

THE LYNCHING OF SIDNEY RANDOLPH (b.1868-1874, d.1896)

Overview written by Sarah Hedlund, Librarian/Archivist: Montgomery History
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Note: newspaper reporters often made errors in identifying local people, especially in details of first names and relationships. Crucial factual errors or assumptions in these publications that have been disproved through more reliable sources are called out in this narrative text or in the endnotes; however, occasional inconsistencies regarding names that occur in one-off articles are not necessarily noted. These discrepancies may only stand out when directly compared to the sourced article(s). We encourage readers to cross-check information with the [Biographies of Named Individuals](#) page associated with Randolph, where some of this confusion is straightened out with the descriptions of family members and other relationships, based on sources other than newspaper columns.

The Crime

In the early morning of May 25, 1896 in Gaithersburg, an unknown intruder entered the Buxton home and attacked its sleeping residents, striking four family members in the head with an axe. The family consisted of Richard Lemuel Buxton (age 36), recently elected town commissioner who worked as a miller, his wife, James Anna (called “Teeny” due to her small stature)¹, daughters Maud (16) and Sadie (7), and son Carroll. According to various accounts from Buxton and his wife given in the first few hours, Richard was hit first and fell out of bed; then Teeny was hit. They both heard the assailant cross the hall and hit the two daughters. Richard fumbled with his revolver, but it misfired into the floor. Teeny attempted to reach her daughters but the intruder choked her insensible and she was thrown to the floor. At this point the assailant ran from the house.



The Buxton House and the Window Where the Assassin Entered.

The Buxton House and Room (Washington Times)

The order of these events and the details surrounding them varied between the early reports, and changed throughout the course of the investigation, as the Buxtons were questioned several times in the weeks following. In the aftermath, the Buxtons discovered their daughters had each suffered one blow to the head with the blunt end of an axe. Sadie was unconscious and Maud was unable to speak due to her head injury. Their son Carroll (reported as a baby² but actually around three years old), was unscathed—either unnoticed in the corner of the room or hiding under his parents’ bed. Buxton and/or his wife roused their nearest neighbors, members of the Phebus and English families.³ David Virts, another neighbor, was sent to bring a doctor. While

he was on this mission, he claimed to have seen a Black man run from the back of the English family's house,⁴ which was next door to the Buxtons, or a few doors down, depending on the source. The people now gathering around the scene realized that the English family's house had also been broken into—a window sash was broken and a chair had been moved outside. George English, the 18-year-old son of homeowner Elizabeth English, claimed he awoke and saw a Black man creeping up the stairs toward his bedroom—when he called out to alert his mother, the man ran back out.⁵



Sidney Randolph (Washington Times)

News of the assault spread quickly via both telegraph and telephone,⁶ and by 6:00 am, “a large force of men, mounted and afoot, were searching the country.”⁷ Among the vigilantes were a pair of cousins in their early 20s, Frank Ward and John Garrett, who recalled seeing a stranger walking along the road between Gaithersburg and Hunting Hill (today this is called Muddy Branch Road) so they rode out on horseback to locate the suspect.⁸ Sidney Randolph, in his mid-twenties, was the man who happened to be walking there, having come up on foot from Georgetown the day before.⁹ According to his story, given later, he was a stranger to Montgomery County, an itinerant worker originally from the vicinity of Macon, Georgia, who had been working in Pennsylvania, then alternately looking for work in the Virginia, Washington, and Baltimore areas.¹⁰ He had slept in a barn nearby the night before, and when the two men rode up to him and began asking questions, he was afraid they were after him for trespassing and/or vagrancy—both charges that could be punishable with jail time.¹¹ When they insisted he should come with them without providing a reason, he tried to escape them. “They looked so mad they scared me,” he said according to the *Baltimore Sun*, “and I tried to get away and they shot me and rode their horses over me.”¹² Ward shot at him several times, striking him in the hand, and grazing his thigh. Garrett ran him down with his horse and tied him up at gunpoint. Randolph declared he had not been to Gaithersburg and had not injured anyone.¹³ He was taken into custody and placed in the county jail in Rockville.

Meanwhile, the Rev. L.L. Lloyd, pastor at the Methodist Episcopal Church South across the street from the Buxtons' house, had appointed himself an investigator, and along with local Deputy Sheriff Horton G. Thompson was following multiple sets of tracks through the woods and fields around the Buxton house.¹⁴ One set of tracks reportedly led them to the house where a local Black man named George Neale lived with his family. Having roused him from bed, they arrested Neale immediately, and questioned him about his whereabouts earlier that morning¹⁵ (two reports state he was arrested while walking on the road toward Boyds Station rather than at his home¹⁶). Neale said he had been at Metropolitan Grove the day before, had come home later that evening, talked with Joe Brooks and his daughters who had come for a visit, and gone to bed around 10:00 pm, where he had



George Neale (Washington Times)

stayed until 6:00 am.¹⁷ His family (grandmother Mary Neale, sister Emma Johnson, brother-in-law John Johnson, and nephew John Young) generally agreed with this statement, except for one of his younger cousins who claimed he had awoken earlier than 6:00 that morning and found Neale absent. This cousin, 11-year-old James Johnson, also claimed a man had come to their door early that morning, asking Emma something about a bloody shirt; Emma later stated this visitor was Isaiah Frazier asking about milk cans, and that James had misunderstood.¹⁸ Reports in these first few days, probably based on James' story, suggested various bloody garments (shirt, pants, or coat) were found at the Neale residence, or that there was evidence clothing had been burned or concealed.¹⁹ None of this supposed evidence was mentioned beyond the first few days of reporting, and was likely just unfounded rumor.



Richard Buxton (Washington Times)

It was also rumored around town that Neale had a grudge against Buxton for aiding in his incarceration in the Maryland Penitentiary several years earlier.²⁰ Neale was accused of an attempted sexual assault on Gaithersburg teenager Jennie Gloyd in 1886. In June of 1887 he was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary, from which he was released (early) in December of 1895. According to newspaper accounts and other records from that 1886-1887 case, Buxton was not a witness nor involved with Neale's arrest or conviction.²¹ When questioned later, Buxton said he knew George Neale and denied he was the assailant.²² Instead, he said his assailant resembled another local Black man named Clem Johnson, but that it was not Johnson who attacked them, either.²³ Neale also denied this supposed grudge, saying "Mr. Buxton had no more to do with that matter [referring to his conviction in 1887] than any other citizen of Gaithersburg, and how could I harbor any feeling against [sic] him for something he didn't do."²⁴

The Investigation

The Buxtons were transferred by train on the afternoon of May 26 to Garfield Hospital in Washington, D.C. for treatment.²⁵ Mr. and Mrs. Buxton were not in critical condition, but their daughters Maud and Sadie were both more severely wounded. Neither was expected to live long, but seven-year-old Sadie's condition was especially serious. Upon their arrival, resident surgeon Dr. J. Ford Thompson expressed surprise that the three axe blows to the head of Mr. Buxton had produced so little damage.²⁶ All the family members had been bludgeoned with the blunt end of the axe, not the blade, a fact also commented on by later investigators puzzled by the relative lack of more serious injuries sustained due to the size and weight of the supposed murder weapon.²⁷

