

The Dean Murder

Rivermead February 28, 2018

MURDER WILL OUT

...or perhaps not

August 13, 1918

BRUTAL MURDER AT EAST JAFFREY

William K. Dean's Body Found in Rain Water Cistern

Had Been Beaten About the Head Bound and Tied in Weighted Sack

—No Clues for Murder Known

One of the most brutal murders in Cheshire County was unearthed by East Jaffrey and county officials Wednesday at East Jaffrey in the discovery of the body of William K. Dean, a retired farmer, with his hands bound, his scalp battered from some blunt instrument, burlap and blankets tied over his head and a stone weighing about 20 pounds attached, in the bottom of a rain water cistern some 200 yards from the house where he lived with his wife. Sheriff E. H. Lord and County Solicitor R. M. Pickard are making every effort to solve the mysterious crime but as yet they have no clue.

Mrs. Dean, who is ill, and has not been in her normal condition, mentally, for some time, reports that on the return of Mr. Dean from the village Tuesday night, he went to the barn to do his milking. Keene Evening Sentinel, August 15, 1918.

The first news reports of the murder

Monadnock Breeze, August 17, 1918.

MURDER IN EAST JAFFREY

W. K. Dean Victim of Foul Play.

About noon on Wednesday this quiet village that was doing its best to bear the extreme hear our people were thrown into excitement when it was learned that W. K. Dean, a retired farmer living with his invalid wife about two miles north of this village, was missing. Automobiles rushed to the scene and in a short time the body of this aged and respected citizen was found in a cistern. Medical Examiner Dinsmore of Keene was immediately notified and Sheriff Lord of Keene and deputies and County Solicitor R. M. Pickard were soon on the scene. The body was then removed from the water and it was found that both hands were tied behind his back, with two ropes in six square knots. A heavy burlap bag was over his head and tied to his wrists. Within the bag was a horse-blanket, tied over his head, and a heavy stone weighing some 20 pounds.

Upon the removal of the blanket severe bruises on the head were discovered, but the skull was not fractured, indicating that he had been struck on the head and stunned, but met his death by drowning. The legs were bound at the knees. In the barn nearby there were some bloodstains and some on the piazza of the vacant house.

on the mountain with Chas + Hatte day . 12 Fair and warmen. fortable home to-mig 13 Fair and very warme. 14 Fair and very warm with a very heavy thunder shower about 4.30 O.M. Mr. Dean was found, murdered 2 a drive 15 Fair & cooler Heifer calf was born to the Black Cow afternoon 16 Fair 17 Mary Lacy came up to stay a few days. Fair & cool. 18 Fair & cool.

14 Fair and very warm with a very heavy thunder shower about 4.30 P.M. Mr. Dean was found, murdered

Entry in Ralph Boynton's diary for the 14th of August.

"ON THE MORNING of August 14, 1918, Jaffrey was rocked to the core by news of the disappearance of Dr. William Kendrick Dean and the subsequent finding of his body in a rainwater cistern near the "big house" on the Dean farm, brutally strangled and murdered with a blunt instrument. The body was wrapped in a horse blanket and weighted down with a 27-pound rock. In the village the people had seen Dean only the night before, with his horse and buggy, doing his weekly shopping of groceries. Before returning home he had stopped at the home of his friend, the village banker, and upon arriving at home he had unloaded his provisions and gone to the barn about midnight, as was his custom, to milk his Jersey cows. Added to the bizarreness of the case was the fact that his milk pail was never found, and the discovery of an initialed cigarette case in the bottom of the six-foot cistern after the recovery of his body, which immediately disappeared.

When, in due course of time, he did not return, his frail and invalid wife became alarmed and in the morning relayed news of his disappearance to authorities. The day was a beautiful sunny August one, as the search was initiated by Chief of Police Perley H. Enos, and the three Jaffrey Selectmen, Edward C. Boynton, William F. Coolidge, and Peter E. Hogan.

Later developments divided the town, turning friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor, as the developments unfolded themselves, and the repercussions are still being felt over half a century later.

Since the case was fraught with possible espionage and deep mystery, it was carried to Washington, D. C., by the local authorities, where it is still classified, at latest reports, as one of the nation's ten most interesting unsolved cases. In Jaffrey it was seemingly otherwise, as the town became divided. There was a segment of the population who, in their own minds, had "solved the case," basing their conclusions upon the fact the horse blanket in question admittedly belonged to the town banker, Charles L. Rich, and the fact be had appeared at the bank that morning with a blackened eye and lacerated cheek. In his testimony, however, he explained that he had pressed the blanket on the victim the night before to ward off the chill of the mid-August night on his trip home, and that his facial disfigurement was due to a kick from his horse."





Bird's-eye view of East Jaffrey at the time of the murder.



Detail of Bird's-eye view of East Jaffrey.





