

ANTONE PRINCE

The morning of December 21, 1890 – a Sunday and the first day of winter – Augustus E. Dodge and Levi Savage departed Toquerville for New Harmony. Buffeted by a strong, cold north wind, the thoroughly chilled duo arrived at length at the ranch of Orren Kelsey, a few miles south of their destination, where they gratefully took temporary refuge from the elements. After an hour, warmed by the hospitality of their hosts and a good meal, Dodge and Savage resumed their journey and reached New Harmony just after the noon church meeting had ended.¹

Dodge presided over the 9th Quorum of Seventies – which encompassed New Harmony as well as Toquerville – and had received a directive from Church leaders in Salt Lake City that he should select four or five of his seventies for missionary labors.² The pressure put on the Church by the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 outlawing polygamy had caused a slowdown in missionary activity, but after the October 1890 Manifesto officially removed Church sanction for plural marriage, missionary efforts picked up immediately and continued to accelerate throughout the decade.³

¹ Savage, Levi, “Diary of Levi Savage,” (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.), entry of 21 December 1890.

² Ibid. The *Seventies* in the LDS Church are an ordained office in the Melchizedek Priesthood; they are elders with a special call and ordination “to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world.” See *D. & C. 107:25*.

³ LDS Church Missionary Department. 1528 missionaries were set apart from 1890-1894 – a 30% increase over the previous five years; 4128 were set apart from 1895-1899.

After Dodge and Savage arrived in New Harmony, Bishop William Redd appointed a meeting “at early candlelight” to enable them to find “a couple” of New Harmony seventies to serve on a mission. James F. Prince, one of the few seventies to attend the meeting, was interviewed by the leaders and seemed to be willing to go.⁴ However, four days later on Christmas Day, Savage returned to New Harmony and was notified in writing that neither Prince nor James Edgar Taylor were prepared to “take a preaching mission” and could not be ready in “less than 6 months or a year.”⁵

The decision to go was far easier for the unmarried Taylor than for Prince, who was married, had two children – James Lorenzo and Clara – under the age of four, and had lost an infant child in August of that year. After making necessary preparations, Taylor left for the Southern States in May 1891, where he served for slightly more than two years. On June 5, one month after Taylor’s departure, James and Sarah Prince had another baby boy – George Lawrence; three weeks later James was set apart by George Reynolds for a mission to the Northern States, leaving his wife with three small children and the responsibility of running their cattle ranch.⁶ His mission was cut short by ill health, however, and he returned after only four months.

Over the next few years he became a well-known cattleman and, on November 14, 1896, had another son – Antone Benjamin. Everything seemed to be going well until a fateful day shortly before Antone reached his second birthday. At noon on October 4, 1898, James and his friend Albert Mathis left town to go deer hunting on Pine Valley Mountain. The next morning they set out, without their horses, and agreed to meet at

⁴ Savage, *ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, entry of 25 December 1890.

⁶ “Harmony Ward Record,” entry for 1891.

noon at a specified place in the woods. Mathis arrived on schedule but there was no sign of his friend. There were, however, deer tracks and footprints, and Mathis assumed that Prince was stalking his prey.

When Prince didn't show up in camp the following morning, Mathis started out in search of him. A short time later he found his friend lying face down with his gun beside him. Since no wounds were observable, it was assumed that he died from heart failure – perhaps a result of the same ailment that had curtailed his mission seven years previous.

Mathis returned to town to summon help in retrieving the body, which had to be carried three miles since there were no roads through the woods. “The sad affair is a severe shock to his wife, children and relatives,” reported the Salt Lake City *Deseret Evening News*.⁷ A hastily prepared funeral was held the day after the body was returned, and “Owing to the lateness of the hour, services were necessarily brief.”⁸

It was the second time in three years that tragedy struck Frank Prince's family: In March 1895, Edward Kelsey died, leaving Frank's only daughter, Eliza, a widow with two small children; and now he had lost James, his firstborn. For several years, James' widow Sarah took care of both family and field, aided greatly by her older children. Antone, too young to be of much help in doing chores, became very attached to his mother and would frequently return early from playing with other children to comfort her in her loneliness. Once, when Sarah was so ill that she couldn't raise herself from her

⁷ *Deseret Evening News*, Tuesday, October 18, 1898. Several different versions of James F. Prince's death developed through the years, but the newspaper story is the only contemporary account and must be considered to be highly accurate.

⁸ “New Harmony Sacrament Meeting Minutes,” HDC, 7 October 1898.

sickbed, little Antone saved her life by extinguishing a fire that had started when a pine ember popped on the floor and began to burn the carpet.⁹

In 1902, Sarah Prince married Reese Davis of nearby Kanarraville, who always was known by his four stepchildren as “Uncle Reese.” The Davis home was one of the biggest and best in New Harmony. In addition to normal living quarters and two bedrooms downstairs as well as upstairs, there was a store in the front portion of the house, known as “Aunt Sarah’s Store,” that was stocked with general merchandise, particularly canned foods.¹⁰ Sarah would take an empty wagon as far away as Lund – a small town about fifty miles north on the Union Pacific Railroad line – and return loaded with goods ticketed for resale.¹¹ It was a valuable service for the residents of New Harmony, who otherwise would have to travel to Cedar City to purchase simple necessities.

As a teenager Antone already had shown himself worthy of carrying on his grandfather’s tradition as a sharpshooter. On a rabbit hunt between one team of fourteen men from Harmony and another from Kanarraville and Cedar City, Jack Isabell from Cedar said he’d bet a hundred dollars that he could outshoot any man from the Harmony team. Albert Mathis grabbed Antone by the arm and said, “Here’s a kid who can outshoot you for a thousand dollars. He can shoot rings around you, Jack Isabell.” Isabell backed down – fortunately for him – and Antone bagged 148 rabbits, easily outpacing all others from either team.¹²

⁹ Interview with Juanita Davis Williams Kossen by Clayton Prince, 29 June, 1994.

¹⁰ Many people in the small town were related in some fashion, and it was quite common to refer to one’s elders as aunt or uncle regardless of the relation.

¹¹ Interview with Clayton Prince and Virginia Anderson by author, 27 May 2000.

¹² Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

Most outsiders would scoff at a place where one of the major events was a rabbit hunt, but as a matter of fact there really wasn't much in New Harmony other than gardens, fields, orchards, and livestock – and, of course, rabbits. The population was shrinking: Harmony Ward in 1900 (which accounted for virtually the entire town) had 130 members, 39 of whom were children under the age of eight; by the time the U.S. Census was taken in 1910, the population was only 104.¹³ With its isolated location, there was little in New Harmony that would give most non-residents reason to take notice of the hamlet.

As would be expected under the circumstances, New Harmony was late to enter the twentieth century in a technological sense. For example, though the first telephones arrived in Utah in 1880, just five years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the device, telephone service did not arrive in southern Utah until late 1903 – and even then, in New Harmony, it consisted of one central telephone with others connected by a party line on which anyone could (and did) eavesdrop. Each person had a different code, such as one or two rings, perhaps a short and a long, but it would be heard on each phone in town, an open invitation to all interested parties. When asked if she ever engaged in the eavesdropping, Antone Prince's daughter Virginia chuckled and replied, "It was something else to behold, I'll tell ya!"¹⁴

¹³ "Harmony Ward Manuscript History," entry for year 1900; 1910 United States Census.

¹⁴ Leonard, Glen M., *A History of Davis County*, (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1998), 277; interview with Virginia Prince by author, 9 August 1997.

Electrical service was available in Salt Lake City in 1880, in Cedar City in 1907, and in St. George in 1909, but did not become a reality in New Harmony until 1927.¹⁵

Through the years without electricity most houses were illuminated by kerosene lamps, though Antone Prince and one other resident had carbide lighting systems in which water dripped over the carbide granules in a tank in the washhouse producing acetylene gas; the gas was then piped into a lamp and ignited, producing a brilliant light with little or no odor, though the washhouse smelled terrible.¹⁶

Although they had been on the streets of Salt Lake City as early as 1899, the first automobile arrived in Cedar City in 1907 and still later in New Harmony.¹⁷ In the first years of the new century, New Harmony farmers had to haul their grain to the gristmill at Cedar City by wagon and return home with the flour, usually a day later. One day while returning from the Cedar mill with a load of flour, Donald Schmutz met Frank Prince's son Joe, who was riding alone on horseback. After a few minutes they noticed a "slow moving jitney," the first Ford they had seen in their part of the country, traveling south at a rate of about fifteen miles per hour on the old road that was used by the pioneers when they settled the town. The jitney didn't seem so slow, however, as they fixed their stare on the dusty wake of the disappearing vehicle. "Look at that damn thing," exclaimed Joe in utter amazement. "It's way ahead of me down the country, and I have just been here talking with you for a few minutes. I am going to have one!"¹⁸

¹⁵ Alder, Douglas D., and Karl F. Brooks, *A History of Washington County*, (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1996), 252; Seegmiller, Janet Burton, *A History of Iron County*, (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1996), 99.

¹⁶ Interview with Clayton Prince and Virginia Anderson by author, 27 May 2000.

¹⁷ Seegmiller, *ibid.*

¹⁸ "Reminiscence of Donald Schmutz," interview with Donald Schmutz by Inez Cooper, Special Collections, Southern Utah University, autumn 1982.

Joe Prince was up to his word and bought the first automobile in New Harmony. There was no greater attraction in town, as the people lined up to pay ten cents a mile for a ride in the new motor-car.¹⁹ Others gradually took the plunge, but change, as usual, came slowly to New Harmony, and horse and buggy as well as team-drawn wagons were still in use for many years.

However gradual the conversion to the automobile, residents of New Harmony greatly benefited by its presence when required to travel to other communities, a frequent event after their schoolchildren completed the eighth grade. For many years a one-room white framed structure, built in 1875, served as both church and school house as well as an entertainment center for dances and community functions. In the small school, education was available only through the eighth grade, but when a Presbyterian seminary was established in Parowan in June 1890, Lemuel Redd decided to send his daughters Ellen and Maria Luella to its school for additional education.²⁰

By the time Antone Prince finished his education at the Harmony school in 1910, the norm was to leave home and attend high school in St. George, where the student would live during the school year. After finishing high school, Antone remained in St. George to attend Dixie College, founded in 1911 under the name "St. George Stake Academy." His second year at Dixie College was cut short after he met and, on November 25, 1915, married Vilate Cottam, the eleventh of twelve children of George Thomas Cottam and a granddaughter of Thomas Cottam, a well-known furniture maker whose chairs were

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Adams, Maria Luella Redd, *Memories*, 56.

purchased by Brigham Young for his Salt Lake Valley homes and also were used in the St. George Temple after its completion in 1877.²¹

Returning to New Harmony, the couple lived with Sarah and Reese Davis while their own home was being built. It wasn't a popular move as far as Juanita – the eldest of Sarah and Reese's three daughters – was concerned. Jealousy probably was involved, since Juanita and Antone had been very close, but a genuine and mutual dislike existed for many years between Vilate and Juanita: Among other things, Juanita didn't think that Vilate was good enough for her favorite brother, while Vilate was understandably perturbed by twelve year-old Nita's practice of climbing on the door and peering through the transit to the bedroom to spy on newlywed activities.²²

As soon as possible, Antone and Vilate moved into their new house and ranch, nearly two miles north of town, which comprised a total of about 220 acres on a gentle slope known as the Harmony Bench. A spring that once flowed near their house had dwindled and the house was too far from town to be hooked up to their water supply, so Antone and his brother James Lorenzo (Low) tapped a spring in the foothills of Pine Valley Mountain and ran a one-inch diameter galvanized steel pipeline – buried at least eighteen inches deep to prevent freezing – three-and-a-half miles along the side of the mountain to Antone's ranch. "You might say I'm a pioneer in that respect," Antone recalled modestly of his massive effort.²³

After a short stint of raising hogs with his brother Low, Antone decided that there was a greater opportunity to be found in sheep. He bought five hundred head of registered

²¹ Barker, Marilyn Conover, *The Legacy of Mormon Furniture*, (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith Publisher, 1995), 98.

²² Interview with Clayton Prince and Virginia Anderson by author, 27 May 2000.

²³ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott, 22 April 1975.

ewes in Parowan and grazed them on Harmony Mountain through the summer. It was a fiasco. “They were just home-raised sheep and they scattered like flies,” Antone remembered.²⁴ That actually turned out for the best, for another type of livestock proved to be far more profitable in New Harmony.

Angora goats evolved on the Anatolian plateau of Turkey near the city of Ankara, from which the name "Angora" is derived. Though the goats were introduced into Spain and France in the sixteenth century, it was not until 1849 that they were introduced to the United States and sometime between 1910 and 1915 to the Harmony Valley. The value of the goats lay in their lustrous, long coat called mohair, the distinctive properties of which have made it a highly desired and durable fiber for both clothing and home furnishings. Not only was the product valuable, but the goats were especially well adapted for the area around New Harmony due to their dry mountain origin in Turkey where, as in New Harmony, the summers are hot and the winters cold with limited rainfall.

