

ALICE DUDGEON GETS LETTER

ALICE DUDGEON
FRED R. EVERETT RE-
COMMUNICATIONS
CLERK

The presiding judge in the new trial of Mrs. Alice Dudgeon at White Cloud has received the following letter. He may get more but this is one addressed not only to him—and "the jury" but to "all concerned." Therefore Fred R. Everett, for the defense, shares it with Pioneer readers. The letter reads:

"I can't keep quiet on this case. I must tell what I know of Mrs. Dudgeon, as I have known them for years.

"Now to begin at the beginning the Dudgeons came from Indiana, down in by Fremont, bought 240 acre farm all under cultivation and Mr. Dudgeon's health being poor, and the children all small, he couldn't care for his farm as he should, so he traded his farm for 1280 acres of that wild land in Goodwell township (now this land laid out to the commons, and cattle from all over were run in there on this land to pasture during the summer season, and of course those people resented any one having land) and fenced it up and made a ranch of it, and thought to make an honest living for himself and family.

"Well, as I stated, the people resented this, and would cut his wires and open his gates and he would have to put chains and locks on his gates, and he was no hog either for he only charged \$2.50 a season for pasture, that was from the first of April till the first of December. I know for we always pastured our young stock there.

"But the people around there made their brags that they would run them out by fair means or foul, so if this Romie Hodell was murdered I wouldn't be afraid to stake my life on it that some one there done it and then put up a job on the people, and hired the state police to do what they done on the other trial. Some state police we have, I'll tell you.

"I will say this for Mrs. D. that there wasn't a kinder hearted woman around there than Mrs. Dudgeon. They were people that always turned to their own business.

Mrs. W. H. Ireland."

effort to make them tell the truth about Romie Hodell's death. Lee said his nose was broken by the mob and that he was painfully manhandled. Several members of the mob later appeared before the justice of the peace and pleaded guilty and were fined one dollar each.

Police May Face Suit

It also has been indicated that action may be taken against members of the Michigan State police for damages as a result of the means alleged to have been employed by them in obtaining confessions. There has been testimony at the previous trial that three state policemen used force and threats in getting confessions from Lee, Herman and Mrs. Dudgeon and from Robert Bennett.

The latter was placed in a punishment cell at the Big Rapids jail given only four meals in as many days, was manhandled and otherwise browbeaten before he finally made a confession, according to some witnesses who have been heard. Attorneys for the state and defense are beginning preparations for instructions they desire Judge Dingeman to make to the jury. It also has been indicated that the defense will renew its motion that all the confessions be excluded from the record on the ground that they were wrongfully obtained. A previous motion to this effect was overruled earlier this week.

Lee Free From Malice

White Cloud, June 13—Nearly three years imprisonment for a crime of which he was held to have been innocent has left Lee Dudgeon with no malice and no desire to cause trouble to those responsible for taking three years of freedom from his life.

"A prison is just what you make it yourself," Lee said today during a recess of his mother's trial for the murder of Romie Hodell. "I ought to know, from July 30, 1922 until Wednesday of this week I have been a prisoner in the county jail or at the state prison at Ionia. Being locked up and facing a long sentence for a crime of which I was innocent might have made me surly and vengeful but I would not let my spirits sink. I knew I had been jobbed and I felt sure that the time would come when my freedom would be returned to me. Life has held much of work and trouble and little pleasure.

Never Saw a Movie

"I never yet have seen a moving picture show in my life. Even at the prison I never went, staying at work in the power house instead so that some of the other boys could go who had never seen a movie. It was no hardship for me to miss it while the other fellows liked to go.

"We Dudgeons have had our share of trouble ever since the family settled in what you call the swamp country of this county. We were put in the position of defending our rights from the start. The people of that section had been using the land we owned as a grazing ground for their stock and when my father and mother put up fences the neighbors did not like it.

Blames "Fence War"

"It was this fence war, if you want to call it that, which set in motion the feeling of hatred that I blame for connecting us with Romie Hodell's death. It led to difficulty that landed us in court on two occasions because they said we had committed assault.

"When my mother gets out of
(Continued on Page Eighteen.)