

Historical Clippings

Three Lakes Museum

November 2023

Searching Local Newspapers

And Watching the Details of a Story Unfold

Not all of Three Lakes history has been retold or published or saved in the museum archives. One way to uncover "new" old stories is to go through local newspaper collections. This search could be general or direct and can sometimes lead to unexpected results. This story of a Three Lakes hunting tragedy in 1912 is a great example. Read through the articles and see how the details emerge.

A special thanks to Les Anderson for doing all of the footwork on this story!

**SET GUN FATAL
TO SUPERIOR MAN**

SUPERIOR, Wis., Nov. 5.—Stumbling over a hidden "set" gun, Stanley R. Currie, 22, principal of the Three Lakes, Wis., school, was killed Sunday.

It is believed that Currie unsuspectingly walked into the hidden instrument of death in the thick brush, and received the full charge.

The use of set guns is against the law and prosecution is expected.

"SET" GUN TAKES A LIFE

Stanley R. Currie, Principal of Three Lakes School, Victim of Illegal Practice by Hunters.

Stumbling over a hidden "set" gun in the woods about two miles north of Three Lakes, Stanley R. Currie of Superior, principal of the Three Lakes school, was fatally wounded early Sunday morning and died a few hours later.

Currie, with a companion, Frank Nemetz of Manitowoc, was hunting when the accident occurred. Currie was walking along a well marked deer runway not four hundred feet from the main highway when he unsuspectingly walked into the hidden instrument of death placed in the thick brush, and received the full charge of both barrels in the thighs. He was removed to Three Lakes and medical aid called but little could be done to relieve his suffering. Death followed a few hours later. Currie was only a few feet from the muzzle of the gun when it was discharged.

The inquest will be held at Rhinelander Thursday. Some interesting explanations are expected to be made in regard to the disappearance of the weapon which was supposed to have been placed in the rig with the injured man after the shooting. Public sentiment at Three Lakes is deeply aroused over the shooting and in all probability some arrests will be made after the inquest.

Stanley R. Currie, Principal of Three Lakes School, Victim of Illegal Practice by Hunters.

The Vilas County News (Eagle River, Wisconsin) Wed, 06 Nov 1912, p5

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Stanley R. Currey, Principal At Three Lakes, Victim Of Tragedy

The New North (Rhinelander, Wisconsin) Thu, 07 Nov 1912, p4.

Stanley R. Curry, principal of the schools at Three Lakes, this county was fatally shot by the discharge of a set gun while hunting three miles north of Three Lakes at six o'clock Sunday morning. Mr. Curry was in the company of Frank Nentz of Manitowoc when the shooting occurred. The gun responsible for the accident was no doubt heavily loaded as the charge shattered both of the unfortunate man's legs. Mr. Nentz immediately secured assistance and Mr. Curry was removed to Three Lakes where his injuries were dressed by Dr. Thorpe. The shock! however, proved too much for him to withstand and he died at about one o'clock Sunday afternoon.

The gun which caused Mr. Curry's death had evidently been placed in the woods for the purpose of killing deer. It was a trap arrangement, the trigger connected by a wire to concealed spring. The parties who set the gun are not known although the people of Three Lakes are said to have their suspicions as to who the guilty ones are.

Immediately after the shooting J.H. Korzilius and M.H. Thompson, deputy sheriffs at Three Lakes, went to the scene, but were unable to find the gun, although the wire and other evidence of the death trap were visible. It is believed that whoever placed the gun in the woods either saw or afterward learned of the shooting and hastened to remove the weapon before the officers arrived.

SET GUN CAUSES TEACHER'S DEATH

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The shooting of Mr. Curry caused intense excitement at Three Lakes and the people there are reported to be greatly worked up over the affair.

Mr. Nenutz, Mr. Curry's partner, said of the tragedy, "I was about fifty feet in the rear of Mr. Curry when I heard the report of a gun. I had flushed a bird a short time before and thinking that he had fired at the same bird made my way in his direction. Mr. Curry lay on the ground badly hurt and when I came up to him he remarked, 'You shot me.' For the time being I really did not know how it happened and upon examining my gun and his found that both were still loaded. I at once thought of the injured man's comfort and went for help. When I came back with assistance Mr. Curry said that he had been shot by a set gun tied to a tree."

