

A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

TRAGEDY IN THE MCCALL FAMILY

The McCall name has been a highly respected one in Williamson County for over one hundred and fifty years. It is uncertain where the McCall's lived before migrating to this area, but some was known to be in North Carolina before the Revolutionary War. This is evidenced by the muster roll of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina under Captain Alexander. The roll contains such surnames as Wallace, Brown, Walker, Neel, McCord, Robinson, Steel, Reed, Alexander and McCall. All of these names are familiar ones in the Flat Creek area. Many times families and friends traveled to the new territory together in wagon trains and settled in the same general area. The first McCall found in southeast Williamson County was Lycurgus McCall, born in 1814. He married Emeline M. Hartley in 1837, daughter of Laban (Jr.) and Nancy Carson Hartley. They were parents of eight children; Laban Hartley, Hulda Rebecca, William Lafayette, Nancy Marenda, Robert Lycurgus, Alexander, Tennessee E., and Virginia C. All of these children were born in Williamson County and grew up in the Choctaw area.

Lycurgus was a dedicated citizen, apparently well liked and well educated, for he served the county many years as a Magistrate. Lycurgus' family home was situated on Choctaw Road, where he was a schoolmaster. He gave the land on which the first Choctaw School was built. Many descendents of Lycurgus and Emeline

McCall has called this area home.

Mr. Samuel Lycurgus McCall, was the grandson of Lycurgus and Emeline McCall and son of Laban Hartley McCall and his wife Tennessee Samuella Scales McCall. He was born February 24, 1867 and married in 1894 to Nancy Ann Crafton, daughter of James Edward and Nancy Matilda Creswell Crafton. He had four children: Carrie, Bessie, Jim and Jessie. Mr. Jim McCall and his wife, Nannie made their home in Eagleville for a few years before their deaths. Jack McCall, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim McCall, and his wife, Alline, presently live in Eagleville.

Note: Additional McCall Family History is published in the "Flat Creek, It's Land and It's People". Thanks to Ennis Wallace for permission to use the above information.

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PART I

TERROR IN FLAT CREEK

It was shortly after 10 p.m., August 14th, 1933, and Sheriff Charles Fox of Franklin, Tennessee, was awakened when his telephone began its disturbing ring. Sleepily, he rolled out of bed and reached for the noisy instrument.

"This is Constable Herman McArthur at Allisona," the familiar voice informed him. "There's been a robbery at Sam McCall's place over in the Flat Creek Community, and he's been badly hurt—may be dying.

His wife just called me, but she was too hysterical to give me any further details. Can you meet me there at once?"

Promising to leave immediately, Fox cradled the receiver and dressed hurriedly. The McCall farm, he reflected, was about fifteen miles from Franklin, and five miles from Allisona in the southeast section of Williamson County. The sparsely settled Flat Creek Community was in the same vicinity that another robbery had occurred only a month before, but despite the tireless efforts of McArthur, it was still unsolved.

With this in mind, Fox called the night turnkey at the county jail. "Round up all the available deputies in this district," he instructed the officer, "and have them stand by. There's been another robbery near Allisona, and I might need them on a moment's notice.

Lights burned brightly throughout the rambling old farmhouse, set far back off the winding country road, when the Sheriff arrived at the robbery scene thirty minutes later. Leaving his car in the graveled driveway, he mounted the front steps and was met at the door by McArthur, who had been watching for his arrival. The Constable motioned for him to follow, and a few seconds later Fox was standing in a high-ceilinged bedroom on the west side of the house.

Mr. Sam McCall had been tortured, and beaten into unconsciousness. He lay across a blood-splotted bed, unaware of the efforts of a physician to stem the flow of blood from three gaping wounds just above the left temple. Large blisters on both legs were mute evidence of the painful torture he had been subjected to before the bandits fled.

The doctor informed Sheriff Fox that McCall had a possible fracture of the skull, and third-degree burns on both legs and the shock, alone, could easily prove fatal to a man of Mr. McCall's age. It was determined that Mr. McCall needed immediate attention, and an ambulance was called to transport him to a hospital in Nashville." Upon arrival of the ambulance, the physician accompanied Mr. McCall to the hospital

Despite his sixty-nine years, time had been kind to the farmer, the Sheriff noted. His large frame was as well muscled as the average, far younger man's and it was not hard to understand why a man of his physical appearance had chosen to resist the bandits.

