

THE LEANDER PASCO - CAL WOOD TRAGEDY, 1890-92
EXTRACTS FROM VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS OF THE PERIOD

Compiled by Ian Watson, 1983

GLENS FALLS STAR

Monday, May 12 1890

(Supplied by Mabel M. Tucker, Town Historian, Warrensburg, N.Y.)

"Leander Pasco, of Thurman, was murdered in our town last evening!" It was the substance of a startling message delivered yesterday morning to District Attorney Patterson and Coroner Streeter by John Glassbrooks and Hartwell Gill, of Stony Creek. A communication of the same report was sent to the STAR office. About 10 o'clock the prosecuting officer and coroner left for Creek Center, and shortly after a reporter for this paper started out, with the same place as the objective point. When the officials in question reached Creek Center they were escorted by residents to a lonely spot, two miles east of that hamlet where the road leads through a piece of dense woods. There lying by the roadside, in a pool of blood, was the body of Leander Pasco.

A DETERMINED MURDERER

The dead man's back was fairly riddled with buckshot. Two heavily-loaded barrels had evidently been fired at him. The first charge took effect in the middle of the back. The other broke his left arm, some of the shot being lodged in the back of the neck and others mutilating the side of the face. The shots which struck him in the back of the neck are supposed to have lodged at the base of the brain and caused death, or some of the shot which struck lower down may have penetrated far enough to strike a vital point. Footprints, and stray shots which struck trees and other objects showed unmistakably that the murderer concealed himself in the woods a short distance from the road, and there waited until his victim had passed by and reached a position that seemed most favorable for his fiendish work.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE

The body was lying about twenty feet from where the axe was found, indicating that when the first shot was fired Pasco dropped the axe and ran. The second shot did its work effectively, and the victim fell forward, his head striking in his open umbrella, in which position he expired.

A JURY IMPANELED

The coroner impaneled the following jury: A. J. Aldrich, Richard Pearse, Danford Harris, Dudley Gill, James C. Millis, Myron Dean, John Burdick, Warren Wait, John H. Knowlton and Lamora Knowlton. After viewing the remains the body was placed in a wagon and taken to Perkins' undertaking rooms at Creek Center where the inquest is now in progress.

A LAWLESS COMMUNITY

The locality known as High Street is situated in the south-eastern part of Thurman, near the line dividing that town from Stony Creek, and about four miles from the hamlet of Creek Center. There lived Leander Pasco, a widower, who at the time of his death was about fifty-five years of age. Several families named Wood were among his neighbors. Those Woods are reputed a bad lot, and Pasco, who is also alleged to have been possessed of an irascible temper, frequently became involved in altercations with them. Law suits have been numerous; cows have been poisoned with paris gree; thefts have been common occurrences. In brief, the record of High Street has been such that reputable people have considered it a very good place to keep away from.

THE FATAL JOURNEY

Having heard that Mrs. Joseph Hebert had sued Leander Pasco to recover a sum of money alleged to be due her for wages and that he was on his way home from the justice's office [when] stricken by the unknown assassin, our reporter drove to the Hebert house. It is located on the road between Creek Center and High Street, about thirty or forty rods from the scene of the murder. Mr. and Mrs. Hebert were at home when our representative called.

MRS. HEBERT'S STATEMENT

Mrs. Hebert told a straightforward, apparently consistent story of her experience with Pasco. She said in substance, in response to inquiries: "Myself and my husband worked for Leander Pasco one month, ending on April 6 last. He was employed in the sugar camp, and I did housework. Mr. Pasco refused to pay myself and my husband the wages due us, setting up as

his defense the statement that he had not agreed to pay us anything. I sued him, and the case was called for trial on Saturday before Justice Hall, at Creek Center. Pasco applied for an adjournment, and his motion was granted.

HEARD THE FIREARM REPORTS

"Some time afterward I started for home. On the way I stopped at the home of Columbus Cudney, about midway between my house and Creek Center. I sat on the stoop talking with Mrs. Cudney, and while there Leander Pasco passed by, going in the direction of his home. Ten or fifteen minutes after I looked at Mrs. Cudney's clock and remarked to her that it was getting late - that it was quarter to six. Mrs. Cudney replied that her clock was fast. I then left for my home. I met no one on the road after leaving Mrs. Cudney's. On the way I heard the sounds of two gun shots. I had been at home only a few minutes when George Pasco, son of the murdered man, came in. He was a short distance behind me, walking in the same direction, and on his way to High Street. He spoke about hearing the shots, and I said 'I guess someone is hunting in the woods above our house,' and paid no more attention to the matter.

FORMERLY FROM GLENS FALLS

"We have been told that suspicion rested upon myself and my husband, because I had sued Mr. Pasco. But that is all nonsense. We do not own a gun. My brother gave me one to shoot hen hawks, but I sold it a year ago, and my husband knows so little about a gun that I do not think he could fire one. Besides he was here with our son during all the time I was down to the Center. The first we knew about the murder was at half-past nine o'clock Saturday night. Lafayette Grimes, Delbert Burdick, George Burdick and David Wood came and told us about it." Joseph Hebert and his wife moved from Glens Falls to Thurman about five years ago. Mrs. Hebert's maiden name is Emma Lamora. She is a daughter of the late John Lamora of this place.

WHAT GRIMES SAW

Lafayette Grimes, a brother-in-law of Leander Pasco, lives in the High Street neighborhood. While on his way to Creek Center about half-past five o'clock Saturday evening he met Pasco. The latter had an umbrella and a new axe. Shortly after he passed Pasco, he heard the reports of two gun shots. A short time after he met George Pasco, son of the deceased. The fact that Mr.

Grimes did not also meet Mrs. Hebert is accounted for by the fact that there are two roads for a part of the distance, diverging at one place and coming together again about sixty rods farther on. Mrs. Grimes and Mrs. Hebert took different roads, it is alleged, and consequently could not see each other. The former met George Pasco at the junction.

THOUGHT IT WAS A BEAR

Between seven and eight o'clock after transacting his business in Creek Center, Grimes started on his homeward journey. About eighty rods from where he had met Pasco in a very uncanny spot, Grimes saw an object in the sand and he at first took it to be a bear. He stopped for a moment and, as the supposed animal did not move, he concluded to make a closer investigation. He recognized the body as that of Leander Pasco, and thinking that he was intoxicated and had fallen, called out: "Come, Lee, get up!" Receiving no response, he took hold of the body and found it to be lifeless.

A LONELY VIGIL

Grimes thereupon notified Delbert Burdick, George Burdick, and David Wood, and with them again examined the body. They then called at Joseph Hebert's (as related by the latter's wife), and there found Reuben Wheeler, who was making a neighborly call. Wheeler, Louis Aldrich and William Brooks volunteered to watch the corpse during the night while Grimes went to the Center and notified Justice Dunlap and Dr. Aldrich. In accordance with their suggestions Messrs. Glassbrook and Gill started about eleven o'clock for Glens Falls, reaching there at four o'clock yesterday morning and later conveying information of the crime to the coroner and prosecuting officer, as already stated.

THE VICTIM'S FAMILY RELATIONS

The murdered man leaves four children: Mattie, the eldest, is the wife of Joseph (alias "Cal") Wood; George, aged about twenty-one years, Samuel, aged sixteen, and Eva, aged nine. None of the children except the youngest have lived at home of late on account of their inability to agree with their father. Only a short time ago George had a pitch battle with his father, and received a severe pounding. As a result the son had a warrant issued by Justice Hawks, of Thurman, for the arrest of the father on a charge of assault and battery. In the absence of that magistrate the constable brought the defendant before Justice Dunlap, of Stony Creek. The latter had received no complaint, however, and of course the father was discharged. Living with the

deceased, as housekeeper of late, was a Mrs. Wyman, alias Hattie White, who recently deserted her alleged husband at Luzerne.

WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE?

Was jealousy the motive for the crime? Those familiar with the circumstances answer in the negative. The same reply comes to the inquiry, "Was it robbery?" Pasco carried but very little money at any time on his person. "Was the motive vengeance, then - was the criminal prompted by a desire to avenge some real or fancied wrong?" To this nearly every person with whom the reporter conversed answered yes. And the officers of the law will probably work on this theory for a solution of the mystery.

A SUCCESSION OF FIGHTS

"The residents of High Street," said a gentleman to the reporter, "have been involved in a succession of quarrels for the last 15 years. All sorts of deprivations have been committed, and threats to take lives have been made. Only a few years ago a Mrs. Reesha was wounded by a shot fired through a window of the house of Stephen Wood, where she was living."

On town meeting day 1884 Mrs. Almon Swears was shot and killed in her own home in the town of Stony Creek in broad daylight. The assassin escaped detection. It is to be hoped, for the sake of justice, that the investigation in this case may be attended with more successful results.

ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Monday, May 12 1890

Mysterious murder at Troy.

TROY, N.Y., May 11. -- This morning the dead body of Leander Pasco, constable of Thurman, Warren county, was found on the road at Thurman. He had been shot in the head. No motive is known.

GLENS FALLS STAR

Week of Monday, May 19 1890

(Supplied by Mabel M. Tucker, Town Historian, Warrensburg, N.Y.)

"CAL" WOOD CONFESSES!

The Story of a Bloody Crime

Vigilant Officers Successfully Follow Up the Slight Clues and Corner the Criminal.

The authorities engaged in the investigation of the Pasco murder case at Stony Creek had secured sufficient evidence during last week to warrant them in issuing a warrant for the arrest of Joseph, alias "Cal" Wood, and he was taken into custody Sunday afternoon on a charge of having committed the crime. When brought before Justice Dunlap and arraigned he first insisted that he was innocent. Subsequently, the depositions of several witnesses were read to him. Much of the testimony embodied facts which he supposed were unknown to the officers, was of a damaging character, and came from friends whom he relied upon to shield him. Finding himself thus completely surrounded by a strong chain of evidence, he became unnerved, cried bitterly and exclaimed: "IT IS ALL TRUE!"

"Boys, it is all true; I could not help it. I want to tell you all about it." He said he did not want an attorney, and did not want an examination. He was informed by the district attorney that he might make a statement after supper if he so desired. Thereupon an adjournment was had. When court reconvened Wood stated his story in brief. He said he had been pestered almost to death by Leander Pasco (the murdered man), and was desperate when he killed him. He said Pasco stole several articles from him, and finally, about three weeks ago, destroyed several nests of goose eggs upon which geese were setting. The eggs were valuable because they were of some peculiar breed.

HE REPEATS HIS STORY

That night Deputy Sheriff Edward Smith slept with the prisoner. Wood lapsed into a confidential mood, and told the officer his story, which was in substance as follows: "I went home from Creek Center Saturday night, May 10 (the day of the murder), took my gun, and went down to the 'runway.' I got into a clump of bushes near the road over which I knew Leander Pasco would pass. At first I thought I would meet him face to face, and have it out with him, but afterward concluded to avoid any row and put him out of the way as easily as possible. So I waited until he got a little ways past me. When he was forty feet away I fired the contents of one barrel, which struck

him in the back. He dropped an axe he was carrying and ran, crying out: "OH, MY GOD!"

"He had got only a short distance away when I discharged the other barrel of my gun. He fell forward to the ground. I did not go up to where the body was lying, but turned around and went up to Wolf Pond, to the house of my sister, Mrs. Lyman Wood. I staid there until the next morning (Sunday) when Lyman Wood hitched up his team and brought me home. I killed Pasco because he had been annoying me and stealing my property. About ten years ago someone stole forty bushels of potatoes from me. A few weeks ago when Pasco had trouble with his sons, George and Sammy, my wife (daughter of Pasco) took sides with her brothers, and told me that her father was the one who took my potatoes. Of late he had stolen nuts from my wagon wheels, log chains, and other things. I had a fine breed of geese that had laid a large number of eggs in a field, and were setting on them. He came along, trampled on the eggs, and destroyed all of them. When my wife discovered the loss of the eggs she cried, and I felt bad about it. Then I decided to kill 'Lee' Pasco."

FOLLOWING THE CLUE

As heretofore stated in these columns, the officers learned early in the investigation that on Sunday night, May 11 (the night after the murder) nearly all the members of th Wood families held a secret conference at the home of Stephen Wood, father of "Cal". By diligent examination and persistent cross-examination it was learned from George Pasco, who was present at this meeting, that "Cal" Wood had declared himself innocent but that he would doubtless be suspected. He therefore wanted them to do all they could to save him. He instructed them to swear, if called to the witness stand, that he had no shotgun at his house on the day of the murder, and that he had traded his shotgun with Lyman Wood on May 2 and taken a Winchester repeating rifle in exchange. The shot found in Pasco's body could not have been fired from a rifle.

THE TELL-TALE LINING

We have also referred to the peculiar footprints made by the assassin. A piece of leather had become loosed from the sole of the boot worn by the murderer and projected beyond the line of the heel. This and the bit of coat lining used for wadding the gun, and found on the scene of the shooting, afforded additional clues. A futile search for the shoe with the peculiar mark in question, and the coat containing lining to correspond to the piece of lining

in the gun wadding, was made at "Cal" Wood's house. Then the officers went to the residence of his father, Stephen Wood, and told Mrs. Wood that "Cal" wanted his coat and boots. The scheme worked successfully, and boots and coat were placed in the hands of the authorities. The boots corresponded with the footprints in every particular, but, so far as could be observed, there was not a particle of lining in the coat. It had been carefully removed, and the seams sewn over. Afterward, while making a more critical examination, E. L. Stearns found a small piece of the lining that had been overlooked, under one of the pockets. It was identical with the wadding.

THE STORY OF THE CRIME

The story of the crime, gathered from the evidence and statements made to the officers, is substantially as follows: Joseph alias "Cal" Wood, upon returning from Creek Center on the afternoon of the murder, took his double barrel shotgun from under the bed, and telling his wife that he was going to the residence of his father, Stephen Wood, started in the direction indicated. He did not go there, however, but took a circuitous route to the spot where the crime was committed. He then walked ten miles through the rain to the residence of his brother-in-law and cousin, Lyman Wood. He arrived there about half-past ten, and to assure himself that no strangers were inside, peered through the windows of the log hut. To make assurance doubly sure, he rapped on the door, and when Lyman Wood responded he asked if any person except the family was inside. Having been assured that there was not, he went in, placed his gun on the floor, remarking that he had emptied the barrels into some animal in the woods. He then asked his sister to get him some supper. After he had finished the meal, all went to bed.

TRADED GUNS

The next morning "Cal" Wood was up before the rest of the household. He built a fire, and cleaned out the barrels of his gun with hot water. After breakfast he asked his brother-in-law to trade guns with him for a few days, adding that he wanted to kill some woodchucks and could do so better with a rifle than a shotgun. Lyman Wood consented, and gave him his Winchester. Shortly after, upon "Cal's" request, Lyman hitched up his team and took his visitor home. On the way they met Charles, alias "Tuck" Wood, a brother of "Cal" who told them about the murder. "Cal" said he was sorry, and said he supposed he would be suspected because he had trouble with "Lee" Pasco and added: "Before God, I am innocent."

A FAMILY GATHERING

After leaving "Cal" at home, Lyman Wood returned to his residence at Wolf Pond. That night as "Cal" Wood's wife was about to prepare supper, "Cal" remarked that they could take supper at his father's and the two started for Stephen Wood's. On the way "Cal" told his wife that he was innocent of the crime, and asked her if he was arrested if she would help him. She replied that she certainly would. "Well, you must swear, then, that I had no shotgun on the day of the murder; that I traded on May 2 with Lyman Wood and got a rifle. You must also swear that I wore shoes when I left the house on the evening of the homicide." She promised to do so. Upon their arrival at Stephen Wood's all the members of the family and George and Sammy Pasco received instructions as to what they should swear in case of "Cal's" arrest. All solemnly agreed to do as "Cal" directed them.

INSTRUCTIONS BY LETTER

After everything had been arranged with those present, "Cal" wrote a letter to Lyman Wood, and early Monday morning Charles or "Tuck" Wood delivered it. It embodied instructions to them to swear as the others had been told to do with reference to the shoe and the gun, and also to say that "Cal" Wood reached their house about half-past six o'clock Saturday night. Lyman Wood protested against swearing falsely, but his wife reminded him that perhaps her brother's life would depend upon his testimony, whereupon he decided to tell the story agreed upon by the others.

REMOVING EVIDENCES

The same day (Monday, May 12) "Cal" Wood tore the lining out of his coat as best he could, and his wife carefully, as she supposed, cut all that remained with her scissors. Wood then took the boots he had worn on his bloody trip and left them at his father's. Then, as he thought, were all the evidences of his guilt removed.

THE WOODS IN CUSTODY

George Pasco, son of the murdered man, first disclosed the plan arranged at the family conference; Lyman Wood finding that the officers were in possession of the main facts, told his story, as did Sammy Pasco. Other members of the Wood family, finding that perjury would be futile and perhaps dangerous, substantiated the facts previously obtained. On Monday last Stephen Wood and his son, Charles, alias "Tuck", were arrested on a charge of being accessories after the fact. In default of \$1000 bail, they, with "Cal"

Wood, were brought to Caldwell jail yesterday. Lyman Wood, George and Samuel Pasco were detained as witnesses in the sum of \$100 each. Charles Rhodes became surety for Lyman Wood, and the Pasco boys were brought to the jail at Caldwell.

A VISIT TO THE PRISONERS

A STAR reporter visited the Woods in their cell last night. The father, who is about 70 years old, and has a patriarchal appearance, emphatically announced that he was innocent. "Cal" Wood, his eldest son, and a self-confessed murderer, was reticent and sullen. He refused to converse. "I don't want to say anything now," he said when the scribe pressed his inquiries. He is about six feet tall, angular, with beetling brows, the animal nature predominating and evidently much below the average in mental calibre. The younger son, Charles or "Tuck", was also wrapped in a gloomy mood, and would not talk. George and Samuel Pasco were found in the jailer's apartments, where they will be kept until court convenes under the surveillance of Sheriff Mills. George was talkative. He said he agreed to swear to the story prepared for him by "Cal" Wood because he was afraid to do otherwise because he was afraid of the Woods, but when he thought the matter over he concluded to tell the truth. Too much credit cannot be given Sheriff Mills; Deputies Smith, Burnett, Gill and Mason; District Attorney Patterson; Justice Dunlap and E. L. Stearns, who worked diligently to fasten the crime on the perpetrator.

Cal Wood was tried twice and twice convicted. The Court of Appeals reversed the first conviction, when he was defended by Charles P. Coyle. On the second trial Judge J. M. Whitman conducted the defense. Judge Francis E. Smith from Essex County prosecuted the case, assisted by Mr. Patterson and Attorney E. L. Stearns from Glens Falls. The defense was insanity. Dr. G. R. Martine of Glens Falls and Johnsburg swore that a crack on the skull and a fall from a roof that Cal Wood had suffered in his early years had rendered his brain "unsound."

"So long as his brain has been unsound he has been in a degree insane," was the expert opinion of Dr. Martine.

The jury was more impressed with the testimony of Dr. Streeter and an alienist from New York that in their opinion the defendant was sane. The Court of Appeals affirmed the second conviction.

(William H. Brown, ed., *History of Warren County, New York* (Glens Falls, 1963), 48.)

ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Tuesday, Aug. 2 1892

HIS LAST DAY.

Murderer "Cal" Wood to Die in the Electric Chair To-Day.

Special dispatch to the Democrat and Chronicle.

Plattsburg, N.Y., Aug. 1.--To-day is "Cal" Wood's last day on earth. Tomorrow he dies by order of the great state of New York, for the killing of his father-in-law, Leander Pasco, in Thurman, Warren county, May 10, 1890. He was given the benefit of two trials, and the verdict was the same in each case; murder in the first degree. An appeal to Governor Flower for a commutation of sentence was unavailing and he was sentenced to die during the week beginning August 1st. Warden Thayer's invitation issued last week, required the elect to be present at 9 A. M. tomorrow and it is understood that the switch will be turned tomorrow at 12:30.

Warden Brown and Mr. Irving of Sing Sing arrived at Clinton prison to-day. Also Dr. Bullard, professor of electricity of Harvard university. The apparatus was tested under the latter's supervision by killing a two-year-old steer, and found to be in fine working order.

GLENS FALLS STAR

Wednesday, Aug. 3 1892

(Supplied by Mabel M. Tucker, Town Historian, Warrensburg, N.Y.)

JOSEPH WOOD'S NEMESIS

Expiated His Crime at Dannemora Yesterday

HE FACED THE ORDEAL BRAVELY!

Joseph ("Cal") Wood was executed yesterday in the manner prescribed by the laws of the state. He paid the awful penalty of his crime shortly after noon in the death chamber of Clinton prison. There occurred the terrible sequel to the tragedy enacted on High Street, in the town of Thurman, on that dreary evening in May, 1890.

The train which left Plattsburgh on the Chautegay road at 7:25 yesterday morning carried, among other passengers, upward of 20 persons who had been invited, according to law, to witness the execution of the condemned murderer, "Cal" Wood.

The train arrived at Dannemora at 8:12. The prospective witnesses to the ending of a human life wended their way from the depot up the steep hill to the main street of the hamlet, and waited at the Adirondack house, the only hotel in this place, kept by A. C. Tolman. About nine o'clock Warden Thayer's stenographer, Edward Coughlin, notified personally each of those who had been invited to act as witnesses, to meet the warden at the hotel at eleven o'clock. At that hour the witnesses assembled in the parlor, and shortly after Warden Thayer came in. He said the apparatus was all in position, and he had been assured by some of the leading experts of the country was in

THOROUGH WORKING ORDER.

He requested the witnesses to go to the north wing of the prison at half-past eleven o'clock and present their invitations to a guard there situated. The witnesses, evidently mindful of the mournful obligation they had assumed at the time designated went to the entrance of that part of the prison set apart for murderers. One by one the men presented their credentials to the guard, and were admitted to a reception of anterooms a small, square apartment, with iron doors, cement floor and only one small window located high up and securely guarded by strong iron bars. From this room the witnesses were escorted through a dark corridor and into the death chamber. This is a room about 49 feet long and 20 feet wide.

THE WITNESSES,

who were as follows, took seats in a semi-circle at the east end of the room. Judge Whitman, of Sandy Hill, who was Wood's counsel; District Attorney Lyman Jenkins, H. Colvin, of the Times, Dr. Lemon Thomson, Dr. George H. McMurray and a STAR representative of Glens Falls; A. H. Thomas, Warren County Treasurer of Warrensburgh, Dr. Sawyer of Auburn prison; Dr.

Tambelin, Copenhagen, N.Y.; Dr. McLaughlin, Ticonderoga; George E. Pond, Plattsburgh; Dr. Tomkins, Lansingburgh; Professor Bullard, Ph.D., Harvard University; Warden Brown, Dr. Irving, Sing Sing Prison; Dr. Frank Abbott, Jr., of New York; Halsey Jones, Plattsburgh; H. P. Gilleland, Plattsburgh; T. A. Patterson, Whitehall; G. E. Graham, United Press Association; W. H. Ferrell, Plattsburgh Telegram; G. H. Vinning, Associated Press; F. L. Clarke, Troy Press; R. Vincent Tobin, Albany Argus; J. P. Pratt, Troy Telegram; A. C. H. Livingston, Elizabethtown Post. There were also present Warden Thayer, Deputy Warden McKenna, Prison Physician Ransom, State Electrician Davis, and Electrician Wells, and Guards Glazier and Vaughn.

In the westerly end of the room was the death chair, above which were suspended the electric wires. The chair was not unlike the ordinary wooden chair with arms. The floor was of concrete, except where the death chair stood. Under this there was a temporary board floor, covered with a rubber blanket.

INSTRUCTING THE WITNESSES

Warden Thayer again informed the witnesses that everything was in readiness. He enjoined perfect quiet, and said that no suggestions or interference of any kind would be permitted.

Then Electrician Davis said he would illustrate the working of the apparatus. Placing a row of incandescent lamps, attached to a piece of non-conducting material across the arms of the chair he explained that the lamps would represent the prisoner in the chair. Then making the connections he turned a little switch just back of the chair, which sent a current through the lamps lighting each of them.

WOOD BROUGHT IN

At 11:45 Warden Thayer and Deputy McKenna went out into the corridor. At 11:47 they returned to the death chamber, accompanied by Wood. He walked by the side of the Warden. There was nothing in his manner or actions to indicate that he feared the end. His step was as firm as that of any of the stalwart guards who made their rounds in the corridor outside. Reaching a point in front of the chair he turned to the Warden and said: "I would like to say a few words." The Warden nodded in assent, and Wood proceeded as follows:

HIS LAST WORDS

"I would like to say a few words of thanks to Mr. Whitman. I would say more, but my time ain't long enough to express the thoughts I feel toward him. I cannot express it. He has been nearer that a brother. I hope he will have a long life and a happy one. May Heaven be with him. I hope that God may give him and give me the courage of two men, and that I may meet him in Heaven. 'Dust thou art and to dust thou shall return' to that land from which no man shall return. I prayed that God would forgive me as He said the vilest sinner might return. Joe Wood has returned. I hope that God will be merciful. I hope that God will be merciful. I hope that my friends may have good luck. I wish them good luck. I wish my friends good luck. I wish all good luck to everybody that has ever done anything for Joe Wood. I wish them all good luck. I wish Warden Thayer good luck and a long life."

Wood was apparently about to continue his address, but at this juncture Deputy Warden McKenna, who stood beside him, touched him on the shoulder as a signal to stop. Thereupon Wood turned about, walked a few steps to the chair and calmly sat down. He moved as coolly and deliberately as if he were about to take dinner in his own log house in the town of Thurman. He placed his hands on the arms of the chair, leaned back and sat there without a tremor. While the electricians adjusted the electrodes, and fastened him in the chair, Wood repeated several times in a clear steady voice, "God remember me! God bless me!"

ADJUSTING THE APPARATUS

Wood was first strapped in the chair. Then a metallic band was placed around his head. Attached to this band were two electrodes, one of which came against each temple. Next an electrode was fastened to the calf of his leg. The wires were connected with those electrodes. A mask was placed over his face, and all was in readiness for the final act.

There were four contacts, although the physicians agree that in all probability the first one produced death. The current was first turned on at 11:50 and lasted twelve seconds. The next contact was made eight seconds afterward and continued ten seconds. The third contact consumed six seconds, and the fourth the same length of time, the entire time occupied by the contacts being 34 seconds. As each current passed through there was a convulsive movement of the shoulders, as if the victim was trying to raise himself out of the chair, but no sound was made.

Precisely one minute and seven seconds after the first shock, Dr. Ransom felt the pulse; then cut a hole in the shirt directly over the heart, and made an examination, which disclosed beyond a doubt that life was extinct.

Warden Thayer invited the witnesses to examine the body. Several of the physicians did so. Then each of the witnesses was required to go to the ante room, and as required by law sign a statement setting forth the facts of the killing.

THE POST MORTEM

The body was removed to the dissecting room, and at 12:08 the post mortem began; the operators were Dr. Frank Abbott and Dr. Irving, and the others present during the operation were Drs. Thomson and McMurray, Professor Bullard, Judge Whitman and A. H. Thomas. The body was found well nurtured. The first incision extended from the collar bone to the lower part of the abdomen, opening through the abdominal walls, on which the adipose tissue was found to be one inch thick. The thoracic cavity showed no adhesions or evidences of inflammation. The lungs were normal, as was also the heart. The liver showed slight signs of interstitial inflammation. The condition of the kidneys indicated incipient Bright's disease. The other abdominal organs were normal. The skull was removed and the frontal and temporal bones were found slightly thicker than normal. The membranes covering the brain were in a normal condition, except that there were slight adhesions between between the outer and inner membranes as a result of slight inflammatory action. The brain substance was normal in all respects. The spinal cord was also found to be in a normal condition. Over the seventh cervical vertebra was a fatty tumor, one inch and a half in diameter and three quarters of an inch from base to apex. The vertebra itself was not abnormally prominent. It will be remembered that at the trials some of the experts contended that the protruberance was a bony tumor, involving the spine, and that it might affect the brain. The physicians found that the electric current had blistered the right temple slightly, and that a small spot on the leg had also been burned.

THE AGENCY

The current was furnished from the prison plant, at a time when all of the convicts were at dinner. As a result, few of them were aware of what was transpiring. The voltage was 1560, and the amperage seven. The electrocution was effected without a hitch. The physicians pronounced it highly successful. There was no bungling, and no unnecessary harrowing incidents or scenes. Death was doubtless painless. If capital punishment is to be inflicted at all, electricity is doubtless the most desirable agency yet discovered.

DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

After the post mortem the body was placed in a coffin and turned over to Mattie Wood, the widow, Lyman and Charles Wood. It was placed on the train and taken to Saratoga on the sleeper. From there it will be taken to Thurman this morning. It is probable that the funeral services will be held at the Pendall Hollow Church today. The remains will be interred on the farm of the father of the deceased where a family burying ground will be established.

None of the relatives was present at the execution. Judge Whitman visited the prisoner in the morning. Wood was cheerful and asked the Judge not to worry about him. During Wood's remarks before the execution, Judge Whitman was visibly affected. Warden Thayer and the keepers were favorably impressed by Wood. He was always good natured and tried to make as little trouble for the officers as possible. Wood held to the last that his father-in-law had been guilty of incestuous conduct, and the Warden expressed the belief yesterday after the electrocution that the victim spoke the truth. Wood was baptised on Sunday by the chaplain.

After her interview with her husband on Monday, Mattie Wood fainted in the prison yard, and had to be taken to the Warden's office where restoratives were applied.

The statement printed in several papers that Judge Whitman advised his client to feign insanity is untrue, and does the Judge an injustice. Wood, himself, denied the story at Lake George after the second trial.

HISTORY OF THE CRIME

The crime for which "Cal" Wood's life was taken was the murder of Leander Pasco, his father-in-law, which was committed in the town of Stony Creek on the afternoon of Saturday, May 10, 1890. Pasco was returning to his home from Creek Center when from behind some bushes by the roadside two charges of buckshot were emptied into his back. The circumstantial evidence against Wood was strong, and he was arrested a few days later. He acknowledged to the officers that he fired the fatal shots. Stephen Wood and Charles or "Tuck", father and brother of the murderer, were also arrested as accessories, but their alleged connection with the crime was not proven, and they were never brought to trial. Wood was first tried at a special term of the oyer and terminer held at Lake George late in the summer of the same year, when he was found guilty after a long and sharply contested trial. District Attorney Patterson and Judge Francis A. Smith, of Elizabethtown, conducted

the prosecution, while Judge Whitman and Coyle & Cunningham ably defended Wood.

A SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

An appeal was taken to the court of appeals, where the people were represented by District Attorney Patterson and Judge Smith and the defense by Judge Whitman. This court granted a new trial to the condemned because of errors committed by Judge Fish, the presiding justice at the first trial.

For the second time was the prisoner put on trial for his life last August at a special term of the oyer and terminer, with Justice S. A. Kellogg presiding. The people were defended by the same attorneys as before, while Judge Whitman, single handed and alone, defended Wood. The result was as before, and for the second time was Wood condemned to die. Then, for the first did "Cal" give up, and, although not known to have uttered a word for more than a year, became quite talkative. He said that it was at the advice of his counsel, first employed, that he had feigned insanity. His conduct had, however, deceived some of the medical men who were witnesses at the trial. Now he became very voluble, seemingly as if to make up for his long term of voluntary silence.

AGAIN SENTENCED

Again was the court of appeals asked to interfere. The people were represented by ex-District Attorney Patterson and District Attorney Jenkins. Judge Whitman represented the defendant. The court, however, affirmed the judgement of the lower court. In June, Wood was arraigned before Justice Kellogg at the regular term of the oyer and terminer, and for the third time was condemned to death, the penalty to be inflicted during the present week.

The the prisoner's wife and his cousin and brother-in-law, Lyman Wood, who had been faithful to him from the first, made a last effort to save "Cal's" life. A petition asking for the commutation of to imprisonment for life was circulated. It was signed by about 800 persons, including five of the members of the jury. It was presented to the governor, who, however, after having heard District Attorney Jenkins and Judge Whitman, declined to interfere, and the law took its course and the condemned man met his death at Dannemora as told above.

ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Wednesday, Aug. 3 1892

WOOD NEVER WEAKENED

The Warren County Murderer Cool To the Last.

DEATH WAS VERY SUDDEN

The Electrical Victim at Dannemora Was in the Chair Less Than Two
Minutes -- Four Contacts of the Deadly Fluid Applied.

Dannemora, Aug. 2.--"Cal" Wood looked through the barred windows of his cell upon the setting sun dropping behind the Adirondacks for the last time yesterday afternoon. He kissed his wife, and while kissing her, broke down and wept. Mrs. Wood arrived yesterday afternoon and was in Wood's cell about an hour. Both bore up bravely for a time, but when the warden called "time up" Mrs. Wood fainted and her husband burst into tears.

Early yesterday morning Wood sent for the prison chaplain and was baptized by him. The stories sent out to the effect that he is not receiving spiritual consolation is denied by the chaplain, who says that he has paid great attention during the last three months.

It was exactly 11:44 o'clock this morning, when at the word from Warden Thayer, Wood's cell door was unlocked and the prisoner stepped out into the exercising corridor upon which the condemned cell opened. The death warrant was read to the prisoner by the warden yesterday afternoon, shortly after the midday meal. Wood listened to the warden's words with a pale and slightly drawn face, but was otherwise unagitated, and made no comment. He was the most collected person present at the reading.

When Warden Thayer gave the word for the prisoner to be brought out, there were grouped the reporters, physicians, and others invited to witness the execution. Four minutes after 11 o'clock, after the witnesses had entered the death room, the machinery was started, the electric current was turned on, and an instant later the two rows of electric test lights placed in the death chair showed that the deadly current was both quick and powerful enough to satisfactorily fulfill the purpose for which it was generated. Previous to the test the warden cautioned the spectators against any interference. After the preliminaries were over the spectators sat in silence, waiting for the coming of the prisoner. The condemned man walked with a firm and steady step along the corridor toward the spot where the warden and two keepers were waiting for him. As the little procession entered the room a half-suppressed

murmur of surprise escaped from some of the witnesses. Wood was neatly attired in a black suit, his shirt, collars, and cuffs were snow white, and a tie of the same hue encircled his neck. His face was smoothly shaven with the exception of the moustache, and with his calm courageous bearing, Wood looked anything but the desperate murderer, half human, half brute, he has been painted in some of the printed reports. Crossing the threshold of the room, the prisoner turned to the right, and with two or three steps stood in front of the fatal chair.

The room was entered at 11:44 o'clock. The condemned man's face was pale, and there was the slightest tremor about the visibly cool, compressed lips, but he permitted no other outward sign of the emotions which must have filled his breast. When Wood reached the chair the keepers stood to one side, and without hesitation the prisoner said: "I want to thank Warden Thayer for his great kindness to me. Also my keepers. My time on earth is not long enough to return my thanks to Judge Whitman for his noble efforts. He has been nearer that a brother to me, and I hope he will live a long life and die happy in the Lord."

The religious feeling of the doomed man found expression in these words: "I pray that God will now give me the strength of two men to go to meet him, for I know I am going there; God bless you all. May he make you all happy."

Here Wood's voice trembled a little, the only indication of any lessening of the wonderful nerve the man had shown, and as he sat down in the chair he said in a strange voice:

"God remember me."

He repeated this three times while the straps were being adjusted. His last words were:

"God bless me," repeated twice.

The fatal signal was given by Keeper Wells, of Auburn prison. As the contact came Wood's body straightened out rigidly and the hand turned upward on the arms of the chair. Twelve seconds was the duration of the first contact. The second contact was two seconds shorter, and as it reached full power a curl of blue smoke arose from the murderer's forehead, and an odor of burned rubber filled the room, and this was repeated in the third and fourth contacts, the latter of which was six seconds long. As the current was turned on each time Wood's body straightened out. This was followed by a relaxation as the electric fluid was shut off. Wood was in the death chair just one minute and fourteen seconds. An interval of three seconds was given

between each contact. The smoke came from the burning of the ends of the rubber tube down which the salt water ran to the electrodes. There was a slight burning of the flesh on the forehead. The adjustment of the straps and electrode took but twelve seconds, Dr. Ransom superintending the four keepers who performed the service. The physicians in charge made an examination of the body immediately after the fourth contact. The voltage contained was 1,560 with amperage of 7. The witnesses were then allowed to make an examination before the prisoner was pronounced dead.

Warden Thayer announced that the post mortem would be held immediately, and the body was conveyed to the post mortem room on a stretcher. The autopsy was conducted by Dr. Abbott, the other physicians assisting. The death certificate was next signed by the witnesses, and the first legal execution at Dannemora was over. The body was delivered to Wood's wife.

NEW YORK TIMES

Wednesday, August 3 1892

"CAL" WOOD ELECTROCUTED.

A WELL-CONDUCTED EXECUTION AT CLINTON PRISON.

DANNEMORA, N.Y., Aug. 2.--"Cal" Wood of Warren County was executed to-day at Clinton Prison. He was the first to suffer electrocution at that place.

It was 11:47:40 o'clock this forenoon by the stopwatch of Warden Brown of Sing Sing Prison, K} acted as official timekeeper, when Wood entered the execution room escorted by Principal Keeper McKenna and two deputies. As the condemned man approached the chair he turned toward the witnesses, who were ranged in the west end of the room, and said: "I would like to make a few remarks."

Warden Thayer gave his consent, and Wood proceeded in a voice slightly husky but distinct to thank Mr. Whitman, his counsel, and the officials of the prison for their kindness to him. Wood then turned and took his seat unassisted in the chair, where he was dexterously strapped by the prison officers, while Dr. Ransom, the prison physician, quickly adjusted and secured the electrode upon the head. At the same time the leather mask covered his eyes and chin from view and shut off the last ray of light from the

eyes that four minutes later were blind forever. As the apparatus was being placed in position the wretched man continued to pray: "God remember me in heaven. God help. God help. God remember me. Lord remember. God help. God rem--" Here the white handkerchief of Warden Thayer waved. All hands were off the apparatus, and simultaneously the switchboard clicked from the partition behind the chair at the touch of Electrician E. F. Davis.

There were no contortions of the body such as have been described in previous electrocutions. Only a slight expansion of the chest was discernible during the first contact. As the second contact was turned on, the hands, which lay on the arms of the chair, lifted as if by contraction of the muscles for a second, and then dropped. The two succeeding periods of contact provided no convulsive action whatsoever. At the close of the circuit Dr. Ransom and his assistants, Dr. W. N. Bullard of Boston and Dr. R. Y. Irving of Sing Sing, quickly examined the body, an operation of about ten seconds, and agreed that it was lifeless. Ten minutes later Dr. Ransom officially declared the man dead.

After a post-mortem examination the body was given over to his brother, who, with Wood's wife and cousin, was waiting on the outside for the end of the execution. It was taken to his old home in Thurman for burial.

The crime for which Wood was convicted occurred May 10, 1890, when Leander Pasco, a Warren County farmer, was found dead, with two gunshot wounds in his body. Wood had secretly married Pasco's daughter. Pasco would not forgive the marriage and refused to recognize Wood. When Wood and his wife went to live together, they were subjected to various annoyances, which they charged to Pasco. Wood tried to secure a warrant for Pasco's arrest. Failing in this effort, Wood made threats against Pasco. Within three weeks after these threats were uttered the murder took place. At the trial, proof being produced that Wood had lain in ambush for Pasco, the plea of insanity was raised. Wood was convicted Sept. 17, 1891. Appeal confirmed the conviction and Gov. Flower refused to interfere.

GLENS FALLS STAR

Ca. Saturday, August 6 1892

(Supplied by Mabel M. Tucker, Town Historian, Warrensburg, N.Y.)

THE CLOSING SCENES

Of the Wood-Pasco Tragedy - The Funeral in Thurman

The correspondent of the STAR in Thurman, under date of Thursday, writes the following interesting letter. It narrates in a plain, matter-of-fact way the closing scenes of a tragedy which has brought to an untimely close the lives of two men, and has brought to others sorrows which will darken their entire future:

The remains of "Cal" Wood arrived in Thurman Station on the noon train yesterday. The hearse from Warrensburg was sent to Caldwell to meet the body, by mistake of Silas Wood in reading the telegram. The body was kept at the station until the hearse came back from Caldwell. The funeral was the largest ever held in town, although the telegram did not reach here but two hours before the remains. The coffin was plain, of cheap wood and without handles. The coffin was taken from the box at the Bowen hotel and was found to be inclosed in zinc, which was also removed before entering the church. The minister and undertaker walked ahead and the bearers and remains next. The mourners in single file followed; first the father of the deceased, then two small grand-children, next the stepmother, Mattie, "Tuck", his wife and two children, Seymour Wood and wife, Mrs. and Mrs. Kenyon and daughter and one cousin and last came Silas Wood, a brother of "Cal". A messenger sent for a minister had not returned, and the large congregation so long waiting, was weary. The Rev. Mr. Jenkins, of Creek Center, was present, and when requested kindly entered the pulpit, without a moment's consideration, and delivered an address which was able and eloquent for a young man and under such trying circumstances. Mr. Jenkins closed his remarks by reading a letter written by the chaplain of Dannemora prison and delivered to Mattie, wife of "Cal", with a request that it should be read at his funeral. The coffin was not opened in the church which was a great disappointment to the large crowd assembled, but at the burial place by request of Jane, a sister of the deceased, an opportunity was given those who wished to do so to view the remains. Upon viewing the deceased, Lyman Wood gave way to his feelings and fainted. He was taken to Mr. Wood's house near by. All of the family were deeply affected and wept bitterly. "Tuck", who before had shown no emotion, wept all through the services. Mattie, arriving at the house where she left the baby, at A. P. Lillibridge's also fainted away. Those who looked at the body say it was not disfigured in the least. There was a scar over the left eye, but he was not dark as all expected and looked natural to all who were acquainted with him. Mattie returned to her place of work this morning. She is doing genral housework for W. Gray and received the compensation of one dollar per week plus child boarded. This money she has cheerfully given

from time to time to Lyman Wood to help defray his expenses while circulating the petition for her husband. Lyman Wood has devoted his whole time for the last few months without any avail, and returned to his home this morning, the picture of grief and despair. Thus ends this terrible tragedy that has excited and agitated our community for over two years.

ANCESTRY OF LEANDER PASCO

Hugh Pasco (ca. 1630-1706 - the colonial immigrant)

Mary Pease (1658-1737)

|

John Pasko (1689-1775?)

Rebecca Terry (1692-1755)

|

John Pasko (1722-180?)

Deliverance White (1721-1764?)

|

John Pasko (1759-1834)

Abigail Frost (1763-1842)

=|

Elihu Pasco (1796-1875)

Nancy Bennett (1801-1854)

|

Leander Pasco (1835-1890)

Helen Grimes (1834?-1888)

Their children were:

1. Mattie (1867-); mar. Joseph "Cal" Wood (-1892)
2. George (1869-); mar. and later lived in Salisbury Center, N.Y.
3. Alvin "Sam" (1872-1918).
4. Eva (1881-); mar. John Reynolds.