

## Paul Pringle Hanged in Mansfield.

**He Dies Protesting His Innocence, but Has Made His Peace with God and is Ready to Go—The Crime for which He Suffered Death.**

[SPECIAL TO THE PICAYUNE.]

SHREVEPORT, La., Oct. 13.—The following is the Daily Standard's special from Mansfield regarding the execution of Paul Pringle, colored, to-day:

The trip from Shreveport to Mansfield last night was made without interruption, but the arrival at Mansfield Station was somewhat late owing to the delay in Shreveport.

Paul Pringle, the doomed man, was of course the central attraction to those on the train, as he was on the way to be executed. During the trip he conversed freely with all who interviewed him, and kept up his spirits remarkably well, when it was taken into consideration that every one talked to him of the near approach of death.

To all those who conversed with him he insisted that he was innocent of the crime for which he was to suffer death, but was prepared to go, as he had made his peace with God.

After the arrival of the train at Mansfield he was taken to jail and properly cared for by Sheriff Sample and his deputies, and slept well during the remainder of the night. This morning he ate a good breakfast, and about 12 o'clock was visited by Rev. Messrs. G. N. Hartfield and Billingsly, of the white Baptist Church, and Johnson and Wickwise, of the colored Baptist Church. He prayed with them. After the prayer in jail Pringle requested them to pray with him on the scaffold, which they consented to do.

The scaffold, which is the same on which Ed. Bolton suffered death for the same crime, is situated in a corner of the court-house square, and at forty minutes past 12 o'clock the doomed man ascended the same with a firm step. On the stand were the four ministers, reporters of the press and officers of court, and the same was surrounded by about a thousand spectators, many of whom were colored.

After all preliminaries had been arranged the doomed man addressed those present for about 15 minutes. His remarks were generally of a religious character, but he took occasion several times to proclaim his innocence of the crime for which he was about to suffer the death penalty. He said he had made his peace with God, and was prepared to die, as he knew God was pleased with him.

He was approached by one of the colored preachers who asked him about the crime and his trial, but he asked him to stop, as he did not wish to review any wordy matters, and still proclaimed his innocence.

Pringle expressed a desire to see his mother and his wife before he died, but they were not present. Two of his uncles were present and came forward, and talked with him. To one of them he gave a dollar for his mother, and asked them to bury his remains beside his father in his old home at Red River parish.

Rev. G. W. Hartsfield then offered up a prayer, which was joined in by those present, and Pringle said he was resigned to his fate and ready to go.

Deputy Sheriff L. H. Hudson adjusted the knot and pulled the cap over his head, when Pringle said, "Good-bye all. I am innocent; God bless you."

Sheriff W. P. Sample said, "Paul, good-bye; God bless your soul," and sprang the trap at precisely twenty minutes past 1 o'clock.

The drop was 6 feet. There was only a slight shrugging of the shoulders and trembling by the unfortunate victim.

He was pronounced dead at thirty-two minutes past 1—twelve minutes—by Drs. Watch and Bead, attending physicians, and when the body was cut down it was found the neck had been broken.

Sheriff Sample had the body placed in a coffin and delivered to the uncle of the deceased, as requested by him.

All the details connected with the execution were conducted in a manner creditable to Sheriff Sample, and everything passed off quickly. Business in Mansfield was generally suspended during the execution.

The crime for which Pringle was hung was the stabbing of Albert Smith while robbing him. Edward Belton, a negro six feet in height and weighing about 150 pounds, very powerful and muscular, who preceded Pringle to the land of shadows by way of the gallows, was the principal actor in the tragedy, though it did not end in death.

John Mobile, another of the conspirators, found guilty of the crime, is said to have been an ex-convict. He is about 5 feet 11 inches high, and weighed 160 pounds.

Pringle was a dark mulatto, about 5 feet 10 inches high, and weighed about 150 pounds, and was wanted at the time he committed his last offense, for a burglary in Red River parish. He was a desperate and unscrupulous character.

The stabbing and robbery took place on the 21st of July last year. Alfred Smith, the victim, left the railroad near San Patrice Station, where he had been at work for some time, for his home in Red River parish. The accused parties, evidently thinking that he had considerable money, formed a conspiracy to kill and rob him, and in compliance therewith Ed. Belton left the camp with Smith. When they passed Thigpen's store, Smith bought a pair of shoes, and farther on they stopped at a blacksmith shop, where they were seen together.

They traveled on until within the vicinity of T. E. Hart's plantation, when Belton pretending to be very tired, induced Smith to remain with him all night in the woods, promising to give him two dollars if he would do so. Just at night Paul Pringle and John Mobile, whom Smith had left at the railroad, appeared on the scene where Smith and Belton were camped, and shortly afterwards they all went to sleep. Smith testifies that he went to sleep; did not know how long he slept, but was awakened by a thrust of a knife across his face, and as he rose Ed. Belton caught him by the shoulders and called upon Paul Pringle to bring him the club, which he did, and the witness knew no more for twelve days. It was also proved that the parties had money immediately after that, and that they had none before; and Belton had a pair of shoes in his possession corresponding with those Smith bought from Thigpen, and he could not account for the possession of the same.

After Smith was knocked senseless he was badly mutilated, his throat was cut and his head was beaten all over, his jaw was broken, and he was bruised in a most horrible manner, and it is astonishing that he survived. The conspirators evidently thought he was dead, for they dragged him some distance and left him in a ditch. But strange to say, that although the flies soon filled his wounds with worms, he survived, and on Saturday morning was found wandering about the woods, more dead than alive. He was out of his senses, and besides was unable to speak because his tongue had been cut nearly in two by his assailants. Although a stranger, some of the colored people took charge of him, and nursed him back to life, and he was thus enabled, though yet a most pitiable object, to appear before the court and testify against the culprits, whom the law has decreed shall sacrifice their lives.

This was the first sentence of death ever passed in DeSoto parish. Belton was hung first.

Mobile, the most unrepentent of the lot, escaped from the parish jail in a general delivery, and has not been re-arrested.

A plucky law fight was made to save Pringle's neck, but with no other success than postponing his death until to-day.

The following is the death warrant:

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }  
State of Louisiana. }

To W. P. Semple, Esq., Sheriff of the Parish of De Soto:

Whereas, on the 8th day of March, 1882, I directed you to suspend the execution of Paul Pringle, who was sentenced and convicted on the 8th of October, 1881; before the Tenth Judicial District Court of the State of

Louisiana, of the crime of stabbing and thrusting, while in the perpetration of the crime of robbery, and for said offense was sentenced by his honor, the Judge of said Court, to suffer the penalty of death; and the execution thereof was fixed on the 13th day of December, 1881. And the said Paul Pringle having escaped from jail, and having been recaptured, his execution was again fixed for the 10th day of March, 1882.

Now, therefore, I, Samuel D. McEnery, Governor of the State of Louisiana, do hereby direct you to cause the execution to be done, on the body of the said Paul Pringle, on Friday, the 13th day of October, 1882, between the hours of 12 meridian and 2 in the afternoon, and for so doing, this, together with the annexed proceedings of the said court, will be your sufficient warrant and authority.

Given under my signature and the seal of the State of Louisiana, at the city of Baton Rouge, this 1st day of September, 1882,  
S. D. McENERY.

By the Governor,  
OSCAR ARROYO,  
Asst. Secretary of State.