Constable McArthur related to Sheriff Fox that Mrs. McCall had recalled there were three bandits involved. Two were masked and the third, which she thought she could identify, was the one that burned her husband's feet and legs.

Mrs. McCall was a frail little woman in her late fifties. It was apparent that the robbery had unnerved her. She sat stiffly in a straight-backed chair, and glanced up nervously when the two investigators entered the room to talk with her. She stated they were in the habit of retiring early and were getting ready for bed at nine-thirty when they heard a pounding at the front door. They had been a little afraid at nights, since the robbery last month, (Mr. White, who lived in the area, had also been robbed) so Sam slipped his pistol in his pocket before answering the door. She had remained in the bedroom and could hear them talking. I couldn't tell what they were saying, but Sam's voice was angry. Then I heard a shot," she said.

Before she could reach the front room, however, three men were forcing her husband back towards the bedroom. One of them, she related, had a pistol. Realizing it was a hold up; Mrs. McCall picked up her purse, containing \$250, and threw it out the bedroom window.

She continued, "I thought they would search the house, and leave when they didn't find money, but, instead they tied Sam and me in chairs and began threatening to torture the information out of him, if he didn't tell where his money was. I knew they meant business, and I pleaded with Sam to let me tell them, but he was stubborn, and told me to keep quiet. One of the men began hitting him over the head with a blackjack, and the other began to burn his legs and feet. The third one ransacked the house. Finally, the man with the blackjack hit him a terribly hard blow, and Sam just slumped down. I thought he was dead, and told them where I had thrown the money."

After learning the hiding place of the money, the trio of bandits left. Mrs. McCall stated a few seconds later she heard them outside the window. They were counting the money, and when finished, one said, "There's supposed to be more here than this. Well, we ain't got time to go back," she heard another say. "I think we killed him. Let's get away from here."

Sheriff Fox asked Mrs. McCall if they had more money in the house during recent weeks.



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“About three weeks ago, Sam drew \$3000 out of the bank to buy another farm. The \$250 was what we had left after the purchase,” she answered.

Fox obtained the name of the bank through which the transaction was carried out, and then inquired, “Were they in an automobile?” “If they were, I didn’t hear it—either before or after the robbery,” she said. Fox requested descriptions. The unmasked bandit Mrs. McCall described as being about fifty, short and stocky of build, and gray haired. He was wearing a white shirt and dark trousers. His two companions were taller and younger. The blackjack wielder wore a white shirt and tan trousers, while the third was dressed in blue denim shirt and light pants. Constable McArthur related to the Sheriff that Mrs. McCall’s descriptions fit perfectly the men who robbed T. L. White during the latter part of July.

Six deputies had been summoned and were given descriptions of the bandits. The deputies divided into pairs and began checking all the service stations and cafes still open between Franklin and Columbia and between Franklin and the Davidson County line. The State Highway Patrol was also notified and given descriptions of the trio.

Sheriff Fox put through a call to the state penitentiary at Nashville and requested that bloodhounds be sent immediately. Guard Ed Pugh was dispatched to the scene with his dogs.

Fox and McArthur returned to the bedroom in search of clues. The Sheriff had little hope that the two strands of rope he found, used to bind the victim would be of any help in the investigation. It was of a cheap make, similar to that sold in all general merchandise stores for use as clothesline. However, he pocketed the pieces for future reference, if needed.

Bits of charred newspaper used to torture the farmer were still scattered about the floor. Carefully, Fox picked up one partially burned piece, apparently used by the bandit as a grip for his crude torch.

“I don’t know if they can get fingerprints off paper like this,” he told McArthur, “but we can try it.” (The science of fingerprint comparison was just beginning to become popular in Tennessee at the time of the McCall robbery, and full knowledge of this phase of crime detection had not yet spread to the small outlying districts. Only the four larger cities, Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga and Knoxville, had set up identification bureaus.)

With the arrival of the bloodhounds, the two investigators noted with no little concern that news of the brutal torture robbery had spread throughout the community. Grim-faced farmers, armed with shotguns and rifles, had assembled in the shadows of the McCall lawn, eager to join the chase for the bandits.

“We’ll have to keep our eyes on those boys,” McArthur confided in Pugh. “McCall and his wife are probably the best liked folks in the county, and their neighbors won’t stop at anything to avenge this brutal attack.”

