

The New York Sun's History of the Loomis Gang (1877)

The following history of the infamous Loomis Gang was written by Amos Cummings for The New York Sun in 1877, and was reprinted in several upstate journals.

Isaiah Belfield, thirty-three years old, has been acquitted of the charge of murdering Mrs. Phoebe Crandall in Brookfield, Madison County, thirteen years ago. The testimony proved that Belfield was a member of the famous Loomis gang, twelve years ago the terror of Oneida and Madison counties.

The history of the Loomis family has never been written. For over sixty years they set the law at defiance, and were at last uprooted only by the strong arm of a vigilance committee. A report of the Prison Association, made to the Legislature in 1865, says that the family have grown rich by thieving. Their children are educated in the best and most expensive seminaries. They dress genteelly, their manners are polished, and they appear to good advantage in society. They rule the counties of Oneida, Oswego, Otsego, Madison, Chenango, Schoharie, Delaware, and Sullivan with a rod of iron.

They have numerous well-trained confederates in all of these counties, who are ready by day or night, at a moment's warning, to ride off in any direction for the sake of plundering or for the concealment or protection of associates who are in danger of falling into the meshes of the law. These men have been indicted times without number in the above named counties, but none of them have ever been convicted, nor have any of them been in jail for a longer time than was sufficient for a bondsman to arrive at prison. There are farmers, apparently respectable who belong to the gang and share in its profits. Whenever bail is needed, substantial farmers come forward and sign the bonds without regard to the amount of the penalty. The family exert a great political influence, and are always ready to reward their friends and punish their enemies, both at the primary conventions and at the polls.

Although they have been repeatedly indicted, the number of their indictments bears but a small ratio to the number of their depredations. It usually happens that any one who is particularly active in bringing any of the gang to justice has his barn or dwelling burned, or horses are missing from the stable, or his sheep or cattle from the pasture. These things have been done so often that cautious men are careful how they intermeddle by seeking to bring the members of the gang to justice. If a man so intermeddling happens to have a mortgage on his property, it is very soon foreclosed. If he has political aspirations, thousands of unseen obstacles interpose to prevent the fulfillment of his hopes. If he is a trader his custom falls off. If he is a physician malpractice is imputed to him, or other stories are circulated to his discredit, and at length matters come to such a pass that his only resource is to quit the country. All who make themselves conspicuous as opponents of the family are in some way made to feel the effect of a thousand blighting influences.

Although the law has been powerless when exerted against the gang, they have been in the habit of using its energies with great effect against those who stood in their path. We are told with great circumstantiality, by men worthy of confidence, of numerous instances in which, under skillful manipulations, the forms of law were used to punish innocence and shield robbery.

The Man From Vermont

Such was the report made to the Legislature. Though the gang is scattered to the four winds, the terror sown by its acts remains, and it is difficult to gather the material necessary for a history. "I know nothing about the Loomises," said a man who had known them from boyhood. "I have no insurance on my house, and they have never molested me. They were good, whole-souled fellows, and if you want to get their pedigree you must go to some other man." Of a score or more of old residents not more than three are willing that their names should appear in print. The others were controlled by a fear of retaliation on the part of stray members of the gang.

George Washington Loomis, father of this noted family, came to Oneida county in 1802. He settled in Sangerfield Township, near the Madison County line. He was muscular and about 5 feet 10 inches high. He was 25 years old and weighed 180 pounds. Loomis is said to have been driven from Vermont for horse stealing. His record in Oneida and Madison counties bears out the imputation. He bought 385 acres of land covering the highest knob in the former county. After clearing it he built a substantial farmhouse on the side of a hill overlooking the Chenango Valley.

The Chenango River, at this point a mere brook filled with speckled trout, watered a large cedar swamp that choked the valley below the mansion. This swamp fills much space in the annals of the Loomis family. Stolen horses and other plunder were hidden in it, and it was a never-failing avenue of escape when the gang were hard pressed with constables. It has never been cleared up, and extends from Sangerfield Center, Oneida county, to Hubbardsville, Madison county, a distance of nine miles in width. The cedars are so thick and impenetrable that not more than ten men in the county can traverse it with confidence.

Two sisters and two brothers, Walter and Willard, followed George W. Loomis to Oneida County. The brothers were at first quartered on the farm. One of the sisters married Dr. Preston, a reputable physician of Sangerfield Center. The other became the wife of one Prentiss, a dealer in counterfeit money. They were intelligent girls, and had a strong family attachment. When he came to Oneida County Loomis was reputed to be worth several thousand dollars. The country was wild and unsettled, and the inhabitants regarded him as a valuable acquisition. He was well educated, smart, industrious and a good farmer. He drove fine horses, and raised the best stock in the county. Genial and obliging to a fault, he became popular, and his advice was sought by his neighbors.

The Mother of the Loomis Family

One Mallett, a Frenchman, lived a few miles from the Loomis farm. An officer in the French Revolutionary army, he had embezzled money belonging to the State, and fled to this country. His wife was dead, but he had a daughter, Rhoda, a beautiful and accomplished girl. She taught school, and was the belle of the ball room. She had a fiery temper. One day the Sheriff of the County tried to crawl into Mallett's window to arrest him for debt. Rhoda disputed his passage, and finally knocked him over with a fire shovel. Loomis saw the whole transaction, and openly expressed his admiration. The Sheriff asked him for aid, and was overwhelmed with jibes. "A girl that will fight for her father will fight for her husband," he said. "I am going to marry that girl." He did so, and none too soon; for in 1812 her father was convicted of perjury and sent to State prison.

Before this, however, Loomis himself had a narrow escape from a similar fate. The country was flooded with counterfeit money, and it was rumored that his house was the rendezvous of the

counterfeiters. In 1810 Loomis, his brother Willard, his sister's husband, Prentiss, and two pals, Howard and Reynolds, were arrested, charged with passing counterfeit money. All but Loomis were indicted, and landed in State prison. Loomis had passed a bad \$10 bill on a Captain Leonard. He escaped punishment by buying up the Captain before the Grand Jury were in session.

While associated with counterfeiters, Loomis did not neglect his farm. It was productive, but was made doubly so by his wife, who had rare tact and resources. She bent everything toward the accumulation of money. The house became a resort for suspicious persons. Stolen horses were occasionally tracked to its vicinity. Sheep, beeves, hogs, and fowls mysteriously disappeared from outlying farms, and while the neighbors had no proof of anything wrong at the Loomis mansion, a few of them began to have their suspicions.

