

JOHN TEN EYCK

THE SHEFFIELD MURDERER

BY

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Today is Friday, August 16, 1878. It is to be the last day of my life. For me in the Pittsfield jail I am moments away from dying. Dying, not of natural causes, but of hanging. I was found guilty of murdering Mr. and Mrs. David Stillman of Sheffield.

Let's just say I now feel guilty enough to have committed the murders. My last thought was the last one that I can fully remember before my physical death took place. My mind stopped and my panicked adrenaline pumped so hard as to scare me into not realizing I shortly was about to die.

We left the hushed holding room of the sealed off corridor and entered the loud noisy hall where my execution was to take place. It was approaching 10:30 when the sheriff took control, stepped forward and told the crowd:

"Be good enough to avoid conversation or moving about in the room. Strike the bell, Mr. Scott."¹

Sheriff Root led the way very businesslike followed by me. I was relaxed and even walked with an assured confident gait up the unlucky thirteen steps to the gallows. I was escorted by Jailer Scott, Reverend Harrison, and three deputy sheriffs: Root, Kellogg, and Wellington.

I walked up all of the steps and stood upon the drop (a raised trap door, which when released, I would fall through and be hanged) with not the slightest sign of fear. One of the deputies tied my legs and arms as I stopped in front of the hanging rope. I looked out over the audience, but could not see any faces.

I stood perfectly still as Sheriff Root was preparing to read the warrant. The only sign of emotion was my damn eyes. They began to wink uncontrollably. I feared my eyes would start watering and all those convincing news reporters would print it, as if I was a coward crying. The Berkshire Courier reporter had had me guilty long before my trial, and had continuously printed up some concocted phony evidence to show my guilt. Since I hadn't confessed, he was frustrated that he couldn't play social gossip and tell the story of how I confessed and begged repentance.

Root was a spirited speaker reading the warrant quickly and smoothly. He must have practiced the reading many times for he had it close to memorized. I had the normal distrust for Root that I had for any white man. His power over me wasn't any different from what my people had faced for hundreds of years and were still facing. However, Root had been used by my cell last night and mentioned a few words that until now hadn't made much sense. He told me he was nervous too, but how we both would appear strong tomorrow. I only knew now that I wanted revenge to control the spectators. The spectators came to watch me writhe with guilt and then ask their forgiveness. My method of outward mockery was to stand up strong and show no emotion, only casual distance.

The following words are those of the Warrant which Sheriff Root read:

Whereas, at a term of the Supreme Judicial Court, Began and holden at Pittsfield, within and for our said county of Berkshire, on the second Tuesday of May, being the 14th day of said month, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight, JOHN TEN EYCK, of Sheffield, in said county of Berkshire, was convicted of the crime in the first degree; and thereupon by our said court, the said John Ten Eyck was adjudged and sentenced for the crime to suffer the pains of death by being hanged by the neck until he be dead, upon Friday, the sixteenth day of August. . .²

At the close of this legal rubbish Reverend Harrison spoke:
"The prisoner wishes me to say that he will make no communication today. All that he intended to make have been placed in the hands of his counsel and the gentlemen of the press."³

I had asked for a thirty minute discourse of my life and subsequent conviction of the Stillman murders, but Sheriff Root, being the businessman he is, refused me. He said I wouldn't make a mockery of his hanging; that I didn't have the right to lecture all the viewers and reporters. He said I'd have five minutes to make my farewell remarks. Just as well, if I couldn't have thirty minutes, I wasn't going to take his five minutes.

Then I caught Reverend Harrison's prayer. It all sounded so organized and pious, as if the prayer wasn't for my peace but his and the spectators. It's not that I didn't like the Reverend, he worked real hard for me. He just didn't understand me. Reverend Harrison was the minister at the Second Congregational (colored) Church in Pittsfield. He was an Ethiopian of the darkest dye and purest blood.⁴ He had been pastor there since 1850 and was the oldest settled minister in Pittsfield. Harrison had a high esteem of himself which to me bordered on Uncle Tomism. But he was happy and satisfied with his life. I wasn't.

I wasn't happy in this life nor I felt in any other. The contempt I had of white people because of their superior quality of life made me hateful. Hateful that every time I looked in the mirror I was faced with a death sentence of being a white man's nigger.

The Reverend Harrison's prayer began:
"Our God and our Father; in Thy presence we assemble at this solemn hour, and we pray that we may realize our need of Thee, and that this prisoner, upon whom, and for whom the sentence of death has been passed, may realize that there is but a step between him and death; and that a moment's space removes him from this place to heaven or shuts him upon hell. He professes to have given his heart to Thee; to be reconciled to Jesus Christ, and grant that this may be; but let him trust in Jesus and enable him now to say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Forgive our sins and look upon us with infinite mercy. And all who are gathered here on this solemn occasion to witness this solemn scene, may they realize the first step and think of the first step that this man took when he grasped the intoxicating cup, and one step and another to the top of the flight and sentence of death is passed upon him and is now expiated for crimes which it is alleged he has committed. Oh, God, hear us and forgive us all as we all

hope to be forgiven, and may we all be gathered around Thy throne in Thy kingdom, and Thine shall be the glory, Amen."⁵

During Mr. Harrison's prayer, which no one really paid any attention to, an interruption took place. Since there was only room for three hundred spectators in this prison hall, only those who had some local political clout could get in. There was a mad scramble by the curious outside to lift themselves up to look into the windows. Some of the local kids wanted to be able to brag to their friends that they witnessed the hanging. The confusion and noise around the windows alerted Root to throw his leather billy club to one of the deputies nearest the window. With a few hard whacks on the heads of the nosy kids, they jumped off and scattered.

What happened next is difficult to say. I wasn't hearing anything because my heart throbbed so hard it was drowning out all the other sounds. I looked down at my clothing which was given me before I left my cell this morning. I was attired in a new black alpaca coat with a black cloth vest, mixed gray pantaloons and a white shirt. This dress was better than any I had ever worn. I guess no man should be poorly dressed to face his execution, especially a routine execution carried out so professionally by civilized people.

Jailor Scott first placed over my head the deadly rope that bit tight into my neck. I made an impatient gesture with my tied up hands behind me that the rope was too damn tight. Scott then made the loosening adjustments, after which I felt better.

Next came the black cloth bag placed over my head. I felt my body becoming weaker. I was gasping for breath. I thought I was going to go to the bathroom in my pants and how embarrassed I would be when the ones up front got a whiff. Luckily, the jailor took my arm and walked me over a couple of steps. Now I was on the trap and not able to think. My mind and body were on the verge of passing out; I was dying. I was scared for the first time; not of dying but of appearing weak. I wished I could just die alone in private. The worst part of the process of dying is not being able to control the dying. In other words, being able to walk back on your own piece of land, after a very satisfied fulfilled lifetime, and say to yourself; "It's time to die; I'm ready."

Then I saw Sheriff Root come to the railing of the scaffold and say: "Now in obedience to the command contained in the warrant which I believe to have read in the presence of these witnesses, I proceed to execute the extreme sentence of the law upon the body of John Ten Eyck by hanging him by the neck until he be dead, and may God have mercy upon the dead."⁶

Trying to describe my death to you is very difficult in that death is in another realm; an area which the living can never understand until they've experienced it; a place that has no description. Therefore, I will be only able to use words and analogies from the living. Believe me, that moment of death was the most relaxed feeling I have ever experienced. I heard absolutely no sounds. It seemed like this second lasted weeks, for I had such a strong sense of internal awareness. Speedily I passed through a void of

blackness. It was a narrow space yet I did not touch the sides as I passed through. Again this moment felt like a long journey to another world. I began to have difficulty breathing. I didn't understand what was happening. Then it all opened up to me; I was alone, looking down at the prison - the place of my physical death.

It began with a second take. I was viewing the scene of my death from a bird's eye view. I could see through the roof and through walls. Instead of viewing my body being placed in the coffin and removed from the jail, I watched Sheriff Root step upon the iron bar, and I saw the trap-drop fall. The trap in falling, struck a bar placed to stop its swinging and made a sharp unexpected crash. The sound startled the spectators, making the hanging seem almost brutal. It was now 10:36 Friday morning. I noticed the knot in the hangman's noose which was almost perfectly behind my neck, just a speck to the right. My face was expressionless and I knew why. It was the relaxation I found during the moment of death that gave me that countenance.

Incidentally, in my present state of consciousness - life after death - I am not able to hear human voices or the livings' voice. What I am able to comprehend though, is much much more. I'm able to get right inside of a living person's thoughts. In other words I know what people are saying without hearing the sounds. Don't misunderstand me, I only know; I don't have any special powers, especially to plant ideas or to influence others. But it seems something is manipulating my actions, my feelings.

So there I was, dangling by a rope and I watch my body quiver full of ever so slight spasms. The part of me that I noticed the most was the movement in my knees. I could feel the chatter in them as they rubbed against each other. When the trap-drop fell, my body seemed to pull tight and be rather still, there was no twirling, just 'limpness.'

Doctors Holcomb and Paddock commenced my examination by timing my heart beat. Then almost mechanically Dr. Holcomb motioned the jailor to lower me another two feet so he wouldn't have to stand on his tip toes. My neck was not broken by the fall which most people believe kills you when hanged. Strangulation is what usually kills most men on the gallows. I was no exception to this rule. What is cruel about the hangman's method of death is you don't die instantly. You struggle for the natural instinct of breath. It takes time to die.

My pulse beat 38 times the first minute and increased to 70, and eventually got up at one time to 132 before it began to fall. It was 104 at the end of seven minutes. It was 110 at eight minutes and a half, 90 at ten minutes, and at eleven minutes was not perceptible at the wrist. The pulsations were obtained by the doctor putting his ear to my body, 68 at twelve minutes, and 60 a minute and a half later. My heart beat irregularly and slower and was 64 at the end of sixteen minutes, at which time Dr. Paddock was obliged to open my shirt to obtain results. The pulsations ceased at 18¾ minutes.⁷ And at nineteen minutes and twelve seconds I heard those words which I'll never forget. John Ten Eyck has died now at 10:45 this Friday morning.

It was beginning to sink in - that I was finally dead. You can never accept death until you hear those official words from the doctor. The shock of seeing me hanging there was alarming. But I recovered fast to observe my feet being unstrapped and then a few seconds later, my arms. Now, they took off the black cap as they brought my body down in full view of all the spectators. My face showed no sign of pain or agony, only of a natural expression. They subsequently brought in a stained pine coffin. As they placed me in this simple burial shelter the spectators' animal instincts came forth. There was some pushing and shoving as some wanted to get a last look at my face. A few did get a quick peek before they placed the lid over me and carried me outside to the waiting wagon.

It was at this time I began to look at others within the prison and the prison itself. I found all the prisoners in their cells at around 11:00 A.M. which was very uncharacteristic. The prisoners usually did their menial jobs in the area workshop all day. But on this day, the day of my execution, work ceased and all the prisoners were led back to their cells at 9:00, and it wasn't until 1:00 that they were allowed to receive lunch and continue their usual routine. It was very clear to me that all the guards were needed to control the spectators at my theatrical execution. By locking all the prisoners up, there was no need to worry about them. Also, there was a fear or an extra precautionary measure taken to avoid any possible planned escape by the rest of the seventy-eight prisoners during the confusion.

The three hundred spectators and witnesses seemed like a Who's Who of Berkshire County. The official witnesses of the execution were Wm. D. Axtell, Otis Cole, D.J. Dodge, H.M. Pierson, Dr. C.D. Mills, Wm. H. Murray, W.G. Backus and Oliver Robbins, all of Pittsfield; R.A. Burghardt of Cheshire; Wm. O. Curtis of Lenox; and A.M. Little of Sheffield.

South Berkshire was well represented at the execution. From Sheffield there were present, Charles Stillman (son of the murdered couple), John C. Smith, George Kellogg, James Roraback, R.F. Little, Dr. H.H. Smith, Ara M. Smith, Dr. H.D. Train, James Bradford, H.M. Huggins, Michael Landers, George Gorham, A.W. Parsons, and Nat Johnson (by my personal invitation).

From Gt. Barrington there were present, Dr. Samuel Camp, Dr. E.A. Kemp, Dr. John Cone, W.W. Langdon, W.W. Norton, John O'Brien, W.B. Van Lenup, E.D. Humphrey.

New Marlboro sent S. Powell, John Potter, H.N. Adams, and John J. Hart.

Dr. Richard Beebe of Alford, M.C. Langdon of Monterey, and H.S. Manley of Sandisfield, Volney W. Haskell of Otis, D.B. Fenn and Chester Averill of Stockbridge, were present.

The press was well represented by T.R. Lewis of the Holyoke News. V.E. Brown of the Troy Standard.

Byron G. Howard of the Hudson Republican.

John H. Mabbett of the North Adams Transcript.

I.T. Oatman and W.E. Wolcott of the Springfield Republican.

J.H. Phelps and W.F. Gompf of the Springfield Union.

A.T. Roraback of the Canaan News.

Wm. H. Foster of the Troy Times.

Wm. H. Spear of the Troy Press.

Thomas Maguire of the Boston Globe.

Thomas Kernan of the North Adams Blue Ribbon.

John Mandeville of the New York Herald.

J.L. Ford of the Pittsfield Sun.

James Harding of the Pittsfield Eagle.

George Ayers of the North Adams News.

R.C. Rockwell of the Lee Gleaner.