It was during the time that the victim was being removed to Three Lakes and before the appearance of the officers on the spot where the shooting occurred that this gun disappeared.

Stanley Robert Curry
 Stanley Robert Curry was twenty-two years of age and was born at Superior. He was a graduate of the Superior High school and the state Normal school at that city. He had

SET GUN CAUSES TEACHERS' DEATH
 (CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE)
 also taken some work at Wisconsin University. Mr. Curry was an energetic, clean cut young man and gave every promise of a bright future. This was his first term as principal of the Three Lakes schools. He was ambitiously working to earn money with which to take a course at the University.
 Deceased is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Curry of Superior, two sisters and one brother. His mother and brother went to Three Lakes and took the remains to Superior for interment.
 The death of this young man, who was cut down in the very dawn of his career, is one of the saddest and most shocking to ever occur in Oneida county.

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The Grand Rapids Tribune (Grand Rapids [Wisconsin Rapids], Wisconsin)
Wed, 13 Nov 1912, p8

Rhineland New North--Stanley R. Curry, principal of the schools at Three Lakes, this county was fatally shot by the discharge of a set gun while hunting three miles north of Three Lakes at six o'clock Sunday morning. Mr. Curry was in the company of Frank Nenutz of Manitowish when the shooting occurred. The gun responsible for the accident was no doubt heavily loaded as the charge shattered both of the unfortunate man's legs. Mr. Nenutz immediately secured assistance and Mr. Curry was removed to Three Lakes where his injuries were dressed by Dr. Thorpe. The shock however, proved too much for him to with. stand and he died at about one o'clock Sunday afternoon. The gun which caused Mr. Curry's death had evidently been placed in the woods for the purpose of killing deer. It was a trap arrangement, the trigger connected by a wire to a concealed spring. The parties who set the gun are not known although the people of Three Lakes are said to have their suspicions as to who the guilty ones are.

HOLD WUNDERLICH FOR MAN'S DEATH Coroner's Jury Finds- He Set Gun Which Took Life Of Stanley Currie

Rex J. Wunderlich, a prominent farmer and hotel keeper of Three Lakes, was arrested Saturday afternoon on the charge of having placed the set gun which caused the death of Stanley R. Currie, the Three Lakes school principal, on Sunday, November 3.

Wunderlich's arrest followed the verdict of the coroner's jury that investigated the shooting of Currie. The inquest was conducted in this city Saturday afternoon by Coroner Chas. Decanter. The Jury after the completion of testimony found that the gun which ended-the life of Mr. Currie was placed in the woods by Wunderlich. Their verdict was as follows:

"That said S.R. Currie came to his death at a place about 3 miles north of the village of Three Lakes, Oneida county on the 3rd day of November, 1912, at about 6:45 a.m. Further that the deceased came to his death by being shot by a set gun, said set gun having been set and placed in position by R.J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes."

Wunderlich is held on a charge of manslaughter. His bail was placed at \$5000 which was furnished late a Saturday night. His hearing was adjourned until Saturday, Nov. 20.

At the inquest three witnesses were examined, R.J. Wunderlich, W.J. Neu and Archie Nelson. The witnesses were not permitted to hear each other's testimony. It was chiefly through the testimony of Archie Nelson, a youth, that Wunderlich was held. Nelson testified to being with Wunderlich when he placed the death trap, which killed Currie, in the woods. The gun, Nelson stated, was set on the Saturday before the tragedy. The boy's admission was secured through the efforts of Sheriff Crofoot and District Attorney Fricke, who by shrewdly questioning Nelson in private gained from him the startling evidence.

Wunderlich is a resident of Three Lakes and well known throughout the county. He has many business interests in this county and elsewhere. He formerly lived in Antigo.

The New North (Eagle River, Wisconsin) **Thu, 14 Nov 1912, p1**

FORMER APPLETON MAN HELD ON SERIOUS CHARGE

R. J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes Accused of Setting Set-gun in the Woods Near Three Lakes—Stanley Currie Is Shot and Dies from Injuries.

