

The Wilson News.

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SHOT DOWN FROM AMBUSH

CAPTAIN CALVIN BARNES MURDERED AT DUSK—ASSASSIN YET UNKNOWN.

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN

Active Steps Taken To Secure The Criminal—The Bloodhounds From Northampton Fail To Get The Scent.

A foul and terrible crime was committed on the outskirts of Wilson last Monday night, and the husband and father lay in the darkened chamber of death and the widow and bereaved family were in the depth of sorrow, not only because of a loved one gone, but because of the horrible deed of which he was the victim.

Just about dusk Monday night Capt Calvin Barnes, with his two little grandchildren, Henry Ashley Young, aged eleven, and Frank Young, aged eight, were in a buggy coming over the new road from Captain Barnes' farm and were within half a mile of Wilson. Frank was sitting by his grandfather's side and Henry Ashley was standing behind with his hands on his grandfather's shoulder. All were laughing and chatting, thinking of the welcome that awaited them at home.

As the horse started down the hill just beyond Hominy Swamp there came the sudden spiteful crack of a gun and Captain Barnes lunged forward saying, "I'm shot." The reins hung feebly in his hands and the horse, a spirited animal, went rapidly forward. Most fortunately a negro man close at hand had heard the shot and hearing three times the pain stricken exclamation of some one "Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my!" ran out into the road and saw the horse coming swiftly down the hill. He recognized Captain Barnes and ran towards the buggy seizing the reins and bracing the stricken man who was leaning from the side of his vehicle. Ned Bunch, the negro, asked what was the matter and Captain Barnes told him, saying "I don't see what any body wanted to shoot me for." He then asked Bunch to help get him home, and the negro climbed into the buggy and with his arm around Captain Barnes started for Wilson. Seeing some negro women at the branch he called to them to go for more help, but none reached him, though the women ran for aid.

Reaching Captain Barnes' home on Nash Street, his grandchildren jumped from the buggy and ran into the house, exclaiming "Grandpa's shot!" Mr. William Walls, a son-in-law of Captain Barnes, had seen the buggy coming, but nothing unusual seemed the matter till he heard the exclamation from the children and then he saw that Captain Barnes was leaning forward, held by the negro. In a moment he was bit for medical help while Captain Barnes' son, James D., with the help of friends and the negro Bunch carefully lifted the wounded man from the buggy to a cot and carried him to his room, where his wife and daughters, despite the terrible shock of such a home coming, did what they could till a physician arrived.

Dr. N. B. Herring was the first to arrive, and a little later Dr. Nathan Anderson. Dr. Herring made an examination and found that the ball had entered back of the left shoulder,

and ranging through the body was just under the skin near the right breast, evidently having passed through the left lung. The ball was extracted and seemed to be a minnie ball, perhaps a home made bullet. It was as large as the front joint of a man's thumb, weighed an ounce and one eighth, and had evidently been fired from a shot gun or a musket.

The physicians soon recognized that the wound was a fatal one, and that there was no hope. They did all in their power to keep the sufferer easy and the struggle for life went on till about half past two when Captain Barnes breathed his last. His faithful and devoted wife had sat for hours holding his hands, but when her gallant husband was no more, her wonderful composure gave way, and with her daughters she shed tears of deepest grief.

The citizens of Wilson and the officials had not been idle. Sheriff Sharp had immediately wired to Raleigh for blood hounds, and Mr. Geo. D. Green, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, had wired to Maj. T. L. Emry at Weldon to secure dogs from the Northampton State farm to put on the trail of the assassin. No dogs could be secured from Raleigh and it was found that the dogs could not be brought from the State farm in time to catch the regular train. Supt. J. B. Kenly, of the A. C. L. was wired and a special train was secured to bring the blood hounds. Maj. Emry came from Weldon to Halifax, having wired ahead to bring the dogs from the Northampton farm there. These were finally secured and three dogs, in charge of Maj. Emry and two men from the farm, reached here at half past one. These were taken to the scene of the crime, but the ground was so dry and the wind had been so high during the night that they were unable to get the trail of the murderer. Early Tuesday morning they were returned to Northampton.

Captain Barnes was able to talk to friends early in the night, and told them of some words that had passed during the morning between him and Mr. John Jefferson, who was in charge of one of his farms.

