

A CRIME OF TWENTY YEARS AGO.

H. E. C. Bryant
Charlotte Observer

Story of Detection and Lynching of Man Who Murdered a Woman and Robbed a Home.

COLONEL ROMULUS Z. LINNEY, (known to political fame as the "Bull of the Bushes") is one of the best lawyers in western North Carolina. He revels in the criminal practice and would rather defend than prosecute. Any case that is wrapped in mystery appeals to his imaginative mind. Dr. James Campbell of Newton is one of the most delightful story tellers in the State. He has a vivid imagination, an easy flow of chaste and eloquent language, and a retentive memory. These two men aroused in me an interest in a noted Wilkes county citizen who met a tragic death in Catawba about twenty years ago.

One day while taking me for a drive Dr. Campbell pointed his whip to a large, horizontal limb on a magnificent tree and said: "There is where they hanged Lige Church." "Who hanged him?" "No one ever knew; he was lynched." This excited my curiosity and I plied my companion with questions.

Found the Dangling Body.
"Yes, I was the first man to pass after the fellow was hanged," said Dr. Campbell. "I had been in the country that night and was on my way home when I saw the body swinging from that bough. The moon was shining and the atmosphere was bracing. Turning my horse I drove up to the man and caught hold of his leg. Life was extinct but the body was still warm. All that I could tell about the man was that he had a white face. Leaving him I went on to town and informed some friends and an investigation revealed the fact that a white prisoner, who had been spirited away from Alexander county, had been taken out of the Catawba jail and hanged by a party of unknown men, who came in that night on horseback and quietly did its work."

"What had Church done?" I asked.

"Robbed a home and killed an old lady. The running down of the murderer makes a most interesting story. It was months, I think, before any clue was got. Finally, however, a young chap, Harrison Dockery of Wilkes, was arrested, cast into prison and induced to confess. Soon after the news of the confession, which implicated Church, began to spread Church gave himself up and got the \$600 reward offered for his arrest. While in prison he tried three times to kill Dockery, once by hanging him to the ceiling and twice by poison, and just the merest accidents saved his life. For lowering close on the heels of the last effort came the lynching."

The recital of these facts by Dr. Campbell created in me a desire to know the full story of Lige Church and for several years I have desired to interview Mr. Linney, who knew all about the affair from beginning to end.

Mr. Linney Tells the Story.
"I want you to tell me about Lige Church, his crime, his arrest and his death," said I to Mr. Linney on the train the other day.

"Lige Church was one of the smartest men I ever saw on the witness stand," said the lawyer. "Why, he was as cunning as a fox and as keen as a Philadelphia lawyer."

"Many years ago, near Hidenite, the daughter of James Thompson, an aged farmer who hoarded money, was beaten to death by some villain with an axe. The crime was committed in daylight, some time between noon and dark. "Thompson—a good farmer, a thrifty husbandman—had the reputation of being a person who kept about his premises much money, especially silver. A large guard dog ran at large in the yard to protect the place from trespassers."

"One day Thompson went to a back field to work. He had been there less than two hours when his dog appeared and began to behave in a strange way. The brute seemed to be wrought up and uneasy. His bristles were lifted and he would start, running toward the house, and turn and come back, as if trying to get his master to accompany him. But Thompson plowed on until dark and then went home. On his way to the front door he stumbled over the dead body of his daughter, where it had been beheaded with an axe which lay near."

A Clue is Obtained.
"For ninety days we heard nothing. Try as we did we could get no sort of clue. One day, however, a postal card came, asking if any reward had been offered for the arrest of the assassin of Miss Thompson. The card was mailed at Grassy Creek, Alleghany county. I got into my buggy and went to Grassy Creek and inquired of the postmaster and others concerning recent visitors. I was told that two strangers had been there about the time the card was mailed, and one of them had left a foreign coin for a quarter. Out of \$600 in coins that were taken from the Thompson home the only one that the owner could identify was the one I found in Alleghany. I knew that I was on the right trail, but at first it seemed impossible to get any clue as to the names of the strange men. But as I talked to the older persons I noticed that a bright-eyed 6-year-old lad followed me and listened intently to every word that was said, and finally at a lull in the conversation he declared: 'I know their names!'"

"What were they?" I asked.