Loomis, however, maintained a fair reputation. He religiously paid his debts, and his word was as good as his bond. Added to his sociability and obliging manners, this averted suspicion, and he pursued his evil course unmolested. There were no unwelcome guests at his farmhouse. His wife was charming and agreeable, his children bright and engaging, and his table well supplied.

The Six Brothers

Loomis reared four girls and six boys. William W., Washington W., Grove L., Wheeler, Amos Plumb, and Hiram Denio were born in the order named. The girls were Calista, Charlotte, Cornelia and Lucia. Calista, the oldest, married a lawyer of note in Whitesboro, and afterward died, leaving a girl and a boy. Maria, the daughter, after an adventurous life, is said to be a private detective in Pinkerton's detective bureau. Lucia married a respectable farmer of Sangerfield. Charlotte became the wife of a member of the firm of J. Bride & Co., merchants of New York City, and died nine years ago, leaving three children. Cornelia, the brightest of all the girls, remains an old maid, and is living with her mother and brother Denio in Hastings, Oswego county. The girls were plump, pretty and vivacious, and fitted to adorn any rank of society. Charlotte and Lucia played the piano and were fine musicians. The boys received a fair, common-school education. They were all good-looking and firm-built.

Wash was unusually bright, and, according to the old schoolmaster, with whom I talked, was an apt scholar, and had keen perceptive faculties. He read a man at a glance. Affable and polite, he was a general favorite. He was generous to a fault, told a good story, and always kept his word. He took the popular side of every question, and had remarkable presence of mind. His eye never betrayed his thoughts. He had dark blue eyes, black curly hair, regular features, and a full black beard and mustache. Many say that he bore a remarkable resemblance to J. Wilkes Booth. His schoolmaster says he was well behaved. He was a keen observer of human nature, and seemed endowed with magnetic power. Few could resist the fascination of his manners and conversation. Detective Wilkins says that in ten minutes he could turn an enemy into a friend. He was a born diplomatist, and never resorted to physical force when his ends could be obtained in any other way. Among his brothers and sisters his word was law. He dressed with exquisite neatness, sported the finest turnout in the county, attended all the rural dances and festivals, and was a general favorite with the fair sex. He gleaned a theoretical knowledge of the law while a student in Judge Eldred's office in Hamilton, but his practical knowledge was obtained in an entirely different school. He intuitively saw the best way out of a scrape, and always had the nerve to follow it.

Grove was next to Wash in importance. He was nearly six feet high, well developed, and almost perfect in manly beauty. He was the most aggressive of all the brothers, but lacked the tact and

diplomacy of Wash. He kept fine fox hounds, and had a taste for hunting and fishing. There was not better horseman or judge of horseflesh in the country. His love for horses was inherited from his father, and grew into a passion. He kept none but blooded stock, and when pressed sailed over the country on horseback without regard to roads or fences.

The finest horses stood in the barnyard night and day saddled and bridled, ready for use at a moment's warning. In early times they were the Kentucky Hunter stock, but were afterwards changed for Black Hawk and Morgan stock. Wash owned the one-eyed Hunter, said to have been the sire of Flora Temple. Grove was the owner of Flying Cloud, a well-known Black Hawk stallion, for which he said he was once offered \$6,000. Marvellous stories have been told about a mare known as the California mare. It was reported that Wash had brought her from the Pacific coast, and he has been pictured threading swamps, jumping creeks, and leaping fences with her at midnight and in the early morning hours. The truth is she was a big, course brown mare, balky and awkward. Wash used her a great deal, because he couldn't get any work out of her on the farm. He swapped a horse for her in the town of Vernon.

William Loomis, the older brother, seems to have been cut out for a plodding farmer. He had no mental activity, and was controlled by the younger and brighter members of the family. He is now living near Verona. His disposition is soured, but he is industrious, and his farm shows care and attention.

Wheeler, the fourth brother, appears to have been the most unprincipled of the six. His character shows not a redeeming quality. He lacked honor and was the only one of the family whose unbridled sensuality led him to the door of a penitentiary. He is now living in Canada, where he was driven through fear of the law. It is known, however, that he has revisited the old homestead, and he is credited with sending many a stolen horse there from the land of snow.

Denio and Plumb were, physically, the smallest ones in the family. They are represented as artful and cunning, and lacked the coolness and courage of Wash and Grove. There was no dependence to be placed upon their word of honor, and, on a pinch, they showed the white feather. Plumb is still living on the old place, and Denio is a paralytic in Hastings, Oswego County.

The Family At Home

Such were the six brothers. The farm house was sightly and commodious, and the family lived in fine style. The table was covered with silver, and, while all were industrious, there was not lack of servants. The girls dressed fashionably, and the services of dressmakers were frequently required. The table was well supplied with meat, fowls and vegetables, oft-times stolen from neighboring farms. Strangers and acquaintances were always hospitably received, and though none of the boys were immoderate drinkers, the best whiskey was as free as water. The dooryard was shaded with sugar maples, and commanded a ten-mile view of the Chenango Valley. The barnyard was on the opposite side of the road, toward the swamp. A grove of maples covered the steep brow of the hill, back of the house, and there was a lane through the maples to a cabin on the top of a hill occupied by negroes and others who worked upon the farm.

A relative of the family says the old lady was quick tempered. At times she was very devout, and spent hours reading the Scriptures. She frequently boasted how many times she had read through her Bible. One of her sons-in-law says that she set her face against all wrong doing; but this does not

agree with accounts given by neighbors. They accuse her of inciting young visitors to petty peculations and crimes.

The were led to the house by Wash, who invited them to ride behind his fast horses, and studied their characters. If they were licentious, the attraction was blooming girls who had been brought to the mansion as servants on promises of good wages, and started upon an infamous career. If they were given to drink, the best liquors were set before them. At night the teams were harnessed, and the whole party sped away on a lark. The young fellows were on the road to crime before they knew it. When they were about to leave the house, the old lady would place her hand on their arms and say: "Now, don't come back without stealing something, if it's nothing but a jackknife." The first time they might return with the carcass of a sheep or lamb, or a tub of butter. Their dexterity was praised and the fruits of the marauding were placed upon the table. There were generally from three to half a dozen young men from 17 to 20 years old about the house. Sometimes they served as pickets, and gave timely warning of the approach of strangers and officers of the law. The most of the thieving and barn burning was done by these young rascals, the Loomises acting as receivers and disposers of stolen goods. They did the planning, and their young pals carried out the work.

