

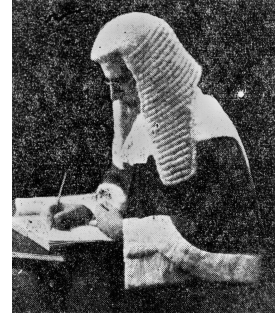
(Received March 25, 1899.)

Brisbane, This Day. The enquiry into the Gatton murder case has closed.

The Inspector of Police said he had no more evidence to offer. Enquiries were still being made, but there was no use keeping the proceeding open.

The Magistrate adversely commented upon the apathy of the blood relations of the victims and their unwillingness to assist in furthering the investigations.

He said that M'Neill, the brother-in-law, acted as if he wished the matter to be buried in oblivion.



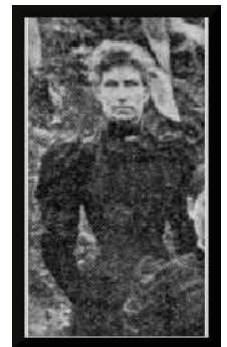
Before the proceedings closed the magistrate, Mr. Shand, complained to Inspector Urquhart about the absurd manner in which he had conducted the case, and also made strong comments as to the reluctance of all the members of the Murphy family, particularly Mrs. M'Neill, to assist the police.

The taking of evidence was then concluded.

The police will continue their investigations.

The remaining evidence as to M'Neill's whereabouts on the night of the murders is that of his wife, and it is the most important.

Assuming it to be credible, it would seem that M'Neill was in his bed on the night of the murders, and if the testimony reproduced in this article is to be relied upon, it is clear that M'Neill could not have been in the vicinity of Moran's paddock at the time the mysterious man at the "slip-rails " was seen.



Moreover, it should be noted that, though it was a moonlight night, this man was not recognised by any of the local residents who passed him/her.

[Why didn't the person at the rails care if he/she was seen if murder was intended?](#)

#### OTHER WITNESSES AT THE POLICE COMMISSION.

Thos. Wilson, J.P., stated he had known the Murphy family for about fifteen years.

He never knew of any of them having sweethearts. He went out with the first batch of persons to the scene of the murder. Witness walked from the sliprails. **M'Neill, who was a little in front when they were about four or five yards off, said the first body was that of Norah.** Witness recognised it as her body. There was no sign of a struggle round any of the bodies. Their first idea was to keep the place clear, and not disturb the ground. Witness and a man named Devitt were left to protect the scene. Two persons arrived first, and then M'Neill and the mother came. He told the people to keep back; but he had a difficulty about it. Witness came to the conclusion that they

received the injuries on the head where they were lying, because of the position of the heads. There was not the crowd on the ground that had been represented. When he left at 1 o'clock there were not more than twenty persons on the ground.

Mr. Devitt, bookmaker, of Gatton, gave corroborative evidence.

Charles Gilbert, publican, of Gatton, said that M'Neill, on the morning of the discovery, came into the hotel and asked where the police station was. It was shown him.

He said, "The three Murphy's are lying dead in a paddock." Witness said, "What paddock?" He said, "About a mile and a-half or two miles out on the left-hand side." **As M'Neill was getting on his horse witness understood him to say that it must have been an accident, as the horse was dead also. When witness went near the bodies he had no doubt a murder had been committed, and he also easily recognised the body of Norah.** It was not true that when the doctor arrived there was a crowd of people in the room where the bodies were lying. The room had been locked, and the key given to Arrell. The scene of the murder was covered with leaves, and was not easy tracking ground.

#### EVIDENCE OF THE CHEMIST.

Richard James, chemist at Gatton, was called. He said he was present when the post-mortem was made by Dr. Von Lossberg. That gentleman did mention about a bullet wound, but not quite in the manner in which he related it. The wound was vivid, and Dr. Von Lossberg put his finger in; but could not feel it. Witness at his request also probed, with the same result. An endeavour was then made to find signs of the bullet on the other side. Witness was one of the first who went out to the scene of the murder after the discovery. While going up the rise towards the slip rails Sergeant Arrell, who was in the lead with M'Neill, called attention to the track of the wobbly wheel on M'Neill's trap, in which the murdered ones had driven. When they were going through the bush towards the bodies they thought it was an accident, but a little consideration convinced them that a trap could not be taken far through such a thick bush without being smashed to pieces. The trap in which witness and others were seated was pulled up about 60ft. from the bodies, and they got out.

Arrell and M'Neill had gone up towards the bodies. The ground near by could not have been disturbed by any of them. The rug on which Norah was lying was nicely arranged.

The body was partly lying on the abdomen.

**From the first look he concluded she had been murdered, because her head was battered in and because of the position of the body. There was blood on the tree near which she was lying.** There were no marks of a struggle. He looked. He could see no marks of a man's foot. M'Neill was looking at the body perhaps a minute and a half but he did not say who it was. After such an observation if he knew the girl well he would know who it was. They then examined the other bodies. Helen's body was stretched out carefully. There were no signs of a struggle, which surprised him very much. Michael's body was doubled up, and he had a purse in one hand. There were no signs of a struggle near this body also. His first conclusion was that they had come

there for a picnic. Though he looked for foot-tracks he could see no footprints anywhere. A few days afterwards he went out to test whether his footsteps would show, selecting similar land in the vicinity; but he found his feet left no impression. M'Neill remained for a while, and then said he would go and inform their mother. He seemed somewhat distressed. Witness, however, did not pay much attention to M'Neill. He did not ask him what he thought about it or hear M'Neill express any opinion about the murder. M'Neill was at this time a stranger to him. In subsequent conversations M'Neill never expressed any opinion as to the murderer. He once complained about the police shadowing him. Michael Murphy's clothes were not disarranged. All those present at first kept back to a certain extent so as not to disturb the ground. Witness left before other people arrived on the scene.

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