

DEPUTY SHERRIFF LOFTIS SHOT, MAY DIE  
Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, Tennessee  
Volume XXXII – Number 37  
September 20, 1934

HOMER ROBERTS, 43, HELD HERE PENDING OUTCOME OF ACTION

Fired Through Door When He Thought Neighbors Intended "Harm"

WERE SEEKING FUGITIVE

BULLETIN

Deputy Sheriff Otis Loftis, was reported improved at the City Hospital this morning. No operation had been performed as this edition went to press.

Deputy Sheriff Otis Loftis, is in the City Hospital with a bare chance for his life after being shot late Tuesday by Homer Roberts, 43, Sixteenth District farmer, at Roberts' home.

Loftis and Deputy Sheriff Charlie Norton had gone to the district with a capias for Oakley Herren, 29, on a bond forfeiture following indictment by the Grand Jury on charges of housebreaking and larceny, and receiving stolen property. According to Norton, he and Loftis drove up to Roberts' home to ask where Herren lived.

Loftis knocked on the door, he said, and gave his name and told his business. His shout was answered with a shot, Norton said, and Loftis crumpled to the porch floor. Norton rushed him to the hospital.

Roberts surrendered Wednesday morning to Deputy Sheriff Jess Rice, who brought him to jail here. After questioning by Attorney General, John Mitchell, Roberts was ordered held pending further developments in Loftis' condition.

USED HEAVY SHOTGUN

Roberts fired through the front door of his house with a 12 gauge shotgun. The discharge entered Loftis' stomach. Attending physicians did not operate Tuesday night because of severe shock suffered by Loftis.

HAD HAD TROUBLE BEFORE

Roberts, according to Deputy Sheriff Collie Jared, claimed that he did not know who the persons were who stepped on his porch, but he thought they were neighbors who intended to do him bodily harm. He said he had had trouble before over houses and that one of his houses had been burned. He had previously told Magistrate A.W. Maxwell that he called to see who was at his

door and that no one answered. Squire Maxwell said Roberts told him he thought somebody was trying to break into his house and that he fired.

Loftis has been a Deputy Sheriff under Sheriff Alex Burton for about two years, and lives with his family at Double Springs. He has a wife, four children, a mother, three, brothers and three sisters.

It was indicated yesterday that a temporary charge of assault with intent to commit murder in the first degree would be filed against Roberts, and in the event of Loftis' death a new charge of murder would be place against him. No action by the Grand Jury was taken yesterday.

Roberts was arrested by Loftis and other officers last year on charges of possessing liquor, General John Mitchell said yesterday. The whisky was of low alcoholic content and no indictment was brought by the Grand Jury, he said.

INDICTMENT OF MURDER BROUGHT AGAINST ROBERTS  
Deputy Sheriff Loftis Dies Of Shotgun Wounds in Stomach, Buried Monday  
AFTER ANOTHER PERSON  
Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN - Thursday, 27 September 1934  
Volume XXXII - Number 38

Indictment charging first degree murder was brought by the Grand Jury Tuesday against Homer Roberts, 48. Sixteenth District farmer, in the fatal shooting of Otis Loftis, 30, Deputy Sheriff, who died in the City Hospital Sunday afternoon.

Loftis was shot by Roberts at Roberts' home on the night of September 18, as he and another Deputy, Charlie Norton, were seeking Oakley Herren, 29 on a capias for bond forfeiture and a charge of housebreaking and larceny.

Loftis' stomach was riddled with pellets from a 12 gauge shotgun admittedly fired by Roberts through the front door of his home as the officer sought to learn from him where Herren lived. Roberts declared under questioning at the jail that he thought Loftis an intruder, and that he fired to protect his home. Deputy Norton however, who sat in the officers' car at the side of the road while Loftis went to the house, said that Loftis shouted his name and that he was hunting Herren, and that Roberts fired without answering. He also said that Roberts asked his wife for another shell to kill the other officer.

Surrendered Next Day

Roberts surrendered next day to Deputy Sam McCulley, and was lodged in jail on a preliminary charge of assault with intent to commit murder in the first degree. He made bond on that charge and was rearrested on the murder

charge. Some disposition will probably be made during the present term of criminal court.

Funeral services for Loftis who had been a Deputy under Sheriff Alex Burton for a little more than two years, were conducted at his home at Double Springs Monday afternoon by Elder John W. Fox, minister of the Gainesboro Church of Christ. Burial took place in the Smellage Cemetery, at Boma.

Loftis is survived by his wife, Avo Jernigan Loftis; four children, Johnnie 7, Jack, Geraldine, and Audrey, five months. His mother Mrs. Clara Loftis and three brothers Leo, Clyde, and Clarence and three sisters, Dona Lee, Lola B. and Lona also survive.

**Murder Cases on Docket for Court Hearing**  
Putnam County Herald - Cookeville, Tennessee  
Thursday, January 17, 1935

Killer of Deputy Sheriff to Face Trial at Session Opening Next Week

A 'docket' of 232 cases, with various others to be filed this week, awaits disposition at the regular January term of criminal court which opens here next Tuesday morning, with Judge Harry Camp, on the bench and Attorney General John Mitchell prosecuting.

Included on the docket are two murder cases, those of Homer Roberts, for the alleged slaying of Deputy Sheriff Otis Loftis, and Rich Davis for the murder of Robert Helms, Roberts and Davis admit they committed the murders, but in self defense. These two cases are in the felony list, and another murder case is in the bound over docket, in which Andrew Hill, colored, is charged with the murder of Eli Winn, another Negro.

There are 130 misdemeanor cases, and 80 bound over cases for grand jury investigation. The misdemeanor docket is made up largely of liquor law violations.