

# Saint Mary's Beacon

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## THE KNOTT ROBBERY.

No preliminary hearing ever held in St. Mary's County has attracted as much attention as the case before Justice Joseph F. Morgan, wherein Daniel J. Bowles, jr., and Frank Stewart are charged with the robbery of Henry Knott. The hearing began Friday, November 30th, and occupied five days. On the first day the Court House was packed, and on the following days the attendance was almost as large. The first witness called by the State was Henry Knott, aged 80 years. He deposed that his house was broken open on the afternoon of Monday, October 15th, 1900, while he was absent from home at Love's store, Morganza, to purchase a hat and other things for his deaf and dumb grand-daughter, Martha Knott. When he left home between 11 and 12 o'clock, he closed the house and left no one at home. Waited at the store to get the hat trimmed. Daniel Bowles was at the store; went out and came in so often attracted attention and witness thought he had "fidgets." Witness left store for about five minutes and when he returned, Bowles was gone. Got the hat and left store about an hour by sun. Found the house had been entered through the window. Subsequent investigation disclosed that his brother's trunk had been forced and \$1.15 stolen. Witness's trunk had been taken into the woods, about four or five hundred yards from house. Followed tracks until it was found. Trunk was smashed open. Had put his money in bottom of trunk. When found everything had been taken out of trunk. Had \$2,800 in paper; \$50 in silver and \$10 in gold. Was also a gold sleeve button with red set. The gold was in \$1 pieces and a \$2.50 piece, (that he didn't recall having lost until some time after the robbery.) Had also between \$5 and \$7 in loose change. Paper was in \$100 packages and in a small box he had made for it. No one living knew how much witness had except himself. It was generally known that he had money in his house. Made known the robbery after it was too dark for him to track the thieves. Told Ben Payne and he said he would notify Sheriff Bailey. On his way home met Sheriff Bailey and told him of the robbery. Didn't speak of it to any one else that night. On cross examination said, he counted his money about 12 months ago and since. Sheriff Bailey, Henry Bailey, Stephen Wood, Henry Thompson, Mrs. Catharine Downs, Clarence Reed, Henry Downs, J. Frank and James H. Knott, Grafton Downs, Philip H. Thompson testified for State. Sheriff Bailey told of being notified of the robbery, first hearing of it from Ben Payne on the evening of the 15th about 7 o'clock. Started to Mr. Knott's and met him on road. Mr. Knott was very much excited and said he had lost all he had—between 3 and 5 thousand dollars. Also told of finding the trunk. Said he had asked Mr. Knott if he met anyone on his way to Morganza and been informed that he had not but had seen Dan Bowles and William Stewart at Morganza. Detective came down from Baltimore to investigate case. Stopped at Sheriff's home. Next morning, Daniel Bowles met detective there. Bowles had never been to his house before. Noticed nothing unusual in his manner. Bowles had married in Knott family.

Henry Bailey testified that he went to Morganza about 7 o'clock on the evening of the 15th, and told Bowles and Love about the robbery and they seemed surprised. I said Mr. Knott had been robbed of \$2,600. Asked Bowles if he was going to shucking feast at Thompson's. Said he was going to help Mr. Love make out his postoffice report. The two went in room together. Witness went to the shucking. Bowles got to the shucking about half hour later. Was at home when detective came. Bowles came while detective was there. Wanted to see witness about some business. Had been talking about buying a saddle and had since bought it.

Clarence Reed lives at Oakville. Was employed by Dan Bowles on Monday, October 15. Pulled corn in the morning and went to Morganza with cart in afternoon to get rails to fix a cross line between Ben Love and Mr. Drury. Mr. Bowles was with him. Bowles went with him to the ice pond on the Clement's road, and then returned to get an axe. Sent the axe by Harry Downs and didn't come back. Did not know the time. Sun was about an hour high when witness went home with cart, and was the first time he had seen Bowles since he left him at the fence. On cross examination, Reed said, he worked on fence about an hour and then went back to the store and asked for Bowles and he came out.

Took the detective to Mr. Knott's and saw the trunk and books of two men. Tracks very plain, for the earth was soft.

