

## Needleman Taken From Jail and Mutilated by Mob

### Three Men Arrested Monday on Charges of Being Mob Members; Expect Other Arrests to Follow

#### Mob Uses Bolt Clippers And Easily Gains Access To Jail; Town Surprised

Victim Carried Mile Out of Town and Forced to Submit to Serious Operation; Walked Back to City Unaided; In Serious Condition At Hospital in Washington

The most brutal, the most irrational, and the most deplorable act that has ever been committed in Martin County occurred Saturday night when Joseph Needleman, a tobacco salesman, was removed from the local jail and carried in the country and castrated for an alleged criminal assault upon Miss Effie Griffin, of Griffins Township, several days ago.

The jail was broken open Sunday morning about 2.30 by a mob supposed to be residents of Martin and Lenoir counties. Mr. D. R. Gurganus, the night policeman, observed several cars assembling near the courthouse, and he immediately went to the home of Sheriff Roberson to get assistance in combating the mob, but before he could get back to Main Street the mob had already secured Needleman and were out of town. The mob first visited the home of Sheriff Roberson, but upon his refusal to present the keys to the jail they proceeded to get the accused man by tearing down the back wall of the jail and cutting the bolts to the jail doors by a pair of powerful bolt clippers.

The crowd carried Needleman out to the Skewarkee Church, and the road was blocked in both directions until the cowardly and unmanly act was committed by some member of the mob. Evidently the nerve of the mob was shattered by the soberness and coolness of their victim, in that they had trouble in getting some member of the gang to use the knife. He voluntarily yielded to the operation, and afterwards walked the mile to town to receive medical aid.

Upon reaching town Needleman asked that a doctor be called. The local physicians, Doctors Warren, Rhodes and York, and Doctors D. T. Tayloe and D. T. Tayloe, Jr., of Washington, performed an operation and dressed the man's wounds, and about 11 o'clock Sunday morning he was taken to the Washington Hospital.

Needleman displayed untold nerve and courage in the face of the avenging mob. When he was asked to take his choice of being shot or mutilated, he replied by saying that they were the doctors and could act as they pleased. He withstood the pain of the operation by bracing himself in the dirt and sand with the aid of his hands and feet. After suffering the agony administered by the brutes he got up and walked back to town in the cold, unaided by anyone. He walked into the Britt Hotel and smilingly asked for a doctor. He con-

versed freely with the physicians and spectators before the operation, and remarked about the cowardly act of the mob.

Nothing has ever caused so much excitement and commotion in the history of the county. A great deal of speculation and criticism has been made, all the way from condemning the county for not providing a better jail to Sheriff Roberson for negligence and carelessness in not providing protection in placing a guard over the prisoner. Others have claimed that he should have been removed to some other county for protection. It now seems that all suggestions of carelessness have some merit in them and that they were not without foundation, yet those who knew the circumstances and the people related to the parties had no idea of violence. Numerous people, it is alleged, claim that they had seen suspicious actions by several people, causing them to suspect an outrage by some unknown party. However, there are always numbers of the "I-wasn't-surprised" and "I-told-you-so" parties springing up after any thing has happened. The pity of it is that they didn't express some of these suspicions before it was too late to the proper authorities. The sheriff says that nothing appeared that indicated even the slightest danger of any disorder taking place. The fact that it was thought that some of the accused man's friends had spirited him away when the news of the jail breaking was first learned would seem to bear the sheriff out in his supposition.

Needleman stated that there were about ten men in the mob that performed the deed, the others standing guard on the highway. Sheriff Roberson insisted that Needleman reveal to him the names of the parties involved, but he claimed that he could not definitely say, as he did not know any members of the mob. However, after the sheriff left the doctor's office he gave the doctors the names of three men whom he claimed to have recognized. Johnny Gurkin, John A. Griffin, of Griffins Township, Martin County, and Fernie W. Sparrow, Jr.,

#### Statement From Sheriff H. T. Roberson Asks Investigation Before Condemnation

To the People of Martin County:

Since the fearful tragedy which occurred in our county early Sunday morning I am told many rumors have been circulated in the county which would indicate that I had been careless in not providing further protection for the prisoner, Joe Needleman, who was the victim of the mob.

No one regrets more than I that such a violent act has been performed which caused such a blot on the good name of the county.

Nothing had appeared to even cause the slightest suspicion that there would be any violence, and for that reason I followed exactly the same course in taking care of this prisoner that I have always followed by putting him in the county jail.

All I ask of my fellowmen is a fair and impartial investigation of the entire matter. I am willing for the people to know all my acts and assure them that I have at all times tried to carry out the laws as required of me as an officer.

Very Respectfully,  
H. T. ROBERSON, Sheriff.