"Lige and Harrison," was the reply, for the tall man said to the other, 'Harrison, play a piece on the banjo for the chaps,' and the short one answered, 'All right, Lige.' The boy then took us to a plank on a bridge where Lige cut his initials, 'E. L. C.' We knew then that Lige Church, a notorious fellow, who lived in Wilkes, about thirty miles from the Thompson home, was one of the party. Later we had Dockery arrested on suspicion and inside of a week he confessed. He and Church traveled all night to get to Thompson's. They went by a roundabout route to escape detection. After entering the house and robbing it of its hoarded wealth, they went to the woods to divide the spoils. As they worked, the old lady, who saw them, said, 'Lige Church, I know you.' Having pondered over this Lige declared, after dividing Dockery his share of the money, 'That old woman knows me. I will have to destroy that evidence.' Miss Thompson was murdered."

Lige Church Surrenders.
"When this came out Church surrendered, with the understanding that he was to get the reward. It was discovered that he had concealed in his shoe sole, between two strips of leather, a burglar's file which he intended to use in making an escape."

"Lige was given a hearing before a justice of the peace. Dockery related his story, just as he had told it in jail, and we corroborated it as we went along. He said that on the way to Alexander from Wilkes, Lige had struck a needle in a pine stump. A runner was sent out and the stump and needle found. A portion of the money, said the witness, was buried in a stump—the stump was located but the money had been removed."

"But with all this, Lige Church tried to prove an alibi and produced four or five witnesses to prove that he was on the banks of the Yadkin, more than thirty miles from the Thompson place, after midnight the morning of the day the homicide was committed. He said that the fish law ran out at 12 o'clock that night and he was waiting on the bank to set his traps as soon as it was legal to do so. I asked him what he, a man who had been convicted of felonies and had served terms in the penitentiary, cared for such a small thing as a fish law. His smart reply was to this effect: 'No man knows better that the way of the transgressor is hard than I, who have served sentences for breaking the law, and when I got out the last time I made up my mind never again to offend, not even against a fish statute.' That was a very clever speech."

"Lige was bound to court and for safe keeping was sent to Newton, but when the people realized that he was such a sick fellow they did not let the law take its course. Lige was taken from the Catawba county jail and lynched by masked men."

Seven Years of Proof.
"I have had seven years of proof that Dr. King's New Discovery is the best medicine to take for coughs and colds and for every diseased condition of throat, chest or lungs," says W. V. Henry of Panama, Mo. The world has had thirty seven years of proof that Dr. King's New Discovery is the best remedy for coughs and colds, influenza, whooping cough, hay fever, bronchitis, hemorrhage of the lungs, and the early stages of consumption. Its timely use always prevents the development of pneumonia. Sold under guarantee at English Drug Co.'s, 50c. and \$1. Trial bottle free."

Hexamethylenetetramine.
The above is the name of a German chemical, which is one of the many valuable ingredients of Foley's Kidney Remedy. Hexamethylenetetramine is recognized by medical text books and authorities as a uric acid solvent and antiseptic for the urine. Take Foley's Kidney Remedy as soon as you notice any irregularities, and avoid a serious malady."

Colds and Croup in Children.
"My little girl is subject to colds," says Mrs. Wm. H. Serig, No. 41 Fifth St., Wheeling, W. Va. "Last winter she had a severe spell and a terrible cough, but I cared her with Chamberlain's Remedy without the aid of a doctor, and my little boy has been prevented many times from having the croup by the timely use of this syrup. This remedy is for sale by Dr. S. J. Welsh."

Smothered Under Pile of Fertilizer.
Ed Garris, colored, working alone on one side of a high pile of fertilizer in the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company's plant at Selma, was smothered to death Thursday by several tons of fertilizer caving in on him. Other workmen in the mill knew nothing of the accident until too late to rescue him."

Confessions of a "Night Rider."

Tiptonville, Tenn., Dispatch, October 27th.

"Ted" Burton, self-confessed night rider, told a remarkable story today of night rider depredations near Reelfoot Lake, confessing to the part he played in the outrages which resulted in a conviction in the putting to death of Capt. Quentin Rankin, an attorney of Trenton, Tenn., on the banks of Lake Reelfoot a week ago, and implicating men prominent in this part of the State.

