

THE HORRIBLE HISTORY OF ROUND VALLEY.

STORY OF ROBBERY, MURDER AND INTRIGUE WITHOUT PARALLEL.

RISE OF GEO. E. WHITE.

CONDITIONS THAT HAVE LED UP TO THE MENDOCINO COUNTY FEUD.

A PARADISE FOR OUTLAWS.

PERJURY TO DESTROY A WOMAN'S NAME—TALES TOLD ON A MOUNTAIN TOP.

good terms with Joe Gregory, who was last week tried in Ukiah for attempting to murder him with a knife. Littlefield was charged with stealing a cow and was about to be arrested.

"You don't have to be tried for that thing if you don't want to," said Gregory to him.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. You don't have to be tried if you don't want to. I'll go on the trail and do the Constable when you pass."

"Not much," said Littlefield. "Don't you do anything of the kind. I didn't steal the cow and am not afraid to be tried."

But it is thus lightly they value the life of him who bothers them in some degree in Round Valley—as lightly as they estimate a charge of murder. Why should they fear to kill? Should a jury declare a Round Valley murderer guilty it would be repeated at the campfires all through these mountains as the most wonderful thing that had yet happened here. Judges and juries in this country have been a covering factor in the lengthening story of crime. They do not dare, perhaps.

Jim Williams, a half-breed living a few

has ever been in Round Valley, murder thus takes its place as one of the pleasures of life—an evening's sport. Even the women consorts of the murderers feel something of the thrill. Think of a woman going across country to see a man "done up," as Mary Casper confessed she did in the case of Ves Palmer, being disappointed because Ves was too well armed to warrant a safe attack.

If Governor Budd's offer of a reward for the conviction of the men who formed the alleged mob that killed Jack Littlefield shall have the effect of hanging the men who did it, the good people of Covelo and Round Valley will bless him, for it will be a long step for their relief and the ending of this history of lawlessness. Hitherto the only use known for the law in Round Valley has been as a weapon to crush and harass those who came to settle in good faith, and it has served this purpose in instances where would-be murderers, thieves and houseburners have been unsuccessful. It is still serving that purpose.

Beautiful, but O God!

The whole story is impossible. All this valley was once designed and set apart as the reservation for the Indians of Northern California. Colonel Thomas J. Henley, brother of Barclay Henley, then Indian Agent (in 1856) and now the next largest property-owner to George E. White, recommended it for such purpose to the Government, and that the few settlers then

defenseless bucks, encouraging them while they tore the Indians limb from limb in the presence of their squaws. The Danite, overtaken by a storm, came to Jim Wilburn's cabin one night, and under the influence of after-supper pipes and grog told this story himself, gloating over the details as something clever. When he realized that the fiend was speaking the truth, Jim Wilburn rose up, opened the door and threw him bodily out and down the canyon to spend the night in the storm as he might.

It was by these means that the number of the Indians was reduced from thousands until they now number a few diminishing and corrupted hundreds. The killing of an Indian was scarcely worth speaking of in those days—the form of report, the routine trial and acquittal that accompanied the killing of a white man in these days was not thought of. If a buck had a handsome squaw a white man wanted, that was justification.

Despite the protests of Indian agents white men continued to come into and take up land in the valley, unresisted by the Government, until their numbers were so great and the numbers of the Indians had grown so small that at last a line was drawn across the north end of the valley over which the Indians were required to retire. Back of this line, however, were 25,000 acres. The same ratio of increase upon the one hand and decrease upon the other continued until these 25,000 acres

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When he invaded the surrounding country after other people's sheep or cattle he would station bands of other sheep or cattle at different points along the trail and so cross with their tracks as to confuse pursuit. If he contracted large debts the creditor died. He imposed obligations to do murder upon the ranchmen upon pain of discharge, and perhaps death, if they refused, and the promise of a reward if they complied, and then when they complied refused to pay the reward, but held the knowledge of the crime over them to enforce subjection.

