

The Eastern Texas Incendiarism

DESTRUCTION OF HENDERSON!!

STARTLING DEVELOPMENTS!!

We have at last full particulars of the destruction of the flourishing town of Henderson, in Rusk County. From the Tyler Reporter we learn that the fire broke out in three or four different places simultaneously, on Sunday night the 5th inst. between sundown and dark, and in a few minutes the whole town was in a blaze. The patrol had just left the square for their supper when the flames broke out.

A letter from Henderson to the Marshall Republican says that the town was fired at 8 o'clock in the evening, while the people were at church. A Vigilance Committee had (on the 7th) been formed and several arrests made. The Era office was destroyed. Times office saved but all in *peril*.

A letter from M. D. Ector to Judge Frazer, dated Henderson 7th, has the following

All from McDonough's Hotel to Smither's office, taking that entire block, and from Redwine's store to Likens's corner, running back to the Presbyterian Church. (which was saved,) is a scene of ruin and devastation; 10 stores, 2 drug stores, 8 or 10 law offices, 2 family groceries, &c, were consumed. There was a still South wind blowing at the time, and in two hours at most, every house which had caught burned down.

Owing to the failure of crops, such a misfortune never could have found us so illy prepared to meet it in a pecuniary point of view. And when we consider it has not been the result of accident, but that it was fired beyond any sort of question by some fiend in human shape, who had only acted the part allotted him in all probability, in a common purpose, to set on fire our towns and perhaps to murder or poison our citizens, it has driven us to a state of desperation which can scarcely be conceived by one who has not witnessed it. All is alarm and excitement with our women and children. Our men are in arms. The most vigilant investigation is being had. The plot was so well conceived, the time of the night, a little excitement between two gentlemen had just occurred which attracted the crowd just as our citizens were assembling at Church, and before the guard started out, the fire was put in some shape into an old shop where there had been none for months. It was burning in every part of the house at once, and in less than five minutes it was on fire all over. As yet we have not been able to find out who it was that did it, whether white or black. No traces have been discovered. My own opinion is, that the negroes had but little to do with it.

We have other accounts written by persons on the spot, but they mostly coincide with that given by Mr. Ector.

The following is from the Jefferson Herald of the 11th.

We learn by a gentlemen who left Marshall Thursday morning, that the incendiaries who fired the town of Henderson on the 5th inst., have been overhauled and summarily punished. The facts, as related to us, are briefly these: Three persons left Henderson, immediately after the conflagration, under very suspicious circumstances. They were followed by a committee of the citizens, and overtaken on the road to Marshall. Perceiving themselves pursued they turned to fight, when one of them was shot dead from his horse and the other two were taken and hung forthwith.

The Tyler Reporter of the 7th says that a report has just reached there that Bellevue, in Rusk county, was burned on the night of the 4th inst.

The same paper says that Dangerfield, in Titus county is burnt.

At Athens, Henderson county, a well was discovered to be poisoned on Sunday night the 5th inst., and over 100 bottles of strychnine were found in possession of negroes. On examination the plot was brought to light, which was to poison as many as possible at breakfast and then the knife and the pistol, with which they were well supplied, were to do the balance of the work. All the old women and young children were to be murdered and the young women were to be taken as wives by the hell hounds.

A patrol of 100 men is on duty every night in Tyler, and this has thus far saved that town.

A stable belonging to John T. Carlisle in Athens was burned by an incendiary on the evening of the 6th.

A negro belonging to Mr Barron, at Science Hill, Henderson county, was hung on the 3d, strychnine having been found in his possession, and he having confessed to having a hand in the insurrection.

A gentleman writing from Rusk, Cherokee county, 4th inst., gives an account of a plot to poison the whole community on election day. Poison was found in the possession of several of the negroes, and confessions are elicited of a determination to poison and murder the whole people. Similar plots had been discovered in Anderson and Henderson counties.

The Enquirer of the 11th says that a vigilant patrol embracing 70 members is on guard in the streets there every night. It gives the following account of the discovery of the plot there.

During the past week our town has been the theatre of intense excitement, growing out of the incendiary movements of the negroes in the neighborhood impelled by abolition leaders in our midst. Up to the first of last week, we had thought ourselves comparatively free from the diabolical plottings which had so alarmed the citizens of Northern Texas; still a sense of danger, and a desire to take measures which would secure our safety, prompted the calling of a public meeting, by which a committee of vigilance was appointed and an efficient patrol for the town organized. No developments of a startling nature, however, had been made, until the negroes on the plantation of Mrs. Timmins, in the neighborhood, became unruly and manifested strong symptoms of insubordination. The overseer on the plantation refused to correct the negroes, and Mrs. Timmins called on the town police for assistance. One or two of the negroes were whipped who made such disclosures as startled the whole community. According to the tenor of their confessions, poison had been freely distributed among the negroes, and they were instructed that on the Sunday before the August election (last Monday) the negroes were to poison the wells and springs and otherwise administer it to the whites—to fire the dwellings in the country and destroy the towns—to get possession of all the arms and ammunition they could and kill the men as they returned from the election.

Many negroes were implicated in the plot, well known in the neighborhood, as well as several whitemen, consequently on Saturday and Sunday several arrests were made of the implicated negroes in different parts of the county. Some of the negroes were severely whipped, and others made full confession with but little or no punishment. All, however, told the same story with but little variation, and all confessed that the plot had been in agitation for some months, and all stated they expected shortly to be free, and that they would be assisted by white men in large numbers, when the time came for them to act. This intended embe was under the direction and control of negroes, for the most part preachers or who pretended to an extraordinary degree of piety, and who were generally the favorites of their masters, but from the disclosures made, although it appeared that all of the negroes in the country were fully aware of the plot, yet comparatively few were willing to participate in it, and many tried to dissuade others from having anything to do with it. According to the confession of some, a meeting of the leaders was to have been held on Sunday last, a few miles west of this place for the purpose of making a more definite arrangement of each to his part; but this meeting was happily frustrated by the discovery of the matter and the arrest of the chief conspirators.

The Committee of Vigilance have had an arduous duty to perform during the past week, as well as severe labor, but they have not as yet concluded that any of the slaves implicated ought to receive the extreme punishment of death. The white men spoken of by the negroes as confidants, or rather leaders do not all reside among us, but the evidence against them is now the subject of scrutiny and deliberation, by a committee of scrutiny and deliberation, by a committee of scrutiny and deliberation, and if circumstances warrant it, measures will be taken to compel the personal appearance of all implicated.

On Tuesday night, a man was started from his concealment in a dark corner of an unoccupied lot, and fired at twice by the guard, but he succeeded in making his escape in the darkness.

Our citizens are determined to exercise all the vigilance possible, and although our town has been particularly threatened,

yet we hope that ceaseless watching will prevent it, and we hope that continued and prolonged caution will save the neighboring towns.

The Committee of Vigilance have passed resolutions prohibiting the assembling of negroes together on any public or other occasion under any pretence whatever—also recommending a strict watch to be kept over all transient persons having no ostensible occupation.

Two German pedlars were apprehended, yesterday, charged with complicity with the negroes, but up to the time of going to press we have not learned of anything being elicited of importance in relation to them."