In addition to the two main suspects, five other people were arrested in connection with the attack, including George Neale's sister Emma Johnson, her husband John Johnson, and their nephews James Johnson and John Young (both around 12 years old). They were all charged with being accessories to the crime, on the "oath and information" of Zadoc Easton,²⁸ a brother

of Mrs. Buxton who also lived in the Buxton household, but was not in the house the night of the attack. Deputy Sheriff Thompson found a young woman named Opera Warfield willing to testify that early that morning on her way to work, she had seen a suspicious Black man (whom she later claimed was Sidney Randolph²⁹) running across the railroad tracks. Her companion, Haler McAbee, disagreed with her statement, and he was also arrested as a potential accessory to the crime. The following week, Thompson arrested Joseph Brooks, the friend of the Neale family who had visited them the night before the incident, as well as two other members of the Neale family, Charles Neale and Edward “Dink” Neale, said to be cousins of George.³⁰



*James Anna (Easton) Buxton
(Washington Times)*

After their arrest on May 25, the prisoners Randolph and Neale were initially taken to the Rockville jail, but Sheriff John Collier arranged a hasty transport to Baltimore’s Central Station, as it was clear to him a lynching attempt was imminent in Montgomery County.³¹ One paper reported the prisoners were rushed through town to Autre Park Station in a closed wagon, evading an already-formed crowd shouting “Lynch them!”³² The townspeople, acting as their own detective squad in the absence of qualified authorities, had collected a large quantity of flimsy and circumstantial evidence bolstered by the rumor mill of a small town. The papers reported every scrap of information in excruciating detail—rumors of bloody clothing found in Neale’s house, Randolph covered in blood (from his own gunshot wounds), Randolph seen having a coat and then missing one, footprints (both shod and barefoot) leading in multiple directions that were used to prove different theories of the suspects’ movements, and townspeople who claimed to have seen Randolph hanging around the house where later an axe went missing.³³ This was all considered “evidence,” the collection and interpretation of which was mostly driven by the Rev. Lloyd and Deputy Sheriff Thompson, neither of whom was experienced in investigating crime. State’s Attorney Alexander Kilgour appealed to Inspector T.H. Hollinberger of the Metropolitan Police, who sent two of his top detectives from Washington to properly investigate the incident.³⁴



*Detective Ned Weedon
(Washington Post)*

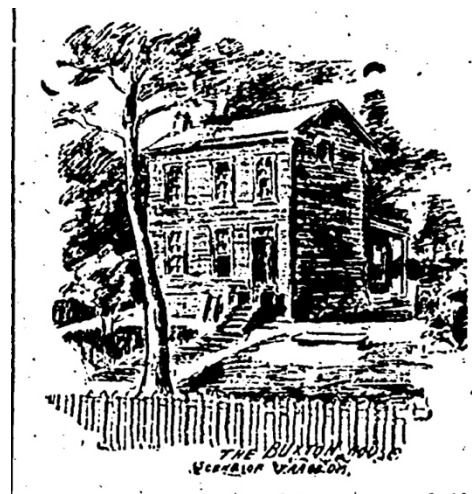
Detectives Richard “Ned” Weedon and Edward Horne, first arriving in Gaithersburg on the afternoon of May 25, set to work investigating the crime and interviewing witnesses.³⁵ They were not yet allowed to speak to the Buxton family on doctors’ orders³⁶ (though certain reporters seemed to have access to Mr. Buxton in particular).³⁷ Weedon and Horne thought it unlikely that Randolph and Neale, both of whom they interviewed in the Rockville jail, were connected with the crime, pointing out the many problems and inconsistencies with the purely circumstantial and possibly manufactured “evidence” collected by the local townspeople.³⁸ The detectives did not speak in detail to the press about their theories, but they did strongly suggest other directions they wished to investigate. According to the Inspector, the perpetrator might “deceive the country people, but not our men, who are trained in

criminal matters.” Horne had a theory as to the actual motive, suggesting the assailant may have been a white man in blackface, and that “suspicion is directed to persons who do not live very far from the Buxton house.”³⁹

In response to this, Gaithersburg people soon began willfully obstructing the investigation, angry that the detectives were investigating the potential motives and alibis of local citizens (i.e. white men) rather than focusing on finding evidence against the prisoners Randolph and Neale. “Mr. English” (unclear which one, as there were three) and Zadoc Easton (Mrs. Buxton’s brother) were both under suspicion, as well as Richard Buxton himself.⁴⁰ After only two and a half days, Weedon and Horne abruptly and angrily left Montgomery County, abandoning the case due to the open hostility of the townspeople.⁴¹ Kilgour then appealed to Marshall Frey of the Baltimore Police. Frey sent detectives Hermann Pohler and George Siebold, who arrived on May 31.⁴² The new detectives remained skeptical but seemed to take up with the theories of the Rev. Lloyd (with whom they lodged while in town),⁴³ believing there was at least some credible evidence against Randolph, though still no clear motive unless he could be linked to Neale. According to one source, Pohler later admitted he had been encouraged by the Gaithersburg townspeople specifically to find evidence against Neale and Randolph.⁴⁴

The Suspects

Being a complete stranger to the area, Randolph lacked any motive. No one in the Buxtons’ neighborhood was wealthy (which was apparently obvious from the size and quality of the houses), so robbery seemed an unlikely motive for a stranger. An early theory (apparently proposed by Lloyd) suggested Randolph must have been in the Maryland Penitentiary with George Neale, who ostensibly did have a potential motive, and that the two had hatched their plan of revenge together.⁴⁵ This rumor persisted until State’s Attorney Kilgour asked wardens from the penitentiary to visit and identify the men held in Central Station in Baltimore. The wardens recognized Neale as the man who had served eight years and been released the previous December, but they had never seen Randolph.⁴⁶ He in fact had never served any time in the penitentiary. However, by then the idea that Randolph and Neale were in collusion was firmly planted in the minds of the Gaithersburg citizens and facts failed to completely dislodge that idea.



Artistic rendering of the Buxton's modest house (Washington Times)

The backstory of Neale’s attempted-rape conviction and subsequent sentence in the Maryland Penitentiary started in the summer of 1886. In June of that year, a 16-year-old Gaithersburg girl named Jennie Gloyd claimed she was sexually assaulted by a Black man while walking home from school along the railroad tracks. More than ten Black men, including George Neale, were detained by the townspeople over the next three days, each one paraded in front of the girl for

identification, none of whom she could pick out as her assailant.⁴⁷ A few days after Neale was dismissed as Gloyd's attacker, he was brought before the authorities on a separate charge of disorderly conduct and sentenced to serve a year at the House of Correction in Baltimore (a workhouse, not a prison).⁴⁸ A few weeks later, several Gaithersburg men concluded, based on evidence that was never mentioned in reports, that Neale was the lead suspect in the Gloyd case after all.⁴⁹ They brought Jennie Gloyd to Baltimore where Neale was serving his sentence, to positively identify him as her attacker.⁵⁰ She picked him out of a lineup of men, but of course he would have been the only one she could recognize from a group of strangers, as she had seen him in a lineup before. In June of 1887, Neale was brought back to Gaithersburg and tried before three judges (and no jury) for the attempted assault on Jennie Gloyd.⁵¹ He was convicted largely based on her identification, though more than 20 witnesses were listed in the trial report, and he was sentenced to ten years in the Maryland Penitentiary.⁵² The grudge against Buxton was rumored to have started here, since Neale "was heard to say" that he would get even with Richard Buxton when he got out; however, Buxton's role in his conviction is completely unfounded, based on current evidence.⁵³ Neale was released in December of 1895, more than a year early for good behavior.⁵⁴ Aside from the rumors of his supposed grudge, there was no evidence linking Neale to the Buxton attacks, and his family members (with the exception of James Johnson) all testified to his presence at home during the time the incident occurred.⁵⁵

