

Watauga Democrat.

H. G. Bivens, Editor and Proprietor

THURSDAY, NOV. 9, 1905.

A Horrible, Tragical and Seditious Affair Near Virgil, N. C.

Mr. Editor: One of the most horrible, tragic and seditious affairs ever known in the history of Watauga county took place near Virgil, N. C., when Joseph Sanders, aged 25, shot and instantly killed his wife, and then shot his own brains out, on last Friday, Nov. the 3rd.

The above named parties were married on Feb. 7th, 1905, and shortly after marriage some difference arose between them which resulted in a separation, but within a few months they got back together. Old grievances were settled and they appeared reconciled. But on Monday, Oct. 30th, Mrs. Sanders went to her sister's Mrs. Lee Green, to do some sewing and did not return that day but went on to her brother-in-law's, Mr. Asa Watson, and told the family that her husband had threatened to kill her and beaten and mistreated her little son (the only child of her first husband, Thos. Trivett) in a most inhuman manner and that she could not live with him. She appeared to suffer great uneasiness and when she heard the footsteps of any one she would run to a back room and look herself and little son in until she was assured that Joe was not there.

On Thursday she sent for the writer and swore out two warrants—a peace warrant and a warrant for beating her child. But Sanders evaded arrest by Deputy Sheriff George Greene, and armed himself with a breach-loading shot gun, a good supply of cartridges and hid out his clothes, some bed covering, rations, etc., not far from his home.

On Thursday night he went to several houses in the neighborhood and told them that he was on his way to Tennessee and for his wife to go and take possession of the things if she wanted them. The next morning the news reached his wife that he was gone. She doubted it, and would not go without a guard. So she employed Mr. Asa Watson and team, accompanied by W. D. Lookahill, the township constable, to go with her after her things. They went to her house, loaded the wagon and were on their way back, walking behind the wagon. The constable was armed with a breach loading shot gun, and when they were in a few hundred yards of Watson Bros store at the head of a swamp that extended up to the road, Sanders was concealed in the bushes with his gun pointing through the crack in the fence, but was not discovered until he fired the fatal shot, that instantly killed his wife. The load took effect just under the left cheek bone, ranging toward the brain, except a few scattering shot that entered her throat and neck. Mr. Watson cried out to the constable: "There he is, and he has killed this woman. Shoot him!" At that time Sanders was fixing to reload his gun. The constable threw his gun on Sanders, but he immediately jumped up and ran down the swamp. The officer fired on him twice in quick succession but did not

hit him. Immediately the report of a gun was heard in the swamp and the smoke raised above the bushes, but Mr. Watson and the officer just supposed that he was bluffing them.

The news of Mrs. Sanders' death spread rapidly, and Sheriff Hodges was phoned for, who, with a large posse of men, was sparing no time in their efforts to cut off his escape, when Messrs A. J. Penley and Armfield Walters were following on down the swamp where they soon discovered the lifeless form of Sanders lying on the ground with his gun across his neck, with a frightful looking face; eyes all powder-burned, with a huge hole in the middle of forehead from which his brains were oozing.

His father, being present, stated that he was satisfied that his boy had killed himself and would not demand an inquest, authorized the writer to search his pockets, which contained among other things, a pint bottle of whiskey, a large open knife, thirteen cartridges, a small amount of money, and a memoranda in which he described the cause of the tragic affair, which appears in full at the close of this article.

County Coroner, John A. Winebarger, arrived just after dark and summoned a jury and the material witnesses and proceeded to hold an inquest over both the dead bodies. The jury soon returned a verdict that Joe Sanders had shot and killed his wife, Julia M. Sanders, and then shot and killed himself. Both were buried on Sunday, but not in the same grave yard.

It will be remembered that the deceased woman was the youngest daughter of the late Parks Watson, one of the best known citizens in Watauga county, and in the division of his property the old home was assigned to her, upon which she erected a beautiful residence, and was receiving a government pen-

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sion of \$15 per month up to the time of her marriage to Sanders. Her first husband lost his life in the Spanish-American war.

Following is a true copy of the written matter found in the pocket of Sanders:

"Nov. 3, 1905.