Antone went into the Angora goat business at about the time the United States entered the First World War. After selling the few sheep that hadn't run off, he borrowed the remainder of the needed capital to purchase a herd of goats in Parowan. The agreed upon selling price of \$3.75 a head for the ewes was raised unilaterally by the seller at the last minute to \$4.25, but enough money was made in the first year of shearing the mohair to cover the entire debt.

With the Angora goat business beginning to thrive, New Harmony was on the road to prosperity. As the United States entered into the World War I, an enormous market

²⁴ Ibid.

for agricultural goods was created, helping southern Utah farmers to prosper as never before. But as the war ended the market for foodstuffs decreased as quickly as it had ascended, bringing hard times to farmers. The mohair industry, on the other hand, was thriving, making it look even more attractive to those who were struggling working the land.

All fifteen New Harmony men who fought in the war returned safely, but the town was not so fortunate in fighting the great flu epidemic.²⁵ On the morning of March 11, 1918 – exactly eight months before the armistice was signed to end World War I – an Army private at Fort Riley, Kansas, reported to the camp hospital complaining of fever, sore throat, and headache. By noon, the hospital had dealt with more than one hundred soldiers suffering from a particularly virulent influenza. The disease quickly spread throughout the world, striking early and with such great killing efficiency in Spain that it became known as the Spanish Flu. The worldwide pandemic took the lives of between 30 and 40 million people, including an estimated 675,000 Americans. In New Harmony, Ruth Prince, the wife of Antone’s brother Lawrence, died during the epidemic as did Andrew Schmutz’s wife Cecil, and nearly everyone else became violently ill.²⁶

Fighting the dual foes of Germany in the war and the flu in the epidemic was a great unifying force for the town. Particularly during the epidemic, heroes emerged such as Sarah Davis, who spent the better part of two flu seasons running from one house to another to care for those who were most in need. But the unity was shattered and the

²⁵ “Reminiscence of Donald Schmutz,” interview with Donald Schmutz by Inez Cooper, Special Collections, Southern Utah University, autumn 1982.

²⁶ Both Cecil and Ruth left infant daughters; Vilate Prince nursed both girls along with her own two month-old son, Clayton, and thereafter referred to herself as “The Jersey Cow.”

Prince family divided by events of the next couple of years. Never before – not even at the time of the Mountain Meadows Massacre and the trial of John D. Lee – had such attention been focused on New Harmony.

It all centered around Frank Kelsey who, like his first cousin Antone Prince, was not quite two years old when his father died. Though Frank was three years older than Antone, a bond was forged between the cousins that seemed to be unbreakable. Frank married Lottie Ballard of Grafton in 1913, about two years before Antone married Vilate Cottam, and before long Lottie and Vilate were best friends.

Frank and Lottie Kelsey had two children when their third child, Bevin, died on February 21, 1921, at the age of one month. Nine months later, on or about December 1, Frank was said to have come home about noon and to have prepared dinner while Lottie was doing the family washing, though he later denied doing so. Shortly thereafter Lottie suffered from severe cramps, abdominal pains, and vomiting. After lingering at home without improvement in health for about a week, she was taken to the hospital at Cedar City.²⁷

Dr. M. J. Macfarlane examined Lottie, who was four months pregnant, and concluded that she suffered from eclampsia, or “toxemia pregnancy.” The major sign of eclampsia – convulsive seizures of unknown cause that occur between the twentieth week of pregnancy and the end of the first week postpartum – seemed consistent with Lottie’s symptoms, and Dr. Macfarlane deemed it necessary to terminate the pregnancy.

²⁷ “Toxicological Investigation in Respect to the Death of Mrs. Lottie Kelsey,” Washington County Court Records.

The operation was to no avail, however, and on December 17, 1921, Lottie Kelsey died.²⁸

That would have been the end of the story had not poison appeared five months later in the water at the home of his grandfather, Frank Prince, where Frank Kelsey's mother Eliza had lived since becoming a widow in 1895. In a front-page article on May 11, 1922, the *Washington County News* recorded an account of the event under the headline, "Dastardly Poisoning at New Harmony:"

It appears from what the county officials learned that Mrs. [Eliza] Kelsey was preparing breakfast at the home of her father, Francis [Frank] Prince, one of the best known and most highly respected residents of New Harmony. She made some coffee and on tasting it noticed it was bitter. She threw it out and made some more when Mr. Prince came in; he tasted the freshly made coffee and said at once "strychnine," the poison having apparently been placed in the kettle.

After breakfast they went to the stable to water the horses out of a trough. Twenty minutes after drinking, the horses died, apparently of poisoning.²⁹

A water sample was taken from the trough and sent to state chemist Herman Harms in Salt Lake City for analysis. Frank Prince, the tests showed, was correct in his supposition that the water used to make his coffee had been laced with strychnine. Washington County Sheriff Wilford Goff concluded that it was a "premeditated attempt to kill the Prince family," though he had no clues and found it hard to believe that anyone would want to harm Frank Prince, the well-liked patriarch of the community.³⁰

²⁸ *Washington County News*, 5 April 1923.

²⁹ *Washington County News*, 11 May 1922.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

But suspicions quickly fell upon Frank Kelsey, who within the week was arrested and brought before Justice Ellis Pickett to hear the charges against him:

That the said Defendant Frank P. Kelsey on the 7th day of May A.D. 1922 at Washington County State of Utah, did willfully, unlawfully and feloniously mingle poison, to-wit, Strychnine with water with the intent then and there that the same should be taken by Eliza Kelsey, Francis Prince and Elizabeth Prince then and there to their injury.³¹

Whatever evidence the authorities may have had was not released to the public, but that mattered little to the New Harmony gossip mill as it shifted immediately into high gear. The case of the State vs. Frank P. Kelsey was called in the district court in early September, four months after his arrest, but the state was “unable to furnish much needed evidence and asked for a continuance of the case.”³² Then, in a major surprise, prosecuting attorney W.B. Higgins asked that the body of Lottie Kelsey be exhumed to see if her death resulted from poison.

State Chemist Herman Harms once again was called upon and determined that Lottie Kelsey had enough arsenic in her system at the time of her death to have died from the poison.³³ Within a month, Frank Kelsey, who had been free on bail, was arrested for the murder of his wife. Early on, the *Washington County News* printed that it had intended to

³¹ “The State of Utah vs. Frank P. Kelsey,” the Fifth Judicial District Court of Washington County Utah, 15 May 1922.

³² *Washington County News*, 14 September 1922.

³³ “Toxicological Investigation in Respect to the Death of Mrs. Lottie Kelsey,” Washington County Court Records.

give a full account of the preliminary hearing of the case but had decided against doing so because “it appears that there may be difficulty in securing a jury to try the case.”³⁴

All of southern Utah was captivated by the case. The proceedings would take place in the Washington County Court House, a boxy, two-story building, completed in 1870, about thirty-six feet wide and forty feet long and adorned by a centrally placed cupola. A large assembly room on the second floor of the courthouse had been used extensively through the years for social parties, but now it was a courtroom, awaiting the commencement of the most spectacular trial St. George had ever seen.³⁵

Proceeds of the trial, which began with jury selection on March 26, 1923, were reported extensively not only in the *Washington County News* but also in the two major Salt Lake newspapers, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret News*. From the beginning the trial was a sensation. “The courtroom has been packed at every session, people even kneeling and sitting on the floor, so great has been the interest in the proceedings,” the *Tribune* reported.³⁶ The next day the *Tribune* printed a description that made the trial seem even more dramatic:

Daily the stream of interested spectators swells. They come from miles around, women with babes in arms and men leaning on the younger for support, housewives with a taste for gossip, farmers who are letting the spring planting wait; an old Indian couple, she in her bright yellow and red clothing and he in his overalls and with evil-smelling pipe. Even the young children race from the schoolhouse to the courthouse when their day’s work is done.

³⁴ *Washington County News*, 30 November 1922.

³⁵ Miller, Albert E., *The Immortal Pioneers: Founders of City of St. George, Utah*, (St. George: Albert E. Miller, 1946), 97-102.

³⁶ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 April 1923.

Throughout it all Kelsey remains unperturbed.³⁷

Kelsey's calm demeanor must have been wonderment to many of the spectators at the trial. "Stone-like indifference and unconcern have marked the bearing and manner of Kelsey while the trial has been in progress," commented *The Salt Lake Tribune*.³⁸ Whatever confidence he may have had in his innocence, however, apparently was not shared by the community in general. Maude Schulder, the wife of one of Kelsey's attorneys, was one of several to file affidavits prior to the trial stating "that nearly every person to whom she talked or who talked to her about said case expressed the belief and opinion that the said Frank P. Kelsey was guilty of the crime of which he was charged."³⁹

Guilt by belief or opinion would not be enough in a court of law, however. After State Chemist Harms confirmed that there was enough arsenic in Lottie Kelsey's stomach at the time of her death to have killed her, the state had to prove a motive. Frank Kelsey, according to testimony, had purchased a \$9,000 insurance policy on the life of his mother and had "negotiated for an \$8,000 joint policy for his wife."⁴⁰ James Taylor then testified to having heard Kelsey say that he would soon be on "Easy street," a claim that Frank steadfastly denied.⁴¹

Having tried to show a motive, it was time to establish opportunity to commit the crime. If Frank Kelsey really poisoned his wife, where did he get the arsenic? Fly paper,

³⁷ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 April 1923.

³⁸ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 April 1923.

³⁹ Affidavit by Maude L. Schulder, sworn in Salt Lake City, 23 November 1922, on file at Washington County Courthouse. Others filing similar affidavits included James W. Imlay of Hurricane and John L. Sevy of Salt Lake City, both of whom were descendants of early New Harmony settlers.

⁴⁰ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 April 1923.

⁴¹ *Washington County News*, 5 April 1923.

the prosecution proclaimed. George Prince – Frank’s uncle – testified to having kept the product for sale in his small store. And if not fly paper, then perhaps arsenic from Eldon Schmutz, who placed some in a tank to dip about thirty of his Angora bucks as a method of tick control.⁴²

Despite their efforts, the prosecution could not establish that Frank Kelsey had ever been in possession of arsenic, so it unleashed a gossip assault in an attempt to establish another motive. Vilate Prince told of affections shown by Frank Kelsey to his wife’s sister, Nora Ballard, both at a picnic and after Lottie’s funeral. Antone Prince recalled having seen Nora lying with her head on Frank’s lap at the picnic and also having seen them together in a car with his arm around her. Antone’s mother, Sarah Davis, related how Frank, following his wife’s funeral, gave Lottie’s wedding ring to Nora.⁴³

Other witnesses added their juicy morsels about Frank and Nora to the testimonial heap, but none could have been as surprising as the statements given by Antone and Vilate Prince. After all, Antone had been Frank Kelsey’s best friend and Vilate was described in testimony as Lottie’s “chum,” but they broke completely with many others in the family regarding Frank’s guilt. Antone’s brother Low joined in by claiming that Nora Ballard had posed as Frank’s wife while signing a note to Sears, Roebuck & Company, though objection to his testimony was sustained and he was excused without further questioning.⁴⁴

The case presented by the defense was, in actuality, inconsequential. Franks’s mother Eliza said that Lottie was despondent over the loss of her baby and suggested that

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *The Deseret News*, 7 April 1923.

perhaps she took her own life, having said upon the death of her baby that “she would soon die and be with the child.”⁴⁵ David Ballard, Lottie’s father, said that there was no jealousy on the part of Lottie towards her sister Nora.⁴⁶ Frank Kelsey, showing emotion for the first time since the opening of the trial, said he never had any arsenic on his farm and tearfully denied making dinner for his wife on the day she became ill.⁴⁷ But it was quite apparent, even before the defense presented their witnesses, that Judge William F. Knox already had determined that the prosecution had not proved their case and therefore he would not allow any verdict other than not guilty. “In this case,” the judge read in his instructions to the jury, “the evidence produced by the State is what is called and termed in law, circumstantial evidence.” Continuing his instructions, Judge Knox slammed the door of decision on the jury:

No evidence has been offered or received in this case, from which you will be warranted in finding that the defendant ever at any time or place had or possessed arsenic, or that he knew of its use, purpose, or its deadly poisonous effect; and, before you would be warranted in convicting the defendant, the state would have to prove to your satisfaction, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the defendant did possess arsenic, and that he actually caused it to be administered to the deceased Lottie Kelsey, for the purpose of taking her life.⁴⁸

The jury instructions were lifted verbatim from written suggestions to the judge by Kelsey’s lead attorney, Samuel A. King, senior partner of a prominent Salt Lake law firm, King and Schulder, who had been hired by Frank Prince to defend his grandson.