Randolph repeated with devastating consistency that he had been in Georgetown until the day before (Sunday) and he had slept that night in a barn on the outskirts of Gaithersburg; however various local witnesses (multiplying with fervor as the days went by) came forward claiming to have seen him in Gaithersburg several days before the attack. The coat he was allegedly seen wearing the day before the attacks, which was missing at the time of his arrest, he stated was stolen in Georgetown days before.⁵⁶ The Rev. Lloyd came up with another theory that Randolph had not been shot while he was being apprehended, but instead had been hit by Buxton's errant shot inside the house.⁵⁷ This was based on the opinion of Dr. John McCormick, who bandaged Randolph's wounds around 9:30 the morning of his arrest, and who claimed the blood was too dry to have come from a wound less than two hours old.⁵⁸ The doctor also conjectured the blood on Randolph's shirt and/or neck looked to be atomized "as if from arterial spatter"⁵⁹ rather than resulting from his own bleeding wounds. Deputy Sheriff Thompson placed Randolph's shoes into the tracks Lloyd had followed from the Buxton house, and claimed they fit perfectly.⁶⁰ He also did this footprint-comparison testing with Neale, but none of these men was a trained investigator and this type of "evidence" would not have been admissible in court.⁶¹ It was flimsy circumstantial evidence at best, fraught with potential bias and misinterpretation.

After his first week in prison, Randolph was brought to the Garfield Hospital in Washington and presented before the Buxtons, at which point Mrs. Buxton could not identify him (nor say whether her assailant was white or Black).⁶² Mr. Buxton said he "thought he was the right man" but (depending on the source) he also could not be sure.⁶³ Almost all the newspaper accounts state several times over the next ten days that Randolph was subjected to the "sweating process" while in prison; that is, questioned repeatedly and at length in an attempt to bring a

confession.⁶⁴ The threat of lynching was also frequently mentioned in the papers, as the Gaithersburg townspeople were convinced Randolph was the culprit. But Randolph persisted in his innocence, never wavering from the story he told from the start. He maintained he had never been to Gaithersburg in his life, and that he had never met Neale before they were jailed together on suspicion of committing this crime.

The First Inquest

Sadie Buxton died in the hospital on June 5, 1896 as a result of her injuries. Before her funeral and burial were held, there was a coroner's inquest called to determine the cause of her death, which was now considered a murder. According to a decision by State's Attorney Kilgour, this inquest would also take the place of a preliminary hearing, to determine if there was sufficient evidence to hold these men for the crime.⁶⁵ This was not the usual course of law at the time. If either Randolph or Neale were able to afford a proper lawyer, this sequence of events would not have been allowed; in fact, a group of Black lawyers in Washington, D.C. had held several meetings by this time, incensed over the handling of the case. Their early plans included calling for "Habeus Corpus" to demand the release of Randolph and Neale on grounds of insufficient evidence (and lack of a timely preliminary hearing), and raising funds to secure a defense lawyer.⁶⁶ Their advocacy led Ashley M. Gould, a prominent D.C. lawyer, to volunteer to represent Randolph at the inquest.⁶⁷



Sadie Buxton (Washington Times)

Randolph and Neale were not brought to Gaithersburg for the proceedings due to concerns for their safety, but they were brought back to Montgomery County from Baltimore and lodged in the Rockville jail. Randolph was questioned again by Sheriff Collier, revealing during this interview a more complete account of his life and movements prior to his arrest in Montgomery County. This account was reported in great detail by the correspondent from the *Washington Evening Times*.⁶⁸ Collier was hopeful Randolph would confess under the pressure of another questioning session of more than two hours, but as always, Randolph maintained his consistent story. According to the *Washington Evening Star*, "It was evident also that the sheriff was not as sanguine as he was formerly of convicting Randolph of the crime."⁶⁹ The *Washington Bee* (a paper intended for a Black readership) took an even darker view, with the acerbic remark, "The unwritten law of Maryland is that if a white person is killed and the murderer cannot be found, some Negro must hang for it."⁷⁰

The inquest lasted over two days, on June 11 and 12, 1896. Originally planned to be a closed affair, the jury decided to make it public.⁷¹ It took place in Gaithersburg's Norman Hall (also called the opera house and/or the town hall), a community space upstairs in the building owned by John A. Belt, which was filled to capacity with eager onlookers and reporters.⁷² Local Justice of the Peace Cortice B. Boughman, acting as coroner, presided over a 12-person appointed jury, with five lawyers present: State's Attorney Kilgour, assisted by H.M. Talbott, who was additionally hired by Buxton to represent his interests; Ashley M. Gould representing

Randolph; Edward C. Peter representing Neale; and George Minor Anderson representing Neale's relatives.⁷³ However, the lawyers asked no questions; instead, the witnesses were questioned mostly by Justice Baughman and by juror Belt (who was also providing testimony for the prosecution—an apparent conflict of interest that was first called into question but later dismissed).⁷⁴

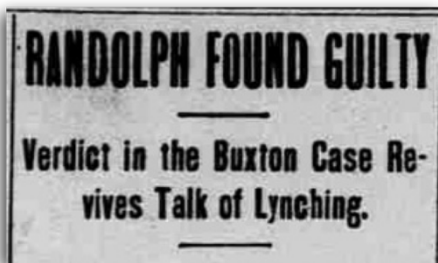


Randolph's lawyer, Ashley M. Gould, caricatured years later by the Post (1905) during his first term on the D.C. Supreme Court.

The assembled heard testimony from 37 witnesses, most of whom claimed to have seen Randolph either running around suspiciously the morning of the crime or hanging about in Gaithersburg in the days leading up to it. The goal was ostensibly threefold: first to prove that Randolph was in the vicinity of the Buxton house on the morning of the attack; second, to prove that he was lying about when he had arrived in Gaithersburg; and third, to establish that he resembled Clem Johnson, whom Buxton had said his attacker looked like. One of the last witnesses was Richard Buxton himself, who (in response to questions described as "leading queries" by the defense lawyers) implicated Randolph directly as the assailant of his family: "Yes, I have seen my assailant since then. His name is Randolph and he is now in Rockville jail. I am positive he is the man who assaulted me."⁷⁵

What was conspicuously absent from these proceedings was actual physical evidence—no murder weapon, no revolver, no bullets, none of the supposedly bloody clothing found, not even Randolph's shoes, which were so prominently featured in descriptions of him and his tracks. Gould, Randolph's lawyer, stated that he had refrained from cross-examining any witnesses, since their testimony, if given again in a real trial, would not be admissible anyway.⁷⁶

Following the witnesses' testimony, the jury—after 30 minutes' deliberation—returned a verdict that Randolph alone was to be held for Sadie Buxton's murder. "We find that Sadie Buxton came to her death by a blow inflicted with an ax, on the morning of the 25th of May, in the hands of Sidney Randolph. We further believe he had an accessory who is unknown to this jury."⁷⁷ The *Washington Morning Times* ran a headline of "Randolph Found Guilty," though there had not yet been an indictment, let alone a trial. There was apparently renewed talk in town of a lynching, promoted especially by the younger men, but juror Belt made a speech



