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One Dollar Yearly

## CONVICTED OF MURDER.

**CHAS. PLYLER, WHITE, AND GEORGE MAYHEW, COL., FOUND GUILTY.**

**Notable Case of Men Charged With Killing Carter Parks—Jury Returns Verdict on Sunday—Appeal Taken and Case of Mayhew to Come Up Again—Judge Compliments Jury.**

The trial of Charles Plyler, George Mayhew and John McManus for the murder of Carter Parks, which began in the Superior court last Thursday after the jury had been selected from a special venire of 200, came to an end Sunday evening at four o'clock when the jury brought in a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree against Plyler and Mayhew, and not guilty as to McManus. A motion for a new trial for both prisoners, on the ground that the verdict was contrary to the weight of evidence, was overruled. But a motion for a new trial in the case of Mayhew, on the ground of newly discovered evidence, will be heard by Judge Allen at the next term of civil court commencing Aug. 22.

Plyler was sentenced to be electrocuted in the electric chair on September 15, and his counsel took an appeal to the Supreme court. Upon motion of counsel for the defendants, by agreement of the solicitor, Judge Allen ordered the prisoners removed to the Lee county jail to be kept there pending the appeal in Plyler's case and the hearing of the motion for a new trial in Mayhew's case.

Plyler, who is a white man, about 28 years of age, and of a prominent family in his community, and Mayhew, were taken by officers Benton and Griffith to Lee county Sunday night. McManus went to Aberdeen on the same train.

The first witnesses for the State were Bob Forest and Tom McCain, negro boys who worked for the murdered man and lived on his place. They testified to finding the body of Parks in the woods near his house on Friday morning, June 17th, two days after Parks, according to his wife's testimony, had left home. The boys said that Mrs. Parks told them in which direction her husband had gone off, and they went in that direction and hunted around awhile, and discovered the body when they were returning to the house after they had about given up the search. They reported their discovery to Mrs. Parks, and shortly afterward a number of people who had heard the news came to the spot where the dead man lay.

Vane Richardson, a negro who worked for Plyler, was probably the most important witness for the prosecution. He testified that he was at Parks' house on Sunday, April 10, the night Parks was called out on the porch and shot in the leg. He said that some hours before that first shooting, Plyler met Parks and himself, and asked the witness to get Parks drinking when they should go back to the house that night, and get him out on the porch, and he (Plyler) would come over and "get him." Vane said he refused to have anything to do with that proposal, but he went back home with Parks, both were drinking, and late that night a voice, which witness said he recognized as Plyler's, was heard on the outside; Parks went out on the porch and was shot in the leg. Witness said he afterward told several people that he knew it was Plyler who did that shooting, he was corroborated in this by other witnesses. But Mrs. Carrie Parks, the widow of the murdered man and the sister of Plyler, testified she was there that night and heard the voice, it was not her brother's voice. Richardson also testified that Plyler afterward said, in talking about the shooting that Sunday night, that he (Plyler) was the "very d—n frog that mudded the pond." This witness testified to threats made against Parks by Plyler before the murder, such as telling witness and defendant McManus to keep their mouths shut, and to tell Mayhew to "keep his d—n mouth shut." On cross examination of Richardson, the defense brought out that the witness had made conflicting statements at the coroner's inquest and at the preliminary hearing, and that he was now making statements which conflicted with his previous testimony. The witness admitted that he was drunk on the night of the first shooting and really did not know much about what had occurred there that night; he also admitted that he had been convicted of stealing some buggy wheels when

he was a young boy, but explained that by stating that someone else had stolen the wheels and came to his house and got him to go to town along with the person who had stolen the wheels, and witness claimed he never knew they were stolen.

W. W. Montgomery, the next witness for the State, husband of Charlie Plyler's sister, testified to a quarrel between Plyler and Parks over some money matter last October, and to a conversation in which Plyler told him to kill Parks. This conversation occurred on the Monday before Parks was killed. On cross examination of this witness, the defense brought out the fact that witness never mentioned this threat of Plyler's to kill Parks until the present trial, although he had testified at the preliminary.

Fred Hayes testified that Plyler came to his house one night a week or so before the killing, and asked if he had heard any threats made by Parks against Plyler.