And the Editor of the Courier, Marcus Rogers (my buddy).

Among the spectators was Isaac Auger, the chief man of the Hancock Shakers. High Sheriffs Longley of Hampshire, Sanderson of Hampden, Haynor of Columbia County, N.Y., and Lewis of Fairfield County Ct., were present.⁸

As I was looking down on all the spectators in the room many strange thoughts occurred to me. My ex-friend, Nat Johnson, showed up even after I had changed my mind about his earlier invitation. You see, he squealed on me during the testimony at my trial. When I did invite him, it was after a time period in jail when I was in a very forgiving mood. I later tried to rescind the invitation but it was too late. However, after seeing his facial reaction to my execution, I was glad he was there. He had the look of real sorrow and pain to see his old buddy, me, dead. I only now wish I could go down and put my arm around him and say: "Don't feel bad, it's ok, you did me a real favor."

Then there was Charles Stillman. His reaction, like that of the men of Sheffield, was of great relief and justice. But young Stillman knew I was the one who murdered his parents, consequently he felt I got what I deserved. His only complaint was that hanging was too easy and that I should have been tortured before I was sentenced to die. What really chilled Stillman right through his whole body was that I never once confessed to the murder of his parents. He saw me as an animal all pent up with wild violence who killed just for the sake of killing. Well, maybe he was right. I had a short fuse, expected everyone to do me a favor, held awful grudges, and hated many a white folk. I took pleasure in appearing mean and violent, but it was only a facade to hide my lack of confidence as a blackman. Yet when I drank, I was uncontrollable, rowdy, uncaring and, yes, vengeful. I never did confess because I was afraid. Afraid that Sheffield residents would hate me more; afraid they would then look at me as a real coward. They'd think I only confessed so I could be redeemed. Therefore, I had to play upon my innocence right up to the last. If I was weak that was my secret, and I could never let the living know the real truth, the real me.

It struck me funny that there were so many doctors at my hanging. Wouldn't one of the twenty plus doctors try to save my life? No they weren't there to save, but for the social outing my execution was. After all, the doctors were at the top of their town's political hierarchy. They had power. Power was what this execution was all about.

And what about those leaches of gossip - news reporters? They were all here. Making news whenever they could. Making it up when there was nothing to write about. Yes, this was the biggest event of Berkshire County for the year. They were all here like bees swarming the prison hall making note of this and that; moving to get a better look or writing notes and names of those in attendance. Hustling to get some little tid bit to give them an edge over their fraternity of fellow biased gossip tellers. They had been hounding me for the past nine months wanting my confession. They were my enemies. They would not let me die peacefully. Thank God, today will be the last day they will be able to scratch up some exciting news of me.

And then there was all those sheriffs from different neighboring counties. They were here to learn how to kill more blacks. It was like a training convention. Maybe they would have to perform an execution in the near future and they wanted this experience. They wanted to be ready.

Finally the one spectator who was an enigma to me was this man, Isaac Augur. I had met him once. While working for a farmer in Sheffield, I was summoned to the Shaker Village of Hancock where he was their spiritual leader. I picked up some fine quality seed there, paid Augur and left. My opinion of him was of a fine, upstanding gentleman. I still could not understand their celibate ways though. What was he doing at my hanging? Surely he couldn't have remembered me. Surely he couldn't accept capital punishment as God's answer to ridding the world of people like me. Maybe, he was God's living witness to my death.

All in all the spectators and witnesses seemed to calmly accept the events of the hanging. Few were uneasy. Few were outraged. Few were queasy at the moment the trap dropped. ". . . While the execution of a guilty and brutal murderer is not an affair to be witnessed lightly, it is not by any means such a shocking spectacle as many people imagine. People who shudder and flee from the sight of an innocent lamb being butchered, can control their nerves when a murderer, rigidly strapped, with a black bag drawn over his head, and hardly resembling a human being, drops helplessly like a sack of grain, through the trap. It is probable the event survives more vividly in the imagination of sensitive people who did not see it than in the memory of those who did."⁹

Before following my physical body (placed in the coffin) out into the Pittsfield air, I would like to describe the inside of the hall and my scaffold. The great hall was constructed expressly for executions when the prison was built, and was 45 feet square and 18 feet high. The ceiling was supported by four iron columns placed 20 feet apart. Between the iron columns there was an aperture 16 feet square, opening into the second story. Around this was a railing, forming a gallery. Under the opening and between the columns the gallows were erected. It was a square frame, made of seasoned white wood six inches square and varnished, and being thoroughly built, and the parts numbered, so they could be used for future executions. A beam over the center, supported by posts, was 18 feet from the floor. The drop was a platform five feet square in the center of the scaffold, and raised 12 inches above it, leaving a space three feet wide

around it for the official and clergyman. An iron spring extended under the edge of the trap, in a convenient place, allowing the sheriff to place his foot upon it, and thus letting the front edge of the trap down, it being on hinges at the back. From a beam overhead a rope extended down to the trap. The rope passed over a pulley at the top, thence to another pulley at the side, and so down to the floor of the hall where it was fastened to a belaying pin in one of the posts. A stairway of 13 steps led to the scaffold, starting directly opposite the door of the jail through which I entered. A railing of two boards extended around the scaffold, the top board being about three feet high.¹²

Finally, my spiritual being followed my physical body outside the prison. I had worried that my brother, who also testified against me, would sell my remains to the doctors for dissection. Maybe that is why all the doctors had observed my death so eagerly, hoping they might get a piece of me. After all it was not uncommon for white people to use black cadavers in research.

All my worries were put to rest when I saw Lorenzo Franklin and a few of his buddies take the coffin and place it on Lorenzo's wagon. Lorenzo lived up in Blandford, Massachusetts. He was my ex-father-in-law. My second marriage was to his daughter. We had had two children who were now living with their grandparents, the Franklins. Our marriage hadn't worked out, and we were subsequently divorced. I was to marry a third time a few years later.

Anyway, good old Lorenzo was nice enough to take my body and see to it that I received a decent burial in Blandford. Another strange incident occurred before he was to drive off. There was so much interest from the crowd outside the jail, that Lorenzo was caught in the middle of the curious spectators. They yelled: "Open up the coffin, we want to take a look at Ten Eyck." Lorenzo, being nobody's fool, chanced the idea of how he could make a fast buck. He and his friends from Blandford tried to give the public a chance to view my remains for an admission fee. By this time a couple of deputy sheriffs were on the scene and refused to permit the viewing. It got a little heated when some of the spectators demanded to see my remains. One man even went so far as to try to lift the lid off of my coffin. He was met with a billy to his back and right shoulder. The message was clear. The mob splintered off and the wagon commenced its long hilly journey off to Blandford.

Lorenzo and his three helpers traveled south, on the main north-south dirt road which linked all of Berkshire County together with Pittsfield, its geographical center and county seat. As I watched from above, the bumpy ride was sullen and quiet, as the four black men, (two up front on the buck seat and the other two in the back guarding the coffin) rode off. We passed many a traveler either in buggies or with wagons, some even walking. All were curious, taking a second glance; yet when their eyes met the coffin they turned away as if afraid. Not one passerby asked what they were doing or where they were headed. I guess when white folk are outnumbered by four blacks on the highway they become panicky, fearful for their lives.

Especially if in that coffin lay a white body, then terror shows its face. I'd never seen such polite white people in the world before.

The wagon took over two hours to travel the ten mile distance to Lee. The town seemed to be completely shut down. We hurriedly rolled past, as the children and shop owners stepped out to glare at us. Our news certainly had preceded us. It was now close to 1:15 P.M., at the hottest point of this August day. Lorenzo wiped his brow with his old hat and looked to the east and the hills he would have to travel up over to reach his partial destination of Chester, Mass. Once out of Lee, the wagon was stopped and the horses offered the luxury of water and rest. The men drank of Lorenzo's flask some hard cider and shared the corn bread they had brought.

They reached Chester at 4:30. The tough winding path had been completed without one passing human. The arrival in Chester was to a hero's welcome. Seeing the large crowd, Lorenzo realized he could now make money off of my remains. The four men took the coffin off the wagon and placed it in the Chester freight house. Here they permitted the public to look upon my face for a small fee of ten cents a look. Lorenzo stood outside collecting the money while the other three men pried the lid off. It looked like a side show of a local carnival with some freak show inside. Women, children, men and whole families viewed with stunned awe my physical body. Being a dead nigger, I guess most people felt that it was like viewing some dead animal; it didn't bother them until they actually saw my body. Then most of them saw a mirror reflection of themselves. They became colorblind for a split second and understood the meaning of death. They saw me as a human being just like themselves, with feelings and emotions. It was ironic that for the first time in my life I was treated as an equal to the whites.

By the way, Lorenzo Franklin turned out to be a shrewd businessman. Hell, he turned over the quickest fifteen dollars he had ever made. By selling peeks at ten cents a look you can easily figure that all of Chester's population and then some got a look at the infamous me. There were only a few teenagers who went in for a second look to impress their buddies that death didn't worry them. This brief sojourn in Chester was carried out with remarkable speed. For as they reloaded the coffin on the wagon, six late stragglers came close hoping to get a look, but Lorenzo had to say no because it was getting late.

It was 6:00. Time enough if they hurried, to trek the remaining leg home to Blandford. Blandford was about eight miles south on more curving river road. Since it was generally on a down hill grade, the distance could be made before nightfall. Without incident Franklin and his boys reached home at dusk. They unhitched the horses and walked them to their stalls, and placed the wagon with the coffin inside of the barn. Had I been an important part of the family, and had the Franklin's been wealthy, my coffin would have been brought into the funeral room of the large house where the proper mourning rights would have been given.

Bed, sleep, sunrise, chores, breakfast. 9:00 A.M. Saturday, August 17, 1878. Lorenzo and his friends met at the barn preparing for the 10:00

burial. One of the boys mentioned that Sheriff Kellogg had heard of the Chester exhibition and had attempted to halt any further exhibitions of my public viewing. By the time Kellogg did arrive in Chester it was much too late for we were all safe in Blandford.

Early Saturday one of the three men who accompanied Lorenzo from Pittsfield was over at the town cemetery readying my hole. He worked fast shoveling for he knew the burial would be soon. As he finished, the wagon with my coffin approached, followed by my father-in-law and his friends.

No words were spoken. Four men lifted the coffin onto the heavy ropes placed over the hole. With two men on each side of the coffin and the other two men on the other, they gently lowered the ropes as the coffin bumped to a stop at the bottom of the five-foot hole. With no ceremony, the dirt was quickly replaced. A small rock was laid on the top of the loose grave with the initials J.T.E. and 1878 scratched in. Franklin, his burial service complete, moved on to continue his days chores.

There I was, alone, looking down at my grave. Strange. What no living person knew, I knew. That you really don't die. My life was like that of a snake. All I was doing was moulting. They buried my skin, yet my existence was still alive. I continue to live on another plane, one at the moment that is far better than any I'd experienced before.

My old life was finally over now. My last words were in the hands of Reverend Harrison. He was to make the contents known to all the newspapers after my death. Since Sheriff Root hadn't given me all the time I requested to say my final statements I decided to write them down, in order that they might be read and preserved. The following is my final letter:

"As I have been refused an hour, or even a half hour to speak upon the scaffold, and as the Sheriff has given me, or will grant me five minutes to say my last word, I have concluded not to say anything upon the scaffold, and my head has pained me so continually that I could not write half what I should liked to have said. But one favor I hope the press will grant me, that is, that they will cease, after my death, to publish false and flying reports about me, for I leave children and friends behind that it will sadly grieve; and don't, I beg of you, don't distress my children because you have ill and prejudiced feelings against me. Remember you have all got to appear before the bar of God, as well as I, and there is not one of you newspapermen less guilty than I; today, as I stand here before my God and your God, who knoweth all things, and that God sees me today and he does know that I freely forgive you all, and pray God to forgive you also, and I hope to meet you all in heaven.

I believe the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that through Him I am forgiven - and saved by His Grace. He has promised salvation free to all who come unto Him; He makes no distinctions; He says "Whomsoever will come, let him come and take of the waters of life freely." He says further, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and He has not only given us the privilege to come but He has invited us. Oh! What great proof of his love, and of his willingness to save us! Our Savior knows

ist how every heart feels; He knows just how I feel to-day, for He has been persecuted and executed upon the cross, and when I ascend to the scaffold He will speak to me saying: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Now who can doubt his willingness to save, and surely no one can doubt his power. Then if we do not doubt, we believe, and if we truly believe let us duly act, and how soon relief is given.

Now it may be said by some that it is almost impossible for me to die with hope of salvation. But, friends, I die with the greatest assurance that salvation is both free and sure for me, for He that has promised his promises are sure. I believe Him, I trust in Him, I long to be with him. He has taken away all fear and the sting of death, and now death has no terrors for me and I hope to meet you all in the blessed land where all sorrows are unknown and the weary are at rest. God grant that we all meet there. It is my last prayer and I breathe it with a firm hope in Christ and trust and believe I shall soon be there.

Farewell."

John Ten Eyck¹¹

My farewell letter was meant to make me feel whole. I wrote the letter on Wednesday night. I know it was a phony sounding last note with a religious backdrop in it, but I felt I had to appear covered. Maybe I could plant within one or two of them a small doubt, a doubt that I was really innocent. After all, I never did confess. If some people sympathized with my ideal, then I was satisfied. I knew I was guilty but they didn't have to know. Without an eyewitness only God and I knew who murdered the tillmans.