Misleading headline from the *Morning Times*, 13 June 1896

from the street outside Norman Hall, imploring the people to allow the law to take its course.⁷⁸ Neale was cleared of all charges and released, along with all the family and witnesses associated with him.⁷⁹ Randolph was to be held until the grand jury, set to convene in November, could rule on a potential indictment. Gould was retained by the lawyers' group in Washington to defend Randolph before the grand jury and if he was indicted, they hoped to remove the subsequent trial from Montgomery County.⁸⁰

The Lynching

After the verdict of the coroner's inquest on June 12, there was only occasional newspaper coverage through the end of the month, despite previous daily coverage in many papers for 20 days straight, May 25 through June 13. Apparently, at least one of the detectives from Baltimore was still investigating the case, and rumors circulated that the Washington lawyers' group had hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to come to Montgomery County.⁸¹ The case took yet another odd turn when West English claimed one of the recently-released prisoners—Dink Neale—had told him (English) that Randolph had confessed to him (Neale) while they were imprisoned together.⁸² Dink Neale had already left town following his release, and the detectives attempted to track him down to verify English's claim.⁸³ Charles Peyton (the jailer) and Sheriff Collier both stated it would have been impossible for Randolph and Neale to communicate with each other, as their cells were on different floors. English's story was questionable, as to both veracity and purpose. Newspapers had been reporting "the general feeling" that most people, outside of Gaithersburg, were beginning to doubt Randolph's guilt, and they suggested English, with some unknown motive, was attempting to fix that suspicion back on Randolph by claiming he had confessed. According to the *Evening Star*, "it would not be surprising if those taken into custody were of fairer complexion than the ones heretofore apprehended."⁸⁴ This story received no further mention in the newspaper accounts—after initial reporting on the likely course of action authorities would take, it was dropped with no further reports.

After a full week of no coverage on this case, several things happened on July 3, 1896. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* (the most local paper) ran detailed coverage of the lynching of Joseph Cocking, a white man who had been the suspect in a similar axe murder case in Charles County.⁸⁵ That event had happened the Saturday before, but the *Sentinel*, being a weekly paper, had just run the story on July 3. With somewhat eerie prescience, the *Washington Bee* published this comment on the morning of July 4, before Randolph's fate was known: "The lynching of Cocking is an indication of what will be done with Randolph. Randolph is innocent, but someone must swing."⁸⁶ Also on July 3, Maud and Teeny Buxton returned to Montgomery County from Garfield Hospital in Washington, somewhat recovered but still obviously afflicted by their injuries, and their arrival elicited much sympathy from those who witnessed it.⁸⁷ Some papers later reported the spread of a rumor upon her return that 16-year-old Maud may have been a target for rape, or that she had finally been able to communicate that a sexual assault was a component of the attack on the family.⁸⁸ However, later reports also suggest that Maud was so impaired by her injury that she was having to "begin almost as a child and learn the language over again,"⁸⁹ so it seems unlikely she was able to communicate anything at this time.



Maud Buxton (Washington Times)



Drawing of Randolph in his jail cell that appeared in the Times the day he was lynched

Immediately following the inquest, Sheriff Collier was reportedly moving Randolph from the Rockville jail each night to undisclosed locations in order to prevent an attempt on his life;⁹⁰ however, in the weeks since he had relaxed his vigilance. In the early morning of July 4, Randolph was in his jail cell when 20-30 men wearing red handkerchiefs to disguise themselves aroused jailer Charles Peyton on pretext of having a new prisoner for him. When he saw the masks and the guns, he attempted to lock them out, but they overpowered him and forced him to relinquish the keys. The crowd seized Randolph, who fought bitterly against them, and literally dragged him out as he attempted to hold onto the floor grating, scraping the skin from his fingers as he was pulled away.⁹¹ Fellow prisoner Perry Elkhorn stated Randolph screamed, "Murder! Murder!" over and over again.⁹² The attackers had to strike him a blow on the head to subdue him enough to take him out through the back of the property to a wagon waiting near the residence of lawyer Edward C. Peter across the street.⁹³ Peter heard the men talking as Randolph was loaded into the vehicle. "'Any tree is good enough for him,' 'No, we have promised to meet the other fellows.'"⁹⁴

Randolph was taken through Rockville in the wagon via an indirect route, first out on Darnestown Road (Route 28), then back through West End Park to a stand of trees at the edge of a large farm on Frederick Road (now Route 355), located about a mile and a half north of town.⁹⁵ Still fighting every step of the way, he was dragged to a chestnut tree and a noose was forced around his neck. Only the *New York Times* and other out-of-state papers reported that the murderous group attempted to elicit a confession;⁹⁶ most local sources indicate Randolph's struggles precluded any such "ceremonies" typically associated with a lynching. It took all their combined efforts to tie him up, haul Randolph up from the ground by his neck, and hold him suspended until he died of slow strangulation. His body was found an hour or two later by local attorney George Minor Anderson and other men who had been alerted to the jail break by Peyton.⁹⁷ They had followed the tracks of the wagon through town, eventually discovering the crime scene and also noting that multiple wagon tracks continued from there toward Gaithersburg.⁹⁸

Justice of the Peace Charles M. Jones summoned a coroner's jury which visited the crime scene at 9:00 am with the body still hanging and a rather large crowd gathered;⁹⁹ the inquest was then adjourned to the courthouse later that afternoon.¹⁰⁰ When the body was finally cut down, members of the crowd grabbed the rope and shredded it to pieces as they scrambled for souvenirs.¹⁰¹ According to the *Baltimore Sun*, "The tree had so many pieces chopped from it that it looked like it had been struck by lightning."¹⁰² Sidney Randolph's body was taken to Pumphrey's Funeral establishment, displayed for a few days, and later buried in the Potter's Field at the Alms House south of Rockville.

The Second Inquest

The coroner's jury summoned to rule on Randolph's cause of death didn't render a verdict at the scene of the crime. Instead, an inquest into the identity of those responsible for the lynching continued in the courthouse over several days, as the jury heard testimony from many witnesses. According to newspapers, citizens of Rockville were indignant at the lynching in their town, immediately suspecting Gaithersburg men were behind it. Many thought Richard Buxton himself had organized the event, so he quickly made a statement to the press that he condemned the lynching and had desired the law to take its course.¹⁰³

Editorials and letters censuring the lynching of Randolph were published in several local newspapers in the following days. A writer to the *Evening Times* stated: "The veil covering the mystery of the Gaithersburg tragedy has not yet been lifted. Is it not possible that some one interested in keeping it untouched instigated the lynching?" The letter writer appealed to the Governor of Maryland for sturdier county jails, more intelligent/capable officers, and fines levied on counties for every prisoner lost to a lynch mob.¹⁰⁴ An editorial published in the *Evening Star* called the lynching "cold-blooded murder" and pointed out the flaws in the case and the investigation.¹⁰⁵ An editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* published on July 6 claimed no man had a guarantee of safety if lynch mobs were allowed to operate unpunished, concluding, "These lynchings have become entirely too frequent in Maryland, and they should be put down with a strong hand."¹⁰⁶ The *Washington Bee* had this to say: "Randolph who was so cowardly murdered by the mob of Maryland is enough to excite Afro-Americans to do violence. What can the proud Caucasian race expect? Are we to be murdered and butchered with impunity? Without due process of law?"¹⁰⁷

Following the lynchings of both Cocking in Charles County and Randolph in Montgomery County only a week apart, Maryland Governor Lloyd Lowndes offered a \$1,000 reward for the apprehension of those responsible.¹⁰⁸ The governor was quoted as saying, "Such lawlessness is demoralizing to the community and the perpetrators must be punished. I realize the difficulty of arresting, indicting and convicting the guilty men, but propose to take strong measures to secure such a result. There appeared to be serious doubt as to the guilt of Randolph. These lynchings are to be greatly deplored and are a blot upon the fame of the State."¹⁰⁹

REWARD FOR LYNCHERS

Gov. Lowndes Denounces the Men Who Hung Cocking and Randolph.

