

# The Laurinburg Exchange

VOLUME XXI—NUMBER 31

LAURINBURG, N. C., THURSDAY, JULY 31, 1913.

\$1.50 PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE

## NEGRO HANGED, PRONOUNCED DEAD--CAME BACK TO LIFE

Strange Story from Florida, Following Hanging of Negro Hung By the Neck Thirty-eight Minutes--Came Back to Life--Relatives Were Superstitious and Afraid to Call Physician.

Jacksonville Times Union.

Starke, Fla., July 22.—In every nook and corner of Bradford county the principal topic of conversation is the hanging and subsequent return to life of Hersey Mitchell, colored, who was executed in the jail yard before the largest crowd of people ever assembled in Starke.

Hersey Mitchell was a young negro, and he had been in jail since February, having been convicted and sentenced to hang for the murder of Arnold Brymer, another negro, at the home of a colored woman near Starke last February.

The execution was to have taken place in the jail yard on Friday, July 11, and on that day hundreds of people began to gather in town early in the morning, but they were disappointed, for the night before Sheriff Denmark had received a telegram from Governor Park Trammell commanding him to delay the execution for a week. This order was secured for the defendant through the efforts of his attorney, A. S. Crews, who wished to have the case presented before the pardoning board, which met on July 15, with a view of having the death sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

This stay in the proceedings of the execution was told to the prisoner by Deputy Sheriff W. W. Baisden early Friday morning, and to say that the condemned negro was overjoyed would be putting it mildly. On top of this, the jailer gave him a drink of gin and all through the day he was in a happy frame of mind thinking that he would escape the gallows, which sinister structure he could see from the death cell in which he was confined. The silvery cloud had a dark lining, however, for Tuesday morning Attorney A. Z. Adkins, of this city, appeared before the pardoning board in Mitchell's behalf, and to no avail, as was evidenced in a telegram received by the sheriff late Tuesday afternoon, which read:

"Pardoning board declines to grant Hersey Mitchell further reprieve. You will therefore execute death warrant Friday, July 18."

This telegram was signed by the State's chief executive, and when Mitchell received the news he was very much downcast and spent most of his time in the death cell singing religious songs and praying with the minister who had come to comfort him during his last moments on earth.

Friday morning the city was again crowded with visitors, they having come from every part of the county and from adjoining counties. The gallows was erected in the jail yard between the court house and the jail, and long before the time was set for the execution the crowd began to gather around the gallows, which was in open view of all those who stood around.

Sheriff Ramsey, of Gainesville, and Sheriff Dowling, of Jacksonville, were on hand to assist Sheriff Denmark in the execution, and promptly at 11 o'clock the party ascended to the platform of the scaffold.

Mitchell walked with a firm step and never once did he tremble or show the least sign of nervousness. Prayer was conducted by one of the colored preachers present, and this was followed by a song, Mitchell looking

over on the book held by the preacher and assisting in the singing of the song with never a falter in his voice.

At the conclusion of the song, Mitchell was allowed to make a statement, and this he did in a clear voice that carried to the outskirts of the crowd. He stated that whiskey had been the cause of his getting in trouble and warned all those present to refrain from its use and try and lead a better life. He asked the mothers who were present to teach their sons to avoid drink.

After making his talk, Mitchell was handed a Bible, and for fifteen minutes he read Scripture in a steady voice. In fact, those who were present, and had witnessed executions before, stated that he was by far the nerviest man on the gallows they had ever seen.

After concluding his Bible reading, Mitchell was told to turn around, and his limbs were strapped and the black cap fastened over his head. Without a moment's warning the trap was sprung by the sheriff and the body of Hersey Mitchell disappeared through the trap.

He was left hanging for thirty-eight minutes, and at the end of that time was pronounced dead by two physicians. After this he was cut down and turned over to his relatives.

