

SCHAFFER, ILLA
December 3, 1905-1925

Illa Schaffer, 19 year-old girl who has been making her home for the past three years with Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Griffin, lost her life Thursday evening when the horse about whose neck she had just tied the end of her lariat rope stampeded, a slip noose in the other end of the rope catching one of her feet about the ankle, and enabling the frightened horse to drag her to death.

About 4:30 in the afternoon, Miss Schaffer told Mr. Griffin that she could see the horse on the hill east of the farm and asked whether she had better not go after it. Griffin told her to drive the animal down into a fenced lane, saying he would meet her as soon as he saw her coming. "I wonder if I could catch him," the girl said. "Don't try to catch him" Griffin replied, "Just run him down into the lane, and then I will help you."

Before leaving, however, the girl went to the barn and got the lariat, which a man employed there had used that day on another saddle.

Shortly after the neighbors saw her running a herd of horses until after six o'clock in a pasture a half mile east of the T.B. Hawes farm, into which the animal she was after had entered thru a break in the fence. This pasture was a mile long and nearly a half mile wide.

Various neighbors state that she ran the herd for some time, apparently trying to separate one horse from the herd.

When she did not return, Griffin went to look for her shortly before dark. Not knowing that the horse had gotten into the neighboring pasture, he searched his own pasture until after dark, and then went home and summoned several neighbors. They searched the brakes of the Chugwater east of the Griffin pasture, and to some extent, the pasture where she had been seen, altho no one present knew that she had been seen there.

Not being able to find any traces, one of the party telephoned to the sheriff Burckhalter, asking for the aid of cars and a searching party from Wheatland. This was not until 11 o'clock and some difficulty was experienced in arousing a posse.

After midnight, however, a party of nearly 20 cars was mustered, gathered at the A.D. Beran corner. The caravan of automobiles entered the pasture and within five minutes the circling lights revealed the horse in full flight, with the body of the girl still tied fast. The animal was herded into a corner, where one of the posse caught the rope and held until another cut the rope from the girl's body.

The condition of the body revealed that the girl had been dead for several hours. Nearby was found her saddle horse with its reins thrown over its head on the ground, indicating she had dismounted and was on the ground when the accident occurred. The running noose which had caught her ankle indicated that she might have roped the horse, and then, dismounting, had tied the other end about its neck to lead it, when from some unknown cause it stampeded with the result now known.

During the three years the girl had lived with the Griffin family, she had worked constantly out doors with horses, preferring that to work in the house, and had become a competent horsewoman, entirely without fear. She was a constant companion of Mr. Griffin in working with stock, her entire interest being directed that way.

The girl was born December 3, 1905, at Winfred, S.Dak., being 19 years, six