P. W. Plyler, a relative of the defendant, said that Plyler came to his house on the night he was coming to give himself up to the officers, and told him he did not do the shooting, but knew who did it. That he did not want to tell it for fear of what the man would do to him if they didn't put him where he could not get to him; that he was a dangerous man, and had said he would kill Plyler if he told.

A negro, Lewis Walker, testified that Vane Richardson had said in his presence, shortly after the first shooting, that he recognized Charlie Plyler's voice. He said, also, that Plyler rebuked him for "telling so much" at the inquest, and asked why he had not "let them pump him and drag it out of him" as Plyler himself had done.

Robt. Rape testified that he was cutting oats in his field not far from Mayhew's house on the Wednesday the murder is said to have occurred, he saw the prisoner Mayhew coming from a southerly direction, and he was travelling "betwixt a run and a trot." He said he hollered at Mayhew and asked him where he was going and he answered "I am going to see my gal." Asked in which direction Mayhew was going, witness said that he was travelling in the direction towards where the dead man was afterwards found. Mr. Rape said he had heard a gun fired about an hour by sun that evening, and that he saw Mayhew about a half hour after he heard the gun. George Mayhew went on the stand and testified that he was in South Carolina the day of the murder, stopped at Gus Brooks' on the way back, and didn't get home till late in the evening, and then went to a band meeting at Eb Robinson's house. His evidence was corroborated by J. B. Johnson, a colored preacher who said he went with Mayhew to South Carolina and back, and by Gus Brooks, Eb Robinson and others.

Doc Montgomery testified for the State that he saw Mayhew on that Wednesday evening when the sun was about ten or fifteen minutes high; that he came by witness' house driving in a rubber-tired buggy. He was driving pretty fast and witness asked him what was the matter, and Mayhew replied "It would not do to tell now." Mayhew's explanation was that he had driven from home and was going over to the band meeting when Mr. Montgomery saw him, and in this he was corroborated by a number of witnesses.

Constable Cliff Fowler testified to a conversation he had with Plyler in a restaurant in Monroe the day the body was found and Plyler had come here for a coffin. He said that he asked Plyler if he thought negroes had done the killing, and that Plyler said he didn't think so; but that "It didn't make much difference, Parks was a very sorry man anyway."

Ransom Plyler testified that he heard Plyler say, shortly after Parks was shot the first time, that "If Parks kept on about his G—d d—n clattering, he might find out who done it." On cross examination witness said that Plyler didn't say who did it and that he did say that he himself didn't do it.

Roland Starnes and Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland Hinson testified for the defense and were probably the strongest witnesses to show an alibi for Plyler. Mr. Starnes testified that he saw Plyler that evening at Plyler's house right before he heard the gun fired and that it was a considerable distance from the place where he last saw Plyler to the place where the dead man was afterwards found. Mr. and Mrs. Hinson testified that they saw Plyler close to his house

very soon after they heard the gun fired.

Mrs. Carrie Parks testified principally as to the first shooting and said it was not her brother's voice that called Parks out on the porch that night.

Mrs. Plyler, mother of the defendant, testified to an alibi for him both at the time of the first shooting and at the time of the killing. A number of witness for the defense testified for alibis for both McManus and Mayhew, and several character witnesses gave these two defendants good characters. In all, twenty-two witnesses testified for the State and twenty-four for the defendants.

The chief contentions of the State were as to the motive and opportunity of Plyler for committing the crime, and the connection of the two negro defendants with him, they being in his employ and he having made statements to them before and after the commission of the crime which implied collusion; the threats made by Plyler against Parks, and the evidence as to his having done the first shooting, and also his statements and actions after the finding of the body. The State contended that it had knocked into a "cocked hat" the alibis set up by the defendants. The defense contended that its alibis as to all the defendants were clearly established; that the evidence of the State given in rebuttal of the alibis really made them more convincing; that the witnesses for the State, as to threats, statements and actions of Plyler, had made conflicting statements at this trial with those made at the inquest and preliminary, although they were sworn to tell the whole truth at each, and consequently these witnesses were not worthy of belief. The defense contended that it was unreasonable that Plyler should have made the statements, these witnesses said he made, so publicly if he was intending to commit a crime. That if the defendants committed the murder, it was unreasonable to suppose that they would have left the body out in the woods for two days when they had ample opportunity to conceal it. In short, the defense contended that these and other circumstances, taken together, should raise in the minds of the jury at least a reasonable doubt of the defendants' guilt and therefore they ought to acquit them.