The guard nodded understandingly. He had operated with his dogs in Williamson County before. The well-trained hounds picked up the scent without trouble and at a word from their master, struck off across the lawn. Flashlights and lanterns blinked ominously in the darkness as the peculiarly mixed posse representing both the law and volunteer amateurs—ran and stumbled to keep close on the heels of the bellowing dogs.

Reaching the roadway, the trail turned west towards Franklin for about one quarter of a mile, and then stopped abruptly in the middle of the narrow pike. Brining his torch into play, Fox studied the markings in the thick summer dust that covered the shoulder of the roadway. After finding tire tracks that looked fresh, they had no doubt that a car was apparently used in the robbery. Crossing the road, Sheriff Fox played his light on the ground, and discovered similar tire prints in the soft dirt of a driveway leading into a cornfield. “They drove in from the direction of Franklin, turned around here and headed the car back. Then they walked down to McCall’s, pulled the robbery and came back here. That accounts for Mrs. McCall not hearing an automobile was the Sheriff’s assumption. With this announcement, the posse began to break up slowly, the men returning to their homes.

Fox and McArthur, returning to the farmhouse, found that a neighbor couple had offered to stay with Mrs. McCall for the night. They had a few more questions for Mrs. McCall about her husband’s pistol. “I suppose they took it away from him. I never saw it after he went to the door. But the pistol one of the bandits had, was not his. Sam’s gun was nickel plated and pearl handled. The one they had was blue steel with a wood handle,” she answered. Constable McArthur stated to the Sheriff, he didn’t see a pistol when he helped the doctor take McCall’s trousers off so he could treat his legs. While studying the living-room walls and ceiling, the Sheriff concluded that

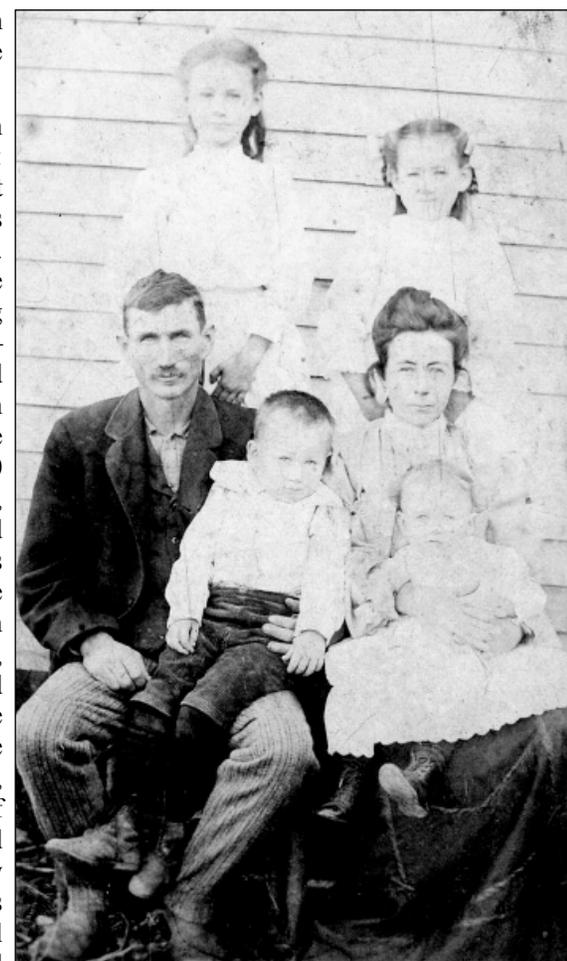
Mr. McCall must have shot at them since there were no marks to indicate that a shot was fired into the room.

Returning to their automobiles in the driveway, McArthur offered: “There are two angles here that convince me that the McCall bandits are the same who robbed White. One is the fact they mentioned there should be more money—indicating they knew about the farm money—and the second is that they tortured McCall in precisely the same fashion they threatened White.” The White robbery had involved only \$50 and a pistol. McArthur continued, “White had twenty five \$20 gold pieces which he had buried in his backyard. When he was robbed, the leader, who answers the description of the old man in the McCall case, told him that he knew about the gold pieces and wanted them. But White insisted he had deposited them in the bank. They slapped him around a bit, and threatened him with all kinds of torture, but apparently he convinced them he didn’t have the money. They seemed satisfied with the fifty dollars and gun, but told him they would kill him if they ever learned he had lied to them.

