

A Sorrowful Tale

The following extractions were donated by Kathy Jerrow.

The *(St. Peter) Minnesota Free Press* newspaper gives the following account of the murder of John **Bodell** and the subsequent lynching of the accused Charles Rheinhardt:
[October 27, 1858]

Murder in LeSueur County!

We have just learned of a most brutal murder having been committed near Lexington, in Le Sueur County, and that a former citizen of that place, but who has resided here since last fall, is suspicioned of being guilty of the deed.

The facts are entirely circumstantial, and as near as we can learn are as follows. A Mr. Burdell, who was a stranger in the state, but who has friends residing in Winona, came to Lexington in search of a farm some week or so before election. He there fell in with Mr. C. J. Rinehart, who has a farm in the neighborhood, and was induced to go with him to examine it. He was not seen again, though Rinehart remained about the place for several days. The stranger's absence excited no alarm there, though he told the family with whom he was stopping, that he would return at night--they naturally supposing that he had gone to see some other land. His friends in Winona however, became alarmed at his not returning there according to promise, and came on to hunt him up. After a brief search, his body was found buried. He had evidently been brutally murdered, having been shot thro' the head, his skull broken in, and his throat cut so as almost sever the head from the body! Suspicion at once fell on Rinehart, who had left in the meantime; and the suspicion was heightened by the fact, that about the time of the murder, he borrowed a shovel of a neighbor, alleging the he wanted to dig a ditch with it. The discovery of the murder created an intense excitement at Lexington. Three hundred dollars was at once raised by the citizens, and the Sheriff dispatched in pursuit of Rinehart, who was supposed to have gone to St. Paul, and possibly down the river.

Mr. Rinehart came to this state from Ohio, and last fall removed to this town, where, for a short time he worked in this office. During the winter he went into a saloon, which he has continued here up to the present time. He has a wife, who is spoken of as a fine woman, and also two small children. These he sent east some six weeks ago, since which time he has been at St. Paul. He has other relatives here, and has himself always borne a good character. It may be that he is entirely innocent of any connection with this affair; and for the sake of all concerned, we hope it may prove so.

[November 3, 1858]

Communicated.

Horrible Murder.

LEXINGTON, Oct. 28, 1858

The following is undoubtedly, one of the most foul and atrocious murders ever committed in any community. For barbarity it has scarce an equal in the annals of our country, and committed as it was undoubtedly, to obtain a paltry of sum of money, we can but look upon the perpetrator as a villain of the blackest die. It appears from testimony adduced at the inquest, that the unfortunate man J. Bodell, came to Northfield in company with a man by the name of Charles Rinehart, who induced him to come to Lanesburg, in Le Sueur county, by representing to Bodell that land could be purchased cheap in that vicinity, and also that he (Rinehart,) would sell him a claim cheap.

They accordingly arrived at Union Lake; remaining there over night, in the morning they hired a conveyance to Codey's, within five or six miles of their destination, and remained there

over night, (this being on Wednesday the 6th of October.) Leaving in the morning on foot, they were seen passing the house of Mr. Wankee about 12 o'clock m., this being the last place they were seen together, and about half a mile from the place where the body was found.

About half-past one o'clock, the same day, he (Rinehart) called at the house of a German by the name of Mr. Mansher and requested dinner, immediately after dinner he borrowed a spade, representing that he wished to fix a bad place on the road. About two o'clock he returned to the house of Mr. Mansher [Wankee,] complaining of thirst &c., asked for a cup of coffee and remained there until near four o'clock, and then left. Going in the direction of Mr. Hansher's house, the distance being only three-quarters of a mile, but did not reach there until dark.

In the morning he started for and arrived about ten o'clock in Lexington, and he remained there until the following Wednesday, and then left for Le Sueur.

The said Bodell had promised to return to Union Lake, and not returning, enquiries were made as to his whereabouts; the circumstances being suspicious, a search was immediately made by the citizens, which resulted in finding the body of the murdered man buried in a sequestered spot, near a marsh, some twenty or thirty rods from the road, and about a half mile from the house of Mansher, bears every evidence of violence and foul play--there being a bullet hole immediately above the left eye, several stabs on the back of the head and throat cut.

After the inquest, the body was removed to Lexington and deposited in the burial ground. Mr. Bodell was a resident of Worcester, Massachusetts.

At a meeting of the citizens of Lexington and vicinity, held on Tuesday, October 26th, immediately after the return from the burial of the unfortunate man, Burroughs Abbott was called to the Chair and F. H. Dennis as Secretary, when it was unanimously *Resolved*, that a committee of five be appointed to draw up a letter of condolence to the widow and distressed family of the deceased.

The committee was as follows: W. H. Childs, T. A. Potter, F. M. Ireland, S. L. Richardson and S. L. Shirel. The committee retired and after an absence of half an hour, returned and reported a letter which was unanimously adopted by the meeting. It was then resolved that a copy of the circumstances connected with the murder and the subsequent proceedings of the citizens be published in the Belle Plaine Enquirer, St. Peter Free Press, and the St. Paul Minnesotian. B. ABBOTT, *Chair'n*.

F.H. Denison, *Sec'y*.

More About the Murder.

We learn that the name of the man murdered in Le Sueur County, is Bodell, instead of Burdell, as stated last week. He was a cabinet maker from Worcester Massachusetts.

The body was fully identified as the man last seen with Rinehart. At last accounts, Rinehart was at La Cross, and has doubtless been arrested ere this.