His body was placed in a coffin, and in company with an uncle and two other colored men the start was made to the home of Mitchell's father, two miles south of Starke. When the party had gone about a mile, one of them ordered the wagon stopped and exclaimed in an excited voice that he was sure that he had heard a noise in the coffin. The wagon was stopped and they all heard moving about and bumping noises distinctly in the coffin. This very much frightened the negroes and they hurried in order to get to their destination to investigate the queer sounds. When they arrived at the house a screwdriver was procured and the coffin was opened. Those present stated that when the coffin was removed Mitchell gasped several times and moved his eyelids.

His body was at once removed to the house and his clothing and shoes removed. His neck was not broken and the only injury that was apparent was a slight bruise just back of the left ear. His respiration, while weak, was nevertheless apparent and his body was quite warm and perspired freely.

The negroes present were frightened out of their wits and only did very crudely what they knew how to do in order to bring the man back to life. They were afraid to send for a doctor for fear Mitchell would have to be hung over if he was brought back to life, so they stated it. For three hours warmth remained in the body and about 6 o'clock in the afternoon the pulse began to weaken, and in another thirty minutes Mitchell passed away.

This unusual occurrence created a great deal of excitement in Starke at the time and large numbers of people went out to view the body. It is stated by a number of white men who were present that if Mitchell had had the services of a doctor when the coffin was opened, he would have been a live man today.

This no doubt is the first time

## CONDENSED NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

A Column of the Week's Happenings Throughout the World Told in Brief--Gathered From Our Contemporaries and Boiled Down For Our Readers.

Twelve thousand barbers have struck for better wages in New York.

Senator Townsend predicts financial ruin when the tariff bill becomes a law.

The government has started a movement to dissolve the Bell Telephone trust.

At the age of 76 Capt. Patrick Grace, who has the distinction of having saved 89 lives, died at Middleton, N. Y., recently.

By signing articles of agreement to arbitrate the differences, the threatened strike of 80,000 trainmen and conductors was averted.

Saturday the national house of representatives held the shortest session on record, in adjourning just four minutes after it began its session.

President Wilson does not think the public mind is much excited over the situation in Mexico, nor is he convinced that a crisis has been reached.

The Governor of Missouri has set aside August 20th and 21st as good roads day in that State. Every able-bodied man is asked to do some work on the roads these days.

According to reports coming from Washington, W. E. Breese, of Brevard, convicted of irregular banking methods, will be permitted to serve his sentence in jail instead of the federal prison.

While carrying a keg of powder, Charlie Boyd, colored, working at a railway construction camp in South Carolina, lighted a cigarette. The explosion caused Boyd and a number of negro workmen to go to a hospital.

An unusual will, made by an eccentric uncle, requires Edward Muse to hold his present position until he is 30 years of age, at which time he will become heir to \$250,000. Muse is a bar-tender in Philadelphia and is 24 years of age.

Governor Sulzer, of New York, has given endorsement to a petition presented by the Men's League for woman suffrage. The petition is to be presented to the United States Senate, and urges a suffrage amendment to the constitution.

While George Hogg, a farmer, of Searle, Ala., was cutting wood Friday, his axe flew from the helve, striking his infant in the head, killing it instantly. Picking up the body, he rushed home to find that two of his young sons had been kicked to death by a mule.

Thomas Dixon has written to Senator Overman vigorously protesting against the confirmation of Adam E. Patterson, the Oklahoma negro, whom President Wilson has nominated for Register of the Treasury. Mr. Dixon says: "This Treasury Department appointment has been a stench in the nostrils of the South for years." Senator Overman assured Mr. Dixon that the negro would never be confirmed if his vote could prevent it.

in the history of the State where a man has hanged by the neck for thirty-eight minutes, been pronounced dead by two doctors and returned to life again, and the odd circumstances have created no amount of talk here.

The negroes in this section are superstitious regarding the occurrence and state that it is a miracle.

