

Transcript Extra

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1893.

(Continued From Fourth Page.)

Dr. Kelley stated to the jury, that he had never had any theory of accident in regard to Dr. Hill's death; Dr. Todd told him that the wound in the neck was a clean cut.

Charles Emory said that Brooks caught the doctor's horse, and called to Comegys and Bradshaw to come and hold it. Brooks grabbed up a stone and struck him, and the doctor exclaimed, Oh! Williams got his knife out, but he did not see him cut the doctor. Did not hear Williams say "come up, boys, and do something, too," as reported. Witness said that he was told, "if we boys said anything about it, we would be beat." Mose Brown, who stated in response to questions on Sunday, that he saw the murder and assisted in placing the doctor in the dog-cart, swore that that statement was not true, and that he made it because he was frightened.

Joshua Baynard repeated his story of the killing, and added to the statement at the inquest, that Williams and Brooks had threatened him.

The inquisition commenced at Millington, on the 25th day of April, 1892, and continued at that place on April 28, and concluded at Chestertown on May 3d, 1892, by Coroner Robert K. Pippin, returned a verdict—

"That on the 23d day of April, 1892, at Ford's Hill, a section or spot of ground on the public road, between Millington and Massey's, in said county, one Frisby Comegys, one Charles Brooks, alias Buck Brooks, one Perry Bradshaw, feloniously stopped and held the horse of Dr. J. Heighe Hill, while on his way to visit a sick child, and that the said Charles Brooks, alias Buck Brooks, struck the said Dr. Hill in the head with a stone, and that one Fletcher Williams stabbed the said Dr. Hill with a knife, inflicting mortal wounds, of which said mortal wounds the said Dr. Hill died on the following day, Sunday, April 24th, 1892, and the said Perry Bradshaw, Frisby Comegys, Fletcher Williams and Charles Brooks, alias Buck Brooks, then and there feloniously killed and murdered the said Dr. Hill against the peace and dignity of the State of Maryland."

The Murderers.

Charles Brooks stated his age at 18, but was evidently about 25. He was a copper colored negro, weighed about 175 pounds, and was about 5 feet 4 inches in height, and lived with Mr. Thomas Donahue.

Fletcher Williams was a dark negro, 5 feet 6 inches tall, weighed about 192, and was about 26 years old, though he puts his age at 23. He worked for Charles Rolph.

Moses Brown was a heavy-set, black negro, who said, that he was "28 going in 29 years old." At the time of the murder, he was employed by W. H. Ford.

Perry Bradshaw lived with Tobe Merritt, is about 18 years of age, and weighed about 120 pounds.

Emory, 16 years old, half-brother of Williams, worked for A. Hendrickson; Baynard, 16 years old, worked for J. C. Rolph; Benson, 17 years old, lived with William Ford; Henry Hurtt, about 17, lived with Dr. E. G. Clark.

Colored Indignation.

An indignation meeting was held by representative colored men of Chestertown, Millington and other sections of Kent county, in James' M. E. Church, colored, on May 5, at which the killing of Dr. Hill was emphatically denounced.

Later Arrests.

Though the general public hoped that all of the participants in the murder had been lodged in jail, on Monday, June 20, John Potts, Frank Baynard, Walter Roe, Henry Hynson and John Harrison, all colored, were lodged in jail as being to a greater or less extent implicated in the murder, making the number sixteen, then held in jail as witnesses or for the crime.

The Trial.

James A. Pearce and Comptroller M. deK. Smith, having been appointed by the court to defend the nine men and boys, Brooks, Williams, Potts, Brown, Hurtt, Benson, Emory, Comegys and Baynard, against whom the grand jury had found true bills, the case was called for trial before the circuit court for Kent county, on the morning of Wednesday, October 26, and the prisoners were brought into court.

By mutual consent of counsel on both sides, Mrs. Hill was excused from appearing at the trial, but a short written statement of the facts surrounding the finding of her husband was read. The evidence for the prosecution, when given more in detail, reduced the murder and the men and boys within a narrow space along the road and within a limited period of time, and served to strengthen the damaging testimony before the coroner's jury.

On Thursday morning, October 27, the case was resumed, and Perry Bradshaw, who had several days before turned State's evidence, was put upon the stand. He heard the men talking in Millington of killing a man, and largely corroborated the damaging testimony already adduced against Williams, Brooks, Brown, Comegys, Hurtt, Benson, Emory and Baynard. He gave a detailed account of the murder and the part which each took in the horrible affair: Brooks stopped the horse and witness and Comegys held it while Brooks struck the doctor with a stone and Williams cut him. Brooks, Williams and Moses Brown fixed the doctor in the dog-cart. Bradshaw said that after leaving town, "Fletcher Williams asked us boys to help kill Dr. Hill, and we said alright." The confessions of Hurtt, Emory, Comegys, Benson, Baynard and Brown were next given in evidence and substantiated each the other in all material facts. Other witnesses were examined and interesting details brought out. The case was much shortened by eliminating much corroborative evidence. The defense offered no witness, and the case closed.

