



CENTER CITY

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MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

OCTOBER 9, 1974

Yea-Sayers

*Mall Celebration- Oktoberfest
A Changing Downtown*



The Trial of Wm. Peterson

Part 1

"From the pen of J. T. L. Sneed, Esq.," writing for the MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL, November 29, 1855. As the APPEAL introduced the story: "It possesses a local interest, aside from its rare merits as a fine piece of composition...."

It would hardly be deemed legitimate for a writer to put forth his thoughts in such a style as this today; but there are segments of this story reminiscent of the moods of Dostoevski and the humanity of the mythical songs of far earlier days, and I hope that the readers of CENTER CITY can appreciate its qualities.

Perhaps the character of the American past has been obscured by our ego-centric perceptions of ourselves and time. CENTER CITY challenges the contemporary notion of fact: the oft' deceptive visibles of truth.

The trial of William Peterson, ... will long be remembered by the good people of Shelby county, as one of the most remarkable developments of revolting crime to be found in all the chronicles of guilt. The circumstances connected with the crime, and disclosed at the trial, gave to the proceedings a romantic interest and immense dramatic effect, rarely ever witnessed in the course of legal investigation.

The prisoner, then a youth of about twenty years, was charged with the crime of highway robbery and murder upon the person of Thomas Merriweather, a citizen of Mississippi. He was arraigned and put upon his trial at Raleigh, in the summer of 1852. In appearance, the prisoner more resembled a fair, young girl, than the common ideal of a highwayman-- of light and bouyant figure-- small of stature-- of fair and beautiful complexion, but an expression of countenance as if chiselled of marble-- cold, saturnine, and indifferent to the last degree. The deceased was a young planter of Mississippi-- of very noble character and great popularity-- then but recently married to a lovely young bride. The character of the deceased and the notoriety of the crime had attracted a vast concourse of people of both sexes, who, during the progress of the trial, which lasted two days, were held in mute and breathless attention by the most extraordinary and well linked chain of circumstantial testimony by which a great crime was ever brought to light, and a great offender to condign punishment.

Thomas Merriweather left his home in Mississippi in the Spring of 1851, to traverse on horse-back the wilds of Arkansas, in quest of a

new home. He took with him about one hundred and eighty dollars in money to pay his traveling expenses. The horse upon which the journey was to be performed, whose astonishing instincts afterwards became such an important and indispensable link in the chain of testimony by which the murderer of his master was detected, was a dark, blood-bay, of great beauty and sagacity, and of wonderful affection for his master. On taking leave of his family, Mr. Merriweather observed that he would take Memphis in his route, some hundred and twenty miles distant-- where he intended to purchase a pocket Bible, and a small map of Arkansas. His wife placed in his vest pocket a package of needles wrapped in brown paper, with some buttons, thread, and such other little articles of the kind as might be needed during his journey; he also purchased two pocket knives precisely alike, one of which he presented to his brother, William Merriweather and then took his departure.

Some five or six weeks after he left his home nothing having been heard from him in the interval-- there appeared in the MEMPHIS ENQUIRER, a startling account of the finding of the dead body of a man in the forest some eight miles South of Memphis, some forty feet East of the Hernando Road, and in the Twelfth Civil District of Shelby county, with every appearance upon it and about it of having been murdered. The body was found at the root of a tree denuded of flesh by decomposition, and by having been eaten by the hogs, and the head, which had been severed from the body, lying some ten feet off. Under the forehead there was an indentation, apparently produced by a blow from an octagon hammer, or other instrument. The account contained a description of the clothing left upon the body. The color of the hair was described, the teeth also, and two notable plugs in the same, and the contents of the vest pocket, being among other things of little value, a package of needles, thread and buttons, wrapped in brown paper, together with some manuscripts much defaced by exposure to the rain. This account, answering so well the description of Thomas Merriweather, in a few days reached his family, who were plunged in grief, and startled by the suspicion that he had been cruelly murdered. William Merriweather, his brother, went immediately up to the vicinity of Memphis to investigate the matter. The body, in the mean time, had been buried. He had it exhumed, and at once thought he recognized it as the mutilated corpse of his lost brother. After reinterring the body, he went to the city to make further enquiry.

(To be continued next week.)

