

# Fairplay Flume

April 12, 1894 Page:1-2

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

## **Town Marshal Cook Instantly Killed by L.J. Streeter at Como**

A tragedy occurred at Como a little before midnight on Friday last, which resulted in the almost instant death of the town marshal, A.E. Cook, who was shot by Levi J. Streeter in the house used by the latter as a shoe shop and residence. Among the few people who learned of the affair the same night, there was much excitement, particularly among the dead man's friends. Streeter was arrested immediately after the occurrence and brought to Fairplay without delay by Deputy Sheriff Link and Constable Lyons. Upon reaching here about 2 o'clock Saturday morning, he was at once placed in the county jail. It was thought that his life would not have been safe in Como when the affair became generally known.

The true circumstances connected with this startling tragedy are difficult to obtain. All sorts of stories and speculations have been circulated. It seems however, that no one was an actual witness of the shooting, although several persons were almost on the scene. On the night in question, a little party of men and women of doubtful character to say the least, were holding a jollification in Streeter's place, finally becoming quite convivial and noisy through partaking of frequent draughts of beer. It is believed that there were present at the time three women and two men besides the proprietor of the place, though but two of the women are as yet known, these being Mrs. Anna Speas, whose husband was temporarily absent in Denver and Mrs. Lillie Robinson. Suspicion attaches to another woman and also to two men, it is said, as the last mentioned were seen running away from the direction of the house after the shooting. Proof is lacking to identify them, however. Marshal Cook's presence is accounted for in two ways. Some think that his intention may have been to quiet the crowd inside, who had become quite hilarious and noisy. Others say that he probably desired to "take a hand in the fun."

Be that as it may, Cook approached the house and knocked at the front door. Streeter went from an inner room, where he and his friends were enjoying themselves, to the door and opened it. The result shows that he must have been fully prepared and probably commenced shooting at once, for when Cook was found dead a few moments later, he had fallen forward upon his face in the room, his toes resting on the door sill. Streeter's statement is that, upon opening the door, the man outside ordered him to throw up his hands, when, thinking he was about to be robbed, he fired at the intruder, not knowing who he was.

This story is not generally credited and there is a strong belief that he suspected his visitor to be Mr. Speas, whose wife was then inside and that, anticipating trouble from the call, he lost no time in taking the initiative. As a lamp was burning in the inner room only, the front room was almost, if not quite, shrouded in darkness. As soon as the shooting began, it is supposed that the women ran into a sort of shed attached to the rear of the house and jumped out through a window, breaking the sash and cutting themselves on the glass, the blood serving as a mean to track the two above-named to their homes. The two men seen

running away are thought to have emerged from the front door, going out over the body of Cook as it lay.

Coroner Mayne held an inquest over the remains Saturday. The examination disclosed the fact that Cook had received three bullet wounds, one in the breast and two in the head and further, that his head had been badly crushed with some blunt weapon, probably the butt-end of the revolver. The jury found that Cook had been killed by Streeter, but whether with felonious intent or otherwise they could not decide, recommending that the prisoner be held to await the action of a grand jury.

Mrs. Speas and Mrs. Robinson were examined as witnesses and disclaimed any knowledge of the crime beyond having heard the shots fired. Later, at the instigation of Mrs. Cook, they were placed under arrest as accessory to the killing. They were brought to Fairplay Saturday evening and remained til Monday, when they were taken back to Como and are still under bonds. The preliminary examination of the accused will probably be delayed until the arrival District Attorney Holliday from Fremont county.

Streeter is a single man and if reports be true, has borne none too savory a reputation in Como, where he has live for several years and carried on business. Among residents there, he was considered somewhat flighty at times, but not dangerous. So far as known, he and his victim were on friendly terms.

Cook also had been a resident of Como for a long time and was prominent in railroad circles there, having also served as town marshal for several years. He leaves a widow and three little girls, the eldest twelve years old. He belonged to several secret societies and was taken to Denver for burial by lodges of the Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias.

*Continued Page 2*

### **Midnight Tragedy at Como.**

A few minutes before midnight Friday, a sensational tragedy took place in Como. City Marshal Cook was shot and instantly killed by J.E. (sic) Streeter, a shoemaker. There were no witnesses to the tragedy and it is difficult to learn the cause of the deed.

