

THE DANIEL BOYS

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY TOLD

The Potter People Declare Jack Daniel to Have Made His Appearance in Their Midst as a Hog Thief - The Murder of William Potter - Part Played by Widow Rippey.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., February 23. - [Special] Jackson M. Noles of Cedar Glades, having read the recent story of Jack Daniel, the Yell County murderer, now a fugitive from justice in Jackson County Georgia, gives the following story concerning the same events:

The autumn of 1881 found this part of the country in perfect peace and harmony. The appearance of Jack Daniel, who stated that he was looking out a locality upon which he would plant his family as soon as he could go to Saline and convey it here, changed all to anarchy. He rode around through the country on a shaft wagon pulled by an old horse. He selected a place on Cedar Suck branch [west? above the intersection with Ion Creek], which is about four miles in length, the valley of which is about a half mile in width containing no land of fertile appearance, and in a mountainous desert, which is thirty miles in length and ten wide, possessing fine range for horses, cattle, hogs etc. The bounds of this desert is daily crossed by the stock of the farmers who live near it. Jack soon returned to Saline County and immediately came back to Cedar Suck, accompanied by A. M. Ramsey and the Widow Rippey. They set about the improvement of claims. Jack erected a rail pen which served him as a dwelling. About the same time one Blocker, a resident of Montgomery County came and build a log hut on the source of the branch and moved his family into it.

DR. EMORY PUT OUT OF THE WAY

In July 1882, Dr. Emory moved near Jack's claim. Jack sought means by which he might remove Dr. Emory, claiming that the doctor was interfering with his claim. Daniel wrote Dr. Emory a note, stating if he did not pay him one hundred dollars for the claim that he would shoot an ounce ball through him before sunset and also stated that he would kill Mr. Potter because he believed him to be concerned in the matter. Jack made turtle bait of Dr. Emory's only milk cow, just after the threat. Dr. Emory did not remain long, but moved away in October following. It seems that Daniel and Blocker soon became intimate friends and seemed to be comfortably situated in regard to their affairs. The Autumn of 1882 witnessed the appearance of Bud Daniel (Jack's brother Jim), who set up a very scanty abode near Jack's residence. The three men soon became independent of the surrounding settlements as though they were millionaires.

CONCERNING THE CLANS OF THE COUNTRY

The citizens of Yell County ask leave to contradict the outlaws concerning clans or cliques in this section. They boldly assert that no clan has ever been known to exist in their midst, save the outlaw clan. They also say that if any citizen can be found in this country who will testify that he ever knew of the existence of a clan here,

save the outlaw clan, that he shall have a one hundred dollar premium. The citizens of this county are conscientious in all their dealings.

COMMENCEMENT OF TROUBLE

In the winter of 1882, the people found that their stock was nightly being stolen. William Potter in passing through the desert, found a number of his hogs in Mr. Blocker's possession. He also found a number of his friend's hogs in Daniels lot. The thieves had for some time been running meat wagons to the Hot Springs market, but were not suspected of stealing it. Intense excitement raged through the country. A number of citizens paid a visit to the hog thieves and only met with defiance and insult. They would not give up the hogs. The visitors returned to their homes, went a second time, secured and brought their own home, leaving the thieves in great anger.

THE ASSASSINATION OF POTTER

This led to the assassination of William Potter, who was one of the owners of the stolen property. He was always industrious in providing sustenance for his family, which was almost suffering from poverty. Mr. Potter was a man of honest toil, dependent upon his daily labor and a man in whom all of his neighbors placed implicit confidence. One bright April morning in 1883, Mr. Potter caught his horse and went to his field as usual. He knew that Jack Daniel had malice against him because of the Emory clan, and the stolen property, and a slight stain of jealousy which arose between them winter of 1881 because of the Widow Rippey.