⁴⁵ *The Deseret News*, 11 April 1923.

⁴⁶ *Washington County News*, 12 April 1923.

⁴⁷ *The Deseret News*, 12 April 1923.

⁴⁸ “Instructions of the Court to the Jury,” *The State of Utah vs. Frank P. Kelsey*, 13 April 1923.

King seemed to have had a commanding presence in the courtroom and undoubtedly swayed Judge Knox, most of whose key jury instructions actually were written by King, but an impartial observer would have difficulty in disagreeing with the judge's use of King's words based solely on the evidence presented at the trial.⁴⁹ The jury, under the circumstances, had no choice but to declare Frank Kelsey not guilty.

Frank Kelsey was, of course, a member of the Prince family, and it was that family that was most divided as a result of the trial. Sarah Davis and her children, in particular, were totally convinced that Frank was guilty, though Frank Prince and many others supported the accused. Even Sarah's family was divided as her husband, Reese Davis, was the first of eleven in New Harmony to sign an affidavit suggesting that the venue for the second trial of Frank Kelsey (for attempting to poison his mother and grandparents) be moved from Washington County due to the "strong feeling of bias and prejudice against the defendant."⁵⁰

The venue was moved, as a matter of fact, to Fillmore, though the change proved to be a mere formality when the charges were dropped by the state, probably realizing that it had even less evidence against Kelsey in the second case than in the first. Left hanging was the mystery of who placed strychnine in the water that killed two horses and somehow ended up in Frank Prince's coffee pot. Equally mysterious was the origin of the arsenic: If Lottie Kelsey self-administered the arsenic due to despondency over her lost child, as was suggested during the trial by her mother-in-law, where did she obtain the poison? Did she have any greater motive or opportunity than did her husband? And

⁴⁹ "Defendant's Requests for Instructions," from Samuel King to Judge William Knox, The State of Utah vs. Frank P. Kelsey.

⁵⁰ Affidavit, State of Utah vs. Frank P. Kelsey, 5 December 1923.

why would she still be despondent over the loss of a previous child while pregnant with another?

The mysteries would remain unsolved, but that mattered not to the exonerated Frank Kelsey. Though a free man, however, his relationship with his cousin and former best friend, Antone Prince, would never be the same. In another affidavit filed to change the venue of the second trial, Kelsey stated:

Antone and James L. [Low] Prince are two personal enemies [sic] of this affiant and have for more than eighteen months past constantly circulated false reports against this affiant and have done all within their power to have this defendant prosecuted not only on the charge of murder but upon the charge now pending against him...⁵¹

Shortly after the dismissal of all charges against him, Frank Kelsey married his sister-in-law, Nora Ballard, solidifying the suspicions of some of his detractors who believed that they acted too much like a couple even while Lottie was alive. For his part, Frank had one great desire: “Antone,” he said longingly to his cousin, “I don’t grieve about anyone else in town but you and Vilate, and I can’t stand to live without your association and friendship. Can you forgive me and forget and be like we were one time?”⁵² It was a noble request but mostly in vain as Antone continued to believe that his cousin was guilty.

For nearly a year, Frank Kelsey had been the center of attention, but now it was time to get back to business, which increasingly was becoming mossier. Antone Prince quietly

⁵¹ Affidavit, State of Utah vs. Frank P. Kelsey, 5 December 1923.

⁵² Interview with Juanita Davis Williams Kossen by Clayton Prince, 29 June 1994.

amassed a herd that eventually numbered 4,000 goats, including about one hundred head of bucks for which he paid at least \$75 and as much as \$300 a piece, a lofty sum in the 1920's. The herd grazed in the Harmony Mountains north of the town in the summertime and was driven about forty miles west to Bull Valley for the winter where it remained through the springtime kidding (having their young).

One year, after kidding early in Bull Valley, a terrific storm hit and lasted for three days, killing every kid – about 1100 – as well as about 700 adults. Compounding the misery, some of the goats were inflicted with brucellosis, commonly known as undulant or Malta fever, and in burying the carcasses Antone and his helpers all came down with the disease, which causes weakness and intermittent fever that can persist for months. “It’s one of the most damnable things in the world,” Antone later recalled.⁵³

The loss of the kids hit particularly hard since their softer and more luxuriant hair brought a far better price (\$1.25 versus \$.75 per pound) than that of the adult goat. Under the best of circumstances the kids had to be tied to a stake exactly where they were born: If the baby goat was not in the location where the mother left it as she went off to feed, she would not search for it upon returning and the kid would be a orphan called a “dogie.” The dogies presented a special problem, with no mother to care for them, but they also could be a bit mischievous, as Charles and Frank Petty, brothers each of whom married a sister of Vilate Prince, belatedly discovered:

One day uncle Charles come down home on the farm and he brought this beautiful new car in, which was black, and dad told him, “You’d better move the car because the kids will get on it.”

⁵³ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

He thought maybe it was [Antone's children] Clayton and me [Virginia]. And so when he went out to go, here were these dogies, and they'd jump up on the running board, up onto the front and slide down the back. And so he went home and he said, "Uncle Frank, now when you go down to Antone's and Vilate's, be sure you leave the car where the kids can't get to it." And uncle Frank thought that it would be Clayton and me and so he left it out over in the field, with a fence around it. Well, somehow the goats got out, and when Frank marched over to the car, here was these kids, jumping up on the thing and sliding down the back.⁵⁴

Along with all of the Angoras, Antone had one large billy goat of a different breed – either an alpine or a Nubian – with large horns. Virginia and Clayton found the billy goat particularly useful, hooking it to a wagon to make the four-mile roundtrip into town to pick up the mail. The goat didn't appreciate the conscripted duty, however, and one day sensed the opportunity for revenge:

Mother sent us with a big pan of fruit, Clayton, [cousin] Avey and I, to go and climb up on this shed and put the fruit out. So we got it all spread out and we got down and all of a sudden we saw this goat come. And the closest place we could get was the outhouse. So we got in there and we braced ourselves and we sat with our feet against the toilet and our backs against the door, and that thing would come BRRRRRRAM and ram it, and mother couldn't find us...We took turns praying.⁵⁵

By 1929, New Harmony had become the goat capital of the state. "Harmony Goat Men Preparing For Record Clip," proclaimed a headline in the *Washington County News*. About 33,000 head of goats were to be "relieved of their winter hair during March;"

⁵⁴ Interview with Clayton Prince and Virginia Anderson by author, 27 May 2000.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

nearly 100,000 pounds of mohair would be shipped in March and April, with a valuation of almost \$60,000. “Although only in its infancy, this industry promises to be among the leading businesses of southern Utah. New Harmony can boast of owning more goats and producing more mohair than any other town in the state of Utah,” exclaimed the newspaper, and Antone Prince had the largest herd of all.⁵⁶

Since the goats spent the summer on Harmony Mountain and the winter in Bull Valley, tended by a herder and a good dog, Antone had discovered that he could quite capably run the goat business without living in New Harmony and decided to move to St. George. The primary motivation for the move remains uncertain. “The drought came and it started drying up, and we got tired and we came down here [St. George],” Antone told Delmar Gott of Dixie College in a 1975 interview.⁵⁷ “We lived two-and-a-half miles from town, and there was so much snow,” recalled Vilate.⁵⁸ “One of the compelling reasons for the folks moving was that grandpa Cottam started having some major heart problems,” said Clayton, intimating that Vilate felt it necessary to move near her parents in St. George to take care of them.⁵⁹

Clouds of trouble began appearing on the horizon just as Antone moved his family to St. George. For eight years, beginning in 1921, the Federal Reserve expanded the money supply by more than 60 percent, and the resultant flood of easy money gave birth to the “Roaring Twenties.” But in early 1929 the Federal Reserve reversed course, choking off the money supply and raising interest rates. The resultant deflation that followed the

⁵⁶ *Washington County News*, 28 February 1929.

⁵⁷ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott, 22 April 1975.

⁵⁸ Interview with Vilate Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971

⁵⁹ Interview with Clayton Prince and Virginia Anderson by author, 27 May 2000.

inflation of earlier in the decade wrenched the economy from tremendous boom to colossal bust.

As the country plunged into depression – about six months before the stock market crash on “Black Thursday,” October 24, 1929 – there was virtually no market for mohair. In an effort to keep the ranchers afloat, the federal government took all of the shearing on consignment at four cents a pound. Sacks filled with mohair weighing two or three hundred pounds filled warehouses. The government’s intention was to pay the rancher when the price went back up, but it never happened as the depression lingered.⁶⁰

To feed his family, Antone took any kind of job he could get. He first went to work as an automobile salesman for Lunt Motors but never recorded a sale. He worked in a service station, doing twelve-hour shifts for a dollar a day. Having hit bottom, just when it seemed things couldn’t get worse, they did.

In late 1930, Antone’s cousin Pratt Prince was visiting St. George with his wife Winnie and infant daughter Daphane and needed to hitch a ride back to their home in New Harmony. Antone volunteered to take them in his truck but became so ill as they were about to leave that Pratt drove the truck while Antone rested. Soon after the trip, Daphane became extremely ill and was rushed to the hospital in Cedar City where she was diagnosed with pneumonia.

A few days after he returned to St. George, Antone was still suffering from headache and high fever when a rash appeared, the spots gradually changing to raised, blister-like pustules. The diagnosis was absolutely frightening: Antone had contracted smallpox. Pratt and Winnie realized all too well that Antone may have been contagious and were

⁶⁰ Interview with Clayton Prince by author, 29 August 1998.

sick with fear that Daphane had been exposed. The news was good for Daphane and her parents, but it was only the beginning for Antone.⁶¹

There is no cure for smallpox. Once infected, absolutely nothing can be done to stop the disease from running its full course and doctors can do little to alleviate the painful symptoms. A minimum of one third of all people exposed to smallpox die from the disease, and there were times when Antone wished he were dead. As he shaved a week's growth of whiskers, he inadvertently clipped off the pox and his face swelled up like a pumpkin. For at least two weeks he was so ill that the doctors never thought he'd survive. His daughter Virginia, fourteen years old at the time, remembered the scene at their home in St. George where Antone was quarantined:

We had a sun porch on that house that was on the southwest corner. That's where the doctor put dad, in there, and mother had a basin of formaldehyde that she would wash her hands and her clothes when she would go in to take care of him. And anyone who wanted to see him would have to climb up a ladder and look in the window. That is the truth.⁶²

Antone did recover, but the same could hardly be said of the economy. A major blow to farmers came from the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of June, 1930, sponsored by Rep. Willis C. Hawley of Oregon and Utah's own Senator Reed Smoot, who served concurrently as a Mormon apostle, thus earning the nickname of the "Apostle-Senator." The act raised trade barriers in the belief that more Americans would be forced to buy domestic goods, thus helping to solve the nagging unemployment problem. But trade is a two-way street,

⁶¹ Letter from Florence Prince Wagner to author, 25 February 1996.

⁶² Interview with Virginia Anderson by author, 9 August 1998.

and foreign governments retaliated with their own trade barriers, hitting farmers especially hard. Farm prices plummeted and many thousands of farmers went bankrupt.

Goat ranchers were no better off than the farmers, but though the prospect of Antone Prince and the other goat men of southern Utah selling their mohair in the immediate future had been smashed, they thought they saw a glimmer of hope on the horizon. In late June 1931, at a meeting of goat ranchers in New Harmony, it was stressed that a “feeling of optimism is beginning to take the place of the depressed attitude of the people, and that it is the belief of the banking institutions of the country that we are on the upgrade.”⁶³

They were dead wrong. Not only did there was no improvement, but with another act of Congress things got worse for the goat ranchers – much worse. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 ended the open range for grazing. Alarmed by the Dust Bowl and overgrazing, Congress passed the act to regulate all remaining federal rangelands requiring permits issued by a new Grazing Service. Goats, foraging on shrubs and brush in a manner that could leave the land barren, were seen in a most unfavorable light, so the goat ranchers could not secure permits to graze their herds on public lands.

That was the end of the line. With no market for the mohair and no way to feed the goats it was impossible to keep the herd. The government, in their wisdom after passing the act that drove a stake into the ranchers’ hearts, made an offer that Antone could scarcely live with but had to accept:

⁶³ *Washington County News*, 2 July 1931.