Stephen Wood testified that he knew Bowles and Stewart. Had had a conversation with Bowles about robbery. Bowles was coming up road on 16th of October and hallooted to him to come out and go up and get balance of old Knott's money. Replied that he didn't expect there was any left. Bowles said he thought there might be some loose change scattered around. Asked him how much money, Knott had. Told me there was \$2600 in paper; \$50 in silver and \$25 50 in gold. On October 27, in another conversation, when they were opening some wrapping paper, Bowles asked for a package to count, and after he had counted it, wanted Mr. Reeder to guess the number of sheets. Bowles said there was a hundred and that old man Knott's money was fixed in this way in \$100 packages with string tied around each package. Asked me if it wasn't so. Had another talk with Bowles recently in which nothing was said about the money, but Bowles said his house had been searched by an unbounded officer and he was going to give them trouble. Wanted witness to go to Knott's with Edgar Russell and see if he would say something to sue for. Went to Knott's house and saw tracks leading from house to where trunk was found. There were two tracks. Was shown a shoe and said it was Frank Stewart's shoe. Had seen the shoe fitted in the tracks where trunk was left and it fitted them. On cross examination said he never told Edgar Russell that it was not Stewart's track.

Mrs. Catharine Downs, daughter of Henry Knott, testified to her father coming to Morganza with Martha Knott on Monday, October 15th. She lived at Morganza. Went to store with them to help select the hat, etc. Saw Bowles there. Saw him take a blue and white striped coat out of the store and go off with it like he was in a hurry. Saw him leave the store between 1 and 2 o'clock and did not see him any more until about 5 o'clock, when he walked up to Mr. Love's stable whistling. Stable is very near witness's gate.

Henry Clay Thompson testified that he had a shucking feast on the night of Monday, October 15. Daniel Bowles was there. Came between 7 and 8 o'clock. After supper Mr. Bowles asked me had I heard the news and said "old Mr. Knott has lost all his money." He didn't seem to want to talk about it in the yard and went into the house. I asked how much money Mr. Knott had lost, and he said \$2600. I asked if it was all in gold. He said, "no," and asked me not to say anything; that he told me because it would get out any how. In reply to the question if he had any idea where it went, he said it didn't go out of the family. I asked who, and he answered, "that d— fellow, Jim Knott." Said there was some gold and some silver, but didn't say how much. Never heard anything about the robbery from anyone else that night.

Clarence Reed lives at Oakville. Was employed by Dan Bowles on Monday, October 15. Pulled corn in the morning and went to Morganza with cart in afternoon to get rails to fix a cross line between Ben Love and Mr. Drury. Mr. Bowles was with him. Bowles went with him to the ice pond on the Clement's road, and then returned to get an axe. Sent the axe by Harry Downs and didn't come back. Did not know the time. Sun was about an hour high when witness went home with cart, and was the first time he had seen Bowles since he left him at the fence. On cross examination, Reed said, he worked on fence about an hour and then went back to the store and asked for Bowles and he came out.

down in the swamp and help Clarence Reed to make a fence and he would treat me. Did it and came back to store in the cart with Clarence Reed. Reed stopped cart and witness went up to Love's store and Willie Stewart came out and he asked him where was Mr. Bowles, and Stewart said he had gone home long ago. Did not see Mr. Bowles until nearly sunset. Was at home standing in the door and saw him coming from the direction of his home. Was employed to help on fence between 1 and 2 o'clock and worked about an hour. Mr. Bowles gave him his treat at night.

Grafton Downs was at home in Morganza all the morning of October 15. About 12 went to Mr. Charlie Russell's and got a horse and went to Sandgate. Got back home about 6 o'clock. Ate supper and went to shucking feast. Mr. Bowles came shortly after witness. Were nearly done shucking a pile of corn when Mr. Bowles said: "I'll be d—, if some man is not well off tonight," and repeated it. Nobody said anything and he called to him and asked me if I knew what he meant. I told him, "no," and he called me over by the shucks and said that Mr. Knott was robbed yesterday evening while he was down to the store of \$2600. Told me not to tell anybody but mother and to tell her it had not gone out of the family. Have not talked with him since.

J. Frank Knott testified to going to his father's house and seeing the tracks, measuring them, fitting a shoe in them and following them. Saw Dan Bowles make tracks, measured them and testified "it was the same track as at the house and at the trunk in every particular." Gave dimensions of the tracks. Did not go to his father's house until the 18th, because his horse was sick.

