

Shot and Killed His Blind Wife The Post 6/5/1903

Wise County Outlaw Commits Many Crimes

Freeling, Va., May 30, 1903

Clifton H Branham, who murdered his wife, Nancy Branham, at Pound, Wise Co., Va., was arrested near Lexington Ky., a short time ago and will be brought to Wise County for trial in a few days. Branham is about 40 years of age and his life has been full of interesting events for several years back. In the early eighties he was a terror to the people of Wise and Dickenson Counties, Va., and Pike and Letcher Counties in Kentucky. His criminal career dates back to the time he waylaid and shot a Mr. Smallwood in Pike County, Ky., while around his fireside with his family not dreaming of danger. Branham slipped to a crack in the house and fired the ball which took effect in Smallwood's arm, he sank to the floor and Branham, believing him to be dead left. Smallwood recovered but was a cripple the remainder of his life. Next, while Henry Vanover, a farmer of Letcher county, Kentucky, was in the field at work, Branham brutally murdered him. For this crime he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for life in the penitentiary; he remained in the pen of fourteen years and six months and was granted a conditional pardon by Gov. Beckham.

While in the pen he professed religion and became a minister of the gospel; upon his liberation, he returned to Wise County, Va., and upon his return he found his eldest daughter had married one David Fleming, and trouble arose between Branham and Fleming. Branham immediately pulled his gun and fired at Fleming, the ball cutting a lock of hair from his head; Mrs Branham begged him not to hurt Fleming, whereupon he levelled his gun at her and fired, the ball lodging in her side; she sank to the ground and almost instantly expired. Branham then took up his abode in Kentucky, but the news of his brutal murder followed him and he was taken into custody by the officers of the law. The murdered woman had some time prior to the killing become almost totally blind. Branham has long been noted for his desperateness and upon one occasion is said to have remarked that he would kill a man for a biscuit. His father is living near here and at the advanced age of 90 years and has always been considered an honest, law abiding citizen.

From Wise The Post 8/6/1903

Wise, Va., August 1 – The jury in the case of the Commonwealth versus Clifton Branham, charged with the murder of his wife, returned a verdict of murder in the first degree, at 3:30 o'clock this p.m. A motion for a new trial was made and will be argued next week, there being 25 to 35 witnesses for the defense and about the same number for the Commonwealth. The defendant was represented by Judge T M Alderson, John A Hughes, J F Alley, Hon R P Bruce and W H Bend, while W W G Datson, Attorney for the Commonwealth, and O M Vicars looked after the interests of the Commonwealth. There are several other cases of importance on the docket among which is the case of the Commonwealth versus Wesley Hicks, charged with the murder of Dav Dykes and George Fowler at Glamorgan on last Sunday morning. These cases will be called next week and it is more that probable that they will be tried. Hicks was refused bond.

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A "Mullin" Died This A.M. The Post 6/5/1903

Expired Suddenly in Front of Central Hotel.

Austin Mullins, of Falls Mills dropped dead in front of the Central Hotel here this morning about 6:30. Mr. Mullins had been in town for several days in the interest of a law suit which, it is said has given him a great deal of worry. He arose early this morning, and after taking a walk returned to the hotel and say down in a chair in front of the public room and fell over.

Friends came to his side at once and after examination found that he was dead. Mr. Mullins was a straight forward, upright citizen, and his sudden death is a shock to his large number of friends in the country. He was a relative if Grant M Mullins, Assistant Cashier of Tazewell National Bank. The cause of death was pronounced as heart trouble.

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Death of Mrs. Barr The Post 8/20/1903

Gen'l R A Ayers and Mr H C Barr of this place were called to Atlanta las Thursday on account of the death of Mrs S C Barr, sister of Gen'l Ayers and mother of Mr. Barr. Mrs Barr's death was entirely unexpected to her Virginia relatives, and she had been sick only a short while. Mrs. Barr was a most estimable lady and had many friends in Southwest Virginia, who will deeply regret to hear of her death.

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Killed at Dryden The Post 8/20/1903

H Mitchell Cox Instantly Killed by a Fast Freight

Dryden, Va., Aug 13 – The people of the community were deeply grieved Wednesday morning the 12<sup>th</sup>, at the news that the body of H Mitchell Cox was found torn to pieces along the railroad between his home and Dryden. Mr Cox had left Dryden later Tuesday evening en route home, which is about one mile north of Dryden on the L & N Railroad and was evidentially overtaken by a fast freight train while walking on the track about 200 yards from the depot. His remains were picked up and cared for by his friends early Wednesday morning, and were later taken and buried in the country cemetery of A B Saffle. Mr Cox was high-minded, and one of the best families in Lee county, was about 35 years old and unmarried. His many friends mourn his death.

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Logan Flanary was Shot and Killed by Ben Skaggs The Post 8/20/1903

About 6 o'clock Tuesday evening in the streets of Dryden, near J P Herndon's store, Ben Skaggs shot Logan Flanary, (a mullatto, aged 15) the result of which shot the boy died Wednesday, the bullet having passed through the abdomen. Both parties were somewhat intoxicated, and Flanary was recklessly shooting his revolver, having fired two shots in the air, but not at Skaggs, after which another party clinched Flanary and took his revolver from him when Skaggs walked from behind and shot Flanary. There was no evidence to show that there was any trouble between these parties until the shooting. Skaggs was given a preliminary hearing before officers Noel, Barker, and Clarkson, the evidence being such that he was delivered to Deputy Sheriff Evans, who took him to Jonesville jail to await an indictment. Being purely a case of murder, Skaggs will look up the rope or receive a sentence of many years at Richmons.

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James Long The Post 9/24/1903

Killed by Policeman ay St Paul

A dispatch from Coeburn says:

At St. Paul, in Wise County, yesterday Policeman Noah Castle shot and instantly killed James Long, whom he was attempting to arrest on a trivial charge. He approached Long in a "blind tiger" where he was drinking with several friends. Long resisted arrest, and a desperate encounter ensued. The officer claims to have acted in self-defense. Long was a married man and had several children, four of whom came upon the scene immediately after the shooting.

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