Later.—From the Minnesotian of the 1st, we clip the following:

"Rinehart was pursued by the Sheriff of Le Sueur county, and arrested at La Crescent, at which place he was about to open a saloon. On being informed that he was suspected of the murder, he said at once that he would return to the place. He was brought here yesterday morning and placed in charge of the officers temporarily. He seems very unconcerned about it, asserts his utter ignorance of the whole matter, and has taken measures to prove his innocence.

P.S.—We have just learned that Rinehart has been brought to Lexington, and that an examination is to be had today. District Attorney Hinds has gone over from here, to attend it.

We are further informed that his family had arrived at La Crescent, and that he left them there, informing his wife that he was compelled to come up here on business—so that, in all probability, she is yet ignorant of the crime charged against him.

We learn that great excitement prevails at Lexington; and have heard it intimated that if the examination should show him, in all probability, guilty, an attempt would be made to *lynch him!*

We certainly hope and trust that the intelligent citizens of Le Sueur county will not permit such an outrage upon the laws and dignity of our State. We have *laws* for the punishment of crime; and to them let us appeal. Lynch law is never justifiable, except *when all other remedies fail*. Again we say let no citizen attempt to take the law into his own hands. It is all wrong, and is setting a dangerous example. Besides all this, he *may be innocent*, notwithstanding circumstances may appear very strong against him—and in that case, what restitution could be made to him, to his family, and to the community, if by any hasty and excited action an innocent man should be sacrificed by mob violence? No, no—citizens; do not let such a foul blot appear upon the annals of our young State! Let the law have its course.

[November 10, 1858]

Rinehart Committed—More particulars—Excitement of the People &c.

From the District Attorney and others, who attended the examination of Rinehart on Tuesday and Friday of last week we learn that he was fully committed to await his trial for the murder of Bodell. There case is a very strong one against him. He was defended on the examination by M.J. Severance, Esq, of Henderson, but made a very poor show for a defense. In fact there appears to be no doubt in the minds of the community, of his guilt.

The citizens of Lexington would not consent that he should be taken to Stillwater for confinement, nor even to Le Sueur for examination—so strong is their determination that in this case justice shall be meted out to the guilty. They are now busy erecting a jail, in which to keep him secure.

Rinehart is represented as being much alarmed, and looking and feeling badly. The excitement was very great—persons being there to attend the examination from Mankato, Henderson, Belle Plaine, and surrounding country. We are glad to learn however, that no violence was attempted by the citizens, nor is any now anticipated. The citizens of Le Sueur Co. though fully satisfied of his guilt, and being determined that he shall not escape, have wisely manifested a disposition to let the law have its course. A special term for his trial has been mentioned, but whether or not it will be held, we are not informed. Whether guilt or not, such a course would save the county some hundreds of dollars, and we think give better satisfaction to an outraged community.

From the St. Paul Times of the 5th, we learn that a Mr. Ames, a lawyer of St. Paul, supposing that Rinehart had not been legally arrested, advised him to use any means in his power to escape—even to *shoot the officers* if necessary to do so, and that he would defend him for doing so! This action of Mr. Ames, is the more strange, for the reason that Sections 11 and 17, chap. 113 of the Statutes, provide that any peace officer, *or a private citizen*, may arrest in such cases even *without a warrant*. The Times further adds:

“Rinehart, only a few moments before had been formally arrested, and the assistance of Deputy Sheriff Brackett being called, Rinehart was hand-cuffed and taken away, against the earnest protestations of Mr. Ames. We have heard a number of persons censure Mr. Brackett for the manner in which he proceeded in making Rinehart a sure prisoner; it is said that he drew a revolver and threatened to shoot him in case he should move. The motive for doing this was simply because Mr. Ames had advised him to resist the attempt of the officers to take him away, and Mr. Brackett had every reason to believe that a pistol had been given to Rinehart, and that he might possibly use it. When the prisoner had got started, in company with two officers, he betrayed some little emotion, probably through fear, that on his arrival at the scene of the murder, the populace would lynch him. On their arriving at Shakopee, the news soon spread through that town that Rinehart had been arrested and was then in the city. The most intense excitement seemed to prevail, and people flocked in hundreds around the hotel to get a glimpse of the supposed murderer. Having remained there over night, they proceeded the following (last Monday) morning on their way to Le Sueur. On reaching Henderson, the same state of feeling seemed to exist among all classes of people, and the arrest of the murderer flew with velocity of thought from tongue to tongue, and people crowded up to get a view of the now seemingly guilty man. At Belle Plaine, the excitement of the people was the

same, and from that point, his fate seemed to stare him in the face, and he began to fear. On reaching Le Sueur, when it became known that Rinehart was a prisoner the fury of the people could hardly be kept within bounds; and they poured in from all quarters, seeming bent on taking him out and inflicting summary punishment upon him at once.

He was, however, protected from the rage of the people, although many cried out "hang him!"---"hang him!" He was, shortly after his arrival there, placed in charge of the Sheriff of LeSueur County. The last Deputy Sheriff Brackett saw of him, he was in a wagon, accompanied by a number of men who were about taking him over to Lexington, some twelve miles distant, and where doubtless he would be tried by a jury of twelve men, and if found guilty, hung upon the spot where the murder was committed. On his way up, Rinehart watched every opportunity to make his escape, and in conversation with a friend, whom he had met on the way, begged that he would be give him a pistol, as he wished to use it. Circumstances which have been brought to light since the murder was committed, seem to place the question of his guilt beyond a doubt. It was found on examination, that the marks of the shovel used in digging the grave corresponded with the marks produced by the same shovel which he borrowed; and heel marks on the body of Bodell, which were made by stamping him into the grave correspond in size and marks with those made by Rinehart's boots."