[The government] said, we'll give you \$1.40 a head for your goats. You kill them and produce the hide, we'll give you \$1.40 for them. So I had several thousand goats there, and these bucks that I paid \$300 apiece for, I had to kill them and skin them for \$1.40. We built a corral along Harrisburg trench, right along the edge, and I had half-a-dozen men helping me, and we'd kill the goat in about two minutes and just shove them off this ledge.⁶⁴

Several ravines around New Harmony were filled with the carcasses as other ranchers joined in the slaughter. The goat industry was dead and Antone was broke. When he borrowed \$6,800 in 1929 to buy his house in St. George he was asked if he wanted a long-term loan. "No, I'll pay it off in three years," he replied. Before the crash he said he could have paid it off in one year, but things got so bad that he went to Salt Lake City and told bank officials, "You've got to come and take our home, because I can't pay for it. I haven't got a thing left." The bank had no interest in being saddled with homes that they in turn couldn't unload and politely told him, "You keep on, you're doing okay."⁶⁵

The money received from the government for the goat slaughter helped Antone pay off his loan, but the outlook still was bleak. The depression dragged on with no end in sight, ushering in an occasional sense of desperation. "I'd steal before I'd see them starve," he said in reference to his family, and he most likely was sincere in his statement.⁶⁶ Nobody starved, however, for everyone shared what little they had, supplemented greatly by game killed during hunting season.

Not that everyone hunted just in season. During the Thanksgiving holidays in 1935, Antone went to New Harmony to slaughter three pigs and was approached by Frank

⁶⁴ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

Kelsey, who wanted to go deer hunting – out of season. After more than a dozen years following the conclusion of the famous trial, Antone’s relationship with Frank had thawed enough that Antone agreed to go after taking care of the pigs. “So we went up Kelsey Mare Hollow and,” Antone cautioned in an interview with his grandson Greg, “this is off the record now, this is illegal, we went up Kelsey Mare Hollow, we stopped and discussed where we wanted to hunt.” Frank went around the hill one way and scared two bucks towards Antone. They were two of the fattest, prettiest deer he had ever seen, and he dispatched them forthwith.

There was just one problem: When he tried to show his booty to Vilate, she burst out in tears for fear that her brother John Cottam, recently elected Washington County Sheriff, would catch them with a deer killed out of season, a serious offence. Frightened when his wife continued to bawl, Antone carried the deer into a field, cut it up, dug a hole and buried it. “Yep, that was the last time I ever killed a deer out of season,” he said, but after a very short pause was compelled to add:

No, I killed one more. I killed one more out of season. You know, when Ed Brooks and Hebe [Cottam] was up there by a stream, Ed Brooks said, “Let’s go get a deer.” I was quite easily influenced...That was the best deer to eat. Mom pot roasted it right down, she had all these boarders and she had a big black kettle she put full of deer meat, and Ed Brooks, he just eat and eat and eat and eat and picked the bones, that was the best meat he ever ate in his life.⁶⁷

Quite easily influenced, indeed. Also easily rationalized, for at least it put food on the table not only for his family but for the boarders who Antone and Vilate had living in

⁶⁷ Ibid.

their home to help make ends meet. A confrontation with the sheriff over the poached deer never materialized, but in a twist of irony, as he would soon find out, Antone's destiny was controlled by the fate of Sheriff John Cottam.

AN UNUSUAL SHERIFF

“I never had a better friend nor knew a better man than John Cottam,” wrote Will Brooks, former sheriff of Washington County. “He was my deputy for all the years I was sheriff, and in all that time he did not fail me once. He was so prompt and quick, in fact, that sometimes I would call him in the night, and he’d be at my home before I had my own shoes tied.”⁶⁸

Following his return from a church mission in Holland in 1915, Cottam served for twelve years as City Marshall and for six years as a deputy sheriff to Will Brooks. Brooks resigned his office on June 1, 1934, to take that of postmaster – a more permanent position with much better pay – and was succeeded as sheriff by Cottam, “a most efficient officer,” according to Brooks.⁶⁹ He was fearless but also was prone to overestimate his own strength: On more than one occasion his wife told him “that he was liable to break a blood vessel” by his heavy lifting.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Brooks, Will, as recorded by his wife Juanita Brooks, *Uncle Will Tells His Story*, (Salt Lake City: Taggart & Company, Inc., 1970) 198.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁷⁰ Thompson, William Howard, *Thomas Cottam, 1820, and his Wives Ann Howarth, 1820, Caroline Smith, 1820: Descendants*, (Thomas Cottam Family Organization, 1987), 296.

An opportunity to test his wife's warning came on the afternoon of June 2, 1936, when a large and very heavy safe at the County Courthouse had to be moved from the Recorder's office into the Clerk's office. Assisted by his son Mason, J.T. Beatty, and Ralph Whipple, Cottam was attempting to lift the safe when he suddenly straightened up, took a couple of steps backward and started to fall. Beatty caught him and eased him to the floor and called for a glass of water, believing that Cottam had fainted. Sensing that the condition was more serious than he had thought at first, Beatty frantically urged that a doctor be called, but it was too late: A blood vessel had burst at the base of his brain, and John Cottam was dead.⁷¹ Informed by his wife Juanita of Cottam's fate, Will Brooks immediately asked, "Who shot him?" for Cottam always carried a gun and took such chances that Brooks figured someday he might meet a bullet.⁷²

A good man had been lost, but after a short period of mourning it was time to find a successor. A total of twenty-one men filed applications to serve the remainder of Cottam's elected term, but Antone Prince was not among them. Considering himself unqualified to be sheriff he was content to work at a variety of jobs, including driving a mail truck from Cedar City to Kanab, working as a fieldman for the State Agricultural Conservation, serving for the federal government as deputy Indian Agent and later as a Deputy County Agent. While serving in the latter position, about three weeks after Cottam's death, Antone returned home late from a district meeting at Beaver and was told by Vilate that the county commissioners had been trying all day to reach him. He

⁷¹ *Washington County News*, 4 June 1936.

⁷² Brooks, Will, *op. cit.*, 219.

could not imagine what they wanted of him and found it very mysterious that, if he got home by midnight, he was to come immediately to the courthouse. What happened next was beyond belief to him:

I went to the courthouse and knocked on the door and George H. Lytle, chairman of the county commission, stopped and shook my hand and said, "Congratulations, sheriff," and I said, "What?" He said, "We appointed you sheriff today." I said, "Not me," and he said, "We just appointed you sheriff. We had twenty-one applications filed for the position. We went through them, sifted them out, Rex Gardner mentioned your name. So we appointed you sheriff." I said, "Well, I haven't had any experience, brother Lytle," and he said, "Well, you helped your brother-in-law John Cottam a little." I said, "Yes, I've been out with him a few times. Give me time to talk to my wife." He said, "I'll give you five minutes."

Well, I started to bawl like a baby. I thought a minute and I said, "Well, if you bear with me 'til I learn the game, I'll accept it." He said, "We'll support you 100%." I said, "What is the pay?" and he said, "\$90 a month, and you furnish your own car. We'll give you 5 cents a mile to operate."⁷³

Ninety dollars a month was a good but not great wage – he had earned that much driving the mail truck for a year, though he gave up the job because his brother-in-law Charles Petty, who had the mail contract from Cedar City to Kanab, gave him no time off to spend with his family – but at least it gave promise of steady employment. The morning after accepting the job he visited County Attorney Orval Hafen and said, "Orval, they appointed me sheriff last night and I don't know a thing about it." Hafen replied, "Well, I'll be glad to help you in any way I can." District Attorney Ellis

⁷³ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

Pickett then gave him a copy of the 1933 Utah Statutes and said, “Learn that all by heart and you’ll be okay.”⁷⁴

Antone memorized the statutes, particularly the section referring to “the duties and responsibilities of the sheriff.” Fortunately, he was able to ease into the job as relatively few events during his first year required police action and most of those that did were centered on the possession of wine or liquor.⁷⁵ In the most violent case, a “demented Negro,” as he was described by the *Washington County News*, stabbed two men on a Union Pacific bus thirty miles west of St. George in December 1936, critically injuring one of them.⁷⁶ Three men were arrested and sent to the Utah State Prison for between one and five years for selling liquor to Indians, as were two men convicted of “indecent liberties” with a minor. There were also, of course, the usual intoxication and drunk driving arrests as well as the arrest of a few cattle rustlers, but no case gave any indication that Antone possessed any special law enforcement capability until it was suggested that he look into a crime that actually occurred while John Cottam was sheriff.

On March 18, 1935, Spencer Malan, a rancher in a small town about fifty miles northwest of St. George called Enterprise, was reported to be missing. John Cottam looked into but couldn’t solve the case and Antone had never even heard of it. After being asked by George Hunt, deputy at Enterprise, to investigate the disappearance, Sheriff Prince, dressed in civilian clothes (he almost never wore a uniform), went house to house in Enterprise on November 16, 1937, to gather information.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Sheriff Prince kept his arrest records on simple 3 x 4 index cards; for many years the records were in the possession of the Washington County Sheriff’s office.

⁷⁶ *Washington County News*, 24 December 1936.

Hunt had a strong suspicion based on the fact that Malan was last seen on St. Patrick's Day in the company of Charles Bosshardt. Sheriff Prince and Hunt went to Bosshardt's farm, with Antone pretending to be a soil expert – the experience from his service as Deputy County Agent had paid off in the guise – while Hunt, who feared Bosshardt, hid out of sight on his hands and knees between the seats of the sheriff's car.⁷⁷ Bosshardt became suspicious after being peppered with questions and said, "What's this all about? What are you questioning me like this for?" Antone shook his finger at him and said, "Charlie, I'm charging you with murder in the first degree and you're under arrest right now."⁷⁸

Bosshardt was shocked and said that he first had to finish plowing his soil but was told by the sheriff to forget it. "You go unhitch your horses and go with me to St. George," he declared. Ushering the accused into his car, Antone told Bosshardt's ten year-old stepson, "You go in and tell your mother that your father has gone to St. George with Sheriff Prince." It was a bold move since there was no evidence that a crime had been committed, the body of Spencer Malan never having been found. Before the sheriff left with his prisoner, Hunt cautioned, "You be careful, he's a very mean man," but Antone had no fear.

Night was at hand as Antone began the return trip to St. George. After informing Bosshardt that he didn't have to answer any questions, the sheriff began the interrogation. "You might as well go back, because I don't know anything," was Charlie's response. For about ten miles Antone drove along in the dark contemplating

⁷⁷ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott, 22 April 1975.

⁷⁸ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, 21 September, 1974.

his next move when he suddenly whirled at Charlie, pointing at him with his finger while saying, “Charlie Bosshardt, as sure as there is a God in Heaven you are guilty of murder in the first degree, and I can tell you within two places where the body is.” Bosshardt was stunned and asked, incredulously, “Where?” “Either up in the cedars back of your home or down on the desert in a well,” the sheriff replied. Charlie was dumbfounded. “Down on the desert in a well,” he blurted. Antone couldn’t believe his ears: “You mean it is, huh?”

It was a bluff, a ruse, a grand deception, but Antone had thrown out the bait and, to his astonishment, Charlie swallowed it whole. “We had a fight down at the place and George Schaefer and I had to kill him. We took him down on the desert and threw him in this well. Then we shifted a lot of dirt down on him.”

It was late at night and Antone had extracted a confession but still had no evidence that a crime had been committed. What if Bosshardt woke up the next morning and decided to recant? What if the body couldn’t be found? The quick-thinking sheriff concocted another plan. Going to Dick’s Café, he told the proprietor, Dick Hammer, to fix up the best meal he could and put a couple of candy bars on the side to sweeten the deal. In the meantime, Antone asked Charlie if he could find the location of the well at nighttime, perhaps fearing that with the new dawn an attorney would appear and tell Bosshardt to keep his mouth shut.⁷⁹

Bosshardt claimed that the killing was not intentional but rather in self-defense, that he and Malan had been best friends since they had known each other, and he was very willing to lead the sheriff – by moonlight – to the well where the body had been

⁷⁹ Ibid.

deposited.⁸⁰ Armed with rope and flashlights and accompanied by City Marshall Paul Seegmiller and Claire Morrow, Antone began almost immediately the arduous task of searching for the body, but the well had partially caved in and was filled with tumbleweed. A crew, spearheaded by the sheriff, worked diligently for two days to remove dirt and impediments from the 110 foot-deep well but still had not found Malan's remains.

Body or no body, the admission to the killing by both Bosshardt and his friend George Schaefer was very big news statewide. On November 18, 1937, the headline of the day in *The Deseret News*, in bold lettering about one inch tall, was: “**TWO CHARGED IN SLAYING OF SOUTHERN UTAH RANCHER.**”⁸¹ After three difficult days of digging, during which time the sheriff openly doubted Bosshardt's veracity concerning the well, Spencer Malan's body finally was recovered, prompting a banner story in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, complete with a large mug shot of Charlie Bosshardt and a diagram of the abandoned desert well in Iron County where the body had been entombed for nearly three years.⁸² But, as it turned out, there was one rather significant problem, as Antone explained:

I tied this rope around his legs and said, “Take him away.” He had a blue suit on, and when they started pulling they pulled the right shoulder off and his head. I thought that was all that was necessary. When they started pulling him up the juice from him came down on me in a stream. Just imagine how I felt.

⁸⁰ *Washington County News*, 18 November 1937.

⁸¹ *The Deseret News*, 18 November 1937.

⁸² *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 November 1937.