A warrant was issued for Mr. Jefferson and Sheriff Sharp with some deputies went after him. He was at home in bed when called, but very quickly dressed and came with the officers to Wilson. An examination of his house for weapons failed to reveal any. Reaching here he was questioned as to his movements during the day. He told of the words between Capt. Barnes and himself, said neither was mad and that he had seen nothing of Captain Barnes during the afternoon, but had spent the time rambling over his corn field till about dusk when he went home. Geo. Williams, a white man working with him corroborated his testimony. Jefferson was examined today before a magistrate.

There were many callers at Captain Barnes' during the night, and large crowds were congregated at various points waiting for developments, great sympathy being expressed for the afflicted family and the horrible deed being condemned in the strongest terms.

Tuesday morning searching parties took to the woods and near the spot where the shooting occurred pieces of cloth used for gun wadding were found. The surrounding woods were thoroughly searched, until finally Mr. Charles Best one of the searchers,

found a double barreled shot gun in the crack of the fence near the old Nadal place where a Mr. Mercer now lives. One barrel had recently been shot and examination showed that the other was loaded with small shot, put in a long time ago. It is reported that Mr. Mercer says the gun is his and that he loaned it to Mr. Jefferson on Monday. Mr. Jefferson in his statement Monday night denied having had any gun, and the Coroner's quest, which began at four o'clock, Tuesday afternoon, developed other important facts.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

From the time of the finding of the gun until four o'clock Tuesday afternoon crowds were collected on the streets discussing the dastardly killing of Captain Barnes. The gun had been recognized as one belonging to L. R. Mercer, a brother-in-law of Joseph Jefferson and people were putting things together and the drift of opinion was that when Jefferson was arrested the guilty man had been found.

Dr. John K. Ruffin, the coroner of the county began the inquest at four o'clock with a jury composed of Messrs. J. G. Roney, W. D. Hackney, W. L. Banks, W. F. Felton, B. E. Howard and P. B. Deans. A better set of men to judicially investigate the killing of Captain Barnes could not have been found. Mr. S. A. Woodard took part by request in the examination of the witnesses and Mr. H. G. Connor, Jr., took down the evidence.

The first witness was Ed Bunch, the negro who assisted in getting Captain Barnes and his grandchildren to Wilson after the shooting. His testimony gave no clue.

Drs. N. B. Herring and Nathan Anderson next testified as to the wound, the bullet extracted and the cause of the death, ascribing it, of course, to the injury done by the ball. Dr. Anderson, who examined the body after death said that the ball had fractured the left shoulder blade and passing through the body broke some of the ribs. It was taken out near the right breast.

Charles Best testified to having found gun wadding near the spot where Captain Barnes was shot, and later on to finding a shot gun near a fence in the woods just this side of the house where L. R. Mercer now lives.

L. R. Mercer, brother-in-law of Jefferson, testified that Joseph Jefferson was at his, Mercer's home, between two and three o'clock. That he asked for Mercer's shot gun as he wanted to kill squirrels that were ruining his corn. He said that he did not loan the gun to Jefferson, but that he told him that anyone who was careful and would return it all right was welcome to it. He left Jefferson at the house and went to work. Did not see Jefferson leave. Jefferson knew where the gun was. Did not tell any one that he lent Jefferson the gun and did not look for it Monday night. Heard no shot about dusk.

Mrs. Delphia Mercer, wife of L. R. Mercer, testified to Jefferson being at the house after two o'clock, that he had little to say, and did not ask her about any fodder hands, nor say a word about hiring one Abe Rackley to work in his corn. Said that she left her husband with Jefferson and that when Mercer came to the place where they were working tobacco that he said that he had loaned his gun to Jefferson, who was to give

him some of the squirrels. She denied having looked for the gun after the shooting was known of, and that she had said she was afraid that "Red" Mercer would get into trouble about lending the gun to Jefferson. Said Mercer told her of lending the gun to Jefferson in the presence of the hired man Williams, and that she had not been told by Mrs. Celia Edwards not to say anything about Mercer lending the gun to Jefferson. Her evidence and her husband's conflicted in material points.

John Williams, a white man who was working for Jefferson told of the words between Captain Barnes and Joe Jefferson. Said neither seemed mad. He also said that he never heard Mercer tell his wife that he had loaned his gun to Jefferson.

Miss Lena Walston, who stays at Mercer's, told that Mrs. Mercer had talked with her Monday night about Jefferson having borrowed the gun. She knew Monday night that the gun was gone.