There are some strange circumstances connected with the affair, it appears that Bodell did not like Rinehart's appearance, and had suspicions of him, before they arrived at Lexington. From the Hastings Daily Ledger, we clip the following in relation to it:

"When Mr. Bodell and Mr. Rinehart arrived in this city, the former inquired for the Methodist minister, and the person he asked of not being able to give him the information he desired, sent him to Mr. O. S. Taylor. On seeing Mr. Taylor, he informed him of his name, occupation, and present business in Minnesota, and also that he had money, though he did not state the amount. Mr. Taylor on receiving this information, and seeing Rinehart, who is not a very prepossessing individual, warned him to beware of him, as he did not like his looks. Mr. Bodell said that Rinehart seemed to be a "good sociable sort of man," and he did not think meant any harm. He then gave Mr. Taylor his address, with the request that if anything did happen to him, he should write his wife, and inform her of it."

Another still stranger circumstance, was the peculiar manner in which the body of the unfortunate Bodell was discovered. While searching for it, one of the citizens of Lexington, in stepping off a log, felt the ground give beneath his foot, and on digging away the leaves, found a valise with Bodell's name written at full length in it. From this they were satisfied the body was not far off, and proceeded to search in the edge of a swamp near by. While doing so, one of the party slipped, and to save himself from falling, caught hold of a bunch of willows, which pulled up—*the ends being fresh cut*, showing that they were recently and intentionally stuck there! Upon seeing this, they proceeded to examine the spot, and at once found the body buried there! The plan of sticking the willows there to conceal the grave, was truly a shrewd one; and yet, it was the very means of leading to the detection of the foul crime—so sure is it that "murder will out"—and that as is usually the case, the very means by which it is detected! This is, to say the least, a very strange circumstance; and shows how futile are all attempts of man to hide his guilt.

While upon this subject, we may be permitted to say, that in our opinion, one of the greatest causes which has led to the commission of so many murders and similar crimes in our State, and the country generally, is the uncertainty of punishment therefore, and the facility with which criminals of all grades have been allowed to escape. It is this laxity of our laws and their application, too, which has, and ever will, lead to the application of mob violence and lynch law. Crime must be punished—and the punishment should always be commensurate with the crime. We have no sympathy whatever with that sickly sentimentality which bestows all its sympathies upon the poor *criminal*, while the *innocent victim and the community* are lost sight of, and left to suffer all the evils of his crime. Laws should be for the *prevention of crime*—and not simply as some contend, to reform the criminal. It is for the *protection of the innocent*, and not the *guilty*, for which they should be framed, and applied. When our legislators and our judiciary shall act upon this idea, and the laws

be faithfully executed, we shall hear no more of mobs and lynching!

Here also we wish to correct a partially erroneous opinion that has gone abroad in relation to Rinehart being a printer. He is not a printer by trade, but occasionally has done press work. This is the extent of his acquirements as a printer. He is somewhat of a wood engraver, and has occasionally done small jobs for the fraternity, in that line.

A contemporary further says that he came to Minnesota about three years since, and with his father-in-law, settled on Sunrise river, some 40 miles from St. Paul, working occasionally in the printing offices in St. Paul. After a year's residence, he brought his wife from Ohio. She is a well educated and fine woman. After various moves he went to St. Peter, where he kept a saloon until his visit to Ohio."

There are also some other erroneous statements going the rounds of the press, in relation to his recent movements. He sent his family to Ohio some two months since, but did not go himself. He left his father-in-law in charge of the saloon here, and himself went to St. Paul where he pretended to be engaged in buying cranberries and sending them to St. Louis. Since the murder, he sent for his family, and met them at Lacross, and at the time of his arrest, was preparing to open a saloon a Lacresent, opposite Lacross.

While on his way up on the boat, he wrote for his family to come on and join him at LeSueur. They were stopping with some old friends at LaCresent, and as they knew of his arrest, though his wife did not, it is probable that they will induce her to remain there, or return to her friends in Ohio.

[November 17, 1858]

Not So

We notice a statement going the rounds of the press, copied from that dirty little sheet called the Cleaveland Herald, stating that Rinehart's brother in law (Mr. Dewitt of this place) had said he believed Rinehart murdered a man last spring. The statement, like nearly everything else which emanates from that source, is untrue—and the friends and relations of Rinehart feel much injured by its publication. We are surprised that any respectable paper, knowing the character of that sheet, should copy anything from it. Even if true, it certainly was very injudicious and unfair to give publicity to it at such a time and before the prisoner had been examined; as all such statements tend to create prejudices, and prevent that fair and impartial hearing to which every man is honestly entitled.

There is no truth either, in the statement that Rinehart had been lynched. He is safely guarded by the citizens of Lexington, in a jail made for the purpose.

The *St. Paul Weekly Minnesotian* newspaper gives the following account of the murder of John Bodell and the subsequent lynching of the accused Charles Rheinhardt:

[November 6, 1858]

Horrible Murder in Le Seur County.

