

# ROUGH & MESSY JUSTICE



**BY W. KEITH REGULAR PHD**  
**BOOK 12 IN THE DURVILE TRUE CASES SERIES**

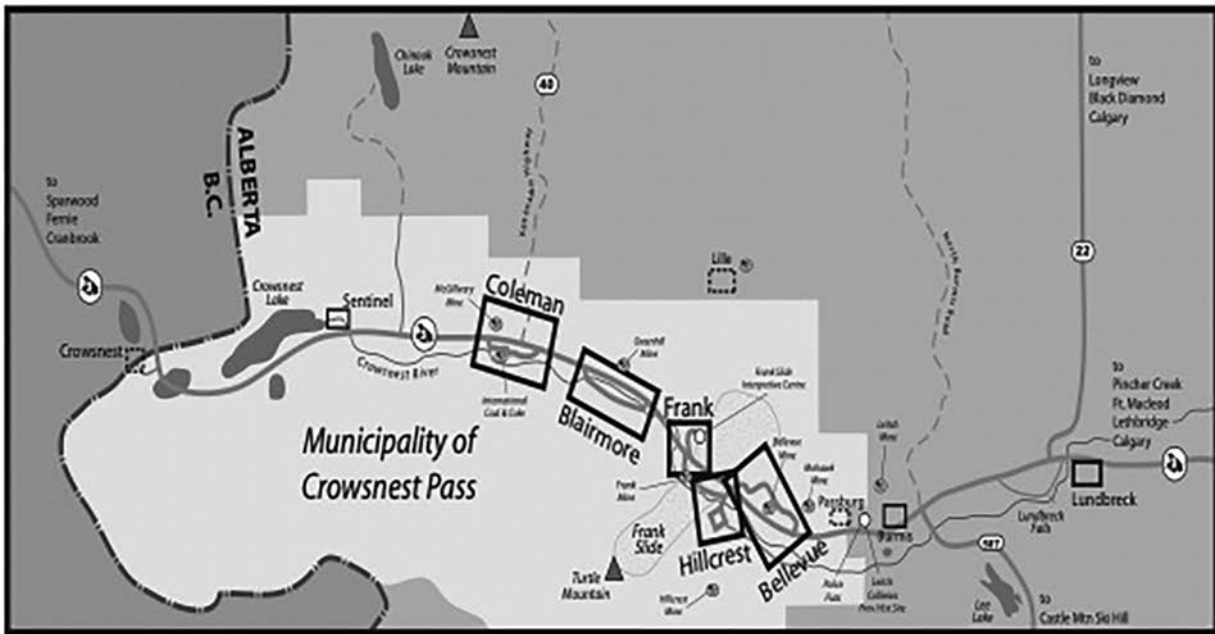
**PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS,  
ILLUSTRATIONS**