## A COLUMN OF STATE NEWS

Short Items of North Carolina News of General Interest to Scotland County--In Condensed Form For Exchange Readers--Gathered From Contemporaries

Two enterprising firms of Lumberton have bought and installed auto trucks.

According to a statement made by Dr. J. T. J. Battle, of Greensboro, malaria cost that city \$63,000 last year.

Mr. J. P. Leak has resigned as president of the Rockingham Railroad, and is succeeded by Mr. T. C. Leak, Jr.

W. G. McLaughlin, member of the Legislature for three terms from Mecklenburg county, died suddenly at his home near Charlotte, Saturday, aged 55 years.

While packing laundry away in a trunk in which a revolver was kept, Mrs. Beulah Aldridge, of Salisbury, aged 17 years, was accidentally shot and killed last week.

Maj. H. L. Grant, of Goldsboro, has resigned as clerk of the federal court for the eastern district of North Carolina, and is succeeded by Mr. A. L. Blow, of Greenville.

George Washington, a negro, ran wild at Kinston a few nights ago, and while he did not chop down any cherry trees, he used an axe and a knife to mutilate Shade Fields, also colored.

Secretary Daniels, of the navy, has announced that as soon as George Goethal gives the word, he will board the old battleship Oregon, and at the head of the entire Atlantic fleet, sail through the Panama canal.

Senator Simmons has assured the people of Charlotte that he will do what is in his power to have the appropriation for a post office building increased. The Charlotte people want a \$500,000 building, instead of \$250,000, as proposed.

The plant of the Steele Hosiery Mill, of Statesville, was practically destroyed by fire Monday, entailing a loss of \$21,000, with insurance amounting to \$13,000. The plant employed 60 people and was closed Saturday that the operatives might have a week's rest.

For alleged damages to his name, fame and reputation, by publishing in the Chronicle and Observer certain affidavits and statements charging irregularities in an election held in Charlotte, and for which election defendant was a registrar, Mr. J. E. Morris has brought suit against the Observer Publishing Company for the recovery of \$10,000 in damages.

Charles Snipes and his brother, Frank, Jr., raised quite a row in Winston-Salem the past week by having trouble at the ball park with some of the local players, and later, arming themselves, raised a rough house at a hotel where the players were stopping. The row resulted in the young men getting terms of four and six months on the roads, one being fined \$50 and the suspension of Chief Thomas of the police force.

Robert Todd was struck and so seriously injured by a Seaboard train, Saturday, while driving from Raleigh to Garner, that he died within a few hours. Mr. Todd and a Mr. Hamilton were in a wagon, and not seeing the approaching train, drove their team on the crossing. The horses were killed, Mr. Todd receiving injuries from which he died, and Mr. Hamilton was only slightly hurt.

## HOW THE BANK AT M'COLL WAS ROBBED

Described in a New York Herald Article--The Operations of Gus and Walter DeFord, Portland Ned and Other Noted Yeggs--Robbery Happened Several Years Ago. Telephone Operator Bound and Gagged.

New York Herald.

The little town of McColl, S. C., also has reason to remember the brief presence of Walter within its corporate limits. This time Walter had as his associates "Conn Shorty" and Chicken Bill. The latter was later shot to death by a posse which overtook him as he went fleeing with his share of plunder stolen from a North Carolina bank, in which burglary "Portland Ned" was the presiding genius.

The bank at McColl loomed as an easy possibility. If there was a watchman employed to guard it by night the "gay cats" had been unable to gain a clue to his hiding place. In the same building that housed the bank the telephone exchange was located, and only one operator, a man, remained on duty at night. It had been arranged that a confederate stationed in a near-by town was to call McColl at a designated hour and thus engage the operator in conversation while Walter and his confederates effected an entrance into the bank, and, if need be, take steps to silence the operator should he become too inquisitive.

Walter and "Shorty" elected to do the actual safe-blowing. "Chicken Bill" was to secrete himself at a point near the telephone exchange, so that in the event of the operator attempting to notify police headquarters he could be struck down or shot.

