

Stalking My Hometown  
1924-1947  
1924 - Granny provided a firm foundation

Ray, a well-to-do Plymouth IN poultry farmer, was popular, playing violin and piano at social events.

In February 1924, during their divorce proceedings, Margaret said Ray, 36, killed his granny two years before. She didn't speak up before due to his threats.

Seems that as Granny was washing out hankies near the pantry door, Ray shot gunned her in the back, then went for another shell to finish her off on the kitchen floor. Margaret wasn't home at the time, but missed Granny when she returned and saw the condition of the kitchen floor. Two days later she saw Ray moving a trunk from the chicken house to the outhouse. Later, Ray built a granary with a concrete floor where the outhouse had been. The soon-to-be-exwife also pointed out that the deaths of his father, later his mother, and still later his first wife, were suspect.

In May 1924, the selection of the jury took five days, interviewing over 500 prospective jurors. The trial took a week, and the jury took only a few hours to find Ray guilty.

Ray only lasted a year in prison before dying there of tuberculosis.

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Buries Granny in Concrete

## PLYMOUTH MAN IS HELD FOR MURDER

**Raymond Smith Accused of Killing Aged Grandmother.**

### BODY FOUND UNDER CEMENT

**Prisoner's Wife, in Seeking Divorce, Makes Accusations Against Husband—Grand Jury in Session.**

Raymond Smith, a well known farmer residing south of Plymouth, is in the Marshall county jail charged with the murder of his aged grandmother, as the result of statements made against him Saturday by his wife in the preparation of a divorce action.

The wife, who appeared before Prosecutor Alvin S. Marsh Saturday afternoon, made a remark in the course of her story of brutality which resulted in further questioning by the lawyer.

She finally charged her husband with having murdered the aged woman during the last week of February, 1922, and with having disposed of her body on a farm formerly tenanted by the Smith family.

Smith was immediately arrested and a searching party visited the farm. Sheriff Earl Bennett and Pennsylvania Railroad Detective H. E. Stout found the decomposed body under the heavy cement floor of a granary.

Mrs. Smith's statement, according to officers, was that Smith shot his aged grandmother to death in order to secure for himself certain real estate bonds which she held on Chicago property. He then crammed the body into an old trunk and hid it away in a henhouse on the farm, the wife is said to have told the officers.

#### **Builds Granary Floor.**

Later he removed it, throwing it into a catch basin, where he covered it with lime and earth. A short time later he built a new granary, in which he placed a very heavy cement floor, using the floor as a further cover for his alleged crime.

A short time later Smith moved from this farm and started a chicken farm along the Tippecanoe river where he was arrested. Declarations that Smith's father had disappeared under mysterious circumstances while the family was residing on a farm near Pittsfield, Mass., were also made by Mrs. Smith.

The story of Mrs. Smith portrays in her husband a realistic parallel to the famous tale of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Smith, a prominent and well-to-do man, has been popular and well-liked in the community. Thirty-six years old, rather small but well-built, of pleasant appearance, he has been prominent in the social life of the country.

As a member of the Plymouth town band, playing the clarinet, he has attended social and sporting affairs in the county. He is said to have been an exceptional musician, being a master of the violin and also having considerable ability as a pianist. His musical accomplishments caused him to be constantly in demand as an entertainer.

At home, however, Smith, according to his wife, assumed an entirely different character. (Continued on Page Eight.)

### PLYMOUTH MAN HELD FOR GRANDMOTHER'S MURDER

(Continued from Page One.)

different character. The murder of his grandmother was committed in a brutal and cold blooded manner, the wife declares.

#### **The Murder Story.**

Mrs. Smith said that on Feb. 27, 1922, she went to Culver to sell some eggs. When she returned, her husband's grandmother was not at home and she asked about her.

Smith, she said, told her his grandmother had gone to visit a neighbor. The woman never arrived at her destination, and after the search for her had been on for some time, Smith, his wife said, finally admitted to her that he had killed the woman.