The Missing Peddler

While the children were young a peddler was missing. It was known that he had stopped at the Loomis mansion. It is said that an unauthorized posse searched the place for his body. They found a well on the farm filled with stones, and began to clean it out. Halfway down they came to an immense boulder, which had evidently been drawn to the well by a yoke of oxen and rolled in. It choked off all further search, and the peddler was never found. This must have been about 1820. I could find no one living who had participated in this search, and it is hard to say how much truth there is in the rumor. Certain it is, that numerous thefts and burglaries were committed in Madison and Oneida Counties, and the family were suspected of being concerned in them. Constable Henry Keith visited the mansion as early as 1836 bearing a search warrant. He was spotted by the pickets, and was treated with the utmost politeness, but returned unsuccessful.

Keith tells some amusing stories of his subsequent adventures. He had a warrant for Wheeler on a charge of assault and battery, and visited the house after dark. The pickets gave the alarm, and the doors were closed. The old lady and Cornelia assured him that Wheeler was not in the house, and refused admittance. He had no authority to break open the doors, and had he done so without finding his man would have been punished, through the family influence to the full extent of the law. He resorted to strategy. He rubbed some mud on the shoulder of one of his posse, who knocked at the door and asked for help. The old lady took a light and surveyed the newcomer through the window. He said he was a traveler who had been thrown from his wagon and badly hurt. The mud on his shoulder apparently bore out his assertion, and the kind-hearted old lady told him if he would come in she would rub some camphor on his bruises and give him some whiskey. The door was opened, and Keith and party rushed in. They searched from garret to cellar. As they were descending the stairs near the sitting room Cornelia told them to look out for the paint. The stairs were boarded up at the side and the boards were covered with fresh blue paint. Keith's keen eye detected an uneven crack at the bottom of one of the boards. He stooped and pulled out the board. There stood Wheeler, confused and sheepish. The warrant was served, and he was bundled off to the office of a Justice.

At another time Keith had a warrant for the arrest of Salem Loucks, one of the Loomis negroes, charged with stealing a horse. The posse surrounded the house after dark. Keith suspected that the

negro was hidden in the garret. The back doors were locked. Cornelia planted herself of the front doorstep, and the old lady forbade the men to enter the house. Keith was afraid that the darkey would escape to the swamp, and kept a careful watch upon the doors and windows. While he was back of the house prospecting near the woodshed, some of the boys in front shouted that the negro was escaping. Two girls had come out of the house with a black man between them, and were crossing the road toward the barnyard. Keith ran after them, and the girls blew out his lantern. His posse closed around the trio, and it was a long time before the constable found a match and relighted his lantern. Then he discovered that the girls were escorting a strange negro. Salem meanwhile had slipped out of a side window and was safe in the swamp.

The Big Search

The first authentic legal scrape involving the boys was in September, 1848. Allen Abbey had a country dance at Brookfield. Grove and Wash got a crowd of hop pickers together and drove over. The wagon body was filled with clubs. They entered the ballroom without tickets, insisting on dancing, and wound up in a bloody fight. Several heads were broken, and Abbey was nearly killed. Wash was indicted for an assault with intent to kill, and brought before James W. Nye, then County Judge and afterward United States Senator from Nevada. Nye admitted him to bail and repeatedly postponed the trial. Soon afterward old Dan Douglas, of Sangerfield Center, had Wash indicted for stealing a saddle and bridle. Things became so hot that Wash was forced to skip his bail, and put for California.

What is known as "the Big Search" occurred in 1849. Burglaries were of nightly occurrence. Clothes lines were robbed, farmers lost their sheep and horses, and there was a multitude of petty thefts. The farmers became thoroughly aroused, and accused the Loomises of the thefts. A large crowd drove up to the house in sleighs and made a thorough search of the premises. They found a great store of goods, including log chains, umbrellas, whiffletrees, neck yokes, buffalo robes, and an almost inconceivable variety of articles. Square holes covered with boards, and filled with stolen goods, were discovered in a hay-mow. Much of the property was taken to Waterville and identified. A guard was left in the house, but were frightened by the brothers, who fastened them in a room, and spent the night burning and destroying the goods that remained. Some of the family were arrested, but conviction seemed impossible. While all were satisfied that they were a family of thieves, no one could identify the one who stole the goods. Tangible evidence against William was unearthed, and he served a short time in jail. All the others escaped.

Wash remained in California several years. At one time it was reported that he had been hanged by a vigilance committee. In his absence old Douglas died and Abbey froze to death, so that it was an impossibility to convict him on either indictment. He returned from California before the death of his father. His return is said to have been accelerated by the dispute with one Burns over some pasture land. There were high words.

"Are you fixed?" asked Burns.

"I am," Wash replied.

"All set," said Burns, "let's go out and settle it."

They drew their revolvers and went out. On the way Wash tried to settle the dispute by shooting

Burns in the side. The wound was a slight one, but Wash's treachery told upon the community. They gave chase with a rope. He escaped into a canyon and was followed by a friend on horseback. Wash rode the pony over two hundred miles pursued by Burn's comrades. It is even asserted that they tracked him to New York.

The Wygart Mare

While Wash was gone William was indicted for stealing what was known as the Wygart Mare. She was bred on a farm near Verona. The evidence against William seemed conclusive. He was seen with the mare and the animal was found on the Loomis farm. Wygart and the best judges of horses in the country fully identified her. The Loomises pretended and proved by respectable witnesses that they bought her of one Bush. The people, however, were confident that there could be no mistake. For once one of the gang was caught "dead to rights." Dr. Preston, his uncle, said: "Bill, I've often told you there'd be an end to your halter. They've got you this time."

"You wait," William answered. "I've got the books at home to tell exactly where the Wygart mare is."

On the day of the trial the real Wygart mare ran up the lane leading to the Wygart barnyard. She was brought to Morrisville where court was in session, and resembled the mare taken from the Loomis farm so closely that her owner could not detect the difference. She had really been stolen by some of the gang and run down into Pennsylvania. Grove Loomis recovered her in time to prevent his brother's conviction. Soon after Wash's return from California a negro was killed upon the homestead. An Irishman employed by the Loomises disemboweled him with a scythe. The family said that it was an accident, and a coroner's jury agreed with them. Many, however, believed that the negro was killed because he had a glib tongue and excited suspicion by his remarks.

The constable who gave the gang the most trouble, and finally destroyed the was James L. Filkins, a blacksmith. He says that he first became acquainted with the Loomises in 1856. He was then 21 years old, and worked for Joseph Avery, a wagon-maker of Brookfield. The father of the family was one of Avery's customers, and Filkins shod many a horse for the old man. Filkins describes him as a genial old fellow, who was always joking with young folks and twitting them of their love affairs. In the fall his pockets were filled with fruit, which he distributed liberally. "I first saw Wash Loomis," says Filkins, "at Laban Alby's hotel. Alby was a colored man. He dunned Wash for twenty-five cents. Wash borrowed the money of me, promising to repay it the next day. He kept his word. About this time I remember that Bill Loomis was arrested on the charge of passing a counterfeit bill on a peddler. The peddler swore positively to both bills, but through some hocus pocus, engineered by Wash, Bill escaped. Wash was a genius. He would train a witness in manufactured evidence until he actually made him believe that he was telling the truth."

