

A terrible tragedy was enacted at Elizabeth Lake Tuesday, when a supposedly ex-convict killed one of that section's most highly respected residents, injured two others, and was himself killed after a conflict with a posse.

The grim affair was the outcome of Henry H. Kent extending true Western hospitality to a thankless desperado, who traveled under the guise of one seeking land investments. According to reports, the slayer entered negotiations for Kent's ranch, but before closing the deal wished to get better acquainted with the country. In this way he became a boarder at the Kent household. After many days the ranch owner, becoming suspicious of the traveler, George Mason, proposed that an agreement of some sort be made. At this suggestion, Mason told Kent to get his shoes at the barn and he would leave.

When the latter returned to the house, Mason, with the words, "I guess I'll settle our account now," produced a shotgun and emptied a load of shot in Kent's breast. The rancher turned and ran to a neighbor's home for assistance. Mason returned to the house, where he barricaded himself and awaited the arrival of future victims.

Kent treached the home of George Curtis, where he told his story. Curtis spread the alarm, and Constable Fred Price, Justice of the Peace G. G. Bennett and Curtis hurried to arrest the desperado.

After failing by use of several ruses to get Mason from his barricade, the men forced an entrance, only to be greeted with a volley of shot from Mason's gun. Curtis was killed instantly, and Bennett staggered away with one eye practically blown out.

News of the shooting was sent to Lancaster, and Constable D. E. Hunter, quickly organizing a posse, hurried in automobiles to the lake.

Surrounding the house, the posse began an incessant firing, answered spasmodically by Mason. The frail building, constructed of one-inch plank, was soon riddled with bullets. After several hundred shots had been fired, and hearing no further reports from the interior, some of the men crept up to the house and fired the building. This failing to bring any response, the door was opened, and the man found lying dead on the floor, two bullets having penetrated his body.

The wounded men were taken to Los Angeles, while the bodies of Curtis and his slayer were taken to Lancaster, and later buried. Kent is reported improving, while Bennett will not recover his eyesight.

George Curtis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Curtis, prominent West End residents, was a favorite among his neighbors, and his friends included many from all parts of the Valley.

Mason claimed to have come from Boston, but it is thought he has a long criminal record. The horse he was riding when coming to the Valley was stolen from a lady near Saugus.

Bertillon measurements, finger prints and photographs of the slain criminal were taken and are being sent broadcast by Sheriff Cline in an effort to learn more of his past.