

THE MONROE JOURNAL

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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR.

A MOST FOUL MURDER.

Cleveland County Farmer and His Wife Slain With Axes—Five Negroes Arrested and Brought to Charlotte Jail.

Before day last Wednesday morning Mr. and Mrs. John Dixon, a young couple living in Cleveland county, about 10 miles from Shelby were most foully beaten to death with axes. Five negroes, three of them thought guilty, and two held as witnesses were at once arrested, and Friday were brought from the Shelby jail to Charlotte, to await trial by a special term of court already called by Governor Kitchin. John and Haek Ross, two of the men, are brothers, and Will Ross is a cousin. The other two, held as witnesses, are grown boys, sons of the others. John Ross confessed. Ross prefaced his story by branding his former statements as a lie out of the cloth. Mrs. Dixon did not tell him when she beckoned to him and old Major Stroud from the window, that two white men had called her husband out to get a mule out of the ditch and he did not see two strange men when he passed the barn. He did see a man at the barn, however, and this man was his cousin, Will Ross. He also saw the dead body of Mr. Dixon lying in front of the barn.

Killing of Mr. Dixon.
Will Ross, so John's confession goes, met him at the barn and admitted that he did the killing, also warning John that he would kill him if he said anything about what he (Will) had told him. Will said that Mr. Dixon had a mortgage on his mule and that he was unable to pay it; that Mr. Dixon had taken a cow from him the year before and he was determined that he should not get his mule. So he planned to commit murder in order to get the mortgage and destroy it, believing that he would then be safe in the possession of the mule. He went to the Dixon home in the dead hours of the night and called to the young husband to come out and get his mule out of the ditch. Mr. Dixon dressed and came out and the two men started towards the barn. Will said he did not get a chance to strike Mr. Dixon with the axe he had picked up for the purpose, and when they neared the barn he said to Mr. Dixon that they would need two axes. Mr. Dixon turned his head for a second and pointed to where another axe was to be found, and on turning back towards the negro he was met with a crushing blow on the left temple, the blunt side of the axe being used. Mr. Dixon went down instantly and Ross made a hasty examination of his pockets but failed to locate the desired mortgage. Foiled here, he rushed to the house in further search for the much wanted paper.

Sent To Join Husband.
Mrs. Dixon was awakened and, fearing that she would recognize him, the negro dealt her a blow with the same instrument that had felled her husband. He then carefully searched the house and still failed to discover the mortgage. Realizing that his dastardly efforts had been in vain, he returned to his home and later came back to the scene to see, according to John Ross, if anybody had found out what he had done.

John Ross, so he alleges, then went to Mr. T. D. Dixon's, father of the murdered man, and he gave the alarm, and while John was gone it is the general belief that Will once more went to the house and sent the young mother to join her husband in the land beyond, striking her twice in the center of the forehead, first with the blade and again with the poll of the axe.

Will Ross Arrested.
Will Ross stoutly denied that he was in any way implicated in the murder. The presence of the miniature arsenal and a number of axes which were also found in the room, could not be accounted for, however, and the authorities are positive in the belief that, so far as Will Ross is concerned, John Ross' story is correct. It is further believed, though, that John Ross was also a party to the crime and possibly Haek, whose

tracks, as expressed by a well-known farmer who arrived at the home shortly after the alarm was spread, were seen "gwine and coming." Whether or not either of the two boys, Pig Ross and Cullen Mull, participated in the murder is not known, but it is firmly believed that they know all about the crime and both will be held as material witnesses pending further investigation. Mull contradicted the story of Haek Ross in that he says Haek was away from home for some time during the middle of the night, Haek saying that he never left home, although he got up at two o'clock.

After the negro had been arrested, and while waiting for the coroner's jury the Shelby crowd got restless and signs of lynching filled the air. Judge Webb, who, with others made speeches, said: "Fellow citizens, I take it that you have gathered here today to hear the coroner's jury's report relative to the horrible murder of Mr. and Mrs. John Dixon. I have always been proud that I was born in North Carolina, and proud that I was born in Cleveland county. It is the duty of all good citizens if possible to find out who committed the deed, but it is never wise to take the law in their own hands. If they do, they will have a pall that will follow them in life and bother them in sleep. I recall the unpleasant consequences in Rutherford county that followed a lynching. Men had to leave their wives and children. I hope that no citizen in the county has thought about lynching. It is a horrible and outrageous crime, but we also have vigilant officers and clean men who will sit on the jury and give the man or men a speedy trial and justice. I have a telegram in my hand from Gov. W. W. Kitchin calling a special term of court to try the men we have arrested. There is no danger of a mob getting an innocent man and destroying evidence that may lead up to the conviction of the guilty party. Mr. Ambrose Cline, father of the young wife and mother tells me that he hopes there will be no violence and he wants the law to take its course. We have the right party; a court can be held in two weeks, so I beg of you, as good citizens, not to stain the fair name of Cleveland, but go home and wait."