Meanwhile, the Williamson County deputies reported little success when Sheriff Fox returned to his office. One deputy did report that he found a service station attendant who said, he waited on three men a short time before nine o’clock on the Franklin Road, near the Davidson County line. He wasn’t sure about the descriptions of two of the, but the driver was a gray haired fellow, wearing a white shirt. They drove off in the direction of Franklin. He thought the car was a black sedan with Davidson County License number, but wasn’t for sure. Fox relayed this information to the highway patrol in Nashville. The Sheriff gave his deputies samples of the rope found at the McCall home with instructions to check general merchandise stores in the area. After reading about some robberies in Cheatham and Maury Counties recently, Fox thought it could be the same gang committing these crimes.

Sheriff Fox decided it was time to talk to Mr. White, the previous robbery victim again.

The victim was unable to supply any information other than what he had previously given the Constable. “You see,”



Samuel Lycurgus McCall and Nancy Ann Crafton McCall with children Carrie, Bessie, Jim and Jessie

he explained, “they got me just as I was returning to the house from the stock barn. It was dark, and I couldn’t see them well”. “Did you ever mention having those gold pieces to any of your neighbors or friends?” the county official asked.

“I might have, but I don’t recall having done so. But I’m sure the bandits were no one I had ever seen before. I don’t think my neighbors would have had anything to do with it.”

“Possibly not, but rumors spread quickly and some innocent party might have passed it on to the wrong person.”

Later in the day, Fox decided to go to the Nashville and ask them to check for fingerprints on the piece of newspaper used as the torch to torture McCall. Elkins Lewis, a veteran chief of the Nashville Detective Department met with Sheriff Fox. Lewis listened while the Sheriff told his story about the robberies. He immediately started checking files on out-of-town robberies and requested four of his veteran detectives, George Redmon, Jack Setters, Witt Scruggs and Pete Williamson to come to his office.

Continued in the Mid-March edition of the Eagleville Times

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The following article is Part II of a true story, *TRAGEDY IN THE MCCALL FAMILY*, that appeared in the *Step Back In Time* section of the March 1-15, 2006 *Eagleville Times*.

On August 14th, 1933, Mr. and Mrs. Sam McCall of the Flat Creek, Williamson County Tennessee Community was robbed by three bandits. Mr. McCall was severely beaten and tortured by fire being set around his feet and legs. This was the second robbery to happen in this section of Williamson County within a month. The first robbery of Mr. T. L. White netted the robbers of only \$50.00. The Williamson County Sheriff Charles Fox asked and received assistance from the Nashville Tennessee Detective Department to work on these robberies, which turned out to be a much bigger problem than first expected. Four detectives, George Redmond, Jack Setters, Witt Scruggs and Pete Williamson were assigned to this case

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A FATAL AMBUSH

After Elkins Lewis, veteran chief of the Nashville Detective Department, summoned the four detectives, they were introduced to Sheriff Fox from Franklin. Lewis gave the officers a sketchy outline of the facts in the McCall case, and added: "Sheriff Fox seems to think these robberies might have been pulled by the same bandits that have been operating in other surrounding counties. I'd suggest you go through this file, and pick out those that appear to be similar. It shouldn't be hard, since most gangs vary little in their technique."

While the quartet of detectives thumbed through the thick stack of reports, Joe Dixon, an identification officer, examined the partial piece of newspaper that was used to burn Mr. McCall, brought in by Sheriff Fox, but was unable to lift a print.

Upon checking the files of old crime reports, the Nashville officers uncovered four unsolved stick-up robberies—all of which bore the unmistakable label of the torture bandits. In each instance, victims had reported that the gangsters had threatened them with burning, and that one of the men had been adept in the use of a blackjack. These four robberies all took place before the White and McCall episodes.

First of the unsolved stick-up robberies was the 1932 robbery of John Roesch, a wealthy farmer near Santa Fe, Tennessee, in Maury County. Roesch had been robbed of \$3600 by three men, two of whom were

masked, and a third unmasked bandit, who answered the description of the torch man, in the McCall case.

Following the Roesch robbery, in early 1933, the same or a similar group struck a farm home in Hickman County. The bandits used a blackjack and threats of torture, but only received \$190 from the victim.

A short time later Daniel Boone, an eccentric resident of Cheatham County, who lived on the banks of the Cumberland River, and around whom many tales of hidden wealth had been built, was robbed by three men who escaped with a small amount of cash and his automobile. The stolen car was recovered later, but again the lack of knowledge of fingerprint science on the part of county officers, had played its part in allowing the bandits to escape, undetected.