Streeter claims that the marshal came into his shop a few minutes before the shooting and demanded that he throw up his hands. Believing that he was about to be robbed, Streeter claims, he grabbed a revolver which lay at his side and fired. This story is not given much credence by those who were acquainted with Cook.

Marshal Cook was formerly a foreman in the South Park shops at Como. Two years ago, he was elected to the office of city marshal and on Tuesday last, he was re-elected. He was a man about 45 years old and was a quiet and well-liked official. Streeter has also lived in Como for a number of years and was considered a peaceable man. He was said to be somewhat eccentric at times. There was no known trouble between the two men.

## **Fairplay Flume**

April 12, 1894 Page:1-2

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

At Fairplay yesterday, the parties accused of being implicated in the killing of A.E. Cook at Como all waived examination and were bound over to the district court before G.L. Horine, acting as justice of the peace. L.J. Streeter, as principal, was bound over without bail, while Anna Speas and Lillian Robinson, held as accessories, each gave a bond of \$1,000 for appearance before that tribunal. Hon. W. Ballinger came over from Como in the interest of the accused.

## **Fairplay Flume**

April 1, 1894 Page:4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

Messrs. Roger Coyue, Dan Leonard, Harry Hopkins and Joe Plunkett, all well-known residents of Como, were in Fairplay within the week. They are friends of the late Marshal Cook and part of their business here, we learn, was to retain the services of C.A. Wilkin Esq. to assist in the prosecution of L.J. Streeter.

## **Rocky Mountain News**

Denver, Colorado

April 8, 1894; Column D

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

Arrests Made Two Women Sent to Jail in Connection with the Como Killing

Arrests Made.

Two Women Sent to jail in Connection with the Como Killing.

### **Special to the News.**

COMO, Colo., April 7. – After about eight hours of careful deliberation, the jury in the inquest over the remains of A.E. Cook, decided that he came to his death from a pistol shot, fired from a gun in the hands of L.J. Streeter, but were unable to decide whether the shooting was felonious or not. It was recommended that he be hold to await the action of the grand jury. A number of witnesses were examined, among them being several women of doubtful character, who were in the neighborhood of the shooting at the time and were seen running through the streets. Cook's body showed a pistol shot in the right breast and two shots in the head. His skull was also fractured, being struck with the butt of a revolver. His remains have been taken charge of by the Knights of Pythias and odd Fellows, and will be taken to Denver for burial. Anna Speas and Lillie Robinson, the women suspected as being implicated in the affair, have been arrested and taken to the county jail at Fairplay.

## Fairplay Flume

May 31, 1894 Page:4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

Surveyor Powless has drawn a map showing the residence and shop of L.J. Streeter at Como, also other buildings and points surrounding the scene of the killing, for reference and use in the court room in connection with the trial.

The following is the jury empanelled for the trial of the Streeter murder case: S.J. White, A.H. Johnson, Anton Nelson, Harry Gross, William Trevan, C.A. Savage, Geo. Thompson, J.J. Mitchell, J.T. Richards, H.P. Thompson, Richard Glasener, Ed. Stephens.

## Fairplay Flume

May 31, 1894 Page:4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

The case of the People against L.J. Streeter, Anna Speas and Lillian Robinson, charged with murder is on trial at this writing and is likely to consume the remainder of the week, as there were many witnesses to testify. It took the entire day Monday to secure a jury and the evidence in the case commenced Tuesday upon the convening of court. District Attorney Holliday is assisted in the prosecution by C.A. Wilkin, Esq., while Hon. Webster Ballinger and Judge Geo. E. Pease are acting as counsel for the defendants.

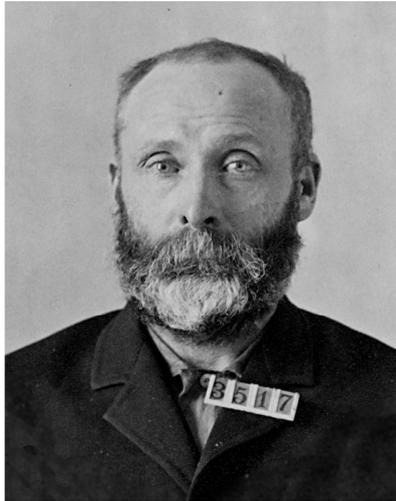
## Fairplay Flume

June 7, 1894 Page:4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

### **Streeter Found Guilty.**

The Streeter murder trial closed last Saturday morning when the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty as charged in the indictment" as to the defendant L.J. Streeter. The defendants Anna Speas and Lillian Robinson, or Kennedy, tried as being accessory to the murder of A.E. Cook were found "not guilty." The jury retired with the instructions of the court on Friday evening. At 1 o'clock they had not reached an agreement and were then allowed a few hours sleep. The ballot taken after reconvening Saturday morning showed that a verdict had been reached. The judge and the attorneys were notified and the report having spread, a number of people were present when the prisoner was led into court at 8:30 a.m. and the verdict of the jury read by the district clerk. Streeter's countenance showed no perceptible change as he heard the verdict that pronounced him guilty and was then led back to jail by the sheriff.



