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Kidnappers of Baby Keet Now on Trial in Missouri. Complete History of Case

By the Associated Press.

Marshfield, Mo., Oct. 15.—The abduction of Lloyd Keet, the fourteen months-old son of J. Holland Keet, a banker of Springfield, Mo., culminated in the baby's death. It involved another alleged kidnapping conspiracy, said to have been part of a German plot and the attempted lynching of one of the so-called conspirators in an effort to force him to confess that he was implicated in the Keet baby's disappearance and death.

While the child's parents were attending a ball at the Springfield country club on the night of May 29, 1917, the baby was stolen from his crib in the family home. Ten days later the body was found, wrapped in an old black undershirt, at the bottom of a well at the Crenshaw mansion, which had been uninhabited for many years. Meanwhile, friends, detectives, and the baby's father had scoured the Ozark hills and had even visited previously the old farm house in their search for the missing boy.

No threats had been made to the Keet family, previous to the abduction, but on the following morning, Mr. Keet received a note threatening mutilation to the infant if a ransom of \$5,000 was not paid the following night. Mr. Keet endeavored to comply but failed to meet the kidnapers. Various rewards were offered, but these were followed up by a letter to the father that the ransom fee would be increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Six days after the disappearance of the boy, Taylor Adams, his wife, Allie Adams, and his two sons, Maxie and Cletus, respectively 18 and 20 years old and Claude Piersol were arrested. All vehemently denied any connection with the Keet case but alleged statements of the prisoners told of a plan to abduct C. A. Clements a Springfield jeweler, and a baby other than the Keet's child.

The German plot angle entered the case, according to the alleged statement by Piersol, that a man had employed him to assist in kidnapping Clements. The man was said to have

received orders from a German agent in St. Louis and to have promised Piersol he might be called upon to kidnap persons in Canada and Mexico as well as in the United States.

All efforts to shake the statements of the persons arrested were unsuccessful. They maintained they had nothing to do with the Keet case. One June 9, however, a party of citizens made a second and more thorough search of the Crenshaw farm and found the body. A coroner's inquest decided that the child had died from exposure and lack of proper nourishment.

The excitement in Springfield became so great that a mob stormed the county jail demanding that the prisoners who were being held there, be turned over to them that they might avenge the baby's death.

Sheriff Webb attempted to spirit his prisoners away in an automobile. The mob pursued and finally caught them at Stockton, Mo., 28 miles north of Springfield where they took Piersol from the sheriff and went through all the movements of a lynching party, even to stringing the prisoner from a tree limb. Piersol held to his original story, and denied that he was responsible for the Keet infant's death. The mob surrendered him to the sheriff and the prisoners were lodged in the Stockton jail.

Federal agents of the department of justice followed up the pro-German angle of the case and arrested Dick Carter of Springfield, who is being held on a charge of being implicated in the Clements plot.

Taylor Adams, Claude Piersol and Cletus Adams are charged with abduction. Charges of murder against them were dismissed. Allie Adams and Maxie Adams are charged with implication in the Clements conspiracy.

The man who has some goods to sell, And takes them down into a well, Is not apt to get the dollars, As the man who climbs a tree and hollers.

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