

Arizona Wanderer Identified as Past Resident of Homer
Daily Illini June 1, 1928 page 3
Same article appeared *Urbana Courier* June 1, 1928 page 3

Mrs. Ray Salladay, Homer, has identified the description of a man found dead in Kingman, Ariz. forwarded in letters received by Sheriff Chester Davis, yesterday as her cousin Roy Hecox.

She stated that Mr. Hecox has been known through eastern Illinois by virtue of his missing left arm and long hair and beard. He was of a wandering disposition and it was believed that he was murdered while bumming his way from Arizona City, Ariz. to Homer.

The man had been dead for five days when the body was discovered and as far as authorities could determine he was about 50 years old, five feet, 10 inches tall and weighed about 160 pounds. Mrs. Salladay claims that his description fits that of her cousin.

Murdered Man May Be Roy Hecox Though
Mojave County Miner Kingman Arizona Friday June 1, 1928 page 1

Investigations by Sheriff Brewer indicate that the man who was murdered near Franconia recently was Roy Hecox, formerly of Urbana, Illinois, with a brother, Walter C. Hecox residing at Cuperlino, California. The brother is now being communicated with for any particulars that may assist in unraveling the murder mystery.

It is the belief of Sheriff Brewer that the murder was premeditated and was committed by someone who knew the murdered man and was waiting here for him to arrive and that he went to Franconia to meet him. The old man had wanted to board a freight train and a lively argument had ensued between him and his younger companion before the latter pulled the old man's baggage from the freight car and they had started off afoot. The identity of the murderer has probably been determined but at this time the sheriff does not wish it published. He hopes to apprehend the man he is after and bring him back for questioning, though the fact that five days elapsed before the body was discovered is a big handicap.

The motive for the crime is not thought to have been robbery, though the silver he had with him had been mostly taken.

Murdered Man is Identified
Mojave County Miner Kingman Arizona Friday June 8, 1928 page 1

Word received this week by the sheriff's office positively identifies the man who was brutally murdered at Franconia, some three weeks ago, as Robert Hecox, brother of Walter C. Hecox, representative of the Equitable Life Insurance Co., at San Jose, Calif.

In his letter to Jasper Brewer, Mr. Hecox states that his brother had been with him for a few days before Christmas up until the first of February and left with something over \$100 in small change in his possession.

In addition to his brother, the murdered man is survived by his mother, who makes her home in Carpenteria, Calif., some eight miles out of San Jose.

IDENTIFY MAN KILLED IN WEST AS ROY HECOX

(By Staff Correspondent)

HOMER, May 31—Identification of a man murdered in Kingham, Ariz., was believed definitely established here today when Mrs. Ray Salladay of this place, after reading letters received by Sheriff Chet Davis of Champaign-Urbana, declared that her cousin Roy Hecox, formerly of Homer, was the man in question.

He had been dead five days when found.

Hecox was known throughout eastern central Illinois by virtue of his missing left arm, off at the shoulder, his long hair and long beard.

He was of a wandering disposition, being here today and gone tomorrow. He had lost his arm at Paducah, Ky.

At one time, it is said, he was involved in some sort of investigation in Ohio, although the exact story has never been learned here.

Hecox, it is believed was murdered while "bumming" his way from the Arizona city back to Homer.

The only known survivors are his cousin here, an aunt, Mrs. Mattie Coffeen Miller at 1142 South Michigan avenue, Chicago; a mother and sister somewhere in California.

Champaign News-Gazette May 31, 1928 page 2

Eccentric Homer Man, Once Saved From Gallows By Chance, Is Slain By Bandits
Sunday, August 4, 1929 page 1 & 2 *Danville Commercial-News*

Death has written the final chapter in the life of Roy Hecox, former resident of Homer, a wanderer on the face of the earth for a quarter of a century who was once arrested for murder in

one of the strangest cases in the annals of American criminology.

Hecox was not guilty of the murder for which he was arrested and for which he was about to be tried in Pennsylvania seven years ago. He never harmed anyone, but a son of the real murderer, and a few other relatives identified him as the man who had slain a deputy sheriff 20 years before, and only the timely arrival of a brother, Walter Hecox, saved him from facing the murder charge in court.