We extract from the St. Peter *Free Press* the following account of a most brutal murder committed a few days since near Lexington, Le Sueur county. The *Free Press* says:

"A Mr. Burdell, who was a stranger in the State, but who has friends residing in Winona, came to Lexington in search of a farm some weeks or so before election. He there fell in with Mr. J. C. Rinehart, who has a farm in the neighborhood, and was induced to go with him to examine it. He was not seen again, though Rinehart remained about the place for several days. The stranger's absence excited no alarm there, though he told the family with whom he was stopping, that he would return at night; they naturally supposing that he had gone to see some other land. His friends in Winona, however, became alarmed at his not returning there according to promise, and came on to hunt him up. After a brief search, his body was found buried. He had evidently been brutally murdered, having been shot through the head, his skull broken in, and his throat cut so as almost

sever the head from the body. Suspicion at once fell on Rinehart, who had left in the meantime; and the suspicion was heightened by the fact, that about the time of the murder, he borrowed a shovel of a neighbor, alleging the he wanted to dig a ditch with it. The discovery of the murder created an intense excitement at Lexington. Three hundred dollars were at once raised by the citizens, and the Sheriff at once dispatched for Rinehart, who was supposed to have gone to St. Paul, and possibly down the river.

“Mr. Rinehart came to this State from Ohio, and last fall removed to this town, where, for a short time he worked in this office. During the winter he went into a saloon, which he has continued here until the present time. He has a wife, who is spoken of as a fine woman, and also two small children. These he sent East some six weeks ago, since which time he has been at St. Paul. He has other relatives here, and has himself always borne a good character.”

Rinehart was pursued by the Sheriff of Le Sueur county, and arrested at La Crescent, at which place he was about to open a saloon. On being informed that he was suspected of the murder, he said at once that he would return to the place. He was brought here Sunday morning and placed in charge of the officers temporarily. He seems very unconcerned about it, asserts his utter ignorance of the whole matter, and has taken measures to prove his innocence.

Further Particulars of the Horrible Murder in Le Sueur County.

To the editors of the Minnesotian:

The following is undoubtedly one of the most foul and atrocious murders ever committed in any community. For its brutality it has scarce an equal in the annals of our country, and committed as it was undoubtedly to obtain a paltry sum of money, we can but look upon the perpetrator as a villain of the blackest dye. It appears from testimony adduced at the inquest, that the unfortunate man J. Bodell, came to Northfield in company with a man by the name of Charles Rienhart, who induced him to come to Lanesburgh, Le Sueur County, by representing to Bodell that land could be purchased cheap in that vicinity, and also, that he (Rienhart,) would sell him a claim cheap.

They accordingly arrived at Union Lake; remaining over night. In the morning they hired a conveyance to Cody's, within five or six miles of their destination, and remained there over night. This was on Wednesday, the 6th of October. Leaving in the morning on foot, they were observed passing the house of Mr. Walker about 12 o'clock; this was the last place they were seen together, and is about half a mile from the place where the body was found.

About half past one o'clock, the same day, Rienhart called at the house of a German by the name of Hansher and requested dinner. Immediately after dinner he borrowed a spade representing that “he wished to fix a bad place on the road.” About two o'clock he returned to the house of Mr. Walker, complaining of thirst and asked for a cup of coffee; he remained there in conversation, until near four o'clock, and then left, going in the direction of Mr. Hasher's house, the distance being three fourths of a mile,--but did not reach there until dark. In the morning he started for and arrived about ten o'clock at Lexington, and there remained until the following Wednesday, and then left for Le Sueur.

The said Bodell had promised to return to Union Lake, and not returning, enquiries were made as to his whereabouts. The circumstances being suspicious, a search was immediately made by the citizens, which resulted in finding the body of Bodell buried in a sequestered spot near a marsh, some twenty or thirty rods from the road, and about a half mile from the house of Walker, bearing evidence of violence and foul play, there being a bullet hole immediately above the left eye, several stabs on the back of the head, and the throat cut. After the inquest, the body was removed to Lexington and deposited in the burial grounds. Said Bodell was a resident of Worcester, Mass.

At a meeting of the citizens of Lexington and vicinity, held on Tuesday, October 26th, 1858, immediately after the return from the burial of the unfortunate man, J. Bodell who was murdered October 7th, in the town of Lanesburgh, Burroughs Abbott was called to the chair and F. H. Dennison appointed as Secretary, when it was unanimously

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to draw up a letter of condolence to the widow and distracted family of the deceased. The committee were as follows: W. H. Childs, T. A. Potter, F. M. Ireland, S. L. Richardson and S. L. Shirel.

The committee retired and after an absence of half an hour, returned and reported a letter which was unanimously adopted by the meeting. It was then

Resolved, That a copy of the circumstances connected with the murder and the subsequent proceedings of the citizens be published in the Belle Plain *Enquirer*, St. Paul MINNESOTIAN, and the St. Peter *Free Press*.

B. ABBOTT, *Chairman*.

F.H. Denison, *Secretary*.

[November 13, 1858] The Reported Lynching of Rhinehart.—We are still without advices either confirmation or negating the rumor that the people of Le Sueur county had lynched or assassinated RHINEHART, who was charged on vague circumstantial evidence with having murdered Bodell in that county. We trust that the report is not true. We trust that the laws made for punishment of the guilty when proved guilty; for the protection of the innocent persons charged with crime and *not proved* criminal; have not been outraged in any such manner—that the citizens of Le Sueur county have not imbrued their hands in the blood of a fellow being, and under the pretense of punishing *murdered* him in cold blood! We hope not to hear of any such terrible transaction. We hope rather that the people of Le Sueur are a law abiding people, and not the community of revengeful, blood-thirsty outlaws which had the commission of such an act would show them to be!

We await further intelligence from Le Sueur with impatience to hear the rumor pronounced an unfounded stigma on that county.