**DURVILE &  
UpRoute**

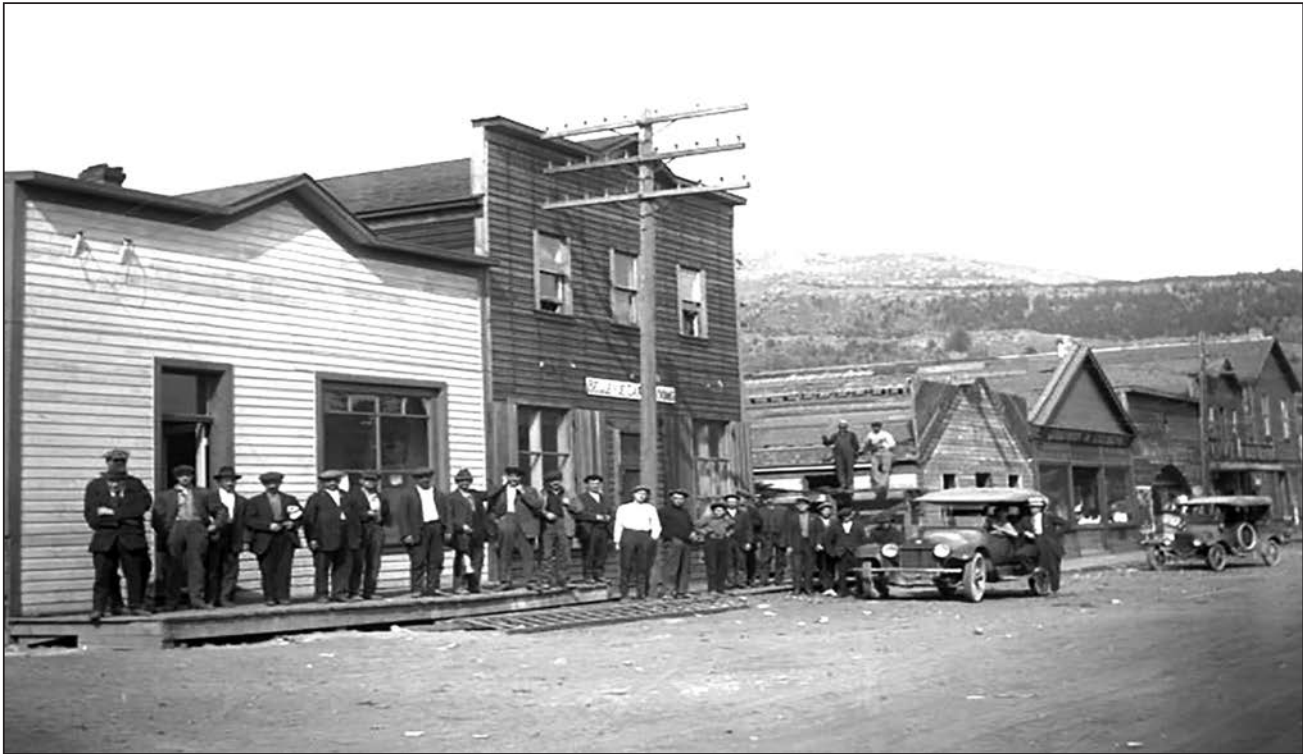
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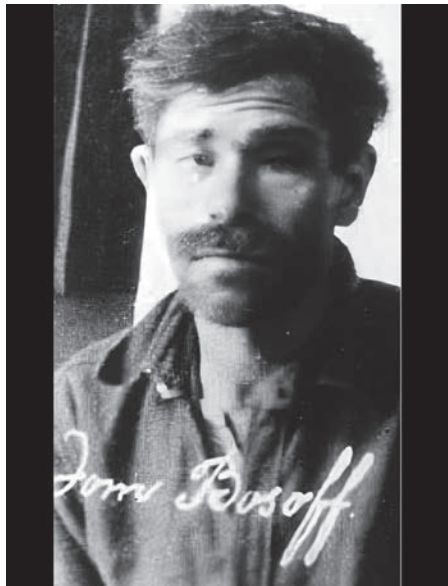
Map depicting the Alberta portion of Crowsnest Pass.  
Courtesy Heritage Crowsnest.

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Bellevue's Front Street showing the two-story Bellevue Café with wooden sidewalk on which Constable Frederick Bailey and Corporal Ernest Usher died. Photo Circa 1920.  
Courtesy of Heritage Crowsnest.

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Tom Bassoff: 5'8": dark complexion; black hair; heavy dark moustache; one of his eyes crossed; brown checked suit; light colored large cowboy hat; well known locally in Lethbridge. Description, RCMP Superintendent P.W. Pennefather. Photo 1920, by Unknown. Glenbow Library and Archives.

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Alex Auloff's arrest photo, (alias Holoff). "5' 8"; clean shaven; black suit; dark brown hair; fresh complexion; black dress shoes; light cowboy hat; Came from Great Falls ten days ago."