When any of these men became restive and showed signs of giving trouble they died through the workings of the same agency, and the dangers of that sort of thing were soon understood. In one instance well known he himself shot his man from ambush after the manner of the recent Littlefield murder. In another he pleaded guilty to a killing that he had

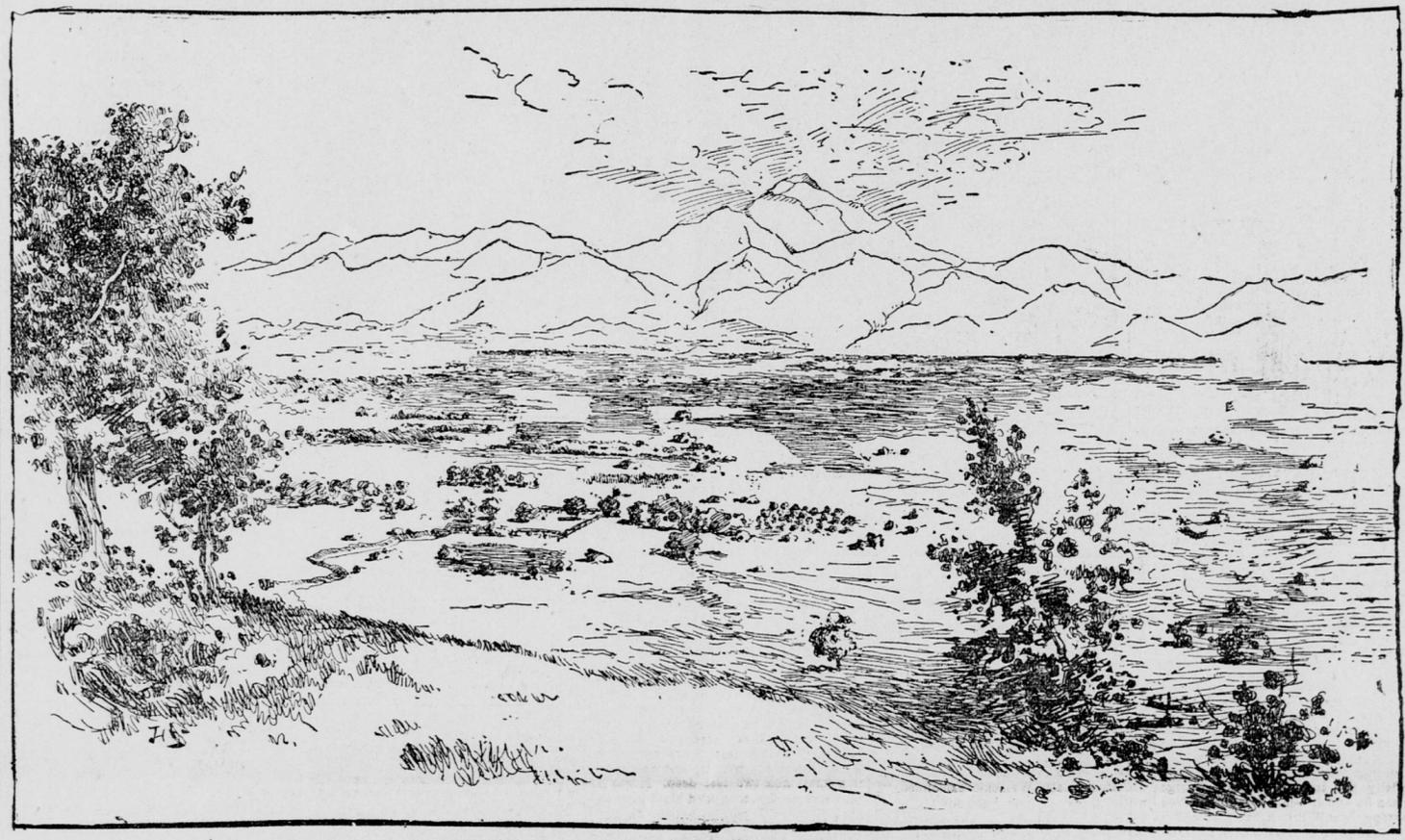
shortly after arrested for an attack with deadly weapons, taken to Weaverville and detained for months in jail. Hembree was tried, and despite a fine assortment of perjury he was acquitted. Both were then set free and returned to their ranch to find their home and fences burned, their flocks dispersed, all their improvements destroyed and White's sheep occupying the range. Nowlin, however, went to work again on the place, and was then told that he would be killed.