[November 20, 1858] THE RIENHART MURDER TRIAL.—The preliminary examination of J. C. Rienhart was closed on the 5th, and he was committed to await his trial. He was defended by M.J. Severance, Esq., but the case was very strong against him. The universal opinion is that he is guilty.

The St. Peter *Free Press* says that the citizens of Lexington would not consent that he should be taken to Stillwater for confinement nor even to Le Sueur for examination—so strong is their determination that in this case justice shall be meted out to the guilty. They are now busy erecting a jail, in which to keep him secure.

“Rienhart is represented as being much alarmed, and looking and feeling very badly. The excitement was very great—persons being there to attend the examination from Mankato, Henderson, Belle Plaine, and the surrounding country. We are glad to learn, however, that no violence was attempted by the citizens, nor is any now anticipated. The citizens of Le Sueur County, though fully satisfied of his guilt, and being determined that he shall not escape, have wisely manifested a disposition to let the law have its course. A special term for his trial has been mentioned, but whether or not it will be held, we are not informed.”

[December 4, 1858] Correspondence of the Minnesotian.

The Report of Rienhart's Lynching Unfounded.—He Attempts to Break Jail, &c.

Lexington, Le Sueur Co. Nov., 25.

To the Editors of the Minnesotian:

I have noticed a statement going the rounds of the press the Rienhart, the supposed murderer of Bodell has been lynched by the people of Le Sueur County. There is no truth in it. Reinhart is now in jail that was built by the citizens of this place, it being built in the most thorough manner of solid oak and iron.

What gave rise to the rumor that he was lynched is probably owing to the fact that a number of Germans from Rice County, having been informed that we, the citizens of Lexington, were in

favor of lynching the prisoner, and that they would meet with no resistance from us, came about 75 in number for that purpose, and as soon as they found they had been wrongly informed, and that we, as a law abiding people, would not allow the commission of such an act in our midst, they returned quietly to their homes, some of them having come 30 miles.

Rienhart made an unsuccessful attempt to break jail at Lexington, on Sunday night. He succeeded in twisting apart his hand cuffs and then tried his utmost to force the door, but found it too well secured. He was immediately re-ironed in a most secure manner.

He still strongly protests his innocence.—Knowing well the feelings of the people of this place and vicinity, I would say that they will defend the prison from Lynch law, and see that he has a fair and impartial trial, which will come off next March. S.

[January 1, 1859] From the Minnesota (St. Peter) Statesman Extra.

THE LAWS OUTRAGED!!

RINEHART LYNCHED!

BY A MOB OF 30 OR 40 MEN!!

Our readers will doubtless be startled to learn from the following communication, that a party of men, disregarding the supremacy of our laws, and assuming the power of both Judge and Jury, entered the jail at Lexington, Le Sueur county, where Reinhart was confined for the murder of Bodell, on the 27th inst., took the prisoner out, and lynched him, within a short distance of the town:

Le Sueur, Dec. 28, 1858.

Dear GREEN: The village of Lexington, in this county, has been made the theatre of a scene of retributive justice, which, however destitute of law and order, nevertheless shows the rough American idea of rewards and punishments, in a forcible light.

About 10 o'clock on yesterday morning, a mob of thirty or forty men, mostly hailing from Rice county, arrived in Lexington, and demanded the keys of the prison in which the murderer Reinhart was confined. The efforts of the Sheriff and his Deputy to preserve the dignity of the law were in vain, and the jail was soon opened. The poor wretch inspired with the strength of a desperate man, tore his right hand free, through a heavy gyve of iron, and seizing the leg of a cast iron stove, stood at bay with his face towards the door. Being a tall, muscular man, the lynchers, for a while, dared not enter. After a short consultation, they tore down the gabled end of the log jail, and assailed him in the rear. Finding all hopes of resistance vain, Reinhart lost all heart, and fell upon the floor in a fit. Taking the senseless body in a sleigh, the whole party proceeded out of the village, a mile and a half, and attaching a rope to his neck, threw it over a tree and hauled him up. The noose was not tight and the lynchers lowered the body to adjust it more securely. Reinhart now came to his senses, sprang to his feet and earnestly asserted his perfect innocence of the murdered Bodell. Seeing that their ears were closed against his entreaties, he changed his tone, and declared his readiness to die. At his request, a bystander was called on to pray, and after a short prayer the murderer was again hauled up.

Public opinion has not yet experienced a reaction, and nine out of ten men in the county, around Lexington, as well as in the village, consent to the justice of the execution. Waiving the possibility (a very slender one) of his innocence, it seems unfortunate for us to possess so little confidence in our government as to take its work into our own hands. Still it requires very keen vision to discern the majesty and supremacy of the great unwritten principles of law and justice in the summary proceedings of Judge Lynch himself.

The same great authority which declares vengeance to be the proper attribute of the Almighty alone, is also positive that "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."

Yours, etc.,

K.

Additional Particulars.

We learn privately some additional particulars of the murder of Rinehart. He attempted to defend himself—we are only sorry he hadn't killed a dozen of them, as a vindication of the majesty of the law—but was struck down with a bar of iron, and fainted. While in this situation, he was carried to the fatal tree. Here he was hung up; and, horrible to relate, when *half hanged*, he was let down again—revived—and then run up again, this time until life departed! They then took his body—grubbed a little hole in the ground and chucked him in! God!—what brutal savages! They must have been, principally, Irish, indeed! He was afterwards taken up and buried more decently by others, not of the mob.