Description provided by RCMP Superintendent P.W. Pennefather

Properly marked as "Train Robber. He looks rather relaxed, likely the result of deciding to plead guilty and accept the consequences." Ausby, (Alex) Auloff, train robber, Crowsnest Pass, Alberta." Photo 1920, by Unknown. Glenbow Library and Archives.



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Sometimes identified as George Akroff the individual depicted looks suspiciously like Alex Auloff. "5' 8"; clean shaven; round face; dark complexion; black hair; khaki suit; Norfolk Style with loops for belt but no belt; white shirt; long dark brown, nearly black boots, reaching to knee; light coloured cowboy hat; Came from Great Falls ten days ago."

Description provided by R.C.M.P Superintendent P.W. Pennefather.

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A CPR train coach circa 1920s, similar to the one on which the three Russian bandits travelled. The toilet was located at the end of the car to the left. Cranbrook History Centre.

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9/1



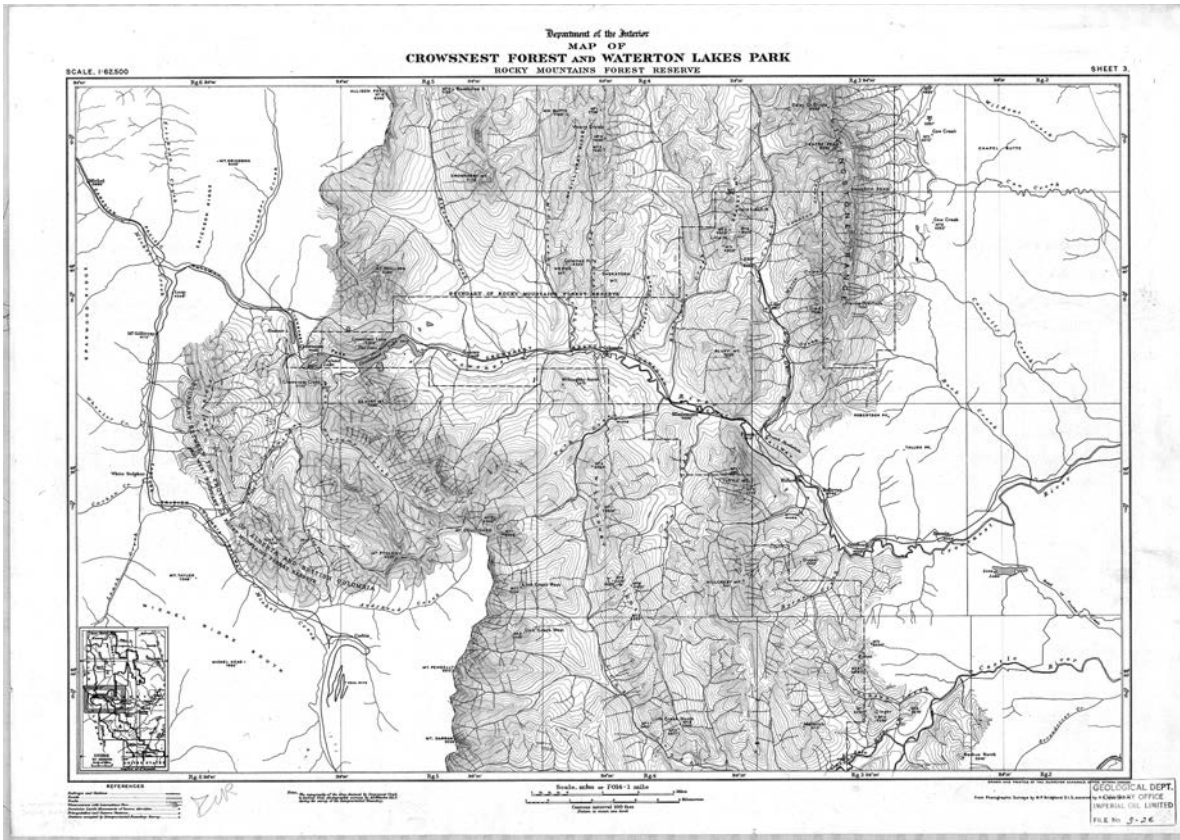
The toilet area in the coach depicted in the coach in above previous photo. It was in a toilet such as this that George Akroff hid until he stepped out to accost Conductor Sam Jones. Cranbrook History Centre.