While the operator was engaged in an animated conversation with the man's confederate who was at the other end of the long distance wire, "Bill" came to the conclusion that "an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure," and that it would be better to "tie up the operator" before the exploding nitro-glycerine echoed throughout the building. Creeping up behind the unsuspecting operator, "Bill" dealt him a blow behind the ear with the butt of his revolver, which sent him reeling from his high stool to the floor, where he lay crumpled and insensible. A clothes line, stolen on the trip through the little town, was used to tie up the unconscious operator, and his handkerchief was employed as a gag. Then "Bill" leisurely rejoined his companions, told them of his enterprising and precautionary methods, and lent a hand at the safe door, and in the outer vault \$600 in gold was found. The inner barrier of the vault was a screw door affair and three blasts of "soup" failed to dislodge it.

The roar of the explosions aroused several dogs in a near-by stable, and their yelps brought half a dozen men armed with rifles and pistols to the street.

As the trio of burglars leaped from the bank window several shots rang out, but none took effect, and they sped away, halting at each corner to return the fire. The leader of the little posse rolled over with a bullet in his groin, but the fugitives made good their escape, and three days later found Walter, "Chicken Bill" and "Shorty" reinforced by the presence of "Portland Ned," all primed for a raid on the bank at Forest City, N. C.

This job netted the burglars \$3,500, and "Chicken Bill" volunteered to buy, at a liberal discount, the dimes and nickels stolen. He then started across country, leaving his companions

to escape by a freight train. A posse took up his trail, followed him, mortally wounded him and then carried him to a near hospital, where he died.

For the next six months a succession of bank burglaries followed, and in each case Walter's was the guiding hand, although he frequently changed partners. At this stage of his career Walter deemed it wiser to confine his operations to banks rather than to post offices, for he found the police and private detectives employed to protect banks easier to elude than postal inspectors.

### Collect By Wire.

To be a good collector, is to be at least that part of a first class business man, and it is especially true just at this time when money has to all appearances retired from active circulation, but Laurinburg has a combination in a business man and collector.

It is Lonnie Hammond, who does a men's furnishing business and the peculiar stunt that distinguishes him in this particular line, came to our attention recently and we think is worthy of telling. A certain party out of town was due him an account. A number of statements were sent which brought no response and at last a sight draft was drawn demanding payment on the account. This like the other demands was returned unpaid, whereupon Mr. Hammond called into use the Western Union Telegraph Company, sending the party a collect telegram which in substance read "Your account must be paid today, send check." The next mail brought the check and letter saying in substance: "You are the best collector I ever knew, if you want a job collecting, come up."

### No Kisses on Bill of Fare.

New York, July 26.—A sturdy woman strode into Simon Hecht's little restaurant at No. 242 First avenue early yesterday and ordered fried fish. It was brought. She gave one contemptuous glance.

"Is that all you can do?" she demanded. "Take it away and bring me some pork chops."

"Sure," said Hecht amiably. "Only they cost five cents more." "Five cents more, hey?" she demanded and arose in wrath. With one sweep of a muscular arm she cleared the table. Crockery rained on the floor. Next her chair was shattered to bits against the wall.

A slender and timid young man had been gazing at her activities with the expression of a startled fawn. With one swoop she pounced upon him. Before the terrified young man had realized his peril, he was being kissed vigorously and persistently.

With yells of alarm all the other customers fled. She made a desperate dash for the hindmost Hecht, with the courage of a hero, covered his customer's retreat.

Patrolman Cullen found her kicking Hecht's shins. She said she was Mary O'Grady of No. 226 East Twenty-sixth street.

"She scares all my customers away," said Hechts, mournfully, in the Essex Market court.

"Were kisses on the bill of fare?" asked Magistrate Herbert. "No, sir; never," said Hecht. "Ten dollars," said the magistrate to Mary.