*Levi J. Streater 3517*

The prosecution of the case was ably conducted by Messrs. Holliday and Wilkin, their closing addresses to the jury being particularly commended by those who heard them. Counsel for the defense probably did all that was possible under the circumstances, but in truth the case seemed to afford but little ground for a defense. Neither Streeter nor Anna Speas was allowed to testify, Lillian Kennedy being the only one of the three defendants who was called to take the witness stand by their counsel. A new trial was denied by the court and Streeter was sentenced to be executed in the week commencing June 24th.

## **Fairplay Flume**

June 7, 1894 Page:1

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

People vs. L.J. Streeter, Anna Speas and Lillian Kennedy, murder; verdict of jury, "guilty" as to Streeter, "not guilty" as to Speas and Kennedy. Motion for a new trial denied, defendant Streeter and exception taken; motion in arrest of judgment denied. Death penalty imposed to be inflicted during week commencing June 24th, 1894, by warden of state penitentiary at Canon City.

## **Fairplay Flume**

June 7, 1894 Page: 4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

Sheriff Wilson left yesterday morning to convey L.J. Streeter to Canon City.

The Streeter verdict commends itself to the community in general as a just one.

## Fairplay Flume

June 14, 1894 Page: 4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

A number of the friends of L.J. Streeter in Como have signed a petition in his behalf, which is to be forwarded to the governor, asking a commutation of the death sentence recently passed upon Streeter.

## Fairplay Flume

June 28, 1894 Page: 4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

L.J. Streeter, who was sentenced to be hanged during the present week, was last Thursday granted a respite of thirty days by the governor, in order to get his application for a new trial before the Supreme Court.

### **Commissioner's Proceedings.**

The board of Park county commissioners met in regular July session at the clerk's office on the 5th inst., at 9 o'clock a.m. Chairman Gumaer, Commissioners Tyler and Witherspoon and W. H. Dearing, clerk of the board, were all present.

On motion the examination of bills was taken up and the following were allowed, either as juror or witness fees and mostly for services in the Streeter (sic) trial. The clerk was instructed to issue warrants accordingly:

## Fairplay Flume

September 13, 1894 Page: 4

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

The governor has granted a second respite to L.J. Streeter, the Como murderer, till January 1st next, in order to give him additional time to get his case before the Supreme

### **Court. The Denver Evening Post**

Denver, Colorado

January 31, 1896 Page: 2; Column E

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

### **ASK A PARDON.**

Levi J. Streeter, serving a life term in the penitentiary for murder committed in Park county, filed an application for a pardon. He was originally sentenced to be hanged but this sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. He figured in the sensational murder at Como a few years ago.

# Rocky Mountain News

February 1, 1896

Page: 4 pg. 4; Issue 32; Column F

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

An Illegible Petitioner Streeter, the Slayer of the Marshal of Como, Files an Application for Pardon

## **AN ILLEGIBLE PETITION.**

Streeter, the Slayer of the marshal of Como, Files an Application for Pardon.

The files in the office of the State board of Pardons were swelled yesterday by the application of Levi J. Streeter, the slayer of Cook, the marshal of the town of Como. The offense was committed about two years ago and Streeter was adjudged guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced to be hanged. One of the first acts of Governor McIntire was to commute the sentence to life imprisonment. The document which was received yesterday is the first formal application of the prisoner for pardon. He takes the ground that he acted in self-defense.

Streeter was a shoemaker of Como and lived in a little house of two rooms, one of which he used as his shop. One night he was carousing in the building in company with two women of doubtful character, when a loud knock was heard at the front door. The women disappeared through the back door or window and a powerful man burst through the door upon which the knocking was heard. What followed is given only by one witness and he is the man who was condemned to death. The intruder proved to be the town marshal and in a rough and tumble fight between the two men, the marshal was killed. Streeter claims that as the marshal opened the door, he exclaimed: "I want your money! I want your money!" The motive of the attack being robbery, as it was commonly rumored that the shoemaker dealt in green goods and had a large amount of gold and silver stored away in his shop. Streeter's trunk was found to be broken open the next day.