One day shortly afterward Newt Irvin, then employed by the White Brothers, was discovered approaching the house. He was one of the two who had driven the White sheep on the land before. Nowlin asked him his business, but Irvin, without reply, continued to approach. It is said he made an attempt to draw a revolver, but it became caught in the lining of his coat, and Nowlin drew his gun and killed him. Nowlin traveled fifty miles to Weaverville, reported the killing and gave himself up. At the trial George Burgess, who in the previous case had been the friend and counsel for Nowlin, now enlisted with the other side and did what he could to convict him. Perjury was employed against him again, and he was sent to San Quentin for eight years. Before the Supreme Court, when the case was taken there, an affidavit was presented from Alexander McPherson to the effect that George White and John Wathan (Wylackie John), had admitted to him

wood was induced to accompany the gang into the mountains under pretense of going to Cox's house to get some money he owed him. They stopped at a spring to rest, and Packwood threw himself on the ground. Kindred walked to and knelt behind a fallen log, and from there, while the others stood coolly by and looked on, fired a load of buckshot into his back. This was the case that Wylackie John took upon himself, declaring he (Wylackie) had fired the shot in self-defense. Two men who visited the scene the following day found Packwood's gun, the hammer of which was down, but no impression upon the cap appeared. They fired it readily, proving that the cap had not snapped. But with this evidence, and the fact that the man was shot in the back, the judge gravely decided that the plea of self-defense was good.

Robert Greves, who took up a ranch of 150 acres on Eel River, was shot by Johnny White while he was in the company of Wilson Lloyd. Wylackie paid Lloyd \$1000 to leave the country and not appear against White. Lloyd took the money and went away, followed down the trail by Wylackie. Diligent search has been made for Lloyd by Masons, of which order he was a member, but he has not since been heard of. "Uncle" Johnny White was tried at Weaverville, claimed the shooting was accidental, and was acquitted.

Tom Steele was offered \$300 if he would kill an Italian rancher named Ed Bizza. Steele became so indignant, threatening instead to kill Henry Peterson, the man who made the offer. That got him disliked and it became only a matter of time with him. Among Steele's cattle was a maverick cow that did not belong to him, but which had never been branded. It remained there for two years and nobody claimed her. The vaqueros advised Steele to brand her and at last he did so. He was promptly arrested on a charge of stealing one of George White's cattle, was overwhelmed and Steele was sent to San Quentin for three years and his property was appropriated.



ROUND VALLEY AS SEEN FROM JUST BELOW CAMP WELCOME.

miles out of Covelo, was to have been a witness in a suit against one Perry, who runs the White saloon in Covelo, for selling liquor to Indians. Selling liquor to Indians is a United States offense and there is danger of conviction in such cases, though that fear does not in the least check the traffic in Covelo. Other methods are adopted. Williams knew some other things, however; he was disposed to be a decent fellow and was altogether objectionable. One night about two months ago Jim Williams was sitting with his wife in his cottage. The lamps were lit, the children had been put to bed, Jim had lit his pipe, and there was a cry outside—some one called his name. He laid down his pipe and went out. His wife heard some one speak from a little distance, as though calling him to come nearer. A moment later two shots were fired, followed by the quick tramp of horses' feet that rapidly became indistinct and died away. She went to the door and called:

"Jim!"

Turned from the bright lamplight into the night her eyes could distinguish nothing. With her hands stretched out before her she went groping down the garden calling: "Jim! Jim!"

Her foot touched his dead body lying in the path. She stooped, turned it over and felt his face, covered with warm blood.

There is a later murder, and so that is an old story in Round Valley. This widow is struggling alone now for her children and Jim is buried. To be sure, there was some inquiry about the matter. It was discovered that the deadly leaden balls were from a 38-55, and it is known that there are only two weapons of that size in the valley. It was noticed by the tracks that the horses that stood by the fence that night were unshod, and these tracks were followed to the house of one of the two men who owned a 38-55. It is known, also, that this man had his horse shod the morning following this crime. But that is all. With these facts discovered proceedings ceased. Jim Williams is buried—he did not testify; but his wife bears the light these autumn evenings.

Impossible to believe men would murder on such slight provocation? You do not know the conditions in Round Valley. Secure against the consequences of doing murder, murder may become fascinating. The names of some men in Round Valley with whom it is so could be printed here. Think of two men standing on the mountain trail for hours whittling sticks while they wait for the Constable to bring Jack Littlefield along—his weapons safely in the Constable's charge. And when he comes, think of one of these men, hidden among the bushes, lifting a rifle, looking along its barrel and driving a ball through the defenseless man's breast. That is murder born of desire—the pleasure the murderer feels in doing murder—the crack of the rifle, the start, the shudder, the clutch of the breast, the fall, the gush of blood, the glazing eye of the victim, the sense of triumph, the satisfied enmity. This man who was hated and feared lies dead here—he will never tell. The birds, the silent forest, the still air—they will say no word. The murderer is alone, or if not his companions are equally guilty. They may say what they will in the presence of their victim; they may pull his beard or lift his lids and laugh in his dead eyes; take the once feared hand in their own and swear defiance and spit upon the face.

