

Paper: Salisbury Post

Location: Salisbury, North Carolina

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Victim(s):

Jack Dillingham

Nease Gillespie

John Gillespie

COVERAGE:

1906-08-07 Page 1

SALISBURY EVENING POST.

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POL. 2. NO. 178.

SALISBURY, N. C. TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1906.

\$4.00 a Year

LAST NIGHT'S TRIPLE LYNCHING

WORK OF A MOB

JACK DILLINGHAM, NEASE AND JOHN GILLESPIE MEET DEATH.

THE JAIL STORMED BY FORCE OF ARMED MEN

Senator Overman, Judge Long, Mayor Boyden and Sheriff

Julian Plead in Vain With the Crowd.

THREE MEN IN CROWD SHOT

Rowan Rifles Ordered Out and Governor Notified.

JAIL ROCKED, LIGHTS PUT OUT

Thousands of People Viewed the Bod-

ies To-day. The Other Three

Prisoners Taken to Charlotte.

Nease Gillespie, his stepson, John Gillespie, and Jack Dillingham were taken from the Rowan county jail last night at 11 o'clock by a party of one hundred lynchmen and hanged at Henderson's park after every effort had been made to secure a confession from them. Their bodies hung suspended from a limb of the massive oak that shades the east end of the park near the corner of Long and Henderson streets and at the break of day hundreds of men, women and even children were looking upon them. The left side of the forehead and face of Nease Gillespie, the most conspicuous of the trio both in life and death, was stained by blood that coursed down the face from a hole in the forehead made by a bullet that made certain the death strangulation had already produced. The same indifferent even defiant look that has marked him as a man of physical courage and cunning, unknown to fear and indifferent to fate, told the character of the man. During the march from the jail in the heart of the city to the scene of the lynching, eight and a half blocks away, he made no plea for mercy nor asked for quarters but doggedly protested his innocence in answer to every question. Dillingham was terror-stricken but he, too, denied any knowledge of the murder of the Lysterly family. John Gillespie begged piteously

and repeatedly declared his innocence. When Henderson's park was reached the men were told to be ready for their end and ropes were placed around their necks. The end was thrown over the limb from which they were hanged and they were urged to make a truthful declaration. Dillingham would neither deny nor affirm his guilt. John Gillespie held out to the end that he had no hand in the crime, while Nease Gillespie, bad man and leader of bad men, kept his counsel. It is stated on apparently reliable authority today that Nease Gillespie made a confession to a white minister of the county placing the crime upon his stepson, John. Dillingham and his violence.

NO VIOLENCE APPREHENDED.

At 8 o'clock last night serenity prevailed on the jail premises. Electric lights had been strung around the exterior of the second floor and twenty-five deputies guarded both entrances and patrolled the grounds. County Commissioner H. C. Lentz, who had been sworn in during the day as a special deputy, guarded the front gate and only officers were admitted. By nine o'clock that portion of the mob that was determined to act regardless of consequences filled up the alleyway to the northeast side of the jail and a bold one in the party cleared the fence and landed in the yard. He was immediately placed under arrest but in a jiffy his associates rescued him and threatened violence to the officer who had effected the arrest. Encouraged by the defiant attitude of leaders, the lynching party tore down portions of the weak fence surrounding the jail at the north side, piling by piling. A big fellow with mighty lungs shouted Come on boys! Are we going to let our white women die and not fix the niggers that killed 'em."

For a moment the crowd paused as the officers counseled and implored. An instant later they caught the enthusiasm of the speaker and swept the resisting officers before them.

Up to this time there had been no display of weapons but as determined deputies took a stand at the rear door, which had been closed a dozen revolvers flashed and cracked and as many bullets

struck the door, one clipping the hair from the left side of Deputy Pat Shop's head.

Sheriff Julian, after the first stand of the lynching party was repulsed, crossed the street and conferred with Judge Long and Solicitor Hammer in the latter's room at Hotel Vanderford. Later Judge Long had a conversation over the long distance 'phone and acting upon the advice of the governor the Rowan Rifles were called out.

In the meantime Senator Overman, Judge Long, Solicitor Hammer, Mayor Boyden and Sheriff Julian were begging the crowd in the rear of the jail to observe the law. Three of the lynching party had been seized and taken to a bed room in the jail. "Let our men out and we bound the arms of the Gillespies will leave!" shouted a talk man of 40 or a few years more who seemed to speak with authority. It was finally agreed that the white men in custody would be released and when they descended the steps the leader who had made the proposition was true to his intentions and pleaded with the crowd to leave. The mass of two hundred or more men dissolved for the instant but soon gathered again in knots.