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Conductor Sam Jones's watch and chain, seized by Ausby Auloff  
The watch cost Jones \$96.00. Courtesy Heritage Crowsnest

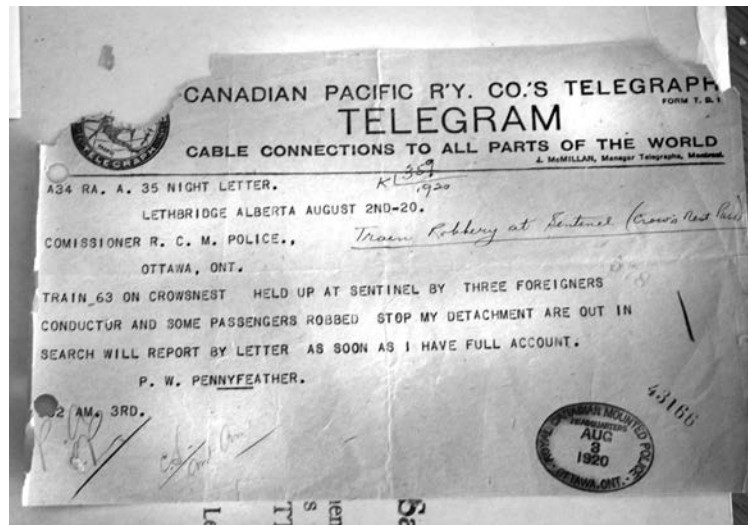
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Department of the Interior, Map of Crowsnest Pass, 1913-14  
 “Relief shown by contours, hachures and spot heights.  
 Shows pack trails, watercourses, intermittent flow,  
 elevations, triangulation and towns.”  
 From photographic surveys by M.P. Bridgeland, D.L.S.



Photo of a CPR train at Crows Nest Station, circa 1920.  
 Could this have been the train that was robbed?  
 Courtesy of Heritage Crowsnest.



Library Archives Canada,  
 Record Group 18, Vol. 3281,  
 1920 – HQ-713-K-1.



A youthful-looking Constable Frederick Bailey, PAA.

# BANDIT MURDERER

## FIFTEEN BULLET WOUNDS IN BODY BANDITS' VICTIM

**Desperadoes Fired Mercilessly Into Prostrate Bodies of Policemen**

**DOUBLE FUNERAL AT MACLEOD TODAY**

**Additional Details of Bellevue Tragedy Received at A. P. Office**

Superintendent W. C. Bryan, of the Alberta Provincial Police, left over the C. P. R. for Macleod on Tuesday evening, to attend the double funeral of Constable Bailey and Corporal Usher, the victims of Saturday's double killing at Bellevue. The funeral will be held at Macleod this afternoon and is expected to prove a long affair, as the whole south country is thoroughly aroused over the brutal killing of the officers by the bandits, who held up the C. P. R. train at Hamilton last week.

Constable Bailey was a member of "C" detachment, of the A. P. P., stationed at Lethbridge and only left his headquarters for Bellevue on the evening of the tragedy. Usher, the mounted policeman who was shot, was a corporal. He was a member of "K" Division, Lethbridge, and had been stationed at Hamilton.

**Why Did Usher Not Fire?**

Additional details of the shooting continue to flow in at head A. P. P. headquarters. From a perusal of the reports received the strange part of the whole affair is that Usher does not appear to have fired a shot, at the time the two bandits Bassoff and Akroff were ambushed in the Bellevue cafe, though he had fired once. Whether Bassoff had shot and paralyzed him, shooting from under the table or what was the reason for the Mounted falling to use his weapon will never be explained, but the fact remains that his failure to shoot is a mystery.

