

CONSTABLE WILLIAM E. FUNKHOUSER – E.O.W. MAY 14, 1922

During the early morning hours of the 14th of May 1922, a burglar stalked the quiet streets of San Dimas Township. His illegal activities began shortly after 3 a.m. at the Esparza residence at First and Depot Streets, where he lifted a pocketbook containing \$75 and escaped undetected. At the second residence he entered, he was not as fortunate. Mrs. Blackwell, who rented out rooms at her home at 316 W. Third Street, heard the suspect and confronted him shortly after he stole a watch and jewelry belonging to two of her boarders, newspaperman Thomas Cervantes and his wife. Mr. Cervantes was alerted by Mrs. Blackwell's cries of alarm and together they chased the man out the back door. Mrs. Blackwell wisely gave up the chase once the suspect re-crossed her threshold, but Cervantes followed the man and alerted Township Constable William E. Funkhouser.

Funkhouser, a fifty-year-old, married father of ten, had been the San Dimas Township constable for a number of years, but only two months before the break-ins on May 14th he was hired by local business owners to also serve as the town's night watchman. Newspaperman Cervantes climbed into Funkhouser's car, and they drove east following the suspect's trail to the pumping plant at Cienega Avenue and the Santa Fe railroad tracks.

Cervantes described the suspect as a Mexican man, about twenty-five to thirty years of age, five feet six or seven, and one hundred thirty to one hundred forty pounds with a scar on one side of his face. They spotted the man on the tracks and Funkhouser got the drop on him and he threw up his hands in surrender. Funkhouser began to search the suspect with one hand while attempting to keep him covered by holding his revolver in the other. When jewelry taken from Cervantes was recovered in one of the suspect's pockets, the man suddenly turned on the constable and struck him, sending the gun tumbling about fifteen feet away. The suspect drew a revolver of his own and fired at Funkhouser, but missed. Funkhouser closed on his attacker and got one hand on the barrel of the weapon. The suspect was able to wrestle his gun away from Funkhouser cutting the constable's hand with the sight in the process. He then fired one round into the lawman's chest, striking him in the heart, killing him.

Fearing for his own life, Cervantes began to grapple with the suspect for the revolver. He managed to wrestle the gun away, but the man refused to submit to Cervantes commands to stop and ran off into the darkness. Cervantes fired two rounds at the suspect as he fled but did not hit him. Cervantes immediately reported the tragedy to Deputy Constable Fairbanks who notified the Sheriff's office before leading seven other men in pursuit of the suspect. The man's trail was lost on Foothill Boulevard at the base of the mountains.

A posse of two hundred lawmen was organized and personally led by [Sheriff Traeger](#). It was comprised of sheriff's deputies and peace officers from La Verne, Azusa, Glendora, Pomona, and Covina, as well as



sheriff's deputies and peace officers from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The interest of officers from Riverside County was particularly keen because the circumstances of the assault on Funkhouser were similar to those of the shooting of Corona Chief of Police Frank E. Redans six weeks before by a Mexican named Jack Mais. Chief Redans was shot in the right breast, right arm and left thigh, but survived his wounds.

Later in the day a man roughly matching the suspect's description was spotted exiting [Dalton Canyon in Azusa](#) by Constable William I. Hamblin. He took off running but Hamblin cornered and subdued him in a section house after a hard fight. Due to the circumstances of the man's capture, together with the general match of his physical description, it was felt certain that this was Funkhouser's slayer. Constable Hamblin and El Monte Constable Lester C. Burdick took the prisoner to El Monte where he could be held in the town jail until Cervantes could arrive to make a positive identification. Unfortunately, Cervantes was certain that the man Hamblin arrested was not Funkhouser's slayer. It was later rumored that the suspect might have fled toward Fullerton in Orange County, but a search of this community failed to locate him.

Constable Funkhouser received laudatory praise from lawmen who knew him. Constable Alex B. Chambers of Pomona said that, "Funkhouser did not know what fear was." Funkhouser told one Pomona police officer shortly before his death, "What's the use to fear if one goes into this business."

Along with an official letter of condolence from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Constable Funkhouser's widow received ninety-five percent of his salary for three years totaling \$3,420. There is no evidence that Funkhouser's murderer was ever apprehended, or that he was Jack Mais, the man wanted in the assault on Corona Chief Redans.



By John Stanley

WILLIAM E. FUNKHOUSER

The popular constable of San Dimas, William E. Funkhouser, was born in Champaign County, Ill., January 1, 1872. He was educated in the public schools, and at the age of eighteen, in 1890, went to North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebr., and engaged in ranching with his father. He also conducted a garage at one time, and was employed by Uncle Sam as mail carrier on one of the rural routes. Politics was also among the things that engaged his time and attention, and he was at one time road overseer, and deputy assessor, and in 1910 took the census for the United States Government.

He came to San Dimas in the fall of 1912 and entered the employ of the R. M. Teague Nursery Company. He was also night watchman at San Dimas, and September 1, 1917, was appointed constable. He is now under civil service appointment. Among various occupations at which he has been employed, he ran a tractor, working among the orange groves of the district. At present, besides filling the position of constable, he is again one of the trusted employees of the R. M. Teague Nursery Company.

His marriage united him with Miss Lillie Stone, a native of Indiana, and they are the parents of ten children. Clarence W., who is with the Stewart Fruit Company; Evelyn is Mrs. Thomas Boddy of San Dimas; Grace, Glenn, Nellie, Doris, Ruth, Marie, Fern and Jack. Fraternally he is associated with the Modern Woodmen. He has made a very efficient officer and is a respected citizen of his community, enjoying the high esteem of a host of friends and acquaintances.

William Eustace Funkhouser was born on January 1, 1872 in Urbana, Illinois. He died on May 14, 1922 in San Dimas, California. He was buried in Evergreen cemetery, 3201 N. B Street, La Verne, CA, located in section F, lot 30, space 2, along curb #29. He married Lillie Olive Stone on January 30, 1896 in Hershey, Nebraska.

Lillie Olive Stone was born on March 19, 1878 in Solsberry, Indiana. She died on April 22, 1963 in San Dimas, California. She was buried on April 25, 1963 in Evergreen cemetery.

They had the following children:

Claire Willard Funkhouser

Evelyn Ann Funkhouser

Grace Della Funkhouser

Doris Laverne Funkhouser was born on August 19, 1907, in Hershey, Nebraska. She died on February 25, 1960.

Marie Charlotte Funkhouser

Another child was born on August 23, 1915 in San Dimas, California. He died on August 23, 1915.