Where the fear of the law is absent, as it

in the valley he paid for their claims and ousted.

When Mr. Henley was removed from office his successors advised the same representing that the place was peculiarly adapted for the purpose; that the level land being forbidden to them, white settlers would find nothing in the surrounding mountains to attract them, and so they and their whisky and other evil influences would be absent. Mr. Henley himself, as stated, afterward, together with his brothers, took up large tracts of the land. Settlers multiplied in the valley, and the tales of how they slaughtered the Indians in those early days, took their squaws for their own and carried away their children to the south and west and sold them to slavery are appalling to ears not accustomed to Round Valley gossip.

The preacher-missionary at that time is said to have been the principal agent of this slave trade, finding buyers among the ranchers in his frequent trips through the mountains. An employe on the reservation was also an active agent. He devised

began in turn to haunt the dreams of the land-grabbers. A plan was formed for which the white men of Round Valley give credit to the Henleys.

In the last hours of the session of Congress in 1873 a bill was rushed through creating a new reservation consisting of 79,000 acres of grazing mountain lands and but 5000 of the level, throwing the other 20,000 acres open for purchase at \$1.25 an acre without even the requirement of a residence. With such a studied plan so well carried out it need not be written that few of those 20,000 acres fell into the hands of honest settlers.

The 79,000 acres of grass land, which now became a Government reserve, was thus made secure from settlement, and perpetuated as an immense grazing tract upon which the land-grabbers of the valley need pay no taxes.

It was so that for this fair picture was earned the title of "the stolen valley."

Began thus with wanton slaughter of bucks, the appropriation of squaws and the enslavement of Indian children, the history of Round Valley passes into its no less horrible second era under which the same rapacious and relentless methods have been and are still applied to the white man, who in good faith seeks to take up land in the neighboring ranges and earn an honest living.

Whether or not George E. White, the Czar of Round Valley, was the first white man to discover the valley—that was in 1838—he did not settle there until 1867. He took up 160 acres at the point where his mansion now stands. The Henleys had already begun their accumulation of acres by building little cabins over the Government land and labeling them with the names of claimants in order to keep settlers away. But this could not last, of course. For the live settler insisted and then the trouble began.

For a considerable time George E. White struggled with poverty and lived, like the most ill-conditioned settler, accumulating a little band of cattle, the price of which went up once upon a time to a point that enabled him to sell at an unusual profit, and from that date his prosperity began and with it a consuming ambition. He gathered about him the pick of the freebooters of the country, and by locating men upon land whom he could control, terrorizing those who came in to take up land for their own use, and by other and worse methods, his estate has grown from that original 160 acres to 150,000 acres, reaching through Mendocino, Trinity and Humboldt counties. His cattle are unnumbered, and he at one time employed a constant train of teams over the mountains carrying his wool to market. He is rated as the richest rancher in Northern California.

It is this George E. White who was the plaintiff in the most sensational divorce suit ever tried in California perhaps, the evidence in which suit gave the first glimpse to the outside world of the terrible goings-on of this mountain region—the suit which Judge Wilson, in deciding the case against White, declared was without parallel in the history of California for its evident perjury and the shocking character of its testimony, and that every witness for the plaintiff (George E. White) had apparently received his reward or expected to receive it.

When they brought the Wylackie Indians over from Tehama County to the reservation there came along John D. Wathan, a white man, who was to ever

put another man on the same land with instructions to shoot the other man when he could so safely, and to trust to him (Wylackie John) to prove an alibi or a case of self-defense.

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(McPherson) that they had sent Newt Irvin to the Nowlin place to kill Nowlin; that when they learned that Irvin had, instead, been killed, they sent another man to take the weapons away from the body, so that it would appear Nowlin had killed an unarmed man; that they had also several witnesses to swear falsely at the trial, and that they "owned the Judge up there anyhow, and he would do as they wanted."