Announcing the Verdict.

The court pronounced sentence against the prisoners on the morning of October 27, in part as follows: "After having carefully considered all the evidence in the case, we pronounce Joshua Baynard, Louis Benson, Henry Hurtt, Moses Brown, Frisby Comegys, Charles Brooks, Fletcher Williams and Charles S. Emory, each is and all are guilty of murder in the first degree."

The verdict was a surprise to many, as they expected that only Williams, Brooks, Brown and Comegys would receive the extreme sentence of the law.

The sentence of death was passed against the prisoners on the morning on November 31, 1892.

Governor Brown, on Friday, November 9, signed the death warrants, putting the date of execution for Friday, December 30. This date was afterwards changed upon the petitions of numerous persons, to January 13, 1893.

Sentence Commuted.

Full details of the commutation was given in our issue of yesterday, yet there are other developments which are of interest to the public. Those opposing any interference in the matter on the part of the Governor, were disposed to criticize the action of Sheriff Plummer, upon the groundless report that the commutation failed to bear the great seal of the State. The following is a verbatim copy of the type-written document, regularly signed, and bearing the great seal of the State of Maryland, and was the sheriff's authority for the surrender of his prisoners,—an authority which no official dare refuse to recognize.

ANNAPOLIS, Jan. 10, 1893.

To EDW. J. PLUMMER, SHERIFF OF KENT CO.—SIR: This is to officially notify you, that I have this day commuted the sentence of death which was passed upon Joshua Baynard, who was convicted at the October term, 1892, of the Circuit Court for Kent county, of the murder of Dr. James H. Hill, and sentenced to be hung; a warrant for whose execution was issued by me on the 11th day of November, 1892, naming Friday, December 30, 1892, as the day of execution, but afterward, to wit, on the 21st day of November, 1892, a reprieve was by me granted, suspending the execution of the said Joshua Baynard, and directing that the same should take place on Friday, the 13th day of January, 1893, to be imprisoned for life in the Maryland Penitentiary.

The official commutation of the death sentence to imprisonment for life, has this day been forwarded for record to Samuel G. Fisher, Esq., clerk of the Circuit Court for Kent county.

Witness my hand, and the great seal of Maryland.

Done at the city of Annapolis on this 10th day of January, in the year of our Lord, Eighteen hundred and ninety-three.

FRANK BROWN,

E. W. LECOMPT, Secretary of State.

An official commutation was sent for each prisoner taken away, the only difference being that of the name of the prisoner.

Though intense feeling was created by the Governor's action, in the upper section of the county, no disposition was shown to indulge in any violation of law or encourage any acts of violence. On Wednesday night Governor Brown was burned in effigy in the streets of Millington by a number of indignant citizens.

Mr. Samuel J. Hill expresses himself as disappointed that the four boys Baynard, Benson, Hurtt and Emory should have escaped what he believes to have been their just degree of punishment, but like a law abiding and magnanimous citizen, he would in no way participate in, or encourage violence in any form.

A leading colored politician of Chestertown, on Tuesday morning when he heard of the removal of the boys, publicly declared himself ready to vote for Governor Brown for another term.

Death at the Rope's End!

THE LAST DAY IN PRISON OF THE HILL MURDERERS.

Their Lips Were Sealed!

HOW THE PRISONERS SPENT THE CLOSING HOURS OF LIFE.

Hopes of a Confession Unrealized.

Comegys's Manful Struggle to Reconcile an Offended God--The Others Ready to Step Into Eternity.

The Four Remaining Hill Murderers Hanged.

The last day which the condemned men were to spend on earth dawned gloomily enough, with the snow heavily and steadily falling and a deep mantle of white covering the earth. The jail yard fence and the trees were festooned with curly white ribbons, and fantastic figures were wrought upon the beams and braces of the grimly awaiting gallows outside. The men had slept soundly, and were late in awakening. The evening before had been spent in singing and prayer, and two colored ministers, the Rev. A. A. Murray, of Edesville, and Lemuel Wilmore, had remained with the doomed men until nearly midnight. For the first time the latter seemed to realize the gravity of their position and the necessity for preparations to meet their fate. William and Brooks were nervous and restless, Brown quiet and thoughtful, and the boy Comegys the least impressed of the four. Throughout all the early part of the night he would lie upon the floor of his cell crooning some weird, wild tune for a time and then, with his face pressed closely against the bars, would eagerly listen to the impassioned exhortations of the ministers. A large number of newspaper men spent the greater portion of the evening in the corridor listening to the service and talking with the men.