"Joseph Sanders aboy you all know well. He is in trouble [all the time no tongue ran tell. And I have decided to bid you farewell. Hoping to meet you in heaven. I have been pleading with my God to let me come up. Miss Julia M. Sanders has destroyed my life I want all you people to understand. She is called my wife, and I loved her so well, that she has tuck my life. I am sitting up on this ridge under a forked spruce, and I talked to my sweet wife, till I found it is no use. And I want all you good people on Gap Creek, to try to remember this writing when I am in my grave asleep. Sitting up on this ridge looking and waiting for the time to come for me, and my love to die. And when walking around the grave, I want Jerry to sing, there is two young men my sister has put away. So I now have been accused of things that was unjust. But I hope when I die I will go to rest. Mr. Alfred Watson and Jerry Watson and Larkin Watson if you please bury my wife Miss Julia M. Sanders between me and Mr. Tom Trivett. Please answer that request. Dear people would like to have stayed with you here, but I cannot with the trouble I see, and may God help me what time I stay. Well on the 1st day of this month I will be 25 let me be dead or alive. Nov. the 3, 1905. Miss Julia, Miss Julia I have decided to take your life. You could have been a sweet wife, but now it is too late. So tell Father and Mother to not trouble about me, for when I am in my grave the people will let me be. When the people are gathered around my grave a troubling about me, but now me and my wife are in our graves, please do let us be. About Nov. the 2nd, don't forget what I said about staying with you all I ment what I said, but you all did not think it but I did. And when I am put under the ground I want you all to sing Amazing grace how sweet the sound, Joseph and Julia is under the ground. And he took Wade's gun and set it by his side That was before Joe and Julia died And it was for the love of my sweet wife that I did take her life. And I believe others had something to do with me and my wife made threats so dont forget what I said for you now I cant talk to you when I am dead. Go hunt this side of the white house, and you will find my clothes, please get them. Good bye, old world you will find the rest of my things not far from where Ben Miller balled wood close to two spruce pines that stands together.

"Married Feb. 7, 1905, parted March 16, 1905. And got back June the 18, 1905. So good bye to you all."

JOE.

Further causes leading up to this tragical and seditious affair is not known and is left to speculation and surmise. Z. T. WATSON, Virgil, N. C.

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DeWitt's E-Z Salve For Piles, Burns, Sores.

PUBLIC SALE

Registered Short Horns at Bristol, Tennessee, on Friday Nov. 17 1905.

Sale commencing at 1, P.M. At the above time and place I will sell 40 head of Registered Short Horns, consisting of young cows and heifers, also a few young Bulls ready for service. A number of Prize Winners at Kentucky State Fair this Season included in this offering.

Parties desiring to secure some good cattle, at their own price, should not fail to attend this sale. Sale positive and without reserve or by-bid. Come and see the Cattle. Parties desiring time will be accommodated. I will also sell some Registered Berkshire and Duroc Jersey Hogs. Catalogues furnished on application by W. B. Dale, 235 E. Market St., Louisville, Ky.

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NOTICE.

By virtue of an order of the Superior Court of Watauga county appointing the undersigned commissioners to sell the lands described in the petition in this cause, we will, at George Story's store at Aho post office, in said county of Watauga, on Thursday, the 7th day of Dec., 1905, offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder the lands described in the petition in the special proceedings, entitled, David L. Horton et al. ex parte as follows, to wit:

First tract lying on the south side of Dugger's Knob, on Triplett's branch of Buffalo creek, beginning on a pine, chestnut and chestnut oak on the ridge between said branch and Joe's Fork, running north 40 poles to two chestnuts and a locust, then east 65 poles, thence north 40 poles, thence east 65 poles, thence south 110 poles, thence west 80 poles, thence 50 poles to the beginning 50 acres more or less, being grant No. 47, granted to David E. Horton Jan. 3rd 1851.

Second tract granted to David E. Horton by grant No. 2162, on 24th day of Dec. 1836. This land lies in what was formerly Ashe county, on the waters of New River, now Watauga county, beginning on a chestnut on top of Blue Ridge, in the old county line and near the Big Gap, and runs north 77 poles to a stake then west 126 poles, crossing a branch to a stake, then south 49 poles to a chestnut in the old county line, then with the meanders of the county line to the beginning, containing 50 acres.

Third tract: Granted to David E. Horton on Dec. 28th, 1854, by grant No. 458, on waters of Joe's Fork, branch of Buffalo Creek; beginning on a chestnut tree in the Low Gap of the Blue Ridge, a corner of David E. Horton's 50 acre tract running west 40 poles to a chestnut, near the top of said ridge, then running south 56 poles to a stooping black oak then east with said line 40 poles to a stake corner, then north 22 poles to a maple, his corner, then east 56 poles to a stake line north 99 poles to a stake, thence west 36 poles to a stake, thence south 25 poles to a stake, thence 12 poles to a stake, thence to the beginning, containing 50 acres more or less.

Fourth tract: Granted to Edmund W. ones by grant No. 203 and conveyed by him to David E. Horton by deed dated Jan. 15th, '55, lying on Joe's Fork of Buffalo creek, beginning on a chestnut on the side of the road leading from Lenoir to Ashe county, and runs east 20 a chestnut on a cliff of rocks, thence South six poles to a stake on the creek bank, thence South 40° east down and with the meanders of said creek 100 poles to a poplar and ash on the west bank of said creek, thence west 82 poles to a stake, then to the beginning containing 25 acres;

Terms of sale 20 per cent cash; 40 per cent on a credit of 3 m's. balance in 6 mos. with approved security. This Sept. 4, 1905.

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