Of the persons who he declares had a part in the killing of Capt. Rankin more than half are now in custody at Camp Nemo, the military base near Samburg. The confession was made at the Tiptonville jail to Sheriff Hains, Judge Harris, owner of a large tract of land in the Reelfoot Lake region, who has suffered much at the hands of the raiders, and Mayor Cleveland Donelson of Tiptonville.

The confession was made freely and voluntarily, and apparently without a grain of conscience he gladly told his story.

While Burton denies that he was present when Capt. Rankin was put to death, he admits that it was through information given by him that the band congregated and took the attorney while he was staying at the hotel at Walnut Log.

Burton declares that the first part he played was when he aided in the burning of a fish wharf at Samburg. Several weeks later he was one of several that crossed the county line from the Reelfoot Lake region into the adjoining county of Lake and whipped Justice of the Peace Winn, an aged man.

Coming to the killing of Capt. Rankin, Burton declared that on the night before the lynching he went to Walnut Log and there met James F. Carpenter, an attorney of Union, at whose solicitation Rankin and Judge R. Z. Taylor, associated in the West Tennessee Company, owners of the land on which the lake is situated, came to the lake. It was stated that the visit of the two attorneys was to discuss a timber deal with Carpenter. After this conversation, Burton says, he communicated with the night rider leaders and told of the intended visit of the representatives of the land company.

On the following night he saw the two attorneys at supper at the Walnut Log hotel, but he declares he left Walnut Log early in the night and went out on the lake to fish. He says that he was fishing when he heard the shots which ended the life of Capt. Rankin, but he did not return to the shore for some time.

In his confession Burton gave the names of no fewer than forty alleged members of the night riders.

Union Meeting of the Union Association at Fairfield.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH.
11:00 a. m.—Introductory sermon. Rev. M. D. L. Preslar.
1:00 p. m.—How a church should deal with a member who can but does not attend its services, and who is able but does not contribute to its support. Rev. C. A. G. Thomas and A. M. Newsom.
2:00 p. m.—The model Christian life and how to attain it. Rev. J. L. Bennett and Robert Gibson.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH.
10:00 a. m.—Devotional exercises.
10:30 a. m.—How to enlist our young people in active Christian work. Rev. A. Marsh and Raymond Griffin.
11:15 a. m.—Educational interests of our denomination. B. Y. Tyner.
1:00 p. m.—Some things we need to realize about our Sunday schools. Rev. J. L. Shinn and O. M. Sanders.
2:00 p. m.—How to create a greater interest in our union meetings. Rev. E. C. Snider and Rev. J. A. Bivens.
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH.
10:00 a. m.—Sunday school mass meetings. Conducted by J. W. Bivens.
11:00 a. m.—Sermon. Rev. D. M. Austin.
O. M. Sanders, Rev. A. Marsh, B. Y. Tyner, Committee.

Deep Fall Plowing And the Seed Bed.

S. A. Knapp,
Special Agent in Charge.

At the commencement of the Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration work in the Southern States it was found necessary to outline the fundamental principles of good farming and to insist that the tillers of the soil should become familiar with them and practice them as a first step in the betterment of farm life. We have previously stated these first principles, but possibly they should be more fully explained.

Preparation of the Seed Bed.
Prepare a deep and thoroughly pulverized seed bed, well drained; break in the fall to a depth of 8, 10 or 12 inches, according to the soil, with implements that will bring too much of the subsoil to the surface. (The foregoing depths should be reached gradually.)

The presence of heat, air and moisture is essential to chemical and germ action in the preparation of plant food in the soil. The depths to which these penetrate the soil depend upon the depth of the plowing, provided the soil is well drained. There is no use in plowing down into a subsoil full of water.

It has been proved beyond question that the roots of plants penetrate the soil deeper and feed deeper in deeply plowed land. Thus, in general, it may be stated that when the soil is plowed 3 inches deep the plants have 3 inches of food; when plowed 6 inches deep, they have 6 inches of food, and when plowed 10 inches deep they have 10 inches of food. The fact that the bottom portions of the plowed land are not as rich in available plant food as the top portions shows the necessity of getting more air and heat down to them by deeper tillage.

The most essential condition for fertile soil is a constant supply of moisture, so that a film of water can envelop the soil particles and absorb nutritive elements. The hair roots of plants drink this for nourishment. If there is any more than enough to serve as films for the soil particles and capillary water, there is too much and it should be drained off. This can be determined by digging a hole 20 inches deep. If there is standing water at the bottom of the hole, it indicates too much water in the soil or subsoil.

