

SOMMERS, CHARLES F.
1868-1929

After shoveling through snowdrifts for hours in a dismal wind, Charles F. Sommers, 63 year old Platte county rancher, fell dead about 12:30 Saturday afternoon on the Wheatland-Laramie road at the mouth of Plumbago canyon, about 33 miles from Laramie.

Mr. Sommers who was accompanied by Julius Martins, who resides west of Wheatland on the Sybille, and who joined him earlier in the day at the Radichal ranch. Believing at first that Sommers had fainted, Martins worked to resuscitate him. After he was convinced that his friend was dead, Martins walked four miles back to the ranch house. Thence the message was carried to Bosler and telephoned to Laramie.

At the time the message was received in Laramie, a blizzard was in full force and the officers were advised it would be impossible to reach the place before nightfall. On Sunday morning, Sheriff E.A. Bailey, Phil E. Kuntz, deputy, and E.W. Johnson left for the scene of the tragedy and after shoveling through about five miles of snowdrifts, they reached the Sommers' car. The body which had been placed inside the car by Martins, was taken to Laramie by the party after nine hours of battling through snow and cold. The water in the Chrysler coupe belonging to Mr. Sommers had frozen and the motor and radiator had burst. It contained only a little gasoline, indicating that there had been considerable struggle traveling through the storm.

Martins had returned Friday from a hunting trip in the Jackson Hole country. A few miles beyond the Radichal ranch, on his way to Wheatland, he became stranded and walked back to the house, where he remained all night. The next morning he saw Sommers pass and overtook him on horseback, believing that together, they could get through the drifts. They were forced to shovel their way for four miles. At the mouth of Plumbago canyon, Mr. Sommers said he was exhausted and dropping his shovel, sat down on the running board of the auto. He died a few minutes later.

Dave Sommers, a brother, and Don and Joe Sommers, sons of the deceased and C.L. Royce of the Watson Mortuary, arrived in Laramie on Monday and returned the body to Wheatland Tuesday morning. They were met at the train by members of the Masonic lodge.

Mr. Sommers underwent a serious operation about a year ago and had made statements to the effect that he was not in the best of health. He was a pioneer rancher of the Sybille country, but this year, he and his family lived on the Mudd ranch southwest of Wheatland. He was for the past four years caretaker at the upper reservoir for the Wheatland Development Company.

He is survived by his widow and eleven children, seven of whom are married. They are Hal, Don, Joe, Jack, Thomas and Pifer, sons; and Mrs. Ruth Peterson, Detroit, Mich., Mrs. J. McSorley, Glendo, Mrs. Nine Wright and Mrs. Madge Perry, Cheyenne, and Mrs. Babe Royce, Wheatland. Dave and Leslie Sommers, ranchers of the Sybille country are brothers.

A coroner's inquest was held Monday afternoon by Judge W.H. Hayes in Laramie and cause of death was pronounced as heart failure caused from over exertion.

Funeral services were held from the Wheatland Masonic Temple, Wednesday

afternoon, at 2 o'clock conducted by the local lodge of which the deceased was a member. Burial was made in the Wheatland cemetery with the Watson Mortuary in charge.

Charles Sommers was born in Iowa, September 9th, 1868. At the time of his death he was sixty-two years, one month and twenty-four days old.

In 1882 he was married to Mina Harper, and it was on the day of their thirty-seventh anniversary, November 2nd, that he passed away.

To this union, twelve children were born, eleven of which are still living.

In 1898 he came to Wyoming and located and has since then always lived in the Wheatland community.

Besides his widow, he leaves to mourn his loss, his children, Mrs. Laurence Peters of Detroit, Mich.; Mrs. John McSorley, of Glendo; Mrs. Carral Wright, of Cheyenne; Hal Sommers, Mrs. Ivory Royce, of Wheatland; Joe of Wheatland; Mrs. Carl Perry of Cheyenne; Don Sommers, of Wheatland; and the three youngest boys, Phifer, Jack and Tommy, that reside at home, and his brothers, Dave and Leslie Sommers.