

POISON NOT CAUSE OF BALDOCK DEATHS

PARKER REPORTS ON EXAMINATION OF WELL WATER.

FINDS NO TRACES.

Says Water in Well Highly Contaminated—Reports Examination of Viscera.

Poison in the well water played no part in the series of deaths which occurred early in November in the Lee family at Baldock, Allendale county, according to the report made by Francis L. Parker, M. D., of Charleston, who has completed the examination of water taken from the well and of the viscera of Mrs. Lee.

It will be remembered that four deaths in the Lee family, all occurring within a comparatively short period of time, gave rise to rumors of poisoning. Mrs. Joe Lee and three young children died and Mr. Lee was taken seriously ill and was carried to Augusta for treatment. It was also rumored that livestock on the place died and it was said that Mr. Lee himself made statements that indicated that he suspected the family had been poisoned.

Officials of the state health department went to Baldock to investigate the deaths, and Dr. C. V. Akin, after an examination, said that there was no evidence of metallic poisoning. He also reported that the well water was in bad condition.

Parker Makes Report.

The viscera of Mrs. Joe Lee and water taken from the well at Baldock were sent to F. L. Parker, chemist and bacteriologist, for examination. The report of Dr. Parker follows:

"State Board of Health: 'Gentlemen:

"I respectfully submit the following report of analysis of samples of water received from M. Lee, 'said to be water taken from the well at Baldock, S. C., supposed to be poisoned, where four of family died,' at 1 of sample of viscera, stomach, intestines, kidney, and spleen taken from Mrs. Lee sent by Dr. Hayden.

"The bacterial and chemical analysis of the water showed no indication of any poison or that the water had been poisoned.

"The water contained a large number of larvae which subsequently developed into mosquitoes; showed presence of B. coli and over 150,000 bacteria per cubic centimeter, a large amount of organic matter which was in an active state of decomposition.

"In brief, though this water is a very highly contaminated water it is not a poisoned water.

"Analysis of viscera showed no indications of any mineral poison.

"A part of the spleen was submitted to Dr. Coward, and to Dr. Plowden of the department of Pathology in State Medical college. Dr. Coward and Dr. Plowden reported that the spleen was in too decomposed a state to permit a satisfactory examination.

"In brief, the analysis indicated no mineral poison in the viscera; and the symptoms of the case and the nature of the conditions were such as to preclude possibility of presence of alkaloidal poisons."

Writes to Lee.

Dr. Parker has also written M. C. Lee that the well water contained no poison. The letter to Mr. Lee from Dr. Parker was as follows:

"Dear Sir:

"Replying to your favor of November 9 I have examined the sample of water said to be taken from well at Baldock, supposed to be poisoned where four of family died.

"The bacterial and chemical analysis shows the water to be highly contaminated with organic matter and bacteria, but it contains no added poisons.

"In brief, the sample received was not poisoned."

Nine Persons Seriously Ill.

Augusta, Ga., Dec. 4.—A sequel to the Baldock mystery in which the wife and three children of J. W. Lee, a prominent planter, died suddenly a few weeks ago of a strange malady caused by poison, has taken place at Martins, S. C., about 15 miles from Allendale, according to information received in Augusta today, stating that nine persons are desperately ill at a boarding house there after eating biscuits made from flour taken from the Lee home at Baldock.

The peculiarity of the situation is that the affairs occurred at the boarding house of Mrs. R. F. Creech, who is a sister-in-law of J. W. Lee, who now lies ill at the University Hospital here.

Officials state that following the death of Mrs. Lee and the removal of Mr. Lee to a hospital Mrs. Creech went to the Lee home and removed a sack of flour and other groceries which she took to her home in Martin. Biscuits made from the flour were served to her boarders and it is

SEVEN PRISONERS DIE IN ELECTRIC CHAIR

RECORD FOR 1921 PASSES LAST YEAR.

TEN UNDER SENTENCE.

Statistics Show That Fifty-five Men Have Paid Death Penalty Since 1912.

Seven men, all negroes, paid the death penalty by electrocution in South Carolina during the present year, according to records at the state penitentiary. No more electrocutions are scheduled for this year, so far as is known, and the record therefore will probably stand at seven.

Tillman Choice, the Spartanburg negro, who was put to death Friday, was the last scheduled electrocution of the year, others that are now pending having been postponed. J. C. Wallace, of Sumter, a white man, is under death sentence for December 16, but an appeal to the supreme court for a new trial has automatically stayed the sentence.