A FIREBAND.

Just as it seemed certain that the crowd would disperse the Rowan Rifles, commanded by Capt. Max L. Barker, arrived and took a stand at the north end of the jail in single column. The presence of the military seemed to enrage the mob and confusion indescribable followed. Stones and other missiles were hurled from two sides and over the jail at the uniformed men and the mob openly dared them to shoot. Acting upon suggestion, Capt. Barker took his men to the jail hallway. The closing of the back door after the last soldier had entered was the signal for a fresh and the most violent outbreak of the evening. Pistols cracked and heavy timber crashed against the door. One soldier fired through a panel of the door but the discharge of his weapon produced no effect and the door was gradually giving away. Capt. Barker had no authority to shoot and realizing the uselessness of remaining at the jail without power to employ his guns took his men to Main street near the corner of Council.

THE FINAL RUSH.

With the departure of the military the triumph of the besiegers was assured. The jail guard was powerless. By shooting down a hundred or more men on the outside he could have saved the prisoners but it was not a part of Sheriff Julian's program to take action that would result in butchery. He and his men fought valiantly with their hands but at 11 o'clock the prison house was in the possession of the mob, which went from cell to cell.

PRISONERS RELEASED.

In one cell were confined Tom Brown and John Fraley, both young white men, who were awaiting trial for robbery. The cell door was thrown open and both the men invited to take their liberty. Brown, an exceptionally bad character, who has served several terms in prison, immediately flew the jail but Fraley re-

fused to leave, declaring his innocence and determination to stand trial. Another young white man, who had been jailed for carrying a concealed weapon, left.

DRAWN FROM CELLS.

Eulphant shouts greeted the five thousand spectators below when the mob arrived at the cells where the defendants charged with the murder were confined. They were dragged out and taken to the rear of the jail where they were questioned by members of the lynching party.

E. A. Barber, of Barber's Junction, was called for and gave his opinion that George Ervin was innocent of any connection with the crime. The mob gave him respectful attention and decided to leave Ervin and Henry Gillespie in the jail. No attempt was made to take the Gillespie or Dillingham woman.

THE DEATH MARCH.

The jail lot was in almost total darkness when the death march began. Three electric lights had been shot out and the remaining light at the south corner of the jail was flickering. Strong cords bound the arms of the Gillespies and Dillingham but there was no attempt to lay violent hands upon the negroes as they were led from the jail yard. Down Main street the lynchmen marched and nearly all the crowd that had been waiting at the front of the jail followed. At the corner of Main and Liberty a half block below the jail, a volley was discharged in the air by members of the party. The crowd then moved without stopping to Henderson's park.

PLEAS WERE VAIN.

Mr. W. J. McMahon, of Pittsburg, Pa., pleaded with the mob but to no avail. The men were drawn up, Jack Dillingham first, strangled and shot.

ENGINEER BADLY SHOT.

Half an hour before the negroes were taken Engineer J. C. McLendon, of Spencer, received a bullet wound in the thigh for which he is being operated upon at the Whitehead-Stokes sanatorium this afternoon. He is in a serious condition. Who shot him is unknown but the prevalent impression that the bullet was fired by J. J. Hodge Kridler is not warranted by the facts. Mr. Kridler has been quite a sick man for a week and Mr. J. S. Hall, one of the leading farmers of the county, requests that the statement be made that he was with Mr. Kridler all night and that he did not attempt at any time to use his gun.

Mr. McLendon is a switch engineer on the Spencer-Salisbury yards and is about 37 years old. He is a quiet unassuming man and everybody that knows him is his friend. His wife, who is in Macon, Georgia, and four children were wired. The deepest regret is felt on all sides at his injury.

OTHERS INJURED.

Fireman Sells and Brakeman Mauney, both of Spencer, were also shot, presumably by some one in the crowd who was firing at random. The former was shot in the arm, the latter in the leg. Two other white men were slightly injured by stray bullets from the crowd.

THE GOVERNOR WIRES.

Sheriff Julian this morning received the following telegram from Governor Glenn:

Raleigh, N. C., Aug. 7.
D. R. Julian, Sheriff,
Salisbury, N. C.

Make every effort to identify and arrest the mob that lynched prisoners. If needed wire me

and I will come to Salisbury.

R. B. GLENN.

Everything is quiet to-day and no further trouble is apprehended.

HALL'S RECORD.

George Hall is a man who has been lawless and violent for many years. He has been indicted for distilling liquor in Stanley and Montgomery counties since Mr. Hammer has been solicitor; he has been indicted in several cases for retailing around Troy and in other parts of Montgomery county. He was engaged in running a distillery with a man named Thos. Hall and Isaac Phillips and, others. The revenue officers did not go into that country; it is a mountainous, hilly section along the Uwharrie river where it flows in the York.

