

TAKES OWN LIFE

Dies Thursday



CHARLES A. COURCHESNE.

*Charles A. Courchesne
Broods All Night Over
Car Tragedy At Smelter*

VICTIM STILL ALIVE

*NOTE IS LEFT TO FAMILY,
TELLING OF "ATONEMENT"*

BELIEVING he had killed a man whom he had run down near the Smelter shortly before midnight Wednesday, Charles Albert Courchesne, 28, superintendent of the Courchesne quarry, and a veteran of the World war, shot himself through the heart at his home at daybreak Thursday. He died almost instantly.

The victim of the auto accident, Jose Escamilla, about 30, was reported in a dying condition at the City-County hospital Thursday. He suffered a concussion of the brain and probably a fracture of the skull.

Rather than be branded as a hit and run driver, Mr. Courchesne arose early Thursday morning and wrote a note to his father, telling him of the accident. He then went into a small outhouse and fired a .38 caliber bullet through his heart. His brother, Tom, was the first to reach the body.

A new Smith & Wesson revolver, which had never been fired, was used to fire the single, fatal shot. The revolver was removed from its original box just before the shooting.

A note, addressed to his father, and written a few seconds before the fatal shot was fired, was found by the young man's body. It read:

"Papa: Coming home last night I hit a man and killed him. Frightened, I failed to stop. Rather than bring dishonor to your clean and honorable name by such a cowardly act, I have decided to die. Lots of love to all the family.

(Signed) "Albert."

P. S. "Please don't publish this. I atoned the act by a terrible night of suffering."

AROSE EARLY.

When other members of the family, including Albert's father, reached the body, the youth was breathing his last.

"Albert evidently spent a terrible night brooding over the accident. He evidently thought he had killed a man and was unable to face the consequences," his brother, Tom, said.

Mr. Courchesne arose early, about 5:30 a. m., and, dressed in a pair of overalls and a jumper, he went into a small outhouse within 20 feet of his bedroom. Other members of the family were arising, when they heard the single, fatal shot.

Dying Thursday.

The accident which caused the young man so much anguish, according to the sheriff's department, occurred shortly before midnight Wednesday as Mr. Courchesne was returning home in a big sedan.

Striking a Mexican, who Thursday was identified as Jose Escimilla, a Smelter employe, the big auto dragged the body nearly a hundred feet before releasing it. The man was said to be dying at the City-County hospital Thursday morning.

Members of the sheriff's office immediately instituted a search for the driver of the car, believing that the auto victim had been run down by a bootlegger. This was corrected when deputy sheriff E. J. Fisher went to the Courchesne home early Thursday.

Tom Courchesne, brother of the dead man, made the following statement:

"Albert had not been drinking, although we must admit that he was speeding. The tragedy is a shock to all members of the family. But morose because he had hit the man, and probably afraid to meet the consequences, he killed himself."

Served Overseas.

The automobile was traveling at a terrific speed when Escimilla was hit. So terrific was the impact that a motometer on the radiator of the car was knocked completely off and hurled through the windshield.

Mr. Courchesne was foreman of his father's quarry above the cement plant. He served overseas in the Eighth engineers for one year. He was a graduate of the New Mexico Military institute, and vice president of the alumni association of the school. He was a thirty-second degree Mason and a Shriner, and a member of the Congregational church.

Suicide Verdict.

Coroner A. J. Wilson, who viewed the body, entered a verdict of suicide. The body is being held at the Peak-Hagedon mortuary.

Besides his father, A. Courchesne, Mr. Courchesne is survived by three brothers, Tom, John and William, and four sisters, Mrs. R. A. Smith of El Paso; Mrs. John Howland of

Pasadena, Calif.; Mrs. B. B. Morris of San Diego, Calif., and Miss Madalene Courchesne of El Paso.

Authorities at the City-County hospital early Thursday said that the auto victim suffered a fractured skull and concussion of the brain. He probably will die.

Father Active.

It is said of A. Courchesne, father of the deceased, that he was one of the "most active and liberal in the building up of El Paso; that he gave more than any other individual in both money and work in building the local Y. M. C. A., and was equally interested in the El Paso Military institute."

During his more active years he and his associates spent \$30,000 in promoting interest in and making surveys for a railroad from El Paso to the Pecos valley of New Mexico toward the plains of Texas. There is a chamber of commerce committee working on the same proposition now.

Mr. Courchesne was president of the chamber of commerce 20 years ago, and was a county commissioner for a long time. He has been vice president of the Southwestern Portland Cement company since its organization.

Made Good Record At N. M. M. Academy

Roswell, N. M., Aug. 26 (AP). — Charles A. Courchesne, who committed suicide in El Paso this morning, was a student at the New Mexico Military institute in this city for four years, entering in 1912 and going out in 1916. He had an excellent record while in school here, but being a member of the academic department, however, he did not graduate.

Mr. Courchesne served in France during the World war, being a member of the quartermaster corps. While an officer of the alumni association of the New Mexico Military institute, he was not president, this office being held by W. E. Talbot of Dallas, Texas.