

LYNCHED BY A MOB

A MIDNIGHT HANGING IN PRINCE FREDERICK.

CHARLES WHITLEY, THE RAVISHER, SUSPENDED FROM A PERSIM- MON LIMB.

AN ATROCIOUS CRIME AVENGED BY A BAND OF MASKED LYNCHERS.

A Ghastly Spectacle on the Roadside on Monday Morning Last.

When the inhabitants of Prince Frederick retired to rest on Sunday night last no one supposed for a moment that within a few hours a tragedy such as has never before been witnessed in Calvert county would be enacted in our quiet little village. But when on the following morning a human form was found hanging dead by the roadside near this place, our citizens could scarcely realize the tragic event that had transpired during their peaceful slumbers.

The GAZETTE last week reported the brutal assault made by the colored boy, Charles Whitley—incorrectly given then as Charles Whittle—upon the little five-year-old daughter of Rev. L. M. Lyle, pastor of the Calvert Circuit, M. E. Church South. The particulars of the assault were of such a nature that we forbore to publish them in our columns. After the hearing given Whitley before Justice W. W. I. Dalrymple on Wednesday of last week, Dr. George H. Jones was called upon to make an examination of the little girl, the result of which proved the assault to have been of a most aggravated nature.

Whitley was confined in the county jail here, and owing to the insecurity of that structure the prisoner was securely manacled to an iron staple driven in the floor of his cell, and a guard placed at the jail every night. Subsequent events prove that while these precautions may have been sufficient to prevent the prisoner's escaping from the hands of the law, they were but trifling impediments to the progress of the party that assailed the building on Sunday night last, bent on avenging the atrocious crime for which Whitley was held in thress.

A MIDNIGHT RAID.

The two guards on duty at the jail—Samuel W. Patterson and Leonard Carroll—were quietly chatting with Sheriff Anderson, who had called at the jail for a few moments, between 11 and 12 o'clock Sunday night, without an intimation of the impending raid. The night was calm and a death-like stillness prevailed, when the sound of an approaching vehicle was borne to the ears of the watching party. In a few seconds the measured tread of horses' hoofs became distinct on the midnight air, as gradually the sounds drew nearer. Sheriff Anderson at once suspected that something was "in the wind," and hastily locked the door leading into the corridor of the jail building. Whatever doubts may have lingered in the minds of the Sheriff and his guards as to the probabilities of an attempt to rescue Whitley were soon dispelled by the appearance of a body of thirty-five or forty men, the majority of whom wore masks and all heavily armed with guns and pistols, in front of the building. Up to this time not a voice had been heard; they moved as quietly as shadows.

DESCRIPTION OF THE JAIL.

The county jail is a one-story frame building, built upon the site of the old brick jail that was burned down some twenty years ago, at the time of an escape of all the prisoners confined therein. The present building has not been regarded as secure, by any means, and prisoners have time and again effected an escape from it. It contains but two cells, each about ten by twelve feet in dimensions. In the front of these cells, or the one facing the court-house,

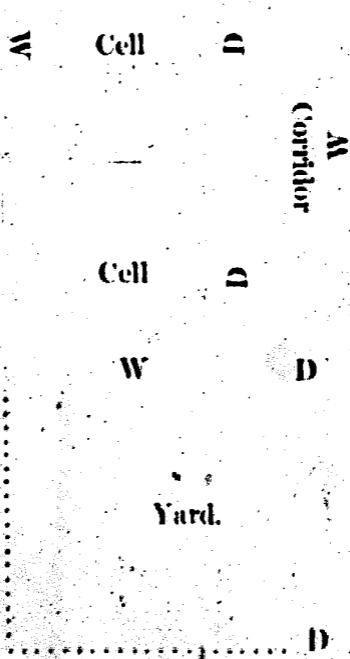


Diagram showing plan of Jail.

Whitley was confined. A high plank fence, with a top rail containing huge spikes pointed upwards, encloses the jail yard on the front, and a door leads through this fence which is fastened on the outside by a stout padlock. On the inside it can only be fastened by a stiff piece of wire bent at the end and hooked over the head of a ten-penny nail. The Sheriff and the guards were in the jail yard when the lynchmen arrived, and the door above-mentioned was unlocked and secured only by the wire fastening on the inside.

EFFECTING AN ENTRANCE.

The lynching party wasted no time in effecting an entrance, as the necessary implements were brought along for this purpose. A crow-bar was speedily forced over the top of the door, and when it had been sprung open wide enough to admit of it a dozen pair of strong hands soon succeeded in tearing it from its fastening, although the guards on the inside lent their aid in resistance. Once within the jail yard the mob overpowered the Sheriff and secured

the jail keys, upon his refusal to deliver them up, hustled the two guards outside the enclosure, and had everything then in their own hands. In the struggle for the possession of the keys several pistol-shots were fired from outside the fence, one bullet passing in close proximity to the Sheriff's face.