The Observer correspondent had a talk with old Major Stroud, who passed the Dixon home with John Ross and was beckoned to by Mrs. Dixon, and it now seems certain that two attacks were made on her. Stroud, who is an honest and industrious negro of nearly 70 years of age and bears a good reputation, says that when he saw Mrs. Dixon she had her head in her left hand, but there was no wound on her forehead. Later, when neighbors arrived upon the scene, she was found sitting on the side of her bed in a dying condition, with blood flowing freely from a gaping wound in the forehead. She seemed to understand what was said to her and made a weak effort to speak, but could not. She was laid on the bed and death ended her sufferings in a few moments.

This story, as told by Major Stroud, is borne out by the nature of the wounds. Mrs. Dixon was struck on the left temple and the temple bone was crushed, and it is probable that she had her hand up to this wound. She couldn't have lived until neighbors arrived if the wounds on her forehead had been inflicted before John Ross and Stroud passed the house.

It seems that Major's good reputation has got him into trouble and that is another circumstance pointing to John Ross' connection with the crime. In going to the woods to chop, John had to go a mile out of his way to go by Major's and his axe did not need sharpening badly, as he said. So it is believed that John Ross intended to carry Major by the house and find the dead bodies and the testimony of Major as to the discovery would save him. His discovery would, though, by finding Mrs. Dixon alive, and it is the accepted theory that either John or Will Ross return-

ed to the house after Major had gone to Mr. Dennis Wright's for help and struck the blows that made the murder double.

The Ross clan of negroes have always borne a bad reputation in Cleveland county. They are said to have Indian blood in their veins and have been in the toils of the law time and time again. A brother of Haek and John, Quint Ross, served a 7-year sentence for killing another negro about ten years ago and John Ross was shot himself some time ago in quarrel. Haek and Will Ross appear to be about 40 years of age and John claims to be 27. The two boys, Pig Ross and Cullen Mull, who are held as material witnesses, are yet in their teens. They all have a chocolate complexion and sharp, piercing eyes that seem to be always looking for trouble. On the train going to Charlotte today they exhibited no signs of nervousness and didn't seem to at all realize their predicament.

Another Witness Comes Forward.

A Shelby special of Dec. 17, to the Charlotte Observer, says: Bert Gardner is the last negro to be arrested in connection with the double murder of Mr. and Mrs. John Dixon, the prominent Cleveland county farmers. Gardner is being held as a material witness against the Ross negroes, John and Will, who are held in the Gastonia jail, and Haek, who rests for safe-keeping in the Charlotte toms, as suspects of the dastardly murder.

Gardner voluntarily told his neighbors shortly after the affair that he heard John and Haek planning the killing at a corn shucking at Mark Beam's three or four weeks ago. As soon as the officers heard of this evidence, they brought Gardner here as a material witness in the prosecution. He is an old negro, well thought of in the community and much will rest on his testimony.

Gardner says John and Haek Ross had their heads close together and were talking in an undertone about Mr. Dixon taking their mule and meat, and they made the threat that Mr. Dixon would not live until Christmas. When this conversation was heard, the crowd at the corn shucking had gone and the Ross negroes did not know Gardner was near enough to hear them. Gardner says he would have told it before this, but that Haek is a talkative negro and he did not put any faith in the threat.

Everything is quiet in the county now, but people continue to discuss the various threads of evidence, and many drove to the desolated home today to look upon the scene of the dastardly crime. Relatives have taken charge of the home and put it in order. The live stock is being cared for by Mr. T. D. Dixon, father of the deceased, and the one-year-old girl baby, that its dead mother, will want for nothing.

The county commissioners will take steps this week toward securing a jury for the special term of court ordered to convene January 8 for the purpose of trying the Ross negroes. The citizens appreciate the efforts of the officials to give a speedy trial.

Financial Statement.

Financial report by the Vice-President of the Union Association of Women's Missionary Societies for the quarter ending November 30th, 1911.

First Church, Monroe, W. M. S., \$87.50; Y. W. A., \$21.25; Sunbeams, \$20.00; R. A., \$15.30.
Marshville, W. M. S., \$12.35; Sunbeams, \$2.15; R. A., \$3.05.
Shiloh, W. M. S., \$4.50.
Mountain Spring, W. M. S., \$1.30
Mill Creek, W. M. S., \$4.50.
Meadow Branch, Sunbeams, \$3.
Total \$174.90.
Mrs. F. B. Ashcraft.