"She was working over the kitchen sink at the time," Mrs. Smith said, relating the story told by her husband. "Ray got his shotgun and walked into the kitchen, pointed it at her back and without a word, pulled the trigger and killed her."

Mrs. Smith further declared that her husband threatened to kill her if she left him or told of the murder of the grandmother.

#### **Smith Refuses to Talk.**

Refusing to discuss any subject connected with the murder, declaring it was the advice of his attorney, Smith remained amiable and willing to talk to visitors about any other subject. The only reference he made to the murder was the statement in answer to a query as to what answer he had to his wife's charges.

"Well, what was she doing all the time? She said she knew about it for two years—why didn't she tell it before this? It's funny that she should wait till we quarreled to come out with the story."

Smith said that the charges and rumors that there is mystery in connection with other deaths in his family are unfounded, untrue and absurd. He said the records will show that the other members of his family died from natural causes.

The Marshall county grand jury started an investigation of the case yesterday. Sentiment at Plymouth, say dispatches from there, is about equally divided in support of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. The latter is Smith's second wife. Previous to her marriage to Smith she was Miss Margaret Bernhardt, a Marshall county teacher. Her parents live near Hibbard.

Buries Granny in Concrete

## PLYMOUTH MAN IN JAIL ON CHARGE OF BRUTAL MURDER

**SUSPECTED THAT SAME MAN IS INVOLVED IN DEATH OF THREE OTHERS IN PAST FEW YEARS. MARRIED TWICE.**

Raymond Smith, aged 35, living near Plymouth was arrested Saturday evening, charged with murder of his grandmother in February, 1922.

The startling arrest followed information given by his wife while consulting with her attorney in regard to divorce proceedings.

Smith is also suspected by officials of connection in the death of his father, mother and first wife.

The horrible story as reported of the alleged crime given by his wife is as follows:

As the story is told, the grand mother was washing out some handkerchiefs near the pantry door and had her back to the living room door when Smith came to this door and deliberately fired his single-barrel shot gun at her. The charge struck her in the shoulder. She fell backward on the floor and looked up directly at him. He stepped back into the other room placed another shell in the gun and fired another charge at close range into her head.

She had \$1500 in real estate bonds purchased from the firm of Peabody, Houghtelling & Co., of Chicago to the amount of \$1500 as good as cash.

She was reported to be about to go to an old lady's home in which event she would have turned in her property to that home.

Neighbors were told that she had gone back east and no one questioned the story.

According to Mrs. Smith's statement her husband told her that seven years ago he had killed his father on their farm near Pittsfield, Mass. The son secured \$6,000 as his part of the estate.

The theory is advanced that the grandmother might have had knowledge or suspicion of this crime and that she furnished an eddied motive for killing her.

The remainder of the family moved to Chicago. Smith was married to his first wife at that time and they made their home with his mother at 58th and Bishop streets. In 1921 the mother died in her room where she was found with the gas jet turned on. A verdict of suicide was rendered.

In view of developments the matter may be investigated anew now.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith moved to Marshall county and located on the first farm north of the Shoemaker bridge. While they were living there, the first wife, Mrs. Cecile Smith, died from tuberculosis, according to the word given out. There are circumstances which lead authorities now to believe that she may have died of slow poisoning.

On August 30, 1920, he was married to Margaret Bernhardt. In August of 1921, the fifteen acres were purchased just south of the Kinmel bridge, the next one to the west where the Pleasant View Poultry farm was established.

On September 9, 1922, a baby girl was born to Mrs. Margaret Smith. The baby is now at the home of the grandparents.

Winamac (IN) Republican 14 Feb 1924: 1. Microfilm.

Pulaski County (IN) Democrat 14 Feb 1924: 1&8. Microfilm.