The *St. Paul (Minnesota) Pioneer and Democrat* daily newspaper gives the following account of the murder of John Bodell and the subsequent lynching of the accused Charles Rheinhardt:

[October 31, 1858] ANOTHER REVOLTING MURDER IN MINNESOTA.--During the early portion of last week citizens of this city were startled by a report that an atrocious and cold-blooded murder had been committed, near Lexington in Le Sueur county. For certain reasons the papers of this city remained silent, thinking that a publication of the particulars might possibly put the party accused on his guard, and thus enable him to escape the just consequences of the terrible and revolting crime which he had committed, but finding the particulars already published in the last number of the *St. Peter Free Press*, we cannot, under the circumstances, refrain from inserting them, notwithstanding the request of the Sheriff of Le Sueur county. A crime like this should be made known as speedily as possible, and every effort used to bring the inhuman murderer to punishment. The *Free Press* says: "The facts are entirely circumstantial, and as near as we can learn are as follows. A Mr. Burdell, who was a stranger in the State, but who has friends residing in Winona, came to Lexington in search of a farm some week or so before election. He there fell in with Mr. C. J. Rinehart, who has a farm in the neighborhood, and was induced to go with him to examine it. He was not seen again, though Rinehart remained about the place for several days. The stranger's absence excited no alarm there, though he told the family with whom he was stopping, that he would return at night—they naturally supposing that he had gone to see some other land. His friends in Winona, however, became alarmed at his not returning there according to promise, and came on to hunt him up. After a brief search, his body was found buried. He had evidently been brutally murdered, having been shot through the head, his skull broken in, and his throat cut so as almost sever the head from the body! Suspicion at once fell on Rinehart, who has left in the meantime; and suspicion was heightened by the fact, that about the time of the murder, he borrowed a shovel of a neighbor, alleging the he wanted to dig a ditch with it. The discovery of the murder created an intense excitement at Lexington. Three hundred dollars were at once raised by the citizens, and the Sheriff dispatched in pursuit of Rinehart, who was supposed to have gone to St. Paul, and possibly down the river.

"Mr. Rinehart came to this State from Ohio, and last removed to this town, where, for a short time he worked in this office. During the winter he went into a saloon, which he continued here up to the present time. He has a wife, who is spoken of as a fine woman, and also two small children. These he sent east some six weeks ago, since which time he has been at St. Paul. He has other relatives here, and has himself always borne a good character, so far as we know. It may be that he is entirely innocent of any connection with this affair; and for the sake of all concerned, we hope it may prove so."

Rinehart came to this city after the murder had been committed, and left for below on the steamer Demark, about two weeks since. He was afterward seen at Hastings, where he informed as acquaintance that he was going to Rochester, in Olmsted county, to purchase a saloon, and a day or two since, the Sheriff of Le Sueur county left this city in pursuit, but we hardly expect

that the Sheriff will succeed in overtaking him. Rinehart has, in all probability, gone to Springfield, in Ohio, where his wife is now stopping with some of her relatives, and the statement in regard to the Rochester purchase was undoubtedly intended to blind his pursuers, if he is in reality guilty of the terrible crime. We understood that Mr. Burdell, or Bedell, the murdered man, is a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, and was supposed to have a considerable amount of money in his possession.

Although hoping that Mr. Rinehart may prove innocent of this bloody transaction, yet we must confess that all the circumstances are strongly against him.

[November 2, 1858] ARREST OF RINEHART.—This man, who is suspicioned of having committed the recent murder in Le Seuer county, passed through this city on Sunday last, in custody of the officers. He was arrested in La Crescent, nearly opposite La Crosse, Wisconsin. He made no objections to the arrest, and came with the officers without any show of reluctance, but was anxious to have his trial immediately upon his arrival at the place where the murder was committed, or as soon thereafter as possible. He denies having anything to do with the murder, or that he had any knowledge of it. He appeared calm and collected, and conversed freely with his acquaintances about the outrage; he exhibited no fear or embarrassment until the irons had been fastened on his arms. This proceeding he did not seem to relish entirely.

[November 5, 1858] THE LE SUEUR COUNTY MURDER.—Deputy Sheriff Brackett returned to this city on Wednesday evening after having assisted in taking Rinehart to his destination. We learn from him that at the inquest held over the body of the unfortunate man who was so foully, brutally murdered, the coroner's jury returned a verdict that the death of Bordell had been caused by wounds from a knife and pistol in the hands of Charles J. Rhinehart. We learn that the evidence elicited during the examination, although circumstantial in its character, points almost directly to Rhinehart as the party guilty of this most revolting murder.

It will be remembered that he borrowed a spade from a German living near the spot where the murder was committed, stating at the time that he wished to use it in fixing the road. Since that time, however, we understand, he has made several contradictory statements, having stated to one person that he used it in banking up his claim shanty; to another that he used it in making a drain on some portion of his own land. It is now stated that a small piece had previously been broken from the edge of the spade, and that the marks caused by this defect in the implement were distinct and plain in the sod where the murdered man was buried. In fact, all the circumstances connected with the terrible affair, have convinced the people living in that region, that Rhinehart is guilty of one of the foulest murders ever recorded.

The accused in his explanation, also says that soon after he separated from Bordell, a party of Indians appeared on the road, and he seems to think the murder was committed by some one or more of the party. In opposition to this statement, persons who were present at the examination state that marks of a *boot heel* were plainly visible on some portions of the body, made probably, while the murder was endeavoring to crowd it into a hole which had been dug for its reception and concealment. Persons living near Lexington also state that no Indians were seen in that neighborhood at the time the murder was committed, and this taken in connection with the heel-marks discovered on the body of the deceased, makes the statements of Rhinehart rather improbable, to say the least.

