

young men about his eating the candy. The others laughed and several more remarks were made. At this the Negro turned and asked if they were talking about him. Words followed, becoming more and more heated, until threats began to be passed between them. One of the young men started into the store whereupon McIlherron, apparently believing, as one of our white informants said, that they were preparing to start a fight, pulled out his gun and started shooting. Six shots were fired, two taking effect in each man. Rogers died in his tracks, Jesse Tigert died about twenty minutes later and Frank Tigert was carried to the office of Dr. O. L. Walker, Estill Springs' only physician, where he received medical aid. The latter will recover, as his wounds are not serious.

#### THE MAN HUNT

Immediately after the shooting, McIlherron, in the attendant excitement, ran down the road leading toward his home. There was no immediate pursuit by the whites. Although everybody knew that he had gone to his home, the white people waited and sent all the way to Winchester, the county seat, some fifteen miles distant, at a cost of sixty dollars, to secure blood-hounds. When these arrived, they succeeded in tracking him only as far as his home, where the scent was lost.

Intense excitement prevailed in the town as news of the shooting spread. In this chaotic state of affairs, no one seemed to know what to do and threats of lynching began to be made. A few of the cooler heads pleaded that the crowd allow the sheriff to handle the entire affair. Knowing of the sheriff's fear of the Negro, the crowd greeted this suggestion with a derisive shout, and cries of "Lynch the nigger" answered this plea. Plans were laid to form posses to catch McIlherron. Word was sent to Sheriff Rose at Winchester, upon receiving which he immediately left for Estill Springs.

Shouts of "Electrocution is too good for the damned nigger," "Let's burn the black —" and others of the sort rose thick and fast. Led by its more radical members, the mob soon worked itself into a frenzy; a posse was formed and set out on the man-hunt.

Meanwhile, McIlherron had gone to his home, gathered his few clothes and pro-

ceeded to the home of Lych, who aided him in his flight. On two mules they set out in the direction of McMinnville, in an attempt to reach the Tennessee Central Railroad where McIlherron could get a train that would take him to safety. The preacher went a part of the way with McIlherron and then returned to his home in Prairie Springs, a small settlement about twelve miles from Estill Springs. The news soon spread that Rev. Lych had aided McIlherron in his flight and a part of the mob went to Prairie Springs to "get" him for this. Two members came upon him near his home. One of them pointed his gun at the preacher and pulled the trigger. The gun did not go off, and before he could fire again, Lych snatched the gun from his assailant's hands, broke it and started towards the man with the stock in his hands, when the other man fired a charge into the preacher's breast, killing him instantly.

The hunt for McIlherron continued throughout Friday night, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, large posses of men scouring the surrounding county for him. Monday night he was located in a barn near Lower Collins River, just beyond McMinnville. The barn was surrounded and the posse began firing on it. The Negro answered the fire, this state of affairs continuing throughout Monday night. During this time McIlherron succeeded in holding off the crowd, whose numbers were rapidly augmented, when the news spread that the Negro had been located. In the hundred or more men in the posses were Deputy Sheriff S. J. Byars and Policeman J. M. Bain. In the fusillade of bullets poured into the barn, McIlherron was wounded, one eye being shot out. He also received two body wounds, one in the arm and one in the leg. Finally, McIlherron's ammunition gave out and, weak from the loss of blood, he was forced to surrender when the barn was rushed. When captured, the triumphant members of the mob carried him into McMinnville. The feeling against him was so great that an attempt was made to lynch him in the town of McMinnville, but the citizens of that town refused to allow a lynching in their midst and were able to prevent it from happening. McIlherron was, therefore, placed on Train No. 5, en route to Estill Springs, where he arrived at 6:30 P. M. on Tuesday.

#### THE CROWD

In the meantime, news of the capture spread like wild fire and men, women and children started pouring into the town to await the arrival of the victim. They came from a radius of fifty miles, coming from Coalmont, Winchester, Decherd, Tullahoma, McMinnville and from the country districts. In buggies and automobiles, on foot, on mules, they crowded into the little settlement, until it was estimated that from 1,500 to 2,000 people were in the town. A high state of excitement prevailed as the time for the arrival of the train drew near. Threats of the torture to be inflicted were made on many sides. Boxes, excelsior and other inflammable material were gathered in readiness for the event, and iron bars and pokers were obtained. Most of the crowd were grim and silent, but there were some who laughed and joked in anticipation of the coming event.

Finally, the train drew near. McIlherron was so weak upon arrival, from the loss of blood due to three wounds received in the battle with the posse, that he was unable to stand and had to be carried to the spot selected for his execution. The leaders of the mob decided that he should be lynched on the exact spot where the shooting occurred. He was, therefore, carried to this place where preparations for the funeral pyre were made. The cries of the crowd grew more and more vengeful as the moments passed.

Just as the arrangements had been completed, a few of the braver spirits among the women of the town demanded that the Negro be not burned in the town itself, but be taken out a little way in the country. There were loud objections to this proposal from the now uncontrollable mob. The women insisted, in spite of these objections, and finally it was decided to carry McIlherron across the railroad into a small clump of woods in front of the Campbellite church. This was done and the mob transferred its activities to the new execution ground.

The self-appointed leaders of the mob by this time had great difficulty in restraining the wild fury of the crowd. They were constantly forced to appeal to them not to strike McIlherron or to spit on him, but to allow the affair to be a "perfectly orderly lynching." The sister of one of the men

slain was in the mob and had become frantic in her pleas to the men to let her kill the Negro. She demanded that he be killed immediately, not to allow him to live another moment. It was evident that such a humane thing as instant death would not have appeased the blood-thirst of the mob, in its revengeful mood.

#### THE TORTURE

On reaching the spot chosen for the burning, McIlherron was chained to a hickory tree. The wood and other inflammable material already collected was saturated with coal oil and piled around his feet. The fire was not lighted at once, as the crowd was determined "to have some fun with the damned nigger" before he died. A fire was built a few feet away and then the fiendish torture began. Bars of iron, about the size of an ordinary poker, were placed in the fire and heated to a red-hot pitch. A member of the mob took one of these and made as if to burn the Negro in the side. McIlherron seized the bar and as it was jerked from his grasp all of the inside of his hand came with it, some of the skin roasting on the hot iron. The awful stench of burning human flesh rose into the air, mingled with the lustful cries of the mob and the curses of the suffering Negro. Cries of "Burn the damned hound," "Poke his eyes out," and others of the kind came in thick confusion from the mob. Men, women and children, who were too far in the rear, surged forward in an attempt to catch sight of and gloat over the suffering of the Negro.

Now that the first iron had been applied, the leaders began eagerly to torture McIlherron. Men struggled with one another, each vying with his fellow, in attempting to force from the lips of the Negro some sign of weakening. A wide iron bar, red-hot, was placed on the right side of his neck. When McIlherron drew his head away, another bar was placed on the left side. This appeared to amuse the crowd immensely and approving shouts arose, as the word was passed back to those in the rear of what was going on. Another rod was heated and, as McIlherron squirmed in agony, thrust through the flesh of his thigh, and a few minutes later another through the calf of his leg. Meanwhile, a larger bar had been heating, and while those of the mob close enough to see shouted in fiend-