

# The Mount Airy News.

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## CAIN BROTHERS ARE ELECTROCUTED

### Pay Supreme Penalty for Murdering Riley Easter North of Mount Airy

## BOTH MEN MADE STATEMENTS BEFORE THEY DIED

### One of the Men Had a Wife and Five Children, the Other a Wife and Six Children

Raleigh, March 5.—Joe and Gardner Cain, Surry county blockade-murders and slayers of Riley Easter of their county, died in the electric chair this morning at the state prison.

The mountaineers might have lived had they submitted their case to the general assembly of curious beings who crowded death-room to its utmost to see two men die. Always the blockaders around the game of death see it differently from the empire and no clemency declined by Governor Bickett ever aroused more protests. To those who had no duty of decision no appeal has appeared to have so much merit.

The elements of murder were all present and this was murder plus liquor violations. The fellow who first perceived that it was safer to commit murder than to sell liquor probably did not anticipate the double crime, making and selling liquor, dashed with homicide. The Cains blockaded and when one of their crowd informed on them they set out for a general trouble. For blockade's ethics will not stand for treason within the ranks and Riley Easter's son took desperate chances when he carried off the Cain still and let the officers capture it.

For the Cains it was pleaded that their old father, a preacher in the Primitive Baptist church, always had believed in liquor and ballasted his faith in the Bible; that the boys were taught that Sunday schools were hell-holes and the fishing hook, the milk chum, or even the still were better employments for Sunday than the school in which the Bible is taught.

### Ever a Liquor Depository

Then the Cain home was over a liquor depository. The old daddy believed in it and found Scriptural warrant, quite sufficient for him, and cited the Bible in support of the right to drink. The right to drink presupposed the right to make and the Cains had a heritage in distilleries. They declared during their confinement here that their father's church never had declared against the illegal traffic in whisky and for themselves they never saw that blockading was even a venial sin. They were taught that whisky has its place, they drank it and made it. They confederated with other blockaders. Their religion is full of the injunction to be honest and tell the truth. They pay their debts and stand by their friends, these Primitives do, so declared the Cains, and they were utterly unable to comprehend the enormity of their offense "against society." They did not seem to feel that society had sinned against them.

These aspects of their unusual case appealed to the crowd which saw them die today. One of their old county residents going out to watch the execution guessed that people had yelled so much at the governor for his past pardons that he could not see any reason for finding something that jury, judge and attorneys had passed over. That feeling seemed to have possessed the crowd today. It was able to understand how men, in whom whisky is instinct and its use a religion, could participate in an assault in which murder became an incident. Joe and Gardner Cain could have carried the prison party easily on a proposal to let them live out their days and atone with their lives rather than their deaths.

Easter was killed when the Cains and Joe Bowles attacked his home because Joe Easter, a son, they claimed, had removed a whisky still belonging to them and reported them to the county authorities.

They were tried at the January term of the Surry county superior court and were convicted of first degree murder and the three were sentenced to die in the electric chair. Governor Bickett recently commuted the sentence of Joe Bowles to twenty years imprisonment, but declined to interfere with the sentences of the Cains.

### Appeals to Governor

An eleventh hour appeal to Governor Bickett for commutation, a confession by Gardner Cain and a personal visit by the governor to the condemned men at the state prison fol-

lowing to move the governor, and his refusal to commute the sentence stands.

Governor Bickett smoothed procedure when he visited the state prison in person to interview the two Cain brothers. Gov. Craig sent his executive secretary to the prison when Charlie Trull, of Charlotte, was making almost daily "confessions." But it was a governor's first visit to the prison on such a mission of investigation. The visit removed what inclination the governor had toward interference. After he had heard the stories, he announced simply that he would not interfere.

The statement of Joe Cain to his lawyer, Mr. John Folger, to the effect that his son, Walter Cain, acquitted of the murder for which the father and uncle were convicted, was guilty, did not move the governor far. Yesterday afternoon, however, Gardner Cain made a confession to Mr. E. J. Collis, superintendent of the prison, admitting his own share in the murder, but maintaining that Joe Cain and Joe Bowles went to the house of Riley Easter unarmed and stood apart during the attack on the house.

