

Jerry McKelvy's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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SIX MONTHS OF TERROR

You may remember hearing about “Jack the Ripper”, a serial killer in London way back in 1888. In Little Rock, Arkansas in 1912, a series of crimes occurred over a period of almost six months terrorizing the citizens of that city. The perpetrator was given the name “Jack the Shooter”.

The crimes mainly consisted of breaking into houses at night and assaulting women. The police thought at first that several men were involved. Several men were arrested as possible suspects, but the crimes continued.

CHILD MURDERED

About three months after the crimes began, the suspect broke into a room where Mrs. D. B. Coulter was sleeping with her one-year-old child. Also, in the home at that time was Miss Marion Scott. She was sleeping in the same bed with Mrs. Coulter and her young son. As the suspect entered the room, Miss Scott woke up and screamed. The suspect fired his gun twice and one of the bullets struck the young child. Both women were covered in blood. After firing the shots, the suspect ran away.

FALSELY ACCUSED

A man named Sam Brasfield was arrested for the murder of the Coulter child. He was positively identified by Miss Scott as the man who had entered the room that night. The police were confident that they had the right man, but the crimes continued.

A week or two later, a man named George Clark was arrested on a larceny charge and again, the police thought he could be Jack the Shooter. He was sentenced to one year in jail on the larceny charge.

Another man, E. S. Cornelius was arrested on a charge of attempted criminal assault and was sentenced to 15 years in jail. During the crime spree, five different men were arrested for similar crimes and in each case, the police thought they had finally captured Jack the Shooter.

LIST OF CRIMES

A long list of crimes was attributed to Jack the Shooter:

- Assault with a knife on Mrs. Temple Parker
- Stabbing of Mrs. A. B. Bowman
- Attempted assault on Mrs. Nettie Nesbit
- Attempt to kill Police Captain T. M. Clifton
- Attempted assault on Miss Katie Pozzet
- Shooting and wounding of Miss Marguerite Martin
- Attempted assault on Mrs. Helen McNutt

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- Robbery at home of S. A. Poe
- Assault on C. R. Smith
- Pointing gun at Mrs. S. J. Drilling
- Wounding of R. B. Wilson
- Setting fire to home of H. B. Sloan and assault of his mother-in-law
- Setting fire to home of W. B. Douglas
- Wounding of the daughter of G. E. West
- Attempted assault on Miss Virginia Howell
- Murder of Paul Coulter —one-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Coulter
- Attempted assault on Mrs. M. M. Hankins
- Attempted burglary of home of R. H. Walker
- Robbing home of P. H. Miller
- Three attempts to enter home of A. M. Fewell
- Entering home of P. W. Crawford and threatening Mrs. Amy Campbell
- Attempted burglary of home of C. B. Vail
- Entering the room of Miss Daisy Andrews
- Entering the home of C. W. Presley
- Attempt to kill Mrs. Alex Peterson
- Attempted assault and wounding of Miss Maud Summer

Arrests were made in two of the above crimes. One man was sent to prison but died of a heat stroke while working at the prison. Another man was sentenced to 28 years.

VOLUNTEERS TO PATROL STREETS

In May of 1912, citizens were demanding that something be done to stop the rash of crimes. The mayor held a mass meeting and appointed approximately 150 to 200 special officers to help the police patrol the streets with orders to get Jack the Shooter “dead or alive”. Even with the extra patrols, the crimes continued.

JACK THE SHOOTER IS DEAD

Jack the Shooter struck again in July of 1912. He entered the home of Miss Maud Summer. She resisted and he fired two shots, one of which struck Miss Summer in the hand. He then ran from the house. The police quickly arrived with bloodhounds.

While trying to get away from the police, he tried to enter another house about three blocks away by climbing through a window. Sam Collins, a Negro pool hall manager, heard someone trying to get through his window about 3:30 a. m. and he fired three shots through the window. The noise stopped and he thought he had scared the intruder away, so he didn't bother to go outside. The police and bloodhounds on the trail from the shooting three blocks away heard the gunshots. When they arrived, they found a dead man outside the window of Mr. Collins' home.

There was no doubt that this dead man was Jack the Shooter. They found an automatic revolver in his pocket with two empty chambers of the same caliber bullets that had been

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fired at Miss Summer earlier that night. He also had newspaper clippings about Jack the Shooter in his pocket.

Witnesses had previously identified their attacker as a white man. It was not until the body had been taken to the undertaker that it was discovered that the dead man was a mulatto black man. He had covered his face with talcum powder to make himself look like a white man or a Mexican. He was wearing fancy ladies' hose and his clothes and handkerchief were highly perfumed. He was identified as J. B. Brown, a Negro attorney in Little Rock.

