spoke to said "hold on". I thought he had shot something when I heard the shot, but did not know what it was".

June 13, 1903 Independence News Wave- Ole Aabakken, the murderer of John Wellin was taken into court Wednesday at Whitehall for the preliminary hearing. He waived examination and bound over to circuit court without bail.