The students of Mineral Springs school will give an entertainment next Friday night. The music pupils, assisted by their teacher, Prof. D. L. Sharp of Charlotte, will furnish music. Proceeds will go towards buying black boards, etc., for school room. Admission 10 and 15 cents.

Indian Trail News.

(Correspondence.)

Mr. L. E. Huggins of Marshville spent Sunday with his brother, Prof. T. J. Huggins.

Miss Maud Hargett spent last week with relatives near Mint Hill.

Miss Annie Crowell and little sisters, Allea and Martha spent Saturday night and Sunday with their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Davis, in the Union neighborhood.

Mrs. T. A. Boyd and little son, T. A., Jr., have been spending some time at the home of Mrs. Boyd's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Guin of Unionville.

Mr. A. C. Hargett, who has been with the Southern Power Co. for some time, is spending a few weeks at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Covington Boyd of Charlotte were guests of their cousin, Mrs. J. R. Dellinger, last week.

Mr. and Mrs. John Gurley and little daughter Kathleen have returned home after visiting relatives in Columbia, S. C.

Misses Lillie and Annie Porter were guests for a few days of their sister, Mrs. Sam Shamon of Antioch.

Mr. Z. A. Pressley, carrier on route 1, has been unable to attend to his duties for several days on account of injuries sustained by a runaway horse.

Mr. J. M. Harkey and family are occupying their pretty new residence which has recently been completed.

The Christmas entertainment to be given by the students of Weddington Academy will be on Thursday night of this week.

Write for The Journal.

The Journal would like for more of its farmer friends to write letters for publication in the paper. It would be a great help to the farming interests of the county if the farmers would each give his brother farmers the benefit of his knowledge and experience in various matters pertaining to farming and farm life. And the farmers wives, too, have many good ideas that they could impart to all the other farmers' wives in the county by using The Journal. We would like to have letters from our friends in all sections of the county. Turn over a new leaf and start the new year by not only reading the paper more closely and carefully than ever before but also by sending us an occasional communication for publication. The only requirements we make are these: Always sign your name, write only on one side of the paper and never deal in personalities. If you do not want your name to appear to the letter in the paper, we will omit it upon request. We simply want to know, for our protection, where each letter comes from.

Meeting of Teacher's Association.

The second meeting of the Teachers' Association convened at the Graded School building Sat. Dec. 16. Notwithstanding the inclement weather, the meeting was a success. Twenty-six were present and the program was carried out, although some of the principal ones on the program could not come. Prof. Nesbit called on a number of the teachers for short talks on the Eight Factors of Study as outlined in McMurry's "How to Study". All the talks were interesting and helpful.

"The study of children and its results" was very ably discussed by Miss Cora Laney and others. Miss Laney emphasized the importance of child study and said that teachers should be careful to study the children in the classroom, in the playground and in the home. Prof. Nesbit then concluded by asking and discussing the pertinent question—Should we study the child properly, what would be the effect on the child, on the community and on the country?
T. J. Huggins (Sec'y.)

Messrs. H. B. Adams, C. B. Adams, and W. J. Rudge and their families will leave Friday for Concord to spend Christmas with Dr. and Mrs. W. C. Houston.

Marriage of Miss Fairley and Mr. Beckley.

In a ceremony of beauty and impressiveness Miss Katie Lee Fairley and Mr. J. Harry Beckley were wedded Thursday evening at eight o'clock in St. Paul's Episcopal church, Rev. Wm. H. Ball of Concord, an intimate friend of the family officiated.

The church had been tastefully decorated under the skillful directions of Mr. Code Morgan. Ropes of cedar, dotted here and there with yellow roses, entwined the altar rail and a large arch at the gate to the altar. Suspended from the arch was a large bell of yellow roses under which the marriage vows were spoken.

At the appointed hour, a quartet composed of Messrs. Frank and Henry Fairley, Fred Smith and Will Love sang very sweetly "O Perfect Love."

Mendelssohn's wedding march was artistically played by Mrs. J. C. Sikes as the bridal party entered. First came the pretty little ribbon children Misses Sarah Russell and Amelia Dillon and Masters McLean Fairley and Braxton Laney. These were followed by the ushers, Mr. J. C. Sikes with Mr. Locke Everett and Mr. G. B. Caldwell with Mr. J. P. Parker. Next came Miss Corine Fairley, maid of honor, beautifully gowned in yellow crepe de chene, carrying an arm bouquet of white carnations. She was followed by the dame of honor, Mrs. N. C. English, wearing white crepe de chene with yellow trimmings and carrying yellow roses. Then came the dainty little flower girls, Misses Celeste Armfield and Catherine English. They wore white batiste dresses trimmed with white valenciennes lace with yellow sashes and hair ribbons and carried baskets filled with yellow rose petals, the handles of which were tied with white chiffon ribbon.