(Continued on Page Sixteen)

## GERMANS DO NOT SEEK AMERICAN

## DOGS AID POLICE SEARCH FOR SLAYER OF OFFICERS; RAIN IS HELPING FUGITIVE

**Ten Additional Mounted Police Arrive From Banff to Take Up Pursuit—Conference of Various Forces Results in Plan For Redistribution of Poses**

(From Special Correspondent of The Journal.)  
BY C. A. HAYDEN.

BLAIRMORE, Aug. 11.—With the three bloodhounds straining at their leashes in the baggage room of the Frank station, police officials held a consultation in the private car of Col. McLeod, head of the C. P. R. investigation bureau, and decided upon their course of action for the day that is confidently hoped will bring the hunted bandit murderer to earth.

At the conference this morning was Col. McLeod, Detective Inspector Nicholson, of Edmonton; Major Barrett, of Lethbridge and Edmonton; Inspector McDonald, of McLeod, and two United States deputy sheriffs, Kearsey and Lee.

The complete reorganization of the posse searching the surrounding hills will be made today. The bloodhounds are being taken to Bellevue first to pick up the blood trail of the bandit murderer, Bassoff, blood that spashed from his boot as he fled from the scene of the cafe battle on Saturday.

The elements have been kind to Bassoff. Throughout the night it rained steadily and at dawn today found the mountains enveloped in a sheet of mist.

Police officers, after their long, wet vigil in the hills, are coming in as I write, but all report not having seen or heard the fugitive.

It was opined that the rain would blot out the tracks of Bassoff, but Deputy Sheriff Lee told The Journal correspondent that Dynamite, one of the bloodhounds, would be certain to pick up a scud.

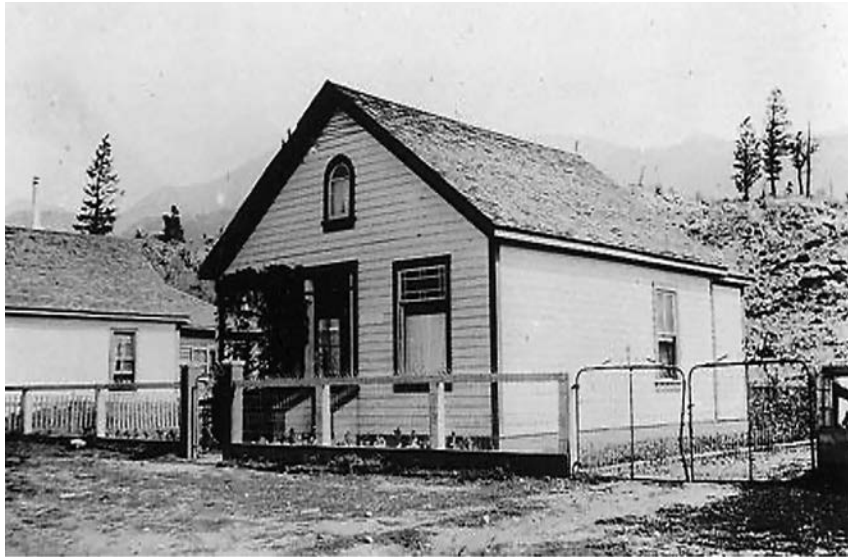
The three dogs, Dynamite, Lightning and Ina, a fox, are beautiful specimens. They were most active when taken from the Calgary train at daybreak this morning. They are honored for \$1,500 each and are the property of Sheriff John Stinger, of King county.

The force of police hunting Bassoff was augmented Tuesday night with the arrival of ten mounted police of the McLeod Division who came through from Banff. Today these men are acting as a relief to the officers who have searched without positive success.

**KILLED BY BANDIT**

**Eyewitness Gives Vivid Account of Gun Fight**

A photo of a youthful Corporal Ernest Usher with details of his death and along with an update on the continued search for Thomas Bassoff, Usher's supposed killer. *Edmonton Journal* August 11, 1920.



