

Newspaper Articles-1931

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Newspaper Articles for 1931

About

The Church Without a Name, The Truth, Two By Twos, *Two by Twos*

From: The Great Falls Tribune, Montana

BARBER SERIOUSLY INJURES WORKER TOM LYNESS IN HOTEL LOBBY

December 11, 1931

December 12, 1931

December 20, 1931

March 23, 1932

March 25, 1932

March 26, 1932

March 30, 1932

November 28, 1936

Read detailed account: Tom Lyness – Bozeman, Montana, 1931

December 11, 1931

EVANGELIST IS WOUNDED AT BOZEMAN

BARBER FROM PONY SERIOUSLY INJURES TOM LYNESS IN HOTEL LOBBY

BOZEMAN, Dec. 10—Tom Lyness, 40 an evangelist with missions at Belgrade and Manhattan, was shot and seriously wounded Thursday by William Sumner, 55, a barber of Pony.

The affair occurred in the reading room of the Baltimore hotel, where the men had met by appointment. Sumner gave himself up after firing three shots at Lyness.

As Sumner walked out through the lobby, he said: "I had to shoot him."

The exact cause of the quarrel is not definitely known. Sumner formerly lived here and his friends told officers they believed he held the preacher responsible for failure of Mrs. Sumner to go with her husband to Pony. She lives here with a grown daughter and they have another daughter.

Lyness, so far as known here, is unmarried. He has been in this vicinity for several months and previously held meetings at Lolo, Radersburg and communities near Missoula. He was not connected with any denomination.

Lyness, with bullet wounds in his head, neck and abdomen, is not expected to live..

December 12, 1931

EVANGELIST WOUNDED AT BOZEMAN IS NOT EXPECTED TO LIVE

BOZEMAN, Dec. 11—Thomas Lyness, 40, evangelist critically wounded by Elwood T. "Bill" Sumner Thursday, was still alive Friday,

though there seemed little possibility of his recovery.

No charges have yet been filed against Sumner, who surrendered after the shooting. Sumner blamed the preacher's influence for his failure to induce his wife to move with him to Pony, where he has a barber shop. The proposed baptism of his oldest daughter brought matters to a crisis, he said.

December 20, 1931, Page 2

SUMNER ARRAIGNED FOR SHOOTING AFFAIR

BOZEMAN, Dec. 19—An information charging first degree assault has been filed in district court against Elwood T. Sumner, who shot Thomas Lyness, evangelist, Dec. 10, during an altercation in a hotel here.

Suffering from two bullet wounds in the head, Lyness still is in serious condition.

Sumner reserved his plea to the charge and was returned to jail in default of \$7,000 bail.

March 23, 1932, Page 6

JURY FOR SUMNER MURDER TRIAL TO BE CHOSEN TODAY

BOZEMAN, March 22—A jury will be chosen in district court here tomorrow to hear evidence in the trial of Elwood T. "Bill" Sumner, barber, on a charge of first degree assault which grew out of the shooting of Thomas Lyness, evangelist, in a hotel reading room here Dec. 10.

Lyness is the preacher in an unorganized church which Sumner's wife attended. He was shot twice through the head but recovered.

Sumner has been in the county jail since his surrender to officers immediately after the shooting.

March 25, 1932

SHOT EVANGELIST IN DEFENSE, PLEA

Bozeman Barber on Trial Asserts He Was Grabbed by Heavier Antagonist

BOZEMAN, March 24—Elwood T. Sumner, 64, defendant in a first degree assault trial, Thursday told a district court jury he shot Thomas Lyness, evangelist, in self-defense.

The defendant, a gray-haired barber who is small of stature, declared the evangelist, who is more than 6 feet tall and weighs about 200 pounds, grabbed him in a hotel reading room here Dec. 10 and a scuffle ensued, after which he fired three shots at the evangelist. Two of the bullets entered the latter's head, while the third missed him.

Mrs. Sumner, who was called by the state and not allowed to testify against her husband, sobbed when Sumner, asked whether his wife had had improper relations with the evangelist, replied:

"If I did know, you could hang me and I wouldn't tell."

Testimony was completed late in the afternoon. The state closed its case with witnesses who testified Sumner had made statements which they had interpreted as threats against the evangelist.

Lyness testified he had never offended the barber or exercised undue influence over members of his family. He said he once was successful in effecting a reconciliation between Mr. and Mrs. Sumner.

Witnesses from Belgrade, Manhattan and Bozeman where Lyness had held services, testified his character was good. Mike Beck of Missoula and H.R. Ness of Molese, said Lyness had a bad reputation in their communities.

March 26, 1932, Page 13

PONY BARBER HELD GUILTY OF ASSAULT IN BOZEMAN TRIAL

BOZEMAN, March 25—Elwood Sumner, 64, barber of Pony, who shot Thomas Lyness, 40, evangelist, twice through the head here Dec. 10, was found guilty today of assault in the first degree by the district court jury.

Punishment was left to Judge B. B. Law, who set Monday afternoon as the time for pronouncement of sentence. The law provides for

a penalty of from 5 to 20 years' imprisonment.

Sumner, who had accused the evangelist of causing Mrs. Sumner to leave him, stood smiling as the clerk read the verdict, reached after four hours' deliberation. The convicted man then shook hands with the county attorney and jury foreman. A minute later he was back in his cell in the county jail, where he has been since his surrender immediately after the shooting.

"Hate to leave my kiddies," the gray-haired barber said later. "But there's nothing to do but take my medicine." .

March 30, 1932, Page 9

BARBER AT PONY IS SENTENCED TO SERVE 12 YEARS IN PRISON

BOZEMAN, March 29—Shortly after denying a motion for a new trial for Elwood T. "Bill" Sumner, 64, barber of Pony, District Judge B.B. Law today sentenced him to serve 12 years in the state prison for shooting Thomas Lyness, 40, evangelist.

Sumner was convicted last week of first degree assault. He accused Lyness, leader of an unorganized church, of breaking up his family.

In the motion for a new trial Sumner's counsel charged that the jury was guilty of misconduct, that it received evidence outside the courtroom, decided the verdict by lot and that the court misdirected the jury. It also stated new evidence had been discovered.

November 28, 1936

WIFE OPPOSES PAROLE OF PRISONER HUSBAND

HELENA, Nov. 27—Executive clemency has been asked for E. T. Sumner, formerly of Bozeman, serving a 12-year sentence in the state penitentiary for first degree assault.

State records showed he was charged with shooting at Thomas Lyness, preacher of a religious organization of which Sumner's wife was a member.

Gov. Elmer Holt asked the state pardon board to commute Sumner's sentence to eight years and make him eligible for immediate parole. The governor said the prisoner's daughter, Mrs. Ed Stauts of Reno, Nev., had asked the release of her father so she may take him to Nevada where he can be given medical attention.

The governor said Sumner's wife and another daughter, living in Bozeman, have protested the proposed parole.

The board set Dec. 23 as the date for hearing the request.