Then, early in June, a few weeks before the White robbery, Charlie Rohrer, a Scottsboro farmer, had reported the loss of \$300 and a pistol to three bandits, who beat him with a blackjack, and threatened him with torture.

However, in each of these reports, there was mention that a fourth bandit had remained in the car. Each file referred to the elderly, gray-haired bandit leader—except in the Rohrer robbery. Descriptions of his two companions varied as to size and age.

Detective Redmond reminded the others that the descriptions could be the result of faulty memories, or it could mean that there are more than four men in the gang, alternating on each job. "I don't think there's any doubt about it being the same gang, because of the frequent mention of the unmasked leader. His absence in the Rohrer robbery, though, puzzles me," Redmond stated.

The detective crossed the room, and pulled down a huge map of middle Tennessee. "I've noticed in those reports," he began, "all of those robberies extend out from Davidson County like spokes on a wheel. I agree that everything tends to prove that the gang is centered right here in our county. But where a local mob manages to get its information is another thing. That has me stumped."

The detectives decided it was time to talk with Mr. McCall again. A call to the city hospital revealed that the farmer had regained consciousness but was still in critical condition. The officers were allowed only a few minutes with the victim.

Still dazed, but apparently rational in his statements, McCall told precisely the same

story that Mrs. McCall had gold Sheriff Fox. He added, however, that the unmasked bandit leader had told him at the door that he knew McCall had \$3000 in the house, and that he wouldn't be hurt if he turned it over quickly.

"That was when I shot," he continued, "but in the darkness my aim was bad. Then all three of them grabbed me, and one of them took my gun."

He added that he could remember no one in the bank at the time he withdrew the \$3000. "But I reckon there were lots of folks who knew I was going to buy a new farm. I had talked it over with several neighbors—the price and everything."

With Identification Officer Dixon, the four Nashville detectives accompanied Fox back over the eighteen miles to Franklin. Dixon reported that he was unable to obtain anything but smudges at the McCall residence. Penitentiary officials were contacted by phone, but had no records on the release of any prisoner known to use the torture method in robberies.

Bank employees were questioned, but like McCall, did not remember seeing anyone of suspicious character in the bank, at the time the farmer made his withdrawal three weeks before the robbery. They all vigorously denied having discussed the transaction with anyone outside the bank, and were quickly eliminated.

Returning to Nashville, the four city detectives furnished the pawnshop detail with descriptions of the weapons taken in the McCall, White and Rohrer robberies, in the hope that some member of the gang might attempt to dispose of them.

Four days later, Constable McArthur thought they had turned up the first lead. Sid Jones, an Allison resident was picked up on suspicion after the hard working officer had uncovered information that the man had openly discussed McCall's purchase of a new farm, mentioned the fact that the farmer had withdrawn several thousand dollars. The tall, sandy-haired suspect denied all knowledge of the robbery, but admitted having discussed McCall's financial status. He was able to furnish an ironclad alibi for his whereabouts on the nights of the White and McCall Robberies. It was decided they would lock up Mr. Jones but during the next few days, no evidence could be found to connect Jones with the gang and he was released. McArthur was assigned to watch his every move in the belief that if he were connected in any way with the torture gang he would make an effort to

contact them. Jones returned immediately to his uneventful mode of existence, and it was soon apparent that he was in no way connected with the series of robberies.

Then just before August faded into September, the gang struck again. Seldom in the crime history of the State of Tennessee has a robbery been pulled in such brazen defiance to a law enforcement officer. It was shortly before 8 p.m., and Mrs. Josie Ellis and Mrs. Beulah Robinson were alone in the modest little home, they shared on the Franklin Road, just beyond the Davidson County line, in Williamson County. After hearing the knock Mrs. Ellis wondered who could be at their door at that time night. Opening open the door, she found herself looking down the barrel of a pistol, clutched tightly in the hand of a poorly dressed man, looked to be in his early thirties. Stifling a scream, Mrs. Ellis backed up before the menacing revolver. Less than fifteen minutes later, the two horrified women had been relieved of all their valuables and a small amount of cash by the bandit, who warned them, "Remember what happened to old man McCall"? You wouldn't want that to happen to you, would you?"