Judge Allen delivered a clear and impartial charge to the jury, explaining to them the rules which govern the consideration of evidence, giving them the law by which they must be guided, and reviewing fully the contentions of both sides. The jury was generally considered to be a most intelligent one. Judge Allen remarked from the bench, on Sunday after the verdict was rendered, that upon consideration of the evidence, there could be no criticism of the jury whether their verdict had been guilty or not guilty. The following gentlemen composed the jury: A. M. Newsome, W. P. Little, J. D. Faulkner, J. C. Helms, W. D. Hasty, W. B. Smith, I. J. Carpenter, J. W. Martin, J. E. Moore, A. L. Locke, H. I. Hagler, G. W. Smith.

The prosecution was represented by Solicitor Stack and Redwine & Sikes; the defense by Adams & Armfield, Williams, Lemmond & Love and Parker.

Other cases disposed of by the court were as follows:

Baxter Crowell, assault and battery; 6 months on roads.

Charles Huntley, assault and battery with deadly weapon; \$40 and costs.

Tyre Price, George Hart, Tom Welsh and Joe Brewer; submit to forcible trespass; costs and bond of \$100 each and to appear at January and August terms of criminal court for two years and show that they have been of good behavior.

Bow Harris, submits to forcible trespass; costs.

John Carter, selling liquor; not guilty.

Jas. K. Polk, assault and battery; guilty.

Sutton Long, slander; plea of nolo contendere entered which is accepted by the State upon payment of costs.

Raymond Baker, embezzlement; not guilty.

J. E. Doster, assault and battery; costs.

Jas. Kilgo, disposing of mortgaged property; nol pros.

Ed Gatewood, larceny; 3 months on roads.

The congregation at Mill Creek church are requested to meet at the church Saturday morning early for the purpose of clearing off the grounds.

## CUT NEPHEW TO DEATH.

**FATAL FIGHT BY CITIZENS OF NEW SALEM TOWNSHIP.**

**Wilson Curran, Well Known Man in His Section, Stays Young Clifford Thomas and is Himself Badly Hurt—Fight Occurred in Anson on the Way Home from Funeral—All Parties Arrested. Bad Blood Beforehand Brings on the Row.**

Last Saturday afternoon, Mr. Wilson Curran, who lives on the College road, three miles this side of Olive Branch, stabbed to death Clifford Thomas, the twenty-one-year-old son of his neighbor and brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Thomas. That is about all that is known with certainty. Friends of both sides have their version of the affair and these vary very widely. The beginning of bad blood dates back several weeks. The Thomases claim Curran had made improper proposals to a daughter of Mr. Henry Thomas, while the other side say he merely let her ride on a cultivator which he was using and which his own and other children had been riding. The tragedy occurred in the road while the parties were returning from Anson county, where they had been to attend the funeral of Mr. Hosea Ross, who died on Friday. The Curran side say that he had been hit several times and knocked down by Thomas by knucks, and stabbed him to prevent being beaten to death. The Wadesboro Messenger and Intelligencer, in its edition yesterday, tells what it has been able to learn about the affair as follows:

"Saturday afternoon Burnsville township, near the Union county line, was the scene of a bloody tragedy in which one man, Clifford Thomas, lost his life, and two other men received injuries of a more or less serious nature. The parties to the difficulty were Wilson Curran and his son, Walter, Brady Rushing and the dead man. All of them live in Union county, not far from the Anson county line. The dead man was a first cousin of Messrs. F. E. and C. W. Thomas of Wadesboro, his father, Henry Thomas, being a brother of their father, Mr. J. W. Thomas of Diamond Hill. Curran, who is an uncle by marriage of the man he slew, is a son of Mr. S. P. Curran of Anson.

