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Smithton Man Killed Today

L. Wagenknecht Apparently Takes Own Life With Pistol

Lawrence E. Wagenknecht of Smithton, foreman of the Railway Service and Supply Co., at the waste reclamation plant at the Missouri Pacific Shops apparently shot and killed himself about 12 noon Thursday a quarter of a mile west of Smithton. Wagenknecht had driven his car west from Smithton along the Missouri Pacific tracks, parked, got out of the vehicle and walked around the side of the car and apparently fired a bullet into his right temple.

He was last seen driving through Smithton about 11:30 a. m. by L. D. Hoehns. Then about 12:40 p. m. Olin Klein, who resides a short distance west of where the incident occurred, went to Hoehns' business and told about a man who was lying in the ditch.

The two men, not knowing who the man was at the time, thought it might be someone who was ill and had fallen in the road and drove out to help him. When they arrived they identified the man as Wagenknecht, then notified Dr. Pete Siegel who went to the scene.

Sgt. Ernest W. Van Winkle also went to the scene and made an investigation.

The men found a .38-caliber Harrington and Richardson pistol lying beside the dead man's hand, one bullet having been fired. Dr. Siegel reported death was instantaneous.

Friends said Mr. Wagenknecht had appeared to be despondent for some time.

Last Sunday, according to Dr. Siegel, Wagenknecht said he was nervous as a result of some changing in machinery at the plant, which caused him to work later than usual.

Wagenknecht was at home a short time before he was last seen by Hoehns, according to friends.

The body was taken to the Parker-Moore Funeral Home at La Monte.

Surviving are: his widow, Mrs. Gladys Hoehns Wagenknecht; two children, Mrs. Frank (Wilma) Griffin of Palestine, Ill., and a son, James Robert Wagenknecht, who is attending Missouri Valley College in Marshall, and two brothers, Russell of La Monte and Byron of Sedalia.