When he had reached the front door preparing to leave, the gunman turned to Mrs. Ellis, and twisted his mouth into a mocking grin. "You can tell that copper nephew of yours that it won't do him any good to try to get us. He'll never do it." Mrs. Ellis stood still for several seconds after he had left before realizing the full import of the gunman's words. Detective George Redmond was her nephew.

A few minutes later, the Nashville Police Department was throwing a blockade across the Franklin Road, in an effort to intercept the bandit. Informed of the robbery, Redmond and his three companions rushed to the scene, while at Franklin, Sheriff Fox ordered a blockade established at the city limits. Neither Mrs. Ellis nor Mrs. Robinson had seen an automobile, but they were certain they heard one speed away on the highway shortly after the robbery. They described the bandit as being of average size, having brownish hair and wearing thick-lenses glasses. The description of this bandit was different from all the others they had heard. The description was relayed to headquarters where it was issued to police throughout middle Tennessee.

As Redmond heard his aunt relate the bandit's message, a surge of anger swept over him. There was no attempt at dramatics when he said, "I'm going to get

that guy if it's the last thing I ever do." But by dawn it was apparent that the bandit had slipped through the tightly drawn dragnet, the various law enforcement agencies had thrown around the area.

At eight o'clock the following morning, the four Nashville detectives were back at the scene. With them were Sheriff Fox and Constable McArthur. Since the detectives were working out of their jurisdiction, the Williamson officers were called in to assist in questioning witnesses. These law enforcers wondered if the "McCall" job were mentioned, only to throw them off track, also wondering if the last robber had been used as the lookout in the other holdups, and was probably enlisted for this job by himself because the gang figured no more than one would be needed to rob two helpless old women.

The officers searched the Ellis lawn in an effort to locate some clue that might help them trace the elusive bandit. Nothing was found there, but near the driveway Fox discovered a fresh set of tire prints. He was quick to point out that they did not resemble the prints he found at the scene of the McCall robbery.

Dixon was summoned and made photographs of the markings. Working on the theory that since the robbery was staged at such an early hour, some resident along the highway might have seen the bandit's car, the six officers began to scour the area, questioning persons at each home.

Finally, at the home of a salesman who worked for a wholesale outfit in Nashville, Detectives Setters and Scruggs found the information, for which they had been searching. The young salesman said he had seen a car parked in front of the Ellis residence on the previous night, when he was returning from work. He stated he had seen the same car parked in front of Buddy Bush's place over in Flat Rock, on numerous occasions and believed the car belonged to Buddy.

The name, Buddy Bush was a familiar one to the Nashville officers. An ex-convict, Bush had been in a number of scrapes with the law over a period of years, and he, together with a brother, had been mentioned as being affiliated with the notorious Davenport gang, which controlled the whisky and dope rackets in Davidson County.

"This is the break we've been waiting for," Redmond exclaimed enthusiastically when informed of the new development. "That probably explains the manner, in which the gang has perfected its sneak getaways from Williamson County. With headquarters in

Flat Rock, it would be simple for them to double back to the Nolensville Road while we were blocking Franklin Road."

Agreeing to help the detectives, Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Robinson was driven to the state penitentiary to view a rogue's gallery mug shot of the dangerous gunman, and identified Buddy Bush immediately. "That's the man," Mrs. Ellis said firmly. "I'd know him anywhere."

With these new clues and identification, their investigation lead them to a gang infested barbeque business establishment located in the Flat Rock area of Nashville. The owner and operator, Buddy Bush, had been committed to prison on a charge of voluntary manslaughter in April 1927. He served two years of the ten-year sentence and was paroled on January 14, 1930. But on April 4th, 1930, he was back in prison serving a flat three-year sentence for housebreaking and larceny. In November 1931, he attempted an escape, shooting G. W. Page, a guard, in his unsuccessful try to crash out. From one to five years was added to his sentence, but a lenient parole board had seen fit to grant the gunman his freedom on Feb. 6, 1933.

Descriptions on the robbers, given by their victims, soon began matching up with the clientele of the Dew Drop Inn operated by Buddy Bush. Mug shots of the gang members were shown to the robbery victims, who were able to identify some of them. Officers were now certain that Buddy Bush was involved in other rackets and was possibly using his barbecue stand as a front for disposing of stolen property taken in robberies throughout the country. Redmond refused to heed the advice of his fellow officers to hold off on picking up Bush in the hopes of trapping other members of the gang. "Maybe he'll break, if we take him by surprise," Redmond argues. "Anyway, I'm taking no chances with him getting wise and fleeing the state." Arrested at his barbecue stand, Bush was sullen, refusing to make any statement other than to deny the robbery of the two women. A check of the tread on his automobile proved conclusively, however, that it was his car that had left the marks at the scene.