Soon after breakfast yesterday morning the men again returned to their devotions, and spent some time reading their Bibles. After this, Brooks and Brown devoted themselves to letter writing. The former wrote to his two sisters and his mother, and also at William's request, wrote a letter to the latter's mother. These were simply commonplace letters of farewell and containing nothing like a confession from any of the men. Moses Brown wrote to his wife and mother, telling the latter that he had something to say to her but could not write it. These two also wrote several letters for visiting newspaper men.

The men seemed subdued and apparently awed all day by the near approach of death, but all professed perfect confidence in their salvation, with the exception of the boy Comegys. The latter stated that he had prayed earnestly and sincerely for pardon, but was not satisfied that his soul was all right. During the day the men were visited by Rev. S. C. Roberts, rector of Emmanuel P. E. Church; Rev. B. A. Queeley, colored, Rev. A. A. Murray, colored, of Edesville, Rev. F. S. Dennis, colored, and Rev. Lemuel Wilmore, colored. Father H. R. Sargent, of the Society of the Holy Cross, of West-

minster, Md., also visited the prisoners the afternoon, and spent several hours alone with each. Father Sargent said that his visit to the men had been exceedingly satisfactory, but that he said nothing of what had passed, as prohibited by the rules of his Order of the Holy Cross is a Episcopal organization, formed for work among the colored people of the South, and Father Sargent's mission is to visit all colored prisoners under sentence of death.

In this way, busied with their devotions and with letter writing, seemingly aware that some terrible and remorseless fate was swiftly approaching, yet still not fully appreciating the awfulness of their true situation, did the condemned murderers of Dr. Hill pass their last day upon earth.

The Scaffold.

About six o'clock watchman Pote had completed the heavier parts of the gallows, and nothing remained but to test the machine and guard against any mishap when the fatal moment arrived. As the day was clear no roof was placed over the machine of death. The men stated during the day that the hammering did not disturb them. Comegys made a noble effort to prepare for the end, which he, with evident labor, struggled to realize. With fearful contortions of the face and body he would prostrate himself upon the steel floor of his cell and appeal to God for aid to enable him to meet the end.

The Guards Gathering.

About four o'clock the guards commenced to assemble in town, and later at the court house, where Sheriff Plummer had had the court room thoroughly warmed and lighted for the comfort of the men. In summoning the guards, the sheriff authorized one in each locality or district to do the summoning, and the plan worked admirably. As soon as a list of his men was presented by the respective captains, tickets were issued entitling the holder to a substantial breakfast at any of the hotels in town. The strictest order prevailed, and as darkness closed in, the substantial county jail presented a weird and picturesque scene. Many guards came armed, but others made no special preparation, trusting to being able to secure arms in town should the necessity arise.

Owing to some failure on the part of several of the captains, the full quota of guards failed to be present; notably, Kennedyville was not fully represented.

The interior of the jail presented an unusual scene. At six o'clock Rev. Mr. Sargent entered into close and private conversation with the prisoners, while Sheriff Plummer, surrounded by a score of newspaper men and friends, were gathered together in the sheriff's private room. In one corner lay the ominous coils of a 3 inch cotton rope, so soon to be called into requisition to terminate the fatal drama, which cost five human lives, and a total expenditure to Kent county of over seven thousand dollars (\$7000).

The guards who reported were:

Millington—Wm. Price, captain; Harry Moore, Gove Everett, Isaac Berry, John Woodall, Wm. Loper, Wm. Hickey, F. Smith, F. Walls, W. Mallalieu, M. Warner, Warren Vansant, E. Spear, J. J. Spear, J. T. Smith, C. O. Cacy, John Hamilton, Tom Hailey, Joe Boylus, Wm. Redmile, Garrett Ruth, J. S. Hurlock, J. M. Archibald.

Galena—James Hicks, captain; John Voshell, Michael Quinn, Will Stork, John Stradley, O. B. Crisfield, W. S. Wood, Wm. Steel, M. Burris, Robt. Wilson, Frank Sylvester, Dennis McCauley, R. Lockwood, N. C. Scotten, F. McCauley, M. A. Wilson, John Walls, Thos. Donahue, James Donahue, Jos. Quinn, R. Vansant, B. Moffett.

Fifth District—T. E. W. Crew, captain; T. F. Hudson, J. T. Frazier, Wallis Wheat, David Ashley, Emory Crouch, George Gale, Abe Gale, Walter Elbourn, O. C. Stoops, C. E. Davis, John Vickers, Jas. Perry, Alfred Jester, David Sutton, G. R. Secone, Thos. Wheat, Walter Sutton, L. C. Ayres, R. S. Jones, C. B. Beck, L.