A HERO

Sam Collins, the man who shot Jack the Shooter, was considered a hero by the residents of Little Rock. The city council voted to give him a medal for ridding the city of the terror which had gripped the city for over five months.

Collins told about firing the three shots at his window when he heard someone trying to get in. He said he had never fired the old pistol he had and had never killed anything in his life. The white citizens of Little Rock collected money to give him as a reward.

A PARDON

Four years later, Governor Hays pardoned E. S. Cornelius who had been convicted on a charge of attempted criminal assault during the crime spree of Jack the Shooter and sentenced to 15 years in prison. The governor said the evidence didn't support the conviction and that he believed the man was imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

In the rush to solve the crimes, several men had been arrested and falsely accused of being Jack the Shooter. Some were quickly convicted and sentenced and probably received harsher sentences because jurors felt the man responsible for these crimes deserved the maximum sentence allowed.

This story about the man shooting through the window reminds me of a story Mrs. Elsie Beaver told me about my great-aunt, Mary Henry Gulley. She was awakened one night and saw a dark shadow through the window which was moving. Thinking it was someone trying to enter her room through the window, she became frightened and fired a shotgun through the window at the shadow.

It was not an intruder at all. The shadow she saw at the window was the large leaf of an elephant ear plant moving in the breeze. My advice is to be careful if for some reason you need to climb through a window of a house if someone is inside. Some people shoot and ask questions later.

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THOMAS AND BARTON MILWEE

Died.

At Falcon, Ark., on the night of the 6th of December, 1886, our aged and esteemed fellow-citizen, Thomas Milwee, in the 79th year of his age. He was born in N. C., in 1807, was married to Margaret Moss, in Alabama, in 1824, emigrated to Arkansas in 1851, and settled near Falcon, where he has since resided. He was the father of 11 children, 7 of whom he leaves, together with their aged mother, to mourn his death. He was a consistent Christian, and had been a member of the Christian church many years. And oh! so sad! on the same day and at the same hour, his youngest child, Rev. Barton W. Milwee, aged 31 years, died at Bingen, in Hempstead county, of the same disease, pneumonia, and his remains arrived in time to be buried in the same grave. He was an ordained minister of the Baptist church, and was becoming noted for his zeal and intelligence as a minister. To the wife and mother, brothers and sisters, we extend our profound sympathy. And while we weep at the void that has been made, yet we rejoice in the knowledge that they have been called home to Christ, to dwell with him forever more.

A FRIEND.

I thought it was quite a coincidence that Thomas Milwee, of Falcon, Arkansas died on the same day at the same hour of the same disease as his son and both were buried in the same grave on the same day.

When my wife and I surveyed Falcon Cemetery back in 1997, we found pieces of an old grave marker which was almost covered by grass and dirt. We were able to determine that it was a double marker for Thomas and Barton Milwee, but could not read the dates. Since the stone was in such bad shape and in danger of being completely lost, we made a note in our records of the exact location of the marker.

After finding this news clipping a few weeks ago, I went back to the cemetery and again found the stone completely covered in dirt and grass which I removed. I could only read a few of the letters.



If I had not made a note of the location of this stone back in 1997, I would have never been able to locate it again. Many old grave markers can be found underneath the leaves and grass in old cemeteries, especially if the marker has been broken or is lying flat on the ground.

I would encourage any descendants of Thomas Milwee or Barton Milwee who might be reading this article to have new grave markers made for Thomas Milwee and his son, Barton W. Milwee to replace this old broken stone. We know the date of death for both men from this news article. In a few months, the grass will once again cover this marker and nobody will know that two men are buried in this spot in Falcon Cemetery.

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UNCLE PETER PETERSON

One of Prescott's most familiar and unique figures passed away in March of 1913. Peter Peterson came to Prescott from his native country, Denmark, about 1900. He resided with the Sid Cole family at first and at the time of his death was janitor of the court house in Prescott and occupied rooms there. His death was caused by complications of asthma and kidney disease.

Mr. Peterson, known as "Uncle Pete" had no relatives in this country and would not discuss his relatives when asked about them. He would only say that he left Denmark because he was not treated right. He was well-liked by the people of Prescott and was a good worker. His funeral was conducted by the Odd Fellows lodge of which he was a member.

He was buried at DeAnn Cemetery in Prescott, but his grave was not found during our cemetery survey of that cemetery. Evidently, his grave was not marked since he had no family living in this country to see about a marker for his grave or maybe his marker can no longer be read. .