Alberta Provincial Police Detachment, Bellevue. It was here that Corporal Usher answered the phone and received the tip that the Sentinel train bandits might be at Bellevue Café.

Courtesy Glenbow Archives.

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The Frank Slide, Frank, Alberta. The slide occurred with the collapse of Turtle Mountain, on April 29, 1903 at 4:10 a.m. The photo is deceptive in that more than 83 million tonnes of rock contains small rubble and gigantic boulders fell. It was in this mass of rock that Bassoff sought refuge following the shootout. Bellevue is located out of the picture on the bottom right where Bassoff would have entered the fringe of the slide. Also not depicted is the Holloway Ranch on the fringe of the slide at the top and where Bassoff visited during his flight. The collapse of the mountain killed more than 70 people in the small mining town of Frank. Courtesy: Glenbow Museum.

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Pall bearers carry the body of Usher or Bailey from the Anglican Church, Macleod, Alberta.

Courtesy, RCMP Historical Collections Unit, Regina, Saskatchewan.



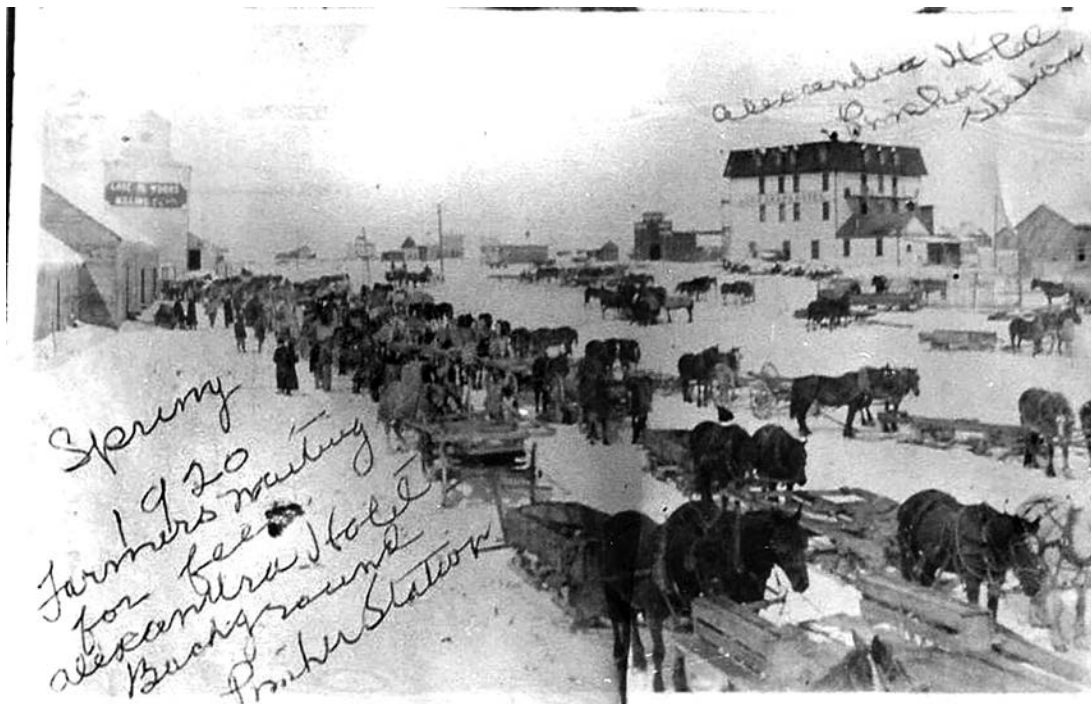
The funeral carriage with the coffin of Corporal Ernest Usher accompanied by honour guard.

Courtesy, RCMP Historical Collections Unit, Regina.



Graveside ceremony for Constable Bailey.  
Courtesy, RCMP Historical Collections Unit,  
Regina, Saskatchewan.





