

The Murderer of Walter Boyd Confesses the Deed — Confesses Also to Robbery and Arson Investigation

We published last week an account of the murder of Walter Boyd, near Idaville, which occurred Thursday morning, August 5th, about 6 o'clock, while he was feeding chickens. Will Johnson, a young negro man of the neighborhood, has confessed to the murder. Furthermore, he confessed to the burning and robbery of Boyd's house Friday night, July 30th, and says he shot Boyd to death with Boyd's own gun that was stolen from the burned dwelling. Sheriff Lauderdale and deputy sheriff N. P. Garret worked up the case and got the first clue from a negro woman, Jane Hall, who was Johnson's sweetheart, and to whom Johnson had given a ring. The ring proved to be one that belonged to Walter Boyd's wife, and the negro girl said that Will Johnson gave it to her.

Confession

When confronted with this evidence, the man broke down and made a clean breast of it. He said he robbed the house while the family was away on Friday night, July 30. And, hearing some voices around while he was in the house, he poured coal oil on the floor and fired it. Then he ran out another way and mixed with crowd that came to the fire and helped to save the furniture.

He shot his victim on Thursday morning, August 5th, robbed him of ten dollars, hid the gun in the weeds nearby and then went on about his business. He told the officers where to find the gun, and also his own purse with the ten dollar note in it. The officers have since found the articles where he said they were. The negro girl and her brother, Claud Hall, who were also arrested as suspects, have both been released, as Johnson says he alone was concerned in either of the desperate crimes and there was no evidence against them.

Community

Excitement was raging at Idaville even before the news of the confession reached the people there, and for fear of possible violence, the officers wisely concluded to place their prisoner in the Shelby County jail for safe keeping. This was done Sunday evening very quietly and the prisoner will remain there until brought back here for trial in October.

Awaiting Trial

The circumstantial evidence taken in connection with the confession seems conclusive of the negro's guilt, and as there can be no possible palliation nor hope of pardon, we think the people can well afford to quietly await the action of the court and jury. Both the crimes for which he must stand his trial are of the most heinous nature and if the jury that tries him is satisfied of his guilt, he will probably suffer the extreme penalty.

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