We learn that Rhinehart entered into negotiations with the landlord of the hotel at Henderson, to assist him in escaping from the officers, but that gentleman promptly informed Mr. Brackett of the fact, and the prisoner was then confined in such a manner during the remainder of his stay in that town, that all further attempts at an escape were abandoned.

We learn from Mr. Brackett that great excitement still prevails in Le Sueur county in relation to the murder and the apprehension of the supposed murderer, and threats of lynching are

common.

We hope, for the reputation of Minnesota, that the accused will have a fair and impartial trial, and, if found guilty, let him suffer the just consequences of the atrocious crime.

[December 1, 1858] RHINEHART made an unsuccessful attempt to break jail at Lexington, on Monday, 22d ult. He succeeded, says the Henderson *Democrat*, in twisting his handcuffs to such an extent that they parted. When found by the jailor and guard, they told him he must be securely ironed. Upon this, he went into a fit, which lasted several hours, followed by several fits of a similar kind. It was thought at one time that he had been taking poison, although he was carefully searched before being placed in irons. The jail in which Rhinehart is confined is a strong and substantial building.

[December 9, 1858] ATTEMPT OF RHINEHART TO ESCAPE FROM PRISON.—On the 21st ult., Rhinehart, in prison at Lexington, Le Sueur county, for the murder of Bodell, attempted to escape from the custody of the Sheriff. He succeeded in breaking the fastening of his handcuffs; the jailer entering his cell soon afterwards, was asked by Rhinehart to go out of doors on an errand, which he did, foolishly leaving the door open. With one bound, Rhinehart made his way out of the jail, and fled to the woods. The jailor instantly gave the alarm, and the Sheriff with a few others went in pursuit of the fugitive. As there was snow on the ground, the pursuers had no difficulty in tracking him. After the lapse of three hours, they found the escaped prisoner lying upon the ground apparently senseless about 1 ¼ mile from the prison house. He was secured and taken back to prison.

[December 31, 1858] **Lawlessness In Le Sueur County.**

On Monday last REINHART, the reputed murderer of BODELL, was forcibly taken from the custody of the constituted authorities at Lexington, Le Sueur county, by a mob of sixty men, and lynched. A painfully interesting narrative of this outrage upon law and order will be found in another column. The conduct of the mob was brutal in the extreme, and has disgraced not only the people of Le Sueur county, but placed a stigma upon the good name of the State which cannot be effaced for years.

The fact that REINHART was in close custody, with no hope of an escape except through the verdict of a jury, should have prevented the commission of the outrage. As it is, the excitement consequent upon the murder having subsided, the lynching cannot be regarded as a deliberate act of brutality, committed by a misguided and ignorant mob. The people and authorities of Le Sueur county owe it to themselves to vindicate the supremacy of the law in their midst, by meting out to the participants in the disgraceful proceedings of Monday last, the most condign punishment.

DISGRACEFUL LAWLESSNESS IN LE SUEUR COUNTY!

Reinhart Lynched by a Mob.

The Law Set at Defiance.

BRUTAL CONDUCT OF THE RIOTERS.

REINHART'S LAST MOMENTS

Correspondence of the Pioneer and Democrat.

BELLE PLAINE, Dec. 29, 1858.

From a party of gentlemen just in from the town of Lexington, Le Sueur county, I learn that CHARLES REINHART, the man committed for the murder of a Mr. BODELL, some two months since, was lynched and executed by a mob, on the day before yesterday. The particulars, as related

to me by one of the gentleman, are as follows:

On Monday last, shortly after noon, a mob of about sixty men, who reported themselves as belonging to Rice county, and composed principally of Irish, Germans, and half-breeds, drove into the town of Lexington, in a body, and immediately sought out Mr. KIRTLAND, the Deputy Sheriff of Le Sueur county, under whose charge the prisoner had been placed for safe keeping. To him they stated their intention of lynching REINHART, (as they stated, to prevent his escape from justice,) and demanded the key to the building in which he was confined. In this they met with a prompt and preemptory refusal from Mr. K., who immediately stationed himself in front of the door of the building, for its better protection. But the mob had come for a specific purpose, and having might on their side, were not to be thwarted. Several of them seized upon Mr. K., and after a fierce and protracted struggle, during which the Sheriff is said to have defended himself and his prisoner with great courage, the key was taken from him, while he was being held upon the ground by force of numbers.

During the time that this was going on outside, the prisoner had learned the cause of the melee, and what would be his probable fate should they succeed in effecting an entrance. Since his late attempt to escape from custody, he had been doubly secured by a pair of close-fitting handcuffs around his wrists, and a band around one of his ankles, by which he was fastened to the floor with a strong chain, and a heavy wrought iron staple, made of half-inch iron. Upon hearing the mob approach, he stripped the manacles over his hands, taking the flesh and skin with them, and then in his frenzy, and by an exertion which must have been almost superhuman, he tore the staple in two above where it entered the floor. Thus in a manner freed, he took one of the legs from off a large stove which stood in his room, and awaited their coming.

The building in which he was confined, was constructed of large hewn logs, firmly put together. The ceiling was composed of the same material, about a foot through, and placed side by side, close as they could be laid. Above this, the outside was merely boarded up with ordinary lumber, and the whole covered over with shingle roofing. There was but one door in the building, and that was situated immediately in one corner, while a small opening through the logs, about two feet long and a foot wide, with heavy bars of iron, running perpendicularly and sunk in logs in the front, was the only window.