Well, we took him to St. George and I went to the district attorney and I said, “Ellis [Pickett], we’ve got this man.” He looked at him and said, “Well, we’ve got to have the head; without the head we haven’t got any corpus delicti. We need a complete body, a corpus delicti, so he can be recognized.”⁸³

So it was back to the well, but it was obvious that locating the skull would be done at great risk. “Considerable work will have to be done at the well,” Sheriff Prince said, “before it will be possible to locate the skull. The well is a death trap as it stands, and another attempt to delve into its secrets would be suicide.”⁸⁴ Under the direction of E.A. Hodges, state mining engineer, the walls of the well were timbered and, after about five more feet of digging – all by the sheriff since his helpers refused to enter the hole – the badly crushed skull was located.⁸⁵

Following the drama of the original arrest and the search for the body in the well, the trial of Charles Bosshardt and George Schaefer seemed almost an afterthought. Though “the preliminary work by Sheriff Prince, Attorney [Orval] Hafen and Attorney [Ellis] Pickett...came in for praise,” the prosecution failed to break down the self-defense plea, and the jury came back with a verdict of “Not Guilty.”⁸⁶ In reality, the prosecution may have made only a half-hearted attempt to assault Bosshardt’s self-defense plea, for Orval Hafen recorded in his journal at the time of the arrest, “When I took Bosshardt’s confession Wednesday morning I came away feeling that it would be

⁸³ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, 21 September 1974.

⁸⁴ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 November 1937.

⁸⁵ *Washington County News*, 25 November 1937.

⁸⁶ *Washington County News*, 27 January 1938.

much easier to defend him than it would to demand his life.”⁸⁷ Antone Prince, predictably, vociferously disagreed: “That was a slap in the face of the law enforcement officer, because even though they killed him in self-defense, they took him down in the desert and threw him in a well and concealed him.”⁸⁸

That should have been the end of the story, but about four days after the verdict was read, Antone got a call to go to Bosshardt’s farm. Common sense dictated caution, but the sheriff went alone. It was the final surprise of the strange case:

When I got there they had a big dinner prepared. I’d never seen such a dinner – chicken or turkey, dressing, salads, dressing to go with it. They said, “Sheriff, you were so fair in this trial, you didn’t try to do anything but to be fair and just. We wanted to give you a dinner for it.”

Well, naturally, I thought they were going to poison me. They would pass the mashed potatoes, and I’d thank them and let them go all around the table and let everyone take some and when it came back to me I’d take some. My fears were to no avail, because they were just trying to show me consideration because I’d been fair with these men.⁸⁹

Shortly thereafter, Sheriff Prince was called back to Enterprise, where Bosshardt was pointing a gun at Roy Adams. “If you move, I’ll kill you right here,” Charlie threatened. Antone, typically fearless, took the gun and told him, “I’ll take you to jail and lock you up and you’ll go forever if I have anything more like this happen.” That was the last trouble the sheriff ever had with Charlie Bosshardt.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Hafen, Orval, “Journal of Orval Hafen,” 20 November 1937, in possession of Jason David Archibald.

⁸⁸ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, 21 September 1974.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Unlike John Cottam, who carried a gun with him at all times, Antone was unarmed as he approached Bosshardt. “All the time you were running around without a gun?” he later was asked. “Oh,” Antone answered nonchalantly, “I had a gun in my car.” In the glove compartment, to be exact, completely out of reach. “That was my philosophy. I never carried a gun.”⁹¹

In retrospect, the wonder is that Antone Prince, not John Cottam, never got shot. The first opportunity for that to happen came on November 16, 1938, a day after Jack Herman Gordon robbed G. W. Simmons of Salt Lake City of his car and money and left him tied in a gulch just west of Santa Clara. Simmons worked himself loose and flagged down an Indian bus driver named Yellow Jacket, who alerted authorities. Notified that a man matching the description of the robber had purchased a ticket for Las Vegas on the Union Pacific Bus line, Antone and G. P. Howell, deputy sheriff, waited for the bus to stop near the Big Hand Café.

The lawmen were too obvious, and a suspicious Gordon escaped through the emergency door of the bus and ran across the street behind the J.C. Penney and O.P. Skaggs stores where he hid among some packing boxes. Antone went in, unarmed of course, and ordered him to come out with his hands up. As he flashed his light in the direction of the man, however, he saw a gun aimed right at him.⁹² “You don’t have enough guts to shoot,” growled the sheriff in what became a familiar refrain, “come on out with your hands up.”

⁹¹ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott, 22 April 1975.

⁹² *Washington County News*, 17 November 1938. Gordon admitted his guilt to Judge Will L. Hoyt on the very day he was arrested and was sentenced immediately to five years to life in the Utah State Prison.

The next morning at breakfast Antone mused, “I can’t figure out why he didn’t pull the trigger.” A few days later, Clayton and his younger brother Alpine were taking a trailer full of trash out to the city dump and asked their dad for a gun to take with them in case they saw a rabbit. Antone gave them the gun he had just taken from his prisoner, but when they saw a rabbit and Alpine pointed the gun, he was unable to pull the trigger. It finally dawned on Antone that the reason he wasn’t shot was the mechanism was jammed.⁹³

It was a close encounter, but scarcely the only one he ever had. Henry Ward, the sheriff of Las Vegas, called Antone one night and told him that a man who had just robbed a garage at gunpoint in Las Vegas was headed in the direction of St. George and was armed and dangerous. Sheriff Prince set up a roadblock, which in this case amounted to him standing alone in the middle of the road, armed with a hunting rifle. At two o’clock in the morning, about seven miles west of St. George, he spotted the car:

I yelled at him to stop and leveled my 30-30 at him but he just kept a coming ‘til he got right up to me almost. He plied on his brakes and I had to ask him to come out of the car with his hands in the air. I turned my head just a fraction of a second; I looked back, I looked right down the mouth of his revolver. There we were, out on the desert, just the two of us, and I was looking down his gun. I just stood there, he told me what he was going to do, he was going to kill me and throw me into my own car, haul me so far that I’d never be found.

I let him talk – didn’t appear to be frightened, but I was – and finally I said, “You yellow son-of-a-bitch, you haven’t got guts enough to shoot – hand me that gun!” His arm dropped and I

⁹³ Interview with Clayton Prince by Stephen Prince, 29-30 August 1998.

took the gun out of his hand and threw it out in the sand. I left his car right in the middle of the road while I brought him to St. George and locked him up. On the road in he said, “I don’t know why I didn’t kill you.”⁹⁴

Antone knew why. A humbly religious man, each morning he prayed, beginning with the words, “Righteous and Eternal Father in Heaven,” and put his complete trust in the Lord. He was not a gospel scholar and never preached to anyone, but he was committed to and had complete confidence in his religion. With very few exceptions (such as staring down the barrel of a revolver) he was never afraid of a man, for through his faith he knew he would be told when it was time to get out; in the meantime, he would be protected. On many occasions he disarmed a man who could just as easily have shot him, but he oozed confidence and always got the gun.

In November 1938, after more than two years in office filling the remainder of John Cottam’s term, Antone ran for election for the first time. Following his work in the Charlie Bosshardt case, the returns from Enterprise were predictable: Antone had picked up all but eleven votes, and nobody was quite sure why he didn’t get those. He did just about as well in the rest of the county: “Sheriff Antone B. Prince, Democrat, proved to be the best vote-getter,” said the *Washington County News*, having more votes and a larger margin of victory than all other candidates in the election.⁹⁵

There was no doubt that Sheriff Prince was widely popular, but it didn’t hurt that he ran as a Democrat, a cagey move since heretofore he had been a Republican. “Sweeping seven candidates out of a possible 10 into office, the Democrats in

⁹⁴ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

⁹⁵ *Washington County News*, 10 November 1938.

Washington County definitely showed that their candidates were the ‘peoples’ choice at the polls Tuesday,” reported the *Washington County News*.⁹⁶

Ironically, one of the major depression era programs of his new party was indirectly responsible for a significant portion of the crime with which the sheriff had to deal. The Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, was created by Democratic controlled Congress in 1933 as an employment measure to provide work for young men in reforestation, road construction, prevention of soil erosion, and park and flood control projects. In southern Utah and across the border on the Arizona Strip there were a total of eleven CCC camps, with most of the young men hailing from outside Utah, more than a few of whom got into some sort of trouble while attached to the corps. In addition to an increase in the crime rate in Washington County, a CCC boy was responsible for the only murder that Sheriff Prince knew to be committed in his jurisdiction while he was in office.⁹⁷

Royal Hunt, a rancher residing at St. George but having a ranch about twenty-eight miles north in the Pine Valley Mountains near Central, met Vae Monroe Fenley, an eighteen year-old ex-CCC member, on November 21, 1941, and offered him employment at his ranch. Fenley, who had been dishonorably discharged from the CCC for multiple thefts at his camp near Sacramento, worked for two days on the ranch but on the third shot his boss through a window in the ranch house with a .22 caliber rifle and robbed him. While Fenley saddled a horse with the intention of riding to Nebraska – a trip of over a thousand miles – Hunt revived enough to telephone the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ In 1954, former CCC employee Stanley Julius Dzwiacien of Ohio confessed to the murder of a fellow CCC member in 1938 that at the time was ruled a drowning. See *Washington County News*, 14 January 1954.

operator at Central to report he had been shot. Fenley subsequently reentered the house and shot the wounded rancher three more times, killing him.⁹⁸

Mrs. Mahalia Bracken, the telephone operator, already had called Sheriff Prince, who hurried to Hunt's ranch with his deputy Art Mitchell, Judge George Whitehead, and Royal Hunt's wife. Antone organized a posse that searched all night for the fugitive. Early the next morning a government trapper, known only as Mr. Norman, captured Fenley, who was weakened from his nightlong wanderings in the severe cold. In his possession was Hunt's watch and \$21.51 taken from Hunt's wallet. When taken into custody by Sheriff Prince, Fenley initially denied any knowledge of Hunt's death, but with repeated prodding finally admitted that he knew Hunt had \$15 in his possession and had killed him to steal the money.⁹⁹

Justice was swift for Fenley. Apprehended on November 25, he was arraigned on December 1, with the trial beginning on January 6, 1942, with jury selection; on January 12, after three hours of deliberation, the jury delivered a verdict of guilty. Offered the choice of death by firing squad or hanging, Fenley chose the firing squad, and the execution was scheduled for March 10.¹⁰⁰

With just fourteen weeks between the time of the arrest and the scheduled date of Fenley's execution, frontier justice obviously still remained to some extent in southern Utah. Fenley, however, was luckier than the previous three men arrested for murder before Antone became sheriff, each of whom was hanged by vigilantes; one of the three, Tom Forrest, who killed a man in Silver Reef in 1881, was taken forcibly from

⁹⁸ *Iron County Record*, 4 December 1941.

⁹⁹ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 November 1941.

¹⁰⁰ *Washington County News*, 15 January 1942; Antone Prince's arrest records. Fenly's sentence later was commuted to life in prison, probably due to his age (seventeen) at the time of the murder.

the county jail and was hanged from a large cottonwood tree in front of the home belonging to Vilate Prince's father, George Cottam, leading an onlooker to comment, "I have watched that tree grow nigh onto twenty years, and this is the first time it has borne fruit."¹⁰¹

An equally strong confirmation of the frontier justice mentality that existed in southern Utah was the trial that immediately preceded the Fenley case. On October 13, 1941, Sheriff Prince arrested four local men on suspicion of "felonious theft and butchering of a white-faced calf" belonging to Charles Foster near Enterprise.¹⁰² The seriousness of the charge was evidenced by the length of the trial – the transcript, at more than 300 pages, was far longer than the Fenley trial transcript – but perhaps understandable in an area of the west where the livelihood of many was dependant on their livestock. While the evidence (a couple of gunny sacks filled with calf entrails, hide, and head and ten bottles of calf meat, later donated to charity) did not confirm that the slaughtered calf belonged to Foster, circumstantial evidence was enough to convict one of the men, Alden Pectol, who was sentenced to one to ten years in the penitentiary, though more than twenty local citizens petitioned the court for leniency.¹⁰³

An area where frontier justice definitely remained well into the twentieth century – if there was any justice at all, that is – was on the Arizona Strip, a vast but sparsely populated area between the Grand Canyon and the Utah-Arizona border. Isolated from the rest of Arizona by the Colorado River and out of the reach of Utah authorities, the Arizona Strip was essentially void of law enforcement, making it an ideal home for a

¹⁰¹ Alder, Douglas D., and Karl F. Brooks, *A History of Washington County*, 351; Pendleton, Mark A., "Memories of Silver Reef," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (vol.3, no. 4, October 1930), 117.

¹⁰² *Washington County News*, 16 October 1941.