He Says He Would Remove the Sheriffs of Charles and Montgomery Counties if He Had the Power.

Headline from the Evening Star, 18 July 1896.

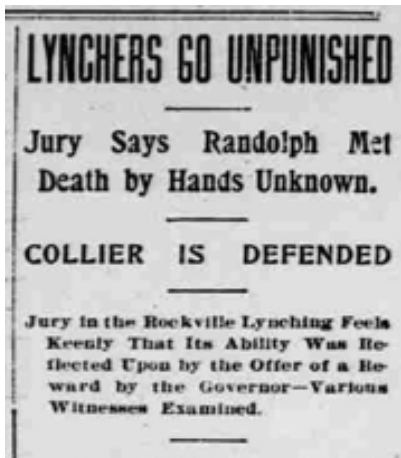
Testimony at the inquest into Sidney Randolph's death was heard from more than 40 men, some more than once, over three sessions: on July 4, July 7, and July 13. Many of those questioned predictably denied any knowledge and seemed willfully obstructive, but several of the witnesses revealed additional significant facts surrounding the Randolph murder:

- Sheriff Collier said he had no idea a lynching was imminent. He had been moving the prisoner from the jail for weeks to circumvent one, but had stopped doing so, as the men from Gaithersburg—particularly John A. Belt—had assured him they would let the law take its course.¹¹⁰ Collier did not live in Rockville and had left town at 6:00 pm to go to his home near Boyds, leaving Randolph and the other prisoners in the care of jailer Peyton.
- Several young Rockville men who caught a train to Frederick the night before the lynching, in preparation for a day of baseball games to be held on July 4, testified that before leaving town, they had heard a rumor that a lynching was planned. Cary Kingdon claimed to have written a quick letter to State’s Attorney Kilgour before boarding the train, warning him of the potential plan (which Kilgour stated never reached him), and James Veirs claimed to have spoken to Deputy Sheriff Thompson on the platform, saying “you shouldn’t let them kill that man,”¹¹¹ to which he said Thompson made no reply.¹¹² Thompson later said he thought the rumor was a joke.¹¹³ Somerville Bean, implicated by several as the primary source of the rumor, was called to testify but refused to appear, saying he couldn’t leave work in Washington. He later sent a deposition statement that he had only mentioned a possible lynching in jest and had no information that one was actually planned.¹¹⁴
- The masks worn by the lynchers were all identical red handkerchiefs tied by a particular kind of jute twine used almost exclusively by post offices. John A. Belt both ran a general store that stocked handkerchiefs and held the position of postmaster for the town of Gaithersburg. He was later heard to be very angry at the obvious insinuations in the press that he was potentially involved.¹¹⁵ However, he was also heard (by the jailer) threatening Randolph in the jail a few days before the lynching, accusing him of using a false name and saying he “hadn’t many hours to live.”¹¹⁶ Belt admitted this on the stand. At this point, Deputy Sheriff Thompson was recalled, to describe a letter he had received from Millidgeville, Georgia, asking if the man they had in custody could be a fugitive from that area known as Ben Temple, wanted for murdering a minister’s wife.¹¹⁷ Thompson had obviously shown Belt the letter, prompting the confrontation.
- Tools used in the abduction of Randolph and found near the lynching site were those issued by the B&O Railroad Company specifically for the Gaithersburg section of the line. Only men who had worked for the B&O would have them.¹¹⁸
- Several people had seen a group of buggies and wagons heading back to Gaithersburg in the early hours of Saturday morning. In particular, witnesses Francis Hall and Jennie Neale testified that they saw the adult sons of G. Fenton Snouffer, William and John Snouffer, partially disguised in a buggy outside Washington Grove around 2:00 am. Clarence Ennis, who worked at the Snouffer farm, stated that he saw the younger Snouffers returning home later that morning, their horses exhausted, unwilling to say where they had been.¹¹⁹ The witnesses relating this story were all Black, and Ennis claimed he was threatened for giving testimony against his former employers.¹²⁰ G.

Fenton Snouffer testified that his sons had arrived home around 12:00 am, before the lynching took place, and had remained home all night.

Initially, the investigation seemed robust, and newspapers reported it likely there would be perpetrators identified. However, after the second session on July 7, there was a rumor that a group of Black men were planning to lynch Buxton.¹²¹ Armed white men roamed the streets as guards, and Buxton was reportedly hiding and terrified in Gaithersburg,¹²² but the rumor proved to be unfounded.¹²³ In fact, the Black citizens of Montgomery County had organized several orderly meetings, in conjunction with the lawyers' group in Washington,¹²⁴ to discuss their views of the lynching and potentially bring to light any information within the community that might lead to the arrest of perpetrators. After holding meetings in D.C. and in a place "north of Gaithersburg" (likely Boyds or Metropolitan Grove), their planned meeting at Emory Grove on July 8 was threatened when the white citizens, spooked by the lynching rumor, claimed it could lead to violence against Buxton or Collier. Dr. J. N. Johnson of Washington, D.C. appealed to Sheriff Collier, requesting in a letter that he allow the meeting at Emory Grove to proceed without interference: that the Black citizens were not contemplating any violence, did not blame Collier for the lynching of Randolph, and also intended no ill will toward Buxton.¹²⁵ Collier stated in the press that he had no reason to prevent a peaceful meeting; however, the meeting at Emory Grove was postponed.¹²⁶

Between the July 7 and July 13 jury sessions, Dr. Charles Waters and the Rev. Lloyd, both highly respected Gaithersburg men, published their opinions of the case, censuring the lynching, but reminding everyone they fully believed in Randolph's guilt.¹²⁷ These publicly expressed opinions may have swayed the jury members away from their charge to discover the perpetrators and back toward the status quo. By the third session, enthusiasm for further testimony had waned, and in the end the jury members rendered the usual verdict: that Randolph came to his death "at the hands of parties unknown to the jury."¹²⁸



Headline in the *Morning Times*, 14 July 1896.