It is interesting to note, yet not surprising at all, that two weeks after my death all talk of me had also died out. The talk of the towns, which was promulgated by the local newspaper, was of how brutal the method of hanging was and how science should develop a more humane way of killing criminals. One paper even noted how science should develop the electric current to kill people because it is a painless death compared to the revolting method of hanging.

Could it be, I now was thought of as a martyr to the cause of black justice or to an inhumane method of death? The 1877 statistics seem to bear me out. For there were 83 men hanged last year in the United States: 7 were white, 34 colored, 1 an Indian, and the other a Chinaman. The crimes ranged from 68 for homicide, 8 for wife murder, 4 for indecent assaults, and 1 each for burglary, filicide, and fratricide.

CHAPTER TWO: EARLY LIFE

I was born, John Lafayette Ten Eyck, in Lenox, Massachusetts in 1832. My father had been a slave in Columbia County in New York State along the Hudson River and had escaped to the free state of Massachusetts, settling in Lenox. My last name, Ten Eyck, then came from the Dutch ancestry that explored and inhabited Henry Hudson's river in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My father was given his last name, Ten Eyck, from the Dutch slavemaster who owned him. My father's first employment in Lenox was for a Judge Walker, where he did gardening and the like. He settled down and married Orrilla Mariah Fletcher, a woman of half white and half Indian blood, and had two children: both of us boys, William Henry, who was two years and seven months older than I.

Since my father never lived with my mother and had her boarded at Joseph and Nancy Kelson's (colored folks), it was not surprising when my father ran away when I was a baby. Furthermore, since my mother was not a strong woman and realizing the difficulty of taking care of two babies without a husband, she decided to leave us with the Kelsons on the condition she could never come and take us back.

Basically, what Joseph and Nancy Kelson were doing was running a poor farm. A poor farm can be run many ways by a local town. It actually is a system of local welfare, a so called humane way of taking care of the poor or those who can't take care of themselves. Since many small towns had little or no tax system for community welfare, individuals like myself could be auctioned off to the townspeople, not for the highest bid but for the lowest bid. Instead of the Kelsons paying the town, the town paid the Kelson's money each month for taking this welfare case, me, off the town's hands. Obviously since William and I were too small there was only an agreement between the town, my mother and the Kelson's. The Kelsons did, however, protect us from a possible auction when I was five and William seven. "The selectmen proposed to put us out until we were twenty-one years of age, to some good farmers, but Nancy, rather than part with us, took us off of the town, as hers, and commenced sending us to school the same spring."¹³

I spent the next eleven years on and off at the Kelsons, doing all the chores and work they asked of me. I wasn't a slave. I could have left at any time. But where was I to go; young, poor, black and insecure? The Kelsons treated me with respect, fed me, and sent me to school at our local district school when times were slow. I would usually spend the whole winter term in school because they didn't need my labor then. Once summer started I did odd jobs like: errands, rode horse to plough, drove oxen to drag, or spread hay. The only kids who went to school during the summer term were young ones whom the teachers ended up baby sitting for, for their parents were very busy in the fields. Even though I only spent three months each winter from eight until two I learned to read and write quite proficiently.

With my new found abilities gained in school, I began to understand that I was different from most people in school and town. I was a different color. People would even address me as the colored boy; yet I wasn't ridiculed by anyone, at least not to my face. I looked upon the Kelsons and the rest of the townspeople as my friends, after all, they took me in and cared for me. I did, however, realize at a young age, my place as a poor black boy.

"Finally, when I was twelve years of age Nancy Kelson hired me out for six months, for three dollars per month, to work for a farmer by the name of James Williams, who lived in Lenox on East Street."¹⁴ An incident was to occur here that left a lasting impression on me. Mr. Williams took in and hid six runaway slaves in his storage cellar. He made it very clear to me that if I told anyone, my fellow people would be severely whipped or tortured. My fellow people! I had never looked at it that way before. I was here in Lenox, safe and free. Slavery and all those problems were somewhere else, not here affecting me.

I had the chore of bringing breakfast down to the runaways. And by the look on their faces, they were more surprised to see that I was black, than I was to see that they looked a lot like me. The only difference was their accent. Mr. Williams had told me our guests would be staying the day and would be leaving when night rolled around. I just left the food on the floor and worked the field along side of Mr. Williams the rest of the day. I think he knew why I was so quiet all day for I was full of questions about the fugitives that I was too afraid to ask.

After we returned home and he had prepared a large meal of harvested corn, last years potatoes and biscuits; Williams had me bring supper to the runaways. As I entered the congested root cellar, I smelled the odor of human sweat. I placed the food on the floor and turned to leave when one man said: "We're all curious to know how a young man like yourself lives here?" I told him about my earlier misfortune, and how Mr. Williams had bought my services for the summer. Before I could even ask this man a question, he went on to explain about himself and the rest of his party.

His name was Thaddeus, a conductor on the Underground Railroad, based out of Philadelphia. His passengers were all from one farm in northern Virginia. His purpose was to get them all to Canada where they would be free. He told me Mr. Williams' house was a seldom used station on the track. The tough enforcement of runaways of late had forced Thaddeus to use a much safer route, on a less populated track. Although it was a tougher, more demanding, and much longer route, the odds that these fugitives would be free were good. The numbers had been discouraging, for there were to be twice as many passengers on this train, but fear set in among the rest; the fear of the unknown, fear of being caught, fear even of being free. Many slaves did not have life so bad that they were willing to risk everything for freedom, especially their loved ones. Couple the risk with the fact that by now most slaves were born into slavery and had never known freedom, it is understandable that many slaves accepted their slavery roles as fate.

These six runaways were different. They had the look of wildness in their eyes. They could not accept the cage of slavery around them. They were young and hungry. Hungry to be ambitious for their lives in the future. Sometimes I wished I was like them, a fugitive slave. Their lives seemed to have a sharp purpose to them. Mine didn't. Reflecting back, I was born knowing a hidden freedom was around me.

Upon my good-byes and thank you's to Mr. Williams, I returned back to Lenox and the Kelsons where I was dealt out for various periods of time and duties to Thomas Gold of Pittsfield and Samuel Belden of Lenox. On March 23 I became sixteen years old and was no longer in the control of the Kelsons. I soon took a six-month job with Charles Mattoon of Lenox and nine days later married a girl named Rebecca Robinson. We moved to the hill town of Washington and I worked with Henry Nash, an uncle of Rebecca, where we hired out to cut cord wood for Thaddeus Lyman. The next spring we returned to Lenox where I worked again for Mr. Belden. It was here, the following spring, that our first child, a boy, was born but died five months later of whooping cough. During the next year we jumped around from one job to another four times. Eventually another child, a girl, was born in Peru but shortly too, died. To make a long story short about my first marriage, I left her after the third baby was born - a white child.

I next went into the barber business in Pittsfield for awhile and then became an expert wood carver in a cabinet shop in Troy, working for a Mr. Lyman Munson there. Again I returned to the Pittsfield-Lenox area, working for a Marshall Hubbard. Upon the completion of work for him, he owed me thirty-nine dollars of which he paid me twenty-nine and gave me a note for the ten dollars. However, this note only had figures on it and no wording so I added a one, straight mark. Now the note read: one hundred and ten dollars. Of course, I was arrested for forgery and spent the next three years in the house of correction at Lenox doing hard labor. Three years of total enclosure, total depression. My only escape was to read every single word in the once a week local Berkshire County Eagle or any large city newspaper that might be brought in weeks late.

Some national events that were taking place a long ways away from my cell block were beginning to raise some serious skepticism of mine. Maybe if I was stupid and never learned to read or write, I wouldn't have known the difference. I might have spent my life as a good farmhand and owned a small cabin, married, and been happy. But I could read. I could understand what was happening in the country. Yet, sadly, I had no control over the decisions that were to be made.

In the 1850's slavery in the South was coming to a boil. Loud mouthed abolitionists in the North wanted the slaves freed while the plantation owners of the South needed the slaves for their own economic survival. In reality, there were still many Northern business owners and New England merchants who directly and indirectly also needed slavery for their economic success, either in the inexpensive abundance of cotton for their mills or for the trading in slaves, sugar, rum, raw materials and other finished products.

When the Compromise of 1850 was finally solved, I was beginning to understand how difficult it was politically, and more important, economically to abolish slavery. The compromise attempted to please both pro and anti slavery folks by admitting California as a free state and allowing other territories to choose their own fate when their time of statehood began. The compromise also banned all slave trading in Washington, D.C. But the real settling point for the plantation owner was the passing in this compromise of a stringent Fugitive Slave Law, which would help protect his investment and assure the plantation owner of Government help in finding runaways.

Shortly after this compromise ended another incident began. A fictional book touched many of the northern softies the way no other word could have. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* stirred up unbelievable abolitionist sentiment. This emotional heat from the heart of many northerners shocked the southern aristocracy. The rhetoric began. Populism took over. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was displayed as a theatre play showing in every major city of the north, including parts of Europe. Although I never observed the play, I did manage to read the book twice. I believed every moving word, it was so real, so sad. I felt like I now was an experienced scholar on the evils of slavery. And if I was smart, I might be able to play upon, for gain, some liberal northern white's sympathy.

Actually, I made a personal gain from the Uncle Tom hoppla. I just completed my three years of hell and moved into the back room of the Inn in Hinsdale for free board in return for all kinds of odd jobs. My life was simple, cutting the trees for the making of the charcoal or working as a farmhand as the need arose. I posed little threat to the townspeople, who all knew me as a poor black boy at the bottom of the town's hierarchy. Yet it didn't bother me to play that role for the town. I knew in my heart that I was better than most of them. I could work at whatever task and be more successful than they. However, my real pride and sense of power over them was that I was smarter and I thought more objective than they. They got better jobs than me because they were white, and at this point in my life I didn't mind.

Things in the world were beginning to heat up. The news drifted in through travelers or townsfolk who had visited relatives. Consequently news was always three to four weeks late along with the number of times the story had changed in its retold state. I still got wind of a serious feud out in the far west in 1854. It seems the earlier settlers were actually fighting over the right to own and use slaves, with the townspeople and new arrivals. Some had even nicknamed the feud there "Bleeding Kansas". The U.S. Government soon passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act which was the usual phony gimmick compromise for the time; which left the question of slavery (to have it or not) up to the territorial legislatures. The Federal Government, made up of equal number of free and slave states, had to get this question off their backs without unfair pain.

The real issues the Government had tried to ignore began to surface when an educated man from Missouri, Dred Scott, was taken into the free

state of Illinois by his master. Dred sued his master to be free since he was no longer a slave because he was in a free state. It took a year or so but Dred finally won his case and thought to be free, or so he thought. Two months later the Supreme Court, nervous that the slave states were angry at such a lower court ruling - since it hurt their business, and their philosophy that a slave was chattel - reversed the lower court's decision and proclaimed Dred Scott still and always a slave.

It was ironic that a white man, John Brown, along with seventeen other whites and five blacks tried to raid the Federal Arsenal at Harpers' Ferry, Virginia. They were hoping to steal arms and ammunition to start a slave revolt. A risky move. An unheard-of precedent. Unfortunately, the attempt failed and John Brown was captured by State and Federal troops under the command of Col. Robert E. Lee and was hung.

Brown's dedication to equality made me feel proud that some white people would go that far for something morally right. Brown was becoming a martyr for many Northern abolitionists, the people most political here. The abolitionists were the ones with all the money, the power, and the influence to convince others of their opinions.

The John Brown incident indirectly affected the presidential election later in the year. There was becoming a large backwash of Southern dislike, economic jealousy hidden under the disguise of the moral issue of slavery. The Northern Puritanical background began to dispute the Southern white Anglican background. The north had more people, more advanced industry and a larger economic base - meaning more political clout. Consequently Representative Lincoln became president in 1860 as the spokesman for anti-slavery.

Six weeks after his election victory, Southern states seceded because the Black Republican, Abe Lincoln, was victorious. South Carolina was first and then Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas, eventually to be followed by Tennessee, Virginia, Arkansas, and North Carolina. They called themselves the Confederate States of America establishing themselves in February 1861 at Montgomery, Alabama. Jefferson Davis was elected President and Alexander Stephens, Vice-President. All this action had taken place before Lincoln's inauguration and his first full day in office on March 4, 1861.

I remember these first few weeks of Lincoln's presidency vividly for once again I spent this time in prison. My final time in Hinsdale ended with financial difficulties. I resorted to thievery. I was hungry. I got caught stealing a five pound sack of flour from the Inn. At least I was better prepared this time for my sojourn back in the Lenox jail. My six month sentence was interrupted by the pending national tragedy of the War Between the States.

The North's white population was near 23,000,000 compared to the South's 5,000,000. There were 23 northern states to 11 southern states. The financial strength of the North was more varied and industrially advanced, especially in our urban manufacturing areas and in our many railroads. The South's economy was still primarily agricultural subsisting

on the growing of cash crops and the use of inexpensive labor, slaves.