Cornelia's Operations

Filkins worked at his trade until 1856. In March, 1858, he was elected Town Constable of Brookfield, Madison County. The whole country was overawed by the Loomis gang, and very few officers tried to serve warrants against them. The new constable began an active campaign. He tells some amusing stories about their doing before his election. He says that Cornelia and the boys were at a ball in Brookfield. Some of the rural belles missed their muffs, and made bitter complaints. A few of these muffs were afterward found in the Loomis mansion, and it was understood that Cornelia had entered

the dressing room at the ball, drawn them over her legs and carried them off.

The old man Loomis died February 26th, 1856, aged 71 years, and the boys were left to their own resources.

In 1857 a stranger called on Russell Crumb of North Brookfield, and said he had heard that Crumb had a yoke of cattle to sell. Crumb showed the steers, and asked \$160 for them. The stranger paid the money, closed the bargain and drove off the cattle. Crumb said he had an effeminate appearance, and his hands were remarkably small and white. On the next day Crumb tried to bank the money at Waterville. The cashier threw out all but two dollars, asserting that it was counterfeit. Crumb returned home, tracked the cattle to the Loomis farm, and found them grazing in a meadow. The boys said they had given a stranger \$155 for them. Crumb replevined the oxen but the boys gave bonds and retained them. Through some chicanery the case never came to trial, and Crumb lost the animals. One of the gang afterward said that the stranger who bought the cattle from Crumb was Cornelia Loomis dressed in men's clothing. It is said that it was not unusual for the girls to array themselves in male attire and travel the country passing counterfeit bills. The case of Crumb incensed many residents of the county, but no effort to assist him in regaining his steers was made. Generally the family was on the best of terms with their neighbors.

A man in moderate circumstances bought a small farm near them. He called upon them, said he was a poor man with a small quantity of stock, and hoped that he could squeeze through life without trouble with his neighbor. Wash assured him that he would look out for his interests. Not long afterward the man lost his best horse. He reminded Wash of his promise. Wash said that he knew nothing about his horse, but that if possible he would find him. Some of the gang had stolen the animal without Wash's knowledge, ran him off to Canada, and sold him. It cost Wash nearly \$300 to regain and return the horse.

Another neighbor, friendly to the Loomises, missed a brand new harness. He complained to Grove, who seemed much astonished, but promised to do what he could for him. On the following morning the harness was found hanging on the rack from which it had stolen.

Robbery on the Highway

In June, 1858, so many sheep were stolen from the farmers that they organized a party, and began to follow the clues that led to the Loomis farm. The Loomis boys became alarmed. They joined the farmers, saying that they also had lost sheep, and had trailed a drove to the farm of Jeremiah Clark, in the town of Hamilton. The party went to Clark's place and found many of the missing sheep. The Loomises gathered the sheep which they claimed, and drove them off, after a severe fight with Clark, who told the farmers that the boys had sold him the whole flock. Clark charged Wash, Grove and Plumb with highway robbery, and they were indicted. The three men retaliated by putting Clark under arrest for stealing the sheep. They manipulated the law to suit themselves. The indictment for highway robbery was never tried but Clark was sent to State prison.

Filkins was one of the constables who served the warrants on the Loomises for arrest on this charge of highway robbery. It was his first service. With seven men he surrounded the house early in the morning. Plumb tried to reach the swamp through the tall grass, but Filkins outran him, jumped upon his back, and handcuffed him. This unusual treatment alarmed Plumb and he shouted murder. The constable threatened to brain him if he didn't shut up, and Plumb said he was afraid of him. Long Sile

Clark, one of the gang, for whose apprehension Constable Keith had a warrant, reached the swamp. Filkins said he counted fourteen different men in and around the house, all spruce young fellows. Plumb only was captured. They took him to Keith's hotel in Brookfield.

He had not been there an hour before Grove rode up mounted on the California mare. A short club swung from his wrist, and he was armed with two revolvers. He demanded Plumb's release. Keith stepped into the house, and Grove, after a moment's hesitation, dashed away. He afterward said that he was afraid Keith had gone to saddle a famous horse that was more than a match in speed for the California mare. That night Plumb was put to bed on the upper floor, handcuffed to a special officer. In the morning the window was open and he was gone. He had slipped his handcuffs.

Scenes at the Loomis Mansion

In September following they were indicted. The bench warrants were sent to Filkins with letters from the Sheriff and District Attorney, urging immediate arrest, and charging him not to let the next slip through his fingers.

Filkins reached the house early in the morning with two men. It was snowing. He saw Wash, Grove and Plumb in the barnyard. They espied him, and were rushing for their horses. Grove mounted a trained horse without saddle or bridle, and put him through the woods over the face of the hill back of the house. Plumb got into the swamp, but Wash, unwittingly, ran into Filkins' arms, and was taken to Morrisville, where he was quickly bailed.

On Nov. 15, 1858, Filkins made a third attempt to capture the game. He approached the mansion at 5 A.M. with nine men. The constable and one of his assistants were mounted. The dogs barked. In the first flush of morning they saw a vedette in the road. He turned his horse and fled. It was Plumb. Filkins gave chase, and shots were exchanged and the vedette was wounded. Plumb ran into a posse on foot, headed by Ephraim Conger, who had come up from the opposite direction. He turned short, and Conger fired at him. The shot broke the leg of the horse, and he fell to the ground. In an instant Plumb was on his feet and off for the swamp. They tracked him some distance through the snow, stained by his blood, but he made his escape. In the confusion Grove and others of the gang became alarmed and got away without trouble. Grove and Plumb then quit the country, and did not return until Clark was imprisoned and matters were satisfactorily arranged.

On their return Plumb wanted the Grand Jury to indict Filkins for an attempt at murder. When the work of the jury was done one of the jurymen said: "Filkins, we came very near indicting you for not killing Plumb."

"The only apology I can make," said Filkins, "is that it was so early in the morning that I could not see very well."

About this time Grove was indicted for passing counterfeit money in Oneida County. The Loomis boys heard that District Attorney Munger carried in his pocketbook the twelve ten-dollar counterfeit bills which had been taken from Grove, and which were to be used as evidence against him. Before the trial the District Attorney was met on the street after midnight, and robbed of these bills. Without them the indictment could not be sustained, and Grove escaped punishment.

