

**The Diary of Ida Lee Rust,
July-August, 1902**

5 Excerpts

**From the Rust Papers at the Thomas Balch Library
Leesburg, Virginia**

[July 1902]

30th A lovely rain all night - so steady & gentle, & so needed. Cleared towards mid-day sufficiently for the old soldiers of the Con. to enjoy their re-union, held here. Two are here for the night. Lee [her son] went to Wash. to meet his friend, Dillard & brought him up for the night so I had quite a crowd for supper.

31st Clear, but still & damp. A growing day, much needed for the corn & grass. An awful crime perpetrated here today! That wretched negro [Charles Craven] was sought & brought here unfortunately by the Sheriff. Soon after 300 men from Fairfax mounted & armed, rode into the town & to the jail — where they demanded the keys. The brave jailor refused to give them up, tho they almost choked him. Col. White, Mr Hinks, Mr Ferguson, & many of our best citizens, in vain appealed to them to allow the Court to take its course. Col. White asked for volunteers to defend the prisoner. Only a few responded – among them Charlie Harrison, Mr Switzer, & my dear son Lee, who seemed very much impressed by the wrong, & injustice of the whole thing. The majority realized that assistance would only result in more blood shed. The jail doors were broken with sledge hammers, & the wretched [prisoner?] carried off, hung, and shot — and the crowd dispersed. It is Emancipation day too, & quite a crowd of negroes were holding a parade at the Fair Grounds. There was no demonstration of any sort- I am thankful to say. & still more thankful that the citizens of Leesburg tried to uphold the law, & were not engaged in this terrible crime. The murder was unprovoked, cold blooded & dastardly, & the man guilty of a robbery a few days before & of many other crimes — but that is no excuse for outlawery & mob law. It is a blot upon Loudoun's fair record. Our visitors all left at one today. Janet Harrison called tonight – & Tom came home early so we talked of the awful affair until ten o'clock.

[August]

1st Cloudy & warm. How fast the summer is flying! Lily & her party returned tonight, having had a delightful trip & all looking so well. All took supper here & we had a fine spread which they all enjoyed.

2nd So very warm & murky. Went to church & communion with my precious boy Lee. Oh may my children constantly grow in grace - & love their dear Saviour more & more. Lee & I, with little Lee leave for a week's visit to Walkersville tomorrow. Mr Hinks gave us an earnest, good sermon, bearing upon the awful crime committed here a few days ago. May it never occur again! . . .

13th Very cool & damp today. There is a suppressed excitement in town. The Grand Jury has indicted three men as principals in the lynching of that negro. I do hope they will be punished, and such lawlessness stopped.