The capacity of a given soil to hold film and capillary moisture depends upon how finely it is pulverized and upon the amount of humus in it. Unplowed lands retain but little water. Thoroughly pulverized soil 3 inches deep can not store enough to make a crop.

In all Southern States there are every year periods of drought, sometimes not serious, but generally sufficiently protracted to reduce the crop. The remedy for this is increased storage capacity for moisture. This can be accomplished by deep and thorough tillage and by filling the soil with humus (partly decayed vegetation). The effect of deep tillage has been explained. The effect of humus is to greatly increase the storage capacity of soils for water and to reduce evaporation. A pound of humus will store seven and one-half times as much moisture as a pound of sand, and the sand will lose its water by evaporation three and one-half times more rapidly than the humus. A clay soil will store only about one-fourth as much moisture as humus, and will lose it by evaporation twice as rapidly.

Plants use an enormous quantity of water. An acre of good corn will absorb and evaporate during its growth nearly 10 inches of water.

About three fourths of this amount will be required during the last seventy-five days of its growth, or at the rate of 2 2/3 inches of water a month. This is in addition to evaporation from the soil, which, even with the retarding influence of a dust mulch, will amount to several inches each month in midsummer. In case the land is plowed only 3 or 4 inches deep, though thoroughly pulverized, it will store an amount of moisture entirely insufficient to supply crop requirements in any protracted drought. These shallow and generally poorly prepared seed beds are the principal cause of the low corn yields in the South, and they affect the cotton yields similarly, but not so much, because cotton is a more drought-resisting plant than corn. If planting is done at all, it is folly to prepare a seed bed so shallow as to bring about the almost total loss of the crop some years and a reduced crop every year.

Many farmers plow or cultivate their corn nearly as deeply as they break their land in preparing a seed bed; this leaves no space for roots in the pulverized and aired soil. Roots occupy a large space. If all the roots of a single vigorous cornstalk were placed end to end they would reach more than a mile, and if allowed by the plowing they will fill the soil to a considerable depth and feed in all portions of it.

At the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station it was found that when corn was 3 feet high the roots had penetrated the soil for 2 feet and thoroughly occupied it. At maturity the roots were 4 feet deep. At this time the upper laterals were about 4 inches from the surface.

What is Deep Plowing.
Plowing 3, 4, 5 or 6 inches deep is only common plowing. In our instructions nothing less than 8 inches is considered "deep" plowing. We are not advocating a single plowing of 8 inches in depth once in two or three years, but the preparation of an 8-inch seed bed thoroughly pulverized and filled with humus. It should be plowed and cross plowed to that depth, or if cross plowing can not be safely done on account of hills then it should be plowed twice in the same direction and disked thoroughly or the smoothing harrow repeatedly used.

When Should This Plowing be Done?
Always plow in the fall before the winter sets in; the earlier after the first of October the better. Always use a cover crop of oats, barley, wheat, or rye if possible. Every observant farmer has noted that seeds germinate more quickly and that plants grow more rapidly on fall breaking than on spring breaking. Fall plowing renders more plant food ready for use, while the preparation of the land in the fall saves work in the spring, when everything on the farm is crowding. A cover crop is a net gain. It keeps the soil from washing, it utilizes the plant food that otherwise might escape into the air, and it adds humus. The soil is improved by the crop and winter grazing is provided. In plowed land the loss of plant food is less than in unplowed land; more plant food may be produced and more stored. In case a cover crop is used the loss of plant food is slight.

An objection is sometimes urged that fall-plowed soil becomes saturated with water during the winter and remains wetter and colder later in the spring than land left unbroken in the fall. This is true only upon land not sufficiently drained and where the breaking is shallow. Water passes through deep breaking readily, and with reasonable drainage it is ready for planting earlier than lands broken in the spring.

When land is nearly level and drainage poor, the soil should not be flat broken, but left in ridges or narrow lands about 5 or 6 feet wide, suitable for planting, with a dead furrow between. This provides winter drainage and keeps the pulverized soil out of the water, which is important even if unbroken.

