

Muskogee Daily Phoenix  
Muskogee, Oklahoma,  
October 29, 1934.

# FLOYD'S FUNERAL SATURNALIA DRAWS 20,000

## PRETTY BOY RITES SEE HILL COUNTRY OVERRUN BY HORDE

Food Sells at Premium; Liquor  
And Gun-Toting Toughs in  
Evidence at Cemetery

### 6000 CARS JAM VICINITY

Phantom Outlaw Buried at  
Akins; Preacher Makes Best  
Of Difficult Job

By HARRISON HUMPHRIES

(Of the Phoenix Staff)

AKINS CEMETERY, Oct. 28—  
The same rocky earth of the Cook-  
son hills region over which the bare  
feet of Charles A. "Choc" Floyd pat-  
tered in his childhood some 20-odd  
years ago, tonight held the bullet-  
punctured remains of the southwest's  
most ruthless slayer of the modern  
era.

More than twenty thousand men,  
women and children, curiosity seek-  
ers from 20 or more states, jammed  
around the little pavilion in the cen-  
ter of this rural cemetery, trampled  
graves, overturned headstones, and  
ripped down fences in their efforts  
to catch a last glimpse of the phan-  
tom outlaw, who was shot to death  
by federal agents near East Liver-  
pool, Ohio, last Monday. Six thousand  
automobiles were parked in the fields  
surrounding the graveyard, and hun-  
dreds were massed along the high-  
way and through the little town of  
Akins, a mile and a half away.

#### Foodstuff at a Premium

Grocery stores and restaurants in  
Sallisaw, Vian, Gore and other points  
along the highway leading from the  
funeral site were sold out of food be-  
fore dark, as motorists who had been  
waiting at the cemetery since early  
morning stopped for a bite to eat be-  
fore going home. At noon Sallisaw  
merchants reported the largest sale of  
lunch meat, buns, cheese, cookies, and  
fruit in the history of the city. Toward  
evening the cemetery assumed the ap-  
pearance of a maudlin picnic as fam-  
ilies, exhausted by more than two  
hours fighting in the crowd, gathered  
in their own circle and spread their  
bounty.

Dust thicker than the famous Lon-  
don "pea soup fog" arose over the en-  
tire area as cars streamed in from  
every section line and highway. In

mid-afternoon the use of headlights  
was necessary and the visibility was  
reduced to not more than 100 feet in  
any direction.

Night had fallen before many of the  
motorists, some of whom had driven  
halfway across the continent, inches  
their way from the funeral grounds:  
10 miles to Sallisaw. The roads were  
packed with cars, all heading from  
Akins, for 50 miles in every direction.

#### 'Largest Funeral Spectacle'

The enormous quantity of funera-  
l wreaths was reduced to a few tattered  
fragments as the milling horde grab-  
bed at the blossoms and made away  
with souvenirs of Oklahoma's largest  
funeral spectacle. Burial was delayed  
when curiosity seekers stole the screw  
from the lid of the "rough box", into  
which the casket was lowered.

After simple funeral rites, sever-  
al songs by the Akins choir, and a ser-  
mon by the Rev. W. E. Rockett, past-  
or of the First Baptist church of Sall-  
isaw, the casket of the slain outla-  
was opened so that the thousand  
could view the sorry reminder that  
"crime does not pay."

With a single file line forming to  
the east of the shingle-roofed shel-  
ter, directors of the Moore funeral home  
Sallisaw and special officers appoint-  
ed by the family from the Floyd cir-  
cle rushed spectators in rapid process-  
ion past the casket. Men were reminded  
to uncover their heads and the greater  
respect was demanded beneath the  
pavilion, while on the outside the jam  
was so compact that 20 women ap-  
peared nearly as many children and  
fainted from suffocation.

COPIES DESTROYED  
11 AUG 26 1964

67-11915-1143

### Booze Flows Freely

Twenty thousand was a conservative estimate on the size of the crowd by unbiased observers. Estimates by some press services ran as high as 50,000 persons, though this last was considered somewhat too high.

In the throng which was packed in literal sardinelike fashion in a radius of 100 feet around the canopy, many men packed pistols. Corn liquor was in evidence on every hand. "Mourners" who became too boisterous were promptly silenced by those "in authority."

The family carried out its plan of barring photographers and newspapermen insofar as it was able, but the hillside was dotted with writers and both men and women with cameras. A woman carrying a folding camera in a "trick" purselike case was spotted under the enclosure before the body arrived from Sallisaw and firmly ordered to leave the grounds. Another camera was snatched from a mother, Mrs. Walter F. Floyd.

