

Hung jury in vigilante justice case

The testimony of witnesses for the plaintiff in the case of William Norman versus 12 men he accused of beating him during the night, sounded extremely damaging. Defendant Reed was supposed to have bragged to the mother-in-law of a Norman neighbor, "I am captain of white caps."

The neighbor, William Murphy, testified that he heard Reed say, "Let's hang him." Murphy also said that the morning after the incident he noticed "man and horse tracks." Having done his homework, one of the defense attorneys got from the witness an admission that William Norman was his landlord.

Undaunted by the defense attorney, Murphy related that he encountered Reed two weeks after the incident. "Carson said to me two weeks after the whipping that if Norman bothered him with a trial, he would give him a good whipping."



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

9-5-1967

Cornelius Norman, a brother of one of the defendants, (several, incidentally were named Norman) testified, "Night brother was whipped persons came up to house on horseback. Tracked horses next morning; mule went toward John Carson's; tracks went in direction of other defendants. At our house the men threatened to give mother 'd...n good whipping.'" Sarepta Norman (presumably the mother) confirmed what Cornelius had said.

It should be noted that the county had not entirely recovered from a recent white capping attack in

Washington Township. William Norman's attorney mentioned the victim by name and suggested to the judge that that case had not been fully examined by the authorities.

Sarepta Norman's testimony ended the plaintiff's case and the defendants' attorneys began to call their witnesses. The *Telephone* reporters did not speculate in writing about the outcome of the case, but it was to have some unexpected twists and turns.

A photograph of the members of the Monroe County Bar Association — taken in 1906 — reveals them to be men who looked like benevolent grandfathers. There was, however, nothing grandfatherly nor benevolent about how the defense attorneys handled the case, friendships notwithstanding. Business was business, and that was that.

see Looking back, Back page