Phil H. Thompson was next witness. Testified to seeing Bowles on the 16th and to Bowles telling him as a secret about Mr. Knott's loss and the amount of it.

James H. Knott, the next witness, visited the scene of the robbery, discovered the tracks and traced them from his father's house to where the trunk was found. Followed tracks some distance. Measured them particularly. There were tracks of two people. When the shoes were taken from Mr. Bowles' house Bowles said, "for God's sake let them take the shoes;" Stewart said they were not the shoes wanted. The shoe was a peculiar one and fitted the track exactly. First went to his father's on the evening of the 18th. On cross examination said: he did not know that he was accused. When he first heard of the robbery, on the evening of the 16th, thought it an idle rumor. Didn't go to investigate it for had tobacco out and feared frost. Stayed at Oakville on the evening of the 15th talking with Phil Buckler, and got home about sunset. Measured the track on the 24th of November in the pines. The State rested its case.

### For Defense.

John H. Drury testified that he lives at Morganza. Was there all day October 15th. Saw Bowles that day in the morning between 10 and 11. Saw him again at 12, and again between 1 and 2. Saw him go down hill between 2 and 3—loading rails. Saw him about 5. Had a sick family.

Benedict Love testified: Lives at Morganza. Keeps store there. Dan Bowles was at his place on October 15th to haul rails. Saw him between 12 and 1 o'clock. Saw him again when the mail came. He got a horse for me and then went in the cellar and ate some oysters. Between 2 and three o'clock I tried to sell a horse to Willie Bowles. He talked with Mr. Abell, the mail carrier. Came in the store shortly after the mail went down. Mr. Nicodemus, a drummer was in the store. Dan Bowles was sitting in store and witness was joking with Mr. Knott about the girls. The drummer left the store after 4 o'clock as school children had passed down. Bowles around the store

until late and came back to help witness fix up postoffice books as he had done before. Was a good deal after 4 o'clock when Bowles left with Reed. Came back to get bundles. Bowles bought a coat for Reed; was in and around the store all the evening. Man could walk from store to Bowles' in about 20 minutes. One could not have gone to Bowles' and then to Knott's and then back to Morganza in any time Bowles was away from the store that evening. The longest Bowles was out witness's sight was when he was in the cellar. Mr. Knott left the store before 4 o'clock. Bowles was at his place all the time Mr. Knott was there. He went over to Frank Russell's; went into swamp after dinner; was in cellar early in evening. Would have taken an hour and a half to go from Morganza to Bowles' and Knott's and back to Morganza. Didn't see Frank Stewart at his place that day. Is seldom there. Mrs. Downs was at the store and stayed about 1 1/2 hours; Dan Bowles was sitting in store from 3 until after 4; Willie Bowles also in store until after 4; so was Mack Reeder, Miss McGinley and Mrs. Love. Saw Henry Bailey on night of robbery. Bailey told witness in Bowles' presence of the robbery and that Mr. Knott had lost \$2600—some paper, some silver and some gold. Bailey said it was a secret and not to talk about it. On cross examination said Bowles came to Morganza on the 15th to fix fence. Whether he did it or not is his business.

Richard M. Abell, mail contractor, got to Morganza on the 15th about 2 o'clock. Saw Bowles and talked with him.

Miss Hattie McGinley testified: Lives at Laurel Grove; clerks for Mrs. Love; was there on the 15th; saw Mr. Bowles at store after mail went down; school dismissed at 3:30 o'clock, and saw him after that; saw him off and on all afternoon. Drummer left after school children passed, and Bowles was at store after drummer left. Saw Mr. Mr. Knott and Miss Martha. Mr. Knott left the store before Mr. Bowles did. On cross examination said it was her first day at Morganza and she noticed everything particularly.

Mrs. Benedict Love's testimony was corroborative of that of Mr. Love and Miss McGinley. She saw Messrs. Love and Bowles making out postoffice reports. She noticed Mr. Bowles first, on the afternoon of the 15th, when the mail came and saw him off and on after that time until 4 o'clock. Saw him at store when school was dismissed. Mrs. Love trimmed the hat for Miss Knott. Took about 2 hours. Mr. Knott remained at Morganza about 2 hours after the hat was trimmed. After Mrs. Love's evidence the hearing was adjourned until Wednesday, the 5th, instant.