JOHN T. MOWREY

John T. Mowrey dropped dead on the streets of Prescott in February, 1913 from heart failure. He was about 60 years old. He had lived in the Prescott vicinity for several years. He had a wife and daughter living in New Corydon, Indiana, a sister in Pennsylvania, another sister in Indiana, and a brother in New York.

The remains of John T. Mowrey were kept at the undertaking parlor of the Prescott Hardware for two months before he was finally buried at DeAnn Cemetery. All of the above relatives were contacted about his death and the reply from all of them was "Unable to assist in the burial".

In a case like this, burials were usually in the section of DeAnn Cemetery known as the potter's field. We found no record of the grave of John T. Mowrey when we did our cemetery surveys. This is another case of a grave not being marked because there were no relatives willing to see that it was done. Now, the location of his grave is lost.

RAINFALL RECORD

January (7.5 inches); February (7.7 inches); March (7.8 inches); April (10.4 inches); May (5.3 inches); June (7.3 inches); July (3.4 inches). That's 49.4 inches through July. Our normal rainfall is about 52 inches. More heavy rain received in August will be added at the end of the month.

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FELIX OLIPHINT SCOTT

Died Sunday afternoon at his home in this city, Felix Oliphint Scott. Felix was only two or three years old and was beloved by all who knew him. Felix was an orphan and was adopted jointly by A. B. Oliphint and Thomas Scott. Cause of death—eating a rat that had eaten a rat biscuit. Felix was a cat and this was his ninth and last death. All Iron Mountain employees at this place are wearing mourning. (from *The Prescott Daily News* (June 17, 1913).



The item pictured in the last issue is a shoe last used for repairing shoes. This type could be turned to accommodate both large and small shoes.

Those who came up with the correct answer were Yvonne Munn, Adrian Hunter, Cathy Straley, and Bill Sellers.

Answers to trivia --- Abraham Lincoln; Thomas Jefferson; France



A NEW NEIGHBOR

Bill Sellers, an avid hunter and fisherman, recently caught this critter on his game camera at a trap he had set for wild hogs near Bluff City.

He thinks it is a ground hog although they are not usually seen this far south in Arkansas

The animal showed up on his camera again a few days later.

TRIVIA (answers are on this page)

1. Which Kentucky-born U. S. president is honored in the Wrestling Hall of Fame?
2. Which president is pictured on the front of the two-dollar bill?
3. Which country gave the Statue of Liberty to the United States?

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September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month

A library card can be a rite of passage for a child, giving them a sense of obligation and responsibility. As a library patron, children learn the importance of caring for things that belong to others. Children take the essential early step in their development when they obtain their library card and become a conscientious member of the community.

Visiting a local library also encourages a child to read. Reading helps brain development and provides a solid foundation of the language and literacy skills. Opening a book encourages children to travel to far-away places and let their imagination soar. With that in mind, a *Sandyland Chronicle* reader shares an early experience with the library.

The Trouble with Reading -- by Don Mathis

The Bookmobile used to visit my neighborhood when I was in junior high school. I was interested in mysteries and found a new book, *13 Ways to Kill a Man* (1965, edited by Basil Davenport), in this little library on wheels. This anthology of short stories was an easy read; I finished it within days.

The first story, *The Candidate* by Henry Slesar, was a perfect crime. A victim was informed that hundreds of people were wishing him dead. Such knowledge was apparently enough to send a man to the grave.

Lamb to the Slaughter was my introduction to Roald Dahl; it was another tale of a perfect crime. The wife bludgeons her husband to death with a frozen leg of lamb – then serves the murder weapon to the investigating officers.

Some crimes are discovered, such as the strangling murder (*The Turn of the Tide* by C. S. Forester) and the burning death (*Hop Frog* by Edgar Allan Poe), but others keep the reader intrigued until the end.

The story of death by stabbing is particularly ingenious. In *The Tea Leaf*, by Edgar Jepson and Robert Eustace, a dagger is formed from frozen carbon dioxide and conveyed in a thermos into a sauna. Because the murder weapon turns to vapor as it melts, no one suspects the culprit.

Other murders are committed by shooting, poison, starvation, animals, explosion, vehicle, and electrocution. But the real crime of this book is the trouble I got in for checking it out.

Judging from the title, my mother thought I was doing research to kill someone. And she voiced her concerns to the ‘authorities.’ I was interrogated by my teacher. The librarian in the bookmobile revoked my library card.

I felt like such a criminal.