"The exact particulars of the tragedy have been difficult to obtain, but it seems that Curran and his son, Walter, and Clifford Thomas and Brady Rushing attended the burial of Mr. Hosea Ross at Fountain Hill Saturday. On their way back to their homes in Union county, Rushing and Thomas got into a fight, Curran and his son were ahead of Thomas and Rushing and it is said the elder Curran, looking back and seeing the fight, left his buggy and ran back and struck Thomas. Thomas then hit Curran and knocked him down and jumped on him. Curran, by this time, had gotten out his knife and was carving Thomas from beneath while his son, Walter, who had also joined the combatants, was using his knife on his back. Finally the elder Curran stabbed Thomas to the heart and the young man expired almost instantly. Thomas, it is said, was horribly cut about the body, face and head. The part Rushing took in the affair at this time could not be learned this morning. It is said, however, that both he and the elder Curran are injured, but not seriously.

"The two Currans and Rushing were arrested late yesterday afternoon and are having a preliminary hearing today before Esq. J. D. Hyatt at Diamond Hill."

**Picnic at Seed Test Farm.**

A seed variety and fertilizer test farm is being maintained by the State at the farm of Mr. P. B. Blake, three miles south of Monroe on the Griffith road. Mr. C. B. Williams, director of the experiment station at Raleigh, will be at Mr. Blake's next Friday, the 12th, and will give a demonstration of seed selection for both corn and cotton, and make a public address. Every farmer in the county is invited to be present. It will be made a big picnic occasion and every one who goes is invited to carry a basket and take part in the picnic. The occasion will be well worth the time of every farmer who is interested in learning how to improve his work by properly selecting his seeds.

We can do nothing well without joy and a good conscience, which is the ground of joy.—Dibbes.

## Train Smashes Auto and Kills Its Passengers.

**Birmingham, Ala., Dispatch, 7th.**

Two were killed outright, three fatally injured and two others may die as the result of an accident in which a Southern railway passenger train near Westlake crashed into a large automobile below Bessemer this afternoon.

The dead are: J. H. Roden, chauffeur, killed outright; Miss Augusta Kiser, aged 16 years, died after reaching hospital.

Miss Mary Fitzpatrick, aged 15 years, skull fractured and fatally injured; Miss Mamie Crenshaw, aged 16 years, skull fractured and fatally injured; Robert Black, skull fractured and fatally injured; Miss Eva Lou Crenshaw, thigh broken, internally injured, may die; Vernon Lee, arm and thigh broken, internally injured and may die; G. C. Dobbs, hand broken and body badly bruised; two Parron brothers, 10 and 12 years respectively, badly bruised, not fatally hurt; W. H. Bennett, Jr., 10 years old, badly bruised, not fatally injured. G. O. Garner was the only passenger who escaped uninjured; he jumped from the car before the engine struck it.

The automobile maintains a regular passenger schedule between Bessemer and Westlake and it was carrying eleven passengers to the lake this afternoon. The machine was struck by the fast passenger train shortly after 4 o'clock and was almost completely demolished.

There is a steep grade leading down to the Southern tracks just before Westlake is reached and as the highway is in a cut it was impossible for the chauffeur to see the train or for the engineer to see the automobile. Those of the automobile passengers who escaped with injuries state that the locomotive whistle was not blown for the crossing. The front wheels of the large automobile had just run on to the railroad track when the engine struck it. The passenger train was running at a high rate of speed and ploughed its way through the forward end of the machine.

## Mayor Who Was Blown Up by Dynamite Did It Himself.

**Romanoke, Va., Dispatch, 8th.**

A special tonight from Ridgeway, Va., says Detective Joseph Funk of the Baldwin detective agency of Romanoke, who has been investigating the dynamite explosion which caused the death of Mayor A. H. Bousman of Ridgeway on the night of Sunday, July 24, is satisfied that he has solved the mystery. His inquiries have convinced him that the case was a peculiarly horrible one of self-destruction. He has so reported to the town council of Ridgeway and the report has been accepted officially and is universally believed to be correct even by Bousman's closest friends.

Mr. Bousman was deeply in debt and the belief now is that the mortification of failure, financial ruin and the dread of poverty for his family which he maintained always comfortably and in good style, drove him to desperate means to save himself at the cost of mutilation, of being a cripple the rest of his days and of deadly risk of his life. He held an accident insurance policy for \$5,000 and another for \$2,000 for which he gave his note.

A paper bag found wrapped about some dynamite in bushes near the mayor's home the day following the explosion was identified as one he got at a store the day of his death. He had recently experimented with dynamite. It is believed he lay on his lawn at night, touched the fuse of a stick of dynamite with his lighted cigar, balanced it on his legs and awaited results. There was no hole in the ground under the tree and it is claimed both legs could not have been blown off at the same point unless the dynamite had fallen directly across the limbs.