The letter which Streeter sends to the Board of Pardons is illegible, but the writer claims self-defense as his reason for killing the marshal. Friends of Cook took the position that the marshal heard a disturbance in the house and entered in order to quiet the noise. The case was argued at length at the time commutation was granted and the board gave the petitioner the benefit of the doubt.

The next meeting of the State Board of Pardons is scheduled to take place on the evening of the 7th of the month. The list of applications to be considered has not yet been announced.

Streeter died in prison only 3 months after filing his illegible pardon.



Died April 9, 1896  
John Cleghorn  
Warden

*STREETOR*

**Name: STREETER, LEVI J**

**No: 3517**

**Crime:** Murder

**Term:** Life

**Received:** 6/07/1894

**County:** Park

**Where Born:**

**Name of parents:**

**Where living:**

**Married:**

**Name of spouse:**

**Paroled:**

**Discharged:** DIED 4/9/1896

**Glass Neg:**

**Sex:** Male

**Age:** 54

**Race:** German

**Expiration:**

**Subj to parole:**

**Read:**

**Write:**

**Occupation:** Shoemaker

**Use intoxicants:**

**Use Tobacco:**

**Prison before:**

**Where:**

**Date:**

**Offense:**

**Days lost:**

**A K A's:**

**Other No.'s:** Committed to Life 3/08/1895 by Gov.

**Remarks:**

*Died 4/19/1896  
Consumption  
Consumption*

# Streeter Coroner Report

*Transcribed by Christie Wright*

## **Lillian Kennedy Testimony**

I was in Streeter's shop last night – went there about 9 o'clock last night in company with Mrs. Speas. We had no particular object in going there. We had been at Mrs. Speas's before going there. We were there about an hour. Mrs. Speas, Mr. Streeter and myself were the only ones there. We drank whiskey with Mr. Streeter. I heard someone knock just shortly after we went in and went away and heard another knock about 10 o'clock and Mr. Streeter went to front. Did not hear Mr. Streeter say anything when he went to front door except that Mrs. Speas said "somebody is knocking. I will go see who it is.

We could not get door unlocked and broke window out. When we were breaking window we heard Mr. Streeter talking to somebody and were afraid somebody would come in and see us.

I did not hear a shot fired before or after getting out of house. Was supposed to hear 1 of in??? I first heard that there was somebody shot this morning.

I heard no loud or angry talking neither, did not take light up when he went to open and the front room was dark.

Mr. Streeter drank a little with us but none of us were intoxicated.

After we broke out window with our hands, the window sash flew open and got out???

I was home with Mrs. Speas and remained there until this morning about 7 o'clock.

Signed, Lillie Kennedy and Anna Speas

## **Anna Speas Testimony (first statement)**

Says that she was at Mr. Streeter's about 8 o'clock last night in company of Lill Kennedy. We remained about ??? minutes. Did not drink anything while in there. A bottle was sitting on the table but I did not notice any one drink.

We went out of back way when we left. We out of window. I did not break glass. Did not cut my fingers on glass and do not know whether Mrs. Kennedy did or not. We reached our window together. I was not excited.

I did not hear any one or front door while in Streeter's. Did not hear anybody at front door. Neither of us suggested going out of back window. We did not go out of front door, as we did not.

I did not hear anybody talking in front room.

I did not hear a shot fired at anytime last night and did not know Mr. Cook was a dead man until this morning when Mrs. Kennedy told

I had not drank anything??? before going to Mr. Streeter's. I went down to Mr. Streeter's after m y shoe which was there to be fixed. Did not hear any disturbance within door which ??? at Mr. Streeter's.

**Anna Speas Testimony** (second statement)

And further I want ?? that I told you this morning that I did not sing??? see??? last night but I now remember that I did. I told you that I heard no noise around the house but I remember hearing someone outside of house call Streeter a couple of names but did not hear who was at the door. How we came to get out of back window - we wanted to go home and Streeter didn't want us to go. When Lil Kennedy said then was a couple of hours as then door and we thought we would get out of back way because he didn't want us to go so soon. We didn't know that the window was bolted so Mrs. Kennedy knocked the glass out with her hand.