The Aftermath

This continued miscarriage of justice engendered strong statements and a call to action from the lawyers' group and concerned citizens in Washington D.C., who renamed themselves the "Anti-Lynching Society." At a meeting on July 16, with founding dean of the Howard University Law School and former Virginia congressman John Mercer Langston presiding,¹²⁹ several committees were formed to draft resolutions, raise funds to investigate both crimes, and marshal the resources of local churches to denounce lynching and work toward justice for Blacks in every community.¹³⁰ Other notable members included lawyer Thomas L. Jones, Colonel Perry Carson, and *Washington Bee* editor W. Calvin Chase.¹³¹ Though Langston expressed dismay that only 50 people were in attendance at that first meeting, the second meeting of the Society reportedly drew a crowd of 1,000 on July 22, less than a week later.¹³² J.M. Johnson

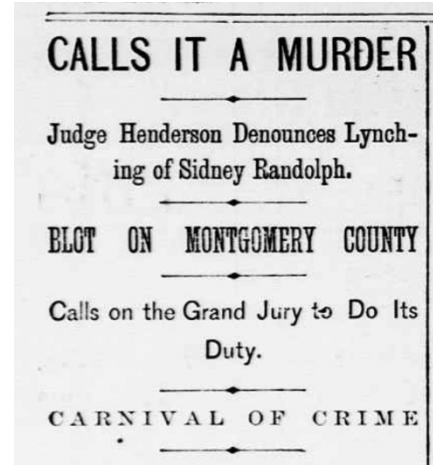
made a statement that the Rev. Lloyd “who has played the part of a detective since the Buxton tragedy,” should be recalled by the Methodist church.¹³³ “The majority of the people in this country are Christians, but lynching is heathenish, and yet it is tolerated by this Christian nation and they should be ashamed of it,” said the Rev. Dr. George W. Lee, pastor of the Fifth Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. Near the end of the meeting, several more resolutions were passed denouncing the practice of lynching, as well as denouncing reckless law enforcement officers and “the silence of religious leaders, politicians, and the public press for allowing these frequent lynchings to pass unnoticed.”¹³⁴ Notable anti-lynching activist Ida Wells-Barnett was present at the third meeting on July 26, as she was in town for a women’s convention on behalf of the Ida B. Wells Club of Chicago.¹³⁵

The newspapers continued to use suspicions raised at the inquest that Randolph was connected to an 1892 crime in Millidgeville, Georgia to suggest he was also guilty of the Buxton attack. Randolph had stated many times he was from that area, having left several years earlier. Before the lynching, Deputy Sheriff Thompson had written to the clerk of the court in Baldwin County, Georgia, asking for news of any wanted criminals there. Baldwin County Superior Court clerk Walter Gainie replied that a criminal named Ben Temple was wanted for the axe murder of Smithy Leonard, a minister’s wife, and to look for scars on Randolph’s face.¹³⁶ Thompson apparently examined Sidney Randolph and saw that “a scar, circular in form, was discernable on his right cheek, just below the eye.”¹³⁷ Though the newspaper reports suggested further steps would be taken to determine if Randolph did fully match the description of Temple (in the form of taking photographs, officers from Georgia arriving to examine the body, or shipping the body to Georgia), a conclusive finding was never reported in the press. Interestingly, the name “Ben Temple” does not appear as a wanted suspect in any prominent local newspaper reporting on the murder of Leonard in Georgia, 1892-1893.¹³⁸

In October, a coat was found by a Mr. Ward near Hunting Hill, which was reported in two papers as being the “missing link” in connecting Randolph to the Buxton crime.¹³⁹ The coat was described as “similar” to the one Randolph was said to be wearing when he was supposedly seen in Gaithersburg several days before the attack on the Buxtons. When found, it was under a pile of rocks, stained from mud and moss growth, but said to be discolored from “what is supposed to be a few smudges of blood.”¹⁴⁰ Randolph had maintained he had only been in Montgomery County the day before the Buxtons were attacked, having lost his coat to a thief in Georgetown. Above its reporting on this discovery of a coat, the *Washington Post* ran the headline “Sydney Randolph Was Guilty.”¹⁴¹ It seems the *Washington Bee* had a premonition of this situation, when it published this statement four months earlier: “Any old coat with blood marks on it, whether found near Gaithersburg or upon the top of the Pyramids of Egypt, will answer for the coat worn by the selected victim.”¹⁴²

In November of 1896, Montgomery County’s grand jury held an inquest into the lynching of Sidney Randolph, before which sitting Judge James B. Henderson strongly admonished the members to discover the perpetrators. “Lynching under any circumstances is deplorable,” he stated in a lengthy charge to the jury. “It is a crime which undermines the foundation of civil government [and its] practice is demoralizing to courts, juries and the public morals.”¹⁴³

According to the law, Henderson re-iterated, it was not under the purview of the grand jury to ascertain Randolph's guilt or innocence, but to identify those who killed him.¹⁴⁴ In spite of this, the grand jury not only upheld the earlier verdict of the coroner's jury of inquest, saying they had "failed to find any evidence to implicate anyone in the crime,"¹⁴⁵ they also posthumously indicted Randolph as guilty of the crime and (like the coroner's jury) particularly exonerated Sheriff Collier.¹⁴⁶ No charges were ever brought against any man following the murder of Sidney Randolph, and any lingering investigation into the attack on the Buxtons was dropped.



Evening Star headline, 11 November 1896

The Buxton family returned to their house on Frederick Avenue in Gaithersburg, having had it cleaned, painted, and outfitted with state-of-the-art burglar alarms.¹⁴⁷ They are enumerated there in the 1900 census, along with Zed Easton and their youngest daughter Grace, who was born in 1897. They continued to live in Gaithersburg until Richard's death in 1923, after which most of the remaining family members moved to Washington, D.C. The last descendant of this branch of the Buxton family (Carroll Buxton's daughter Gaile Buxton Crump) died in 2014. Currently, no family connections have been verified for Sidney Randolph, and it is assumed he had no direct descendants. Research is ongoing.

All articles from the *Washington Evening Star*, the *Washington Times*, the *Washington Bee*, the *Richmond Planet*, *The News* (Frederick), and the *Alexandria Gazette* were accessed from the following online database: Library of Congress, "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" database. Available at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

All articles from the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*, were accessed from the following online database: D.C. Public Library, "Go Digital" database, provided by ProQuest. Available at <https://www.dclibrary.org/godigital/> (valid library card required for access)

Articles from the *Montgomery County Sentinel* were accessed from microfilm at Montgomery History's [Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections](#) in Rockville, MD.

Articles from the *Montgomery Journal* were accessed from microfilm at the [Enoch Pratt Free Library Periodicals Department](#), with assistance from the African American Department.

More articles were consulted than are directly referenced here. For a more complete list of relevant sources on this case, see the page [Newspaper Reporting](#).