The Loomises Punishing Filkins

Filkins was made a Deputy Sheriff in April, 1855. He made so many raids upon the gang that they determined to punish him. In May, 1860, they went to Higginsville, Oneida County, and got a warrant from Justice Samuel Marsh for the arrest of Filkins and party on a charge of assault and battery. It was claimed that the offense was committed while the officer was endeavoring to make an arrest at the Loomis house. Filkins stood in his shop when Denio rode up with a Madison County officer, a friend of the Loomises, and served the warrant. Denio and the officer wanted to iron Filkins, but the officer would not consent. They drove to a crossroad in North Brookfield, where they met Wash, Plumb and William. They had Filkins' old posse in a wagon. The prisoners were shackled.

Filkins demanded that they should take him before a magistrate of his own county where he could be admitted to bail according to law. Wash said that the law did not accord this privilege, and Filkins insisted that it did. He had taken off his coat and refused to go with the party unless they proceeded according to law. Wash proposed a compromise. Filkins consented to go with them to ascertain the law in the case. He got into the wagon and Plumb planted himself behind, and gave him much abuse. After appealing to the constable for protection Filkins threatened to knock Plumb out of the wagon if he did not hold his tongue.

The driver evinced an inclination to cross a plank road and take a road leading to the Loomis homestead. Filkins sprang from the conveyance and accused Wash of bad faith. Grove drew out a cudgel and advanced on him, and Plumb pulled up a fence stake and prepared to take him in the rear. Filkins then drew a revolver, and there was a second compromise.

The party drove to Waterville, and it was ascertained that Filkins had a right to an examination before a Madison County magistrate. Wash was chagrined, "Jim," said he, "I'd rather give you the best horse I've got than to have you go back home this way." True to his word, however, he released Filkins who went home.

On that night, as he was about to go to bed, there was a knock at his door. "Who's there?" he asked.

"Kit," was the response. "Open the door quick. I want to see you."

Recognizing the voice of Christopher Mason, one of his posse who had been captured by the Loomises, and fancying that he had escaped Filkins opened the door. There was a rush of feet. In an instant he was knocked down and handcuffed. The Loomis party stood over him in glee. He was taken over to the old homestead, and was run through to Higginsville, a distance of forty miles. They pulled up at Oneida at 8 A. M. There Filkins got into the office of Lawyer Shoecraft, who made the Loomises show their warrant, and accompanied him before a magistrate. There the Loomises swore out four or five more warrants. Meantime Filkins' friends had trailed him down from Madison County. He gave bail and was released. The case was never even presented to the Grand Jury.

Filkins then had the Loomises indicted in Madison County for assault and battery. Judge Mason quashed all but one of the indictments, on the ground that Wash alone struck him when they dragged him from his house at night. The jury found Wash guilty and the Judge stultified the effect of their verdict by fining him \$25.

Disgusted with this result, Filkins moved to Oneida County. His reputation had preceded him. He was nominated for constable by both parties, and despite the efforts of the Loomises elected by a large

majority. He says he accepted the nomination on the promise of the people to stand by him in his efforts to uproot the gang.

At that time he says he could enumerate seventy persons in the town of Sangerfield alone who either affiliated with the Loomises, or stood ready to harbor or bail them. Many were land holders, and nearly all were of fair standing in the community. Filkins was elected March, 1862. When Plumb heard of it he swore that if Filkins ever came upon the premises to arrest him he'd shoot him.

A Beautiful Girl Murdered

Wash made money during the war by forcing the most worthless of the gang into the army and taking their bounty money. He knew their runways and scared them into enlistment by stories that Filkins was after them. In 1862 there was a sad tragedy in the Loomis mansion. In 1854 Wash had formed an intimacy with Anna Wright, a beautiful girl of German descent. She lived with him in the house and took an active part in the management of the farm. She was shot and killed by one Mott, a member of the gang. A coroner's inquest proved that Mott was near the mantel cleaning the barrel of a gun. The stock had been removed, and the barrels were capped and loaded. As Anna was passing he dropped them in the fireplace. One of the barrels was discharged, and the shot entered the girl's thigh, severing one of the arteries of the leg. She lingered several days, and died leaving Wash a son, who is still living and working as a farm laborer in Madison County. Filkins says that Mott entered the army soon afterwards, and told a comrade that Plumb and Denio promised him \$50 to kill the girl, as they were jealous of her influence with Wash. They cheated him out of the money.

Plumb's threats against Filkins led the latter to get out a peace warrant. The warrant was served with one held by Officer Beardslee. Plumb made an effort to escape but was caught by Albert Root, one of Beardslee's posse, and now a dentist at Hamilton. He was taken to Waterville and promptly bailed. He then got out a warrant against young Root, charging him with drawing a revolver and threatening his life. He claimed that Root did not properly belong to the posse, and Beardslee, for some reason refused to swear that he did. Two trained witnesses swore in Plumb's favor, and the law kept Root from the stand. Plumb, however, swore too much. He knew the revolver was loaded, for he could see the points of the bullets when it was pointed at him. The revolver was then produced, and when loaded the points of the bullet could not be seen. Root was discharged. He denied the charge in toto.

The Operations of the Gang

There were numerous petty thefts in 1862. Messrs. Montgomery and Eastman, the latter a brother of the late Mayor Eastman of Poughkeepsie, drove up to the American Hotel one evening at about dusk. In a few minutes they missed a valuable skunk skin robe. The landlord had seen old Beebe and several members of the gang in the streets. Montgomery made the remark that it was a dark night, but it might be lighter before they got home. Old Beebe lived over a hill a mile from the Loomises. His son, Lavergue, was one of the most daring and active of the gang. That night the Beebe barn was burned. The old man rode over to the Montgomery place and accused the young man of incendiarism. Mr. Montgomery kicked him out of his yard, and that was the end of it. While the barn was burning one of the clapboards fell off, and out dropped a store of revolvers, stolen from G. W. Tallman, a Government contractor in Utica. About the same time a shoe store in Hubbardsville and a tailor in Leonardsville were robbed. Filkins visited the Loomis place with a search warrant. The gang had become so bold, and had burned so many barns belonging to persons who had taken part against

them, that the residents were frightened, and Filkins found it impossible to raise a posse. He went to the house alone and found Wash at home. The house was searched. Scores of saddles and bridles were unearthed. Among the things, Filkins found a half dozen of Tallman's revolvers, a lot of new shoes, and Montgomery's skunk skin robe. Whips and blankets were found including some of the stolen goods from Leonardsville. Wash was caught trying to secrete the robe, and Filkins arrested him. Wash submitted after a protest, and Filkins took him before Justice Church, who said "Why do you bring the infernal scoundrel before me? Why don't you hang him?" The Justice held him. During the examination, the Leonardsville tailor saw one of his coats on the back of a spectator, who proved to be George Peckham, who Filkins says was one of the gang living in Hamilton. He said that he bought the coat from John Hall, another member of the fraternity. Wash was indicted by never put on trial.