?? no loud talking or scuffling before leaving. Did not hear a shot fired and ?? no crying while there.

**Sam & Ed Corey testified:**

Sam & Ed Corey testified that they went into Streeter's around 8:45 p.m. and talked for a few minutes. Streeter commented: "If that girl doesn't come after her shoes, I will lock up." Streeter left for a few minutes, then returned and said, " Well boys, you will have to get out as I am going to close up."

As the two men left, there was a lady standing about 8 feet from Streeter's down in the alley and another lady was stooping down. The woman standing had on a light dress "about the size of a half dollar" and the other one was dressed in dark.

The men went to a saloon and spent almost two hours there until they heard shots fired. They went outside to investigate after hearing the second shot fired about two minutes after the first one. and Samuel ran over to Cook's house , assuming the marshal was in bed, to tell him about the shots. Mrs. Cook came to the door and said he was not in, that he was uptown somewhere.

He then went over to Streeter's and heard him say that a man was trying to hold him up and he had shot him. Streeter had his gun under his arm at that point. Sam then saw Cook laying on his face with left arm under him.

**William Daughtery testified:**

testified that about 10:30 p.m. he heard a shot and loud talk like a disturbance. In a few minutes he heard the next two shots. He went down to Streeter's, whose door was open. Streeter stepped out and said "I shot a man" and came walking towards Wm. Wm asked," who is he." And he answered, "Don't know." He is laying inside of door on floor."

He had a great big long gun in his hand and was showing me how he cocked the pistol and how he hit the man on the head with it.

Streeter did not appear to be under the influence of liquor and did not know who he shot.

Streeter continued talking but Wm. Didn't pay any attention.

Streeter said this man came in and wanted to hold him up, wanted his money, He said people knew he had a lot of money and he wasn't going to give it up.

Wm. And Mr. Talbott went up to Streeter's. Cook was lying on his back, light was . Ed Montage came in and said "It is Cook".

James Delany testified - into Montag's. He heard Streeter's voice say, "I'll kill you, you SOB. Then he heard two shots.

Streeter then came around and said "he had killed some sob that tried to hold him up and did not know who it was."

**M.J. Donnell testified:**

He went into a store and saw two men running away from Streeters;. Heard shot fired saw Streeter on sidewalk, who said some man came in and tried to take his money when he shot him.

He heard glass breaking just after last shot and before lights were smashed.

He went to his saloon (Delany's) to get 2 bottles of beer. Cook had been in there and left, about 10 minutes later, Delany heard shots fired.

He went out into the street and saw someone running

## **Coroner Jury Verdict**

We the jury after careful examination of witnesses and due deliberation affirm that deceased came to his death as the result of gunshot wounds caused by bullets fired from a gun held in the hands of L.J. Streeter and therefore recommend that he be bound over to appear before the District Court. Whether or not feloniously we do not feel justified in saying.

# THE FLUME

The Park County Republican & Fairplay Flume

January 13, 2011

## **A. E. Cook, 1894 Como marshal, to be inducted into National Law Enforcement Memorial**

By Laura Van Dusen - Correspondent



*Early Como This street scene in early Como, circa late 1890s to early 1900s, was familiar to Como residents at the time that Marshal A. E. Cook was shot. The building is Allen's Saloon, now known as the Como Mercantile building, at the corner of 6th and Rowe streets. (Photo courtesy of the Park County Local History Archives, Tom Klinger collection)*

Marshal A. E. Cook of Como was probably not expecting trouble when he knocked on the door of Levi Streeter's home in Como a few minutes before midnight on Friday, April 6, 1894. Newspaper reports and witness testimony indicate that when the door was opened, Streeter fired his revolver immediately. Cook had three bullet wounds, "one in the breast and two in the head, and further that his head had been badly crushed with some blunt weapon, probably the butt end of

the revolver," said the April 12, 1894, Flume.

Cook fell into the open doorway and was dead "within moments," The Flume reported.

Cook is the only law enforcement officer in Park County ever to be killed in the line of duty, said Park County Sheriff Fred Wegener via telephone.

More than a century later, Cook is continuing to receive recognition for that.

Cook will be "formally dedicated on May 13th at the 23rd Annual Candlelight Vigil during National Police Week," said Berneta V. Spence, director of research with the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial (NLEOM) Fund, in a Dec. 8 letter to Park County Office of Historic Preservation Director Linda Balough.