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- ¹ Buxton, Stephen A. "The Buxton Family: Their Great Tragedy of 1896." Unpublished manuscript, Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections: Lynching Vertical File. December 13, 1984.
- ² "He Wielded an Ax," *Evening Times* (Washington): May 25, 1896.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ "No Good Clew Yet," *Morning Times* (Washington): May 26, 1896, p1.
- ⁵ *Ibid.* Early reports refer to "James English" as the homeowner of the neighboring house that was broken into. James English lived across the street in a separate household from his mother and younger siblings, which was the house next door to, or very nearby, the Buxton residence. James was a more prominent local citizen, and had more name recognition, which possibly led to the error of identification.
- ⁶ "State of Maryland," *Baltimore Sun*: May 26, 1896, p2. According to the *Evening Times* of June 13, "Montgomery County has the most complete house-to-house connection by telephone of any county in Maryland."
- ⁷ "Gashed With an Ax," *The Evening Star* (Washington): May 25, 1896, p1.
- ⁸ "No Good Clew Yet."
- ⁹ "A Crime for Revenge," *Washington Post*: May 26, 1896, p1.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, but also reported in the *Times* on May 25, as well as the *Sun*, and the *Star* on May 26.
- ¹¹ "Gashed With an Ax."
- ¹² "State of Maryland." Also quoted in the *Star*.
- ¹³ "Gashed With an Ax."
- ¹⁴ "He Wielded an Ax."
- ¹⁵ "No Good Clew Yet."
- ¹⁶ "A Crime for Revenge." (*Post*) and "State of Maryland." (*Sun*).
- ¹⁷ "No Good Clew Yet," p2.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Statements of this sort were printed in the *Star*, the *Times*, and the *Post* on May 26-27.
- ²⁰ "No Good Clew Yet," p2. Also reported in the *Sun* and in the *Post*.
- ²¹ Numerous articles from the *Alexandria Gazette*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Washington Evening Star*, *Washington Post*, and *Washington National Republican* were consulted from the time of the attack on Gloyd, first reported May 26, 1886, through the conviction of Neale in June of 1887. According to Gaithersburg town records, Buxton held no official office at this time. According to the records of the trial in 1887, neither Buxton nor any man from the English family was called as a witness against Neale. This suggests that while the townspeople correctly recalled Neale's trial and incarceration of eight years earlier, they either misremembered or falsified Buxton's involvement then in order to also attach Neale to this current crime.
- ²² "Mystery Grows Deeper," *Evening Times* (Washington): May 27, 1896, p25.
- ²³ "No Good Clew Yet." Clem Johnson may be tangentially related to the family of George Neale's brother-in-law John Johnson, but the accounts do not indicate a close family connection.
- ²⁴ "Mystery Grows Deeper," p25.
- ²⁵ "Assassin Yet Unknown," *Evening Times* (Washington): May 26, 1896, p2.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ "Think Them Not Guilty," *Morning Times* (Washington), May 27, 1896, p1.
- ²⁸ Cortice B. Baughmann, Justice of the Peace docket 1896-1899. Series: DISTRICT COURT 6 MO (Docket), 1876-1939. Citation: T2488-6. Maryland State Archives (Annapolis, MD).
- ²⁹ "Assassin Yet Unknown," p2.
- ³⁰ Baughmann, Justice of the Peace docket.
- ³¹ "Brought to This City," *Evening Star* (Washington): May 26, 1896, p3; also in "A Crime for Revenge."
- ³² "Doubtful of Guilt," *Evening Star* (Washington): May 26, 1896, p3. The name of this station is spelled differently across many sources, even those beyond newspaper articles. Here is used the spelling from the 1894 G.M. Hopkins map called "The Vicinity of Washington, D.C." Autre Park station was south of Rockville, where the Twinbrook development is today.
- ³³ All newspaper reports from May 26-28 carried details such as these.
- ³⁴ Weedon and Horne were both featured frequently in the Washington news for their investigations and solved cases. Weedon in particular seems to have been a minor celebrity in Washington, featured by name in more than

450 newspaper articles there between 1890 and 1900. Both detectives were fresh off solving the case of Elsie Kreglo, murdered on May 5, 1896.

³⁵ "Gashed With an Ax."

³⁶ "Assassin Yet Unknown," p2.

³⁷ The author of "State of Maryland" from the *Sun* (printed on May 26, so reporting on events from May 25) says, "Mr. Buxton seems to be stronger than any of them, and **in talking to THE SUN correspondent** said that he felt very sore and his head pained him very badly..." [emphasis added].

³⁸ "Think Them Not Guilty."

³⁹ "Mystery Grows Deeper," p25.

⁴⁰ "Times Proves His Alibi," *Morning Times* (Washington): May 28, 1896, p1; and "A Calm Appeal," (editorial by L.L. Lloyd) in *Montgomery County Sentinel*: June 9, 1896.

⁴¹ "Detectives Drop Out," *Washington Post*: May 29, 1896, p4.

⁴² "New Man on the Trail," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 1, 1896, p2.

⁴³ [untitled] Gaithersburg, MD. *Evening Star*: June 1, 1896, p2.

⁴⁴ "Sure He is Innocent," *Washington Post*: June 4, 1896, p10.

⁴⁵ "Assassin Yet Unknown," p1.

⁴⁶ "Victims Brought Here," *Washington Post*: May 27, 1896, p1.

⁴⁷ Reports from the *Washington Post*, *Evening Star*, and *Baltimore Sun*, May 29-June 3, 1886.

⁴⁸ "Charged with the Gloyd Assault," *Baltimore Sun*: June 19, 1886, p6.

⁴⁹ "Miss Gloyd's Assailant," *Evening Star* (Washington): June 19, 1886, p2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ "To be Tried for Assaulting Miss Gloyd," *Baltimore Sun*: June 7, 1887, p6.

⁵² Criminal Trial: June 24, 1887. Series: Montgomery County Circuit Court (Minutes), Citation: T413-4. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

⁵³ See note 21.

⁵⁴ Prisoner Number 11-579 (Geo. Neal). Series: Maryland Penitentiary (Prisoner Record), Citation: S275-4. Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

⁵⁵ "Think Them Not Guilty."

⁵⁶ "Doubtful of Guilt," p3.

⁵⁷ "Randolph Found Guilty," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 13, 1896, p1.

⁵⁸ "The Buxton Assault: A Theory..." *Baltimore Sun*: May 29, 1896, p6. The timeline is unclear here, as sources are either not specific or inconsistent in reporting when events occurred. The attack on the Buxtons took place around 4:30 am; Randolph was shot and apprehended while walking on the road more than an hour later, at the latest 6:00 am. If his wound was not bandaged until 9:30 am, that would make his injury consistent with one inflicted "several hours earlier," i.e., at the time he was apprehended on the road.

⁵⁹ "Randolph is Held," *Evening Star* (Washington): June 13, 1896, p3.

⁶⁰ "Victims Brought Here," p1.

⁶¹ "Doubtful of Guilt," p3. Also *ibid.*

⁶² "Following New Claws," *Washington Post*: May 28, 1896, p3.

⁶³ "State of Maryland: Investigating the Buxton case..." *Baltimore Sun*: May 30, 1896, p6.

⁶⁴ Late-19th and early-20th century sources seem loathe to define this term, which was used colloquially to mean anything from a period of intense questioning, to a coercion of a confession by application of extreme physical duress; i.e., torture. Some period sources distinguish between "sweating" (mere questioning) and "the third degree" (physical duress), but these are not consistently distinct.

⁶⁵ "Suspects Have Counsel," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 10, 1896, p1.

⁶⁶ "Counsel for Randolph," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 5, 1896, p1.

⁶⁷ "Sure He is Innocent," *Washington Post*: June 4, 1896, p10.

⁶⁸ "Ready for the Inquest," *Evening Times* (Washington): June 11, 1896, p1. This account has been exhaustively researched for potential leads to Sidney Randolph's family, but the reporter garbled many of the spellings of places and people's names, perhaps stymied by Randolph's Georgia accent. Some information has been teased out of this reporting, but many questions and dead ends remain. Research is ongoing.

⁶⁹ "The Buxton Case," *Evening Star* (Washington): June 11, 1896, p3.

⁷⁰ "A Negro to Die," *Washington Bee*: June 6, 1896.