Rhineland, Wis., Nov. 12.—The corner's jury on the shooting case in which Stanley Currie was shot at Three Lakes on Nov. 3, reported on Saturday that Currie met his death from a set gun that had been placed by R. J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes. Wunderlich is held under bonds of \$5,000, which will be furnished. Currie was a school teacher and lived at Superior. The injury to Currie was in the leg and he might have been saved if surgical aid had been handy. As it was he bled to death before the artery was tied up.

The testimony at the inquest Thursday brought out the following facts: Currie and Nemetz started out hunting Sunday morning and had gone about 2 miles up the Eagle River road and were on a run way when Currie was shot. He first accused Nemetz of shooting him and Nemetz denied it, showing his gun, and said Currie had shot himself. This was found to be untrue and Currie told Nemetz to get help. Nemetz ran until he met Archie Nelson and they went to Jim Nelson's house where a wagon was hitched up and the three started back to Currie meeting R. J. Wunderlich on the way and taking him with them.

At the scene of the tragedy a set gun was found hid in the bushes. It was a double barreled shot gun loaded with shells filled with metal jacketed bullets which had torn an awful gash in Currie's legs. The gun was set upon wooden props and a very fine wire had been strung across the runway. The bullets struck Currie in the left leg and passed through to the other leg, about six inches below the hips, smashing the bones and muscular tissues.

Currie was put in the wagon and the men started back to Three Lakes with him. Wunderlich being told to get the gun of Currie and the set gun and put them in the wagon with Currie. It was supposed this was done and the wagon started, Wunderlich not going but starting in the opposite direction. About this time Deputy Sheriff Korzelius approached and met Wunderlich on the road and asked about the set gun and Wunderlich said he had put it in the wagon. Search of the wagon failed to find the set gun and it has not yet been located.

Currie was taken to his boarding place where he died from loss of blood, little if any effort being made to tie up his wound until a physician arrived.

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Appleton Weekly Post (Appleton, Wisconsin) Thu, 14 Nov 1912, p1.

Wunderlicht Up For Trial.
The trial of Rex Wunderlicht of Three Lakes, charged with having put out a set gun which killed Stanley Currie last fall, will be held at Rhineland this week before Judge A. H. Reid.

The Vilas County News (Eagle River, Wisconsin) Wed, 05 Mar 1913, p4

WUNDERLICH JURY SAYS NOT GUILTY

The New North (Rhineland, Wisconsin) Thu, 13 Mar 1913, p1

After being out seven hours the jury in the case of R.J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes, charged with manslaughter, returned a verdict of not guilty at about 8 o'clock Tuesday night.

Wunderlich was accused of setting the gun which caused the death of Stanley Curry, the principal of schools in Three Lakes, early last November. The defendant was represented by Attorney T.W. Hogan of Antigo and Judge H.F. Steele of this city. District Attorney O'Melia, was for the state and was assisted by Attorney Chas. Fricke.

The case occupied about four days and attracted intense interest.

Archie Nelson, the lad who was charged with an offense similar to that of Wunderlich. being accused of implication in the same case, was dismissed on motion of the district attorney who deemed the evidence insufficient to convict.

HELD ON \$10,000 BOND

Rex J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes Held on Charge of Having Set Gun Which Killed Stanley Currie

Rex J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes, waived examination last week when brought up before Judge Walker at Rhineland on the charge of having set a gun which killed Stanley M. Currie, school principal of Three Lakes. He was bound over to the circuit court of Oneida county under bond of \$10,000. The set gun was discharged by Currie who was partridge hunting Sunday, Nov. 3rd a mile and a half north of Three Lakes. Its fatal result created strong feeling in the village and careful investigation brought to light startling evidence.

The Vilas County News (Eagle River, Wisconsin) Wed, 04 Dec 1912, p5

ACQUITTED!

R. J. Wunderlich of Three Lakes had his trial at Rhineland the past week. It was claimed that Wunderlich set a gun in the woods near his home which killed S.R. Currie, principal of the schools of Three Lakes. At the time of the killing, one Nelson, sixteen years old, said that the gun had been set by Wunderlich, and that he saw him while in the act. At the trial Nelson denied this story saying that he had been frightened into telling the story by the sheriff. Besides Wundealich was able to prove an alibi on the day Nelson said he saw him set the gun. The jury acquitted Wunderlich.

Wausau Pilot (Wausau, Wisconsin) Tue, 18 Mar 1913, p1