Farmer Brown missed some sheep, and got out a search warrant. Filkins visited the Loomises on the day after Wash was bailed, to look for them. As he neared the house, Plumb and Denio mounted their horses and prepared to fly. "You needn't run," said the constable, "I've no warrant for you." Wash received him with the utmost politeness, and ordered the sheep driven up to the yard, so that Mr. Brown could see them. Brown identified his sheep, and Wash said "There's a d--d sight of iniquity in this county. Now, John Hall probably stole those sheep and put them in our flock to cast suspicion upon us." Grove backed up Wash and told Brown to ask any neighbors who had lost sheep to come and look their flock over. Brown took his sheep and made no further complaint.

Assassination

Up to July, 1863, Filkins visited the place on business every week. Scores of indictments were found against the Loomises. At midnight on July 22, there was a knocking at the door of Filkins' house in Waterville. His life had been so often threatened that he observed the utmost caution. His wife was attending a sick child. Seizing a revolver, Filkins approached the kitchen window and asked what was wanted. A voice replied "I'm Mr. Clark's hired man. Last evening he came by Van Dee's and saw Jack Van Dee at home, and asked me to come up here and let you know." Van Dee was a noted Loomis rascal, whom Filkins had vainly tried to arrest. Satisfied that the voice was that of Plumb Loomis, the officer stepped back. He was in the act of cocking his revolver, but a double-barreled shotgun loaded with slugs and pieces of nails was discharged through the window. Filkins was shot in the right arm and left hand. His hands dropped. The wife screamed, "James are you hit?" He replied: "I'm wounded," and she heard the blood pattering on the floor. He started for the bedroom, and two more shots were fired through the bedroom window. The blinds were shattered, and the lower part of the sash torn out. The bedroom door was filled with buckshot, and there were fourteen shot holes in the mantel. Seven buckshot and forty small shot had riddled the bed curtains. Filkins became faint with the loss of blood. The neighbors were aroused and his assailants retreated. The floor was covered with blood. Hundreds of persons visited the house on the next day. Filkins exhibited the following letter, which he had received two months before the attempt on his life, and there was much excitement:

"J. Filkins--Dear Sir: As a friend to you and all mankind I set down to write to forewarn you of danger. That gang has offered one of their associates a good sum of money to kill you at some convenient time, and he says he doubts whether they will pay him if he should do so. He is a daring and bold robber. I dare not sign my name."

Early in the morning Filkins requested an officer to go up to Beebe's house and look for a double-barreled shotgun that had recently been discharged. The public terror was so great that no one would leave town. When he got well however, he dug up enough evidence to secure indictments against Plumb, Wash, Lavergne and Ezra Beebe, and Thomas Mott. In May, 1865, he went to the office of the

District Attorney to see what had become of the skunk's robe indictment. He found that a nolle pros. had been entered, and that the same course had been taken with the indictments for attempted murder. He says he asked Hiram T. Jenkins, the District Attorney, that it was his last term, and he had an agreement with the Loomises to see them clear of everything before he went out of office. He wanted too make his word good, and asked me to help him."

Burning a Court House

About this time one of the Loomises outraged a girl 14 years old, the daughter of a respectable farmer. He was taken before Justice Ira B. Crandall of South Brookfield, and bound over. Bail was given. On the following night the justice's docket was stolen. The thieves did not find the bail bonds, because the Justice had mailed them to the County Court.

The girl was then kidnaped to prevent her from going before the Grand Jury, but testimony of the father, mother, and physician secured an indictment. After this some constables got upon the track of the girl and found her in the Loomis mansion. She was taken home, but her terror was so great that she preferred to stay in jail two years as an assistant in the Sheriff's family instead of remaining at home. She believed that the Loomises meant to put her out of the way.

Loomis jumped his bail bond. When the authorities threatened to come upon his brothers for the amount of the bonds, he came forward and pleaded not guilty to the indictment. D. C. Pomeroy, his counsel, urged a postponement of the trial. Judge Mason, a brother of Congressman Joseph Mason, denied the request. One of the other brothers pleaded not guilty to an indictment, and was about to be forced to trial.

In this dilemma both brothers ran out of the court room, and sprang into a cutter driven by Dan Geer. They had not gone many miles before they were overhauled and brought back. Meantime the Judge had discharged the jury, and the cases went over. He declined however, to admit Loomis to bail. He was afterwards taken before Judge Le Roy Morgan, of Syracuse, on a writ of habeas corpus, and that Judge took bail for his reappearance. An industrious farmer was induced to go upon his bond. Loomis fled to Canada, and the farmer was forced to pay his forfeit. He did so, and then committed suicide. In Canada, Loomis took the name of Theodore Goodenough, and overlooked the interests of the family at that end of the line.

In September, 1864, the brothers deemed it necessary to clear themselves of certain indictments in Madison County, on which they feared to stand trial. It is rumored that after entering the engine house in Morrisville and cutting the hose, the gang fired the Court House. Anyway it was burned to the ground. Wash was in town when the fire occurred and took his turn at the brake of the engine. He seemed to be utterly astonished when some one told him that the hose had been cut, and said: "It's a d--d outrage, and I would like to help hang the man who did it."

Afterward, fancying that the indictments might have been destroyed, Wash and his counsel called for a copy of a certain indictment. The copy was given. Wash then learned that the indictments had been removed to the office of the County Clerk, before the Court House was burned. This was a fireproof building. In the same week it was broken open, and indictments, deeds and mortgages were burned in a stove that stood in the office. Every indictment against the brothers was destroyed, and as the statute of limitations had expired, new indictments could not be procured. Among the papers burned was an indictment against someone not a Loomis. Wash afterwards called upon him and told him his

assessment for this work was \$199. The man borrowed the money and gladly paid him.

Destroying Indictments

Meantime similar indictments were pressing the brothers in Oneida County. The District Attorney's office was rifled, and all his papers, including the indictments were carried off. The District Attorney is said to have paid Wash \$250 for the return of the papers other than the indictments. They were afterward found mixed with leaves in a dooryard and returned to him. Many indictments were found against the family, but, except in one instance, no conviction was effected. At one time thirty-eight indictments were pending in which Filkins was a material witness, but hardly one of them was brought to trial.