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- 71 "Inquest Thrown Open," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 12, 1896, p1.
- 72 *Ibid*, also reported in the *Star* and the *Post* articles of the same date.
- 73 "Ready for the Inquest," All of these lawyers, excepting Gould, were Montgomery County men and maintained law offices in the county seat of Rockville.
- 74 "Maud Anxious to Talk," *Morning Times* (Washington): June 9, 1896, p6.
- 75 "Jury Holds Randolph," *Washington Post*: June 13, 1896, p1.
- 76 "Randolph Found Guilty."
- 77 *Ibid*.
- 78 *Ibid*, but also reported in the *Post*: "several applauded him, but most shook their heads ominously."
- 79 "Suspects Are Released," *Evening Times* (Washington): June 13, 1896, p1.
- 80 "The Buxton Case: Release of George Neal..." *Baltimore Sun*: June 15, 1896, p2.
- 81 "Pinkertons on the Case," *Evening Times* (Washington): June 24, 1896, p6.
- 82 "Following a New Clew," *Evening Times* (Washington): June 16, 1896, p2.
- 83 *Ibid*.
- 84 "The Buxton Mystery," *Evening Star* (Washington): June 18, 1896, p14.
- 85 "Cocking Lynched," *Montgomery County Sentinel*: July 3, 1896, p3.
- 86 "By the Way they Say," *Washington Bee*: July 4, 1896, p2.
- 87 "Will Unmask the Mob," *Morning Times* (Washington): July 5, 1896, p1.
- 88 "At Gaithersburg," *Evening Times* (Washington): July 6, 1896, p2.
- 89 "Acts Against Lynchers," *Evening Times* (Washington): July 8, 1896, p2.
- 90 "George Neal Set at Liberty," *Washington Post*: June 14, 1896, p10.
- 91 "Avenged the Murderer," *Washington Post*: July 4, 1896, p1. and "Another Lynching." *Baltimore Sun*: July 6, 1896, p2.
- 92 "Fiends' Fury," *Richmond Planet* (Virginia): July 18, 1896, p1.
- 93 "Randolph Lynched," *Evening Star* (Washington): July 4, 1896, p1.
- 94 *Ibid*.
- 95 The reports of the *Baltimore Sun* and *Evening Star* both call the location "the Anderson farm." Other sources, including the *Richmond Planet* and the *Evening Times*, called it "Rozer's" or "Rozier's" place. It may have been on the edge of both properties; also, the two families had intermarried and likely the distinction between the property ownership was blurred.
- 96 "Lynched a Suspected Negro," *New York Times*: July 5, 1896, p24.
- 97 "Life Choked Out," *Evening Times*: July 4, 1896, p1.
- 98 "Randolph Lynched."
- 99 *Ibid*.
- 100 "Life Choked Out."
- 101 "Randolph Lynched."
- 102 "Another Lynching."
- 103 "Feeling at Gaithersburg," *Washington Post*: July 5, 1896, p5.
- 104 "Getting Worse and Worse," *Evening Times* (Washington): July 4, 1896, p4.
- 105 "Punish Every Murderer," *Evening Star* (Washington): July 4, 1896, p6.
- 106 "Another Brutal Lynching," *Baltimore Sun*: July 6, 1896, p4.
- 107 "Randolph Murdered," *Washington Bee*: July 11, 1896, p4.
- 108 "Bean Dropped a Hint," *Washington Post*: July 8, 1896, p3.
- 109 "State of Maryland: Investigating..." *Baltimore Sun*: July 8, 1896, p7.
- 110 "Rockville Still Uneasy," *Morning Times* (Washington): July 7, 1896, p2.
- 111 Reported on July 8, 1896 primarily in the *Baltimore Sun* ("State of Maryland: Investigating..." p7), the *Washington Post* ("Bean Dropped a Hint," p3), and the *Evening Star* ("Jury in Earnest, p5).
- 112 "No Clew to the Lynchers," *Morning Times* (Washington): July 8, 1896, p2.
- 113 "Fiends' Fury," p1.
- 114 "Lynchers Still Free," *Washington Post*: July 14, 1896, p2.
- 115 "Speaks in Denunciation," *Evening Times* (Washington): July 7, 1896, p4.
- 116 "The Randolph Case," *Evening Star* (Washington): July 6, 1896, p12.
- 117 "Will Unmask the Mob," *Morning Times* (Washington): July 5, 1896, p4.

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- ¹¹⁸ “Deputies Guard the Town,” *Morning Times* (Washington): July 6, 1896, p1.
- ¹¹⁹ “Lynchers Still Free,” p2.
- ¹²⁰ “Speaks in Denunciation.”
- ¹²¹ “Deputies Guard the Town.”
- ¹²² “At Gaithersburg,” *Evening Times* (Washington): July 6, 1896.
- ¹²³ “The Randolph Case,” p12.
- ¹²⁴ “He met the Avengers,” *Washington Post*: July 7, 1896, p4.
- ¹²⁵ “Speaks in Denunciation,” p4.
- ¹²⁶ “Bean Dropped a Hint,” p3.
- ¹²⁷ “A Calm Appeal,” *Montgomery County Sentinel*: July 9, 1896.
- ¹²⁸ “The Randolph Inquest,” *Montgomery County Sentinel*: July 17, 1896 and “A Disgraceful Verdict,” *Evening Times* (Washington): July 14, 1896, p4.
- ¹²⁹ Mr. Langston was one of only five Black men elected to Congress from the South before the 1890s, after which time Jim Crow-era electoral laws passed in former Confederate states effectively barred Blacks from politics. The next Black man in Congress from a Southern state was elected in 1973.
- ¹³⁰ “Will Expose the Lynchers,” *Morning Times* (Washington): July 17, 1896, p2.
- ¹³¹ “Lynch Law Denounced,” *Washington Post*: July 17, 1896, p2.
- ¹³² “To Crush Lynch Law,” *Washington Post*: July 23, 1896, p2.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁵ “Anti-Lynching Agitation,” *Evening Star* (Washington): July 24, 1896, p12.
- ¹³⁶ “The Randolph Case.” *Evening Star* (Washington): July 6, 1896, p12.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁸ Online access to newspapers from Georgia is inevitably limited; however, accessible coverage reports on several suspects that were arrested and charged in the Leonard case. There was no mention of a suspect named Ben Temple during this time.
- ¹³⁹ “Sydney Randolph Was Guilty,” *Washington Post*: October 17, 1896, p3; and “The Buxton Murder,” *Baltimore Sun*: October 17, 1896, p7.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, *Washington Post*.
- ¹⁴² “The Buxton Tragedy,” *Washington Bee*: June 6, 1896.
- ¹⁴³ Judge Henderson’s very lengthy charge to the grand jury was published in full in multiple newspapers, including the *Montgomery County Sentinel* and the *Montgomery Press*, and was quoted multiple times in the *Evening Times* and the *Evening Star*. (November 10-13, 1896).
- ¹⁴⁴ “The Randolph Lynching,” *Evening Star* (Washington): November 24, 1896.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁶ “Montgomery’s Queer Grand Jury,” *Evening Times* (Washington): November 25, 1896. The sheriff and the jailer in the Cocking case were both indicted by the Charles County grand jury on November 19, 1896 (*Baltimore Sun* and *Evening Star* reports), but those indictments were not pursued by the state. Members of the Cocking family then filed a suit and subsequent appeal against them that lasted from June 1897 until April of 1898.
- ¹⁴⁷ “Buxton House Protected,” *Evening Times* (Washington): July 27, 1896, p5.