

## Three men were hanged on the same day, 127 years ago on February 5, 1892

Tuesday, February 5, 2019, marked the 127th anniversary of a significant day in Kentucky history on February 5, 1892, as three Kentucky murderers paid for their crimes at nearly the same time. In each of the towns of Stanton, West Irvine, and Henderson, Kentucky, the trap door fell open, leaving three convicted murderers hanging by the neck until pronounced dead.

Henderson, an Ohio River town in western Kentucky, was the first to see death take its intended, as Robert Charlton, a black man, the murderer of Minnie Hoskins, his mistress, was hanged in an inclosure on the north side of the jail, just before noon.

At 12:50 p.m., the gallows took the

life of William Puckett as 5,000 people watched the 4-minute ordeal that completed the punishment of one of the killers of Henry Hall.

In Stanton, Kentucky, less than 15 air miles from West Irvine, Simpson Bush was hanged at 1:08 p.m. for the murder of his wife, Anna, at Clay City on June 23, 1890. Over 2,500 people witnessed the execution.

The following are excerpts from the Louisville-Courier Journal, depicting the hangings.

*West Irvine, Ky., Feb 5 -- (Special) - Four thousand people came from the mountains and valleys to witness the execution of William Puckett for the murder of William (Henry) Hall. They began coming in at dawn. The place selected for the execution was in a bottom surrounded by high hills, and fully 5,000 people witnessed the execution.*

*Puckett had been sent to Richmond for safe-keeping, and on Wednesday night, the Sheriff of Estill County, fearing an attempt to rescue by friends, went in a buggy to Richmond and brought him out on a mixed team, Thursday morning. He joined the M.E. Church, South, and*

*was baptized last week. On his arrival in Irvine, a strong guard was placed upon him.*

*The march from the jail to the scaffold was begun at 12:10 o'clock. Thousands were in front and following, but a guard of sixteen picked men kept the road clear. Arriving at the gallows, prayer was offered by the Rev. J. P. Strother, and hymns were sung.*

*At 12:43, the handcuffs were removed from Puckett's wrists and the Sheriff and his deputy assisted him in putting on gloves, probably the first pair the condemned man ever had on. At 12:46, his hands were bound, then the black cap was drawn over his head. He then for the first time showed any weakness, becoming very nervous and repeatedly saying, "Lord, have mercy on me."*

*At 12:50, the drop fell. His neck was broken and death was instantaneous and painless. Drs. Evans, Stagner and Turner pronounced him dead in four minutes, pulse and heart ceasing to beat.*

*Stanton, Ky., Feb. 5 -- (Special) -- Simpson Bush was hanged here at 1:08 o'clock this afternoon for the murder*

*of his wife at Clay City, June 23, 1890. Twenty-five hundred people witnessed the execution. The scaffold was erected 400 yards from the jail and was inclosed by a plank fence, sixteen by twenty-four feet square and twelve feet high. The platform was level with the top of the fence.*

*Fifty spectators were admitted to the inclosure. Below a rope was stretched around, fifteen feet from the sides, to keep the crowd back. The condemned man stood in full view of the crowd which had gathered around until the trap door was sprung which dropped him six feet and from outside view.*

*Bush made a short address to the young men, warning them against wrong doing, claiming his downfall was brought on by keeping bad company. He pleaded not guilty to the crime for which he was about to be executed. He ordered and assisted in the singing of "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," after which a prayer was offered by Rev. John Law of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The drop fell at 1:08 o'clock, and death ensued without a struggle. Bush was pronounced dead in ten minutes.*

## 213 TALES

by the late

Michael Dale Proffitt

My name is Michael Dale Proffitt, and I was born and raised in Estill County. I was the ninth child born to Charlie Elmer Proffitt and Elsie Patrick Proffitt and was the first born in a hospital. Mom was born at Cob Hill, the ninth child of twelve children.

Mom and Dad decided to buy a grocery store off my Uncle Floyd McIntosh. We moved out there in 1960. My oldest sister, Barbara, had done got married and had a child before we moved. Her baby, Connie Lois Wise, was born with a hole in her heart. She lived about a year. My sister then had a lot of problems from the pressure. I know that had to be hard. Connie was a pretty baby. They had her at the house after she passed and the funeral at Gum Springs Church. Barbara's husband, Reece Wise, had bought a place about a half mile from us and built a little house.

We went ahead and moved out to the store then. It was at the intersection of KY-213 and KY-52, three and a half miles from the old home place. The house was an old store building, built on, on both sides. Gilbert McIntosh had run a store there before but he had moved to town.

