

WERNER'S NECK IS BROKEN

A FULL BLOOD CHOCTAW PAYS THE DEATH PENALTY.

A Horrible List of Crimes Confessed on the Scaffold—Three Thousand Persons Witness the Execution.

TAHLEQUAH, I. T., April 15.—John Werner, a full blood Choctaw, about 50 years of age, was hanged in the jail yard at this place to-day at 12 50 o'clock for assisting in the cold-blooded murder of John Daugherty of Flint district last July.

For several days past Werner has been very nervous, talking but little, and when he talked at all it was only to one or two of his guards. He did not sleep at all last night. He put in the entire night singing and praying and pacing to and fro in his cell.

Yesterday afternoon he became unusually restless and begged High Sheriff Mayes to take him out and hang him and end his misery. This morning after 6 o'clock he slept for an hour or so, and at 7:30 ate a hearty breakfast.

Promptly at 12 o'clock Sheriff Mayes and a deputy took the doomed man from his cell to the gallows. He walked on to the platform with a firm and steady step. He was dressed neatly in a black cloth suit, wearing kid gloves. He glanced unconcernedly about him as he took his seat on the scaffold.

When asked if he wished to say anything he raised from his seat and walked to the banister of the platform, and, pausing for a moment, as though he was going to answer an opponent in a political speech, he began talking with as much composure as a stump speaker would have done. He said he fully confessed to the crime for which he had been tried, convicted and for which he was then about to pay the penalty; that he had written full particulars in a previous confession and did not want to consume any more time, as he was in a hurry to get off.

"I wish, however," said he, "to make a few additional remarks which I neglected to include in my confession. I wish to advise my friends to keep away from bad associates and abstain from the use of whisky, two evils which have brought me to the gallows. The life of crime which I have led was brought on by drinking and bad company. I have been a member of no less than three secret organizations whose motives were crime, and these organizations have brought me where I am. Whenever a man displeased one of the organizations or injured one of its members they were called together and the offender sentenced to death without judge or jury. A committee was then appointed to do the killing, and they seldom failed to do it if they were given time enough.

"I have been on these committees more than once. I could if I had time tell you of many of your citizens who have fallen victims to our decree. George Howing was one of them and John Ratt another. I will also tell you the names of persons who have been condemned to death, but not yet murdered. One of them is Ellis Starr, a leading man of our nation, Tom Sanders and still others who I don't remember.

"John Daugherty was not a member of these organizations, but the organization began to lose faith in me and feared I would divulge some of their secrets and to rid themselves of me they condemned John Daugherty and Paul Christie. John Muskrat and myself were appointed to do the killing. We did it and I alone to-day am to pay the penalty. The particulars of this affair, together with a full confession of my crime, you will read in the Cherokee newspapers next week, so I will not repeat it now. I only regret that I have lived the life I have and the others equally guilty with me are not to die with me."

After making this statement in a calm, quiet voice, he took his seat. Rev. Lucy Hawkins led a hymn, which was sung, after which the condemned man, with the clergyman, knelt in prayer. After rising, the noose was adjusted, the black cap put over his head and the trap sprung. His neck was broken and not a muscle quivered after he fell. In twenty minutes he was pronounced dead, cut down and prepared for burial.

It is estimated that nearly 3000 persons witnessed the execution, and among them not a sympathizing tear was seen to fall. Nearly every beholder admired his mistaken nerve and unquestionable bravery in facing death without a tear.

THE CRIME.

The crime for which John Werner to-day paid the penalty was one of the most dastardly recorded in Cherokee annals. The evidence at the trial showed that Werner and one John Muskrat deliberately planned and executed the cold blooded murder of Daugherty for no other reason than that he opposed them in politics.

Werner has confessed since his conviction that Daugherty was killed because of his knowledge of a crime more revolting which had been committed by Werner and Muskrat.

About three years ago an inoffensive young Cherokee was murdered and robbed near Evansville, Ark., his head severed from his shoulders and the body hidden in a thicket. When found it had been almost devoured by hogs and wild animals and no clue was left as to the perpetrators. This horrible crime, so Werner confessed, was committed by himself and Muskrat, and Daugherty being privy to the deed, they planned his murder also.

On July 17 last Werner and Muskrat met Daugherty in the road near his home. After passing him some distance the two wheeled their horses and began abusing Daugherty. When he failed to say anything in return they began firing upon him, and when found about an hour afterward he was lying dead in the road with a dozen bullet holes in his body. Werner and Muskrat were charged jointly with the crime and warrants issued for their arrest. Werner was arrested about a week later, tried and convicted and to-day paid the penalty. Muskrat is still at large and defies arrest.