"An officer shall be included if a department states that the officer died in the line of duty and there is no information to believe otherwise," says the NLEOM Web site at [www.lawmemorial.org](http://www.lawmemorial.org).

Wegener was contacted by a Colorado Law Enforcement historian in the fall of 2010 asking if the Sheriff's Office would complete the national form for Cook so he could be included in the ceremony in Washington, D.C., in May 2011. The application form has to be completed by the agency the officer worked for.

Cook was included on the Colorado state memorial for officers slain in the line of duty at Camp George West in Golden in May of 1999, Wegener said.

### **Who was Cook?**

Cook had been marshal of Como since at least October of 1887. He had just been elected to another term on April 3, 1894 - three days before he was murdered. He had lived in Como since at least the fall of 1884. An article in the Nov. 5, 1884, Como Headlight mentioned his presence at a masquerade ball on Thursday, Oct. 29, of that year. He dressed as a cowboy.

Cook was prominent in railroad circles and had previously worked as foreman of the South Park shops in Como where "he would have been in charge of the section of the work force that repaired engines, cars, snowplow, etc.," said Tom Klinger, co-author of two books and frequent speaker on the railroading history of Park County.

Cook was about 45 years old at the time of his death. He lived in Como with his wife and three daughters; the eldest was then 12 years old. The Flume of April 12, 1894, reported that he "was a quiet and well-liked official."

"There was no known trouble between the two men (Cook and Streeter)," it said.

Cook was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and the Knights of Pythias. His body was taken to Denver by those societies, and he was buried there.

### **Who was Streeter?**

Streeter had lived in Como since at least December 1890. He was described in the April 12, 1894, Flume as "a single man, and if reports be true, has borne none to savory a reputation in Como where he has lived for several years and carried on business." Among residents there he was considered "somewhat flighty at times, but not dangerous." In another part of the same Flume edition, it was said that Streeter "was considered a peaceable man."

Streeter lived in a two-room house; one room was used for living quarters and one room was used for his business of shoe making and repair. Park County Clerk and Recorder records show that one of two properties that Streeter owned in Como was at the corner of 8th and Broadway. It is almost certain that this is where his home was and where the shooting occurred.

### **The crime**

The following paragraphs are taken from the front page of the April 12, 1894, edition of The Flume:

"On the night in question a little party of men and women, of doubtful character to say the least, were holding a jollification at Streeter's place, finally becoming quite convivial (sociable) and noisy through partaking of frequent draughts of beer. It is believed that there were present at the time three women and two men besides the proprietor of the place, though but two of the women are as yet known, these being Mrs. Anna Speas, whose husband was temporarily absent in Denver, and Mrs. Lillie Robinson. Suspicion attaches to another woman and also to two men, it is said, as the last mentioned were seen running away from the direction of the house after the shooting."

"Streeter's statement is that, upon opening the door, the man outside ordered him to throw up his hands, when, thinking he was about to be robbed, he fired at the intruder, not knowing who he was."

"This story is not generally credited, and there is a strong belief that he suspected his visitor to be Mr. Speas, whose wife was then inside and that, anticipating trouble from the call, he lost no time in taking the initiative."

"As soon as the shooting began it is supposed that the women ran into a sort of shed attached to the rear of the house and jumped out through a window, breaking the sash and cutting themselves on the glass, the blood serving as a means to track the two above named to their homes. The two men seen running away are thought to have emerged from the front door, going out over the body of Cook as it lay."

"Coroner Mayne held an inquest over the remains Saturday. The jury found that Cook had been killed by Streeter, but whether with felonious intent or otherwise they could not decide, recommending that the prisoner be held to await the action of a grand jury."

"Mrs. Speas and Mrs. Robinson were examined as witnesses and disclaimed any knowledge of the crime beyond having heard the shots fired. Later, at the instigation of Mrs. Cook, they were placed under arrest as accessory to the killing. They were brought to Fairplay Saturday evening and remained till Monday, when they were taken back to Como and are still under bonds."

### **Speas Family**

Sam Speas, the husband of Anna, was an engineer with the railroad, which in 1894 was called the Denver, Leadville & Gunnison. He was a handsome man, just under six feet tall, with broad shoulders and bright red hair.