### Gardner Cain's Confession

The statement which Mr. Collis took from Gardner Cain reads:

"Walter Cain, son of Joe, who was acquitted, was armed with a six-shooter Smith & Wesson. He emptied every chamber.

"Gardner Cain was armed with a five-shot .32-caliber Iver Johnson and a single barrel shot gun. Four shots were fired from his pistol and the shot gun was empty when found next morning, but he did not remember to have fired the gun.

"Joe Cain and Joe Bowles were standing together some distance away and neither were armed in any way."

The confession of Gardner Cain taken with Joe Cain's statement, and indicating that a miscarriage of justice had allowed the principal factor in the crime, Walter Cain, to escape, stirred the governor considerably. He was not inclined to commute the sentence of Gardner or of Joe, but a report of Joe Cain for use as a witness on a charge of perjury against Walter Cain appeared likely.

His interview with Joe Cain only increased the governor's conviction of the father's responsibility. The boy, Walter Cain, was only eighteen years of age, and the governor could not avoid the conclusion of the father's guilt. The story of Gardner Cain who claimed that he used two weapons, a shot gun and a pistol, lost its force when the governor talked to the man in person, while the combined statements of the three that they had not gone to Easter's house for an unfriendly visit, did not break down the cumulative testimony in the trial that Easter had received almost daily threats from the Cains.

### Bickett Visits Them

Bickett did the best he could for the fellows for a man who believes in the state's right to kill and in the efficacy of terrible judgments. He went to the prison yesterday and talked over the case with them. He thinks they were more intelligent than does John Folger, their attorney, and the governor was not disposed to go far behind the returns. He examined the fellows and last night appeared to have a half a notion to give Joe Cain a chance by respiting the fellow a few days. Gardner Cain had confessed his part in the killing; he took shot gun and pistol. But his son Walter, acquitted of the crime, was charged with the actual killing. For Gardner there was no hope.

Joe Cain denied killing Easter or having anything to do with it. There was evidence that Gardner Cain persuaded Joe to follow him. Joe Cain had no gun, he said, and Gardner corroborated him. The relation of Joe Cain to the murder was similar to that of St. Paul's toward St. Stephen—"consenting unto his death." It was not altogether different from David's toward Uriah. Joe Cain did not actually try to kill. But he was an accessory before the fact.

For a time it appeared that Walter Cain would be tried for perjury and Gardner Cain, his father, would be used as a witness against him. The news did not live long. This morning he reiterated his recent decision and the prison officials started up the electric motor.

The tests were all made, the death-wagon with two baskets for the bodies of the brothers rumbled on the sidewalk and everything was ready for the execution. Joe Cain, who finally attained spiritual heights by breaking into semi-contemplation, appeared least ready to go. He thought he had a right to hope. But this morning he seemed most anxious to get through

with the ordeal and he came first to the chair.

Rev. Mr. Caviness, of the Methodist church, led the way and Joe Cain, big powerful mountaineer, walked to the chair. "Well, I haven't anything against anybody in the world," he said, and primitive prayers were read off as long as the big leather straps would allow him to articulate. Through the helmet one could see Joe's eyes looking onto the hills from which he hoped to get help. He never looked down but up and he was whispering prayers when the current struck him. He put his hands nervously against the arms of the chair and was in motion when the voltage hit him. Paralysis complete followed, the dynamo pulled powerfully and big Joe's full chest struggled against the bonds. The current remained on 40 seconds when the flesh began to fry and great blisters break out from the points of contact.

Then occurred something never seen there in the four dozen slain by the state. Dr. A. W. Knox, prison physician, went over to put the stethoscope on the dead man's heart, and Cain breathed visibly to the whole room. Three times full breaths were registered and the current went on for 25 seconds. Then when the wretched devil was dead he sat bolt upright with eyes wide open looking heavenward. It was an awful spectacle.

They took Joe out and Gardner came in. The smaller man was in the best frame of mind that Mr. Caviness had seen him. "The Lord be with you," said Gardner Cain as he rounded the door leading into the room, "God bless you all."