The destruction of the indictments emboldened the gang. Robberies were of nightly occurrence, and Filkins found the gang operating far down in Delaware county. He took from them a horse said to have been stolen in the county, and the gang had him arrested for stealing the horse. He was a witness in one of Beebe's trials for stealing, and the old man had him arrested for perjury. When he was discharged it was getting dark, and his lawyer did not dare to ride back home with him. Ephraim Conger took an active part in reclaiming a stolen wagon; on the next night his barn was burned. Maurice Terry made disrespectful comments on the Loomis family, and on the following night his barn was ablaze. No one who intermeddled with the family in any way was safe. A meeting was held in the Baptist church in North Brookfield to devise measures for protection. A committee on organization was appointed. At the next meeting by-laws were passed making any one who paid a dollar a member of the organization. Thereupon Wash and Grove gravely appeared, extolling the organization, and saying they were afraid of thieves, and wanted to become members. They planked down their dollars and crushed the life out of the association.

Nemesis

At 1 A. M., October 29, 1865, fourteen persons were asleep in the Loomis mansion. There was a knock at the back door. Wash was called out and murdered. His body was found behind some barrels in the woodshed. Grove was the next victim. He was badly beaten and covered with oat sacks and blankets, which were afterward saturated with kerosene, and fired. His sister, Cornelia, saved his life. The barn was burned, and many valuable horses perished. The coroner held an inquest over Wash's body. Louisa Yates, swore that she was awakened by a rap on the bedroom window, and that someone called "Wash." Wash went to the window and asked what was wanted; that the reply was, "Come to the back door. I want to speak to you a minute." Wash went out. A second afterwards Filkins entered the room with a candle. Wash followed him, saying, "Filkins, I don't want you in here. Come out. There's nothing in here you want." Filkins looked under the bed, and then turned toward the door, saying, "No, there's nothing here, but Wash, I want you." Wash said, "Very well," and they walked out in the back kitchen, shutting the door.

Louisa then heard a "dreadful jar that shook the house." Just after this someone went upstairs, and in three or four minutes they came down with Grove. She heard Brove say, "Filkins, I want to see Wash a minute." Filkins replied, "You can't see Wash. He's not there." They then took Grove into the back kitchen and shut the door. She heard Grove screaming, and went to the kitchen door and tried to open it, but someone held it and she could not get in. She went back to her room and screamed while dressing. When she went back again she found Grove on the floor all on fire. He was covered with

bags, blankets and his overcoat. They were saturated with kerosene, and the room was ablaze. Cornelia and herself threw the bags into the fire-place, and saved Grove from burning to death. A minute afterward the barn began to burn.

Grove corroborated this story. He swore that Filkins rapped on his door, and he replied that he would be there as soon as he could dress. Filkins said he was in a hurry and couldn't wait. Grove opened the door and went out. Filkins caught him by the collar. "I'll go with you, Mr. Filkins." Filkins shook him saying, "I know you will." They met two or three men with guns on the stairs. The men followed them into the back kitchen. According to testimony, Filkins struck him on the head six or eight times as fast and as hard as he could. The others pitched into him, and he defended himself as well as he could. Filkins then struck him several times with a slug shot. He also shot at him with a revolver, and the ball went into the fireplace. He then struck him twice with the revolver, breaking it in two pieces. Grove fell to the floor, and Filkins jumped on him two or three times, kicking him in the head and neck. Filkins then said: "Boys, he's dead. Let's burn him up." The kerosene was then poured on him and fired. Such was the testimony.

Nellie Smith and Cornelia, Grove's sister, both swore that they saw Filkins. When they tried to enter the room where Grove lay on fire, Filkins shoved them back with the words, "Get out of here. This is no place for women." Others in the house swore that they found a broken revolver on the floor, near where Grove was picked up. One man said that he found a pair of handcuffs in the meadow near the barn, and Grove swore that Filkins was inquiring for these handcuffs before he struck him the first blow.

Filkins In the Clutches of the Law

Wash lived but a few hours. His skull was broken and he was beaten to a jelly. The jury returned a verdict that according to the testimony, Washington L. Loomis came to his death by the hands of three or more persons, and that one of these persons was James L. Filkins. Filkins informed the coroner that he was ready to deliver himself to the authorities. The coroner replied that he would let him know when he wanted him. Meantime, William Loomis swore out a warrant before Justice G. W. Cleveland, of Waterville charging Filkins with the murder of his brother. Filkins was arrested, and at the request of the prosecution, the examination was postponed two days, Filkins being discharged on his own recognizance. The same counsel appeared for the Loomises who had acted for them during the inquest.

On Nov. 6 Filkins again appeared before Justice Cleveland. Loomis's counsel, Mr. Lamb, again asked for a postponement until the 8th. This was granted. On the 8th neither Loomis nor the subpoenaed witnesses appeared. The complaint instead of serving the subpoenas, had put them in his pocket and gone to his home in Verona. The real design was manifested. The Grand Jury was to meet on the 13th; the object was to throw the case over, so as to put Filkins in jail until the February Court. Lawyer White told the Justice that the District Attorney had given instructions to postpone the case. The Justice, however, issued new subpoena, directing immediate service. Plumb Loomis appeared at 4 o'clock, and wanted the case postponed until Lawyer Pomeroy came. He said he had telegraphed for him. The Court refused any further delay, and called Plumb to the stand. Plumb asked to step out a minute and then ran away. Soon afterward Mr. White entered, and said he had dispatched from Mr. Pomeroy and the District Attorney, informing him that they could not control his actions, and issued attachments for the witnesses. Later in the day L. D. Bixby, who slept in the house on the night of the murder, was caught and put on the stand. In the morning the prosecution examined Nathan Gates, who swore that Filkins had asked him to assist in cleaning up the Loomises. With this testimony, Mr.

White rested the case for the people.

Filkins Again Shot

On June 9, 1866, Filkins went to the Loomis mansion to capture some horse thieves. He was accompanied by Constable Stanford and Hibbard and Deputy Sheriff Conger with their posses. They had warrants for several persons hiding in the house. They got there at daybreak. The old lady was at the back door feeding ducks. She screamed "Here's Filkins and a lot of men." And the officers rushed into the house. They found a strong party of men entrenched in the garret. An Alvord, a noted outlaw, stood at the head of the stairs with a gun. Conger and Filkins started up the stairs, and Alvord shouted, "Back, -you, or I'll shoot you through." Conger fearlessly shoved ahead, and Alvord struck him with the gun, making an ugly wound. Filkins drew his revolver and fired. Alvord struck at Conger a second time, and Filkins again opened fire. Both shots struck the mark. The men in the garret then opened a fusillade, and the two officers fell back. At the foot of the stairs they met a stranger, who said that he came from Canada on the preceding night. He was hand-cuffed and taken into the dooryard. The party in the garret opened fire from the windows and shot the prisoner in the shoulder. Mr. Lord, one of the Sheriff's posse, was also wounded. Conger and party started for re-enforcements, and one of he gang came out with a repeating rifle and started for the swamp.