Deepening the Soil.
The advice to go down gradually is given solely because the inexperienced farmer may try to plow too deeply the first time and bring to the surface too much of the subsoil. The best plan is to double plow; that is, to follow the breaking plow in the same furrow with a narrower plow or a scooter (with sides removed) and go down as deeply as desired. Generally the disk plow may be sent down 8 or 10 inches with impunity if the plowing is done in the fall, and especially if the land is plowed twice or more.

There is no question that breaking and pulverizing to a depth of 8 to 10 or 12 inches is economical. The cost of breaking 10 inches deep when done with a disk plow should not be more than 50 cents an acre in excess of breaking 6 inches deep. Whether a plant has plenty of food all the time or only part of the time makes the difference between a good crop and a poor crop.

Exceptions Due to Conditions of Soil and Subsoil.
(1) Never plow below the line of standing water in the soil, because the subsoil can not be pulverized in water. The water level must first be lowered by drainage.

(2) Do not deep fall plowing on light sandy land on dry, semi-arid plains, and this especially applies to elevated sandy table-lands. Such lands can be helped by adding humus and using a winter cover crop of durum wheat.

(3) Do not plow deeply or subsoil in the spring. The subsoil is generally too full of water, and it is too late for much effective action of the air upon the soil and for the winter rains to firm the subsoil before planting for cotton.

(4) Thin gray soils underlain with yellow or stiff clay near the surface, most of the post-oak flats, and the comparatively level coast lands should be broken in ridges (back-furrowed) 5, 6 or 7 feet wide, according to the crop to be planted. Cotton and corn may be planted thicker in the row to offset the wider space between the rows. The dead furrow between the rows should be double plowed and made as deep as practicable, with a good outlet for the water. This method will gradually deepen the soil, increase drainage, reduce washing, and give a larger and deeper body of loose, aired earth for the roots. This plan is excellent when surface drainage is necessary. Soil to be live and friable must be kept out of standing water winter and summer.

The sugar planters of Louisiana all use the ridge method (generally 7 feet wide) both for sugar cane and corn. The dead furrow is as deep as a plow drawn by 4 or 6 heavy mules can penetrate at the last breaking. This gives an average depth of tillage of 12 or 15 inches.

The adoption of the ridge method on demonstration fields in the Yazoo Delta in 1906 increased the yield of corn from 14 bushels per acre to 70 bushels. No fertilizer was used.

Winter Management.
In case no winter cover crop is used the soil should be disked or harrowed two or three times during the winter, provided it is dry enough. Give good drainage to all parts of the field.

Any cultivation done after the deep fall breaking should be shallow—not more than 3 or 4 inches deep.

Horse Walked Sleeper to His Death.
Lexington, Dispatch.
One night last week Will Westmoreland, who had been in Lexington to see if his name was on the permanent roll of voters, returning home, drove onto the Flat Swamp bridge at the Cal Harris place and lost his horse and was badly hurt himself. Since the freshest last August this bridge has been unsafe, and the creek has been forded. The southern end of the bridge was moved while this end was intact. Before he knew it Westmoreland walked more than his length on a naked sleeper. It fell so that it was caught by a plank and a sleeper. Leach Davis and Cleve Daniels were in a buggy close behind and they helped all they could. The horse fell into the creek 18 feet on the rock and was killed. Going back to the bridge to save his buggy, Westmoreland fell backward to the rocks and was badly hurt. He lives in Deaton but was cared for at the home of Dart Daniels near by. One report yesterday says that he is not seriously hurt and another that he may die.

Weaving a Web Around Night Riders.

Camp Nemo, Tiptonville, Tenn., Dispatch, October 26th.

Within one week from the time the soldiers of Tennessee under personal direction of Gov. M. R. Patterson spread their tents in the heart of the night rider region, evidence of the most damaging nature against the murderers of Capt. Quentin Rankin has been unearthed. Frank Ferriner last night confessed and implicated ten or twelve men now in custody. He gave names and went into details. Ferriner is carefully guarded in an isolated tent. Ferriner's confession came after a long grilling examination in Col. Tatum's tent. Governor Patterson in person questioned the witness. The Governor expressed himself tonight as highly pleased with what has been brought out.

"We are getting some mighty strong evidence," he said, "and I am confident we will discover the members of this marauding band and convict them."

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Italians in the United States last year sent to Italy 459,754 postal orders aggregating \$19,000,000; \$17,000,000 went to Austria-Hungary and \$10,000,000 went to Russia.

How is Your Digestion?
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