The second victim stood and smiled at his preacher, shook hands warmly and took the chair so hospitably prepared for him by a state, such a sanctimonious stickler for its own protection, so indifferent to its obligations to its moral morons and idiots. Gardner Cain deserves the reputation that he has won, having more sense than his brother. The smaller man dropped down, chattered off his prayers, looked at all the wrappings on the chair and viewed it with the greatest apparent interest. As they hurried him up to the chair he was all brightness and animation. He went away with grace and abandon.

Warden Busbee would take no chances on him and held the current against him until 57 seconds had fried away. The little man was not then dead. His heart just pumped away. Twenty-five seconds more did the work in a minute or two more the dead Cains were riding side by side in baskets on their way to the undertaker.

Both left letters to their wives and put these unsealed in the hands of their spiritual pastor.

One of the boys had eight living and three dead children; the other six living children. Of course, Society, having killed their fathers and their head, has discharged its full obligations to them.

## GOOD HEALTH LIFE'S GREATEST BLESSING

### Happiness and Success Within Easy Reach of Red-Blooded Men and Women

### Asemic Condition Unnecessary

### Pepto-Mangan Makes Rich, Red Blood—Builds Up Pale, Thin Asemic Men and Women

Good health is the most important asset of life. Without a vigorous, strong body and keen, clear mind, true happiness and enjoyment are impossible.

And yet so many women, and men too, whose misfortune it is to be pale, thin and anemic, hopelessly accept this condition in the belief that robust health and real happiness are not for them.

Thousands of men and women have been restored to vigorous health and lasting happiness by Gule's Pepto-Mangan. This beneficial blood tonic contains the very properties so vitally needed to improve the blood. Pepto-Mangan, if taken for a few weeks, will enrich the blood and create thousands of the tiny red blood cells that are so necessary to carry nourishment and strength to every part of the body.

Pepto-Mangan is safe, beneficial, and pleasant to the taste. For convenience it is prepared in liquid and tablet form, both possessing exactly the same medicinal properties.

Be sure to ask your druggist for "Gule's" when you order Pepto-Mangan. "Gule's" is the genuine Pepto-Mangan. Look for the name "Gule's" on the package. Ad.

## Executions in Surry

Life is so sweet and dear to most people that it becomes an interesting problem to take the life of a fellow citizen that the end of so called justice may be met. The execution of Joe and Gardner Cain, last week, brings to mind that the county has been spared from this experience with but few exceptions. In the memory of the present generation only four men have been legally executed in the county.

Old people recall that back before the county was divided and while the county seat was at Rockford some men were hung at that place. But the county was divided in 1850 and thus the county seat was moved from Rockford 70 years ago. Observations recall hearing talk of a hanging that took place in the hollow that runs up between the hills just north of the depot at Rockford. The scaffold from which the man was hung was built in the hollow and the people stood on the hills on either side making a natural amphitheater.

Later old people say a man was hung at Dobson soon after the court house was built, about 1852, but we know no one who can recall the facts of this execution.

During the years of the Civil War a negro slave named Frank Martin was tried and convicted at Dobson for the crime of rape. He committed the crime in Yadkin county and his victim was a young white girl, and for some cause the case was moved to Surry. The late William Haymore was high sheriff at the time, and he hung the negro using a wagon as a scaffold. When the rope was in place about the neck of the victim and over the simply provided beam that was to support the victim the wagon was driven from under him and thus he was allowed to strangle to death. The negro was a big buck fellow, black and so bad that his master wanted him hung, and he had no friends in his last earthly trouble.

About 1899 John Jack Mays was hung at Dobson charged with the murder of his neighbor, a Mrs. Heggins. The evidence that Mays ever committed the crime for which he gave his life. He was a man in good standing in his section and was a churchman to some degree. He acted as the business adviser of Mrs. Heggins who was a widow woman and lived alone in his neighborhood. Her house was burned one night and the charred remains of her aged body were found among the ashes of her home. Suspicion pointed to Mays and a chain of circumstantial evidence developed that became positive proof to the general public that Mays was the guilty man. He died without making any confession or giving away any facts that pointed to the guilt of any other party. Mays was a rather high type of man to be tangled up in so serious a matter.

