

THE SHERIFF'S REPORT.

Newberry Officer Makes Official Report to Governor Ansel of the Lynching.

Newberry, S. C., Nov. 20, 1910.

To His Excellency, M. F. Ansel, Governor of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C.

Dear Sir: A short time after 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the 25th instant, I was notified over the telephone from Little Mountain, in this (Newberry) county, that a school girl (the name being given) had been murdered. I immediately got my deputy, and Messrs. William Swittenberg and Forrest Summer, and with all possible speed went to the scene of the murder, which, after arriving at Little Mountain, I found to be in Lexington county. I might say just here that had I known before leaving Newberry that the crime had been committed in Lexington county, I would have gone anyway. I arrived at the scene of the murder at 6.45 p. m. the same afternoon, and found the dead body of the young lady who had been murdered, who appeared to me to be about 14 years of age, her neck being almost severed from her body. In fact one could hardly imagine a more ghastly scene or more horrible murder. I then made inquiry of Dr. Sease, a physician of Little Mountain, S. C., who was examining and washing the wound, as to whether the murdered girl had been (suffered other wrong,) and was informed by him that she had not been. I talked with the father of the young lady, who told me that while he was on his plantation some distance from the house where he had some laborers at work, among them a negro called Flute Clark, he had sent the negro Flute Clark to the house for a pick and a shovel and a bucket of water; that the negro had stayed away an unusually long time, and upon his return did not bring water from the well, but brought water from the branch, and upon being asked why he brought branch water instead of well water stated that he had fallen down and spilled the well water and had then gotten branch water. The father of the girl stated that when the negro returned with the water his sleeves were rolled up. Within a short time after this the father of the girl heard his farm bell ringing and upon going to his home to ascertain the cause, found the dead body of his daughter. In order that the real perpetrator of this dastardly crime might be caught and brought to justice I suggested that squads of men be sent to all ferries on streams and railway stations and that any and all suspicious characters be arrested at such places and minutely examined, and that the houses around in the neighborhood be searched for suspicious characters. In the course of my investigation I was informed that an old negro woman and two children were picking cotton near the home of the murdered girl. I got Mr. Derrick and drove to see these negroes who had been picking cotton and found them at their home about a mile and a half from the scene of the crime. Upon making inquiry of this old negro woman I was told by her that she could not see in the yard where the crime was committed, from where she had been picking cotton, and had not seen anyone passing to or from the place where the crime was committed. I of course made other and further investigation and was hard at work on the matter all the while. When I went to search Flute Clark's house I found it unlocked, the door simply being tied with a cloth string, and Flute Clark's wife being over at the home of her father-in-law. After making this last search I returned to the scene of the crime and about this time Mr. Miller, the deputy sheriff of Lexington county, arrived, and a little later Sheriff Corley, of Lexington, appeared on the scene.

I might state that I never did get to see the negro Flute Clark, but was told that he had been accused of the crime, caught and spirited away by the infuriated crowd to whom it was rumored he had made a confession. There was still left at the scene of the crime a tremendous crowd, whom I begged to have the negro turned over to Sheriff Corley, as he certainly would be hurt as he had made a confession; at the same time I knew I was wasting breath in urging this course, for I have never seen a more determined, yet orderly, body of men of from 500 to perhaps a thousand. At 10.15 o'clock that night we heard volleys of rapid firing at a distance, and knew then that it was all over. From my investigation I believe the negro Flute Clark killed this young lady.

In conclusion I might say that I do not believe all the sheriffs in the State and their deputies could have prevented this ending.

Yours very truly,

M. M. Buford,
Sheriff of Newberry County, S. C.

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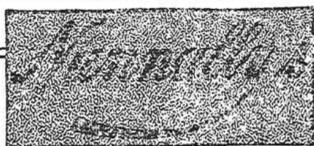
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