Ten men are now under death sentence, but in all cases appeals have stayed the verdicts of the lower courts. Of these ten six are white and four are negroes. The whites are S. J. Kirby, C. O. Fox, Jesse Gapins, Edmund Bigham, Cliff Hawkins and J. C. Wallace. The negroes are El Culbreath, Abraham Williams, William Thompson and Will Hood. The first three are in the penitentiary, while Hood is in Greenville.

Record to Date.

Since the establishment of the electric chair in 1912 and up until yesterday 55 men have been electrocuted. Of this number 52 were negroes and three white. In 1920 three negroes paid the death penalty. The number increased this year to seven, a record equaled only by one or two previous years.

The seven negroes this year were: Ivey Littlejohn, February 18, who was sent up from Spartanburg for the murder of a chain gang guard; Adam Griffin, March 4, who was sent up from Sumter for murdering a guard at the state farm; Feetie Fogle, March 25, who was sent up from Calhoun county for the murder of a white man at Lone Star; Albert Wilson, May 3, who was sent up from Richland county for the murder of a white man; Pink Griffin, September 2, who was sent up from Greenwood for the murder of a white man; Harvey Whaley, November 4, who was sent up from Calhoun county for his part in the murder of Earl Wadford, a white man; Tillman Choice, December 2, who was sent up from Spartanburg for criminally assaulting a white woman.

First to Pay Penalty.

William Reed, a negro, was the first person to be electrocuted. He was put to death August 6, 1912. Reed was from Anderson county, and a coincidence is that the first white man, Samuel N. Hyde, to be electrocuted was also from Anderson. He was put to death October 1, 1912. Hyde was convicted of killing several people at the Orr cotton mills at Anderson and was very anxious, according to his statement, to be the first man electrocuted. He was disappointed when Reed was the first man to die by the new method.

Since the electrocution of Hyde, only two other white men have paid the penalty. C. P. Rushing of Chesterfield was electrocuted April 18, 1913, he being the second white man, and M. L. Garrett, of Bishopville, paid the penalty July 14, 1913, according to penitentiary records. No white man has been electrocuted since 1913.

How About It?

Mrs. Smith engaged a new housemaid and was annoyed to find that the girl persisted in addressing her as "Mrs. Smith." She remonstrated and suggested that she should address her in the same way as the other maids did.

"Well," said the girl thoughtfully, "I can't call you ma'am or mum; I always called mother that. But I don't mind calling you auntie, if you like."

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said that all who ate of the biscuits were taken ill, the symptoms being similar to those in the Lee case.

Doctors called to administer to the sick worked on the theory that their illness was caused by ptomaine poisoning from canned goods, although some of those affected claim that they did not partake of the tinned salmon.

Sheriff Bennett tonight, however, declared that he favored the theory of the doctors but to be on the safe side would have samples of the flour analyzed.

SLAIN WHILE ON FOX HUNT.

Farmer Kills Fay Poston and Wounds Brother as Riders Come on Tract. Florence, Dec. 1.—The Florence Times tonight received the following dispatch from Johnsonville:

"When Fay Poston, Alger Poston and Dallas Poston, of this place crossed near the yard of J. C. M. Benton about three miles west of here early this morning, Benton shot at all three of them killing Fay Poston and hitting Alger Poston whose injuries have not been fully determined. Dallas Poston escaped without injury. The three young men were in a party on a fox chase, the party having divided and these three were passing near Benton's place. Alger Poston, making his escape, was hurried to this place for medical treatment and spread the news of the shooting. Not knowing at the time whether Fay Poston was dead or not, Fin Poston, the father of the dead man, in company with E. C. Ventress, went to the scene of the shooting and as they approached the house, Poston going toward his dead son, Benton left his house by the back and others drove up about the same time. Some shots were exchanged, one of which hit Fin Poston in his hand, another passing through the sleeve of Mason Elam. These shots were fired by Benton at long range from a .32 rifle. Benton escaped into the river swamp and up to this hour has not been captured, although there is a large posse on each side of the river and blood hounds are being put on the trail. Deputy Sheriffs Joe Conner and Eichelberger are here and every effort is being made to capture Benton."

Slayer to Prison.

Florence, Dec. 3.—J. C. (Jim) Benton, who shot and killed Fay Poston and wounded others when they went upon his lands Thursday while hunting near Johnsonville, surrendered to Magistrate O. W. McKnight at Cowards this morning. He was brought to Florence immediately after he gave himself up. Barefooted and hatless and weak from the lack of food, Benton presented a pitiful spectacle when he alighted from an automobile at the jail.

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS.

All persons having claims against the estate of Charles Ehrhardt, deceased, will please file the same, duly itemized and verified, with the undersigned, and all persons indebted to said estate will please pay the undersigned.

G. B. KINARD,
ALEX. F. HENDERSON,
Executors.

November, 21, 1921. 12-8n

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