¹⁰³ Criminal Case #308, State of Utah vs. Lee Laub, Fred A. Reber, Alden Pectol, and Rex Cannon.

number of polygamists seeking to live without government interference as well as a variety of thugs, thieves, and cattle rustlers, the most notorious of whom was Bill Shanley.

Born William Franklin Bragg in New Mexico in 1885 – he became Shanley after killing a posse member by that name – Bill was a twelve-year-old tending cattle in a remote mountain area of southeastern Utah when he met and for nearly three weeks shared a campsite with four desperados, including Butch Cassidy. The infamous outlaw taught Bill the fine art of his trade and invited him to join his gang; Shanley declined the invitation but did follow Cassidy’s direction, eventually becoming one of the great cattle rustlers of all time.¹⁰⁴

The Arizona Strip, with plenty of cattle, provided a perfect venue for Shanley who, with Honore Cook, rustled and killed cattle and brought the beef across the state line into Utah. In May 1941, Antone got a tip that Shanley and Cook were bringing beef into the cafés in St. George and arrested them; while Cook remained in jail, Shanley was released on \$1,000 bond but didn’t stick around for a trial.¹⁰⁵

Shanley had made a statement that he would kill the sheriff if he ever came out on the Arizona Strip. Antone most likely had no interest in testing the resolve, and knowing that he didn’t have the authority to go across the state line he was content to wait until Shanley came to St. George. Months later at the Liberty Hotel, Sheriff Prince spied the fugitive. Going into the hotel, he tapped Shanley on the shoulder and told him he was under arrest. As always, Antone didn’t have a gun but said,

¹⁰⁴ Harris, Grant B., *Shanley: Pennies Wise – Dollars Foolish*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1980).

¹⁰⁵ *Washington County News*, 8 May 1941.

nevertheless, “You’d better hand me that thing under your arm, too, I don’t want a scene here.” Shanley looked at the sheriff, reached under his arm, and handed over his .45 Colt revolver.¹⁰⁶

Shanley was given a \$300 fine and six months in the county jail for the “slaughtering of beef without a slaughterer’s stamp,” the only charge that could be leveled against him in Utah since the cattle rustling took place in Arizona. For some time Antone had been carrying two or three meals a day to the prisoner from Dick’s Café but after a couple of months said, “Bill, I’m not going to carry another meal to you. If you can’t get your own meal, you can starve.” Bill looked at Antone and said, “Do you trust me?” “If I didn’t think I could, I wouldn’t do it,” came the response.¹⁰⁷

Time and again Bill went to Dick’s Café, had his meal, and came right back. When his time had been served, Antone took him down to the judge, who said, “The sheriff tells me that you have been a model prisoner, Mr. Shanley. You’re a free man.” Shanley replied, “Well, I’m not going.” Both the sheriff and the judge tried to explain that he was free and had to go, but, turning to Antone, Bill repeated, “I’m not going! You’re the only man who’s ever treated me like I was a white man, and I’m going to stay.”¹⁰⁸

Bill Shanley was, of course, a white man, but no man had ever treated him with such kindness and trust – perhaps for good reason, not forgetting that he was, after all, a cattle rustler. Many months later, while on business in Kanab, Sheriff Prince heard that Bill was living about seven miles south in the small town of Fredonia and made a

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Antone Prince by Delmar Gott, 22 April 1975.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

special trip to see him. "Come in," Bill said in a gruff voice as Antone knocked on the door. Now in the chicken business, Bill was scalding chickens and looked up and said, "Well, you old son-of-a-bitch, you. Come over here." Shanley threw his arms around Antone and reiterated, "Sheriff, you're the only man who's ever treated me like a white man." Antone couldn't help but respond, "That's quite different from the statement that if I ever came on the Arizona Strip you'd kill me." "Well," said Shanley, "I'll tell you again, if you ever come on the Arizona Strip, Bill Shanley's home is your home; anything Bill Shanley's got is yours."¹⁰⁹

The sheriff continued to trust many prisoners, frequently allowing them to fetch their own meals and then return on their own to the jail, though one time he got stung. In August 1942, Harold Messenger, Bill Shanley, and a few other prisoners went to Dick's Café for breakfast under the charge of Deputy Sheriff Israel Wade. As they started back after breakfast, Messenger claimed that he urgently had to go to the rest room and was permitted to go ahead. When Wade arrived at the jail, however, Messenger was nowhere in sight.

Sheriff Prince was notified and found the escapee's tracks in back of the jail and surmised that he had headed north. Driving up to the Sugar Loaf, a boxy, red sandstone formation overlooking the town, he didn't see Messenger and drove towards Washington. When, once again, he couldn't locate the escapee, he came back and drove up the old road toward Enterprise. Getting out of his car, he spotted the man climbing the Black Ridge about a quarter of a mile away. The sheriff ran, out of sight, to a point where he expected the prisoner to come over the ridge; he was in exactly the

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, 21 September 1974.

right location when Messenger cleared the ridge and immediately took him into custody. Held in solitary confinement, Messenger vowed that, when released, he would come back and kill the sheriff.¹¹⁰

Undeterred, Antone continued trusting many of his prisoners. A young man from Cedar City named Armstrong was apprehended after breaking into the service station right next to Dick's Café. One night Sheriff Prince got a call from Mesquite, Nevada, warning that a man driving a stolen car was headed for St. George. Antone didn't have a deputy at that time and couldn't find Art Mitchell or Paul Seegmiller to help him. Armstrong said, "Sheriff, if you let me help you, I'll put my life on the line and won't do anything to disgrace you." Antone trusted Armstrong, gave him a gun, and took him to Middleton, where they set up a roadblock and apprehended the fugitive.¹¹¹

Armstrong soon came before Judge George Whitehead, who, on the recommendation of Sheriff Prince, was lenient. After getting out of jail, he joined the army and was sent to Okinawa; while a soldier, Armstrong frequently wrote Antone expressing gratitude for his trust, and sent him a beautiful satin pillow.¹¹²

At the close of World War II, Antone and Vilate invited their son Clayton and his wife Joy, who were visiting St. George with their year-old son John, to go to a dance. "I'll get babysitting," said Antone, who soon came back with a young man. "Now you take care of this boy," instructed Antone; "I'll guard him with my life, sheriff," came the response.

¹¹⁰ *Washington County News*, 13 August 1942.

¹¹¹ Interview with Virginia Anderson by Stephen Prince, 7 September 1998.

¹¹² Interview with Clayton Prince, Wilmer Anderson, and Virginia Anderson by Stephen Prince, April 1999.

While at the dance Clayton and Joy asked who the babysitter was. "Oh, one of my prisoners," Antone answered casually.¹¹³

This was truly a most unusual sheriff. His reputation, already established in the Charlie Bosshardt case, grew to epic proportions in 1940 with his handling of the most famous Dixie College prank of all time. "I'll tell you, *everybody* heard about it," recalled Everard Cox forty-nine years later.¹¹⁴

What later became Southern Utah University in Cedar City was called, at the time, Branch Agricultural College (BAC), the archrival of Dixie College. Both schools were rather small, so the teams played football with only six players a side. As the big game approached, Merrill "Bud" Kunz, one of the Dixie players, came up with a brilliant plan. Taking teammate Justin Tolten along to Cedar City, they carefully measured and laid out a large block "D."¹¹⁵ Kunz, who was a skilled carpenter, took great pride in making the letter perfect before pouring gasoline to kill the grass. From top to bottom it measured between twenty and thirty feet, an overwhelming and unwelcome sight for the hometown fans.

It was not well received in Cedar City, and irate officials called Sheriff Prince, who investigated and in short order found the perpetrators. At the behest of leaders at BAC, an assembly was arranged for Kunz and Tolten to meet and apologize to their enemies. "Can you believe this?" said Kunz. "Now I've got to get up in front of the whole school!"

On the appointed day, Sheriff Prince picked up the culpable parties and began to drive them to BAC and their doom. After chastising them, not more than halfway to Cedar

¹¹³ Interview with Clayton Prince by Stephen Prince, 29-30 August 1998.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Everard Cox by Stephen Prince, 10 May 1999.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

City, Antone suddenly put his foot on the brake. “Oh, I can’t take you up to apologize to those Cedar people,” he said as he turned back to St. George. But it was too soon to return – everyone would know they skipped the assembly – so Antone took them to Washington, where they drove through the fields, stopping to get a milkshake, for about as long as it would have taken to go to Cedar City and back before returning to Dixie College.¹¹⁶

As word of the escapade made its rounds, Sheriff Prince was elevated to folk hero status among the younger set. Though the Bosshardt case got the most press and the BAC prank story was repeated most frequently, the case that Antone always thought to be his most important was the encounter with Joe Lewis, the FBI’s number one most wanted man. So often did he repeat the story in his later years that Vilate, upon hearing just a few words, on one occasion said, “I’ve got to leave the room, I’ve heard it so many times!” and on another simply said, “Oh, bull!” Vilate’s reaction would seem to indicate that Antone embellished the story each time he retold it, but his account is remarkably consistent not only with the *Washington County News*, but also with the official account in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.

On the night of September 26, 1944, Highway Patrolman Loren Squire called Antone to report that he had been shot at twice while attempting to stop a car for speeding. After reaching Toquerville and talking to Squire, Sheriff Prince approached the car and shouted, “If you’re in that car, you’d better come out with your hands in the air, because you’re surrounded and somebody’s going to get hurt.” Nothing happened, so he looked in the car

¹¹⁶ Interview with Lewis Kunz by Stephen Prince, 8 May 1999. Lewis said that his father got a kick out of two things: That Sheriff Prince didn’t make them apologize; and that, through the years, so many others took credit for the prank. Everard Cox, meanwhile, had one regret: “I will have to tell that I’m sorry that I wasn’t there.”

and found a box on the front seat that had \$364 in silver dollars in it and three brand new guns that had never been fired – a .38 special police revolver, a .32 automatic revolver, and a .22 – and well over 100 rounds of ammunition.¹¹⁷

Antone phoned Jay Newman, chief agent for the western district of the FBI, to report the incident. Newman heard enough and interjected, "Do you know who that cookie is?" Antone didn't, so Newman told him. "Joe Lewis, the number one enemy in America today." Lewis had just robbed the Grant County Bank of John Day at Prairie City, Oregon and earlier in the year had escaped from the Texas State Penitentiary.¹¹⁸ "You be careful; by daylight I'll have several agents down there to help you."

"Mr. Antone B. Prince, Sheriff of Washington County, St. George Utah, who is a fearless police officer took up the search for Lewis immediately after he had fired at the highway patrolman," reported the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. At daybreak Antone started tracking Lewis. In all his years running livestock he had become an expert tracker, as recognized by the *FBI Bulletin*: "Sheriff Prince is a tireless worker and has in the past proved himself expert in the art of tracking down fugitives."¹¹⁹

After a few days of tracking but not sighting Lewis, the sheriff tried to hand off the case to Newman, who had ten FBI agents with him but declined, saying, "No, it's your baby. You know this terrain of the country; it's up to you. You tell us what to do and we'll do it." While they were talking he received a phone call from Bob Philips

¹¹⁷ *Washington County News*, 28 September 1944.

¹¹⁸ *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 14:6, June 1945, 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

who, like all residents of southwestern Utah, had been notified of the search and had spotted Lewis.

Though his tracks were easily identified from the unique rubber heels of his shoes that had a picture of a bell, numerous times Lewis' trail was picked up only to be lost as the outlaw traveled back and forth across the base of the Pine Valley mountains. On the fifth day, Deputy Sheriff Carl Caldwell and two FBI agents located the tracks and located Lewis near a stream. The noise of the running water covered their approach, and when they were close and called for him to surrender, Lewis fired two shots and jumped into the creek. The officers returned fire, fatally striking Lewis in the head.¹²⁰

High praise was given by FBI Director Newman "for the fine cooperation of all branches of law enforcement" and, in particular, for "the trailing ability of Sheriff Prince."¹²¹ The next week, Antone received a personal letter from the famous director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover:

Mr. Antone B. Prince
Sheriff of Washington County
St. George, Utah

My dear Sheriff.

Mr. Jay C. Newman, Special Agent in Charge of our Salt Lake City Field Office, brought to my attention your splendid work in the case involving Joe Lewis, robber of the Prairie City Branch, Grant County Bank of John Day. I know this case presented unusual difficulties and

¹²⁰ *Washington County News*, 5 October 1944.

¹²¹ *Washington County News*, 5 October 1944.

the outstanding work performed by you is worthy of commendation. Deputy Karl Caldwell of Leeds conducted himself in a most creditable fashion. I do hope you will convey my thoughts to him and to Mr. Robert Phillips of St. George who notified you after he saw the fugitive pass.

All of us in the FBI appreciate your tireless performance of duty, which, coupled with your detailed knowledge of the terrain and your abilities as a tracker, made possible a successful termination of this case.

There is perhaps no way in which I can tell the many other deputies and local citizens who joined hands in a search for this dangerous fugitive just how much we appreciate their assistance.