For twelve months the sheriff was unable to locate him. They knew he was in the county, but could not get him. Finally the sheriff took six or eight deputies and stayed in that community three or four days. They finally located him at his barn about 2 o'clock at night. He was down several feet below the top of a shuck pen with the shucks several feet deep over him. He had his head through the rails of the pen so he could breathe. They got in on top of him with their guns, and threw the shucks out, and told him they had repeating rifles and shot guns, and if he moved or resisted in any way, they would kill him.

He gave bond and forfeited it. It has been collected and turned over to the school fund of Montgomery county. He was arrested again and sentenced to three months on the chain gang. After he got off the gang he left the country with a young woman; in three or four weeks he abandoned her and returned to his family with a wife and several small children. He was arrested again by the vigilance of the officers of the county, and was tried and sentenced to the road for nine months. While he was on the chain gang a letter came to him that his wife was dead, and that his little children were homeless at Spencer. An appeal was made to Mr. Hammer by his counsel, to ask for his pardon. The solicitor told his lawyers to verify the statement that his wife was dead and get a proof of her death, and after that was done, he would consider that question. His counsel made a partial investigation, but failed to get any information as to the death of his wife; in fact, Mr. Hammer's recollection is that his counsel ascertained that his wife was not dead.

He served his term out, and has not been heard from until last night, when the solicitor saw him in the crowd and recognized his face but did not recollect his name. Hall would go to protracted meetings in the lower part of Davidson and Montgomery, with a one-horse wagon, and sell liquor out in the woods on Sundays.

THE LYNCHERS.

Few of the lynchmen were known even by sight to the Salisburyans who scrutinized and had to do with them. They were a determined lot of men, however, and a stick of dynamite with a slow fuse found at the entrance of the back door this morning is convincing evidence that the evening might have ended even

more tragically than it did. Even had the lynching not occurred last night it seems certain that the negroes would never have been legally executed.

HENRY GILLESPIE TALKS.

Henry Gillespie, before leaving for Charlotte this morning, told a Post interviewer in the presence of the officers that he heard Jack Dillingham make a confession to the negro preacher Massey. Gillespie says that Dillingham stated that he, Nease and John Gillespie murdered the Lysterlys and that Nease told Massey to say nothing about the confession.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT.

THE PRISONERS ARRANGED.

At 3.50 o'clock yesterday afternoon, immediately after the returning of the bill by the grand jury, the prisoners were brought from the jail to the court house and were placed in the iron cell adjoining the court room where they remained in consultation with their attorneys for half an hour. It was 4.25 when the prisoners entered the court room. Della Dillingham, carrying her baby on her arm, Solicitor Hammer said the State was ready to proceed and the six accused prisoners were arraigned, charged with the murder of Isaac Lysterly, his wife and two children. Nease Gillespie was first questioned and Gillespie said "not guilty, sir." John Gillespie next plead "not guilty," George Ervin next pleaded "not guilty," Jack Dillingham was the next to plead "not guilty" and Della Dillingham was the last questioned and answered "not guilty."

When asked by the court if the prisoners had counsel, Attorney Jake Nevell arose and said he would ask for a son inuance and read his grounds for such request, said grounds being in substance that the accused had not been given a preliminary hearing, that the Salisbury newspapers had contained articles referring to the accused as brutes and expressing the belief in the guilt of the parties under arrest, of the inflamed condition of the public mind, of the threats said to have been made, of the attack on the jail, and the hurrying away of the prisoners to the Charlotte jail and of the short time given the prisoners for preparation for trial; that certain witnesses had been locked up and defendants counsel had had no occasion to examine them.

Solicitor Hammer in answer to this request stated that the strongest articles he had seen in the papers referred to was that "the authorities believe they have the guilty parties," and that no violence would occur if it took the whole State forces to prevent it, that the witnesses in jail had been locked up in default of bond for their appearance, that defendants counsel had had ample time to examine said witnesses if demand had been made, but that no such request had been made until today.

His Honor stated that he realized that there was much feeling and interest in this case in Rowan, but that there was also much interest in Davis, Fredell, Davidson and Stanley, and also in Mecklenburg where the prisoners had been confined. He stated that there were just as good people in Rowan as any other county and that there were also some as bad and that the talk of lynching was not all being done by citizens of Rowan. The court stated that it was acquainted with almost every good man in Rowan and that none but good men would sit on the jury. The motion for

(Continued on page 8.)