

## THE MARCUS LYON MURDER

Only a few months more than six years after the sad accident at Nine Mile Pond, occurred the horrid murder of Marcus Lyon.

None of the principals in the affair were residents of this town, but the crime was committed here, on the old Bay Road, about one-third of a mile east of the present Railroad Station.

The two men who committed the murder were traveling from Boston to New York. "They lodged in Western (now Warren) on the night of November 8th. On the forenoon of the next day they called at a Store in Palmer, near the meeting house, and took some spirit in a canister; about two miles from this towards Wilbraham they soon called at a Tavern and drank." (There was a tavern across the road from the "Washington Elm.") These two men were seen traveling with great speed towards Springfield, and when they arrived there, "they directed their course to the lower ferry. . . . They called for some hasty refreshment at a tavern in the upper part of Suffield, and then pushed on to Picket's tavern in Windsor, where they remained over night. On Sunday morning they started early and had breakfast in Hartford. On Tuesday morning they were in Greenwich, and at Cross-Cob harbor, where they had bespoke a passage to New York, by water, to sail shortly. While they were there the pursuers came up and arrested them. . . . They were from Tuesday until Saturday on their way from Boston to Wilbraham, a distance of about 80 miles. And from the afternoon of Saturday to the forenoon of Tuesday, when they were arrested, they had travelled about 130 miles. . . . (or) at the rate of nearly 50 miles a day. . . . April 24, 1806, in the morning, the trial commenced in the meeting-house, in Northampton, which was insufficient to hold the crowd collected from various quarters." A preliminary hearing of the case was held in the "Town House" at Springfield on the Friday after they were arrested, where they were ordered to be committed for trial before a regular session of the Court. I have gathered the above items from a long account of the affair, published by Ezekiel Terry about 1810.

The men who found the body of the murdered man in the river, were M. K. Bartlett and P. Bliss. It was found "about 9 o'clock in the evening of Sunday Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 1805, and was conveyed in a waggon to the Stage house, occupied by Asa Calkins."

I now copy part of an account, published at, or near the time, and republished in a History of Massachusetts about 1835.

The following is from the *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester) November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1805.

"Mr Thomas Jun. Sir.

I have written the following at the earnest request of the relatives of the deceased. Please to give it a place in your paper, and you will gratify the public, and discharge a duty which humanity imposes.

Your real friend

Z. L. L.

## HORRID MURDER AND ROBBERY

"Mr. Marcus Lyon, a young man of peculiar respectability, about 23 years of age, left his friends in Woodstock, Conn., last March, and went to Cazenovia, N. Y., and labored through the season. As he was on his return to his native place, mounted on an excellent horse, he was attacked by two merciless ruffians in Wilbraham, on the Springfield turnpike road, between the gate and Sikes tavern, on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst, about 2 o'clock P. M., and there murdered in the most barbarous manner. The circumstances attending the awful scene are almost too shocking to humanity to relate. It is supposed from the best circumstantial evidence, that the unfortunate young gentleman was first shot with a pistol; but the assassins, perceiving the wound not fatal (as the ball was afterwards found on the outside of his ribs) fell upon him like bloodhounds, and with a club and breech of the pistol mangled and lacerated his head in a most savage and barbarous manner. The upper part of his head over the *cerebrum*, and also over his left eye, was indented with wounds, evidently made with the cock of the pistol, and the back part, against the cerebellum, was all mashed to a pulp. They beat him till the guard of the pistol flew off and the ramrod was knocked out, which were afterwards found lying on the fatal spot. Having thus far gratified their infernal disposition, they robbed him of his