The Dean House (Built in 1893)



The Dean house.



The Dean house today.



Site of the Dean Murder

Pictured above as it looked in 1918 is the barn where Dr. William Kendrick Dean was murdered 50 years ago today.⁸ No clues were ever found in the barn, however.



Location of the barn today.



About 12 hours after Dean was murdered, his body was pulled with a pair of ice tongs from six feet of water in a cistern near the house.



The cistern today.



The Bungalow as remodeled in 1910.



The Bungalow today.



The Cast of Characters

Dr.William Dean



W. K. Dean at 53 (about 1908)

Charles Rich













Roy M. Pickard, who at the time of the Dean murder mystery, was county solicitor at Keene, N. H.



Father Hannon

Mrs. Morison

Mrs. Horace Morison, of Boston, Washington and Petersboro, N. H., had a conversation with Dr. William Kendrick Dean. This gave police a working clue. Twelve hours later he was found dead.







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The Monadnock Bank



The Monadnock Bank



The Rich house, Bradley Court



The Rich house, Bradley Court, today.

Some of the Books & Articles
The Dean Murder Mystery

By Bert Ford

War Correspondent and author of "The Fighting Yankees Overseas." With an Introduction by William Dean Goddard.

> Privately Printed for the Relatives Pawtucket, R. I. 1920

Bert Ford

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LEFT: The Pitman shorthand notes became very familiar after working with them for six years. Lena Marsh, the Court Reporter, had high marks from my expert Pitman friend, Samuel Fitz-Henley, of Kingston, Jamaica. This page reads:

... was that Mr. Dean died from strangulation, that is, he wasn't drowned. In other words, he didn't breathe after he went into the water. Wound around his neck twice was a hard hitch rope, or halter, one of those kind such as you gentlemen are all familiar with, a hard ¾ inch rope.

Now Mr. Pickard is going to draw a little chart of the particular points, not, of course, according to scale, but so as to give you gentlemen a little idea of the situation up there at the Dean homestead.

I was telling you about the rope which was around Mr. Dean's neck. It was a hard ³/₄-inch hitch rope with a snap on one end, and back a couple of feet or so, and I would say you could put this....



A Personal Account of the Dean Murder Mystery, A Tragedy in Which The Author Was Involved



PUBLISHED BY THE JAFFREY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I G H T S FROM

-2-Survey and as w 9. PLACE BRIDE BARD. Harry R. Varshall Beton, Mass. In re: Flashing lights in Souther For Hampshire. times sur works make. Juge 5, 1918 # 1pr, 19-18 At Peterboro, N. H. 82613 In accordance with suggestion and pursuant to the directions of Agent Gifford of the Boston office, Agent together with Agent Nash, left North Station, Boston, Mass. at S P. M., arriving at Peterboro, S. E. at 6.38 P. M. and registered at the Tavern. Each reported to the Boston Office that in the observation of flashings lights, a single observer who has seen a flashing

light at a distance of several miles, and on the next might has taken his station at the point where he believed the light was, and yet sees no flashing light, has no way of knowing whether absence of this light is due to the fact that it is not being operated or that it it behind some obstacle from his observation point.

After supper. Agent occupied suitable observation point observing toward the W. and at 9:30 P. M. saw a bean of light of 2 seconds duration, originating from a point about N 60 W magnetic) the bean pointing into the sky in a one o'clock direction. At 9:32 P. M. a steady white light appeared for 3 minutes from a general morth-westerly direction. At 10:15 P. M. in a south westerly direction, and near Mosre's Farm, I saw a lantern moving as if it were carried by a man and lasting 2 minutes. This lanters was also observed by Agent Nash from his observation point about a mile south of mine. I completed my observation at 11:15 and returned to the hotel.

This investigation will be continued.

JACK COEY

TWO LEGGED FOXES

JACK COEY



ARK INVASION 1915: GERMANY'S SECRET WAR AND THE HUNT FOR THE FIRST TERRORIST CELL IN AMERICA HOWARD BLUM

18 17





Thursday, Aug. 12, 2010

ON LEADER HEATER THE STATE ON LEADER

Who killed Dr. Dean?

Clairvoyant CC Carole leads a paranormal detective program about a 1918 Monadnock murder

-Page 2

/ilde things: 'Dorian Gray' and 'Ernest' on NH stages | Page 4

3 5695 1994 LEDGER



These shoes, worn by William Kendrick Dean as he plunged lifeless to the bottom of a well in Jaffrey, are part of an exhibit at the Jaffrey Civic Center. More than 76 years later, the case still fascinates.

A long-lasting mystery

Civic Center exhibit tries to shed light on Dean murder

BACK

A.C.

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Kelly Stimmell

Aug. 13, 1918, was a typical late summer night. It was hot, moonlit, the air motionless, the crickets silent. It was the perfect night for a murder, Dr. William Kendrick Dean's, to

be exact. He was a prom A LOOK nent, well-respected Jaffrey citizen.