The moment I heard of the war I wanted to enlist. The day I was released from prison, I tried to enlist. I was turned away at first because I was black and Lincoln did not want to anger or lose support from the border states over allowing blacks to fight. It wasn't until 1863 with the Emancipation Proclamation that things began to change. I harbored the opinion of many black leaders of the time that we wouldn't be truly free unless we helped to physically fight to win our liberty. Unexpectedly at the time, I managed to hook on with Mr. O.K. Dennis of Hinsdale as a minor partner in his flourishing whitewashing and paperhanging business. My thoughts of fighting in this war were over, yet my brother William Henry served. He served in the all black Fifty-Fourth Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

Just as my happiness was elevated with Lee's surrender to Grant at the Appomattox Court House, the terrible haunting news pierced my soul. LINCOLN ASSASSINATED! The assassination took place only five days after the formal ending of the war and a little over a month after he took office for his second term.

My depression was aggravated by my heavy drinking. I tried to forget that I was black. I tried to forget that many blacks had stupidly risked their lives in war. For what? To be more frustrated after being on the winning side! The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified on December 18, 1865 prohibiting slavery in the United States. Yet I had always been free living here in Massachusetts, thanks in part to a fellow Sheffield black. Her name was Mum Bet and she was a domestic who worked for the famous Ashley family over eighty years ago in 1781. Bet had been injured trying to protect another indentured servant. She ran to the home of Judge Theodore Sedgwick in the hope that he might help her to gain her freedom. Bet had been influenced by the freedom talk she continually overheard as she listened to prominent Sheffield residents discussing the Sheffield Declaration or the Massachusetts Constitution. Sedgwick represented Mum Bet and eventually won her release. This case, along with others in Massachusetts helped to abolish slavery here long before I was ever born.

I had come out of the Civil War worse off than I had entered it. My self esteem had hit rock bottom. To be looked upon as a slug, a leech, a burden, to the white man's society, deeply hurt. I knew what it must have felt like being an Indian in the West at this time. In many cases the removal to Indian territories or reservations was a slow living death more cruel than physical death. Their pride had been broken much like mine. The lucky ones had been killed off. The great Indian culture and tradition were being destroyed. I, at least, had no past cultures to look back on, to identify and feel sorry for. I felt sorry only for myself.

I was thinking about moving West after the War, because in 1862 the Government, through the Homestead Act, was giving 160 acres of public land to every adult who was willing to pay a ten dollar fee. I could get the title after cultivating the land for five years. However, the risk of not knowing what faced me made me decide to stay in Massachusetts. At least

here I knew my place. The thought of taking free land the government had stolen from the Indians left a bad taste in my mouth.

It was a bad time in history to be black. When I first heard about the Ku Klux Klan riding in 1866, my blood began to boil. The new president, Andrew Johnson, held little empathy with the newly freed slave. His goal was to make the South happy. If that meant harm to the Coloreds, fine. Reconstruction was for many a freed slave a more difficult time than during slavery. Many Southern States had Black Codes which perpetuated field labor and house service as the black destiny. It was slavery of a more frustrating nature - "Economic Slavery". Since most of the freed slaves had no money or place to go to, some moved to Northern cities looking for work while many stayed behind to work the land the plantation owner rented to him. Ultimately, the freed slave owed money for rent, seed, food, clothes, and other things to his former master. The "Freeman", was forced to work to get out of debt - his unending circle of debt.

A slight ray of hope squeezed through when the Freedman's Bureau was passed by Congress, over Johnson's veto (Civil Rights Bill). The Fourteenth Amendment gave the right of full citizenship to Blacks entitling us to equality of treatment before the law. "... the Freedman's Bureau was responsible for the first legislative effort at social engineering in this country. . . in that it helped with educational and medical aid for Blacks. It also established 4000 schools and enabled 250,000 Blacks to read and write."¹⁵ What did all these new laws do for me? Nothing again. They were paper laws.

As the Basic Reconstruction Act went into place the South was divided into military districts for the purpose of rebuilding the devastated areas ruined by the War and to bring order to the South. I, too, was in the process of putting my life back into order. Farm jobs were opening up everywhere in Western Massachusetts. I took a job in North Blandford working the fields for two dollars a week plus free use of a small cabin. Here, I met my second wife, Cornelia. We stayed together a few years and had two children: the oldest, a girl named Gertrude, and a son, Arthur. Eventually Cornelia went off with another man and left me with the two small children. I got her mother to take care of the children in Blandford as I went off to work in Otis, Monterey and sites in northern Connecticut.

The events in the country were quieting down some and my daily work load kept me from worrying or drinking so much. The fact that Johnson, a year earlier, had come one vote short of being impeached (acquitted by the Senate - 35 to 19), or that Reconstruction's bid to succeed was failing because of Southern white apathy and Northern white indifference, made very little difference to me. Even the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869 which gave me the right to vote had little impact on me. I was socially numb, lonely but working.

It was while I was working in Canaan, Connecticut that I took my third wife. We shuffled around working four or five jobs, boarding in, before I landed a foreman's job at the Canaan Iron Company. I was to get fifty dollars to oversee eight men, all non English speaking Frenchmen. Our

work consisted of leveling and making the pit bottoms, setting the pits and getting them ready to burn. After successfully completing this job, times were a bit rough with us; I was cheated out of money due me on a wood cutting job.

My final jail term occurred while working for Mr. Shores of Southfield. I received a contract to cut cord wood for him, and to make the job go faster I hired a friend to help me. My friend got into a quarrel with Shores' neighbor, Mr. Norton. (The same Mr. Norton who had cheated me earlier). In the subsequent argument my friend gave him a good whipping. We were both arrested, I as an accomplice. However, I was cleared on Norton's testimony. Then we were tried for defiling Norton's well; even though I said I didn't do it, I got six months back in Lenox. My friend got eighteen.

Just as the sun rose every morning, I too was released. I stayed in and around Lenox, determined to stay out of jail and on the good side of the law. I began to realize my biggest crime of all was that I was black. The slogan "innocent until proven guilty" was only for whites who could expect a fair trial. Guilty, guilty, guilty, was the reality a black could expect from any accusations. Here in the North there is a subtle racism which is far worse than the open racism sometimes witnessed in the South. At least in the South a colored knows where he stands; here one gets smiles to the face and stabs in the back.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE SHEFFIELD MURDER

By March 1877 I had rented a small house on East Road in Sheffield from James Roraback. My work consisted of farm duties, cutting cord wood and driving a team for Mr. Dwight Boardman and others in Sheffield. The physical labor I encountered and the world events around me couldn't explain my acute depression. Maybe it was finally hitting me, that my life was a waste working away for pennies. Drinking on a serious level had retaken control over me. I was becoming mean and ugly asserting my only sense of power, my physical strength and the fear I could instill in people. Although my physical appearance was short and stocky, my upper body strength was remarkable; yet not so remarkable for heirs of ancestors who survived the middle passage to slavery in America and then worked the fields ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. Incidentally, it was not my appearance that scared people but my unpredictable behavior and my short temper. I had a black stare that when I got heated up with anger many a folk would melt from.

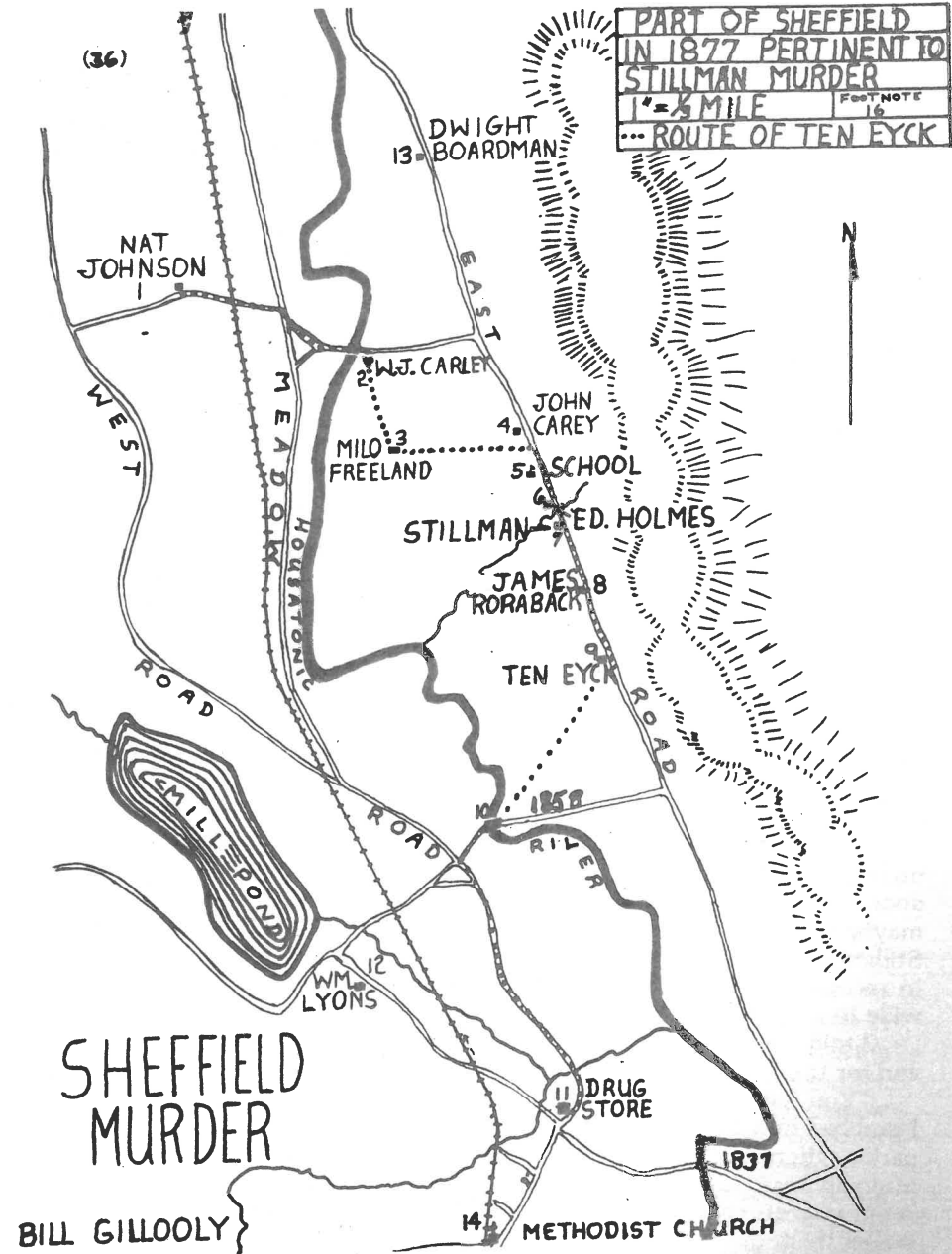
I even scared my third wife away, Cornelia, a small black lady fifteen years younger than me. I became jealous one night after she arrived home late and I chased her out of the house near naked. She cut her hand on a razor that I was carrying to scare her. She now lives three miles out of town with the John Johnson family.

One person I began to hate shortly after I arrived on East Road was Mrs. David Stillman who lived just up the road a mile from me. My hatred stemmed from two incidents. The first came when I heard the Stillmans needed some painting and wall papering done. Consequently I offered my services, we agreed to a mutual price and I subsequently was hired. I worked close to two weeks. However, when it became time to be paid, I was handed in cash exactly half the amount due me. Upon questioning her about the money, her reply was something to the effect that I wasn't worth any more because I was colored and that if I intended to work in Sheffield I shouldn't expect to charge wages that were equal to those of a white man's.

The second incident occurred after a long day working for Dwight Boardman, who lived further north on East Road. As I walked home this particular evening I saw Mrs. Stillman outside her home. I politely asked her if I might have something to drink. She sighed making a wincing gesture under her breath and within minutes returned with a cup less than half full with cider. I thanked her, and with one quick gulp it was gone. With some curiosity I again politely asked her for a second cup. Of course she bluntly refused and told me to get off her property.

Needless to say, I lost my composure and called her a few choice words. I even concluded by threatening her, to the fact that I'd be back to take care of her sometime. Our brief dialogue ended abruptly for Mr. Stillman came out of the house pointing a gun at me. Evidently he had heard the

PART OF SHEFFIELD
IN 1877 PERTINENT TO
STILLMAN MURDER
1" = 1/2 MILE FOOTNOTE 16
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omotion and wanted to end the matter. I walked off their property slowly but diligently with smoke steaming off my head.

The days were getting shorter now with night time approaching the horizon by 4:30. Thanksgiving would soon be here. The prospect of few friends and no family didn't trouble me as much as the thought of going without a good meal. As I sat on my wood chopping stump in front of my cabin, a chilling northern breeze struck my weathered face and a vision came over me. I could see all my white neighbors snug in their comfortable homes preparing for their Thanksgiving meal. A meal is all Thanksgiving meant to me. Thanksgiving was a white holiday; a white tradition, spiced with hypocrisy for the black. I am a black man living in religious Massachusetts who feels no spirit for this holiday.

Hatred for the Stillman's became an obsession. I had no one or place to vent my anger. I couldn't sleep at night because my mind kept plotting fantasy murders of the Stillmans.

The Stillmans were the epitome of coziness. Wealthy and smug. It was commonly rumored that they were worth between six and eight thousand dollars. They were everything I despised yet envied. Mr. David Stillman was eighty years old and his wife Sarah was sixty-seven. Mr. Stillman was a retired carpenter and farmer. They had two children: the Reverend George Stillman (a Methodist preacher) who lived in Darien, Connecticut, and Charles Stillman who recently returned to Sheffield after living for some time in California. Charles was the bookkeeper at the Curtiss Marble Mill in town which had been converted to a grist mill. Mr. and Mrs. Stillman were sanctimonious attendants of the Methodist Church and were respected citizens of Sheffield. Mr. Stillman had helped build the Methodist Church #14 (numbers and locations can be found on the accompanying map) just east of the railroad tracks and facing Main Street in 1842.