Filkins pursued him and was shot in the arm. The disabling of Filkins paralyzed his party, and all the scoundrels escaped, including the Canadian. On the next day the District Attorney moved the trial of the indictment for murder. Owing to Filkins' condition the trial was postponed. The District Attorney then called a special term of court for the trial. The 27th of August was the day specified. It was afterward discovered that there was no legal authority for such action, and as no one appeared, the case went over the next regular term.

The Day of Reckoning

The second attempt to kill Filkins exasperated the public. Deputy Conger returned to Morrisville. One of the Judges threw some documents before the Sheriff, and told him it was his duty to serve them on the Loomises at all hazards. After the Judge retired the Sheriff took a revolver from a nook in the wall, and said that that was the only document he would serve on the Loomises. A Vigilance Committee was organized. They resolved to burn the Loomis mansion and hang every person found within it. The Sheriff and a strong posse went to the place early on Sunday morning, June 17, to serve half a dozen warrants. He was followed by over sixty persons well armed. The house was surrounded before day break, and the inmates were warned to make no resistance. Most of the family were handcuffed. The house was searched and silks, satins, furs, dress goods, and other stolen property were found. While the Sheriff was searching the barns and out houses the vigilants fired the house, and it was burned to the ground with all its contents. Cornelia and the old lady tried to save some of the valuables, but they were summarily taken from them and thrown into the flames. All the outbuildings but the negro shanty on the hill were destroyed. The only things saved were a valuable horse belonging to Grove, and some beds for the old lady and Cornelia, who retired to the shanty on the hill. Those caught in the house were Grove, Plumb, the old lady, Cornelia, a son of Wheeler, John Stoner, John Smith, Elizabeth Calkins, Adelaide Glasier (now Plumb's wife), Hester Crandall, and Nellie Smith. Plumb and John Stoner were hanged to the limb of a sugar maple fronting the house to extort a confession. Plumb was hanged twice. Having been resuscitated with much difficulty, he promised to tell all he knew and lead an honest life if his life was spared. He said the Maurice Terry's

barn and Ephriam Conger's building were burned by Tom Mott, and that he and his brothers paid him to do it. He declared that Mott was the man who shot Filkins the second time. He was then taken to Morrisville jail, convicted of stealing, fined \$100 and sent to jail for ninety days. The family afterward sued the county for \$22,000 damages, and recovered \$1,000. Plumb says that Francis Kernan was one of their counsel.

The Indictment Against Filkins

Filkins' trial was set down for the term of court held in Rome in June, 1867. Attorney-General Martindale and District Attorney Jenkins appeared for the prosecution. Roscoe Conkling moved to set the indictment aside on the grounds that it was not legally found, and that the paper purporting to be an indictment was unlawfully obtained from the Grand Jury. Affidavits from several of the jurors were then read, setting forth that the affidavits of George Jones and Charles Bird, two principal witnesses, were produced as witnesses. They objected to the affidavits, but were advised that such affidavits were just as legal and competent evidence as though the makers of them were present and sworn. It was shown that Jones and Bird were in the streets of Rome when and after the indictments were found. An affidavit from Jones was then read denying that he had ever made the affidavit that was read before the Grand Jury, and adding that he did not see Filkins at the Loomis murder, as stated in the alleged affidavit read before the Grand Jury.

Mr. Conkling's motion was opposed by Gen. Martindale on the grounds that the prisoner, having pleaded to the indictment, the motion to quash or set aside could not be entertained. Mr. Conkling made an elaborate argument detailing the facts as above given, and dwelling specially upon the fact that the only evidence against the prisoner was that given by the Loomis family alone, and that the Grand Jury would have failed to find an indictment without the affidavit of Jones and Bird. He closed as follows:

"The conclusion has been forced upon us that the instrumentalities of public justice have been seized upon and perverted, not only to being one man to trial by forbidden means but also to suppress the truth in other respects, and to screen the guilty and the favored. The law has, it is believed, a remedy for this, and although it may not concern the defendant to be tried upon a valid indictment rather than upon this, it is fit and wholesome that such things be done decently and in order."

The judges, after an hour's consultation, set the indictments aside. No effort has been made to secure a new indictment.

Filkins' Own Story

I asked Filkins his theory of the murder. Here is his story: Richard Loucks, one of the Loomis negroes, told him that Jones and Bird killed Wash. They came there with a fine turnout that they had stolen in Vermont. They gave Wash the wagon and harness, and wanted him to give them \$75 for the horse. He told them that his negro had seen Filkins spotting them, and refused to purchase the animal. Jones went up to the negro's shanty and asked Loucks where he saw Filkins. The negro replied that he had not seen him at all. Jones then returned to the house and accused Wash of trying to swindle him out of the animal. "You thought," he said, "that we would get scared and run away, and you would get the horse for nothing." Jones then threatened to cut the throat of the horse and leave the carcass on the farm. He was about to put his threat into execution when Grove appeared and offered him \$30 for the

animal, which was worth \$300. "Give us \$35," said Jones, "and take us to the nearest railroad station, and we will close the bargain." Grove said he would have to run the horse to the station before he could get the money, and Jones and Bird agreed to wait. Grove returned after midnight, as sworn to by the old lady before the coroner, without the horse and without the money. A fight ensued in which Wash was killed and Grove sent to the verge of the grave. I asked Eph. Conger and Wm. V. Durfee if they had ever heard this story. Eph. winked at Durfee, and replied that he thought it very plausible.

After Wash's death the gang went to pieces. Grove retired to a little farm on the edge of the swamp and Plumb remained on the homestead. I paid him a visit. The bark was peeled from the limb on which he was hanged, and the blackened cellar and rusty farm implements told the story of retribution. Everything had gone to rack and ruin. He declared that the house was plundered before it was burned. He said the mob brought a keg of powder with them, and wanted to lock the whole family in a room and burn them alive and that there was not a decent man among them. They stole \$585 in money from his sister, and carried off \$386 belonging to the girl Crandall. No papers were served and "the Sheriff went back on the hill when the rope was put around his neck." Grove died a year or more ago.

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