

Investigation of Collision Fatal to Five Reveals Anger May Have Been Involved

The collision that cost the lives of five Great Falls persons and critically injured another June 26 on the River Road may have been caused at least in part by anger, County Atty. Gene B. Daly stated Friday.

25 Years Ago

Montana—Great Falls

(From Tribune files)

JULY 8, 1936

Moving to eliminate red tape and to provide an immediate market for Montana cattle in areas where drought conditions are prevalent, U.S. Sen. James E. Murray wired Henry A. Wallace, secretary of agriculture, urging that purchasing agencies be established at Great Falls, Billings and Miles City, where public stockyards are in operation.

Construction of the Ella J. Heisey Memorial or the St. Ann's Parish Union Hall at 311 7th St. N., was authorized by City Building Inspector A. J. Cook. Funds for the structure were donated by Charles E. Heisey, husband of the late Mrs. Heisey. George Shanley is the architect.

Because of increased forest fire danger, smoking will be barred in all portions of the Lewis and Clark National Forest except at established habitations, effective July 11, according to W. B. Willey, forest supervisor.

John J. Egan, who has been a member of the police department 21 years, has been appointed acting captain by order of M. J. O'Neil, acting chief of police.

Dr. Robert J. Holzberger has left for Chicago where he will spend from 12 to 18 months in further medical study in eye, ear, nose and throat work.

Daly said he had made an extensive investigation of the activities of the occupants of the death car prior to the 7:50 a.m. head-on crash.

Daly said his conclusions are that men in the group had been involved in a heated argument over a woman who wasn't a member of the group, and that high speed of the car leading up to the 7:50 a.m. crash might have been due to the driver's anger or desire to frighten other members of the group.

Daly said the Highway Patrol, Dr. C. E. Magner, coroner, and himself were agreed that Eugene Tenney, 22, was driver of the car. Mrs. Gussie Betty Williams, 25, a passenger who is being treated at Columbus Hospital for critical internal injuries, is quoted by Daly as saying Tenney was driving and she was sitting in the front seat between Tenney and Michael Todd, 21.

She has been unable to remember incidents prior to the accident, the county attorney said. She is expected to recover unless complications arise.

Daly said his investigation could not ascertain exactly where the group started from and since Mrs. Williams was the only witness it would be difficult to determine unless some new facts were revealed. Leo LaMar Jr., 34, operated the Ozark Club with his parents and Tenney worked there as an afternoon bartender. Todd was a musician at the club and Dorothy Joan Hendy, 31, was widely-known in local music circles. Daly pointed out, so the group could have gathered at any time and any place.

Yvette DuPre, 25, also one of those killed, met the others at the Roy Harrison house about five miles south of the city on the

River Road about 5 a.m., Daly learned. He said persons he questioned told him the DuPre woman had gone there with other people but did not wish to leave when they left and so joined the LaMar-Tenney group.

LaMar, Tenney, Todd, Miss Hendy and Mrs. Williams did not arrive at the river side house until 5 a.m. and did not appear intoxicated when they arrived or when they left, according to statements given to Daly.

Daly said his talk with the proprietor of the house and with friends and co-workers of the dead persons revealed that the group was served a meal at the house and Tenney had eaten heartily; that Tenney customarily drank very little; that if the group drank after leaving the Ozark Club no one knew where and the surviving member of the party could not say; that the men in the party had been having a hot argument.

Daly reported that a blood-alcohol test revealed Tenney had had enough to drink to be on what the law considers the borderline of being under the influence of an intoxicant. Where a borderline reading might mean a person unaccustomed to drinking was very drunk, in the case of another person who may have been accustomed to an occasional drink daily, the effects of the intoxicant could be fairly negligible, Daly believes.

No further action is planned in the case. Henry D. Hoover, 18, driver of the government truck into which the passenger car smashed as it swung wide around a gentle curve, has been absolved from all blame in the case. Hoover received an arm fracture and his passenger received facial cuts.