#### Two Well-Known Men of Griffins Township in Jail; Other Man From Kinston

Johnny Gurkin, John A. Griffin, and F. W. Sparrow Held in Greenville Without Bail; Three Suspects All Relatives of Alleged Victim of Attack; All Claim Good Alibis

Solicitor Donnel Gilliam, of Tarboro, was called to our city yesterday to investigate the jail breaking and the action of the mob Saturday night. He went fully into the details of the case and found sufficient evidence to advise the sheriff to procure warrants for three men. Sheriff Roberson swore out warrants before Justice of the Peace A. T. Cawford for the arrest of Fernie W. Sparrow, of Kinston, and John Gurkin and John A. Griffin, both of Martin County. The sheriff and several deputies went at once and arrested the men, taking them to Greenville, where they are now in jail.

Sparrow is a resident of Kinston, a young man about 21 years of age. He married Miss Effie Griffin, the young lady upon whom the assault is alleged to have been committed. They were married at the home of the parents of the young lady Sunday March 29. The police of Kinston speak well of Sparrow, and say that he is well thought of in his home town.

John Gurkin is a brother-in-law of Miss Gurkin, and is about 25 or 30 years old. He is regarded as one of the most respectable young farmers in this section. He says that he will be able to present a preponderance of evidence to prove that he was not in the game. It is stated that he was at the home of Elder Stone, and he will be able to show or prove by numerous people that he spent the night at the home of Mr. Stone.

Young Griffin, who is only about 18 years old, is a brother of the young Griffin girl. He will be able to offer an alibi similar to that of Mr. Gurkin.

Rumor has it that the State will be able to show by testimony of one John Robert Jones, who was traveling the road where the deed was committed, that Gurkin was in the mob. He claimed that he stopped, not knowing the facts of the situation, asked if he could render any assistance, thinking that they were having car trouble, and Gurkin ordered him to move on. The officers are making every effort to apprehend and take into custody the guilty parties and every thread of evidence is being worked out to the end that justice may be done and the law vindicated. Gurkin, Griffin, and Sparrow are now in the Greenville jail, being held without bond, pending the outcome of Needleman's injuries.

#### SCOUT MEETING AGAIN TONIGHT

Prospective Scout Leaders Taking Training Course Under Regional Director

Scout Executive John H. Wilcox, for the Pamlico Council, Boy Scouts of America, was here Tuesday night and had a meeting with a number of men who are interested in this phase of work. Two patrols were organized. The Eagle Patrol, with Simon Lilley as patrol leader, and the Ram Patrol, with Rev. E. D. Dodd as patrol leader. This is a kind of a training course that is being given by Mr. Wilcox for the benefit of leaders of the Boy Scout organizations in the county. It is hoped that a larger number of men will attend these meetings from all sections of the county and get the benefit of these interesting meetings that are being conducted by Mr. Wilcox that these leaders may go out and perfect a number of organizations throughout the county. The meeting will be held at the graded school building each Tuesday night. Come Tonight.

#### NEGRO HURT IN DRINKING SPREE

Hit on Head With An Axe; Now in Critical Condition at Rocky Mount Hospital

Walter Wilson, a colored man, was hit with an axe on Saturday, March 21, by Monk Clark, another colored resident of Everetts. The blow was a result of a general drinking spree indulged in by the two negroes. Wilson is now in the Rocky Mount Hospital, and his condition is regarded as exceedingly critical.

He was hit by Clark with the axe, and for several days his condition was not regarded as dangerous, until he began having fits Saturday. Blood clots and a fractured bone were found to be pressing the brain.

He who hesitates may not be completely lost, but it's a safe bet that a few of his arms and legs will be missing soon.

of Kinston, to whom Miss Griffin was married Sunday, were arrested yesterday and are being held in the jail at Greenville without bond.

Needleman, who now lives in Kinston, is a traveling salesman for the P. Lorillard Tobacco Co. His parents, it is understood, live in New Jersey. He is about 21 years of age and appears to be a bright and intelligent young man. He was arrested last Thursday in Edenton, later being brought here and placed in jail awaiting trial in June, for an alleged assault upon Miss Griffin on Friday, March 20. Miss Griffin claims that Needleman assaulted her at the point of a gun, and that she, through fright of the act to her parents. It is further stated that he threatened to kill her should she ever relate the story to anyone.

#### HOSPITAL REPORTS RESTFUL NIGHT FOR NEEDLEMAN

At 5.30 this morning (Tuesday) Joe Needleman, victim of the mob Saturday night, was reported as having had a very good night's rest by the head nurse of the Washington Hospital.