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An indictment

**SMITH INDICTED  
BY GRAND JURY**

**Marshall County Man Formally  
Accused of Murder.**

**DENIES KILLING AGED LADY**

Charges Improper Conduct on Part  
of Wife—Mrs. Smith May Not  
Be Permitted to Testify  
About Confession.

The Marshall county grand jury Tuesday afternoon returned an indictment against Raymond Burr Smith, charging him with the murder of his grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet, age eighty-three, whose body was found buried under the cement floor of a granary at the Smith farm near Twin lakes.

Smith was arrested on information given by his wife, Mrs. Margaret Smith, in answer to questions asked her by an attorney in preparation of divorce proceedings, as detailed last week. It is alleged Smith killed his grandmother February 27, 1922, with a shotgun, hid her body in an old trunk for several days, and then placed her body in a cess pool. Later, it is alleged, Smith filled the cess pool and built a granary over it.

During the investigation of the case by the grand jury, it is said to have developed that Smith had accused his wife of unbecoming conduct with a young man, a neighbor. Mrs. Smith had said her husband had threatened to kill her if she ever sought a divorce or revealed his secret.

Many persons were examined by the grand jury, among them numerous neighbors. Mrs. Smith was not a witness.

Smith, who is still in jail, continued in his denial of the crime. A new angle is given the case, it is reported in a dispatch from Plymouth, by an Indiana law that confidences exchanged between husband and wife may not be taken as evidence.

It is therefore hinted that at the coming murder trial Mrs. Smith will not be allowed to tell what her husband told her. She can only tell of leaving the grandmother alive at the home on the day of the disappearance, the condition of the kitchen floor on her return, seeing her husband bear the trunk on a wheel barrow from the chicken house to the out house two days later and empty it, throw it in dirt, tear the trunk to pieces and burn all but the bottom on which she saw blood stains. The evidence will undoubtedly be presented of the digging up of the remains at the spot mentioned and the identification of the same by means of shoes, a gold tooth, etc., as the remains of Mrs. Frances Sweet.

Pulaski County (IN) Democrat 21 Feb 1924: 1. Microfilm.

An Indictment

**MURDER CASE AT  
PLYMOUTH SOON**

**GRAND JURY RETURNS INDICT-  
MENT AGAINST SMITH—STORY  
OF WIFE MAY NOT BE ALLOW-  
ED AS EVIDENCE.**

Raymond Smith, Plymouth poultry farmer and musician, was indicted for first degree murder Tuesday afternoon by the grand jury which has been investigating the charge that he shot to death his grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet.

Smith has been held in the county jail since February 9. He will be held without bail, pending trial.

A new angle is given to Marshall county's most sensational murder case in which Raymond B. Smith is charged by his wife with shooting down his aged grandmother two years ago and dumping her body into a vault over which he later put in a cement floor for a granary. The matter of law is presented that in Indiana confidences exchanged between husband and wife may not be taken as evidence.

It is therefore to be expected that at the coming murder trial, Mrs. Smith will not be allowed to tell what her husband told her. She can only tell of leaving the grandmother alive at the home on the day of the disappearance, the condition of the kitchen floor on her return, seeing her husband bear the trunk on a wheel barrow from the chicken house to the outhouse two days later and empty it, throw in dirt, tear the trunk to pieces and burn all the bottom on which she saw blood stains. The evidence will then undoubtedly be presented of the digging up of the remains at the spot mentioned and the identification of the same by means of shoes, a gold tooth, etc., as the remains of Mrs. Frances Sweet.

Winamac (IN) Republican 21 Feb 1924: 1. Microfilm.

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GrannyKiller wife needs money

**Mrs. Smith Wants Allowance**

In a complaint filed in the Marshall circuit court by Margaret Smith, wife of Raymond B. Smith—indicted by the Marshall county grand jury for first degree murder and held in the county jail pending trial—Mrs. Smith alleges that he is worth about \$12,000. She seeks an allowance for the support of herself and baby to the amount of \$50 a month, for the payment of \$1,000 of her own money entrusted to him and the protection of her interest in the joint property.