The house still had bars on the windows in the store part. They had dug out to build on the upper side. The bank wasn't far from the house. The roof was real flat on both sides. The new store building wasn't but about 20 feet from the house. It had homemade doors. You locked the front door by sliding a big bolt into a hole. You had a padlock on the back door. We kept all the pop bottles on the front porch. It had a big potbelly stove in it.

The house didn't have an upstairs and had one big room for a living room.

Mom put a dresser and one bed in the back of it. Sanford slept in there. Chester and Glenn slept in the next bedroom. The girls were in the front, from the living room. They were both the old store building. The kitchen was beside the boys' bedroom. Mom changed to propane to cook. No more wood cooking. Dad and Mom's bedroom was next to the kitchen and we had a big back porch and a room beside it next to the kitchen. It must have been the wash room. You had to go outside to get to it.



Madeline and Kenny at the store.

The old toilet was made out of aluminum tin. It was straight behind the house. Dad later had a new one built; it was up the hill from it. Mom had a smoke house built where the old toilet was. There was a chicken house out past it. After that, they had another building built up from the toilet for a chicken house. There was a big rock shelter in the back yard. You could get under it and play. The coal pile was above it. You had to haul a wheel-barrow load a day to the store and one to the house, every day. It was hard to hold the wheel-barrow back when it snowed. One year we used a board with a hubcap nailed on it

to help slide over the hill.

Mom was a good business person. She used to take me walking all the way to Furnace, selling Avon. She worked in the store all day until we got home. Then, one of the girls would work while Mom cooked supper. Then Dad would come home from work and eat supper. Then he would run it until it closed at night. Mom also come over in the morning to get us ready for school. She made sure you were clean.



Glenn, Chester, Sanford, Margie, Sue, Lorene, Mike, Barbara and Lucille

Mom loved all of us and you didn't do us wrong. A teacher once whooped Sanford so hard it made places on him. She closed the store and walked up there. Mom "jumped on her" and told her what she thought. They said the teacher put her head down on the desk and cried like a baby. Mom was hard to get mad but when she was, look out! Something was going to happen.

Mom was a really good cook. She could cook anything and it tasted good. You didn't say nothing about the food or you knew what you had coming. She didn't want nobody in the kitchen when she was cooking. Sometimes I would go in there, playing. She would get you by the arm and use a butcher knife turned sideways. You were afraid to move. Other things she would use is clothes hangers and fly swats besides a switch off the apple tree. I hated the clothes hanger the worst of any of them. The switch was next.

Mom couldn't drive and she would go to town sometimes during the day. Sometimes we would ride with the

mailman. His name was Terry Neal, and he would charge a certain amount. She would close the store and here we would go. Sometimes we would catch the bus. They were small buses. Sometimes they would have a big bus, but most of the time, it was a Ford station wagon that was real long. They were '57 or some year in the 50's. The bus company was Black Brothers and they run a route from Jackson or Hazard to Louisville. They mostly hauled L&N Railroad workers. There was a railroad yard in Ravenna. Mostly they had coal cars there. But sometimes they would have box cars and tankers, but not very many. They would have thousands of cars at Ravenna. Every track would about be full. After we got done at town, Mom would get a cab to bring us home. Sometimes, she would go to the doctor. Her favorite was Dr. Virginia Wallace. But sometimes she would go to Dr. Glenn Marcum. She would also go to A&P to get groceries and other stores. We would eat at Cedar Village Restaurant. It was the fanciest one to eat at in Irvine.

Mom didn't have time to wash clothes at home on the wringer wash machine. Friday night was wash night. Dad would drive her down to the Wash House in Irvine. It was on Broadway across from the fire department. I would go with them and Dad would take me to Main Street Pool Room. I would get bowl of chili and a pop to drink. It was the best chili you could find. The fire chief took care of the laundromat at night. His name was Hubert Tipton. He was also from Tipton Ridge. He would joke me and try to get me mad about things. He would act like he was going to put me in a storage room in the back of the laundromat, and he called it "the rats den!" I would get so mad at him. Mom would get done and we would go home. It would be late because there was so many clothes.

**CORRECTION:** Margie was born in Chester Patrick's car. Elsie was at Grandma Dora's at Cob Hill and was going home to have her but didn't make it.

### MARBLEYARD SCHOOL - 1920

Total enrollment at Marbleyard School in 1920 was about 80 students.