The key once in their possession, the mob fancied the prisoner an easy victim to their murderous design. But it appears that in this they were disappointed; for upon opening the door, they found REINHART standing by its side, and between it and the window, wielding the piece of iron which he had taken from the stove and threatening death to any one who dared come into the room. Thus he stood for the space of an hour and a half, defying the entire mob, and not a man of them dared to enter where he was. Finding no way by which they could cripple him from the outside, except by inserting a long sharpened stick, slantwise through the bars of the small window by his side, (in which manner they succeeded in bruising him considerably, and inflicting a gash over his right eye.) They tore off the boards from one gable of the building, and the shingles from a portion of the roof, and with an axe cut through the logs that separated the upper from the lower portions of the jail, intending doubtless, to so cripple him from above, that those below might enter by the door and secure him. Just as this was accomplished, the prisoner fell down in a swoon, and thus became an easy prey. He was immediately placed upon a sled, and driven some three quarters of a mile from the jail, and then while still in a state of insensibility, one end of the rope was placed about his neck, and the other thrown over the limb of a tree, and he was swung into the air. Through some negligence, however, the moose [noose] slipped round under his chin, and he was again let down to the ground. Having by this time revived from his swoon, he was asked if he had anything to say. He again, as he had constantly done while defending himself from the mob, asserted his innocence of the crime for which he was about to suffer, and asked that a prayer might be offered up in his behalf. This was done by an exhorter who chanced to be in the vicinity, (most of the lynchers kneeling during the ceremony!) and then, with the assertion of innocence still upon his lips, he was once more drawn into the air, and so allowed to remain until life was extinct; --a victim of ill-advised and

unwarrantable justice, if guilty, --a martyr to popular fury, if innocent; and, in the eyes of the law, a murdered man under any circumstances.

After the execution, a hole was dug into the ground, some two feet deep, and his body uncoffined and unshrouded, was thrown into it, and covered over with dirt. This accomplished, the mob departed for town, and returned to their homes.

It is said that not a drunken man, or a drop of liquor was seen in the mob: the whole proceeding was gone through with in the most calm and deliberate manner by those engaged in it.

For the good name of Minnesota abroad, may a like occurrence never transpire within the borders of our State.

Yours,

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P.S. Since writing the above, I conversed with a gentleman from Wisconsin, who was on the spot throughout the entire scene. I elicit no new facts from him, except that the mob had sent word to Lexington upon the previous day, that they would be there on Monday, for the purpose of lynching REINHART; that the Sheriff of the county was sent for from Le Sueur, and was on the spot during the entire day; and that he read the riot act to them, and warned them of the consequences, should they persist in their acts of violence. He also states that what were supposed to be half-breeds, were merely white men in disguise.

*

ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

We are indebted to Mr. GEORGE GLEASON, express messenger of the N. W. Company, on the Minnesota River, for the following extra, from the office of the Minnesota *Statesman*:

The Laws Outraged. REINHART LYNCHED! BY A MOB OF THIRTY OR FORTY MEN!!

Our readers will doubtless be startled to learn from the following communication, that a party of men, disregarding the supremacy of our laws, and assuming the power of both Judge and Jury, entered the jail at Lexington, Le Sueur county, where Reinhart was confined for the murder of Bodell, on the 27th inst., took the prisoner out, and lynched him, within a short distance of the town:

Le Sueur, Dec. 28, 1858.

Dear GREEN: The village of Lexington, in this county, has been made the theatre of a scene of retributive justice, which, however destitute of law and order, nevertheless shows the rough American idea of rewards and punishments, in a forcible light.

About 10 o'clock on yesterday morning, a mob of thirty or forty men, mostly hailing from Rice county, arrived in Lexington, and demanded the keys of the prison in which the murderer Reinhart was confined. The efforts of the Sheriff and his Deputy to preserve the dignity of the law were in vain, and the jail was soon opened. The poor wretch inspired with the strength of a desperate man, tore his right hand free, through a heavy gyve of iron, and seizing the leg of a cast iron stove, stood at bay with his face towards the door. Being a tall, muscular man, the lynchers, for a while, dared not enter. After a short consultation, they tore down the gabled end of the log jail, and assailed him in the rear. Finding all hopes of resistance vain, Reinhart lost all heart, and fell upon the floor in a fit. Taking the senseless body in a sleigh, the whole party proceeded out of the village, a mile and a half, and attaching a rope to his neck, threw it over a tree and hauled him up. The noose was not tight and the lynchers lowered the body to adjust it more securely. Reinhart now came to his senses, sprang to his feet and earnestly asserted his perfect innocence of the murdered Bodell. Seeing that their ears were closed against his entreaties, he changed his tone, and declared his readiness to die. At his request, a bystander was called on to pray, and after a short prayer the murderer was again hauled up.

Public opinion has not yet experienced a reaction, and nine out of ten men in the

county, around Lexington, as well as in the village, consent to the justice of the execution. Waiving the possibility (a very slender one) of his innocence, it seems unfortunate for us to possess so little confidence in our government as to take its work into our own hands. Still, it requires no very keen vision to discern the majesty and supremacy of the great unwritten principles of law and justice in the summary proceedings of Judge Lynch himself.

The same great authority which declares vengeance to be the proper attribute of the Almighty alone, is also positive that "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."

Yours, & c.,

K.

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Le Sueur County, Minnesota