ocket-book (how much money it contained we are not able to inform), then threw him over the wall, dragged him a few rods to Chicopee river, and there deposited him, and placed large stones upon his head to prevent his rising. Without delay they next conveyed the horse through a small piece of wood to sequestered enclosure, and then turned him loose, with saddle, saddle-bags and bridle on, and then went on. Soon after the horse was found and taken up; the neighbors conjectured he had by accident gotten away from some place where his rider had hitched him, and supposed that inquiry would soon be made for him, it being Saturday in the afternoon. They waited till Sunday morning but, alas! no rider appeared! The alarm spread. The woods, fields, and every bye corner were searched, and at evening they found the corpse close by the edge of the river, with all his clothes on, mittens on his hands, and his great coat wrapped about his head, with a large stone pressing him to the bottom. The pistol was found on the brink, broken to pieces. The young man's hat, new and unharmed was discovered under a small bridge, near the spot. The corpse was conveyed to a neighboring house, and the inhabitants paid that peculiar attention which sympathy alone can dictate and gratitude reward. The remains were conveyed to Woodstock on Tuesday, and the funeral attended on Wednesday, when the Rev. Abiel Ledoyt addressed the assembly from Mark 13. 33: The grief of the mourners, the numbers convened, and the tears that profusely flowed, presented a scene which we conclude has never had a parallel in these our inland towns. The villains who perpetrated the awful crime are supposed to be two foreigners in sailors dress, who were seen that day by a number of people making their way towards Springfield. One particular circumstance tends much to strengthen the suspicion. A lad, about 13 years of age, being sent after some logs in the woods, near the place of the murder, happened to come out into the road, within two or three rods of two men in sailor habit. He declared under oath before the jury of inquest, that before he got out of sight of them, he saw one mount the same horse which was afterwards found, and ride him up the hill into the woods, while the other stood with a new cudgel in his hand leaning upon the wall. The same persons, according to the description, were soon after observed travelling in great haste towards Springfield. We are happy to learn that his excellency Governor Strong issued a proclamation offering a reward of *five hundred dollars* for the detection of the villains, and that the high Sheriff of Hampshire County greatly inter-

ested himself in taking measures to detect them, which we learn have proved effectual, and the murderers are both *committed to gaol* in Northampton."

From the *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester)  
June 25th 1806.

"Execution of Daley and Halligan.

"On Thursday last, pursuant to their sentence, Dominick Daley and James Halligan were executed at Northampton. At half past 10 o'clock they were conducted to the meeting house, by the high sheriff and his deputies, with a guard, composed of a company of artillery and a detachment of militia. An appropriate and eloquent discourse was there delivered to a very crowded auditory by the Rev. Mr. Cheverus, of Boston, from 1 John 3 : 15. 'Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer.' After the sermon the criminals were constantly attended by Mr Cheverus, with whom, during the greater part of the time, they appeared to be engaged in prayer. At 3 o'clock, sentence was executed by Major General Mattoon, sheriff of the county. Notwithstanding their protestations of innocence, in which they persisted to the last, it is believed that of the 15,000 supposed to be present, scarcely one had a doubt of their guilt. Daley and Halligan were natives of Ireland. Daley was about 34 years of age, and has been in this country two years; He has left a wife, a mother and a brother in Boston. Halligan was about 27 years of age; and we believe has no connections in this country, in which he has resided for four years."

This sad affair resulted in producing a long and realistic ballad, of which many knew a verse, and no one seemed to know it all. Miss E. O. Beebe has procured the following version of the quaint old rhyme.

#### MARCUS LYON BALLAD

Listen to me and hear me tell  
Of a young man and what him befell;  
Of his hard fate now take a view  
Most solemn and affecting, too.

A shocking story to relate;  
 He on his way from New York state  
 To Woodstock, to his native home,  
 As far as Wilbraham he come.

'Twas some past noon on Saturday  
 Two ruffians did this man waylay.  
 They murdered him most barbarously,  
 Then threw him in the river nigh.

A boy he see them on the ground;  
 Where marks of violence were found.  
 Blood in abundance to be seen.  
 He tells the spot describes the scene.

He see them lead his horse away;  
 The horse was found on the same day.  
 Then constant search was made around;  
 No owner for the horse was found.

On Sunday evening lights they took  
 Along the river for to look—;  
 At nine o'clock his corpse was found  
 With a huge stone to hold it down.

One says "Come here, I something see;  
 A dead body there appears to be."  
 And to it did attempt to get;  
 The stone slipped from off his feet.

The stone slipped off, there did arise  
 A bloody corpse before their eyes.  
 Oh! what a scene: oh, what a sight,  
 For to behold there in the night.