Alex Alexandra's Hotel at Pincher Station as it appeared in 1920 and containing the store where Bassoff purchased food shortly before his capture.

Photo courtesy of Pincher Creek and District Historical Society.



Artist's illustration of Tom Bassoff appearing in the *Arizona Republic*, August 23, 1920.



Portrait of Maitland Stewart McCarthy, 1920.  
Photo courtesy of Legal Archives Society of Alberta (LASA).

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Portrait photograph of Joseph D. Matheson.  
Photo courtesy of Legal Archives Society of Alberta (LASA).  
LASA Reference print from *Lords of the Western Bench*, (1997).

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Portrait of John W. McDonald in his barrister's robes  
after his appointment as King's Counsel, 1919.  
Photo courtesy of Legal Archives Society of Alberta (LASA).

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This photo taken during a re-enactment of the shooing of Bailey and Usher, and no doubt prejudicial to Bassoff's defence, was entered into evidence during the trial. Photo: Glenbow Archives

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Lethbridge Alberta, 22nd December, 1920.

Statement showing disposition of Contingent cheque received on account of the Capital punishment of Tom Bassoff:-

|                                              |          |
|----------------------------------------------|----------|
| AMOUNT RECEIVED:                             | \$200.00 |
| By Hick Sehl Hardware Company, Rope,         | 2.00     |
| " A. G. Spence, Livery.                      | 22.50    |
| " T. J. Wakelin, officiating,                | 100.00   |
| " J. H. Rivers, Warden, erection of scaffold | 50.00    |
| " Cheque attached                            | 45.50    |
|                                              | \$200.00 |
|                                              | \$200.00 |

CERTIFIED CORRECT:  
*M. G. Goring*  
 WARDEN.

The cost of hanging Bassoff. T. J. Wakelin was likely the hangman. His main tool, the rope, cost all of two dollars. PAA, Acc. No. 69,294, File 3.

**Criminal Statistics**

Name *Tom Bassoff*  
 Place of Trial *Lethbridge*  
 Date of Trial *13th October 1920*  
 Date of Offence *7th August 1920*  
 Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation *Labourer*  
 Sex *male*  
 Age *30 years*  
 Where born *6 months, Russia*  
 Religion *Catholic*  
 Education | Superior *very poor*  
 | Elementary  
 Reads \_\_\_\_\_  
 Writes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Drink | Moderately \_\_\_\_\_  
 | Immoderately \_\_\_\_\_  
 | Excessive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Married *no*  
 Offence charged (state charges and how many) *murder*  
 Offence convicted of *murder*  
 Previous convictions \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sentence *Death*

Clerk

Library and Archives Canada, GR 1978.0235, Reel #1359, Thomas Bassoff Criminal Case File.



The former Bellevue Café, now with signage Bellevue Restaurant, as it appeared in 2020. The open space to the left is where Office of the Justice of the Peace stood.

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

\$1,000

\$1,000

**REWARD**

A REWARD of \$1,000.00 (One Thousand Dollars) will be paid by the Government of the Province of Alberta to any person furnishing information that will

**Lead to the Arrest of Alix Auloff,**  
Wanted for Holding Up the Canadian Pacific Train  
at Sentinal, Alberta, on the 2nd August, 1920.

This man is a Russian Cossack; Age about 35 years; Height 5 feet 7 inches; Weight 135 lbs.; Clean Shaven, Dark Complexion, Dark Hair, Good Teeth; Wearing when last seen a Black Suit, Black Shirt and Tie, Black Boots and Tan Coloured Cow-boy Hat. He had a Gold-filled Elgin Watch, sixteen size, twenty-three jewels; Number of works 22554511.

Sample of his signature: *Alix Auloff*

If located, notify the nearest Police Station or the Superintendent, Alberta Provincial Police, Edmonton, Alberta, when a man will be at once sent with warrant and necessary papers to bring him back.

Dated at Edmonton, Alberta, September 15th, 1920.

**J. R. BOYLE,**  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL.