

# **HANGING OF THE PRICE FAMILY ON ASHE COUNTY COURTHOUSE LAWN, JEFFERSON, NC**

**on  
23 March 1863**

With the secession of North Carolina from the Union on May 20, 1861, the release of anger and evil among Ashe County citizens was like the opening of Pandora's box. Neighbors and friends for years became openly hostile enemies as the Civil War began. The greatest loss was perhaps the loss of security and innocence, not only in Ashe County, but also in the whole of the Appalachia Mountains\*.

The secession placed a great burden on the independent nature of the mountain way of life that was part of Ashe County citizens. Although only few of the citizens owned slaves, most of the population favored the Confederate cause. A surprising number of Ashe County's population was Union sympathizers. Union sympathizers thought secession was rebellious to the country, and they had nothing to gain by joining the Confederate cause. A number of Ashe Co. Union sympathizers join the Union Army in Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia. Making a living in the mountains was hard and going off to war placed a great burden on wives and families. There was no glory in hardships, disease and death on the battlefield or returning home with mangled bodies.

Some of Ashe County men were reluctant to enlist in the Confederate Army. Many men succumbed to peer pressure and harassment and went off to war to an uncertain life alien to their clannish mountain life of friends and families. Of course, there were many who rode off to war willingly with praise, hullabaloo and hoopla from friends and family to unknown glory, adventure and death.

When it became apparent that the "War of Rebellion" was going to last more than a few months, and hardship, disease and death became a reality, many men deserted the ranks and went home. These conscript deserters found themselves in company with those who refused to enlist and Union sympathizers who saw the folly of war and never offered themselves up as cannon fodder for the Confederate cause. Some overzealous citizens of Ashe County formed the Ashe County Home Guard to deal with these men. There may have been more than one cell of the Home Guard operating in Ashe County, but I have found no evidences of another. Leading the Ashe County Home Guard was George Washington "Wash" Long who assumed the rank of Major.

Jessie W. Price, his sons and others of his extended families, including sons of neighbors who were Union sympathizers and Confederate conscript deserters hid from the Ashe County Home Guard in the surrounding mountains to avoid being caught, killed, or

impressed into the CSA Army. To gather food for themselves, they foraged the mountains, farms and food that families would make available to them and hunted wild game.

Gathering food became the most dangerous part of their existence. Families and farms of suspected men who were in hiding were harassed, watched and often searched for evidences of their presence and support. Jessie, two of his sons and a nephew were captured by the Home Guard the night of March 22, 1863 when visiting a mill to grind corn for making bread near Jessie's home. One of the members of the Home Guard was a Price family relative and it was thought that it was he that told the Home Guard Jessie would be coming to the mill that night. After their capture by the Home Guard, they were taken and jailed that night in Jefferson, NC.

News of the capture of the Price family ran through the town of Jefferson quickly. Before noon a large group of Jefferson's citizens gathered at the Courthouse to see the prisoners who most knew personally. The Home Guardsmen being fueled by the excitement of the crowd and alcohol consumed during the night, decided to present the crowd with a hanging show almost as quickly as the crowd gathered. Some members of the crowd did try and stop the hangings but the majority did not want to be denied the excitement of seeing four hangings.

Jessie W. Price and his party were hanged in Jefferson, NC on the left front side of Ashe County Courthouse lawn near noon on March 23, 1863 by local Confederate Home Guardsmen, Commanded by Major George Washington "Wash" Long. The Prices were Union sympathizers, which did not sit well with the locals. Hanged+ with Jesse W. (55 years old) were his sons Hiram (34) and Moses (20), and a nephew, Solomon Price (20s). With Ashe Co.'s Sheriff John M. Carson not objecting, the Prices were hung with hemp rope in front of a large crowd from Jefferson as witnesses. The tree used was said to be a large locust tree located on the front left side of the Courthouse lawn, now a parking lot for the Museum of Ashe County History. This tree was cut down years later due to its age and dying condition. Locust trees had been planted, lining the road in front of the Courthouse, some with sitting benches under them. I was told they all were hung from the same tree branch. When the men were cut down, they found Moses Price alive. Moses was resuscitated by Dr. & Rev. James Wagg by rubbing snow in his face. Moses was returned to jail near the Courthouse and after he recovered was sent to Richmond to serve in the Confederate Army. He soon deserted the Confederate Army and joined the Union Army's 7<sup>th</sup> W.Va. Cal. Vol. in Fayette County [now Raleigh Co., WV]. He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regt.; Co.'s F, B & I and fought throughout the rest of the Civil War. Moses survived the hanging with a crooked neck and lived to be 70 years old, dieing on July 8, 1913 near Abingdon, VA.

Moses Price was blinded in one eye and had a minie ball in his shoulder, resulting from being shot in a small Civil War engagement near Buchanan, VA on June 13, 1864, which is about 10 miles south of Natural Bridge, VA. Moses' full name may have been Benjamin Moses Price. He used the name Benjamin Price when joining the Union Army. Yet most people in the mountains had single names at this time and his use of Benjamin may have been to disguise himself to the Confederates if taken as a prisoner. Moses' nickname became "Scape Gallows Price" after his hanging. Moses was described as 6'-1"

tall, light complexion, gray eyes and black hair. His wife's widow application number for a pension is: WA# 1038092.

+Jesse W. Price was married to Nancy Jane Cornett. Nancy (June 22, 1808 Grayson Co., VA-aft.1880 Ashe Co., NC) was the daughter of William and Mary (Hatfield) Cornett. Mary was the daughter of Jeremiah and Rachel (Vance) Hatfield. Jesse W. (May 28, 1808 Ashe Co., NC--March 23, 1863 Ashe Co., NC) was the son of William and Sosandra Keziah "Allie" (Roark) Price. Jesse W. and Nancy's known children are:

+Hiram	1829-March 23,1863	married 4/11/1851	Nancy C. Howell
David	1831-Feb. 2, 1911	married	Martha Bennett Dunn
Samuel E.	1833-1909	married 11/25/1857	Rebecca Jane Roark
Delilah	1834-5 Jan. 1860	married	John W. West
Mary	1836-Sept. 17,1883	married	William Marion Bone
William Leftridge	b.1838	married	#1 Mary Daughterly #2 Nancy (Hodge) Greaver #3 Amanda Asbury
Hezekiah	b.1839	married	#1 Mary King 8/30/1866 #2 Martha Osborne
Zechariah Wesley	May 20,1842-Dec. 9, 1917	married	Emily Workman
+Moses	April 26, 1843-July 8, 1913	Abingdon, VA married	#1 Mary Jane Stevens #2 Alameda Pope
Timothy	b. 1848	married	#1 Martha Hicks #2 Nancy Waddell
Thomas	~1850~1858		

Note: This author is a descendant of David and Martha Bennett (Dunn) Price's son, Phillip Sheridan Price. Sheridan served in the Spanish-American War. David served in the Union Army during the Civil War and moved his family from Ashe Co., NC to Raleigh Co., Rock Creek, WV in the summer of 1871. David, working in the sawmill, died Feb. 2, 1911, was 80 years old at Dry Creek while living with his youngest son, Sheridan. David was buried on Feb. 4, 1911 at the head of the Right Hand Fork of Rock Creek. His Union headstone has the inscription: David Price Co. B 2 W.Va. Cav.. He had enlisted in Tennessee on Aug. 28, 1863 and discharged as a Private on June 14, 1865. The service record on his headstone may be in error.

picture Sheridan in uniform here  
picture David's headstone also here

I was told that the hangings and tormenting by the Home Guard were the main cause for some Price families to leave Ashe County, NC and eventually settle in Boone and Raleigh Counties, WV. The Prices are said to have been a "bad lot" and sometimes described as "dangerous as a rattlesnake" when provoked. Although there are still Prices living in Ashe Co., NC where the family of Jesse W. Price, it appears, wore out their

welcome with their Confederate neighbors. They first came to Madison in Boone Co., WV in three covered wagons where they already had kin, the Benjamin Price's families. Being made uncomfortable by a large Confederate sympathetic population presence in Boone Co., after a short stay they moved to Raleigh Co. [then Fayette Co. with a large Union sympathetic population] on Marsh Fork of Big Coal River in the areas of Horse Creek and Rock Creek, WV. Additional members of Ashe Co. Price families moved to WV after 1870.

In keeping with the family's thinking, "get mad and get even", a nephew, Thomas Price, got even with five of the eight or nine men who participated in the hangings. According to my father Dewey Pettry and his half brother Herman Price, Thomas hunted down five of the men and killed them. Thomas killed 3 men locally in NC; others may have been killed in the Civil War or moved to parts unknown. The next to last to be killed had become a preacher and was preaching in a church near Madison in Boone Co., WV. The preacher failed to come home one night after church services. The next day he was found dead in a ditch between his house and the church. Shortly after that, Thomas Price went to Louisiana where he killed another man. I was told that Thomas married a Cajon woman and settled near Denton, Texas. The leader of the Home Guard and the hangings, George Washington Long, lived to be 92 years old.

Jessie W. Price was the son of William L. Price Sr. (1786 Orange Co., NC- August 18, 1864 Rock Creek, Ashe Co., NC) and Sosandra Keziah Roark (~1778-Aug. 18, 1864 Rock Creek, Ashe Co., NC), half Cherokee Indian\*\*, the daughter of Charles O. and "Abigail" Raven (Canoe)\*\*\* Roark. Sosandra, called "Allie", being half Cherokee Indian, now is referred to as a Melungeon\*\*\*\*. Allie was about 5'-8", had light mahogany skin, dark eyes and long black nappy hair. William L. Sr. and Allie are buried in the Price-Roark Cemetery (also known as the Rock Creek Methodist Church Cemetery) on the Right Hand Fork of Rock Creek, Ashe Co., NC and their known children are:

Unknown child	b. Dec. 30, 1804		
Jesse W.	May 28, 1808-March 23, 1863	married	Nancy Jane Cornett
Delilah "Dialphia"	Aug. 19, 1810-1881	married	Harrison Murphy Osborne
Rebecca	b. Dec. 10, 1813	never married,	had children.
Sarah	b. Mar. 7, 1817	never married,	had children.
Abigail	b. Feb. 7, 1819	married	David Osborne
William L.	Apr. 15, 1822-1892	married 7/28/1840	Cinda Ollie Ham
Solomon	Jun. 24, 1824-Aug. 3, 1900	married	Nancy Mahala _____
Timothy	b. July 1, 1826	married	Diadema Allen
Thomas	May 23, 1829-Sept. 26, 1865		
Ladoma	b. 1831		

Rebecca's children are: Neoma and William. Sarah's children are: Emaline, Susan and Delilah.

William L. Price, Sr. was the son of William and Delilah (Dickson) Price. Delilah was the daughter of Thomas and Nancy (McMillan) Dickson. William and Delilah were

married in Orange Co., NC ~1781. William was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and in ~1800 lived in Grayson Co., VA. In ~1817, William (~1762 Orange Co., NC-April 21, 1833 Johnson Co., TN) and Delilah (~1762 Orange Co., NC--Feb. 8, 1843 Ashe Co., NC) moved to Johnson Co., TN there he died in 1833. After William's death, Delilah moved to Ashe Co., NC and lived with her son Thomas until her death, she is buried in the Joe Hampton Cemetery, Ashe Co., NC. William and Delilah's known children are:

Thomas	~1782~1877	married	Mary "Polly" Thomas
William L.	1786-Aug. 18, 1864	married	Sosandra Keziah "Allie" Roark
John	~1790~1865	married	Millie Landreth Grayson
David	~1792	married	Mary "Polly" Haley
Jessie	~1796		
Ellen "Nelly"	~1800	married	Jessie Roark
Moses	~1802		
Nancy	~1803		

William L. Price enlisted on July 20, 1778 into the Continental Army and was assigned to Captain Childs' Company, 10<sup>th</sup> Regiment. After the Revolutionary War, he was given a land grant of 116 acres by the state of TN for his service in the war. The grant was given on April 4, 1816 and the land was located in what became Carter Co., TN. That part of Carter Co. became Johnson Co., TN in 1830. His sons David and Moses moved there also, but Moses left and moved to Green Co., IN. Some of his children remained in TN and others went to Ashe Co., NC area.

Sworn Affidavit by Delilah' brother, Moses Dickson, dated 11/23/1854 in Ashe Co., NC

"Before me and acting Justice of the Peace in aforesaid county personally came Moses Dickson a resident of said County age 79 years whom I certify to be a full credit for veracity as a witness who upon oath duly administered, state that he resided in Orange County (NC) in said state during the Revolutionary War but was then a boy and was not then engaged in military service. He states further that he well knew William Price at that time and was present at his marriage with Delilah Dickson his sister which took place at his father's residents in said county on the \_\_\_ day of one thousand seven hundred and \_\_\_\_\_. The marriage ceremony was performed by \_\_\_\_\_. He recollects the marriage well from the circumstances that the marriage party danced and frolicked all night of the marriage."

Sworn Affidavit by Delilah's brother, Moses Dickson, dated 8/21/1855 in Ashe Co., NC

"He distinctly recollects the marriage of his sister with William Price. His sister's name was Delilah. William Price had before the marriage been on a tour in the War of the Revolution on the side of the Continental or Whigs and sometime thereafter he became engaged to and married his said sister. He recollects distinctly the occurrence of the marriage crowd collected on the occasion and in honor of the occasion those assembled danced all night, as was the first occurrence of the kind he ever witnessed it made a strong

impression on his mind. He thinks this occurred late in the spring of 1781 or 1782 from this circumstance. At that time the British and Tories were making incursions upon the Wigs in the North Carolina and a new draft of men was ordered. As William Price had recently married he was loath to separate so soon from his wife and for a few days he avoided being drafted but at length he came in and joined the troop and served for during the war and never laid down his arms until the war ended.”

\*Appalachia Mountains: A term that notes a region within the Appalachian Mountain System. While the Appalachian Mountain System extends from northern New York to northern Alabama, “Appalachia” generally includes the Blue Ridge and Allegheny ranges of this mountain system. This region includes WV and counties of southwestern VA, eastern KY, western NC and eastern TN.

\*\*Cherokee Indians: It is difficult to determine the true fathers of Cherokee Indian children because of the Indian’s society and life-style. So-called “marriages” quite often did not last long. The “husband or wife” could walk away from the relationship easily and often did. Both father and mother owned their own belongings, so there was no problem in who gets what when the relationship was over. The father had little to do with raising the children and the children most often went with their mother when the relationship ended. Therefore a woman often had children with two or more men. Some children were “adopter” when their mother died and some were “adopted” when stolen from their tribe’s enemies. With no written records, it is difficult and almost impossible to trace your genealogy in the Indian culture. Many genealogists trace their roots through the Indian culture by “selective decision”. Selecting their ancestors to those Indians of historical fame and notoriety.

At the time of the events happening in this article, the Cherokee Nation had a long relationship with the Europeans, first with runaway slaves and French, then with the English. At this time the Cherokees had become dependent on trading with the Europeans to obtain their guns, shot, powder, iron knives, pots, hoes and some clothing and blankets. The Cherokee’s offer for trade was peaceable relations and animal skins, mostly deerskins.

The Cherokees first encountered European in 1540 when the Spaniards Hernando DeSoto’s expedition crossed their territory and again by Juan Pardo’s expedition in 1566-’68. A group of 7 Cherokee Indians traveled to England in 1730, escorted by Sir Alexander Cumming and had an audience with King George II. Attakullakulla (The Little Carpenter), then 19 years old and often recognized as the father of Cheucunsene Kunmese (Dragging Canoe), traveled with this group of Cherokees. In 1762 another

group of 3 Cherokees traveled with Lt. Henry Timberlake to England and had an audience with King George III. Lt. Timberlake also escorted a group of 5 Cherokees to England in 1764-'65. Some Cherokees wanted to travel to England for the adventure and because it enhanced their status and influence among the tribes upon return. They also expected and received many gifts while in England. American Indians traveling to England were common into 1820s. An interesting similarity with this article is in 1791, a three man Cherokee Indian delegation traveled to England. One Indian was a mixed-blood Indian named Moses Price whose Cherokee name was Wasi. The other two delegates were Kawantikiski (peach-eater) and Unatoy or Ana-edohi (water-walker). For more information read the book: "*The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake*".

\*\*\* "Abigail" Raven Canoe: "Abigail" Raven Canoe (~1760-1820) was the daughter of Cherokee Warrior Cheucunsene Kunmese "Tsiyu-gunsi-ni (Dragging Canoe)" (~1734-1 March 1792) and U ga lo gv "Nellie" Leaf (~1730~1790). Abigail married (~1775) Charles O. Roark when ~15 years old. Charles O. Roark was the son of Timothy O. and Sarah (Parker) Roark. Dragging Canoe was the son of "Attakullakulla (The Little Carpenter)" (~1708-1777) and Nionne Ollie, he the adopted son of White Owl (~1680-1741) and "Nancy" Moytoy (~1683~1741). Dragging Canoe and his raiding party, killed David Crockett's grandfather, grandmother and several of their children in 1777. Dragging Canoe got his name from wanting to be a warrior, asked his father to include him in a war party against the Shawnees, but was refused. His father later gave him permission to go if he would carry the canoe. The canoe was too heavy for a small boy, so he dragged the canoe. The warriors being impressed with his effort called him "Dragging Canoe". Although Dragging Canoe distrusted the whites and fought them all his life, most all of his children married whites and Melungeons\*\*\*\*. Dragging Canoe and Nellie's known children are: Little Dragging Canoe, Little Owl Canoe, Eyoostee Canoe, Turtle At Home Canoe, Abigail Raven Canoe, Nakey Sarah Canoe, Gi-yo-sti Canoe and Yalotiskee Canoe. More information on "Dragging Canoe, The Little Carpenter and White Owl" can be found on the Internet or see enclosure (1). An Indian's name often changed during their lifetime because of events or situation they were in or dealt with during their life.

Picture of Abigail Raven (Canoe) Roark here

\*\*\*\*Melungeon:

Melungeons (meh-LUN'-jun) in Ashe Co., NC are multiracial with mixed ancestry and ethnic diversity of French, English, white, black, Indian and others found in the Appalachia Mountains. Originally dark-skinned black-whites multiracial

families found within the Appalachia TN-NC-VA-KY and WV borders. In WV I knew them as “Loggers” because they usually worked in the logging and timber industry. It was difficult to understand most of them for they spoke with a guttural tone. Knowing them in my youth and sharing common ancestry, I was able to understand talking to them except for one, James French Turner, Jr. There are many Melungeon sub-groups, originally with little education, members could move outside their culture and others could move into it also. Melungeons have organized and have a reunion once a year in the Southern Appalachia Mountain area to celebrate their heritage. For more information: Melungeon Heritage Association, Inc., P.O. Box 4042, Wise, VA 24292. Their website: <http://www.melungeon.org/node/2>

### “The Adventures of a Conscript”

The information printed below is a portion of an article, “*The Adventures of a Conscript*”, written by W.H. Younce and published by “Editor Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1889”. This portion of the article is W.H. Younce’s description of the hanging of the Price family. The 32-page article can be found in its entirety at the following website: <http://www.webroots.org/library/usamilit/taoacnc0.html>

William Henry “Buck” Younce (July 26, 1842 Riverview, Ashe Co., NC--May 27, 1922 Franklin, IN) was the son of David and Lois (Perkins) Younce. David Younce was the son of John and Roda (Foutz) Younce. John, born in Holland, served in the Revolutionary War as a blacksmith. Buck was born and lived on his father’s large plantation near Riverview, Ashe Co., NC near the TN-VA borders, on the North Fork of New River. The Price families also lived on the North Fork of New River near the towns of Creston, Clifton and Jefferson. Shortly after the hangings, Buck left Ashe Co. while a deserted Confederate conscript and went to Miami Co., OH in March 1863 and lived with his uncles, Phillip and John Younce. In Oct. 1863 he joined the Union Army. Buck survived the Civil War and married (Aug. 1865) Elizabeth Terhune. They lived in Franklin, Indiana and had two children:

Alice	married	William Slack
Celete	Died at age 16	playing Russian roulette.

### “At Home Again

Our purpose was to try to reach my father’s home that night, but about the middle of the night we had given out with fatigue and hunger, and could go not further. We stopped at a cabin with people whom I knew, and lay down on the floor and slept till nearly daylight, and then started for home. We arrived at my father’s home about eight o’clock in the

morning, on Friday, the third day of March (1863), having been on the road just three weeks to the day.

The boys who were with me went to their homes in another part of the County [Ashe Co.], and thus ended my second desertion [from the Confederate Army].

I will not attempt to describe the condition of things that existed there at that time. My vocabulary is too limited to attempt a portrayal of the horrors and the sufferings of those poor Union people. Civil law and courts of justice had been abolished; monarchy and ruin reigned supreme; men and neighbors, who had always passed for good men, and who had turned to be rebels, were transformed into demons, murderers and savages. Conscripts were hunted like animals, and often shot and murdered. Their homes were often destroyed by the torch, and if spared were robbed of everything they had, and their families left without a crust of bread.

The fact that I had deserted the second time was known by the authorities at home before I arrived. My Captain had instructed the Colonel of the Home Guard, as they called themselves, not to return me again to his company; in fact, not to arrest me, but to shoot me on sight, and they were on the lookout for me before I arrived. I was informed of these facts as soon as I got home. I then doubled my vigilance; for I well knew with me then it was a simple a matter of life or death. I decided to find a hiding place and allow no one to see me, and at night I would slip in and get something to eat. Every two or three nights, five or six of them would come and search the house from cellar to garret. But I was very careful not to be there. This was a hard life, and I soon began to grow tired, and at night, as I would lie in my hiding-place in the gloomy forest, I would wonder if there were not some way out of this kind of existence, when just at this time a circumstance occurred in the neighborhood that changed the whole course of things, and opened again new fields for adventure.

There lived not far away an old man by the name of **Price**. He had four or five sons who were conscripts, but up to this time had never been captured. The old man had also gained the enmity of these bandits or Home Guards, and they were seeking to capture him. They had camped on his place during a part of the winter and robbed him of everything he had. His family had left their home and sought refuge elsewhere. He had an old mill on a mountain stream near his house, and he and his sons would slip in from the mountains and grind corn for bread, and take it back with them to their hiding-place.

### Union Men Murdered

The Home Guards learning they were making frequent visits to the mill, concealed themselves near by, and waited for their coming. **Price**, thinking the way was clear, with two of his sons and a nephew, came to the mill. They were surrounded, taken by surprise, and all of them captured and led by Major Long (the same Major Long who captured me, before referred to) went to jail, took these prisoners to a wood near the town, and hanged every one of them. They would tie one of the poor fellow's hands behind him, put a rope around his neck, place him on a horse behind one of the mob, who would ride under the limb of the tree, throw the end of the rope to a man on the horse would ride out from under him, leaving him dangling in mid-air.

The three boys were hung first, one at a time, as I have described. In the crowd that went out to witness the hanging was Dr. Wagg, a prominent physician and also a Methodist preacher, a man well and favorably known throughout all the country, and, be it to his credit,

was trying to quell the mob and save the lives of these men. After the three young men had hanged, Dr. Wagg approached the old man, whom he had known for many years, and told him he could do nothing for him; that he had no influence with these men, and there were going to hang him; “And now,” he said “you are unprepared, and in a few minutes more your soul will be ushered into eternity. I am here to try to do you good. Shall I not stay the hand of death, while I pray with you?”

The old man replied:

“Doctor, I have done nothing to be hung for. I am old---not even subject to military duty. I have committed no crime. I have only been loyal to my country, and if it is for this you intend to murder me, I will go into eternity as I am. I want no rebel, such as you are to pray for me.”

In a moment his hands were pinioned, and he was swinging beside the three boys.

Then they were taken down, Dr. Wagg discovered that one of the young men was not yet dead, and after some time spent in working with him, he was resuscitated. He was taken back to jail, and as soon as he was fully recovered was sent to the front at Richmond.

He at once made his escape, got to the Union Army, and enlisted in the Federal service, and fought throughout the war.

This happened about two weeks after my arrival home, and convinced me that it was exceedingly hazardous for me to remain in that part of the country.”

Notes: The Home Guardsman that was in charge of capturing and hanging the Prices on March 23, 1863 was Major George Washington “Wash” Long (Sept. 20, 1809 Ashe Co.-April 22, 1907 Allegheny Co.), the son of John R. Jr. and Mary Susannah (Stamper) Long. Washington Long married Martha Matilda Woodie (Dec. 3, 1813 Ashe Co.--Oct. 18, 1907 Allegheny Co.), the daughter of James and Margaret (Bryant) Woodie. Washington and his wife left Ashe Co. and went to Allegheny Co. NC shortly after the Civil War, possible to foil any vengeful attempts on his life. Both are buried in the Meadow Fork Church Cemetery. Washington and Matilda’s known children are: Eli C., James, Martin, Harrison “Hudson”, Louisiana “Lucinda”, Morgan, Mary Jane, and George Neil.

Home Guards were formed in most every state during the Civil War [especially border states]. In bordering states, both Union and Confederate sympathizers formed Home Guards. North Carolina seceded from the Union on May 20, 1861 and was readmitted on July 4, 1868. Leaders of the Home Guard gave themselves military rank and their originations nicknames like: Rebs, Federals, Scouts, Raiders, Rangers, Rattlesnakes, Copperheads, Panthers, Fire Eaters, War Hawks, Yellow Jackets, etc. Home Guards were generally groups of elderly, underage, and unserviceable-opportunist men who murdered and stole for their own gain under the banner of their alliance. Members of the Home Guard were volunteers, but its ranks would swell when a foray or raid was planned. They roamed the area plundering indiscriminately farms and property while the men were away in the Army, targeting and terrorizing families of those who were on the other side of their alliance. They shanghaied men for compulsory military service. On occasion they would capture soldiers home on military or sick leave, turning them

over as prisoners of war or simply kill them. Home Guard's membership also gave an individual the opportunity to settle personal scores against someone they disliked. The turmoil caused by the Civil War gave opportunity for outlaw activities by individuals and the Home Guards. Recorded history often called the Home Guards "Outlaws". Many of the Home Guardsmen were subjected to retaliation and bushwhacked by those who they offended after returning home from the Civil War in 1865. The hate and "pay-backs" were severe in most cases. Back home, the Civil War wasn't over for many years to come and then not completely, living on through descendants.

Rev. & Dr. James Wagg (Oct. 8, 1807-Jan. 23, 1887 Ashe Co.), the son of John and Fnu (Blevins) Wagg, was a Methodist minister and medical doctor. Rev. Dr. Wagg married #1 (Jan. 28, 1832) Elizabeth Duvall (1815-1855), the daughter of Samuel and Mary "Polly" Duvall. Rev. Dr. Wagg lived in Jefferson, NC and most of his children died of TB. Dr. Wagg's home in Jefferson mysteriously burned down the night of March 17, 1864 with everything in it when he was away. Several of his sons became doctors and ministers; one was killed in the Civil War while serving in the CSA Army. James and Elizabeth's known children are: John D., Mary, Samuel T., Alfred, Martha A., James M., Wiley, Thomas Eugene and America.



Reverend James Wagg

The jailhouse that held the Prices was near Ashe County's original Courthouse in Jefferson, NC. It consisted of two buildings, the original jail section was a one-room structure called "The Dungeon". The Dungeon had two planked beds, two tin buckets, each with a wooden board (slabs) for cover that served as a stool also, and a drinking dipper. One bucket contained water for drinking and the other was the toilet. It was described as a dark, evil smelling place. The Prices were housed in The Dungeon for one-half night before hanged. The Dungeon had one heavily barred window and an iron door with iron bars. This door is displayed in the "Museum of Ashe County History". A larger jailhouse built later and made of bricks was next to "The Dungeon" but not attached. Both jailhouses had tin roofs,

as well as the Courthouse that was removed to make tin kitchen utensils during the Civil War and were replaced with wooden shingles. Both jailhouse buildings burned down in 1887. The original Courthouse built of bricks in the 1830s was torn down and a new and larger brick Courthouse was built in 1904 on the same spot. This Courthouse is located at 301 East Main St., P.O. Box 1404, Jefferson, NC 28640 [Ph. 336-846-1904, [ashemuseum@skybest.com](mailto:ashemuseum@skybest.com) and [www.ashehistory.org](http://www.ashehistory.org)] and was restored in 2009 to house the “Museum of Ashe County History” with Donald F. Long as its Curator. The Ashe County Public Library is located at: 148 Library Dr., West Jefferson, NC 28694-9793.

Ashe County Courthouse picture here

This mountain area of Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee at one time tried to become an independent State called “State of Franklin”. The State of Franklin effort existed for five years between Dec. 14, 1784 and 1789 with its capital at Jonesborough, TN. This was an effort by independent thinking mountain people, and their involvement in the Revolutionary War. They had fought in the Battles of King’s Mountain and Guilford Courthouse, under General Nathaniel Green against General Charles Cornwallis. Their lives were far detached from the central governments of VA, NC and TN. Historians now agree that these two battles were critical for General Washington and the French to win the Battle of Yorktown. The loss of men and materials at these two battles forced General Cornwallis to go to Yorktown, VA in a weakened condition. This was the beginning of winning the Revolutionary War.

