

An Unsolved Murder in Gleeson

February 25, 1913

Tuesday morning, Dick Lockett, owner of a restaurant and meat market in Gleeson, hitched his horse up and headed his wagon north on High Lonesome Road, intending to arrive at the Courtland depot of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad in time to take delivery of some beef coming in on the noon train. He never arrived at the station.

Dick, whose full name was Royal Richard Lockett, was a 66 year old butcher who had lived in Gleeson for several years after moving up from a dairy farm near Bisbee. Familiar to people in the area, he was known as a gentle and somewhat private man, and often carried considerable cash on his person. On Tuesday morning, he left Gleeson at 10:40 and rode north on High Lonesome Road, with four hundred dollars in his pocket and his faithful dog trailing the wagon. His horse had a tinkling bell attached to the harness, which signaled his approach. Unknown to Dick, two men were laying in wait, ready to ambush him.

COURTLAND, ARIZONA, SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1913.

AWFUL MURDER

**Committed At Mid Day Close
to Gleeson - Robbed and
Choked to Death**

Royal R. "Dick" Lockett, 66 years of age, proprietor of a restaurant and meat market in Gleeson, was killed and robbed, Tuesday when on his way to Courtland, between 11 and 12 o'clock, noon.

Lockett started from his place of business at 10:40 Tuesday morning to come to Courtland to receive some beef that would come in on the train from Douglas, and was never seen alive afterward.

Unfortunate man had fallen or been pulled out of the wagon, the free end of the rope was tied to the wagon.

Then the horse was apparently led forward some 8 or 10 feet, in order that the animal could be tied, thus dragging the body.

Lockett's gloves were found near the body, one clinging to the rope, the other lying on the ground. He had been robbed of his money, known to have been nearly if not quite Four

sandy wash made clear what had transpired on that Tuesday morning.

The ambushers had hidden themselves in a culvert to the side of the wash, to avoid detection from both Lockett or any other passers-by, as they awaited his approach. When they heard the tinkling bell of Lockett's horse, they darted further up the wash and hid just beyond a sharp left-hand turn until he arrived. At that critical slow-point, they emerged from hiding and confronted him.



In his investigation, Sheriff Bright concluded that the two men were probably known to Lockett, as neither he nor his hound made any struggle nor attempt to escape. No gunfire was heard either in Gleeson nor down the wash in Courtland, and no one else reported traveling the route that day. The two ambushers tied a rope around Lockett's neck and forced him to move the wagon about a hundred yards further down the wash, and then turn off the road and into a shallow depressed area out of sight from the road. One culprit walked beside the wagon and one behind it. Then they pulled Lockett off the wagon by the rope around his neck and he hit the ground. As he was trying to free himself from the tightening rope, the second man stabbed him three times in the chest and twice in the neck. The cuts were made with a long thin blade, the cuts being only about a quarter-inch in width, but extending five inches into Lockett's body. The rope was pulled tight, and Dick Lockett died by strangulation. They tied the other end of the rope to the wagon, then led the horse another 10 feet, dragging Lockett's body along the ground, so that the horse and wagon could be tethered, preventing it from going home and alerting others to the crime.

The murderers took about four hundred dollars from Lockett's wallet, then put the empty wallet back in his

pocket. Afterwards, they hid off the road until dark. When darkness came, they continued east through the wash until they came to the Southern Pacific tracks, which they followed either back into Gleeson or out of town, leaving no footprints on the tracks. Interestingly, Lockett's dog followed the murderers into their hiding place and as far as the railroad tracks, then headed back to Lockett's home, where it was waiting when investigators arrived.

On Wednesday, when Lockett had failed to appear either to pick up his delivery in Courtland or back at home, searchers went looking for him, following his wagon tracks up into the wash. When they saw the tracks leave the road and followed them, they found his body, still tied by the rope around his neck and attached to the wagon.

Two men were arrested in Gleeson, but since no money was found and no other evidence connected them, they were released. Neither the murderers nor the money was ever found. It is possible it was those two and that they got away with murder and robbery. It is also possible that the real murderers walked right out of town on the railroad tracks east into the valley and made a clean getaway.

Lockett was buried in the Gleeson cemetery on Friday, February 28, 1913. Two Mexican men were later arrested, but then released. Months later, in an entirely different murder investigation, a man named Luthor Price claimed that he knew the men who had killed Lockett, but he was found to be an inveterate liar, and his testimony was discounted. While the county board of supervisors offered



first a \$100 and then a \$250 reward for information leading to the apprehension of his killers they were never found, and the murder of Royal Richard Lockett remains unsolved to this day.

The current road between Gleeson and Courtland circles around the south end of the mountains, then turns north past Maud Hill and up into Courtland. That road, however, was not completed until about a month after this tragic story took place. Before that, the trip from Gleeson to Courtland went up High Lonesome Road for just over a mile, then turned right and cut east over the Southern Pacific tracks through what is now called "Dead Mexican Canyon". As is evident from the name, this sandy divide was the scene of several ambushes, robberies, and murders over the years. According to Deputy Sheriff John Bright, the tracks in the