## Elect the Old Board.

We think it would be unwise to make a change in the county commissioners at this time. Better let well enough alone. The present board have been found to be safe and conservative. They have business on hand which they have already proved themselves capable of handling for the most good to the county at large. SEVERAL FRIENDS.

Hon. A. C. Shuford of Catawba county and Mr. P. P. W. Plyler will attend Farmers' Union rallies in Union county as follows: Lanes Creek township, at M. L. Baker's, August 23rd; Buford township (place to be named later), August 24th; Goose Creek township, August 25th.

## HUNTER SHOT TO DEATH.

**THREE BELK BROTHERS ARE CHARGED WITH DEED.**

**Hunter and Walter Stack, Driving About in Buford Township, Are Met by Gus, Will and Winifred Belk and Hunter Left Dead on the Roadside—Stack Shot in the Arm—Belks Still at Large. Shooting Occurred in Sound of Trinity Church.**

About dusk yesterday afternoon, Ben Hunter and Walter Stack were driving about in Buford township and were met in the road by Gus, Will and Winifred Belk, sons of Mr. P. R. Belk, and a terrific shooting occurred. Ben Hunter was left dead in a corn field by the roadside and his body lay there till 10 o'clock this morning. Stack was shot in the arm, and is at his home in South Carolina. The Belks are at liberty, though friends of theirs have stated that they would give themselves up tomorrow.

Just how the tragedy occurred no one knows. The participants alone were the eye witnesses. Stack has said that the Belks met them in the road and began shooting without provocation, but of course they will tell another tale about it. The shooting occurred near the home of Esq. J. C. Laney and persons gathering at Trinity church, where a meeting was in progress, heard a number of shots, some say as many as ten or fifteen. Mr. R. C. Laney and his wife, who were on their way to church, were the first to arrive on the scene. They state that they met the three Belks hurriedly getting in their buggy and leaving. Sheriff Griffith went down this morning and secured warrants for the Belks but was unable to find them. Two bullet holes were in the temple of Hunter and one or more in his body.

Hunter is the man who a few months ago ran away with his sister-in-law. Some weeks later he and Stack, the man who was with him yesterday, had a fight at Tradesville and Hunter was shot in the face. The two were driving about the neighborhood yesterday and had a keg of cider in their buggy. The Belks are reported to have been driving about looking for them, presumably for the purpose of settling a dispute that one of them had had with Hunter some time ago. They are not of the same family that Ben Hunter's wife belongs to. Winifred Belk is a boy in his teens. Will Belk has been living in South Carolina and was up on a visit.

There is of course much talk as to how the shooting occurred and nothing but a trial will ever bring out the facts. The body of Hunter was not taken up owing to the belief that the coroner would have to be present, but this was later thought to be unnecessary and the body was to be buried this afternoon.

## A Mysterious Disappearance in Lancaster County.

There is much anxiety and concern in Flat Creek township as to the whereabouts of James Davis, who left his home, about ten miles east of Kershaw, on the 21st of July and has not been heard from since, says the Lancaster News. Sheriff Hunter, in response to a phone message, went to Flat Creek Thursday and spent much time investigating the matter, but found no trace of the missing man. Mr. Davis' wife told the sheriff that her husband said when he left the house on the day of his disappearance that he was going off to look for a home. His gun is missing, but his wife says he did not take it with him when he went off.

There is much speculation as to what become of Davis. Some think that he has been foully dealt with, while others incline to the belief that he has committed suicide. Others are of the opinion that he is still alive and will yet be heard from. He is about 50 years old and has been in bad health for some time.

## Mr. Long Shot in the Shoulder.

At a dispute and scramble at the place of Mr. Vern Long Sunday afternoon, Roscoe Long, a brother of Verne, was shot in the shoulder with a pistol in the hands of Ode Cook, a brother-in-law. It seems that Tom Cook and Vern Long were in a dispute of more or less violence, when the others interfered and a pistol in hands of Ode Cook was discharged, the ball making a painful but not dangerous wound in the shoulder of Roscoe Long. It is claimed the shooting was accidental.