

Hiram “Daddy” Shultz

By George Holdren

Dale W. Bangs of Gilbertsville, PA., formerly of Greenwood Township, Columbia County, presented an important Columbia County historic item to the Society. Dale is a retired history teacher, having taught in the Millville school.

He and his brother Don were runners for a local auctioneer circa 1950, when Dale purchased the shotgun which Hiram “Daddy” Shultz had used to shoot Floyd Brown on Thanksgiving night 1928 in an affray at Daddy’s Iola residence.

According to the Benton Argus (4 Dec. 1930), a series of operations at the Bloomsburg Hospital failed to save the life of Brown, who died shortly after two o’clock Saturday afternoon. Liquor was involved and a felony charge for that was postponed until the murder charge “is determined upon.”

Prohibition was in effect from 1920-1933. See the accompanying photograph which shows the woodworking skills of Daddy. The double barreled 16 gauge shotgun has inlays on either side of the stock and also on the forearm. According to Glen Farr (of the Millville Farr family), Daddy was known for his whittling skills. Daddy could make an interlocking bracelet from a single block of wood. The following is an incident attributed to Daddy. When the sheriff opened the cell door and announced that it was time to go home, Daddy placed his current whittling project on a shelf above the door and remarked, “I’ll finish it when I come back.”



An article in the Argus, May 5, 1911, reported the following. “Hiram Shultz, a bad worthless character, who before his arrest proclaimed that he was Jesse James, Pat Hester and a few others of like stripe, molded into one, was the man captured.” (This is when Daddy shot Sheriff William P. Zehner with his pistol.) (See below.)

Another incident occurred one Sunday evening at a home in Iola. A man resting in his chair heard a commotion outside, coming from the direction of the chicken coop. He inquired, “Who’s in there?”

From the darkness of the coop came the answer, “Nobody but us chickens.” Daddy was once again exhibiting his fondness for other peoples’ chickens.

The Benton Argus of Nov. 29, 1928 had the following article. “Hiram Shultz of Iola who told the court that he had been in jail four times in the last twenty-five years, (that he remembered), was sentenced to serve one year in jail and pay a fine of \$50.00 after he had pled guilty to a charge of assault and battery brought against him by J.C. Polk of Greenwood Township. Again,

liquor was involved and the issue was a remark concerning a woman. Daddy said he was in jail once for shooting Sheriff Zehner (May 1911 in Espy). He shot his revolver five times, wounding the sheriff in the arm, whereupon the sheriff took careful aim and shot Daddy twice in the back. Note: Daddy had already expended five bullets from his six-shooter and obviously was trying to, "Get out of Dodge." This episode cost Daddy six years in jail. Another time, he was in jail for over a year for driving drunk, and another time he was in the county jail for 90 days, but he couldn't remember why. He gave his age as 51."

An article in the Columbian, Feb. 6, 1896, would appear to credit Daddy with his first misdemeanor. He was convicted of stealing Reverend Smith's robe, for which he was imprisoned for three months.

Now we come back to the shooting of Floyd Brown and the murder trial. The Benton Argus, Thursday, May 14, 1931 headline read, "JURY FREES 'DADDY' SHULTZ OF MURDER." and the sub-title, "SHOULDERS HIS GUN AND RETURNS HOME." Sheriff Rabb was so sure the defendant would be found guilty; he had already taken him to county jail. However, it took the jury only twenty minutes to free Daddy of the crime charged, but they remained in the jury room another ten minutes while the prisoner was being brought from the jail. After the county clerk, H.N. Gunther, had read the verdict to the jury and the District Attorney moved for Daddy's discharge, Daddy asked the D.A. for the return of the shotgun and a shirt. The Shamokin Dispatch, May 12, 1931, added "These were given to him and Shultz quietly left the courtroom a free man. He stayed on Main Street for a short time, walking the length of the principle part of the business section, and then started auto-hiking to his home below Iola." It's easy to visualize that walk today. Leave the courthouse, go to Iron Street, walk toward Millville with your thumb extended toward the sky.

Local Lore: Harry Parker, who owned a store nearby, upon seeing Daddy on the porch steps of the Iola Hotel, chastised Daddy. (Harry Parker's store sold all the ingredients to make beer and wine.) Daddy replied, "When I die, I'm going to sit on the porch of a Hotel. I don't know where in Hell you are going."

Daddy's life would continue to be eventful. The Benton Argus, Oct. 1, 1931, reported a failed attempt to murder Hiram Shultz. Awakened by shouts outside his home, he lighted a lamp and went to the door. When he opened the door, a gun was discharged and the bullet entered the door jamb less than two inches from his head.

On January 31, 1935, (one year and one day after this writer's birth), the Argus chronicled another event. Daddy was accused by his nephew of wantonly pointing or discharging firearms. Although there were nine bullet holes in a car, which led to Daddy's arrest, he went into detail about his innocence. The judge got a little testy when Daddy asked that his .38-40 rifle be returned.

Sadly, Daddy's life ended in a bizarre way. While engaged in cutting timber for Stanley Moser near Iola, Saturday, April 16, 1938, he had two fingers "gnawed off" by a circular saw when his hand slipped. He was rushed to the office of Dr. O.S. Southall in Millville. He was then removed to the Bloomsburg Hospital where he died from shock on the operating table.

It should be noted that according to the certificate of death, the principal cause of death was as follows: Respiratory failure under ether anesthesia and chronic alcohol poisoning.