

**CHARGES OF CRUELTY TO CHAIN GANG CONVICTS**

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died. He had stretched the negro on a bank. Thomas said he was sick and couldn't work and witness whipped him more to scare him than anything else. Mr. Richardson hit him ten or twelve licks. Didn't know whether he was sick or not, but supposed he was playing off. He told Thomas he was going to whip him until he promised to go back to work. When he had given him eight or ten lashes the negro said he would go back to work. He got up and worked for an hour and a half and then said again that he was sick. He lay down and then got up and fell down. Mr. Richardson said he couldn't see anything the matter with him and told him to go to work. But sent him on back to the camp and he fell down. Thomas lived about an hour and a half after he got to the camp. He lived about five hours after the whipping. When Thomas fell some boys carried him on to the camp. Richardson said he sent for doctors but they didn't get there before he died.

**"INITIATED" ON ARRIVAL.**

Ever since there had been a chain gang, Richardson testified negroes were "initiated," whipped, as soon as they got to the gang. They were not whipped when turned loose. As to the number of lashes given when the negroes were whipped for the various offenses, Richardson said he expected as many as fifty had been given. "I whipped them until I convinced them." The lashes were hardly ever administered to the bare skin, and the skin was never cut.

Sometimes the convicts had been whipped after they were chained in the tent for the night. Richardson said it was done by himself sometimes, and sometimes by guards. He waited until night for different causes, sometimes because they were working where ladies were, or in town, or for other causes.

On re-direct examination by Mr. Hunter, Richardson testified that he had no idea Thomas was sick and that the whipping couldn't possibly have killed him.

**J. F. RISER.**

J. F. Riser, who was in charge of the engine with the gang for several months last summer, on direct examination by Mr. Hunter, testified that he had seen several negroes whipped for not working, for stubbornness or for various causes. He had seen no unmerciful treatment and in his opinion it was impossible to work the gang properly without whipping.

On cross-examination by Mr. Dominick, Mr. Riser testified that the usual number of lashes was from 5 to twenty-five and he never saw one whipped on his bare skin. It usually took a week to teach loafing negroes that they would be whipped. The strap used was an inch or an inch and a half wide. This wouldn't hurt through rough clothes unless the clothes were tightened and he had never seen the clothes tightened, but he had seen those whipping the negroes pick out the places where the clothes were already tight.

Mr. Riser testified that he had seen the negroes "initiated" when they reached the gang. It was all done through fun to pass time among the negroes. There was a regular judge and court. The superintendent and guards wouldn't allow it unless one of them was present. It was no punishment of a serious nature. Those being "initiated" might have been hurt a little. It wouldn't have been fun unless they had been hurt a little.

**M. P. CHALMERS.**

at present city health officer, and who was a guard for three and a half months last summer and fall, on direct examination by Mr. Hunter, testified that he was probably more intimately connected with the whipping business than any of the others. He had sent a negro very often to Mr. Koon when he got slow and Mr. Koon would give him from 5 to 10 licks and send him back. Sometimes when a negro got a little slow he would make a negro whip him.

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**THE NEGRO WHO DIED.**

Mr. Chalmers said he had taken John Thomas from jail to the gang. He was told at the time by those who knew Thomas that Thomas would play off. Mr. Koon was working Thomas. Thomas lay down and then several others lay down. They gave Thomas a good dose of calomel that night. Next day Thomas wasn't able to work. They sent for a doctor but doctor didn't come and they sent Thomas to jail and left him there for about two weeks. Thomas was taken back and that afternoon he was sick and they let him stop work for an hour or two. They held a consultation that night and thought he was playing off and next morning they took him out again. Thomas said he was sick. Mr. Chalmers felt his pulse. It was a little weak but not fast enough for Thomas to have any fever and Thomas was put back to work. He stopped again and Mr. Chalmers again felt his pulse and insisted on Richardson whipping him and putting him back to work. He went back to work. Later Thomas dropped over. Mr. Chalmers felt Thomas' pulse and didn't think he had any fever. He thought that a man who was sick enough to stop work ought to have a little fever, though Thomas' pulse was a little weak. He told Thomas to eat dinner. Thomas refused to eat. When Thomas died and Dr. Senn was called in Mr. Chalmers said he told the doctor to examine the negro well because there might be a little hereafter. Dr. Senn said there was not a mark on the dead negro.

**THE MOST SEVERE WHIPPING.**

Mr. Chalmers said he had whipped only two negroes himself and had given one of these probably the most severe whipping administered to any. It was given to a negro who had run away. He had given him about fifteen licks. Dr. Senn had examined him and had found three cuts on his hips. This negro was diseased.

**THOMAS WAS "BLEACHED."**

On cross-examination by Mr. Dominick Mr. Chalmers said that John Thomas, the negro who died, appeared a little "bleached" but that was natural for a man who had been in an iron cell during the hot spell. He didn't have a healthy appearance.

It was during the hot weather and they put him to ditching. "Notwithstanding his unhealthy appearance and his weak pulse, you kept him working thinking he was playing off?" asked Mr. Dominick. A. "Yes." Q. "It turned out afterwards that he was sick all the way through?" A. "Yes, if he wasn't he fooled himself on a mighty serious thing, because he died."

**WAGON WHIP USED.**

Mr. Chalmers said he had seen a four-horse wagon whip used with twang leather on the end, though the negroes were hardly ever touched with the end. That was how he got the negro referred to—by hitting him with the end of a wagon whip. He had never heard of the whipping Mr. Schroder spoke of, though Mr. Koon made a confidante of him.

Mr. Chalmers said he thought if anything that the gentlemen in charge of the chain gang were too easy on the convicts.

**J. H. BROWN.**

J. H. Brown, who has been with the gang since September last, said that there had been some whipping, but none of an excessive nature to his knowledge. He had whipped some, giving them from 5 to 15 lashes. The negroes were whipped

with straps, but he knew of none whipped on their bare skin.

**B. E. KOON.**

at present on the Newberry police force, testified that he was with the gang for four years, up until December, 1902. There was no cruel punishment. The negroes were whipped when they wouldn't work. Supervisor Schumpert's instructions were to whip no more than possible.

On cross-examination by Mr. Dominick, Mr. Koon said that the greatest number of lashes he knew of having been given was 75, hardly ever on the naked skin.

**CARRIED A WAGON WHIP.**

Mr. Koon said while he was with the gang he carried a wagon whip "to touch 'em up like" when they wouldn't work. When his brother, Mr. Ben. M. Koon, got a position with the gang, his brother had come

to him for information. He told him that Mr. Schumpert didn't like much whipping, and not to give the negroes over 15 lashes, because there were a lot of sorry white men who would report it to the supervisor.

**W. W. RISER.**

Ex-Sheriff W. W. Riser said the gang had worked near his home and that everything was about as nice as he ever saw. Messrs. Miller and B. E. Koon were guards at that time.

**SUPERVISOR SCHUMPERT.**

recalled, testified that his instructions were to give the convicts two or three lashes if necessary to make them work. He went to the gang at least once a week and sometimes oftener. He had even provided tobacco for the use of the convicts. The reference was then adjourned until a day next week.

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