Mrs. Celia Walston, a neighbor, testified that Mrs. Mercer had told her of Jefferson having the gun, and wanted her to say nothing about Mercer having lent it to him. Jefferson was at her house from 8 to 9 Monday night.

J. F. Eason testified that at the request of Sheriff Sharp he had drawn a load from the gun now in court. That one barrel had been used recently and that the other was loaded with bird shot.

Bennie Mercer, son of L. R. Mercer, testified that Jefferson left his father's house at three o'clock exactly, as the clock struck then.

William Edwards testified that Jefferson told at dinner that he was going to town Monday afternoon to look for fodder hands and did not see him till night again.

Mr. J. F. Edwards testified that Jefferson without any inducement had made a statement in the office of Mr. S. A. Woodard, that Jefferson said he had gone to Mercer's to get a fodder hand, and had asked Mrs. Mercer to let him have Rackley, that he had neither gun nor pistol, and did not know there was one on the place.

This concluded the evidence and the jury retired and brought in a verdict that Calvin Barnes came to his death by a shot gun wound inflicted by John J. Jefferson who was lying in wait when he fired the shot.

Jefferson was committed to jail without bail for trial at the next term of the criminal court.

Between eight and nine o'clock, in order to remove any chance of lynching, Deputy Sheriff William Wells and M. J. F. Edwards took Jefferson from the city lock up, and driving round the outskirts of the city went to Lucama, where they boarded the Southern train for Raleigh. In Raleigh they put Jefferson in charge of the city authorities who will place him in the county jail for safe keeping.

Mr. Wm. Wells talked with him on the trip. At first Jefferson vehemently denied the crime, laying great stress upon the fact that no one had seen him get a gun or have a gun. Later on he ceased to deny the crime.

Twenty-Seventh Off.

Harrisburg, Pa., August 29.—The Twenty-seventh Volunteers started from Camp Meade to-day on three special trains for duty in the Philippines.

HE CONFESSES HIS CRIME

JOSEPH JEFFERSON IN JAIL IN RALEIGH—ABUSES HIS VICTIM.

HAS NO SORROW FOR HIS BLOODY DEED

Laid In Wait For Captain Barnes—Shot Him Because He Was Mad About Dresses And Crops—Assassin's Story.

From Raleigh Post, second edition Wednesday morning, August 30th.

The murderer of Captain Calvin Barnes, of Wilson, N. C., was brought here this morning for safe keeping.

J. J. Jefferson is the name of the murderer. He arrived here this morning at 2:50 over the Southern Railway from the east in custody of Special Officers Jake Edwards and Wm. Wells, of Wilson.

The prisoner was taken out of the Wilson county jail shortly after dark last night. The talk of lynching had become rife, and it was found necessary to remove the prisoner, who was quietly driven to a station nine miles this side of Wilson, where he was placed aboard the first train. The officers came direct through to Raleigh with their charge.

To a representative of The Post this morning Jefferson acknowledged that he killed Captain Barnes. The prisoner told his story from behind the bars in the city station house without displaying the least bit of concern. He was cold blooded in his recital of the facts and had only harsh words for his victim.

Jefferson is a tall, sparsely-built man. He has a grizzley brownish beard; that conceals his white face. His eyes are positively wicked.

"Did you really kill Captain Barnes?" the prisoner was asked.

"I shot at him," he replied without the least hesitation. "They swore this thing on me, and I reckon I killed him."

"I have been farming for Captain Barnes. I had a whole lot of trouble with him. He has bothered me all the year. He wouldn't buy supplies as he promised me, and refused to help me. He has interfered with my hands and has always given me trouble."

"He was the only enemy in the world that I had. He can't be any more. Nobody ever saw any peace with him. Over five hundred people down there are glad he is dead. Yes, over five thousand, it all was known. But he won't bother anybody else. He can't now. He's a kinder leader in the town. He belonged to the Barneses and I reckon some of them is glad, too. He was mean enough."

"He wanted to make me fight work in tobacco. I wouldn't stand it. I got tired of it all and I shot at him."

"When did it occur?"

"I met him about dinner and told him to bring me some cloth to make my daughters some dresses. He said he wouldn't do it."

"That night I met him and asked him if he had bought the dresses. Said he hadn't and wasn't going to. I told him I was going to kill him and shot him."

"Did you kill him?"

"I don't know. They say he's dead."

"Did Captain Barnes have one of

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