The execution of the two Cain brothers at Raleigh last week was the first double electrocution that has ever been in the state. Much has been said during the past few months about the men who paid the penalty of the law last week, and about their father who is an aged Primitive Baptist minister now living on his farm half way between Ararat station and the town of Pilot Mountain. It has been charged that the Cain brothers never had proper training. But those who know the Cain family say this is not correct. The Rev. Hance Cain is now possibly 50 years of age. During all his life he has been a citizen who stood well among those who knew him. A good old man who had the respect of his neighbors and stood well as a minister of the gospel, so say those who live in that section. It has been charged that the two Cain boys went bad because of early home training. Rather, they tell us, they went to the bad because of the company they began to keep soon after getting into early manhood. They seem to have broken away from the parental restraint early in life and became what many would call neighborhood roudies. They drank and were disposed to be vicious when drinking. They tell us that during the years of early manhood they made the name of being the very worst young men in that section of the county, and it was common to see them at public gatherings under the influence of liquor and on the hunt for trouble. They frequently engaged in fights and for one of these Gardner Cain served a term in the penitentiary.

Both were strong men and they were not lazy, but made good crops. Their father gave them off part of his large farm and on this they lived until about six years ago when they left the Pilot Mountain section and moved into Carroll county about eight miles north of this city. Before leaving Surry they had been broadly sus-

cepted under government license. After going to Carroll county they got credit for engaging in the illegal manufacture of liquor. They bought land in a section where for many years blockading was the rule, it being along the state line and in a sparsely settled section where the lands were not cleared up and the hills and ravines furnished ideal hiding places for the blockader. In this section they farmed and made good crops and stilled as a side line.

Many people in this section, in a way, sympathized with the Cains in their last trouble because of the type of man who was their victim. Old man Easter, as they called him, was known as a man who could make a good still—a copper smith. So far as we know if he was a copper smith he confined his operations to preparing stills for his neighbors. They say that he could take a still after the officers had cut it so full of holes that "it would not hold sluick" and in a few hours he could have it patched up and in operation again. The old man also had the reputation of having engaged in the business himself in his younger days. It was his son, Jim, who brought about the trouble that caused the old man's death and the undoing of the Cain brothers. Jim Easter gets credit for being just a little above the idiot. He is certainly not bright and is what might be called a worthless character. He put in some time, they say, working for wages about the neighborhood and his favorite work was to assist some neighbor in making a run of blockade liquor. After a time they tell how Jim caught on to the idea that it was more profitable to report a still to the sheriff than to help operate it. They say he would help about one and thus learn of its location, then he would slip away some night and tell the sheriff and pocket a small reward for his deed. In this way Jim is supposed to have made some money and caused several stills to be destroyed. Now evidently they got wise to his game and when he destroyed their still by carrying it away with his own hands and hiding it so that the sheriff could not find it by the directions given, when he did this the Cains could bear with him no longer. They were vicious and mud and gave Jim a chance to return the still, but they brought about their own undoing when they boldly made threats to Jim that unless the still was back in place by a certain hour something was going to happen. These threats caused the State to be able to make out a clear case of premeditated murder. Jim failed to put the still back, for the simple reason, if for no other, that the sheriff had it. Then the Cains and some of the neighbors, went to the home of old man Riley Easter to make good their threat. Just what they went there to do no one will possibly ever know. They no doubt went there to get Jim Easter rather than the old man. Any way they shot up the house in a most reckless way and might have killed the whole family, and the wonder is that they did not kill more persons than they did, judging from the bullet marks about the house.

The officers of the law had but little trouble to capture each of the suspected criminals and at once a strong case developed for the State. They mortgaged their homes to get money for their defense, and employed J. H. Folgers of this city. Mr. Folger left no stone unturned to bring about their freedom and did everything possible to secure a new trial. When he failed in this he went to the Governor and plead with him at great length asking for their death sentence to be changed to life imprisonment. So strongly did he present his case to the Governor that he caused the Governor to do something that has never been done before—the Governor to go to the prison cell and interview the condemned men himself. This Governor Bickett did, but failed to change his mind.

