

things - 1901.

uses of NIMS

GALVESTON, TEX. 39

August 22 1901

LYNCHING OF WILDNER

ANOTHER VERSION OF HIS CONFESSION REGARDING THE CRIME FOR WHICH HE DIED.

DETAILS OF HIS CAPTURE

Official Correspondence Between Austin and the Sheriff, Trying to Prevent the Lynching.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS.

Sherman, Tex., Aug. 21.—The definite clew which resulted in the pursuit ending in the capture of the negro Wildner on Mud Creek I. T., yesterday about noon was furnished by George Morris, a negro, who knew him and saw him and at once notified the officers. He was taken across the river yesterday by a ferryman, who had not even heard of the murder. The actual capture was effected by Messrs. Pearson and Churchman, but Constable Davenport and Marshal Witt of Whitesboro came up at once. The posse never surrendered the prisoner to the officers. It was the intention of the posse to bring the prisoner back to the scene of the murder. The Indian Territory members of the mob wished to finish the work on the Indian Territory side but at the earnest request of Caldwell and others they crossed the river into Cook County and proceeded via Dexter to Grayson County. At Dexter word was received that militia and officers were coming to take the prisoner, and the determination to carry out the plan of punishment at once was reached. He was taken into Bill Nelson's ranch, one mile east of Dexter and a half mile over the Grayson County line. He was led to an elm tree about eight inches in diameter, standing on the bank of the ravine. Trace chains were used in securely fastening his feet and neck to the tree and his hands were wrapped about his body and the tree. His hands were tied in front with a cotton rope. He admitted his guilt and described the crime as follows: "I had been asleep near the house, saw Mr. Caldwell leave and heard part of his conversation with his wife just as he left. Waiting until I judged he was far enough from home, I went up the ravine and on the west side of the house and went around to the south side or rear of the house and entered the room by the kitchen window and the top sash fell. This attracted Mrs. Caldwell's attention and she came in. I was hiding under the table. When she turned I seized her. She resisted and dragged me into the dining room. In the scuffle she fell on the floor. I dragged her back through the kitchen. She was weak by this time to offer any resistance. I dragged her out in the cellar. She asked me if I was going to kill her. I told her I

could not if she would not tell or give these officers present will be in command of troops. Act promptly, but be cautious. THOMAS SCURRY, Adjutant General. 6.30 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—To the Commanding Officer Denison Rifles, Denison, Tex.: You will report with your company to Major C. W. Nimon for duty at Whitesboro. Assemble your men with all possible dispatch, and in the event he is absent proceed with your company to Whitesboro with the purpose of protecting Abe Wildner against mob. Report to Sheriff if there; if he is absent act promptly yourself, but with caution. THOS. SCURRY, Adjutant General. 6.30 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—General Superintendent Missouri, Kansas and Texas, Dallas, Tex.: Please provide special trains at once to move Denton, Gainesville and Denison companies to Whitesboro to prevent lynching of Abe Wildner. Send bills to me. By command of the Governor. THOS. SCURRY, Adjutant General. 6.30 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—C. W. Nimon, Denison, Tex.: Negro reported burned. If true order for troops to proceed to Whitesboro countermanded. Satisfy yourself before dismissing your company. If not true you will proceed as directed. Make full report by letter in reference to action of company on receipt of order. THOS. SCURRY, Adjutant General. 10.16 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—Captain T. D. Collins, Gainesville, Tex.: Satisfy yourself as to the truth of Clark's statement. If true proceed as directed. If true dismiss your company. Make full report by letter in reference to action of company on receipt of order. THOS. SCURRY, Adjutant General. 10.20 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—Commanding Officer Denton Light Guard, Denton, Tex.: Negro reported burned. If true order for troops to proceed to Whitesboro countermanded. Satisfy yourself before dismissing your company. If not true you will proceed as directed. Make full report by letter in reference to action of company on receipt of order. THOS. SCURRY, Adjutant General. 10.14 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20.—C. W. Nimon, Whitesboro, Tex.: Wire commanding officer companies at Denton and Gainesville if you need them. Both companies assembled, but delayed moving on account of rumor that negro was burned. THOMAS SCURRY, Adjutant General. 11.50 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 21.—To Sheriff Grayson County, Sherman, Tex.: Please wire whether Abe Wildner has been lynched. If so state time and place. THOMAS SCURRY, Adjutant General. 11.50 p. m. Copies of telegrams received: Denison, Tex., Aug. 20.—Adjutant General Scurry, Austin, Tex.: Telegram received company assembling. Special leaves 8.30. NIMON. 9.35 p. m. Gainesville, Tex., Aug. 20.—Thos. Scurry Austin, Tex.: Clark, Deputy Sheriff phones from Dexter that prisoner burned in Grayson County. COLLINS. 9.40 p. m. Dallas, Tex., Aug. 20.—Thomas Scurry Adjutant General, Austin, Tex.: Yours to day to general superintendent M., K. and T. railway, signed Thomas Scurry, undelivered. General superintendent's office closed. Not at his residence. Somewhere in city can't find where. His chief clerk out of city. Will try and deliver when he comes home. 9.40 p. m. Denton, Tex., Aug. 20.—Thomas Scurry Adjutant General, Austin, Tex.: Telegram received. Will leave on first train for Whitesboro. CHAS. DAUGHERTY, an ax. 10.22 p. m. Whitesboro, Tex., Aug. 20.—Adjutant General Scurry, Austin: Arrived here with company K, 22 men, 3 officers. At 10.30 rifles that Wildner was burned six miles