I hope that I might have the privilege of having a detailed account of this case from you personally at some future date. In the event that you should come to Washington at any time by all means drop in to see me.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

[Signed] J. Edgar Hoover

In addition to the Lewis incident, Antone had two cases involving a gun battle. While chasing a stolen car that almost ran down the sheriff – who, once again, thought a roadblock meant standing alone in the middle of the road – Antone and City Marshall Paul Seegmiller fired numerous shots. Though they lost the car after it turned down a dirt road, raising so much dust that they couldn't see where they were going, the FBI later found it just outside of Wendover, Nevada. When the agents came through St. George, they told Prince and Seegmiller that “they had never seen so many well placed

shots in a car that didn't stop it," but chided the pair "for not shooting at the men instead of just trying to stop the car."¹²²

The other known case of a gun battle had an almost comical ending. "The tires were shot off Alfred Morris' car by Sheriff Antone B. Prince when the car thieves who were driving it failed to heed the warning to stop," reported the *Washington County News* on September 30, 1943. As Deputy Sheriff Lee Adams drove, Antone peppered the fugitive car with bullets as they raced down Tabernacle Street at a speed of 80 miles an hour. When the sheriff shot out the tires, the car was forced to stop and the two youths jumped out and began running up a hill:

By the time the officers were stopped the boys were nearly to the top of the hill. Sheriff Prince reports that he called to them and told them to "stop or I'll shoot your legs off." They stopped immediately and were taken into custody.¹²³

Antone was no-nonsense in most respects – he may well have shot their legs off if necessary – but he also was compassionate and would try to settle a matter, whenever possible, outside the legal system. "If a juvenile was involved nowadays in some of these offences, they'd have him in court and really make a big deal out of it," said Charlie Pickett, whose father was district attorney for most of the time Antone served as sheriff. "Antone would get these kids who were doing some pilfering – we called it pilfering, it wasn't stealing – he'd get the kids and talk to the parents, and it never got

¹²² Seegmiller, Paul, "History," in possession of Fayone Whitehead.

¹²³ *Washington County News*, 30 September 1943.

past that. Once Antone would talk to you, you got things straightened out.”¹²⁴ His sense of fair play could make friends out of enemies, as demonstrated by Bill Shanley and, to an extent, Charlie Bosshardt, but the most unusual example occurred in a totally unexpected location.

After graduating from the USC School of Dentistry in 1943, Antone’s son Clayton took the Utah State Board Examination, the clinical section of which took place at the Utah State Prison, with prisoners as patients. Thirteen graduates lined up to work in somewhat primitive conditions, using an uncomfortable chair that had a board nailed to the back as a head rest and a gallon bucket for the patient to spit in. Seventeen prisoners were brought out, and Les Warburton, the Chairman of the Board of Dental Examiners, said, “Thirteen of you boys go over there and get in a chair.”

Clayton had noticed that one of the convicts, number 17, kept staring at him and, at the first opportunity, made a beeline for his chair. “Is your name Prince?” asked the prisoner. Of course it was. “I thought so. You look just like your dad. He’s the one who sent me up here.” “Oh, no, there goes my career,” thought the young dentist, but the inmate continued: “He treated me more fairly than anyone else in my life.” When Clayton finished the dental exam, the prisoner rewarded him with a tooled leather wallet and a braided horsehair belt.¹²⁵

Antone easily won reelection in 1942, and by 1946 had become so popular that nobody bothered to run against him. By 1950, an opponent dared run against him, but Sheriff Prince once again was reelected by a wide margin. Something seemed to be

¹²⁴ Interview with Charlie Pickett by Stephen Prince, 5 December 1999.

¹²⁵ Prince, Clayton, *Go Stick It in the Ditch: An Autobiography*, (St. George, 1999), 22.

missing, however: The number of arrests had dwindled in the years following 1946. In 1949 there were barely more than a quarter as many arrests as a decade earlier and not many more the following year.¹²⁶

Part of the decrease might be ascribed to the prosperity the country experienced following World War II, and the crime rate seems to have decreased – certainly there were no murders or violent crimes and only a few armed robberies – but the possibility cannot be discounted that Sheriff Prince, after so many years in office, may have started to tire. By 1951, a portion of his attention was drawn elsewhere when he was elected secretary-treasurer of the Utah State Association of County Officials, a situation that became more acute in 1952 and 1953 when he was elected vice-president and then president of the association, but there was one last important case to be handled.

Though the Mormon Church, since the 1890 Manifesto, had mostly disallowed polygamy (there were still a few church-sanctioned plural marriages in the early twentieth century), the practice of polygamy among some of its members had not entirely disappeared by 1930. The Church, in 1933, began putting increased pressure on its members to cease the practice and, in 1935, the Utah State Legislature passed an act “Making Unlawful Cohabitation a Felony, and Providing That All Persons Except the Defendant Must Testify in Proceedings Thereof.”¹²⁷

A small town of polygamists called Short Creek, that in 1935 consisted of twenty houses and a combination store and gas station, had been established on the Utah-Arizona border in Washington County. As the 1935 act elevated “unlawful

¹²⁶ Antone Prince’s arrest records.

¹²⁷ Van Wagoner, Richard S., *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 195.

cohabitation” from a misdemeanor to a felony, the location of Short Creek became very attractive to polygamists, who could cross back and forth over the state line to avoid arrest. In 1939 the state of Utah began cracking down on individual polygamists rather than on the settlement, and on August 30 and September 1 – undoubtedly acting on orders from the state – Sheriff Antone Prince arrested Cleve LeBaron and brothers Richard and Fred Jessop.¹²⁸

LeBaron was a Short Creek fundamentalist, but the Jessops were from New Harmony, living about a quarter of a mile south of town on the old James E. Taylor ranch. The brothers lived in houses about forty yards apart on the property, and two women lived with each brother, according to Vivian Prince, a New Harmony resident who happened to be Antone’s nephew.¹²⁹

The trials of the Jessop brothers took place rather quickly. Richard’s trial, on September 19, lasted just one day and he was found guilty and sentenced to five years in the state prison.¹³⁰ Joseph W. Musser and other fundamentalist leaders were alarmed because Sheriff Prince, District Attorney Orval Hafen, and Judge Will Hoyt all were Mormon and thought they were acting in concert “to stamp out polygamy.”¹³¹

Richard Jessop never served a day in prison, however, for an important point had been made in an appeal to the Utah Supreme Court. The law stated, “If any person cohabits with more than one person of the opposite sex, such person is guilty of a felony.” But what, asked Jessop’s attorney Claude Barnes, defines cohabitation? The Court agreed with Barnes’ argument, stating “That the parties may have been seen

¹²⁸ Antone Prince’s arrest records.

¹²⁹ Interview with Vivian Prince by Stephen Prince, 29 August 1998.

¹³⁰ State of Utah vs. Richard Jessop, Criminal 268, 20 September 1939.

¹³¹ Musser, Joseph W., “Journal,” September 1939, HDC.

living in the same house does not by itself prove a prima facia case.” Ruling that the facts were insufficient to prove cohabitation, the verdict was overturned and Jessop was set free.¹³²

It is highly doubtful that Sheriff Prince had any emotional stake in the case. He was a faithful Mormon, to be sure, but the law was his primary concern. Asked if the accused harbored any ill feelings towards the sheriff, Vivian Prince, a very close friend of the Jessop’s while they lived in New Harmony, said: “No, they didn’t, they were friendly to uncle Tone. They never had any ill will. They knew that he was just upholding his job.”¹³³

A few years passed during which time the polygamists were left in peace, which is all that they wanted, but on March 7, 1944, a massive raid coordinated by the executive branch of the Utah State government, along with FBI agents and U.S. federal marshals, served warrants throughout the region for the arrest of those accused of “unlawful cohabitation.”¹³⁴ Called into duty once again, Sheriff Prince arrested Fred and Edson Jessop of Short Creek.¹³⁵ Though many of the arrested were found guilty in verdicts that were upheld by the United States Supreme Court, the cases against Fred and Edson Jessop were dismissed by Judge Will Hoyt of the Fifth District Court in St. George – the same judge who five years earlier had found Richard Jessop guilty of the same charge.¹³⁶

¹³² The State of Utah vs. Richard Jessop, No. 6193, 6 May 1940.

¹³³ Interview with Vivian Prince by Stephen Prince, 29 August 1998.

¹³⁴ Bradley, Martha Sonntag, *Kidnapped From That Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 68.

¹³⁵ Antone Prince’s arrest records.

¹³⁶ Bradley, *Kidnapped From That Land*, 81.

Sheriff Prince, beyond doubt, would have been happy never to be involved in another polygamist raid, but, unfortunately, the 1944 Boyden Raid (named after one of its architects, U.S. Attorney John S. Boyden) was a mere hint of what was to come. Arizona Governor Howard Pyle, elected in 1950, became concerned that the community of Short Creek had welfare demands on Mohave County and yet its citizens were paying no taxes. Alarmed by an apparent misuse of tax funds for private purposes as well as by the burgeoning population, that was doubling each decade and by 1953 included 39 men, 86 women, and 263 children, Pyle orchestrated a surprise assault on the town.¹³⁷

The massive raid took place on July 26, 1953, and involved two hundred law officers, mostly from Arizona, though Pyle managed to secure the participation of Utah officers lest polygamists simply walk across the border to avoid arrest. In defending the raid, Pyle stated that an investigation “had proved that every maturing girl child was forced into the bondage of multiple wifhood” and recalled that the population, just sixteen years before, was two men and a half dozen wives. “It is easy to see,” he said, “that in another 10 years the population of Short Creek would be in the thousands, and an army would not be sufficient to end the greater insurrection and defiance of all that is right.”¹³⁸

The invasion from both sides of the state line was set to coincide with an eclipse of the moon at 4:30 a.m. The Arizona force was accompanied by national guardsmen, the Arizona attorney general, judges, policewomen, nurses, twenty-five carloads of

¹³⁷ Ibid., 112-123.

¹³⁸ *Washington County News*, 30 July 1953.

newspapermen, and twelve liquor control agents, while the much smaller Utah faction consisted mainly of Sheriff Antone Prince, his deputy, Israel Wade, a few men deputized for the mission, Judge Will Hoyt, district attorney Pat Fenton, and county attorney Pershing Nelson.¹³⁹ What was supposed to be a secret raid turned out to be no surprise at all, however, for the polygamists had been tipped off the day before. Instead of being asleep in their beds, most of the populace stood around the city flagpole singing “America” while hoisting the American flag.

It is impossible to tell where the sheriff’s sympathies lay, but he was all business. On July 29, he arrested five women on Arizona warrants, though he released them the next day to return to care for their children.¹⁴⁰ No sooner were the women returned than 125 married women and children attempted a mass escape, only to be turned back by Washington County deputy sheriffs while Sheriff Prince and Israel Wade searched the steep cliffs for any stragglers.¹⁴¹

The raid turned out to be a dismal failure and was certainly the low point of Antone’s illustrious career. Though all 263 children were seized, within three years all had been returned to their families in what had become an expensive and unpopular public embarrassment and a public relations nightmare. It was a fiasco to forget, but the polygamists had long memories. Years later, when Antone’s grandson Robert Prince began his practice of orthodontics in St. George, he immediately began seeing a number of patients from Hilldale and Colorado City – the name Short Creek had been changed following the 1953 raid. One day, in about 1990, a young polygamist bride

¹³⁹ *Washington County News*, 13 August 1953.

¹⁴⁰ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 July 1953.

¹⁴¹ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 July 1953.

casually asked if he was related to Sheriff Prince. Being very proud of his heritage he beamed and said, “Yes, he was my grandfather.” All of his patients from the two polygamist towns immediately had their records transferred to another orthodontist.¹⁴²

The luster was gone from being sheriff, and Antone was getting tired. As the 1954 election approached, he told Democratic officials that he wouldn’t run, but they put him on the ticket despite his objection. “I never campaigned a bit,” he recalled, “only wherever I went I told ‘em what a good man Roy Renouf was and to elect him.”¹⁴³ Antone’s memory may have been a bit selective, since the *Washington County News* reported that “Both candidates had conducted vigorous campaigns,” but there is no doubt that he was tired of the office.¹⁴⁴

Renouf won the election, but out of nearly 3500 ballots his margin of victory was only 60 votes, an extremely close race considering that Antone ran as a Democrat when the Republicans, led by President Eisenhower, had taken control. His reign was over, and Antone was openly relieved. Now 58 years old, he had served for eighteen years six months at a time when *he* was the law. Never before or since did Washington County – or southern Utah, for that matter – have such a memorable sheriff.

¹⁴² E-mail of Robert Prince to Stephen Prince, 20 July 1998.

¹⁴³ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

¹⁴⁴ *Washington County News*, 3 November 1954.