The Cains were unlearned men and had but little education so far as book learning goes. Mr. Folger made much of this in his argument to the Governor. But they say that when the Governor went in person and talked with the men they made a strong impression on him as men of much natural ability. They died in the prime of life, strong men happily past forty, and both leave large families. After the crime for which they died the two families closed out their holdings in Carroll county and moved back to the same section where they began life. They are now tenants on farms near Pilot Mountain. It was to the home of Mrs. Joe Cain that the bodies of the two brothers were brought last Saturday noon, and there they stayed until Sunday afternoon when they were

carried to the burying ground at Old Westfield and interred at three o'clock, the Rev. J. W. Cline performing the last and rite over them.

The editor of this paper hopes to see the day when our people will abolish capital punishment and allow a man to live until his maker takes him away. To say the least it is not economy to put a strong man to death when there is so much work that he could do, and he might reform and be better prepared while doing work that would benefit humanity.

## A Splendid Opportunity

The United States Navy offers the boys of our nation the finest opportunities for training and education that have ever been offered to the youths of any land; and while they are being trained and educated they are fed, clothed, and paid—what more could any one wish?

Travel is highly entertaining as well as educative and the boys in the Navy have a chance to visit the countries of the globe and see for themselves the people of all nations as well as learn something of their customs and see the places of interest.

J. R. Guakie, Navy Recruiting Officer of Winston-Salem, spent a few days here the last of the week to secure recruits for the Navy.

Men may join the Navy who are from 15 to 30 years old, the enlistments are for 2, 3, or 4 years.

There are some vacancies yet in the aviation department, term of enlistment 3 years, 16 months of this time will be spent in school where the best mechanical training will be given, and the boys are trained mechanics when their time expires, they can then secure fine paying positions and their training has not cost them a cent.

Mr. Guakie is anxious to get in touch with all ex-service Navy men, they may secure Victory buttons by taking or sending their naval discharge to the recruiting office in Winston-Salem.

Literature will be sent to any one who writes for it.

All young men who are interested should call on, or write Mr. Guakie.

A son of Jess Atkins has recently enlisted for a term of 2 years.

## Elkin Citizens in Auto Wreck

Elkin Tribune.  
Messrs. A. W. George, R. H. Chatham, J. H. Tharpe and Prof. J. H. Allen went over to Dobson Monday to attend the meetings of the different county boards and on the return trip the driver of the car lost control and left the road when the car turned completely over. Fortunately none of the party were seriously hurt, but all got a good scare. The top of the car was right badly torn up, but the remainder escaped damage, and the party was able to finish the trip home safely.

## SHE WORE NO SHOES FOR TWO LONG YEARS

### Los Angeles Woman Lived in Bed and Pillowed Chair Until She Started on Tanlac

"I had to be cared for just like a baby before I began taking Tanlac," said Mrs. Alice Murphy, of 1901 Pennsylvania Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.

"Two years ago I had a very severe attack of muscular rheumatism," she continued, "and no one knows the pain and torture I have suffered since. My hands swelled until I could hardly work my fingers and I haven't been able to put on a pair of shoes because my feet were swollen so. I had sharp pains through my back so that at times I simply could not keep from screaming. Sometimes I got so dizzy everything seemed to spin around and then I would have sharp pains and a chilly feeling afterwards. I was so helpless that I had propped up with pillows in a chair or in bed all the time and had to be helped from one place to another.

"I tried every medicine or treatment we could hear of, but it was money thrown away and I got so blue I did not care to live. Then my husband read in the papers about Tanlac and by the time I had taken it four or five days I saw it was helping me. Now, after taking several bottles, I can't praise Tanlac enough. My nervous system is much better. I sleep like a child all night long. I am already doing my household again and it is the first time in two years I have been able to get around at all and wear my shoes."

Tanlac is sold in Mount Airy by I. W. West Drug Co., in Pilot Mountain by Pilot Drug Co., in Elkin by Elkin Drug Co.