Master John Wilson Fairley, the handsome nephew of the bride, carried the ring which was tied to a large yellow chrysanthemum.

The bride entered with her brother, Mr. John M. Fairley, Jr., who gave her away. She was met at the altar by the groom who entered from the side, accompanied by Mr. Albert Redfern, who served as best man. The beautiful ring ceremony of the Episcopal church was used. At its conclusion the march from Tannhauser was rendered.

The bride was handsomely gowned in white satin on train with pearls and point lace trimmings. Her long tulle veil was caught with ribbons of the valley and she carried a shower bouquet of white sweet peas.

On the following afternoon an informal reception was given at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Fairley.

Mr. and Mrs. Beckley each have hundreds of warm friends who wish them a happy wedded life.

Farmers' State Union.

The Farmers' Union of the State met at Wilson last week. The following officers were elected for next year:

President, H. Q. Alexander of Matthews; J. M. Templeton, vice president, Cary; secretary and treasurer, E. C. Fairis, Charlotte; State organizer, J. Z. Green, Marshville; business agent, J. R. Rives, Sanford.

Executive Committee: W. G. Crowder of Wake, W. B. Gibson of Iredell, C. C. Wright of Wilkes, I. P. Coggin of Chatham and W. H. Moore of Pitt.

President Barrett, of the National Union, took ground that the plan of holding cotton proposed by the New York bankers would not work. President Barrett stated in substance that the plan submitted by the financiers was not in line with the proposition he laid before them and he thought they wanted too much and their restrictions were harder than the farmers would be willing to submit. He urged the farmers to reduce their acreage, raise their own supplies and thus get in position to hold their cotton on the farms.

At the Dixie to-night, The Millionaire, and Too Many Burglars, also illustrated song by Mr. Henry Fairley.

Christmas Whiskey.

If I buy your practice with a quart of whiskey once or twice a week and keep you tanked up to control your good will, you force my service upon your wife and children who may prefer some other doctor.

The lowest possible basis upon which to select a family physician is the basis of whiskey prescriptions for yourself.

Any doctor can scribble off a liquor prescription, but it requires a certain amount of brains, knowledge and experience to handle a case of desperate illness.

Please, for heaven's sake, don't ask me to debauch and degrade the medical profession by bartering and trading whiskey prescriptions for practice.

Only one kind of medical practice is meritorious and gives us a sense of genuine comfort and that is when we can find out what is the matter and relieve or cure the patient.

Don't force our services upon your wife and children just because you get a quart once a week.

Hereafter I wish to limit my liquor practice to not over three prescriptions in one day. This will cure many.

I desire not to prescribe whiskey for any fellow that will do and say things under whiskey that he would not otherwise do and say; for any fellow that has been intoxicated within two years; for any fellow that has gone home drunk, abused his wife and children or cursed in their presence, kicked the door open, broken any article of furniture or any dish, kicked the dog, thrown a shoe at the cat, fired a pistol on the public highway; or cut the fool in general; for any minor or any unmarried young man under twenty without permission from his parents.

If every wife and mother who has a drunken husband or son will write the doctor a request or demand not to prescribe whiskey for hers, it will have its effect.

Many a poor enslaved animal who is an inebriate by birth and environment has ordered two to five gallons to help him as a hog to celebrate the birth of Christ could cut a small cedar, use the whiskey money to load it with well selected articles and thereby wreath the whole family in smiles and good will.

This is not a thrust at any man, but only a request and a reminder.

Very truly,
H. D. Stewart.

Resolutions.

Whereas, our heavenly father, in His providence, has removed from our midst Floda Ann Fowler, the wife of Sov. J. B. Fowler, a member of Price's Mill Camp No. 162 W. O. W., we, the members of the Camp, desire to extend to Sov. Fowler our sympathy in his great loss, therefore, be it Resolved,

First, That we assure him that he and his little helpless children have our heart felt sympathy in the death of the wife and mother, and we pray that God may sustain them in their affliction.

Second, That we bow in humility to the will of the Father, knowing that he is too wise to err; that he has said that all things shall work together for the good of them that love him.

Third, That a copy of these resolutions be given the bereaved family, a copy be placed upon the minutes of the Camp, and a copy be sent to The Monroe Journal for publication.—R. B. Cuthbertson, W. A. Biggers, and C. T. Winchester.

Fire in Stanly.

(Correspondence.)

The house of Mr. John Tucker in western Stanly that was occupied by Mr. Adam A. Hathecock, was burned last Saturday afternoon. Mr. Hathecock was gone to preaching, and his wife and three small children were at home, but the house was in a flame before they gave the alarm. Some neighbors arrived just in time to save two trunks, a sewing machine and a few other articles. Just last July Mr. Tucker's barn and granary in Montgomery county, with all his wheat and oats, was burned.