The September term of the Williamson County Grand Jury was in session at Franklin, and Buddy Bush was indicted the following day. Sheriff Fox, knowing the feelings of the populace of his county, requested officers to hold the defendant in Nashville for safe keeping, pending his trial, which was set for an early date at the insistence of Attorney General John Henderson.

Bush went on trial in Franklin, before Circuit Court Judge Wirt W. Courtney. The White and McCall robberies stirred the citizens of the Flat Creek Community, as well as the surrounding area. An overflow crowd came to court the day of the trial, even small children. Mr. Jim McCall, son of Sam McCall, recounted to his family before his death that on the day of the trial, in the courtroom, he, (Mr. Jim McCall) was given a shotgun by a court officer, and told him to shoot and kill the Bush man. Mr. McCall said he wanted no part in that, and he put the gun down.

The trial was speedy and a jury returned a verdict of guilty, setting sentence at eight years. Defense attorneys filed an appeal to the Supreme Court and the gunman was released under bond pending action of the higher court.

Intense investigation continued, and several other gang members were brought in for questioning, with one of them finally announcing he wished to confess and within an hour, officers had the names of four other gangsters that had been involved in the robberies. The confessor refused to name Buddy Bush in any robberies, other than the Ellis holdup. The officers were now certain that Buddy Bush was involved in other rackets and was possibly using his barbecue stand as a front for disposing of stolen property, taken in robberies throughout the country.

Redmond, Setters, Scruggs and Williamson decided to pick Bush up again for questioning, but Bush remained steadfastly, maintaining his innocence. He was finally released and as he stepped from the automobile, Scruggs warned, "Buddy, you'd better get some more lawyers, because you're going to need more than you've got. We're going before grand juries in several counties tomorrow and I think we've got enough to get indictments against you." "From now on I'll take care of this my own way," Bush answered.

At nine o'clock that same evening, Redmond received a telephone call at his home in south Nashville. "This is Buddy," a voice said. "If you'll come over to my place I'll tell you everything you want to know."

Before the detective could question his caller, the receiver had been replaced at the other end of the line. Redmond, who was in the habit of carrying a .32 caliber hammerless revolver in a shoulder holster, apparently sensed danger in the call, because before leaving his home he exchanged the weapon for his heavier .38 caliber service revolver.

A few seconds earlier Detective Setters had received a similar call at his home. However, the caller had not given a name and had instructed the officer to go to a house on Tenth Avenue, North, where he would be given information on the torture gang.

When Redmond telephoned Setters, the latter officer had already gone. Mrs. Setters had not been informed of the nature of the call. Redmond drove to police headquarters and picked up Detectives Leo Flair and Ed Badacour to accompany him to Bush's establishment. In the meantime, Setters had arrived at the address in North Nashville only to find it deserted and showing signs of not having been occupied over a long period of time. Puzzled, he returned to his home.

When Redmond, Flair and Badacour approached the Dew Drop Inn shortly before ten o'clock, they found the establishment in darkness. Inside a radio had been turned up full volume. Flair was driving with Redmond sitting next to him and Badacour was on the rear seat. "Wonder what's wrong with the lights?" Flair remarked.

Before either of his companions could answer, orange flame leaped from the side window of the inn, and a rifle bullet tore through the windshield of the police car and crashed through the rear window. Badacour tumbled out of the back and began racing for a telephone to summon aid, realizing that they were being ambushed. Flair took cover behind a rock wall at the side of the road. Redmond leaped from the car and ran to the front door of the stand. "Buddy!" he shouted. "Buddy, open this door. For answer, Bush shoved the barrel of an automatic shotgun through the glass window, and sent a load of buckshot plowing into the brave officer's side; Redmond staggered back and then pitched forward on his face. Shoving open the front door, Bush fired another load of shot into the detective's head, and then escaped through a hail of lead from Flair's revolver.

Within fifteen minutes after the fatal ambush, approximately fifty city, county and state police were scouring the area in search of the elusive killer. One of the first officers to arrive was Gus Kiger, who had worked with Redmond in solving the \$13,000 payroll robbery at the DuPont plant in Old Hickory several years before. With tears streaming unashamedly down his cheeks, Kiger announced: "I'll personally give \$500 for Buddy Bush—dead or alive."

