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CURRAN'S STORY OF KILLING.

In His Testimony Before Judge Biggs, Mr. Wilson Curran Gives His Version of the Killing of Clifford Thomas—Three Defendants Admitted to Bail.

Wadesboro Messenger and Intelligencer.

Wilson D. Curran and his son, Walter Curran, and Brady Rushing, who are charged with murdering Clifford Thomas, in Burnsville township, Saturday, the 6th inst., had a hearing Saturday afternoon before Judge J. Crawford Biggs on a writ of habeas corpus, and were admitted to bail, the bond of the elder Curran being placed at \$5,000 and that of young Curran and Rushing at \$2,500 each. All of the accused persons gave the bond required of them and late in the afternoon departed for their respective homes. The bonds were signed by the following gentlemen: J. E. Thomas, B. F. Edwards, M. J. Helms, John W. Curran, G. W. Rushing.

All the parties to the tragedy live in Union county, and had been attending the burial of the remains of Mr. Hosea Ross at Fountain Hill, in this county, not far from the Union county line, the killing taking place on the Anson side of the line while they were returning home.

An outline of the evidence heard by Judge Biggs is given below:

Henry Thomas, the father of the dead man, was the first witness for the State. He testified to having observed at the grave, while the burial of Mr. Ross' remains was in progress, that there was trouble between his sons, Clifford and Randolph Thomas, and Brady Rushing and Walter Curran. Nothing important occurred at this time, however, and he left for his home after the services were over and did not see any more of the young men until after the homicide. Mr. Thomas also told about the trouble between his family and the Currans in regard to the alleged improper proposals made to his little daughter by the elder Curran. He stated that, at the instance of his pastor, he went to Mr. Curran about the matter and that Mr. Curran bitterly denied having said or done anything of an improper nature in regard to the girl.

Randolph Thomas, brother of Clifford Thomas, was the next witness. He also testified to the fact that there was some cursing at the grave on the part of Brady Rushing, his brother and himself. The witness stated that when he and his brother left the burying ground they first went home and then went to Lonnie Thomas', a distance of a mile and a half, after cider, both of them drinking two glasses. They left Lonnie Thomas' for the home of Mr. N. G. Thomas in Anson, near whose home the funeral had taken place. Just as they got to the county line they met Wilson Curran and his 6-year-old son. In the buggy at this time were the witness, Clifford Thomas and Ed Traywick. In a buggy a short distance beyond Wilson Curran were Brady Rushing, Walter Curran and Ed Little. Just as the buggy of the witness passed the buggy of Wilson Curran he called out that he was as game as hell. Their buggy went on a short distance and he pulled the lines and stopped just about the time they got even with the buggy in which were Rushing, Walter Curran and Little. As his buggy stopped the other buggy also stopped and the occupants of both of them jumped out onto the ground as quickly as they could, and Clifford Thomas and Rushing went to striking, or pushing, each other. Just at this time Wilson Curran ran up and struck Clifford, the witness said, whereupon Clifford turned on him and the two men went off down the road a distance of about 30 steps striking at each other. The witness said he did not see his brother hit Curran with brass knuckles and did not see him knock him down. He saw a pistol lying on the ground, which was picked up by Ed Little. This pistol, the witness said, belonged to Rushing.

The clothes of the dead man were then exhibited. These were the man's shirts in the coat, cut in the back and front.

Wilson Little of Union county testified that he saw Wilson Curran and son after the killing; that they came to his house, which is about a mile from the scene of the tragedy; Wilson Curran was bleeding and he asked what was the trouble. Walter Curran replied that those sons of b—s Thomas boys got his father down and were beating him and he could not stand it, and that Ed Little and Brady Rushing were with him.

Mark Moore testified that Brady Rushing and Clifford Thomas had some trouble at a singing on Wednesday night before the homicide.

Two or three other witnesses testified to unimportant facts, after which the State closed.

Evidence for Defendants.

Wilson Curran was the first witness for the defendants. He first gave his version of the trouble in connection with the little Thomas girl, stating positively that there

was absolutely no wrong doing on his part in connection with the child. Continuing he stated that his son, Rushing, Ed Little and himself stopped at the home of N. G. Thomas on leaving the burying ground. They stayed there about 15 minutes and then left, he and his small son a little in advance of Walter Curran, Rushing and Little, all of whom were in a buggy together. Just as he reached the county line he saw the Thomas boys and Ed Traywick coming down the road, their mule at a gallop. He turned out to the side of the road and stopped and just as they passed him one of the Thomas boys hallowed out that they were as game as hell, and we will kill the d—n son of a b—h. Just as they passed they stopped their buggy and jumped to the ground and he left his buggy on the opposite side from them as he was afraid they would shoot him. The place where the buggy, in which were the Thomas boys and Traywick, stopped was right near the buggy his son, Rushing and Little were in. The men in both buggies jumped out and Clifford Thomas and Brady Rushing passed some blows; he advanced some three or four steps toward them and stopped, yet some distance off, when Clifford Thomas left Rushing and ran to him and hit him on the head with brass knuckles; he backed on down the road, Clifford Thomas following, until he was knocked down by Thomas, who then jumped astride of his body. The witness then said that he got his knife out of his pocket and opened it on his hip and commenced to use it. At first he declared he did not cut to kill Thomas, who was all the time striking him with the knuckles, and only gashed up his face. In explaining how the fatal stab was inflicted, he declared that he struck at Thomas' arm to cut the muscle, so as to disable him, and missed the arm and plunged the knife in his chest. The cut in Thomas' back he explained by saying that he cut at the face of his antagonist and that he dodged and the blade struck in his back. After the cut in the breast was inflicted the witness said that Thomas fell to one side and that he turned him over, and with the aid of his son, Walter, got to his feet. He denied that Walter reached him until after the fatal wound had been given, and that Walter at any time touched Thomas.

Walter Curran and Rushing gave about the same account of the tragedy as did the elder Curran. Walter Curran denied that he had a knife and said that he did not at any time cut Thomas.

Ed Little, who is a brother-in-law of Rushing, told about the same story as the other witnesses for the defendants. Walter Curran did not reach his father and Clifford Thomas until he saw Thomas fall over. He also stated that Thomas knocked Curran down and was on him all the time until he saw him fall to one side. Little also testified to picking up a pistol in the road and unbreaching it and throwing it in the road. He said that Randolph Thomas reached for the pistol just as he did and asked him for it.

The attorneys for the defendants, after Little testified, stated that they had no more evidence to offer.

Judge Biggs wanted to know if Ed Traywick, the young man who was in the buggy with the Thomas boys, was not in court; that he wanted to hear the testimony of one disinterested witness, as those who had been examined were either parties to the trouble or kin to them.

Traywick then went on the stand, and it appeared from questions put to him by the judge that if he was any kin to the parties involved in the tragedy it was distant. His testimony differed from that of the defendants in two important particulars. He said that Wilson Curran ran up while Clifford Thomas and Rushing were knocking and took part in the fight. Curran, it will be remembered, testified that Thomas advanced on him and struck him with brass knuckles. Traywick also testified that Walter Curran reached where Thomas had his father down before Thomas fell over and appeared to be reaching for Thomas. Thomas, he said, was on top of Curran. He took a pair of knucks off of Thomas' right hand after he was dead.

Traywick was the last witness examined and after a short speech by Mr. L. D. Robinson, counsel for the defendants, Judge Biggs announced his decision, admitting the prisoners to bail.

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