No steps toward the prosecution of Smith have been taken. The date for the trial has not yet been taken up by the attorneys, Martindale and Martindale will appear for the defense and Prosecutor Alvin F. Marsh, H. A. Logan, Harry L. Unger will appear for the state and Mrs. Smith.

Winamac (IN) Republican 28 Feb 1924: 1. Microfilm.

Papers found

**PAPERS IN SAFETY  
BOX FIGURE IN  
PLYMOUTH CASE**

**PRISONER ASKS POSSESSION OF  
LOCKED BOX—LATER SUD-  
DENLY WITHDRAWS REQUEST  
WHEN WIFE TALKS**

There have been some very remarkable developments in the Smith murder case at Plymouth within the past few days. It all came about because of Smith's desire to get hold of the securities which at the time of his arrest were deposited in a safety deposit box at the First National Bank in Plymouth.

The result of Smith's petition to the court to get hold of the property in the box was that his wife, Margaret Smith, made some further sensational charges against him concerning the sale of their common property on the farm, as to her interest in the property, and as to the property of Margaret Sweet, whom it is alleged Smith murdered in cold blood.

Along with these matters came to light also one of the most remarkable things in criminal procedure, namely, the right of the owner of a safety deposit box in a bank, and as to who had the right to open such a box and take out the valuables concealed therein.

At the time of his arrest Smith had a safety deposit box at the First National Bank in Plymouth and in that box were deposited securities to the value of \$5,500, so Margaret Smith states in her answer to Smith's petition. There were in that box, also, she says, some securities belonging to the murdered grandmother, Margaret Sweet.

On March 15, Martindale and Martindale filed in court a petition asking for an order against Margaret Smith and the First National Bank to produce certain documents and papers as set out in said motion and petition.

After Mrs. Smith, the First National Bank, and Alvin F. Marsh had filed their answers to the petition the attorneys withdrew it and are not asking for a hearing nor decision by the court.

Winamac (IN) Republican 27 Feb 1924: 1. Microfilm.

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Asking death penalty

## DEATH PENALTY ASKED IN MARSHALL COUNTY MURDER

The death penalty for murder in the first degree will be asked for Raymond B. Smith, on trial in the Marshall circuit court, charged with slaying his aged grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet, at the "Pleasant View" poultry farm seven miles southwest of Plymouth, and burying her body in an outhouse vault.

This was indicated in the questions repeatedly asked by Prosecutor Marsh in questioning prospective jurors. Efforts to secure a jury were started Monday, but none had been obtained up to last night.

*Pulaski County (IN) Democrat 15 May 1924: 4. Microfilm.*

Accused says wife did it

## Smith's Wife Fired Fatal Shot, Asserts Accused's Attorney

"The defense will show, as far as circumstantial evidence can prove, that the person who shot and killed Mrs. Frances Sweet was Mrs. Raymond B. Smith, wife of the defendant." This was the startling statement with which E. C. Martindale, counsel for the defense, opened in the trial at Plymouth of Raymond B. Smith, musician and poultry farmer, charged with shooting down his grandmother, Mrs. Frances C. Sweet, March 22, 1922.

All of last week was spent in securing a jury to hear the case, and the introduction of evidence began Monday morning, with crowds in attendance that jammed the court room and adjacent corridors. So great was the crush, it is stated, that three women fainted during the day.

Mrs. Smith was the principal witness for the state, relating substantially the same story that she told previous to her husband's arrest, and which led to the discovery of the lime-covered remains of the grandmother. The state rested Tuesday noon, and then followed the sensational announcement by the accused man's attorney.

The attorney went on to relate that on entering the home one day Smith found his grandmother dead on the floor from a wound in the head, and his wife in tears.