Engineers were at the top rung in the railroad hierarchy. They were the highest-paid, worked long hours, and sometimes were gone from home for days or even weeks on end. Their wives were left at home to care for the children, do the chores and keep the home in repair. At least that's the picture portrayed in "Goin' Railroading" by Margaret Coel, as told by Sam Speas (Jr.), which is a book about the Speas family, their railroading careers, and life in Como at the turn of the 20th century.

Coel is the granddaughter of Sam Speas Sr., who was married to Anna, and the daughter of Sam Speas Jr.

Anna Blythe and Sam Speas were married on Sept. 30, 1886. They met in Boulder at a boarding house where Anna worked, and which was run by Anna's mother and sister.

Anna Blythe was "the belle of the town, quite beautiful and sought after," said Coel in an e-mail. Soon after the marriage, in November 1887, Sam Speas was transferred to Como with the Denver South Park & Pacific.

"Anna was very young, only 17 years old, whereas my grandfather was about ten years older," said Coel.

Between November 1887, when the Speas' moved to Como, and April 1894, Anna Speas gave birth to three babies. They all died in infancy and are all buried in the Como cemetery.

"According to my father, Anna took the deaths hard and started drinking. And with my grandfather out on the road for long periods of time, she started hanging around with a party crowd that included Levi Streeter. When Cook came to investigate a loud party at Streeter's house, Streeter assumed it was my grandfather, who had probably warned him to stay away from Anna. At any rate, Cook ended up shot to death. Had it been my grandfather at the door, he would have been dead," Coel said in the e-mail.

At the time of the party at Streeter's home, *The Flume* reported that Sam Speas was in Denver.

Coel's book says that Sam Speas was overdue on a freight run to Climax; however, new information was discovered after the book was written, in the form of Sam's time sheets that he kept meticulously his entire career, and they show Sam Speas was not working from April 4 to April 11, 1894. He was very likely at home in Como that week.

"If (Anna) went to the party when Sam was in town, then that would explain why Streeter was so sure that the man at the door was Anna's husband and greeted him with a bullet," said Coel in a follow-up e-mail.

After Anna was arrested the evening after the shooting, Sam Speas posted bail for her and secured Park County's most prosperous attorney, Webster Ballinger, for his wife's defense.

### **Real estate changes hands**

Real estate changed hands within a week after the shooting.

On April 11, 1894, Streeter, while sitting in jail for murder, sold his two properties in Como, a "free and voluntary act" according to the deed, to Samuel Cohen, administrator of the estate of the deceased George Weston, to pay back two loans Weston had made to Streeter in 1890 and 1891. The selling price was \$750.

Administrator Cohen resold Streeter's former property on Sept. 10, 1895, to Elizabeth W. Link, a member of a prominent early-Como family, for \$300, taking a \$450 loss.

Cohen, part of the family for whom Cohen Park in Fairplay is named, was described at various times in *The Flume* of the 1890s as a merchant, miner, and railroader. In the early 1900s, he was a member of the Colorado House of Representatives for Park County.

Coel, when speculating about the quick sale of Streeter's property, said: "I can only guess that the whole affair was so shocking and people were so outraged at the murder of an innocent man like Cook, just doing his duty, that Cohen forced the sale."

### **The trial**

While Streeter remained in jail continuously after the murder awaiting trial, Anna Speas and Robinson were allowed to return to Como until they were called to court. Anna Speas must have gone to Boulder, Colo., to be with her mother because *The Flume* reported on May 17, 1894: "Sheriff (Daniel H.) Wilson went to Boulder this week and returned Tuesday with Mrs. Anna Speas." It also reported that "Mrs. Blythe (Anna's mother) accompanied her daughter to Fairplay from Boulder."

Anna and Robinson were brought to Fairplay for "preliminary examination as [accessory] to the killing of Town Marshal Cook." The trial began on May 28.

The May 31 edition of The Flume reported the names of the 12 men who were chosen to serve as jury members in the trial of Streeter, Speas, and Robinson. That edition also reported Hon. Webster Ballinger as counsel for Speas and Judge George E. Pease as counsel for Robinson and Streeter.

In the June 7 Flume a retraction was printed. Pease was "in the capacity of counsel only for Lillian Kennedy (Robinson)" and not for Streeter.

Court records, Case No. 1461, of May 21, 1894 show that "to the satisfaction of the court, defendant Levi J. Streeter is a poor person and unable to employ counsel. It is ordered by the court that Webster Ballinger Esq., one of the attorneys of this Court, be, and he hereby is assigned to defend him herein."