He was about 16 years old when the Hecox family moved to Champaign from Homer. He was a perfectly normal boy and nothing unusual was noticed in his conduct until after he had lost an arm in a railroad accident in Kentucky. He was working on the railroad at the time.

Let Beard Grow.

It was shortly after this accident that Hecox allowed his beard to grow and he refused to stay in any one place long at a time. He said he had become a member of a religious sect and spent his time walking up and down the country. On several occasions he came back to Homer, but would not stay long at a time, leaving as unceremoniously as he had appeared. Where he came from or where he went, no one seemed to know. His mother and his brother, Walter, went to California and there were no relatives left in Homer save a few cousins.

He met death at Prescott, Ariz., when he was held up by bandits and robbed, the bandits leaving his body along a railroad track, where it was found several days later. News of his death did not reach relatives in Homer until some time afterwards.

The strange story of Hecox's arrest in Pennsylvania on the charge of a murder committed a score of years before, was told in detail in the July issue of True Strange stories, issued by the MacFadden Publications, Inc. The story was written by Walter B. Gibson.

The Atherholt Murder.

Mr. Gibson started his story by telling of the murder of Irvin Mandeau, a deputy sheriff, near Bursonville, Pa., and the serious wounding of Sheriff Metas Atherholt by Adam Weaver. The shooting occurred in the Haycock mountains, where Weaver and his family made their home. Weaver had been accused of robbing farmers of food and farm animals and the sheriff and his deputy had gone to his mountain home to take him into custody.

They found the man of the mountain at home sitting at a table. He did not rise as the officers entered and made no move to get his trusty shotgun, which stood in the corner of the room. The sheriff told his business and informed Weaver that he had better go with them. As the officers started to draw their revolvers Weaver made a quick move with his hand and the little oil lamp on the table was knocked over. At the same time his wife, who was later arrested and convicted as an accomplice, dashed a kettle of hot water in the faces of the officers.

Weaver jumped past the officers, who were groping in the dark and rubbing their faces where the hot water had struck them. Two shots rang out in quick succession in the dark, each one hitting a mark. Weaver jumped out of a window and was never seen afterwards. The sheriff, seriously wounded, succeeded in getting the dying officer out of the house. The entire country was aroused and an entire country was aroused and a man hunt was conducted for weeks, but no trace of Weaver was found.

Waited 20 Years.

For 20 years, people waited the return of Adam Weaver, confident that he would not stay away," runs the story. "The law never forgot him; and while those who sought him were unsuccessful, they passed their mission on to another generation.

"Yet when they were sure that Adam Weaver had returned, the new champions of justice found themselves in a strange dilemma! The crime of the man had been established; but his identity

was scarcely more than a memory! The law was confronted with unexpected difficulties, and from a curious web of testimony came a most surprising solution to a most remarkable problem. "Adam Weaver was a man who lived apart; who knew no law; who sought no friends; and who was mistrustful of humanity. Few persons knew him well, save those of his own family; and by a strange trick of fate it was his own son who was the most anxious to see him suffer for his crimes.

Wife Goes Insane.

Mrs. Weaver went insane in the penitentiary and was removed to an asylum. She always said in her sane moments that Adam would return, that he could not stay away. The two great impulses, to which the most hardened criminals will often yield, the yearning for home and the lure that brings most criminals back to the scene of their crime, were influences that made many believe that the aged woman was right—that Weaver would some day return to the little deserted cabin in the mountains.

There were stories afloat that Weaver had enlisted in the army and had gone to the Philippines. It was said he had been killed in the islands, but no one could vouch for any of the stories. The years passed on and there were stories that the house in the mountain was inhabited by a strange man believed to be Weaver.

"In the spring of 1922, it chanced that another sheriff of Quakertown was passing the old abode of Adam Weaver," according to the story in True Strange Stories. "This man was Harry Rhodes, who held the same office that Metas Atherholt had occupied 22 years before. As he gazed curiously at the dilapidated building, Rhodes saw the figure of a man in the woods nearby.

Kindling A Fire.