### WEDNESDAY.

At the resumption of the hearing, Wednesday, Mack Reeder, was the first witness sworn. He had lived with Ben Love since September 18th. Saw Dan Bowles at Love's store on the morning of October 15th, about 11 o'clock. Saw him there continuously until about 5 o'clock. Bowles was in the cellar twice that day—waited on him once with crackers. Mr. Nicodemus, a drummer, came to store that evening. Willie Bowles also at store. White children are dismissed from school about 4 and colored children about 3:30 o'clock. Saw Bowles when colored children were dismissed. Thinks Knott left store before Bowles. Impossible for Bowles to have covered the distance from store to his home, then to Knott's and back to store at any time he was out of witness's sight that evening. On cross examination witness said he was 16 years old. Bowles has been around the store every day since witness has been there. Of course, did not watch him all the time—had no particular reason to do so. Was there on the 16th in the morning. Don't know how long he stayed. Suppose he was there on the 13th. Think he was there on the 18th.

Didn't know where he was on the 17th. Thinks Bowles wears No. 8 shoes. In rebuttal, said, "the remembered Bowles was accused and refreshed his memory in regard to his whereabouts on the 15th and so impressed it on his mind.

William Bowles was at Morganza on the 15th, arriving about 3 o'clock. Henry Knott was there. Saw his brother, Daniel, at the store and talked with him. Dan Bowles was at store when witness left. Returned home smart while before sun was down.

Mollie Gough lives about 2 or 3 hundred yards from Morganza. Went down to Love's about 1:30 in afternoon. First went to Drury's to get tooth drawn. Remained about the store until about 4:30. Bowles was around about store all this time. Was about 4 o'clock when she saw Bowles eat last oysters. On cross examination said Bowles eat first oysters about 2; last about 4.

John W. Graves was at Henry Knott's sometime during week of robbery. Sheriff Bailey pointed out tracks. One was of fine shoe about No 6 and one was made by a boy as it was about a 4 or 5. Jim Knott and all spoke of its being a boy's track. Measured tracks with stick. Knott's measurement longer than witness's. Tracks were distinct on an elevated place of clay. Didn't think tracks could be measured satisfactorily a month after.

Henry Bailey was with his father and Mr. Knott when tracks were measured. Thought shoes were 7 and 5. On cross examination said in speaking of the robbery on the night of the 15th, said \$2600 had been stolen, and said nothing about silver or gold.

T. Edgar Russell had seen tracks at the robbery, as shown by Stephen Wood. Denied having asked Stephen Wood to go with him to Mr. Knott's and hear if Knott would accuse Ben Love and Dan Bowles of being connected with robbery. They agreed to go to a certain place to have a little game. Examined tracks on November 10. Couldn't distinguish anything. Had heard Frank Knott's evidence. Was positive shoe could not have fitted in track since Nov. 10th. Only Almighty God could have recognized on November 27th, a track made October 15th. On cross examination said that on November 10th, track shown was a hole in the ground. Could have fitted track of Vic Jackson. She has a human foot but an inhuman shoe.

Adjourned to Friday, December 7th, instant.

### FRIDAY.

Robert L. Harris sworn. Live at Morganza. Teach the colored public school there. Remained at school until 4 o'clock on afternoon of October 15th, 1900; went to Love's store—about a quarter of a mile—took about five minutes to walk it. Saw Dan Bowles and a stout gentleman there. Stayed at store about 30 minutes. Left Bowles there. Guess some of the children pass by the store. On cross examination said: he remembered the day so well because his wife had to leave for Washington on the 17, and he went to get a pair of shoes for child. Had school on 16th and 17th. Didn't remember if he went to Morganza on those days. Is a stranger in the county and hardly ever goes anywhere. Lives at William Thomas', about 2 miles from Morganza. Generally lets out school at 4. Don't recollect what children were as school on the 15th. Some children named Bowman and Herbert have to pass Morganza. Has been in county since September. Knows Bowles. Sees him often on way to school. School house five or ten yards from public road. Didn't remember seeing Bowles pass school house that day. Two children with him when he went to store. In rebuttal said he was positive he was at Love's store on the 15th. Didn't know all the children who go to his school.

J. Woodley Latham testified that

(Continued on 4th Page.)