"Neither Streeter nor Anna Speas was allowed to testify. Lillian Kennedy (Robinson) being the only one of the three defendants who was called to take the witness stand by their counsel," said the June 7, 1894, Flume.

An explanation of the name change from Lillian Robinson, at the first report of the crime, to Lillian Kennedy during the trial is that "Lillian Kennedy's husband (Robinson) immediately divorced her and left her to the mercy of a court-appointed attorney," said Coel in an e-mail.

Court records reflect the correction of Robinson's name to Kennedy on the first day of the trial, "At this day it appearing to the Court that the real name of the defendant herein is Lillian Kennedy instead of Lillian Robinson."

The pre-verdict part of the trial ended on Friday, June 2. The jury started deliberations on Friday evening. It had not reached a verdict by 1 a.m. Saturday morning and jury members were given a few hours off to sleep. They reconvened on Saturday morning, June 3 and reached a verdict, which was read at 8:30 a.m. in court, as reported in the June 7, 1894 Flume.

Streeter was found "guilty of murder in the first degree as charged," as recorded in the trial documents. Speas and Kennedy (Robinson) were found not guilty.

The Flume of June 7, 1894, reported "Streeter was sentenced to be executed in the week commencing June 24th." The court ordered that Streeter be kept in solitary confinement until the day of his hanging. Sheriff Wilson accompanied Streeter to the Colorado State Penitentiary in Canon City on June 6.

### **Divorce**

Samuel Speas stood by his wife after the murder and during the trial, but, as reported in the July 12, 1894, Flume, "In county court on Tuesday Samuel Speas of Como made application through Attorney Ballinger (the same attorney that defended Anna and Streeter in the murder trial) for legal separation from his wife. After hearing the testimony offered, the jury rendered a verdict in his favor and Judge Ifinger pronounced a decree of divorce. Suit was entered on the ground of drunkenness and cruelty. No defense was offered."

In fact, Anna was not even in the courtroom. She had boarded the passenger train and went back her mother's home in Boulder soon after being found not guilty of accessory to murder, according to Coel's book.

### **What happened to Anna?**

"Soon after moving back to Boulder, Anna left her family, moved to Denver and continued drinking. She moved in with a 'colored' man in a room in a shack at 2143 Lawrence St. His name was Andrew Lyles. He mistreated her badly and beat her frequently, but instead of returning to her family, even after her mother begged her to return; she stayed with Lyles and continued drinking. After beating her during the night, Lyles left the room in the morning, and a neighbor found her dead. Lyles and another man who also lived in the house were arrested and charged with murder. Witnesses (probably other neighbors) testified that Lyles had 'beaten her into insensibility' the night before she was found dead, and had then beaten her again in the morning before he left. However, an autopsy ruled out trauma as the cause and instead found that she had died of an internal abscess, pneumonia and alcoholism. (Because of the autopsy results, both Lyles and the other man who was arrested were freed.) The date of her death was July 6, 1898. She was 26 years old," said Coel in the e-mail and quoting from Denver and Boulder newspaper editions of July 1898.

### **What happened to Sam Speas?**

Sam Speas courted Ellen O'Leary, a waitress at the Pacific Hotel in Como, for almost a year after the divorce. The women hired to work at the Pacific were "attractive, intelligent and of good character," according to Coel's book. They were often daughters of railroaders, as was Ellen O'Leary. Her father had worked his way across the country laying tracks for the Burlington Railroad from Illinois to Denver.

Sam Speas and O'Leary were married in Fairplay on Oct. 29, 1895, and they led respectful lives. Sam continued in his career of railroad engineer. They had six children, three died in infancy, but the three that lived - Sam Jr., Clarence and Neil - grew up in Como and Buena Vista in the railroading community and followed their father's footsteps, becoming railroad engineers.

### **What happened to Streeter?**

Several of Streeter's friends signed a petition asking for a commutation of the death sentence, as reported in the June 14, 1894 Flume, and Streeter himself also applied for respite. On March 2, 1895, the death sentence was reversed to "imprisonment for life, hard labor" by the Colorado State Board of Pardons.

Later Streeter filled out an application for a pardon, as reported in the Jan. 31, 1896 edition of The Denver Evening Post. That paperwork was filed too late to benefit Streeter.

A note in his prison file states: "died April 9 - (18)96." It is signed by John Cleghorn, Warden.