"The stranger was kindling a fire when Rhodes approached. The sheriff was startled by the appearance of the man. He was dressed in old, shabby garments. His hair was red, and his face was obscured by a long, sandy beard. He had all the appearance of a hermit who had lived in the wilds for many years, and he gazed sullenly at the man who had disturbed his solitude.

" 'Better move along,' snapped the sheriff. He was suspicious of this unusual fellow. 'I'm the sheriff around here.'

"The unkept man said nothing. He reached beside him and picked up two small bags with one hand. It was then that Rhodes noticed that the man's other sleeve was empty.

"Silently the strange visitor walked away through the woods, and as he clambered over the rocks the sheriff could hear a jingle from the bags which he carried." Weaver Is Recalled. Upon his return to the county seat the sheriff told some friends about the strange man and they suggested that probably it was Weaver, returned to the scene of his crime. The sheriff made another trip past the old house the next afternoon and to his surprise he found the old man there again. The sheriff took the hermit into custody and placed him in jail, where the entire community visited him, many of them quite sure he was Weaver. When asked what his name was the stranger said "Hecox." Believing that the man had taken the name of the Haycock mountains as the first one that came to him after leaving home, the officers prepared to question him still further and sent him to jail on a charge of vagrancy.

It was while in jail that a son of Weaver, who was but nine years old at the time of the murder, visited him. One look and he said the man was his father. A brother-in-law of Weaver also said the man under arrest was the one wanted for murder. The prisoner said but little while in jail but insisted that he was not the man wanted and that his home had been in Homer, Ill. He did not appear to be the ignorant mountaineer that Adam Weaver was when he left, but the positive identification by the son and brother-in-law caused the officers to believe they had at last

arrested the much-wanted man.

Pictures of the prisoner were sent broadcast and printed in practically all of the newspapers of the country, and about three weeks after his arrest a stranger arrived in the village and said he would like to see the prisoner. He was taken to the jail by the warden, who on the way told him something about the man under arrest and the charge against him. He told the stranger that the identification had been very good, but that the man refused to allow them to shave off his beard to see if a scar on the face of Weaver was there.

Brother Visits Cell.

The two reached the cell where Hecox was confined.

"Hey, Weaver, here's a man who wants to see you." Said the warden.

"The wild man made no response.

" 'Come on Weaver,' repeated the warden. 'Weaver, or whatever your name is, we want to see you.'

"The wild man rose lazily and shambled to the door. He glanced curiously at the newcomer, but made no sign. The warden was watching both men closely, and caught a gleam of recognition in the visitor's eyes.

" 'Do you know him?' he asked eagerly.

"The stranger turned to him and nodded.

" 'Yes,' he said quietly, 'I know him, he is my brother.'

"The warden stroked his face in surprise.

" 'Adam Weaver is your brother!' he exclaimed. 'We didn't know he had a brother! We didn't know that he had any relatives except-'

"The man held up his hand."

Explanation Made.

" 'Just a moment,' he objected. 'I've been trying to explain to you, but you haven't given me a chance. This man is my brother-but he is not Adam Weaver!'

"He turned to the silent man.

" 'Hello, Roy,' he said. 'I've come to take you home. Will you go with me?'

" 'I guess so, Walter,' replied the prisoner wearily, 'that is if you'll let me do as I please and I won't have to dress up around the place.'

" 'All right, Roy, that's agreed,' replied the visitor.

" 'You've been mistaken about this man' he said, turning to the warden. 'He is my brother, Roy Hecox. We both came from Illinois. The last time I saw him was 12 years ago in Arizona.' "

The next day the Hecox brothers left the county seat where Roy had been confined on a charge of murder, but Roy would not ride to the train. He preferred to walk through the streets, so that all could see that he was again free.

Saved By Photo.

In concluding the story the writer of "At the Foot of the Gallows," says:

"The story of Roy Hecox stands as one of the strangest of the recorded cases of mistaken identification and remarkable coincidence. Where in all his wanderings, should this man, who looked so much like Adam Weaver, have chosen the foot of lonely Haycock mountain as his favored spot?

"Charged with a crime of which he had never heard; identified by a man who claimed to be his son, the wild man of Haycock mountain was saved from unjust punishment through the chance publication of a photograph in a newspaper thousands of miles from the scene of the capture!"



Roy Hecox on left wire photo