

## HISTORY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

On March 7, 1906, the Deseret News in their "DO YOU REMEMBER 10 YEARS AGO TODAY" Section wrote "Mrs. Rose Browning was held without bail upon a charge of having poisoned Alvin Green a South Cottonwood farmer." What were the circumstances behind this charge that made headlines for many days from Ogden on the north to Vernal on the east?

## ANSWER TO HISTORY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

During the morning of February 29, 1896, Alvin Washington Green, a prominent Butlerville resident stumbled into Maxfield's Saloon on the road north of Murray, complaining that he didn't feel well and begged for a place to lie down. He was allowed to lie down in a back room. Late in the afternoon when someone checked on him, he was dead. A local doctor was called to the scene and claimed that he had probably been dead three or four hours and the likely cause of death was from alcoholism.

The Salt Lake Tribune on Mar 4, 1896 detailed the following account. Because of statements by the man's family that he wasn't a heavy drinker and, ". . . the great excitement and a large amount of talk" caused by Green's mysterious death, Judge Sanders opened a thorough investigation. It was learned, Green and a neighbor Andrews while in Ogden came in contact with a women named Rose Browning, aka "Black Rose", who asked if she could ride with them to Murray. The two men had about \$50.00 between them. They stopped at Thiedes Saloon (the saloon where Thiede killed his wife) on the road to the Murray Smelter. Mike Hall known as "Slaughter House Mike," was behind the bar. He testified as to the goings on that night and that Green, Andrews and Browning ended up falling asleep in the Saloon. The following morning Browning had disappeared, Andrews had managed to make it home but didn't know how he got there and all the money he had was 25 cents. Green had to be aroused, all of his money was gone and he wasn't seen again until he entered into Maxfield's Saloon. It was also learned that Rose Browning was a known "morphine fiend" and had been seen several times shooting morphine with a hypodermic needle into her arm. Judge Sanders ordered her held on suspicion of Murder, for poisoning Green and stealing his money.

The case went to the Grand Jury where the doctor doing the autopsy, testified that he suspected poisoning and sent the stomach contents to be analyzed. The chemist who received those contents believed that he was poisoned but couldn't state that for fact because the county wouldn't pay for the analysis. Other expert witnesses also testified that they felt Green's behavior was from

poisoning and not alcoholism. Without the analysis of the stomach contents, the Grand Jury felt that there was insufficient evidence to charge Browning and on March 24, 1896, she was set free, leaving Green's death still a mystery.

Alvin W. Green lived on the hillside north of the old paper mill and left behind a wife and nine children. Besides being a farmer, he owned mines and a saw mill, in Big Cottonwood Canyon and there is a basin in Big Cottonwood Canyon named after him.