northwest of here at 8 o'clock. Using all possible means to confirm rumor. Can't find civil officers in town. Crowd peaceable. NIMON, 11.38 P. M. Whitesboro, Tex., Aug. 20.—Adjutant General Scurry, Austin: Have confirmed rumors of burning of Wildner by eye-witnesses. Reported to Mayor Hughes. Sheriff still on scene. Crowd dispersing. Peaceable. Will return to Denison. NIMON. Synopsis of telephone message: Captain T. D. Collins, commanding Gainesville Light Guard, telephoned me about 8.15 p. m. August 20, that he received telegraphic orders to proceed to Whitesboro about five minutes before a special train left Gainesville for Whitesboro. That he assembled his company within 20 minutes, but could not secure a special train, so no engine was in the yards. I directed him to communicate with the division superintendent of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas by wire and ask for special train. SCURRY. Telegram received at 10.25 o'clock a. m., August 21: Sherman, Tex., Aug. 21.—Thos. Scurry, Adjutant General: Wildner burned about 7 o'clock, in Grayson County. A. D. SHREWSBURY, Sheriff. Federal Inquiry. SPECIAL TO THE NEWS. Paris, Tex., Aug. 21.—There is a possibility that the Federal authorities may make the burning of the negro Abe Wildner, near Red Branch last night, the subject of an investigation, and may institute prosecution for kidnaping. Early last night United States Marshal John Grant called up his chief deputy, John B. Walter, over the telephone from Sherman, and stated that he had received a message from the Department of Justice, saying it had been advised that the negro had been kidnaped from the Territory and directing him to take all necessary measures to rescue him from the kidnappers and have him returned to the jurisdiction of the Territory courts, so that he could be turned over to the State authorities by due legal process. Marshal Grant instructed Deputy Walter to come in at once and bring the other deputies there, but the message was received too late to catch the train. Marshal Grant was notified to that effect, and stated that he would go himself to Whitesboro, where he was advised preparations had been made to turn the negro at 10 o'clock, and make a demand for him.

Official Communication.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS. Austin, Tex., Aug. 21.—Governor Sayers made every effort to prevent the lynching of the negro Wildner at Red Branch last night. As soon as advised of the prospect of a lynching State militia was ordered to the scene, but the work was done before they could reach the place. The following telegrams are self-explanatory: Gainesville, Tex., Aug. 20, 1901.—Governor Joseph D. Sayers, Austin, Tex.: Abe Wildner in hands of mob and taken to Whitesboro to be burned. Am powerless. Please order militia to Whitesboro at once. A. D. SHREWSBURY, Sheriff Grayson County. 5.44 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20, 1901.—A. D. Shrewsbury, Sheriff, Gainesville, Tex.: Have directed Gainesville, Denison and Denton companies to report to you at Whitesboro on special trains. Major Nimon of Denison instructed to take command under your directions. THOMAS SCURRY, Adjutant General. 6.30 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20, 1901.—Major C. W. Nimon, Denison, Tex.: You are directed to proceed with Company K, Fourth Infantry, to Whitesboro on special train for the purpose of commanding troops there and protecting Abe Wildner from mob. Other companies will be directed to report to you. Report to the Sheriff if there. Act promptly, but with caution. Keep me advised. THOMAS SCURRY, Adjutant General. 6.30 p. m. Austin, Tex., Aug. 20, 1901.—To the Commanding Officers Gainesville Light Guard, Gainesville, Tex.: Assemble your company with it to Whitesboro with all possible dispatch to protect Abe Wildner from mob. Secure special train if necessary. Act promptly, but with caution. Revisit and entered the room by the kitchen window and the top sash fell. This attracted Mrs. Caldwell's attention and she came in. I was hiding under the table. When she turned I seized her. She resisted and dragged me into the dining room. In the scuffle she fell on the floor. I dragged her back through the kitchen. She was weak by this time to offer any resistance. I dragged her out in the cellar. She asked me if I was going to kill her. I told her I