EPILOGUE

On his popular 1950's daily CBS television show "House Party," host Art Linkletter regularly had student guests from Los Angeles public schools. Among the questions he would ask occasionally was, "Do you have anything you'd like to tell the world?" Six-year-old Greg Prince didn't hesitate for a second in answering:

"If anybody's in trouble anywhere in the world, call my grandpa in St. George, Utah."

"Who's your grandpa?"

"He's the sheriff."¹⁴⁵

Linkletter was tickled enough by the exchange that he included it in his 1957 bestseller, *Kids Say the Darndest Things!* Greg's response wasn't meant to be funny, but was merely an honest answer to a simple question. Any of Antone's grandchildren may have said basically the same thing, for he was our hero, he was *the sheriff*. How many kids could say that of their grandfather?

¹⁴⁵ Linkletter, Art, *Kids Say the Darndest Things!*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), 33.

He told stories (probably with a little embellishment), though he was more likely to tell us of his encounters with rattlesnakes rather than with criminals. The favorite story, as he told it:

There were eleven CCC camps in Washington County. One camp was delegated to do work on the Arizona Strip. While they were out at Hay Rocks on the Arizona Strip they ran into a flash flood. There was twenty-six of them in a truck. The flood took the truck down, and they all escaped but one. They sent word to me and I got a posse and we scoured the country all the way from Wild Ax down to the mouth of the canyon [Virgin River] and they all turned back except Jack Spencer and myself. We hadn't had anything to eat or drink all day, but we couldn't give up.

We came to a big fall on the river and we couldn't get down, so we backed up and hoofed around a little knoll and, in doing so, we came into a sand rock that had water in it, rain water. We got down to the river edge, there was a big rattlesnake, he seen us and crawled back between two sandstones, rocks. I couldn't get in there to kill him, so I sharpened a stick and poked it to him and anchored it and it seemed hard to get away.

Well, we went a little farther and we couldn't get down along the river, so we had to help ourselves up over a ledge. Jack lifted me up and I caught a hold of the top and pulled myself up there and gave him a boost and helped him up. We went a little farther but the river narrowed up and we couldn't go down there that night, it was so dangerous. So we walked down this sandbar and decided to stay there. Late in the night I choked and said to Jack, "I've got to go back and get a drink," and he said, "I have to too." And so we came to this ledge and let ourselves down and I said, "Now, Jack, be careful, they say where there's one rattlesnake there's usually two." I'd just done this and he grabbed me on my leg, hanging on my overalls, and I ran and I said, "My hell, I'm bit by a rattlesnake, Jack!" He wrapped around my legs and finally I shook him loose. He never bit me but he hung into my pants for quite a ways.

So we backed up against a ledge and just stood there the rest of the night. When morning came we went down through the river, it just meandered back and forth, we locked arms so if one went down we'd both go. We went down through the narrows, the river so narrow that three or four men could take hold of hands and touch the wall on each side. We were just about choked and starved

too, but they brought word to us that the body had been found, some dog had found it near Mesquite, Nevada. Well, that ended that story. Shall I tell another one?¹⁴⁶

His grandchildren didn't know at the time that our their seemingly immortal grandfather had a mortal fear of rattlesnakes. That was understandable, for when he was a young kid in New Harmony a rattler struck, biting his Levi's while somehow missing him. His other fear, however, was a total surprise: "I believe he would have gone after a grizzly bear with a switch," said his youngest son, Jim, but Antone "had a deep fright for mice." When Jim his brother Alpine once handed him a paper bag out of which a mouse jumped, Antone came after them, yelling: "I'll kill you sons-of-bitches! I'll kill both of you! I'm going to kill you on the spot."¹⁴⁷

Antone was prepared for retired life following his defeat in the 1954 election. His first order of business was to accept an offer from Philips Petroleum to lease the prime piece of property where his house stood on St. George Blvd. to erect a service station. Philips got the better end of the deal, but \$50,000 plus \$175 a month for twenty years, proved to be enough for a man whose top salary as sheriff was \$210 a month.

Philips was going to bulldoze the house but allowed Antone to take whatever materials he wished, which he did liberally, taking the house apart brick by brick. Doors, windows, studding, rafters, everything that was useable was taken to be used in the construction of his new house on the red hill overlooking St. George. The new site provided a wonderful view of the town and surrounding mesas, but more importantly it was immediately above Alpine's house, with the two properties connected by a wooden stairway.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Antone Prince by Gregory Prince, September 1971.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Jim and Marsha Prince by Gregory Prince, 25 March 2000.

He had a hobby that was well suited for retirement. During the years he was sheriff there were two things that Antone loved to do: Visit with and help people, and prospect. In his early years of prospecting he looked for gold and silver, but with the coming of the Atomic Age in the late '40s and early '50s, a new craze swept across the Colorado Plateau.

Following the conclusion of World War II, the United States embarked on a massive bomb-building program, and the newly formed Atomic Energy Commission was paying top dollar for uranium, the key component of the bomb. An estimated 2,000 prospectors, including Antone, fanned out in search of prehistoric trees that had petrified and soaked up radioactive gases coming up from inside the earth, creating uranium. Armed with a pick, a pair of binoculars, a hand-held Geiger counter and a few other accessories, the miners staked claims measuring 600 by 1,500 feet on public lands under the mining Act of 1872.¹⁴⁸

Antone did his share of prospecting while serving as sheriff, but retirement meant extra time for his avocation. Most of his claims were in Bull Valley, where he wintered his goats many years before, but he also ventured into Goldstrike and Mineral Mountain in the western section of Washington County. He certainly was not alone, and the haphazard method of marking claims led to confusion and frequent claim-jumping, an activity to which Antone evidently was no stranger. "Hell, some of those claims were ten deep," recalled Charlie Pickett. "I saw a sign once in the early '50s on a road in Goldstrike: 'Prospectors Welcome – ex-sheriffs will be gut shot!'"¹⁴⁹

The search for mineral riches was not always in vain: Charlie Pickett managed to secure a lease for Art Crosby and Earl Cox on state land northwest of Kanarra where

¹⁴⁸ Zoellner, Tom, "The Uranium Rush," *American Heritage of Invention & Technology*, (Summer 2000, vol. 16/no. 1), 56-57.

¹⁴⁹ Letter of Charlie Pickett to Stephen Prince, 11 November 1999.

uranium was found; they later sold the lease for \$200,000.¹⁵⁰ Antone, however, succeeded only in finding thorium, a soft, silver-white radioactive material that is three times as abundant as uranium but virtually worthless. Returning with backpack after backpack, Antone accumulated tons of the rocks that eventually filled an old cesspool on the corner by his house, crammed his garage, and lined the embankment that separated his house from Alpine's.¹⁵¹

Antone was justifiably proud of his children, often telling how Clayton graduated from the USC School of Dentistry as the only student ever to be number one in his class each of his four years, and how Alpine did the same, only in three years instead of four as school was held year round due to the Second World War. He loved all four children – Virginia, Clayton, Alpine, and Jim – but his relationship with Alpine was special, in great part due to the fact that the other children moved away from St. George while Alpine stayed home, lived next door, and visited his parents every day. And then the unthinkable happened.

Antone and Vilate had just returned from a Monday night dance on December 19, 1960, when she heard a knock on the door. “Where’s Antone?” one of the three men on the doorstep asked frantically. They had bad news about Alpine. “Is he killed?” asked Vilate. “We don’t know,” they responded as they took Antone to the scene of the accident.

It was the night before the Dixie Medical Plaza was to open. St. George had never had a building with office space dedicated solely to the practice of medicine and dentistry, but Alpine, an orthodontist, had spearheaded the drive that resulted in the organization of the Dixie Medical Plaza Corporation. Having noticed a piece of floor molding was loose, Alpine nailed it down but in the process punctured a small copper tubing.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Charlie Pickett, 5 December 1999.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Jim and Marsha Prince by Gregory Prince, 25 March 2000.

Descending through an access opening, Alpine crawled under the floor to turn off the water. When he did not return in a few minutes, a dental colleague, Dr. E. L. Cox, went to investigate. Alpine was lying face down on the damp ground near some electrical wires. His head evidently had touched the wiring, which carried 110 volts, and the combination of the leaking water and the electrical shock proved deadly.¹⁵²

A large chunk of Antone's heart was cut out that night. He had lost not only his son but also his best friend. To be sure, everyone in the family was severely affected by the untimely death. Clayton, my father, was inconsolable; it was the first time that I ever saw him cry. Jim, who at the time of the accident was on his way home from the Washington University School of Dentistry in St. Louis for Christmas vacation, immediately lost interest in dentistry and dropped out of dental school. But Antone was hit the hardest and never fully recovered. He and Vilate took down their Christmas tree and in the rest of their years had another tree just one time. "They pretty well secluded themselves after that," recalled Maeser Terry, a close neighbor and friend.¹⁵³

Antone was sixty-four years old, but he still had strength and stamina that, particularly on deer hunts, shamed his younger companions. Like a tire with a slow leak, however, he gradually deflated. On his last hunt, with Jim and grandson Greg in 1966, not a shot was fired and, for the first time, Antone complained about his health. "I'm all give-out," he said repeatedly, using a phrase that was part of the local idiom.

Greg was living with his grand parents at the time while attending Dixie College in St. George. The small house they had built on the hill had two small bedrooms, separated by a wall that contained back-to-back heaters, with grill work open to both rooms that allowed

¹⁵² *Deseret News and Telegram*, 20 December 1960.

¹⁵³ Interview with Maeser, Marilla, and Fenton Terry by Stephen and Robert Prince, 29 August 1998.

sound to pass freely from one room to the other. From the first night he stayed there, Greg had been exposed to Antone's snoring that in tonality and volume defied description. One night he taped the awful sound and played it back the next morning. Antone at first had no idea what the noise was, but after being told it was his snoring he was embarrassed and so self-conscious that he began sleeping in the garage, about thirty feet from the house, a custom that persisted for most of the rest of his life.

Each succeeding year brought further decline. In 1973, a year after I graduated from the UCLA School of Dentistry, I picked up grandpa and drove him to Los Angeles to perform some dental work on him. His vision and hearing were failing and he had high blood pressure and severe throat problems due to many years of coughing. As we drove through the Nevada desert, grandpa paused for a moment and then uttered a profound truth that I will never forget: "Old age is a son-of-a-bitch!" Nobody has ever said it better.

Antone's vision was severely impaired, but Vilate's was unable to bend her right leg, that had been totally stiff since a childhood accident, and was unable to drive. They had a system where she provided the eyes while he drove, but in 1975 the system failed, resulting in an accident in which both of Vilate's femurs were broken.

After Vilate got out of the hospital and came home, Antone did his best to take care of her. While lifting her from her bed with a hydraulic device into a chair, however, Antone dropped her. Vilate wouldn't let Antone touch the jack again, so for about six weeks Maeser – whose knees were so bad that he had to ride a bicycle to get across the street – went back and forth three times a day to perform the duty.

Antone declined further and developed extreme difficulty in swallowing. After a short stay in the hospital in St. George, he was taken by ambulance to Salt Lake City, a distance

of over 300 miles. He went back to St. George and spent three months in a rest home, after which his bishop, Bruce Stucki, flew him to Salt Lake in a private plane. Antone was weak enough that dad had to lift him from the plane to the ground.

The doctors performed tests but could do nothing. My parents, Clayton and Joy, took him to see his brother Lawrence, who was living in Salt Lake City, but he never got out of the car: Clayton helped Lawrence from the house to the car, and the two brothers sat in the back seat, hugging each other while tears flowed from their eyes, never speaking a word.

Clayton and Joy took Antone back to St. George, where Vilate was relieved to have her mate back home, and then continued on to Los Angeles where, on April 15, 1977, they, my sister, Mary Lou, and I embarked on a long planned trip to Mexico City and the Mayan ruins in the Yucatan Peninsula. We knew grandpa wasn't doing well and, just in case, left a carefully detailed itinerary of our trip, complete with hotels and telephone numbers. On the second day of our trip – on April 17 – an emergency call was placed to our hotel in Mexico City, but we evidently had not been put on the guest list and repeated attempts to reach us failed.

Two weeks later, at the conclusion of our trip, we were met at Los Angeles International Airport by our other grandparents, Leland and Rubye Anderson. “Clayton,” said Leland as gently as possible, “your father died while you were in Mexico.” We couldn't be reached and the funeral couldn't wait for our return, so he had been buried in our absence. It was the second time in my life that I had seen my father cry.

Grandpa lies buried in the St. George Cemetery. The simple tombstone marking the grave bears no epitaph. He was a simple man, and I guess he probably wanted it that way. I've often wished that I could go back in time to honor him at his funeral. I can't, of

course, but at least I *can* write an epitaph for him – keeping it simple, of course, so he wouldn't object:

ANTONE PRINCE

14 November 1896 – 17 April 1977

He was a good man,

An honest man,

A worthy Son of the Utah Pioneers