Left to right, front, seated: Lester Barnes, Hubert Marcum, Earl Marcum, Lemon Adams, William Barnett, Herman Tipton. Row 2: Angel Coffield, Hazel Barnett, Gladys Abney, Florence Marcum, Allie Marcum, Cassie Barnett, Lester Abney, Elinor Davis, Mary Liz McIntosh, Zeffie Tipton, Mallie Mae Davis, Della Walters. Row 4: Willie McIntosh, Beverly Walters, Grover Barnett, Eula Barnes, Gracie Barnett, Lona Hall, Lester Abney, Hobert Marcum, Albert Marcum, Void Walters, Ethel Abney. Back row: Ora Pasley, Lula McIntosh, Bertha Carmichael, Minnie Crowe, Hazel Pasley, Stella Alexander (teacher), Etta Carmichael, Clarence Barnes, Gordon Abney, Ethel Abney, and Aca Abney.

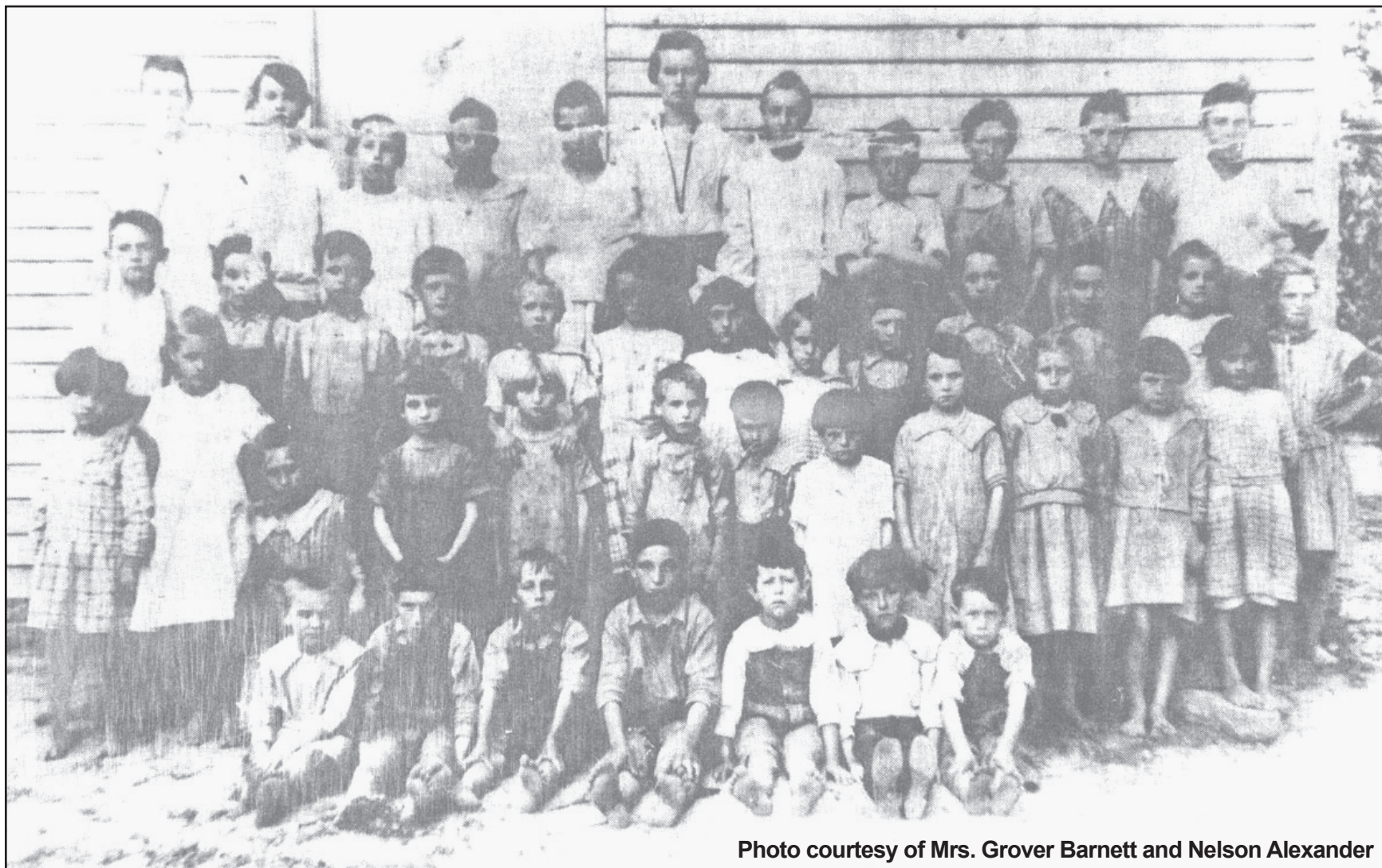


Photo courtesy of Mrs. Grover Barnett and Nelson Alexander