Then came McPherson's turn—one of the most pitiable cases of them all. Wylackie John, before he came into the valley, had been engaged in a liaison with McPherson's wife—for he was accomplished in love-making, too. He induced McPherson, who was a decent and industrious man and was well-to-do, to come there with wife and children and invest some \$5000 in a stock-range. With the passage of time the liaison with Mrs. McPherson became irksome, however, and threatened to be troubled to another woman—the Anthony girl, whom he afterward married.

While still carefully shielding himself, it was easy to make trouble in the McPherson family that soon grew to a point where divorce was talked of and Wylackie took a long look ahead, that all things might be made to work together for his good. He now induced Mrs. McPherson to give him a bill of sale and deed for the property as a means of saving it from McPherson in the event of a separation. Another of the gang worked upon McPherson in the same way, while Wylackie played Iago, directing McPherson's suspicion against Brady Tuttle, White's hired vaquero. He did this so successfully that McPherson came home one day and discovered such evidence of his wife's guilt with Tuttle that he shot her to death.

Jim Neafus, one of the tools of the gang, was in the house at the time, and McPherson turned the gun on him, but he pleaded hard and was spared. McPherson threw his gun upon his shoulder and started in search of Tuttle. Neafus arrived at the corral ahead of him, and as Tuttle was about to step out in answer to McPherson's call warned him not to do so. They were shearing sheep at the corral, and seeing McPherson preparing to shoot the men opened fire upon him. Thus, Wylackie's plan was carried safely to its conclusion—the McPhersons were out of the way with deeds for their valuable property in the hands of the gang. Husband and wife were thrown under the ground, the children shipped to the poorhouse and the estate confiscated.

The Packwood brothers came into the valley looking for work. They were not scrupulous and were engaged. They were commissioned to drive away a settler named Johnson, who had bought an inclosed ranch for \$1200 and was industriously at work upon it. They went on the range with cattle, threatened to kill Johnson, and were successful in scaring him away. Wylackie John appropriated the property and paid the Packwoods \$70. They wanted more, and kept asking for it until they became an absolute bother. Wylackie John, Ben Pickett, Bill Cox, George Kindred, and three others held a council and decided that somebody "ought to take care of the Packwoods," and lots were drawn as to who should do it. The job fell to Pickett, but he said the Packwoods had always treated him right, and he declined in favor of some other. They tried again, and Kindred drew it. Gus Pried

The two waited for their man on the trail which Ericson must follow returning from Hettchenchow. They tired of waiting and went to the mountain side to fix a fence, but fearing Ericson might pass Kuntz took his gun and returned to the trail. Presently Orr heard four shots and Kuntz returned.

"Well, I got some big game down there," he said.

"What was it?"

"George Ericson."

"What were the four shots about?"

"To fool any one who might have heard the shooting. They would lay it to some poor sucker and never suspect me. I shot him in the back of the head by his mule. He threw up his hands and yelled and rode on. But he's fixed!"

The sheep men had heard the shots, saw the riderless horse, and found the body, which was unmarked.

Kuntz took a cool part in the gossip about the murder, and offered to furnish the boards for the coffin, for which he charged the family \$2.50. When he came to placing the body in the box, however, he hailed so visibly as to provoke comment.

Poison was frequently used to clear the country of men too decent for the gang, or who began to know or talk too much. Quantities of strychnine are used by the woodsmen for the killing of bears, and so it was always obtainable. Newt Irvin before he was shot by Nowlin endeavored ill will by telling how he had been offered \$500 to kill Nowlin. He was presented with a quarter of beef, but on his way home gave a piece of the meat to his dog, who promptly died, and thus saved his master's life.

Nowlin himself, while defying the gang to open warfare, so feared this method of attack that he educated himself to taking large quantities of the poison by a course of graduated doses. He never ate a word of food without first trying it on his dogs.

Among the victims to poison, only one instance need be named. His name was Stages. He had considerable property, some money, 1200 sheep and rented the Alder Point Range, on Eel River, from White. He was found dead in bed, poisoned, one morning and his property missing.

But of murder this is enough. They are merely sample cases. The gloomy story may well be filled just here by an illustration of Wylackie's quality at plain theft. A settler in the valley owned a valuable colt which would exactly match one of White's. When it disappeared he saw it in White's herd he sued to recover it and the case was heard in Weaverville. The colt was tied outside while the usual hard swearing was going on in the courthouse.

