

A.W. HOLDEN KILLED FRIDAY MORNING
While Assisting in Raiding Moonshine Distillery on Turkey Creek
The Hugo Husonian May 13, 1909 - transcribed by Ron Henson

A.W. (Lon) Holden, for several years a resident of this city, being elected first city marshal on the organization of the municipality several years ago; and later for many years a U.S. marshal stationed at Fort Towson, was killed about 6 o'clock Friday morning on Turkey Creek where he was assisting in the arrest of moonshiners. The scene of the unfortunate circumstances was about 30 mile northeast of this city in the mountains.

For the past several months Holden had been living on his farm about twenty five miles northeast of this city. For sometime it had been evident that a wildcat distillery was being operated in that vicinity, and Holden at the instance of the officers had definitely located the still together with those operating it. About two weeks ago Revenue Collector Irvin, of Muskogee, visited this city and secured the promise of the cooperation and assistance of Sheriff Connell, of this county, as well as that of Sheriff Ellis of Pushmataha county, in making a raid into that district.

Last Thursday afternoon, Mr. Ervin, accompanied by Deputy Marshals Early of Ardmore, Land of McAlester and Dug Everidge of Grant, reached this city. They were met here by Sheriff Wm. Ellis of Antlers, and the party accompanied by Sheriff R.M. Connell of this county, left about 3 o'clock in the afternoon for the scene. By traveling into the night they reached the home of Mr. Holden, who accompanied them to the rendezvous of the moonshiners. Arriving near the home of J.W. Myers and Dad Lee, for whom they had warrants, they awaited until after daylight and divided into three squads; Holden, Ellis and a deputy sheriff going to the east and secreting themselves near the barnyard, Deputies Land, Everidge and another deputy going to the west side of the house. Sheriff Connell and Deputy Early passed through a clearing and approached the house from the front and asked a child standing on the porch concerning the whereabouts of his father. The child replied that he was not at home, whereupon Connell requested the men in the house to come out. Two men were seen to run into the rear room and out the back door. These men proved to Myers and Lee, and were immediately covered by the guns of Land and his squad. The men on seeing that they were surrounded threw their hands up and advanced to the deputies.

It had been anticipated that should the moonshiners show fight they would run out the back way and squads had been divided so that in case of a fight there would be no cross firing. From what can be learned, shortly after the exit of the men, a boy about eighteen years of age ran out of the house and it seems that Holden by this time had left his position near the barn and had passed through the bushes to a position south of the house, the direction of the still. He called to the boy to halt, but the boy instead of

stopping ran back, Holden to stop the boy began firing. The shots coming from the direction of the distillery evidently caused the officers to think that other moonshiners had come to the rescue of their companions and the firing became general. Connel and Early who were in the house carried the women and children to a place where they could be seen and asked that the firing cease. After quiet had been restored; the officers going to the place from which the firing started, found Holden lying on his face, a winchester ball having passed through his head, tearing away the top of the skull. The affair is regarded as being most unfortunate as the killing was wholly an accident.

The still house was found about 200 yards south of the house on the banks of the creel, It was walled up about four feet and the surroundings were such that it would have taken for a pig pen. The apparatus used was a galvanized tank, holding about sixty gallons, into the top of which had been fitted a wooden head which connected with a worm. About fifteen gallons of whiskey was also found together with a quantity of sour mash, evidently prepared for another run.

The prisoners together with the still were brought to this city that night, arriving about 12 o'clock.

Both men appear to be about fifty years of age and when seen at the jail talked freely. Lee denied being in any way implicated in the business of making whiskey. Myers stated that he had been moonshining about eight or nine months and had operated at several points in that locality for some time previous to moving to present location he made whisky on Terrapin Creek. He stated that he make whisky mostly for his own use and run only about two or three weeks at a time. He also stated that he had been in this part of the state for about eight years and that he had been engaged in making ties.

Holden's body was taken to Ft Towson, where it was embalmed and prepared for shipment to this place by Undertaker Haines of this city. Notwithstanding the whole top of his head had been shot away, the parts had been so perfectly reassembled that those who viewed the remains here saw no trace of the awful wound.

The funeral services were conducted Saturday afternoon by Rev. J.G. Downing from the residence of the deceased's mother, Mrs. Holden, who resides on Grant street. A large crowd of sorrowing friends followed the remains to the Spring Chapel cemetery where the remains were laid to rest.

The deceased leaves a wife and six children.

As an officer, Holden was fearless, business like, passed through numbers of close encounters with the lawless element, and under the Territorial regime was regarded as one of the best officers of the Central District. His death was a great blow to hundreds of close friends which he had made in this part of the state.

An effort is being made in official circles to have the widow placed upon

the pension rolls; as a communication from Mr. Archer, office deputy of Marshal Grant Victor, of Muskogee to the Husonian says in part:

"I am taking the matter up with Congressman C.E. Creager of this district to see whether or not some congressional aid cannot be given the widow of Mr. Lon Holden."