

## Needleman Takes Stand Accuses Dennis Griffin

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Johnny Gurkin, who married my wife's eldest daughter. On Friday afternoon I came with my wife and Effie Griffin to see Dunning, Moore & Horton, and the doctors. I met Dennis Griffin and he asked me to go to Robersonville with him. I had been knowing him about one year and married him about two or three months ago. He asked that Gurkin and I go to Robersonville and tell the people about the insult made on Effie Griffin by Needleman. We went to Robersonville and into Dennis Griffin's barber shop about 9 o'clock that night. Griffin said that something should be done to Needleman, and that a crowd could be gotten from different towns to lynch or castrate Needleman. No plans were made at this time.

### Went With Gurkin

Johnny Gurkin came to me and said that they were making plans to meet at Skewarkee Church. He and I left together and went to the home of John Smithwick, where he joined us. Smithwick took a shotgun with him. Several cars were at Skewarkee when we arrived, mostly Fords. I saw Mr. Sparrow and his son. I do not know whether or not Heath was present. I knew Dennis Griffin and heard him talk.

Mr. Stone claimed that he did not know who lined up the crowd, but was near the party that gave orders. "Young Sparrow introduced me to his father," he continued, "and I asked him to go home with me, as his son was going to marry my stepdaughter the next day."

**Asked Crowd Not to Kill Him**  
"Masks were then suggested, and nearly all placed them on. Before leaving killing, shooting, and throwing him in the river were suggested. Others suggested castration, and I, with several others, asked them not to kill him. I did not go near the sheriff's house but remained in the road. Some one called the sheriff and told him they were his friends and to let them have the keys, but they were refused

by the sheriff. The cars then proceeded to the courthouse. I remained in the street, and seven or eight went to the jail and returned with the prisoner. He was taken to the big car, which drove past us when on our way to Skewarkee. When the cars assembled Needleman was taken out. Some said hang him, other said shoot, and castration was also suggested. I asked them again not to kill him. Myself, Gurkin, Smithwick, and Mr. Sparrow and his son, Dennis Griffin, and others from Robersonville whom I did not know composed the crowd. After the cutting we left and took up Gurkin and returned home."

### Placed in Tarboro Jail

"I was arrested and placed in the Tarboro jail. Remained there from Monday until Thursday with Mr. Tom Harrell. I told the solicitor Thursday afternoon that I felt better about it, but no promises were made."

"I was in jail after this with Griffin one day. He said that he could prove that he was not in the affair. I told him that I had made a confession. Johnny Gurkin suggested to me that he had rather see his wife dead than

humiliated by court procedure."

Mr. Stone claimed that he knew nothing about the bolt clippers or the cutting of the sheriff's telephone wire. He also said that words could not explain the sorrow and regret that had come into his soul. When asked why he did not tell his counsel everything, he replied, "Solomon says that a fool uttereth all his mind."

### Afternoon Session

Alfred Griffin, 22 years of age, and Clarence Gurkin, 18 years of age, both of Griffins Township, and relatives of Effie Griffin Sparrow, were placed on the stand, and their evidence was practically the same as that of the other boys of their community, as they recognized about the same parties as the others had. They said they turned around at the sheriff's home and went immediately to their own homes.

J. H. Coltrain, when called, gave the same story, adding that he thought he was going to a Ku Klux parade. When he found what was going to be done, he insisted that his party return home, but they went to the home of the sheriff to urge the crowd to disperse. Coltrain is a man of about 40 years of age.

Several other witnesses were examined during the afternoon, but nothing of importance was developed, and the court adjourned about 6 o'clock until 9:30 in the morning.

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