#### COMMENCEMENT HERE APRIL 25

General Rules for Group Center Rallies and the County Commencement to be Held Here

Introduction These rules are practically the same as rules sent out during September, 1924. All schools are provided for and expected to participate. Actual results growing out of the year's work in each teacher's class room should be presented in the commencement. We are not to neglect class-room work, nor to prepare a tinsel or tin-foil parade, nor to present a show or parade, but we are to endeavor to show fathers and mothers and friends results obtained during the year. This commencement is to offer an opportunity to live teachers—dead ones not participate—who wish a chance to compare the results of their school teaching with that of like teachers in similar situations. Therefore, schools are grouped as follows:

Group I. Contains schools of six or more teachers: Jamesville, Robersonville, Williamston, Oak City, and Everetts.

Group II. Contains schools of three teachers, not to exceed five teachers: Parmele, Hamilton, Hassell, Bear Grass, Sandy Ridge, Farm Life, and Gold Point.

Group III. Contains schools of two teachers or less, viz: All other schools of the county not mentioned above. No school in Groups I and II will be allowed to compete with schools in Group III, except in spelling contest A, arithmetic contest C, and story-telling contest B. Success in the above-mentioned contests depends more on the ability of the individual pupils than on the size of the school.

Awards Each committee shall purchase ribbons as follows for awards: For first place, blue and white; for second place, red and white; and for third place, green and white. These awards shall be made for group-center contests, and the county-wide contests. At group-center or county-wide contests the

#### ATTENTION OF "A SUBSCRIBER"

Yesterday we received a letter signed "A Subscriber," relative to the happening of Saturday night. If this subscriber will be kind enough to send in his or her name, we will be glad to publish the article. We do not care to publish the name, but it is necessary that we know the author before publishing any communication. THE ENTERPRISE.

#### MAN KILLED IN STILL EXPLOSION

Two Others Hurt; One of Them Not Expected to Live; Happened in Greenville

A very serious accident happened at Greenville Saturday morning when a liquor still exploded, killing one man and wounding two others, one of which died yesterday, and the other is not expected to live.

The still was one of the steam type, and not being carefully guarded by the operators it ran too high, causing the boiler to burst. When the boiler went up the brick work was demolished, casting brick in every direction. Flying brick was responsible for the killing of the two men and the wounding of the other.

winning school shall be determined for each group of schools. At county-wide commencement the winning school in each contest shall be awarded 4 points, the second order of choice shall be awarded 3 points, and the third order of choice shall be awarded two points. Blank tabulation of score sheets will be furnished both for detail contest scores and for the summary of scores.

#### Athletic Contests at Group-Center Commencements

1. The principals of the group-center schools should arrange an athletic program to suit the schools in their groups. 2. A play period for both boys and girls should be arranged by the principals of the group-center school for their rally. Some teacher who has the interest and ability should be appointed as game leader. Each school will be expected to give some singing game, such as "The Farmer in the Dell," "Lody-Lo," "Clap Partner." Judges will decide which school gives the best performance. For suggested games see Clark's "Physical Training in the Elementary Schools."

#### Dramatization Contest

1. This contest will be held at the group-center commencements only. 2. The participants in the contest must be chosen from the first, second, third, and fourth grades. 3. Any group of children taking part in this contest must be chosen entirely from one room. 4. Stories dramatized must be selected from Curry-Clippinger's reading texts or books on the adopted list of the State. 5. No dramatization should exceed eight minutes in length. 6. Elaborate costumes will not be permitted. Only such costumes as might be used in a class-room dramatization will be considered suitable. No participant in the dramatization should be allowed to wear a costume which can not be improvised on one day's notice. Stage setting should be simple. Only material actually available in the home or school room should be used.

La Follette is unfortunate in a way. First he found he could not run the Republican party and now he wakes up and finds he can't even run with it.

#### MEETING LAST NIGHT EPWORTH LEAGUE

The Epworth League held its usual meeting at the Methodist Church last night at 8 o'clock. This being the annual time for the election of new officers, the following were chosen:

President, Evelyn Harrison; vice president, Sophie Little; Secretary, Mrs. Jack Hooker; Treasurer, Elizabeth Gurganus; corresponding secretary, Bill Harrison; first department, Pattie Edmondson; second department, Mrs. J. A. Leggett; third department, Mary Clyde Leggett; fourth department, Josephine Sykes; Epworth Era agent, Janie Edwards.—Christine Dodd, press agent.

#### THIEVES RAID SMOKE HOUSE

A. J. Manning Loses Several Hams and Numerous Strips of Bacon; Tunnels Under Building

Thieves visited the smoke house of A. J. Manning Saturday night and escaped with several nice hams and numerous strips of bacon.

The thieves were of the mole type, entering the building by the underground or tunnel route. At the time of this writing no clue to the guilty party or parties has been discovered.

#### Minnesota Honors



Mrs. E. L. Lord, of the With (Winn.) Mirror and now president of the Minnesota Editorial Association, is the first woman ever elected to that office in that state.



THE STRAND

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