The Stillmans lived in a very comfortable, clean and organized two-story farmhouse with a white picket fence around it. They had a modern large bay window in the front facing the road. Part of the outside was adorned with vines giving the house an aura of security and stability. Inside, paintings symbolized a stature similar to that of English Gentry.

Enough of the background. The particulars leading up to the murder of the Stillmans on this fateful Thursday, Thanksgiving night November 29, 1877, are as follows:

Nat Johnson, a fellow negro, and I left his house in the early afternoon to go to the Carleys. Nat #1 lived over in the swamp between Meadow Road and West Road. We crossed the Housatonic River over the bridge and came upon the Carley homestead #2 on the south side of the road immediately after the bridge. Nat needed to buy some silage corn. So while he was bartering with Mrs. Carley's son I stayed outside occupied by Mrs. Carley who was scared to let me out of her sight for she feared me. Making small talk, I asked her for some matches to light my pipe and she promptly handed me two short round ones. Nat soon returned from the barn with his errand completed and we parted, both leaving for our homes.

Instead of taking the road home this night I crossed the brown barren

harvested fields. This southerly short cut found me at Milo Freeland's house #3 at around 4:00P.M. Milo, too was colored. He was an old man who once was a slave and was freed after the Civil War. He took his new name, Freeland, after coming to Sheffield, yet many called him by his white name, his alias, his slave master's name, Lampman. Milo and I shared supper and some very hard cider. We drank too much. Before I left his place I asked him for some more matches. He handed me a tin box filled with long stick matches and I counted out and kept six.

I left Milo's just before darkness set in and walked due east across a vacant field arriving on East Road between John Carey's house #4 to the north and the school #5 to the south. Just as I began to walk south on the road I met a young fourteen year old Irish boy, John Carey, Jr., walking in the opposite direction. I knew this boy did the farm chores like the milking, morning and early evening, for the Stillman's. Greeting each other I asked: "By any chance did you just leave the Stillman place?"

"yeh" was his quick reply.

"Great, they must be home then." I said.

He nodded.

I carefully asked: "Would you know if they have any extra butter for sale?"

He remarked: "I don't know, but they're home, why not go over and ask them."

I said: "I don't know, I'd hate to bother them, especially if they're having company."

"No company." He piped in.

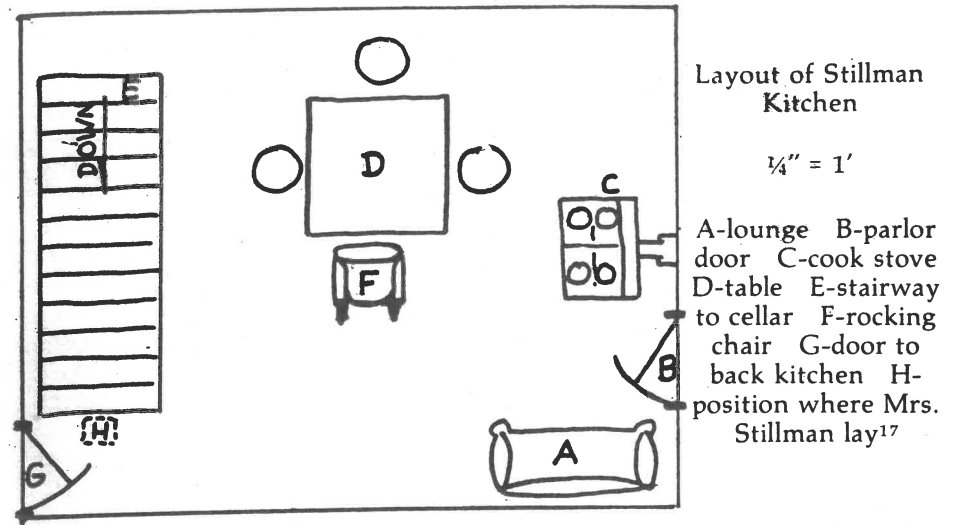
I nodded my thanks and rolled on down the road. A few hundred yards south of the school house I stopped in at Edward Holmes' #6, who lived next door to the Stillman's. The reason for this stop was to forward a message to Holmes about a hired hand he was expecting the following week. He thanked me for the word and I again was on my way.

It was just past 5:00 P.M. and darkness had fallen upon a clear brisk night when I reached the Stillman residence #7 and calmly knocked on the door. I don't know what my motive was, maybe to agitate, maybe revenge, maybe to see what they'd do and then react. It seemed forever before Mr. Stillman finally came to the door. Because of the darkness, he had difficulty in recognizing me. Not realizing at first who it was, he opened the door wide to greet me.

I told him I was here to buy some butter for my Thanksgiving supper and for the long winter. Immediately he raised his old scruffy voice at me:

"You lying nigger"

I grabbed him by the arm and escorted him into the kitchen through the parlor where his wife was working on a patchwork quilt. I restated my interest. Fear clouded Mrs. Stillman's face. Wasting little time she left the room and returned with four or five pounds of butter and the steelyards to weigh them out. Once she began to weigh the butter cakes out I couldn't help but state that I had no intention of paying for the butter. I further told her to go and get more.



At this time, out of the corner of my eye I saw Mr. Stillman pick up a flintstone off the stove and lunge toward me. Luckily, I saw him coming and thwarted his attempt. As I blocked his arm, I slapped him across the face and the stone dropped to the floor splitting in half. I dove for the broken stone, grabbed it and slugged the old man once, as he fell back onto the couch.

All the noise when Mr. Stillman screamed must have alarmed Mrs. Stillman who had made her way down stairs for more butter. I heard her coming up the cellar stairs. I picked up the axe resting in the corner behind the door and greeted her on the top landing with one fierce swing to her right temple. Her spectacles flew off and she dropped the candle. The blow threw her to the wall, splattering blood everywhere. She died instantly, tumbling to the bottom of the cellar dirt floor where she came to rest with her head near the steps.

My mind went into a raged panic, I went berserk. I went back to Stillman who was groaning and closed my eyes as I lifted the heavy blunt edge of the axe three times over him. Out of breath I stopped his breath. When I opened my eyes, I was shocked. Stillman lay quiet with his feet dangling over the couch toward the parlor. He was lying on his left side with his left arm out straight under his head. His right arm was bent over as if trying to protect his head. Blood was everywhere, on the pillow, on the seven-foot-high ceiling, and on his body and my clothes. There was one, two-inch gash over his right eye. Another blow hit him in the right temple so hard that the bones were all crushed and shattered with the brain visible. The final wound was behind the ear, crushing in even more bones.

In nervous shock I dropped the bloody axe in front of the couch. My senses were giving me such quick information I couldn't focus my thinking on a next move. It was ghastly still. My eyes saw red everywhere. It smelled of sickness, of death. My lips and throat were so dry I was hardly able to

swallow. My body was prickly goose bumpy all over. A sudden nausea took control of my stomach.

I had not planned this brutal tragedy, yet my first instinct was to check the house for money. I found \$11.83 in a man's pocketbook as I rummaged through the bedroom chest of drawers. As I stuffed the pocketbook into my coat pocket I felt the matches! The next moment found me hurrying up the attic stairs with a container of kerosene I had found in the kitchen. I doused a good size area of the floor with the kerosene and stuffed old papers between the door jam and the space above it. The first match I lit went out, but the second ignited as I tossed it onto the combustible attic floor. A quick burst of flame shot up. I tightly shut the door and sped down the stairs back into the kitchen, where I was reminded of my deed. Already it seemed like it had been hours, even days ago since I killed them; only ten minutes though in reality. I ran out the kitchen door.

Free and innocent now; the next order of business was to get home unseen, get clean, dispose of my bloodied brown jacket and get to the Drug Store for some dye to cover the red stained shoes and for some booze to hide my guilt. My house was less than a half mile away but the main obstacle would be to get by my landlord, James Roraback's house #8, unseen. Staying on the far side (east) of the road I quietly passed Roraback's and reached my cabin #9 around 6:00 P.M.

The actions and motions I now made, although twice as fast as normal, were actually slower than usual. Had I taken a deep breath and slowed down I might have been able to accomplish my few tasks here at my place. I removed my coat all spattered with blood and wrapped it in a newspaper placing it under the bed. I then attempted to wipe off my shoes and pants of the collected blood. The best that could be done was to remove the obvious bright color and hope to blend the rest in with the fabric or leather. Had I had another wardrobe I could have burned this set. Luckily, I did have another jacket, a bluish-black one. My last chore was to take the corner of the damp cloth and clean my face and hands. I tried to swallow down a chunk of cornbread but my throat was too dry and my jaw muscles were too tight.

As I closed my cabin door, I looked up the road hoping to see a red glow. None was seen. Thinking it odd, I rationalized that the house just hadn't caught yet and it was only a short matter of time before the whole house exploded. I was further satisfied when I smelled smoke.

It was well past 6:30 when I took a southwest shortcut through the fields to the Upper Covered Bridge #10. On edge, the slightest sound left my bones shaking as I tiptoed on the side of the path leading to the new bridge. Crossing the covered bridge at night often meant surprises. Although the primary purpose of a covered bridge was to protect the carrying timbers and floor from rain and rot, transients (tramps, who drifted looking for work or a handout) came to use these bridges as temporary shelters. Under the heavy hand-hewed timber framing I saw the shadows of two people apparently sitting down. With no where to hide and a need to cross at this point I firmly strode past. I walked smack down the middle of the two-inch

planking floor. I said hello, and moved on. I didn't wait for a reply. I strolled south toward the drug store unnoticed.

It was past 7:00 when I reached the drug store #11 owned by A.M. Stone. I was happy to be in the store so Stone could verify the time and my innocence. With my new found riches I slowly shopped the shelves stopping here and there to carefully observe many luxury items that I never had time nor money to look at before. I then bought four necessities for me:

half pint of cider brandy
bottle of hair dye
half pound of tobacco
three cigars

The amount came to \$1.65. I handed Stone a new five dollar bill. With the thank you complete and the change in my hand, I took my leave.

It was well past 8:00 when I left the store. Thirsty, I took a quick sip. It helped to alleviate the fears of being caught. I also opened the dye bottle and drenched my shoes with black dye to hide the stains. I then proceeded to trip over railroad ties on my way to Nat's house.

After 9:00 I arrived at Nat's, where he and his wife were already asleep. I shook Nat to wake him, but he kept turning over. I threatened to pour brandy over his head if he didn't go outside with me. Not wanting to waste brandy, he followed me out and we sampled the liquor. It was obvious that Nat, although not mentioning it, was very curious to know why I dragged him outside and how I came about money enough to buy brandy and tobacco. To solve his puzzlement I explained how two men attacked me on the bridge and how one man had a rock inside a handkerchief. As he struck at me I dodged back and he hit me in the shoulder. It was at that point he dropped his pocketbook and I grabbed it. Then I hurried off just when I saw the other tramp point something at me and I heard a clicking sound.

I don't know if Nat believed my story or not, but he sure was not complaining. We returned inside where I fell asleep on the floor. The next morning I had breakfast with the Johnson's and gave Mrs. Johnson 25¢ for sewing a tear in my coat.

I left Nat's and returned to Stone's Drug Store to butcher a hog. Waiting for the water to heat up and boil I skipped over to William Lyon #12 for some liquor. On the way I met Bob Graham who told me that Fred Wilcox, Callender and Manville were out looking for me to arrest me.

"For what? I'm not afraid, for I've done nothing wrong." I said.

Upon reaching Lyons', I bought a pint of brandy and I asked Lyons for a chew of tobacco. He noticed right away the blood on my wrist as I took the tobacco. I said nothing to defend the blood, after all I was butchering. Outside Lyons' house we heard horses approaching. I told Lyons:

"I guess they're after me, don't tell them I'm here." I went back inside and hid behind the door when I heard Fred Wilcox say:

"You are my prisoner."

I opened the door and came out, saying:

"I will go with you, but what am I being arrested for?"

He did not answer the question but just trailed me on his horse to the

lockup in the center of Sheffield, surrounded by his posse. Approaching the lockup he told me I was arrested for the murder of Mr. Stillman.

CHAPTER FOUR:

ARRAIGNMENT

"Go ask Mrs. Stillman if I murdered her husband." I shouted. The three men who delivered me to the Sheffield lockup said nothing about my statement. They held me there until Deputy Sheriff John C. Smith arrived and he quickly handcuffed me. We then drove out to the scene of the crime to view the victims. I guess they were trying to intimidate me, get me to break down. But I held firm.

The two hundred odd people who were already at the murder scene became loud and angry as they saw my face. A rope was being readied by the wild mob. Fortunately, the people listened to Sheriff Smith as he protected me from the masses as we entered the house. I was told to look at Mr. Stillman's corpse. I did so quickly, and turned my eyes away, glancing at the floor. Dr. Camp asked:

"Do you recognize this man?"

"No" I snapped back.

With coolness and an act of innocence, I was paraded handcuffed around the house to the whispers of "killer", "murderer". Upon returning to the lockup I hand wrote a statement of my innocence.

I was shipped up to Pittsfield the very same day on the 4:00 train. The Sheffield police feared they would not be able to protect me from the townspeople. I arrived at the County Correctional Facility on Second Street by 6:30 and routinely waited for my inquest or preliminary hearing that was to be on Wednesday, December 5, at the Town Hall and Court House in Gt. Barrington.