SECRET IN AMBUSH

About 10 o'clock a.m. [April 18, 1883], the desperadoes appeared at the side of Mr. Potter's field, secreted themselves in ambush, and when Mr. Potter came near the fence they ordered him to come out. The deceased told them that he wanted to go to his house and see his wife and children.

"You shall never see them again," said the outlaws, and as Mr. Potter started to cross the fence the fire of two guns was heard, and one ball entered Potter, pierced him through, and life was soon extinct.

Immediately after the fire from the guns, Potter began screaming from the sting of death, and to his assistance ran his wife and eldest daughter. As Miss Rosey ran to her dying father, she heard the assassins running across the creek which ran near the field. When Mrs. Potter appeared at the side of her dying husband, he commenced to relate the circumstances and said:

"Jack Daniel, Rile Blocker, and Bud Daniel have killed me."

He also stated that they tried to draw him out into the woods.

Mr. Potter could not protect himself, as he had no weapon, not even a pocket knife. Before the outlaws shot Potter they said:

"We are going to kill you and Mr. Noles [the author of this piece], the other owner of the stolen property."

So the deceased said on his dying bed. He breathed his last in about one hour.

On the day of the assassination the outlaws concealed themselves until the presumption arose that they would not be taken. The next day thereafter the roads were crowded by pursuers, riding night and day - anxious to find the desperadoes. They scoured settlements and deserts. The outlaws lay

concealed, slipping from from friend to friend, receiving messages from every part they could. The terrific struggles soon reached the ears of the governor, and he offered a \$500 reward each for their capture. After the offer of the reward had come out into all parts of the country, immense throngs of persons turned out. Times ran thus for the space of three months, when at last Mr. Blocker pulled loose from Jim and Jack, and went where his relatives lived, and there he was drawn in. This left religious[?] Jack and Jim to dodge all the pursuers of the country, but their whereabouts were soon known. Mr. Blocker proved traitor and directed all the pursuers to one Coker's, eight miles east of Cedar Suck, when a large number poared in to arrest the desperadoes.

THE PINE LOG BATTLE

On Sunday morning, July 29th [1883], one sheriff with six men and two blood hounds started on their way toward Brushy Mountain. They had not gone far when the hounds began to track someone who had just gone along.

"We'll soon have them, boys," said the officer.

After they had gone six miles north, through the mountainous desert, the hounds stopped and gave signs that the game was close.

"Oh, we'll soon bag our game, boys," said the officer.

At that moment the shrill report of a Winchester told the whereabouts of the desperadoes. The battle was hot for about five minutes, two persons being killed and one wounded. The outlaws were safe, from the fact that they were concealed behind a huge pine log, the under side of which was chinked with stone.

ESCAPE OF THE DESPERADOES

The desperadoes escaped and ran up and over the summit, winding their way through the desert to some other portion of the country. They have never been seen in this country since.

Immediately after the battle, the officers arrested John Coker and Mr. Flood and took them to the Yell County jail. A mob came in the darkness, burst the jaildoors, took the inmates, led them to a bridge across the Arkansas River, tied the ropes to the bannister and threw them over. When daylight came, it revealed to public view the two dead bodies.

SUICIDE OF MRS. DANIEL

After the outlaws were gone, Mrs. Daniel (Jack's wife) committed suicide [Dec. 20th, 4½ months later], thereby placing herself out of all trouble. Mr. Ferguson, from north Arkansas, moved and bought out Jim's claim [and Mary Ann went back to Saline County to have her baby on Nov. 29th], and was living near Mrs. Daniel. She told him that for some time she had been hunting a pond in the branch in which she could put an end to her troublesome life, but could not find one deep enough. A day or so later, her eldest son saw her with a bottle of laudanum. He took it from her. Early next morning all of the children were awakened by the report of a rifle. When they sprang from their beds and ran to their mother, she was holding the gun in her hands and the ball had passed through her body.

Soon after her death a man from Georgia named Bennett came to this country and carried the children to their relatives in Georgia.

[bracket notes by J. Danel, 2006]