Four rods from where they murdered him  
 They threw his body in the stream.  
 One hand was on his bruised head;  
 'Twas thought 'twas there by him layed.

They in the current did place him  
 Upon his face, his head upstream;  
 The stone they did upon him lay  
 Upward of sixty pounds did weigh.

A jury then was summoned,  
 An inquest held upon the murdered.  
 His skull was broke, his side shot through;  
 His face disfigured by a blow.

Papers with him did plainly show  
 That Woodstock people did him know.  
 And by the same did ascertain  
 That Marcus Lyon was his name.

At dead of night the people sent  
 This heavy news unto his friend.  
 Before sunrise his mother had  
 News of her son being murdered.

His mother says "Now in this way,  
 I never thought my son to see  
 I've husband lost, and children two;  
 Trouble like this I never knew."

His friends then after him they went,  
 Their hearts being filled with discontent.  
 Those of his age some miles did go,  
 His corpse to meet, respect to show.

On Wednesday was his funeral,  
 Hard-hearted were those that could not feel  
 Such bitter mourning never was  
 Viewing the corpse and then the cause.

His mother lost a loving son;  
 One only brother left alone.  
 Three sisters to lament the fate  
 Of their dear brother who died of late.

Amongst his mourning friends we find  
 To mourn he left his love behind  
 Who did expect the coming spring  
 In mutual love to marry him.

Forsaken now, disconsolate,  
 Ofttimes lamenting his hard fate,  
 She wishes and she weeps again,  
 Telling their cruelty to him.

His age was nearly twenty-three;  
Was kind affectionate and free;  
Humane benevolent and kind  
His like you seldom ever find.

A pretty youth beloved by all,  
By young and old, by great and small;  
By rich and poor, by high and low,  
And every one that did him know.

Ezekiel Terry, from whose account of this sad tragedy I have copied part of the foregoing account, was a printer, perhaps part of the time in Wilbraham.

I have been loaned a bound book, consisting mostly of a collection of orations delivered in this vicinity by different persons, and sometimes printed by different firms, which were collected and bound in one book by Ezekiel Terry. He lived for a time on the Old Bay Road, near the line between Palmer and Wilbraham, either in the last house in Wilbraham, or the first one in Palmer.

He was a member of the Second Baptist Church in Wilbraham, located east of Glendale.

About 1805, he had printed a book on "Restoration," which was not in accord with the belief of the church. Several meetings were held to consider the matter, and on March 8th, 1806, the Church "Voted unanously to send Ezeakel terry a letter withdrawing the hand of fellowship with our watch and care from him as a brother in the Ch<sup>b</sup> with us." They evidently thought differently about it in a short time, for, on January 10, 1807, the record reads;—"in the first place heard Brother Ezikel terry Exknodgement and Voted to receive him again into our fellowship as a member."

Ezekiel Terry was also a clergyman. For, in a list of ministers in Wilbraham, printed in "The Massachusetts Register for the year 1814," I find his name as the Baptist minister.

He died in 1829, and on his headstone in the Deacon Adams Cemetery, the name reads "Rev<sup>d</sup> Ezekiel Terry." His daughter, Mary, was the second wife of James C. Pease, and

mother of Jerome Pease, one of the oldest men now in our town.

The book to which I have referred is now owned by Mrs. Homer Tupper of Warren, Mass.

In this collection I find a few items of interest to our town, as follows:

### AN ORATION

Pronounced at WILBRAHAM

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1810.

BY CALVIN PEPPER

Palmer from the PRESS of E. TERRY

THE TRIAL OF MAJOR JOHN ANDRÉ  
Adjutant-General of the BRITISH ARMY.

September 29, 1780.

PALMER

PRINTED BY EZEKIEL TERRY.

FOR CAPT. JAMES WARNER,\* WILBRAHAM.

1810

### THE GOSPEL RANGERS.†

A

SERMON DELIVERED

at the ORDINATION OF

ELDER HENRY HALE.

BY DANIEL MERRILL, A.M.

THIRD EDITION

WILBRAHAM

Printed By TERRY & LEARNED

1808

\*Capt. James Warner was a son of "Clark" Samuel Warner.

†This title is interesting to us because it seems to have been printed in Wilbraham.