Affidavits:

North Carolina  
County of Ashe

“In the matter of the pension claim cft no. 858418 of Moses Price. Who claims to have rendered service as private Co.’s I & B 2<sup>nd</sup> Reg. W.Va. Cav. war of the rebellion. On this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July 1896 personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace in and for said county duly authorized to administer oaths David C. Latham age 58 years a resident of Lrout, NC, whose P.O. address is Lrout. Well known to me to be reputable and entitled to full faith and credit who being by me duly sworn disposed and says in relation to the afore said claim as follows.

That about the latter part of the year 1862 or the early part of the spring of 1863 the afore said Moses Price the claimant were captured by the Confederate Authorities and brought to Jefferson N.C. Where he the said Price were hung by the neck without trial by the Confederate Soldiers and cut down for dead and he appeared to be dead for some time and he finally came too the Confederate Authorities were going to rehang him again Myself and others then begged and pled for his life---Confederate Authorities from hanging him

anymore, the reason why I know these facts to be true is that I were present at the time claimant were hung and seen the hanging occur with my own eyes.

The said Moses Price were hung on the grounds of being a very strong Union man and opposed to secession and refusing to enlist in the Confederate Army affiant further states that there were no other charges against him. My best opinion is that were not caused by any vicious habit on the part of the claimant. I have no interest direct or indirect in the prosecution of this claim and am not related to the claimant. This affidavit were all written in my presents and from my own oral statement this day made to E.H. Graybeal who wrote same at Lrout N.C. on 22 day of July 1896. That it were not prepared from any written of printed matter or recital nor dictated by any other person and not attached as an exhibit to my testimony. That the facts here in stated are true.”

David C. Latham

North Caroline  
County of Ashe

“In the matter of the pension claim ctf. No. 858418 of Moses Price who claims to rendered service to the United States Army Co.’s I & B 2<sup>nd</sup> Regt. W.Va. Cav. Vol. War of the rebellion. On this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June personally appeared before me Clerk Superior Court of said County W.W. Rollins whose P.O. address is Jefferson N.C. age 70 years well known to me to be reputable and entitled to full faith and credit who being by me duly swore depose and says in relation to the fore said claim the following.

That on or about the year 1862 or 1863 as well as I now remember were in the winter season Moses Price the claimant were captured by the Confederate Authorities and brought to Jefferson, N.C. where he the said Moses Price was immediately hung by the neck for dead without trial by the said Confederate Authorities Solely on the ground that the said Price were a very strong Union man and were bitterly opposed to secession and refusing to enlist in the Confederate Army and father that said Moses Price after hanging this time out were cut down for dead and he the claimant came too by the aid of myself and others by rubbing snow in his face and I think for his life, and did succeed in preventing the said poesy of Confederate Soldiers from hanging him anymore, That I were present at the time said Price were hung, and know it to be correct and my best opinion that it were not caused by any bad habit on the part of the claimant that said Confederate Soldiers were the time of the hanging intoxicated drinking to some extent. I have no interest direct or indirect in the prosecution of this claim.

This affidavit all written in my presents and from my own oral statement this day made to E.H. Graybeal of Solitude, N.C. who wrote same at Jefferson on 25 day June 1896. That it were not prepared from any written of printed matter or recital nor by any person and not attached as an exhibit to my testimony. That the facts here in stated are true.”

W.W. Rollins

Sworn and subscribed  
to this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June 1896  
before me.

P. Blevons Clerk

of Superior Court  
Ashe Co. N.C.

When doing research for this report in Ashe County, NC, I found no written mention of the hangings by local or area historians. Some family historians in NC and TN did mention it in their personal family history but gave no details other than the hangings did occur. The bulk of the information gathered here came from the family descendents of Jessie W. Price in WV and VA orally and limited written accounts in their family history. W.H. Younce's "*The Adventures of a Conscript*", published in 1889, provided the most positive description of the hangings, the conditions and atmosphere during the Civil War, which led to the unthinkable crime of hanging fellow county men. This act appears to be acceptable to most Ashe County citizens at the time. No official accountability for this action was sought for after the Civil War.



The best New and Coal Rivers have to offer.

This is work in progress.

January 18, 2013

Any comments, corrections and additions will be appreciated.  
You are welcome to copy the contents of this report in part or whole.

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