

Skeleton Found, Then Lost; Officers Probe Paragonah Mystery

The mystery of a human skeleton found by deer hunters in the mountainous country near Paragonah and its subsequent complete disappearance has local officers baffled and the interest of the citizens of this area at a high pitch.

The discovery was reported to Sheriff S. C. Lamb late Saturday evening by Loyal Millett and Frank Booth of San Bernardino, California, who had been hunting deer in the hills near Paragonah. According to their story, Millett and Booth became separated and a few minutes later Booth met another hunter whom he assumed to be from this vicinity. The two proceeded up the canyon, eventually coming out on a large flat rock to get a view of the surrounding territory. At their feet they discovered an old Savage rifle and sitting propped in the shelter on the rock they found a skeleton of a man. The rustiness of the gun and the bleached condition of the bones indicated that they had been there for several years. A minute examination was made of the skeleton, Booth reporting that the skull showed no signs of injury and that on the left arm was found a wrist watch with a metal band.

Booth's companion suggested taking the bones and gun to town and turning them over to the Sheriff, but Booth insisted on leaving things as they had found them, reporting the discovery to the officers and letting them make an investigation.

The two men retraced their steps and on a hill a short distance away met a third hunter, also believed by Booth to be a local man. The third hunter, on hearing the story, offered to notify officers, whom, he said, were camped not far down the canyon. Booth left the two men and returned to his own camp, while the other two presumably went in search of officers to report the discovery. Later that night Booth and Millett, who were registered at a local hotel, returned to Cedar City where they contacted Sheriff Lamb and told their story.

Early Sunday morning Sheriff Lamb, Deputy Sheriff **Claude Macfarlane**, Booth and Millett returned to the hunting area and Booth led the officers to the spot he claimed the skeleton had been found. No trace of the skeleton or gun could be found, however.

After making a cursory examination of the spot, the officers returned to the deer camp where police officers Arthur Nelson and Pete Wood were camped, thinking the discovery had been reported to them and that they had investigated and removed the evidence. Nelson and Wood, however, had not been notified and had made no investigation.

All the deer camps in the vicinity were then visited and several hunters questioned in an effort to learn the identity of the two local men referred to by Booth. They met with no success.

Sheriff Lamb and Chief Deputy Ray Adams again visited the vicinity yesterday afternoon, but due to the mud and snow were unable to reach the spot. The officers are continuing their investigation, and as soon as it is possible to get into the country, a detailed search will be made of the area.

Officers announce that they are fully convinced the skeleton was discovered as Booth reported, and advance two theories which might account for their failure to find it later. The first is that the two local men, as yet unidentified, returned to the spot and removed the evidence chiefly in order to secure the gun and watch, which, apparently, were worthless; and the second is that Booth, a stranger to the territory, became confused and led the officers to the wrong spot. It was pointed out that the discovery was made in a rocky slide area extending about a quarter of a mile under the rocks, and that to someone unacquainted with the area could easily mistake one large rock for another, due to the similarity of the various formations.