I spent these lonely days reading the newspaper all about the details of the murder. Marcus Rogers, the editor of the Berkshire Courier, had already proved me guilty in his articles. The embarrassment he caused me deeply hurt. I was powerless against the strength of his pen.

Even the particulars of their funeral were not without Rogers' prejudice of my guilt. One sentence he used was to the effect - many regret Ten Eyck not lynched yet. The funeral took place Sunday, December 2. There was a prayer service at the house before the actual assembly at the Methodist Episcopal Church at 11:00. The Church was packed with many of the residents of Sheffield who came out to pay their last respects to the old and respected couple.

Another funeral took place on Tuesday the 4th, that the papers said I was directly responsible for. It appears a Mrs. Kellogg fainted when she saw the Stillman bodies on Friday. Apparently she just never came out of it and died at her home Tuesday.

The original date of my arraignment was postponed to the next day, Thursday, December 6. Riding the train south from Pittsfield, there were many crowds at village depots hoping for a glimpse of me. When we did arrive in Barrington, there were large crowds lining the tracks from

Railroad St. to the depot. Since there was a good crowd at the depot, the train did not stop, but continued by to Castle St. where Sheriff Root and I jumped off the slowly moving train. Handcuffed he escorted me into the back of the Town Hall as we saw the surprised crowd running down the tracks to meet us.

The inside of the courtroom was packed. The outside window sills were all crowded with curious spectators who hadn't arranged for seats earlier. One enterprising man had put up a ladder to a window and was selling chances for 5¢ a head to view the proceedings.

The arraignment took place before Judge Couch in the absence of Judge Bradford, at around 9:00. H.C. Joyner of Gt. Barrington and N.W. Shores of Lee were my defense counselors. I pleaded not guilty to the findings. We called no witnesses. We felt we needed none.

The prosecution under acting District Attorney, Justin Dewey, called four witnesses. The first was Dr. Camp who described the murdered couple and their positions, using a diagram of the house. His gory descriptions made the listeners shudder. Yet, I sat there cool, pretending to take notes.

The second witness was the boy, John Carey Jr. He related to the Judge, how he had met me Thanksgiving night around 5:00 and the discussion that took place. He then explained how he went to do the milking Friday morning and saw the back kitchen door open. As he walked in, he saw Mr. Stillman lying on the lounge. At first he thought he was asleep but when he saw the blood he knew Stillman was dead. The boy then went out to feed the cows before going next door to inform Mr. Holmes.

The third witness was George Sam Johnson. He told the story of how he was walking with me in the middle of September; and in passing Stillman's house I said:

"There are two G_d d_m old cusses living in there; have been mean to me all summer; will pay them for it before I leave this town."¹⁸

Two weeks later Ten Eyck said:

"There would be a d_m good place to go in and knock those d_d old people over and get some money, and I think I will do it before I leave town."¹⁹

The fourth witness was James Roraback, who stated he spoke with me in June or July about annoying the Stillman's. Mrs. Stillman had told Roraback that she did not want me near her place looking for cider or pork in that she feared for her life when I was around. He then said I got mad and began making threats with such anger, that I made a threat with an oath. With Roraback's statement the prosecution ended their case of circumstantial evidence.

My lawyers then made a plea for my discharge on the grounds of insufficient evidence. The Judge disagreed and ordered me held without bail under the custody of Sheriff Root, until the Grand Jury met in January. From the reaction of the spectators, I gathered they were unhappy with the judgement. They were hoping the Judge might free me so they could give out a quick form of justice. Well, it almost happened that way.

Root and the officers removed me out the back entrance where we

waited for the wagon to come around. Many of the crowd hurried to the back where they overpowered the officers and placed a rope around my neck. I was scared. For a moment there, it looked like this mob would get their revenge. Soon though, the officers pulled their pistols on the crowd, and they backed off and respected the power of the bullet. We boarded the horse drawn wagon with officer Langdon brandishing a pistol while sitting on the back of the wagon. Close to a hundred men followed the wagon, hoping to cause a further disturbance at the depot. Root shrewdly planned to go to the next northern depot at VanDeusenville to thwart any violence. He was right, there was a much smaller crowd here. The plan was that the train was not coming to a complete stop but would rather slow down. I was to be thrown into a baggage car and the door promptly locked. It succeeded.

The next week I did read about a disturbance that took place after my hearing. It seems that the crowd became angry and a quarrel broke out on Railroad St. between John Hickey, a prominent Irishman, and another Irishman from Stockbridge. Hickey received a serious wound on the head from a stone held by the other man. The crowd chased the Stockbridge man where he hid in a saloon on Railroad St. When the police did arrive, he managed to escape.²⁰

It was ironic that while I was awaiting the Grand Jury the Temperance Movement came head wind into Barrington. It was called the Murphy Movement or the "Blue Ribbon Revolution". Basically it was an emotional type of meeting where song, prayer, and strong motivational words were used to convince drinkers to stop. Those that could be convinced took the oath and were given the symbolic blue ribbon. In the Barrington situation, a couple of advance men arrived a few days earlier to lift up the spiritual pressure and warm up the local residents and then the almighty, Francis Murphy, would arrive and give his heightened oratory about the evils of drinking. In the less than one week this traveling show was in town over 1,624 drinking and non-drinking individuals signed the petition:

"National Christian Temperance Union," With Malice toward none and Charity for all. I, the Undersigned do pledge my word and honor, God helping me, to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and I will by all honorable means encourage others to abstain."²¹

A few months later, and after my short arraignment before the Grand Jury, Gt. Barrington was the location of a large Temperance Jubilee. It was on Wednesday, March 27, and over 2000 blue "ribboners" from all over Western Massachusetts met to give praise and vows to the abstinence of the spirited waters. Many local religious leaders spoke of the evils of liquor along with Francis Murphy. Had I been a fellow Temperance member a year ago, perhaps I might not be in this mess now. One unfortunate consolation for me was that I didn't need a blue ribbon for I'd never taste the stuff again, here in prison.

My grand jury arraignment was routine. I arrived in the Pittsfield courtroom at 9:00, neatly dressed and hair combed. I was placed in an elevated single seated dock where I listened to the three indictments read: two for the murder of Mr. Stillman and one for Mrs. Stillman. I explained to

the court that I had no money to pay my lawyers, so they appointed Joyner and Shores for my defense. The Judge set the date for my trial on May 17. I returned back to prison to await my trial.

My jail stay was rather hectic, with many visitors. Of course, Reverend Harrison befriended me and worked diligently to save me. The reporters were the ones, though, who in the end became a real menace. They all wanted a piece of me, a private confession. It was for this reason I began to write my autobiography. I started it in February and continued to work on it through and after my trial. My purpose was clearly stated in my Preface:

"It is not my object in giving this sketch of my life to the public to do it for gain nor for fame; but as I have been arrested and imprisoned on a charge of murder, and am innocent, and seeing that some of the County papers have indulged in so many false reports - yes, base lies, - about me, few of which I intend to put into my sketch, I feel it my duty, to show the world how an innocent man may be slandered, and perhaps tried and convicted, condemned - perhaps executed - through prejudice grown out of false reports and without the slightest foundation. I mean to make a truthful statement in my sketch, and also to request those whom it may reach, who know me, to confirm my statements by publication in one of the Pittsfield papers, as I shall make arrangements with the editor to insert all such communications or any that he receives fully signed; also any contradictions of my statement with particulars also fully signed. I propose to give the sketch to show first my birthplace, school-days, places of residence, and different towns and acquaintances, also to show how a man may suffer even undeservedly; and no doubt many who have known me will read it with sadness and see what a sad wrong I have undergone and suffered."²²

John Ten Eyck

CHAPTER FIVE: THE TRIAL

The Court commenced at 2:15, Wednesday, May 15. The eighty plus jurors had been impanelled and were waiting for their instructions by the court clerk to see who would be the chosen twelve. The prosecution and the defense both were allowed twenty-one peremptory challenges of the prospective jurors. Each potential juror's name was drawn and as he stepped forward, he was asked the following four questions:

ONE: Do you have any conscientious scruple which would prevent you from finding a verdict of guilty in cases where the penalty is death?

TWO: Have you formed or expressed an opinion which would prejudice the case?

THREE: Are you conscious of any bias?

FOUR: Are you related to any party involved with this trial or do you have any interest in this case?

After they answered the four questions, they had to face me. I used all twenty-one challenges because I did not like the answers some gave, or the look of others. The prosecution only challenged one juror.

Within one hour the jury had been picked. They were:

David C. Smith, Dalton, (foreman)	W.P. Beach, New Ashford
Dwight Rockwell, Peru	J.W.P. Buck, Charksburg
Joshua Pine, Lanesboro	Fred C. Brown, Cheshire
Thos. K. Plunkett, Hinsdale	W.H. Brown, Williamstown
W.W. Prentiss, Becket	Orrin Benedict, Pittsfield
Marshall Childs, Lee	Marcus M. Thatcher, Florida

I now include the full report of the trial published by David O'Connell, who also was publishing my autobiography.²³

The witnesses were excluded from the room, and the case was opened by Mr. Leonard who spoke for 40 minutes. The trial was for the murder of Mr. Stillman. Architect C.T. Rathbun was the first witness, who made the plans and drawings.

Medical Examiner Camp, said he made an examination of the bodies at 9 o'clock the morning after the murder, finding Mr. Stillman on the lounge in the sitting room, where, judging from the rigidity, it had laid dead 15 hours. Dr. Camp then described how the body of Mrs. Stillman was found in the cellar, and showed a diagram of Mr. Stillman's skull with the wounds upon it, two of which were enough to cause instant death. The lamp was still burning in the house when he arrived. The trunks were found to have been rummaged, but nothing taken. Dwight Boardman corroborated the story of Ten Eyck that he had got a dollar of him claiming he had no money. Nat Johnson, the colored man, at whose house Ten Eyck stayed the night of the murder testified that the latter had no money the morning of the 29th, but had considerable that night. He also told the prisoner's anxiety to have his hair dyed and his boots blackened the next morning. He repeated the story that Ten Eyck told to account for the money in his possession, viz.,

that he had got hold of it in a tussle with some tramps. His cross examination occupied nearly all of Thursday forenoon.

Mrs. William Carley: sworn, resides in Sheffield; saw prisoner and Johnson at her house about 4 o'clock together; Johnson came for corn: Ten Eyck remained on steps; asked witness for matches, in shed; went in to get matches, but had pipe lit during her absence; said he liked to have matches; (identified matches shown - of particular make) spoke to his dog and pointed to clock, said it was four o'clock and they must be going; Freeland's is ½ mile; (identified match box) gave the box to officers; matches and box shown to jury.

Milo Freeland: lives off road; saw prisoner on Thanksgiving P.M., 4 o'clock, at his house; had cane; same one shown; asked for liquor; wanted to sell stove; was going to Boardman's to supper; wanted to sell other things; both drank from bottle; then said he was going to leave town; also got matches of witness; went out doors and went towards road past Boardman road; Identified match box and matches shown him; (different from Carley matches); 60 rods from his house to Boardman road.

Cr. ex. - Prisoner took five matches from box; didn't buy stove; thinks he could identify matches as same he gave Ten Eyck.

John Carey Sr.: lived near school house; saw prisoner that night on highway a little after 5; went south; 20 rods from him; had dog with him; went down the highway.

Cr. ex. - Lives ½ mile from Stillman's; was about doing chores at that time.

Edward Holmes: lived next door north of Stillman's; saw defendant pass house about 5 that night; spoke to prisoner; it was snowing a little; don't remember dog; had lit lamp; going rapidly south.

Cr. ex. - I spoke to him first; Nat Johnson had been working for witness, lived 25 rods from Stillman's; can see the house from his house; had no company that day; knew Ten Eyck; had worked for witness.

John Carey Jr., 15 years old; father's house next school house; did chores at Stillman's last fall; had been there two weeks; stayed home nights; did milking; used to carry in milk; Mr. Stillman (Thanksgiving night) was on lounge; Mrs. S. was in sitting room; table on north; stayed there till Mrs. S. had strained milk, left soon after; Mr. S. still on lounge, old lady in chair, lamp lighted, nothing on table but patch work; no butter or steel yards on table; left a few minutes past 5, about 10 minutes; went to father's; met Ten Eyck at school house, came down the road, prisoner asked who worked for S.; asked if they made butter and if they had company; no one with him; had known him since April; he went south towards Stillman's; next morning at 6:30 found pail and milked; door was open: door leading from wood shed to kitchen; left milk, and noticed S. on lounge; supposed he was dead; he was dressed; didn't see Mrs. S. or inquire for her; saw blood before he went to Holmes; curtains were down: saw butter and pitcher; Holmes went for Roraback.

Cr. ex. - Stillman had 4 cows and a horse; went first to barn that morning; she strained milk in dining room during fall and winter; just

milking cows, didn't have to fodder; knew where table and lounge were; told prisoner he could find out if they had butter or company by going and trying: they had been in the habit of selling butter; did not know whether Johnson bought butter there; parties were used to carrying butter in pail found on table; Geo. Johnson had bought it once; went into dining room and saw Mr. S. lying there; did not notice cellar door open; only door open was kitchen door; other doors fastened; don't know what kind of patchwork it was; little pieces of cloth; were in either box or basket: saw her sewing on it; went and told Mr. Holmes first; told him Mr. S. was dead; milk was kept in pantry next dining-room; Ten Eyck had no cane.