"I drove 1400 miles to see the body and got within three feet of it," one man was heard to complain.

Others announced their residence as "a few miles from where Floyd was killed in Ohio."

After the throng was convinced that the casket really had been sealed, the mob began drifting away in all directions. The bulk of them, however, went 100 yards deeper into the cemetery to the Floyd family lot, selected by the gunman as his last resting place more than a year ago. The body was lowered there at nearly dusk, beside the graves of his father and younger brother.

The Rev. Rockett, pastor of the church of which the bandit's mother and a sister are members, made the best of his difficult assignment. He selected as his text a passage from the 19th chapter, 30th verse of the Apostle John, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

#### Emphasis on Forgiveness

In his sermon, the pastor placed emphasis on the passage in the same chapter concerning Jesus' forgiveness of the thief hanging on the cross at

his side with the words, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

"Who are we to judge?" the pastor asked. "Who are we to doubt but that Charles Floyd was forgiven by the Master when he asked, as I have been told he did, in his last hour, 'Lord have mercy upon me?'"

The Rev. Rockett praised the people of Akins and the Cookson area as "the salt of the earth." He asserted that relatives of the "Pretty Boy" were among his best personal friends and were kind, lovable people who "would do anything in the world for me."

"I do not say this for the benefit of the thousands of persons, mostly curiosity seekers, who have gathered here today, but because I feel it deep in my heart. With the sanction of the family I wish to speak word of caution to all of you, that you who call yourselves Christians, be not led astray as this lad was."

#### Cautions the Living

"There is nothing we could say that would be of any benefit to Charles Arthur Floyd, but it is possible, we hope, for us to say something that would be beneficial and consoling to those who are living; therefore we urge you who do not know the Christ as your Lord and Savior, to seek Him now before it is too late and we may have to recognize that it is finished."

The arrival of the body from Sallisaw was delayed some time because of the traffic jam on the road from Akins to the cemetery. Three flower cars preceded the hearse, as did several more cars bearing members of Floyd's family.

Before doors of the hearse could be opened, more than half an hour was spent in persuading the unruly throng to back away from the vehicle. Only a small part of those gathered around could hear the funeral oration, and cries for loudspeakers rang out from every side.

When the casket was opened, the outlaw's mother almost fainted, screamed, "My boy never hurt nobody!" and then quieted. His widow, Mrs. Ruby Floyd, wept in the arms of Mrs. George Birdwell, widow of Floyd's first henchman, killed in a bank robbery nearly two years ago.

#### Son Looks Like Him

Floyd's 9-year-old son, Jack Dempsey Floyd, was with his mother. The two spent all last week in Sallisaw.

Young Floyd, who bears a remarkable resemblance to "Pretty Boy", is a nice appearing, well-behaved child. He spent the week playing with neighboring children, was well liked and made many friends.

Floyd's aged grandparents, the wrinkled old woman wearing a new sunbonnet, waited in the cemetery from noon until joined by the other relatives. The family stoically fought its way to the cane-bottomed chairs under the shelter.

Among those who viewed the body were police officers from every county in the state. Only a small percentage of them had ever seen Floyd alive and were anxious for a glimpse of the man they had trailed fruitlessly for the past 10 years.

Floyd's grave clothes consisted of a dark serge suit, white shirt and tie. Only the upper part of his body was visible, and his features bore no signs of the bullet spray of federal officers who sent him to his rendezvous with death seven miles east of East Liverpool, Ohio last Monday afternoon.

#### Private Rites First

At time the routine of passing before the casket was halted while warnings were sung out to the crowd, reminding them of their respect for the family. When the casket was closed a howl immediately went up to "Let the people see the body," and at times under the canopy, individuals were cautioned against boisterous laughter and "improper" remarks.

According to those intimately connected with the family, private funeral rites were conducted at the home of his mother in Sallisaw before the body was brought to Akins. Pallbearers were Clar Friz, Lester Maudin, B. D. Cheek, Arphus Franks, Melvin Faulkner and Frank Green.

It was rumored that it was only through the pleadings of friends and hill-folk that Mrs. Walter Floyd permitted a public funeral. Spectators began arriving last night in every manner of conveyance, wagons, trucks, busses, buggies and on horseback. Some walked as far as 30 miles through the rough country.

Sallisaw was during the day the host to perhaps the most motley crowd in history. Booted hillmen with "ten gallon" hats, city dwellers, Indians and "toughs" alike descended upon the city at daybreak.