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forces and started for these places. He had the nearest militia, at Denton, called out, but the farmers in thousands were too strong, even if the militia had gotten on the scene in time, for the mob was also armed. The negro was taken overland, twenty miles from where captured, to the scene of his crime. He admitted his guilt, but refused to make a statement. He was chained to an upright post and wood covered with oil piled about him. As the torch was about to be applied Wildner requested his executioners to take away the fire and he would tell them all about the crime. The fire was pulled away and the negro told to talk, but he refused. The wood was again piled around him and set on fire. His body was completely consumed in an hour and the crowd drifted away. Wildner had served five years in the Texas penitentiary for burglary. He was 30 years old. BURNED AT THE STAKE NEGRO IS CREMATED BY A MOB in Henderson Confesses Murdering Mrs. Caldwell Before John Henderson and Mrs. Younger Mob of 5,000 the Governor. announced that Gov. Caldwell and the militia and the jail and soon had and gun wires to hold Henderson was brought to the iron post in the courthouse yard. His clothes were with oil and a match was applied to him. Henderson, the husband of the victim made repeated attempts to kill the mob with a knife, but was prevented. Death ensued in ten minutes after the negro's clothing was fired. He gave no visible sign of his sufferings. Women and Children Looked On. Just before the match was applied Henderson pulled the cap down over his head with a gesture that indicated it would prevent the fury of the flames. Great excitement prevailed until he had expired. Then all was quiet, saloons were all closed and drunkenness was seen. The officers were powerless to interfere with the mob. About 5,000 people witnessed

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burning and a great many women and children saw the horrible death, but did not express the least pity.

Henderson Confesses Two Murders.

Henderson's confession was secured by a committee that visited him in jail. It follows:

"I, John Henderson, killed a white lady unknown to me about three miles north of Corsicana Wednesday afternoon, the 6th inst. There was no one present when I killed her except myself and her two children. The knife I killed her with was a new one and two small and one large blade. I did not assault the lady criminally, but she became scared and commenced crying and I killed her deep from being arrested. This is the first man I ever killed, but I killed a man in Marlin, Tex., for which I served five years in the state penitentiary. I know I am going to die, but I don't want to be burnt."

Verdict of Coroner Commends Mob.

The following is the coroner's verdict:

"Inquest over remains of John Henderson held this the 13th day of March, 1901, at the courthouse yard at Corsicana, Navarro county, Texas, I find that the deceased came to his just death at the hands of the incensed and outraged feelings of the best people in the United States, the citizens of Navarro and adjoining counties. The evidence, as well as confession of guilt by the deceased, shows that this punishment is merited and is commendable. Given under my hand and seal at Corsicana, Tex., this the 13th day of March, 1901.

H. G. ROBERTS,
Justice Peace Precinct No. 1, Navarro County."

Story of the Crime and Arrest.

Henderson, who was a tall, black and heavy-set negro, went to the home of Conway Younger and assaulted and murdered Mrs. Valley Dale Younger in the presence of her two infant children, cutting her throat and jabbing the knife into the back of her neck. Officers arrested him in Corsicana the next afternoon and at once spirited him away. Bloodhounds trailed Henderson from the scene of the murder to the place of arrest. Henderson was taken to Hillsboro. Last night the officers in charge of the negro started to take him to Fort Worth for safety. When the train reached Itasca the officers were overpowered and the negro taken from them by citizens of the county, who had gone there for that purpose. Henderson was then brought here.

Crowds by Rail to the Lynching.

The first train this morning on the Cotton Belt from Hillsboro was so crowded that it could carry no more. Runners were sent over the county announcing the arrival of Henderson here, and all the morning people swarmed into the city to take part in or witness the execution of the penalty to be inflicted on the negro. After his confession it was decided to burn him at the stake.

A railroad rail was driven into the ground in the corner of the courthouse lot, and oxes and wood piled around it and saturated with oil. As about forty men made a dash from the jail across the street to the carrying the negro, handcuffed, the alarm bell was rung. The crowd were deserted the negro and ran. The crowd yelled and a attempted to cut the knife. At no time was there any outcry, other than

from a Treetop.

Anderson Norris, who was taken from the jail by the officers and carried to safety, climbed a tree and made an impassioned speech to the crowd, asking them to help him get the murderer and deal with him as they had just dealt with Henderson. The crowd yelled back that they would assist.

The north-bound Central train, arriving here at 12 o'clock, was crowded with people from the southern part of the county, who expressed disappointment at being too late. There was no militia on the train.

Gov. Sayers Says He Was Duped.

Special to The Chicago Record.
Austin, Tex., March 13.—Gov. Sayers will send a special message to the legislature on the subject of the burning of the negro, John Henderson, at Corsicana. He feels that the state has been greatly outraged by the act of the mob in lynching the prisoner and he will recommend vigorous legislation with the view of bringing the guilty members of the mob to justice and to provide against such crimes in the future. Gov. Sayers is highly indignant at the local authorities of Corsicana and Navarro county for the alleged manner in which they imposed upon him to get the prisoner back to the scene of his crime, and he charges that these authorities played into the hands of the mob.