James Roraback: lives 60 or 70 rods south of Stillman's; and next house beyond was Ten Eyck; noticed the lights were not as usual, one window being very bright; discovered there was no light; this was about 6 o'clock; next morning saw Mr. S. on lounge dead; next thought of Mrs. S; noticed shade down; never knew curtain down before in 8 years; noticed pail and steelyards; noticed blood on landing of cellar stairs, and spectacles between blood and stairs; went down stairs and found Mrs. S.; saw she was dead: next thought of notifying their son; lamp was burning; blood on pitcher; cider in pitcher; found axe in front of lounge; blood and hair on it; was recognized as Stillman's axe; had conversation with prisoner in July about the Stillmans; told him that Mrs. S. had said he had been there after cider twice in one day, and mustn't annoy them; he was angry and threatened that "he would ax them". Ten Eyck had worked for them in April, papering sitting room.

Cr. ex. - Mrs. S. large woman, rather excitable; did her own work; above medium height; health was poor at times; old gentleman able to do his own chores; energetic man; weighed 150 pounds; crippled in one of his hands; ceilings were 7 feet high; landing at head of cellar stairs; cellar door opened outwards; noticed blood on cellar stairs and print of bloody hand on post under cellar stairs about three feet from cellar bottom; print diagonally on post which was support of stairway; appeared as though made with right hand; noticed absence of light going through his sitting room; didn't excite alarm; didn't go from house to barn; had some thought of going up there that evening; remembered seeing snow fall, so that it was not fully dark; sun set at that time at 4:30; could not see from window; nothing to obstruct view at that season; witness has family of seven; all at home; his house and Stillman's command view of village; prisoner was angry when spoken to about Stillman's not wanting to be bothered drawing cider; expected a time on prisoner's making threats; repeated previous conversation about threat; didn't carry threat to them; they were excited enough about the man; no one but Ten Eyck in field; blood print on post looked like made by person crouching; looked like bloody hand.

Chas. W. Stone; apothecary in Sheffield; saw defendant night of murder; asked for and got cider brandy and hair dye; wanted dye that would dry quick; asked for dye soon after entering store; paid for them \$1.65; took purse, took bills out; new \$5 bill; witness identified bill by mark he put upon it next morning; there were other bills in pocketbook; remained about an

hour after purchasing goods; recognized cane, it lay on counter; left store after witness did.

Cr. ex. - Store is north of village; there are hair dyes slow in their effect: ½ pint cider brandy; keep cash account of sales; keep cash book; don't remember where other \$5 bill went; marked it following morning; reserved new bill; looked at cane, was close to cane; don't know when he left store.

Wm. Lyons: Ten Eyck arrested at his house; saw prisoner first at 9:30 Friday A.M.; noticed blood on prisoner's wrist; was arrested soon after; asked witness not to tell the men outside he was there, told them Ten Eyck was in house; stood behind post straight as broom handle.

Cr. ex. - Don't know what he came over for: wife had no liquor; always helped himself; prisoner didn't get liquor there; made no excuse for being there; stepped in to get tobacco; blood seen.

F.B. Wilcox: officer arrested prisoner; corroborated story of prisoner's standing against post; took him to lockup; defendant asked what he was arrested for; took pocketbook, liquor, keys and camphor gum from the prisoner; did not count money; Mr. Gray did, there was \$10.90; Smith asked him where he got money; said he had been saving it up little by little; said he had \$15 in house, in chest.

Cr. ex. - Ten Eyck's house unlocked; door open; chest unlocked; was taken to lockup; witness not an officer; was up to Stillman's half an hour; didn't search Ten Eyck's house; officers searched house; took prisoner to Stillman's by request of officer Smith; two hundred men present; they were excited, demonstrative, and threatened to hang him but no one touched him.

C.C. Calender: officer in Sheffield, and arrested Ten Eyck; \$10.90 found; had saved it up for good while; prisoner made no resistance; stayed with prisoner while being searched.

Franklin C. Grey: station agent at Sheffield; train going north 7:44 P.M., station in center of village; searched defendant; counted money, \$10.90 - \$7.81 bills, \$1.90 change; one \$2 bill; train was on time to best of knowledge.

AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS

There was a genuine surprise about five o'clock when his brother W.H. Ten Eyck, was called, and the prisoner trembled. He testified that he had not seen the prisoner in twenty years; nor written to him in seven. Had been a sailor and in the army. He denied writing this letter:

Pittsfield, April 1878

Mr. Joyner sir, I called to see my brother and was not permitted to do so. I called in July and could not see him. I should call you today but I have got to return to Springfield. I hear that he had \$100 when arrested and claim I sent it to him, I did no such thing. On the 25th of November I sent him \$12, two \$5 bills, and one \$2 bill. I requested him to fetch me 20 or 25 pounds of ball butter and to use the rest of the money to pay his way. I am his brother and I mailed the letter to Sheffield.

W.H. Ten Eyck.

David O'Connell testified to bringing the letter from the prison; jailor Scott said that the paper was like that furnished to the prisoner; cashier Francis and T.L. Allen said that the handwriting, though disguised, was evidently the prisoner's.

John Smith: arrested Ten Eyck; asked what he was arrested for, was told murder; said he had money in this house; did not find any; searched in bedroom, found clothing; didn't tell of considerable sum of money; went to Stillman's; Dr. Camp asked prisoner if he knew Stillman, said no; denied being there night before; had only been in vicinity few weeks; demonstration as they came out; afterwards went to Barrington; said he had saved up money; prisoner owed witness; found hair dye from Johnson; Stone gave cane and some other articles to witness.

Smith: found matches at Stillman's while blowing ashes in attic; corresponded with those of Carley's and Freeland's.

John H. Stone: Clerk at Drug Store at Sheffield; saw prisoner at 20 minutes past 7; prisoner when he went off, was particular to say that he came in at that time; recognized cane; don't recollect prisoner purchasing gum camphor at store, and didn't see him pay for articles purchased; saw nothing peculiar about cane; let him have ½ pint of cider brandy.

Frank H. Burtch. Clerk in Sheffield post office; was there from 10 to 2; didn't see defendant at post office nor gave him a letter that day; would not remember every letter given out day after day.

Charles Stillman, son of murdered people: lived in the village at time of murder; been in California; last saw father alive Tuesday previous at mill; came with grist, paid him some money - \$11.83; said he hadn't brought his pocketbook; put money in envelope; witness recognized envelope; paid two \$5 bills and one was a new bill; parents always kept camphor in house.

Dr. H.H. Smith: was family physician of Mr. Stillman; saw body on sofa; appearance natural; from examination, Mr. S. had been dead 15 hours; determined by rigidity of muscles; age and temperature enters in: temperature 58 or 60; wound was inflicted by axe.

Cr. ex. - Can't fix certainty by condition of body, length of time they have been dead - age has something to do with it; in general terms cannot determine to a certainty; varies.

Dr. Camp: In Mr. Stillman's pocket found camphor gum.

Mrs. Lina Wickwire: helped lay out Mrs. S.; smelled camphor, there were traces on her clothing.

Philo Blake: buried clothing; smelled camphor on Mrs. Stillman's clothing; clothes were buried ten hours.

Dr. J.B. Treadwell: physician in Boston, expert in the examination of blood; explained how corpuscles in blood, clot, and can be magnified to measure the diameter; the blood of animals then can be distinguished from the blood of man; the spots taken from defendants clothing point to the fact that they were human blood.

Prosecution closed at 12:30

OPENING FOR THE DEFENSE

Mr. Shores opened the defense in a brief address relating the prisoner's version of the affair, and at once the examination of witnesses began.

Dr. Wilcox of Lee first witness. Physician for 12 years, and resided 6 years in Lee; could tell approximately how long body had been dead by rigidity of muscles, mode of death, temperature, size of the body, amount of blood; in old age by large loss of blood rigor would commence in 7 hours; was not an expert in examination of blood stains on clothing, from his studies and reading was of opinion that the question was a mooted one whether human corpuscles could be distinguished from the blood of animals.

Mrs. Stella Boardman, wife of Dwight Boardman, for whom Ten Eyck worked. Was there morning of Thanksgiving; did not see that defendant had nose bleed; Friday before heard conversation about nose bleeding; said he could have Thanksgiving supper if he was at witness house when ready.

Robert Graham: Knew defendant and Johnson: remember day arrest, was in Stone's yard butchering; Johnson was there: officers inquired for prisoner: Johnson told witness to go over to Lyon's and tell prisoner to 'skin out'; saw prisoner and delivered message; don't know what he went to Lyon's for or got.

Nathaniel Johnson: Defendant had on cinnamon colored coat Thanksgiving day from time he met him until they separated at Freeland's; on his return had on black coat.

Lieut. Allen Mansir, police officer in Sheffield. Went with officer Smith and defendant to defendant's house, to find any evidence connected with the crime; on the way up to Stillman's house discovered no traces of blood on clothing, or anything to implicate him in the crime.

John Ten Eyck: Went to Mr. Little's store, and post office, where I got letter that has been disputed; had \$12 in it. Went to Johnson's where we talked and drank for some time; went to Carley's for corn; Johnson had been smoking my pipe, called for match, but Mrs. Carley only gave me one; went to Miles Freeland's and talked with him about stove; ate supper with him.

From this, his testimony was corroborative of Mr. Holmes', the Carley boy and others. Said he went home, changed his coat and arrived at the drug store at 6:40, made the purchases, and next appeared at Johnson's where he stayed all night.

At Lyon's saw officers outside and said to Billy to tell them I'd be out: when door opened I was standing behind it; Wilcox told me I was his prisoner; didn't tell me what warrant was for; took me into my house; Mr. Callender unfastened house, searched rooms, took my money, pocketbook; bought camphor gum at drug store; let me have cider brandy at lockup; asked what I was arrested for; don't remember at what point it was when I was told I was arrested for murder; taken from there to Stillman's house; day before Thanksgiving fell from scaffold at Boardman's, and hurt my side, causing nosebleed. Letter shown purporting to come from W.H. Ten Eyck, came into my possession on Monday - sealed, stamped, and addressed; Mrs. Jane Clark gave it to me in my cell; she wanted me to hand it to my counsel; it wasn't directed as I direct mine; gave it to David O'Connell

to mail; wrote to my counsel that I wished to see him; he didn't come.

Dr. F.K. Paddock: Been physician for 14 years; little certainty as to length of time body had been dead; it may have been 1 or 3 hours or 8 or 10 hours; rigidity of muscles varies from 4 to 20 hours; have had some experience in examining blood, made it something of a study, become quite familiar with it; experience shows that it is difficult to tell human blood from that of animals.

FINAL ARGUMENTS:

Paraphrased from the publisher, David O'Connell, from the *Life of John Ten Eyck*.²⁴

DEFENSE:

1. Mr. Joyner's address began with the sadness of the murdered victims.
2. Who did this crime? Joyner asked the jury. The Sheffield residents were so angry that they wasted no time in convicting John, without looking at all the evidence.
3. Ten Eyck was found guilty by prejudiced men, who forgot the maxim: innocent until proven guilty.
4. He warned the jury of the lack of real evidence to convict Ten Eyck. The whole trial is based on the circumstantial evidence of the stupid Carey boy's testimony.
5. Joyner raised the question: if Ten Eyck was as shrewd as everyone says he was, why would he ask the Carey boy if the Stillmans had butter and then go over there and murder them and then leave the butter and steelyards on the table as evidence against himself.
6. It could have been any tramp that killed the Stillmans.
7. Would Ten Eyck walk from Freeland's to Carey's to Holmes', all to make further witness against himself.
8. The story about the matches makes no sense, for anyone in town would have had the same type of matches.
9. John did not hide that night. He went straight to the drug store, not all bloody and guilty the way the prosecution would have you believe.
 - A. He bought cider brandy and hair dye; dye which he has bought many times in the past.
 - B. The druggist thinks he remembers payment was made with a new \$5 bill.
 - C. The druggist again thinks he saw a pocketbook with other bills in it. Do you really think John is so stupid to kill, then steal their pocketbook and show it to Stone at the store?
 - D. Don't guess away a man's life with this shoddy money question.
10. Could Nat Johnson have committed the crime?
 - A. Nat was with John most of the day.
 - B. The Johnsons did buy butter at the Stillmans.
 - C. Who was it that found the defendant's coat and cane after he was in

jail?

11. Why did William Henry Ten Eyck testify against his brother? Why did he need two deputy sheriffs to bring him here? How can he be believed? Couldn't John have saved up the money?

12. The mysterious letter given John by a girl, was even questioned by John himself.

13. The question of human blood on his clothes is totally insane. Science cannot prove beyond a doubt that it is human blood; even if it was, John did have a nose bleed.

14. A man uses a tool in a proper way according to the way he is familiar with. Nat Johnson said he was a butcher and John was not. A butcher would slaughter an animal with the pole of an axe, whereas a wood cutter would use the blade.

15. Isn't it probable that two men did this nasty job quickly. One killed Mr. Stillman while the other killed Mrs. Stillman. Couldn't it have been the two tramps on the bridge?