*Pulaski County (IN) Democrat 22 May 1924: 1. Microfilm.*



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Jury selected for murder trial

**Select Jury to Try Raymond Smith of Plymouth**

Shortly before noon Thursday the jury for the trial of Raymond J. Smith, charged with murdering his grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet, was accepted by both state and defense after over 500 veniremen had been questioned during five days. The court adjourned until Monday morning at 9 o'clock when statements of the case will be made to the jury by both the state and the defense and the hearing of witnesses will begin. Twelve men who survived the attorneys' grilling and will be called upon to pronounce judgment upon the alleged murderer possibly to send him to the electric chair.

Winamac (IN) Republican 22 May 1924: 4. Microfilm.

GrannyKiller gets Life

**JURY DECIDES ON LIFE SENTENCE IN PLYMOUTH MURDER**

**SENSATIONAL CASE IN MARSHALL CIRCUIT COURT BRINGS HEAVY PENALTY FOR FARMER AS MURDERER**

Raymond B. Smith, well known young Marshall county farmer, residing a few miles west of Argos, was found guilty of the charge of murder placed against him following the grewsome discovery of the body of his dead grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet, at 10 o'clock Thursday. The case went to the jury late Thursday afternoon and 13 ballots were taken before the verdict for conviction was reached. Special Judge Albert Ward, of Peru, who tried the case, sentenced Smith to life imprisonment.

The case, which was the most sensational case ever held in the Marshall circuit court at Plymouth, came about as a result of domestic trouble between Smith and his wife. Mrs. Smith went to Harry Unger, Plymouth attorney, to file petition for a divorce. She told her lawyer that she was afraid to live with her husband any longer and that he had threatened her life. Upon questioned closely by Unger, the information was brought out by the wife that Smith had murdered his grandmother in March, 1922, and buried her body under an old out-building on the farm.

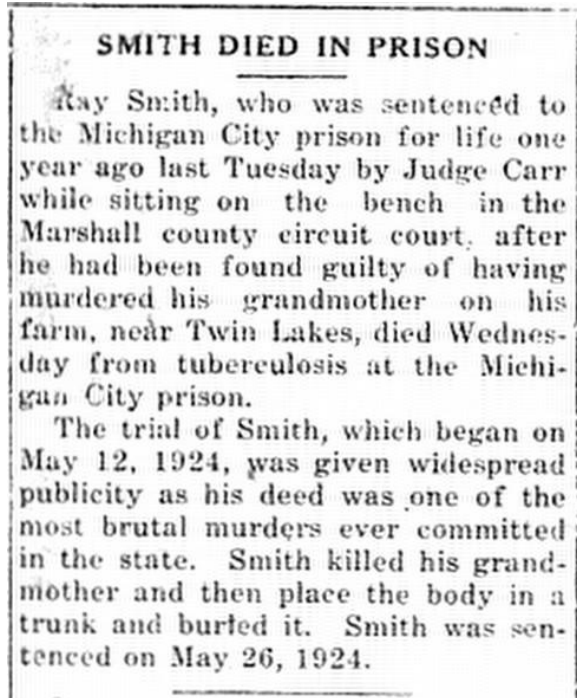
Motion for a new trial in the case of Raymond Smith, convicted murderer of his grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sweet of Plymouth, was overruled in the Marshall circuit court Monday, by Special Judge Albert Ward, of Peru, who sat on the case.

Immediately following the overruling of the motion Judge Ward passed sentence on the prisoner, that he must serve the remainder of his natural life in the state prison at Michigan City. The court granted Smith the right to remain in the Marshall county jail for a short time to conclude business matters that he wishes to dispose of before entering prison. While no definite statements have been forthcoming from the defense it is indicated an appeal will be taken to the supreme court in an effort to have a new trial granted.

Winamac (IN) Republican 29 May 1924: 1. Microfilm.

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GrannyKiller dies in prison



Winamac (IN) Republican 4 Jun 1925: 1. Microfilm.