

HEART HAS BAD RECORD.

*Slayer of Kerns Has Been
in Trouble Before.*

*Once Broke Jail and Later
Stabbed a Man.*

*Officers Expect to Prove the
Killing Was Murder.*

Detectives who are investigating the killing of Thomas Kerns by J. W. Heart, which occurred in a rooming-house at No. 907 Maple avenue Saturday night, believe that Heart is guilty of cold-blooded murder.

Heart's record was looked up by the officers yesterday and it was found to be bad; on the other hand, Kerns is alleged to have been a quiet, peaceable citizen, who would always avoid a difficulty if it was possible to do so.

Detective Benedict is thoroughly familiar with the murderer's past, and he it was who arrested him at the point of a Winchester rifle when the latter returned to Los Angeles three years after he had broken jail, where he was awaiting trial on a charge of assault with intent to murder.

ESCAPED FROM JAIL.

Heart was arrested on that charge in 1885 and was confined in the old jail, which then stood on the spot now occupied by the People's Store. The prisoner dug a hole through the wall of the building and scaled the high enclosure surrounding. He eluded the vigilance of the officers and remained at large for over three years. Heart's escape puzzled the Sheriff's men greatly at the time, and the exact means employed in cutting the hole and scaling the wall were never discovered.

COVERED WITH A WINCHESTER.

In 1888 Detective Benedict learned that Heart was living at The Palms with his aunt, Mrs. Tibbits, and securing the old papers in the assault case, he went down to arrest the man. Benedict had been warned that Heart would resist arrest, and it was said that he would shoot an officer on sight if one should attempt to take him. Believing these statements, Benedict took no chances, but surprised Heart when he went out in the yard early in the morning to wash his face. The officer covered his man with the rifle and did not relax his vigilance until he had him handcuffed and safely landed in jail again.

When the trial came up Heart sprung a surprise on the prosecution by pleading the statute of limitation, and he was discharged. The officers claimed that Heart perjured himself at the trial by swearing that he had been in Bakersfield during the intervening years, whereas he had been in Arizona.

STABBED A POSTMASTER.

Heart was arrested again a few years later on a charge of stabbing the postmaster at The Palms. The postmaster was a prominent citizen, but when the case came to trial, Heart claimed self-defense and he was acquitted. A third assault case was preferred against Heart, when it was alleged that he had attacked a man with a pick handle, but nothing came of the charge.

During the investigation yesterday the revolver with which Heart killed Kerns was found in the room in which Heart was arrested after the shooting. It had been hidden away. The weapon is a 32-caliber Iver-Johnson revolver, and one chamber had been discharged.

SAW NO KNIFE.

Louis Mills, who was the first man to enter the kitchen in which Kerns was shot, says that he made a search for the knife alleged to have been used by the dead man, but he could find none. Detectives Quinn, Rich and Davis, who worked on the case yesterday, say that they searched the house thoroughly and that no sign of a knife could be found.

Many of the roomers at the house and friends of Kerns feel bitter against Heart, and they say that they will show clearly at the inquest that Kerns was murdered. The Coroner will hold an inquest at Bresee Bros. Tuesday afternoon.