Ed Pugh and his bloodhounds were rushed to the scene, and trailed the fleeing Bush through the heavily wooded area around

Five Points to the Franklin Road, where the trail ended. It was assumed the killer of Detective Redmond had entered a car at this point, and blockades were ordered set up at Franklin, Nolensville and at the Nashville city limits. But four hours later, no trace of Bush had been found. At shortly past 2 a.m., a weary posse was about to give up the search when Jim Martin, who lived only two doors from the inn, approached officers breathlessly.

“It’s Buddy,” he cried nervously. “He’s up there—on my front porch—and he’s still got that shotgun.” Bush, always the clever escape artist, had wormed his way back to the scene through a tight cordon of police. The Martin home was quickly surrounded. Spotlights on the various police cars were brought suddenly into play, catching Bush by surprise. Leaping from a porch chair, he wheeled and ran into the house, as officers sent shot after shot into the clapboard dwelling. For several minutes there were no further sounds. Deputy Frank Bess organized a squad of volunteers to go after the killer, but before they could reach the house there was a loud gunshot from inside, then silence again.

When police swarmed into the residence Bush was lying in a pool of his own blood in the middle of the front room. His still warm shotgun was lying at his side. The wild-eyed killer had elected to take his own

life rather than face the electric chair for the Redmond slaying. The killer died a short time later on arrival at General Hospital.

Several hours later, an attempt was made to burn the Dew Drop Inn, apparently in an effort to destroy any possible evidence of the rackets in which the killer had engaged.

On the same afternoon Detectives Setters, Scruggs and Williamson appeared before various sessions of County Grand Juries in the sections where the torture gang had operated and obtained indictments against the remaining gang members. Trials were held and each of them received various prison sentences.

The mystery of the telephone call received by Detective Setters was never clearly explained. Some officers advance the theory that Bush, suddenly turned into a kill crazy madman, reasoned that Setters would accompany Redmond to the inn and that someone close to the Bush organization steered the detective away from certain death before he was able to contact Redmond. Still others believe that Bush intended to keep his rendezvous with the officer in North Nashville, but his plans were upset by Redmond’s late arrival, brought about through his decision to go first to Headquarters to pick up Detective Flair and Badacour. There is the possibility that Bush went to the house in north Nashville with intentions of slaying the second officer, but

Setters had already been there and gone. This would account for Bush’s complete disappearance from the time of the ambush until his discovery on the front porch of the Martin home.

In the case of Mr. McCall, it was never proven how the robbers knew he had withdrawn money from the bank. In the robbery of John Rohrer, it was determined a family member was a frequent customer at the Drew Drop Inn and knew of Mr. Rohrer’s large amount of cash on hand. It’s reported Mr. Rohrer refused to prosecute because of their relationship.

Many, many hours were spent on this investigation that resulted in both success and tragedy.

The name Joe Sissom is fictitious as is that of Sid Jones.

Sam McCall later recovered partially from the injuries he received at the hands of the torture bandits. Friends said he never completely recovered, however and several years later, committed suicide. There is little doubt in his everyone’s mind the farmer’s mental condition, that led to his suicide, was brought on by the torture and beating he received in 1933.

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Other accounts of the robbery of his parents, passed to the family by Mr. Jim

McCall.

----Mr. Sam McCall, returning from the hospital went to the home of his son, Mr. Jim, for a while. Dr. Jonathan Blythe Core and Dr. Eggeston came and changed his bandages on his burned legs. A painful life followed. His mind gave away, and he had terrible nightmares about the bandits coming back to harm him.

----The bandits parked down the road and walked to the McCall house. They stepped into sleeping chickens and ducks that belonged to Robert McCall. Sam McCall knew someone was outside—the bandits shot the coal oil lamp out.

----John A. McCall put up a reward for the robbers.

----Dr. Clyde Eggleston and Buford Reed put up the money to bring out the bloodhounds from Nashville.

----The robbers took Sam McCall’s pistol and watch but the items were recovered and are in hands of some of the McCall family.

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I want to express my appreciation to Jack and Alline McCall for their information and the permission to run this story. Also, Mr. Ennis Wallace for who brought this story to my attention. This story was featured in a 1945 edition of a national detective magazine.