PHIPPS Amelia Selina Murdered

A murder report extracted from The Brisbane Courier, Friday 31 October 1873.

FRIGHTFUL TRAGEDY NEAR GLOUCESTER.

A FEARFUL tragedy has occurred at Newnham, in the Forest of Dean. A young farmer named Edward Butt murdered a young lady by shooting her, because she had of late rejected his addresses. The particulars of the sad event are thus given by the Bristol Post: The murderer is about 22 years of age. He is the son of a respectable farmer, but since the sudden death of his father about two years ago, he has lived with his mother at what is called the Church Farm. He is the eldest son of a numerous family, and since his father's death he has managed his mother's farm for her , and indeed, has been the principal stay of the family. His victim was named Amelia Selina Phipps, and she lived with her brother, Mr Thomas Phipps, at a farm called the West-end Farm, some 200 yards from the Butts, upon the other side of the church. Her parents, we believe, keep a farm near Stroud. She was a fine, handsome girl, and peculiarly amiable in her disposition. Butt had been paying his addresses to her for more than twelve months, but his feelings of affection were not warmly reciprocated. It is said that there was another and more favored (sic) suitor. Notwithstanding the coolness with which his attentions were received, Butt still continued to visit her, and they walked out together occasionally.

Last Sunday week Butt's jealousy was aroused by the poor girl refusing to accompany him to an adjacent village. A quarrel ensued, and words were uttered by the deceased which appeared to have stung Butt very much. Sunday was Arlingham 'feast,' and the occasion gave rise to a little merry making. A few friends from a distance paid a visit to the Phippses. Butt and the deceased were out in company with the others in the early part of the evening. He accompanied her to her brother's house between 8 and 9 o'clock. After the friends had gone away, Butt was left alone with the deceased. He tried to persuade her to go with him to Gloucester the next day, but she flatly refused to accede to his request, having promised to accompany her brother in law thither. He asked her a second time if she would go with him to Gloucester, and again she refused. Thereupon he threatened to stab her. The poor girl became frightened, and called to her brother-in-law, Mr Merritt, who was in the house, and he came out upon the lawn and remonstrated with Butt.

As Mr Merritt walked away, the deceased was heard to tell Butt that she would never go out with him again. These were the last words the unfortunate girl spoke, for in about a minute afterwards Merritt was startled by the report of a gun close at hand. It was almost dark at the time, but on running to the spot where the deceased, who wore a

white dress, had been standing a moment before, Mr Merritt was horrified at seeing her lying on the green sward struggling in the agonies of death. He shouted for assistance to some neighbors (sic) named Watkins, who lived within earshot, saying "Mrs Watkins, for God's sake come here!" Watkins and his wife were just in time to hear Butt jump over a wall into an orchard that adjoined Mr Phipps's farmhouse, then run across the orchard, get through the hedge into the road just by Watkins' house, and run at the top of his speed down the road in the direction of the Severn.

When the murdered girl was picked up and removed to the house, it was found that the charge had entered her neck just below the ear, and passed through the throat in an upward direction, carrying away a portion of the lower jaw. Some shots were found to have penetrated the fingers of one of her hands, as though, seeing the deadly weapon pointed at her by the murderer, she had raised her hand to save herself. The girl expired in less than five minutes after the tragic occurrence. Owing to the dreadful nature of the wounds, she was unable to articulate a word. Search being made for the weapon, a single barrelled gun, which had been newly discharged, was found upon the grass near the spot where Miss Phipps had fallen. It was identified as belonging to Butt. It seems that Butt fetched the gun from his mother's farm some half hour before the murder. Butt is supposed to have committed suicide by jumping into the Severn.

Article Transcribed by Don Cameron

Forest of Dean Family Hitory
http://www.forest-of-dean.net