-- Mr. Joyner's address took 1 hour and 55 minutes. The court adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

PROSECUTION:

1. Attorney General Train began his address at 9:15 the next day by thanking the jury for their acute attention.

2. Train assured the jury that the defendant had all the facilities open to him for a fair trial.

3. At 5:00 the Carey boy left Stillmans; there was no butter on table, no cider pitcher, and Mrs. S. was sewing. Doctors debate when they died - 14 - 15 hours before bodies found at 9:00 that morning. One thing is for certain: they were not undressed, had not gone to bed, it must have been early evening.

4. An attempt to fire house was made to cover up murders. Whoever went to house had negotiations about butter.

5. Ten Eyck had made threatening statements against the Stillman's which were heard by two people.

6. There were two motives: revenge or pecuniary gain. Ten Eyck had both possible motives.

7. There was no motive for the Carey boy to lie about meeting Ten Eyck at 5:00 and the discussion about butter and no visitors.

8. Ten Eyck walks the 2½ miles to the drug store where he tells Stone the time of 6:10, to show he didn't have time to commit the crime, change, and walk the 2½ miles to the store. But, in reality, Ten Eyck didn't arrive at the store until close to 7:30.

9. Ten Eyck went to the store waiting for the house to burn and to have a witness who observed him there. But the alarm never sounded so he stayed and stayed.

10. Finally he leaves and goes to Johnsons where he tells him of the fight on the bridge with the tramps and how he got the money. Stayed night and was seen scraping his cane. He dyed his pants and shoes. For what? To go butchering?

11. Do you suppose tramps would have left silverware behind?
12. Young Stillman gave his father \$11.83, which Ten Eyck stole. Ten Eyck also had \$1 from Boardman. From that he spent:

\$1.65	at store
.25¢	to Johnson's wife
.2¢	to Johnson's children
<hr/>	
\$1.92	

Subtract this number from the \$12.83 Ten Eyck had and you get \$10.91. When he was arrested the sheriff found \$10.90 on him and later found 1¢ in his house. This is quite a coincidence, since Ten Eyck previously couldn't pay the smallest debt.

13. The forged false letter supposedly written by W.H. Ten Eyck and delivered by a Jane Clark is unquestionably fake. There is no red headed Jane Clark. Ten Eyck wrote the letter himself, as can be seen by the way he spells and the type of paper used which matches the paper given to prisoners.

14. The borrowed matches of Carley and Freeland match those used to set the fire.

15. His own brother says he did not send him money nor has he seen him in many years.

16. The blood stains on pants were spatters not stains of a nose bleed. There was no blood found below the height of the couch.

17. What was Ten Eyck scraping from his cane?

18. The statements the defendant made in his behalf should not be fully accepted in that they were biased and made with the hope of saving his neck.

19. He denied ever talking to the Carey boy when he first was arrested.

20. He denied knowing Stillman when he viewed the corpse, even though he papered their room and lived just down the road.

21. He was under the influence of alcohol.

22. He had camphor gum in coat pocket. Victims smelled of camphor.

The Judge then addressed the jury, explaining their job and giving the definition of homicide. First degree murder has to be deliberately premeditated with malice aforethought. He then went on to explain the difference between direct evidence and circumstantial evidence. He further stated the jury must be satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt of the defendant's guilt in order to bring about a guilty charge.

THE VERDICT

The jury retired directly after the charge, and in a few minutes after entering their room, took an informal ballot, which was unanimous pronouncing him guilty. After examining some evidences before them, another ballot was taken, with the same result. It was deemed best, however, not to report at once, and they remained out for an hour and a quarter, returning at 1:25 P.M. There was a death-like silence in the court room, as they solemnly filed in and took their seats. His counsel were sent for, who returned, the court came in, and in response to the clerk's inquiry the jury were asked if they had found a verdict, to which they responded

that they had, and foreman Smith, looking on the prisoner, and he on the foreman, pronounced him guilty of murder in the first degree. Ten Eyck's coolness did not leave him for an instant. Attorney-General Train, no motion being made by prisoner's counsel, moved that sentence be passed upon him. Before preceeding to that solemn duty, the prisoner was asked if he had anything to say, and he answered as follows:

I have a few words to say, but I don't wish to say anything thinking it is going to do me any good, but what I am going to say, is for the good of others. I don't want to die with a lie on my lips, and if I was speaking it on the scaffold, I shall say it there. I contend I am innocent of the crime; and why I am saying this so as that my counsel, who have done all they could for me, would not regret what they have done for me hereafter. When I first met my counsel, I was informed by them and also aware myself that they would not know how to act for me unless I told them the truth, and the facts. There are the facts, and as I also told the jury nothing but the truth in any form, that is all I have to say, sir.²⁵

THE SENTENCE

John Ten Eyck: Two indictments, found against you, one for the murder of David Stillman, and the other for the murder of his wife, having been duly certified, to this court by the superior court, you have been duly arraigned thereon, and counsel assigned for your defense. You have now been tried upon the indictment for the murder of David Stillman. In this trial, all the provisions of the laws of this commonwealth intended for the security of persons charged with the commission of crime, have been carefully observed. You have met the witnesses against you face to face. You have had ample opportunity to summon the attendance of witness in in your behalf. You have had the assistance of counsel of your own selection who have labored with marked fidelity to present your case to the consideration of the jury. You have had an equal chance with the government to challenge as many jurors as the law allows. You have selected as impartial a jury as it is possible to select. That jury have given to your case patient, intelligent attention; all the testimony before them we have no doubt, has been carefully considered as it came in, and they have found a verdict that you are guilty of the murder of David Stillman in the first degree. That verdict meets the approbation of the court, and you have taken no exception. The most appalling crime, this double murder, a crime of greater magnitude than ever committed in this county before, is laid to your charge. It is useless to dwell on the magnitude of this crime; but it may be permitted to the court, kindly, earnestly to warn you that there is no hope in human aid for you. To urge you now to turn your hopes in another direction; to look to that higher power from which the greatest sinner on earth, if he approaches in the right spirit, may hope for forgiveness. It only remains for us, as the ministers of the law, as representing the supreme power of the commonwealth, to pronounce upon you that sentence which is expressed in the brief but expressive manner of the statute, that whosoever is guilty of murder in the first degree, shall suffer for it the

punishment of death. That sentence is, that you, John Ten Eyck, be taken from this place to the county jail for the county of Berkshire, and there detained in close custody, and that on the 16th day of August next, you be thence removed to the place of execution, there to be hung by the neck until you are dead. And may God in his infinite goodness, have mercy on your soul.²⁶

S.H.S.
Family History Center
Sheffield, MA 01257

CHAPTER SIX:

WAITING

"Well, white folk have no business to educate the nigger; he will be sure to forge or do anything he can with his education to get a living."²⁷ This is the quote I gave the Sheriff after my first arrest, over twenty-five years ago. Yet the idea is precisely what society has been saying about our so-called inferior race for a hundred years. This quote had special significance now, because I was a product of the white man's society and I wanted to blame him for my guilty verdict.

To reflect back on the guilty verdict of last week, I was not surprised. The cards were stacked against me from the beginning. The color of my skin alone was a crime. Couple my skin color with the mood of Berkshire County after a recently completed trial, where a man was acquitted of raping an Otis woman; one easily understands that a scapegoat needs slaughtering for the defense of a fair and righteous law system. A law system that punishes a man for actions he learned from the superior race.

One final note about the trial which I just learned about concerns my brother, William Henry. Mr. Shores, my lawyer, had found William in New Haven. Without asking him if he ever sent me a letter with money in it, Shores' asked him to write a certain sentence. From his handwriting it was obvious that the original letter was a forgery, not written in William's hand. My lawyer got William to agree not to testify against me. However, the prosecution, working with the New Haven police, later located William and threatened to charge him with past debts owed to three wives, who were all living in New Haven. William was forced to testify against me or risk going to jail himself.

I did make an attempt to get a reprieve from the Governor, but was denied by the Lt. Governor. With my last recourse a failure, I began to accept the routines of prison and my subsequent hanging. At least it was a modern prison here on 2nd Street, only a few years old, and offering three meals a day. Although the food was the same from week to week, I still enjoyed marching single file past the kitchen shelf where we took the rations and again marched back to eat in our cells. The weekly menu was:

BREAKFAST: Bread and coffee

LUNCH:

Mon. & Thurs.: boiled corned beef, potatoes & bread

Tues. & Sat.: beef soup

Wed. & Sun: baked beans & fresh baked corn bread

Friday: fish hash

SUPPER:

Six nights: bread & coffee

Sun. night: mush & milk²⁸

Alot of us didn't look like prison types, but were here for one reason or another. One man was even here of his own free will, so he could save his money until his wife joined him from the old country. Some men were angry with their prison lot, but most just seemed to accept it waiting for the

day they would be released.

I handled this waiting time pretty well. Every day reporters came to my cell hoping to get a confession or an exclusive story. I continually wrote letters that were published in the papers defending my name and honor. I was also preoccupied with writing my autobiography of my youth. A reporter from the Sun, David O'Connell, had agreed to publish my story along with an account of the trial. Although death was just around the corner, this autobiography gave me a clear perspective on my life and a real purpose to my last month.

My behavior in jail was generally good, except for two minor incidents. The first trouble came when I stole a supper knife and hid it in my mattress. The next day upon searching my room, the guard found the missing knife. My only punishment was to eat the rest of my meals without the use of a knife. The second incident came about when I overheard the guard telling the turnkey to be careful when he exercised me each day. They thought I'd steal the key and escape. It turned out the turnkey never kept the key on him anyway. But their insinuation angered my pride so I protested by refusing to leave my cell and go for the hour long hall walk each day. Within a week my protest had blown over and I was back on my exercise routine.

At times I thought I was in a zoo, with the way people flocked in to get a glimpse of me. I was the "Lion of the Institution".²⁹ One humorous incident occurred when a visitor asked to see me; as the turnkey was showing him around they came across another colored prisoner, Robinson Corkscrew. The visitor, thinking Corkscrew was me, immediately began shouting obscenities at him. Corkscrew stared in disbelief while the guard couldn't stop laughing.

For the most part, my prison life was different than the other men here. Although there was only one bathtub to accommodate all 79 of us, I did manage one bath during my stay. Where my colleagues were all required to work in the new workshop making shoes, I spent my time talking to visitors or waiting. While they worked making sixteen cases of shoes a day with the use of a new machine that attached the soles to the leather with a screw wire, I waited for time to slowly tick away. They got to spruce up the prison in early August by painting and whitewashing, I got to hear the distant banging of my scaffold. They slept well at night because of their physical work; I tossed, thinking of revenge.

My pen was my savior. It cleared my tension filled thoughts. I wrote a letter to my wife to make her feel sorry for me. I mentioned that I forgave her, but had she been home that night this whole incident would not have happened.

I also used my pen to lay shame on Nat Johnson and others. I wrote an article to be printed in the papers confessing all my crimes. Although I did not mention Nat by name, it was clear who I was talking about when I said a fellow Sheffield resident accompanied me in these crimes. The confession letter was meant to make me appear innocent and honest. Only an honest man would admit all his crimes, and if Nat was with me, then certainly he could have murdered the Stillmans.

My last full day alive, Thursday, finally rolled in. I spent the day looking into the history of past executions in Berkshire County. It appears there were seven men who were hung before me in the county. The first two men were caught for burglary in Lanesboro under the influence of Shay's Rebellion in 1787. At this time period burglary was commonly punishable by death. The next three executions were all for rape, in 1806, 1813, and 1819. The 1819 rape was by a colored man, Peter Johnson, which occurred in Sheffield. The sixth execution was of a Oneida Indian who robbed and killed a colored man in 1826. The last execution was a James Callender, another colored man, who was hung in Lenox in 1863. It was alleged he murdered a woman and her two children in Otis.

Finally, before the last few reporters left the hall in front of my cell, I asked them to watch closely. I placed bread crumbs on the cell floor to attract the daring mice who frequented my leftovers. As one mouse boldly darted forward to grab a bite, I caught him by the tail and slammed his head against the cell.

FOOTNOTE PAGE

- ¹ *The Berkshire Courier*, "Execution Extra", Gt. Barrington, Ma., Friday, August 16, 1878, p. 2. (microfilm-Mason Library).
- ² *Idem*.
- ³ *Idem*.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ⁶ *Idem*.
- ⁷ *Idem*.
- ⁸ *Idem*.
- ⁹ *The Berkshire Courier*, August 21, 1878, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ "Execution Extra", p. 2.
- ¹¹ *The Berkshire Courier*, August 21, p. 2.
- ¹² *Idem*.
- ¹³ David O'Connell, *The Life of John Ten Eyck*, pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ¹⁵ Years, *Pictorial History of the American Negro*, passim.
- ¹⁶ Sheffield map is combination of: Lillian Preiss, *Sheffield Frontier Town*, p. 189, and "Execution Extra", p. 1.
- ¹⁷ *The Berkshire Courier*, December 5, 1877, p. 2.
- ¹⁸ *The Berkshire Courier*, December 12, 1877, pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁹ *Idem*.
- ²⁰ *Idem*.
- ²¹ *The Berkshire Courier*, Jan. 16, pp. 1-2, and Jan. 23, pp. 1-2.
- ²² David O'Connell, *The Life of John Ten Eyck*, p. 3.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-25.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-32.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
- ²⁷ *The Berkshire Courier*, May 18, 1878, pp. 1-2.
- ²⁸ *The Berkshire Courier*, December 5, 1877, p. 1.
- ²⁹ *Berkshire Eagle*, Thursday, May 18, 1878, p. 1.

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