

**From *The Mirror*  
July 31, 1902**

(The punctuation and spelling are as they appeared in the original document.)

**ASSASSIN STILL FREE**

**But Hundreds of Men in Pursuit  
And Blood Hounds on the Trail – Sure to be Caught**

**ALL LOWER LOUDOUN EXCITED**

**Particulars of the Most Dastardly Crime  
Committed in the History of Our County –  
Victim a Member of Mosby's Command.**

While returning from Herndon, to his home near Sterling on Monday afternoon, Mr. William Wilson, a prominent farmer in Broad Run district, this county, was shot from ambush and almost instantly killed by a negro believed to be Charles Craven.

Mr. Wilson had been in Herndon on business and was supposed to have had money in his pockets, as he was a man who usually carried considerable money on his person. It is the negro who held up, and robbed young Steadman at Tuscarora Creek last week, the particulars of which have been stated in these columns. He was seen in Herndon Monday morning. At about one o'clock he appeared at the residence of Mr. Frank Van Dusen, and demanded something to eat.

Being refused he left in a rage. A few minutes later Mr. Wilson was seen to pass and a pistol shot was heard. The sound of fire arms in that community is rare, and an investigation was made from the Van Dusen homestead, which resulted in finding Mr. Wilson mortally wounded. He was speechless and died in a few minutes. His pockets had been rifled, which shows that the murder was committed for gain.

Thus it is seen that the circumstances point to Craven as the murderer. Immediately a posse was organized at Herndon and started in pursuit. Soon another company started from Sterling, both of which were met at Goose Creek by a large number of citizens from Leesburg, accompanied by Sheriff Russell. The chase was continued all night without success. The negro was seen several times, and three shots were fired at him by Mr. Jno. Hutchison, who met him on the road.

Our local authorities, who are ever on the alert, telegraphed at once to State officials for blood hounds, which arrived in Washington at about 11 o'clock Tuesday night. Special conveyances had been provided by Mayor White and others, and the keeper of the dogs, two detectives and a number of other persons started for the scene of the murder, arriving there at about 2 o'clock.

Owing to the rain the dogs were useless, but they were put on the trail at an early hour Wednesday morning and the trail was followed till about four o'clock, when the rain again interfered. The murderer was chased to within 2½ miles of Leesburg at that time by three hundred armed men and the faithful dogs. The river is picketed, making it impossible for him to cross over in Maryland. Another posse will start out tonight (Wednesday) with the blood hounds and no doubt before this paper goes to press the fiend will be caught, and if caught, will probably be lynched.

## CRAVEN CAUGHT

A telephone message from Ashburn Thursday morning, states that Craven was caught at that place about 10 o'clock.

LATEST—Craven lodged in jail here Thursday morning at 11 o'clock. Big excitement.

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## CRAVEN LYNCHED.

A mob of about 300 from Fairfax County arrived in Leesburg about 1 o'clock today, and began an assault on the jail. The officers were overpowered and the jail doors battered down, and about two o'clock they left with Craven and about a mile from town he was hanged and his body was riddled with bullets.

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*The Mirror*  
August 7, 1902

## THE CORONER'S INQUEST

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### Verdict Rendered – Some Prominent Men Arrested

Since the lynching of Chas. Craven on Thursday, Leesburg has been in a somewhat excited and demoralized condition. Shortly after the crime was committed Coroner Clagett summoned a jury composed of Messrs. W. W. Chamblin, Jno. White, Henry Sellman, Jno. Rinker, E.B. Harrison and Edward Titus, who at once began an inquiry. After four days of hard work they returned about three o'clock Tuesday afternoon with a verdict, which, omitting the caption and names, reads as follows:

“The jurors, sworn to inquire when, how and by what means the said Chas. Craven came to his death, upon their oaths do say that on July 31, 1902, Charles Craven was taken from the county jail of Loudoun county, Va., to a point on the Washington turnpike, one half mile east of Leesburg, Va., and hung by the neck with a rope and the body riddled with bullets and shot, resulting in death. A large number of persons were implicated in the lynching. From the conflicting testimony given the jury are only able to connect the following persons with the breaking in of the jail and lynching the prisoner. (Here follows the names) We therefore find that the said Charles Craven was willfully and feloniously killed by being shot by several persons, the names of some of those who participated as principals and accessories before the fact being unknown to us, but amongst whom were the aforesaid named above.”

To the great disappointment of the expectant groups which had gathered about the courthouse, the names in the verdict were not made known and this precaution in itself was an indication that arrests were contemplated.

Upon the inquisition, in accordance with his duty, Coroner Clagett at once issued warrants, charging the men whom the jury had implicated with the murder of Chas. Craven, and turned them over to the Sheriff. Most of these names have been kept a secret but of necessity several of them have become known.

The Sheriff had no sooner received the warrants than he began to search for the parties and to start his deputies after men in their respective districts. The first man to be arrested was S.H. Grimes, a butcher, residing in the town of Leesburg. He was at once carried before Justice Harrison, who not having authority to accept bail in such cases, committed him to jail to await further examination Wednesday morning. Upon his

appearance the next morning, Mr. Grimes, through his council, Mr. W.E. Garrett, waived further examination. He was at once sent on to the Grand Jury. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Z.L. Weaver and Mr. John Lefever, both of Broad Run district, appeared before Justice Harrison, and stated that, having heard warrants were out for their arrest, they desired to surrender themselves to the authorities. Dr. Z.L. Weaver, acting under the advice of his council, Mr. Walton Moore, waived an examination, as likewise did Mr. Lefever, who has retained Judge J.B. McCabe. Thereupon they were also sent on to the Grand Jury. The three men then applied to Judge R.H. Tebbs for bail. After hearing much of the evidence, pro and con, which was produced before him by the above attorneys and by Commonwealth's Attorney Garrett, Judge Tebbs consented to accept bail and fixed the size of the bonds for Dr. Z.L. Weaver, and Samuel H. Grimes at \$15,000 each, and for Mr. Lefever at \$20,000. All were able to furnish satisfactory bonds and were recognized for their appearance before the Grand Jury on Monday.

Dr. Z.L. Weaver is a popular young physician residing in Sterling. He is about twenty-eight years old, of a pleasing personality and married.

Mr. John Lefever is a prosperous and popular young farmer, and lives near Waxpool. He has a joint interest with his brother in about 400 acres of land. He is of a happy disposition and about thirty years old, and has host of friends in Broad Run District. He is a brother in-law of Rev. Mr. Popkins, a prominent Baptist minister.

Much interest was manifested in the examination and the Court House was crowded from beginning to close.