Fifteen minutes after drinking a glass of milk and sating a couple of curran burs, Dean was bludgeon with a three-pronged hand weeder in his barn, a mere 500 feet away from his house where his wife getting ready for bed. A light horse blanket was wrapped around his head; his ankles, knees, and vrists were tied; and his

body was dropped into a 12-foet well. A 27-pound rock, placed inside the grain sack pulled over his head and shoulders, made sure he stayed in submerged in the dank, dark water.

Seventy-six years later, his death is still a mystery. Nearly all the Jaffrey residents - and the various suspects - have since passed away. But like most unsolved crimes, especially those that occur in a place as peaceful and safe as Jaffrey, this one refuses to die

Case in proof is the latest exhibit at the Jaffrey Civic Center. On display through Sept. 23, you can see the actual evidence presented during the Dean murder trial, held at the Keene Court House eight months after the murder.

Included are a piece of wood from the barn, splattered with blood; Dean's tattered rubber foam vas shoes, black socks, and garters, which he was wearing when he was killed; and the white porcelain doorknobs that had been smudged with a bloody hand but didn't reveal fingerprints.

The weapons are also included: the horse blanket pulled over Dean's head to absorb the blood, the ropes he was tied up with, and the burlap bag tied over the blanket which held the rock used to weigh him down in the cistern.

The evidence was given to the Jaffrey Historical Society by the Keene Courthouse early this summer, thanks to the effort of Margaret Bean, a Jaffrey resident who you might say is the local expert on the Dean murde

Bean's father-in-law, D.D. Bean, and Dr. Frederick Sweeney were both interested parties during the Dean murder trial. Sometime later, Sweeney' son, Bud, received a letter from Stillman Rogers, clerk of the Superior Court in Keene. Rogers said that in rebuilding and expanding

the courthouse, they had come across a brown paper package containing 20 notebooks in Pittman shorthand, the recording of the Dean murder grand jury inquest. They asked if he was interested in the

Knowing of her interest in the case, Sweeney informed Bean. By coincidence, Bean had learned Pittman shorthand, an obscure form long since overshadowed by the more popular Gregg, while working on Wall Street. With Sweeney's permis-sion, she went to the courthouse and was given official permission to transcribe the notebooks two at a time

Bean spent six years transcribing, an arduous task because there were many passages she was unable to translate

During that time, Bean was vacationing in Janaica when she read about Samuel Fitz-Henley, a Pittman expert who had just been paid thousand of lars to transcribe the notes of a reporter who had died. Bean met with him, and he told her that Pittman shorthand had changed over time, then showed her a teaching manual and shorthand dictionary from the early 1900s, pointing out the differ-

Armed with this new knowledge, Bean returned home to finish the transcription, which she eventu-ally published in a book, Hearing by the Grand Jury on the Death of W. K. Dean, April 11-22, 1919, Courthouse, Keene. Meanwhile, Bean had developed a friendly rela-

nship with Rogers, clerk of the court. He told her about the box of evidence. Twice Bean arranged to row the evidence so that history teacher Dennis Wright could present it to his middle-school stu

That got Bean thinking about having the items kept at the Jaffrey Historical Society. Last year, Bean asked Martha Crocker, a friend and Peterborsuch judge, to write a letter to the Keene court. Early this summer, they turned it over to the hisrical society

Poring over these artifacts could lead one to create some new conclusions to this who-done-it, al-though it's highly unlikely.

Immediately after the murder, there were four prime suspects and motives: Mrs. Dean, who could have murdered her hushand in a fit of jealousy, Lawrence Colfelt of New York, a mysterious stranger who wintered in Dean's large house, ru-mored to be a German spy.

This theory was strengthened by the fact that shortly before Dean's murder, Dean had asked him to move out; intoxicated hoodlums caught in Dean's barn; Charles Rich, town moderator, cl director, cashier of the Monadnock Bank, and district judge

The prime suspect, Rich had a mysterious black e the day after the murde

He claimed his horse had kicked him; others beed he was lying. The town, already caught up in World War I hysteria, was torn between those who sided with Rich and those who called him a coldbearted killer

Nothing was ever proven, and Rich ended up uning a libel suit against the Boston American newspaper. But that didn't change what people

thought Today, the mystery goes on. Bean said, "I still have people tell me in confi-dence that they know who did it, but they all say one different."

t was nearly 70 years ago that William Kendrick Dean was killed and stuffed down his cistern in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, yet even today mention of this famous unsolved murder will still raise eyebrows around town.

would have been judged pretty flaky today - a short, slight, physical-fitness nut who gave himself the title "Doctor," who milked his cow af midnight, who wore khaki shorts, a highstanding celluloid collar, (continued)

ED DR.U



When Dr. Dean headed for home at 10:30, folks said he was followed by a car with three men in it.