At the noon recess White invited the court, lawyers and jury to the saloon across the street. While there Wylackie John brought White's colt from a neighboring barn, where he had him concealed, tied him up in front of the courthouse, mounted the stolen horse and rode with all speed for Round Valley. When the judge and jury, returning to the courthouse, wiping their whiskers, stopped to inspect the colt they found him wearing the White brand and none other.

It was talent like this that was directed as energetically toward securing evidence against the several Mrs. Whites when his master wished to rid himself of them for one purpose or another. It was this man who engineered the case against the third wife, Frankie White, the startling sensa-

Do you see that group of houses a little further away? That is the town of Covelo. It is the headquarters of the rough riders of these mountains, but the people who live there are not all bad—by no means. Indeed, but a comparative few of these rough riders are so. If you have good eyes you may see a church spire rising above the trees, and it marks a place where good people gather nightly now, crying "How long, O Lord, how long?"

The cowardly murder of brave Jack Littlefield, shot to death in a narrow mountain trail while unarmed and submitting to arrest for a crime it is almost certain he did not commit, following closely as it did upon the equally cowardly murder of Jim Williams, has brought home to these good people the terrible realization that this horrid history is not closed. There are others and still others, no doubt, who are marked for the relentless vengeance of this side or the other of warring factions, or who stand in the way of ambition or avarice, at whose nod, at the most convenient time or place, will be "done for."

Robbery and murder, arson and perjury interlinked through years, and the accumulation of vast estates and money and power, a colony of people are necessarily implicated. Have you knowledge of any of it? Are you disposed to talk too much? You then become dangerous and are better dead. Or are you merely impatient at the moral desolation of this beautiful valley and disposed to be active in ferreting crime for its punishment? That is embarrassing, too.

So, terrorized, the well-disposed people do not dare to tell each other what they think, but in their church and in their closets on their knees they whisper to Heaven, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

Does this seem like exaggeration—trifling with over-serious things? Jack Littlefield, the man who was shot to death and hanged the other day, was formerly on

a false bottom in the big covered wagon with which he made journeys for provisions. In the space thus allowed he would place the little Indians to carry them away. They were sold as chore boys or prospective vaqueros for from \$50 to \$60.

Old Jim Wilburn, whose son it was who was with Jack Littlefield the day it is claimed he shot Vinton, found a cabin in the mountains some years ago while hunting, where a dozen Indian children were imprisoned, tied hand and foot, awaiting the arrival of the slave-dealing preacher. Wilburn was always sternly opposed to the outrages of every character peculiar to the country, and of course set them free. He is terrible as a fighter, and perhaps this fact is responsible for his lusty old age. He tells a story of a Danite who fled to this mountain fastness from Mormonism to escape punishment for the part he took in the Mountain Meadow massacre. The Danite kept a pack of fierce bearhounds. Coming home one day he found a party of bucks and squaws being supplied by his wife with some scraps of food from the brass outside waiting for the squaws to bring them some of the food. The Danite went to his corral and released his pack of bloodhounds and turned them upon the

nothing to do with (except to plan it), and on the worn plea of self-defense went free as he knew full well. He marshaled a gang of perjurers who blasted the good name of his employer's first wife, thereby procuring the divorce he sought; he was preparing to do the same in the case of the second wife when the good lady fortunately died, and he was actively engaged in performing the same service in the case of the third wife when her brother put a ball through his dark and busy brain. Wylackie John was a valuable man in his way.

Joseph Le Van and his brother were among the early victims of Wylackie's genius and White's greed. They went into Potter Valley and undertook to raise sheep. Wylackie John soon after led a party over and made an attack on the house in the disguise of Indians. The Le Van boys made their escape in the darkness, and their house was burned and cattle killed. They left the country. On the way over Wylackie had invited a young man named Nowlin to join the party, but he so indignantly refused that he became objectionable.

Nowlin and one H. C. Hembree took up some land in Trinity County on which the sheep of George E. White had been grazing. Two men were sent to drive White's flocks upon the pasture. Nowlin and Hembree ordered them off the land, and when they refused to go lifted their rifles and threatened to shoot. They were

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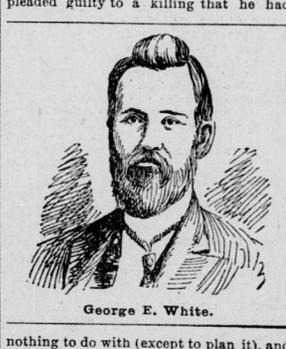
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Clarence White, Who Shot Wylackie John.



George E. White.