

JOHN CHAMBLESS DIES INSTANTLY OF GUN WOUNDS

Shooting on West Duke Street Early Monday Night Fatal for Cattleman;
Beal Gives Up To Sheriff.

The Hugo Daily News Tuesday March 7, 1939 - transcribed by Ron Henson

Five bullets fired at close range from a .45 caliber gun ended the life of John Chabmless, 63-year-old cattleman last night before medical aid could be administered. Chambless died just as he was being wheeled into the surgical room of the Hugo Hospital after being shot by W.J. Beal, 50, Hugo merchant. Beal walked to the sheriff's office and gave himself up immediately after the shooting.

The killing occurred on the sidewalk in front of the Shelton Cafe on West Duke street at 8 p.m. Six persons, including the proprietor and his wife, were forced to take shelter behind tables in the cafe as bullets whizzed through the restaurant after shattering the glass in the front door.

Norman Horton, assistant county attorney filed murder charges against Beal this afternoon after investigating the circumstances.

Officers quoted Beal as stating he shot in self defense, thinking Chambless was preparing to kill him.

"I walked around to the back of my store to see if everything was closed," he is reported to have said. "He jumped me at the alley and I had to shoot him."

Witnesses said they heard a shot and looked up in time to see Chambless slump forward.

"He kept lunging forward and Beal kept shooting," said Jim Spicher, who was in the cafe at the time of the shooting. When Chambless got even with the door, he fell to the sidewalk."

Other witnesses said six shots were fired in rapid succession. Night Patrolmen A.A. Ray and Elmer Barnett who were attracted to the scene by the shots, said they heard two shots, then a pause, then four more in rapid succession. Ray said he was the second person to arrive on the scene, but that Beal already had fled.

Five Bullets Take Effect

Five of the shots took effect, according to Dr. Howard Kenaga, who was waiting for the wounded man at the hospital when the ambulance arrived. Two entered his mouth, two entered the side of the head and one struck him in the left side of the stomach, emerging on the right side of his body. The steel bullets penetrated the body and cut holes in the woodwork on the front of the restaurant.

Patrolman Elmer Barnett said he found the empty shells and he and other officers recovered most of the bullets.

Several Witnesses

In addition to Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Shelton, proprietors of the cafe, and their daughter, there were three other persons in the cafe: Jim Spicher, Archie

Locke, and Soloman Harrison.

Locke said he ducked under a table when he heard the first shot. Others said it was all over before they had time to decide what to do. Two bullets went through the front wall and penetrated the partition separating the dining room from the kitchen. One bullet struck the partition only inches above the head of Spicher.

Funeral services for the slain man will be held in the First Baptist church at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday. Coffey-Baker-Campbell funeral directors are in charge of arrangements.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Claudie Chambless; three daughters, Mrs. Buck Clowers, Hugo; Mrs. Carl Jumper, Cumby, Texas; Mrs. V.B. Logsdon, Winters, Texas; three sons, Clyde, Jack and Ambler Chambless, all of Hugo; sister, Mrs. Ernest Ammonette, of Arkansas; and two brothers, Tom Chambless of Paris and Bob Chambless of Garland, Texas.

Chambless has lived in Hugo many years and is widely known as a cattleman and trader.

Beal recently established the Three C's store at the corner of Broadway and Duke street. He came here from Fort Towson where he owns a similar store.

It was understood the two men had been having trouble of late. Officers said Chambless was not carrying a gun, contrary to street rumors.

W.J. BEAL FREE ON \$10,000 BOND

Charged With Fatal Shooting Monday

The Hugo Daily News March 19, 1939 - transcribed by Ron Henson

W.J. Beal posted bond late Wednesday afternoon and was released from the county jail, where he has been held since Monday night following the fatal shooting of John Chambless.

Beal appeared before District Judge George R. Childers Wednesday on a habeas corpus action, after waiving preliminary hearing. His bond was fixed at \$10,000.

He will be tried for murder, presumably at the next criminal session of the district court, dates of which have not been determined.