FOR STATE SENATOR VOTE FOR Merrill G. Symonds of Jaffrey

VOTERS

"You can fool all the people some of the time—some of the people all of the time—but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time"—*Lincoln*

Who put the Dean Murder Case in Politics?



The Evidence





DR. DEAN'S SNEAKERS THE ONES HE WAS WEARING WHEN HE WAS HILLED

EUIDENLE #5

THE DOOR KNOBS THAT WERE TESTED FOR FINGER PRINTS

1994.9.21

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as

WOOD FROM THE BARN WITH BLOOD SPLATTERS

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THE SOCKS AND GARTERS HE WAS WEARING WHEN HE WAS KILLED





The Disinterment of Dr. Dean (Don't be squeamish)











Dr. Dean's gravesite, Mt. Hope Cemetery, Rochester, New York.



Charles Rich's gravesite, Conant Cemetery, Jaffrey.

August 13, 1918 - August 13, 2018

100 years

The End





Lawrence Colfelt, Sr.



Harry N. Guterman




Dr. Dean in his sleigh, ca. 1915.



Dr. Dean's sleigh at the Rindge Historical Society today.



Dr. Dean's sleigh at the Rindge Historical Society today.



Dr. Dean's sleigh at the Rindge Historical Society today.



The Rich house, Bradley Court, 1996.



The Rich house, Bradley Court, 1996.



The Rich house, Bradley Court, 1996.



The Rich house, Bradley Court, 1996. Barn.

Some Odds & Ends



Box of Dean Murder documents in the Library Vault.

	Ints. 71.	So it is on beyond your house, how far? A. I don't
		know just how far. Never measured it.
	72.	Well, approximately? Can you see anything that looks about
		as far as from there? A. I should think it was as far
		as from here to that sign there.
	73.	Which one? the one that says "standing on the seats for-
		bidden"? A. Well the "exit". Well, it doesn't asks
		any difference; that is all right.
	74.	How long has that light been there? A. I couldn't tell
1		you how long it has been there.
	75.	Well, approximately? A. About three years, I should
		think.
	76.	About three years now? A. Yes, sir.
	77.	That night, was that a moonlight night? A. Yes, sir; it
		WAS.
	78.	Was the moon shining then at that time? A. Yes, sir.
C	79.	Shining brightly between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning?
		A. Yes, sir.
	80.	On this day of August, 19187 A. Yes, sir.
	81.	You are quite certain that was the week of August 13,
		1918? A. Yes, sir; I am positive.
	82.	How do you fix that? A. Why, I know that it was because
		I was worked up over the murder, and I was alone there
		staying nights with the children, and I couldn't sleep,
	, e'	and I hadn't gone to sleep when this car stopped in front
		of the house. Then a short time afterwards, I heard two
		alalash shaths as T know it was that time.

83.

Typical deposition page in the Dean Murder file in the Library Vault.

That is, 2 o'clock on the village clock? A. Yes, Sir, by

-10-Geri F. Weiss In re: .William K. Dean Murder Case 3/21/19 Lights in New Hampshire Mountains (German Spy Suspect) and that somebody came for it. I heard them tell. about three or four different ones. It was always a mystery to me how this could be at the bottom of the well, if Mr. Dean was thrown down like they said he was. How could it have gone in to the cistern, unless he tied himself up afterwards. This was a little bit of a cigarette case. It have been the last of the cigarette paper. I don't think it was more than 1-1/2 inches wide. It was not round at the corners, but kind of squared cornered. Mr. Dean used to make his own cigarettes. I have seen him. Agents next interviewed Father Hannon, who stated as follows: I have preserved the following clipping for you, taken from the "Keene Sentinel" of March 19th, which will tell you all about the meeting we had in regard to the Dean Murder case here. THE MYSTERY OF THE DEAN MURDER Recalled by a Recent Meeting in Jaffrey and Alleged New Evidence. Discussion of the Dean Murder so long a very mysterious crime, and one without reasonable purpose or motive. so far as can be learned, was renewed at East Jaffrey, recently, when a large meeting of cttizens was held at which County Solicitor Pickard, William Kent or De Kerlor, employed as a detective at first and later classed as a consulting physchologist and detective were heard. Nothing new of importance appears to have been found, to lead to the identification of the murder. Mr. Pickard appeared at the meeting by request, it is understood, and reviewed the case at more or less length as far as he could do in a way consistent with his duties as the county prosecutor in charge. He also answered numerous questions in a similar way. Of course the solicitor and the attorney general have many facts and more or less evidence in their possession that cannot be made public. It is also understood that U. S. government authorities have been through the case very carefully and know all about

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Typical FBI report



NH 'Cold Case Unit' with members of the Society.



The Dean Murder Research Group meeting.



Chuck Cole photographing the evidence.