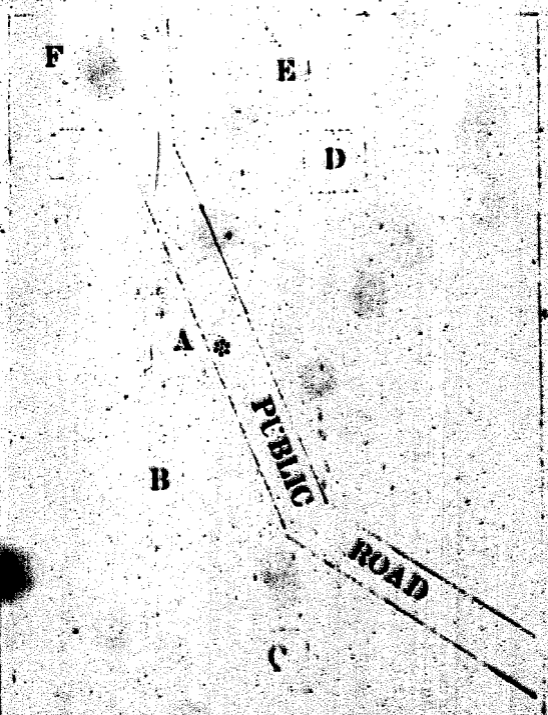
Sheriff Anderson did all in his power to protect his prisoner, but was powerless in the hands of the mob, now thoroughly inflamed to desperation as the object of their vengeance appeared so close within their grasp.

INSIDE THE JAIL.

After securing the jail keys the front door was hastily unlocked, and fifteen determined men sprang into the corridor. There was now no further obstacle in the way, as the cell-door was fastened but not locked on the outside, and it was but the work of an instant to gain access to Whitley's cell. Here the prisoner was found rolled up in his blankets and crouching with fear under his iron bedstead. It took some little time to discover him. An axe was handed in, and with one blow the chain connecting the prisoner's leg-irons with the staple was severed. A rope was then placed about Whitley's neck, and he was hurried rapidly along to his impending fate, all the while begging piteously for his life.

DANGLING FROM A PERSIMMON TREE.

One and a-half miles out from this place on the road leading through the farm of Joseph A. Wilson a large persimmon tree grows within four feet of the public road. There is no other tree in the immediate vicinity. Upon a limb of this tree overhanging the public road Whitley's body was found suspended on Monday morning. While no one doubted for a moment the purpose of the mob, yet it was not known until Monday morning what spot they had selected upon which to wreak their vengeance. Below is a diagram showing the scene of the lynching.



C—Joseph A. Wilson's house. B—Thomas Smallwood's house. A—Persimmon tree, on which Whitley was hung. F—Colored

C—Joseph A. Wilson's house. B—Thomas Smallwood's house. A—Pernimmon tree, on which Whitley was hung. F—Colored school. E—Barn. D—A. L. Johnson's house.

It was a ghastly spectacle to those who viewed the corpse on Monday morning. The lynchers had done their work well, even the knot with which the rope was fastened around Whitley's neck being the regulation hangman's knot. His hands were tied with a stout cord behind his back, and his feet came within eight inches of touching the ground in a little foot-path on the side of the road. On his left ankle was the leg-iron with which he had been secured, with a piece of the chain two feet long attached. The rope used was an ordinary plow-line, perhaps a trifle stouter than that in general use among farmers. It had been carried twice around the limb and was doubled a part of its length. Whitley was dressed in a pair of dark cassimer pants, checked calico shirt, and wore a pair of red suspenders. On his feet were a pair of cotton socks, much worn, but no shoes. This was the only clothing he wore.

HOLDING AN INQUEST.

Sheriff Anderson notified Justice Dalrymple of the hanging at an early hour on Monday morning, and the latter came down to the village at 9 A. M. for the purpose of holding an inquest. After the corpse had been cut down and brought back to the jail the sheriff summoned the following jury of inquisition: James B. Duke, R. A. Buckmaster, C. S. Parran, James J. Pitcher, James T. Sewell, W. W. Bowen, Perry S. Ross, Thomas E. Hall, Leonard Carroll, Silas R. King, James S. Catterton and Wm. H. Dowell.

State's Attorney John P. Briscoe was present and conducted the examination of witnesses before the jury, which, after hearing the testimony of Sheriff Thomas F. Anderson, Samuel W. Patterson, Leonard Carroll, R. A. Buckmaster and Charles J. Thawley, rendered a verdict that "Charles Whitley came to his death on Sunday, June 6, 1886, by hanging at the hands of parties unknown to the jury; and the jury further finds that James W. Lyons was present and aided and abetted in the hanging." The Sheriff and one of the guards testified that they positively identified James W. Lyons among the party, but failed to identify any of the others.

Whitley's body was encased in a plain pine coffin and buried in the northwest corner of the court-house lot. It lies within a few feet of the grave of Albert Saunders, who was executed here in 1873 for the murder of an itinerant watch and clock mender named Burdell, a native of New Jersey. In addition to these graves is that of John Rice in the same locality, all traces of which are now well-nigh extinct. Rice, it will be remembered, suffered the extreme penalty of the law for a crime of the same character as that committed by Whitley, his victim being a resident of the Third District of this county.

A SHORT SKETCH OF WHITLEY.

But little is known of Whitley in this county. He accompanied Rev. L. M. Lyle from Stafford, Virginia, when the latter took charge of Calvert Circuit this spring. He was engaged by Mr. Lyle about one month before leaving Virginia, and has been in his employ since. He is said to have had rather a bad reputation in Stafford, and to have been engaged in several cutting affairs. He was a bright mulatto, about twenty-one years old, five feet eight inches in height, and weighed about one hundred and thirty pounds. His parents are said to be living in Virginia.