Lipchitz Exhibit at Brooks

The only comprehensive exhibition of sculptures by the late Jacques Lipchitz to be shown outside the northeast area will be opened to the public October 11 at Brooks Memorial Art Gallery.

The exhibition, which includes a selection of 29 bronzes and several lithographs spanning more than 50 years of the artist's career, is sponsored by First National Bank of Memphis. The exhibition will remain open through November.

Lipchitz, who died in May, 1973 at the age 81, had a prolific career which took him from his native Rumania, to France, America, and finally, Italy. His contemporaries included Picasso, Modigliani, Le Corbusier, Matisse, Romain, and Gertrude Stein. Art historian H. H. Arnason once ranked Lipchitz, along with Picasso and Marc Chagall, as "the final survivors of the first heroic age of Twentieth Century paintings and sculptures."

Lipchitz' works included monumental sculptures for the Los Angeles County Music Center, Municipal Plaza in Philadelphia, Columbia University in New York, and Mount Scopus, Israel.

The exhibition opening will be followed on Sunday, October 13, with the second television showing of the film "Jacques Lipchitz", a documentary by NBC producer Bruce Bassett which was purchased by the bank. The film will be shown at 1 p.m. on WKNO-TV. The bank sponsored the American television premiere of the film June 23 on WMC-TV.

A complimentary copy of the film will be presented to officials of the Memphis Board of Education for classroom use. Another copy will be donated to Brooks Memorial Art Gallery and Memphis Academy of Arts.



Maquette For Bellerophon Taming Pegasus

Announcements

"Meet Me in the Middle", a bring-your-own luncheon series at the University of Tennessee's Randolph Student-Alumni Center at 800 Madison Avenue, invites interested persons to the weekly programs. The first is to be at noon on October 16, in Room 305; the speaker is Dr. Margaret Di Canio on "The Impact of the Masculine Mystique in Medicine."

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Memphis Film Series

UT Center Film Society

October 11-- "Women in the Dunes"

Lyceum Film Theatre

October 15-- "Captain Blood"

MSU

October 9-- "Zachariah"

Jewish Community Center

October 15-- "I Love You, Rosa"

Church Women Unite

*Hazy town on the edge of life,
Worn horizon upon the Square
Mingling with morning shuffles;*

*Damp curtain to words
Tossed about bodies:
Lonely signals from obscurity;*

*From birth
Primed
By a picture book world;*

*Hesitant to change place,
Spinning bed
Of the passing through;*

*Vacant city,
Such weeping makes laughter--
Out of step, out of step.*

A rare opportunity for Memphis will be the coming national triennium meeting of Church Women United, called the Ecumenical Assembly, to meet October 10-13 at the Cook Convention Center. National and international religious leaders will speak, and there will be group discussions and creative worship experiences on the theme, "Journey Toward Wholeness." Some two thousand women are expected to attend.

Of particular interest to employed women of Memphis is the box supper and special program on Friday evening, October 11, at 6:00 p.m. This "Professional Women's Evening" will feature a supper program with the national president of Church Women United as speaker, giving a bird's eye-view of the total Assembly, to be followed by an evening agenda.

To reserve your place for the Friday evening supper and program, send a check for \$5, made to Church Women United, to Mrs. Ray M. Allen, 1754 Galloway Ave., Memphis, 38112, no later than Wednesday, October 9, including your name, address and phone number. Your ticket may be picked up at the Convention Center Registration Desk in the Lobby just prior to the supper.

CENTER CITY IS A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER, AS SUCH IT REQUIRES COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. PLEASE CONTRIBUTE. WRITE OR PHONE CENTER CITY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, c/o the EDITOR.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR. CRUMP
HAS BEEN POSTPONED**

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB

*Serving from 11:30 to 1:00
First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue
Price: \$1.25 per serving, including drink*

MENU FOR OCTOBER 10-18

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

Turkey and Dressing, english peas, cranberry sauce and rolls

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

Meat Loaf, potatoes au gratin, lima beans and rolls

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

Salmon croquettes, hash browned potatoes, salad and rolls

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

Ham, potato salad, green beans and rolls

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

Spaghetti, cole slaw and french bread

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

Fried Chicken, rice & gravy, squash and rolls

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

Roast Beef, whipped potatoes, english peas and rolls

*Second-class
postage paid at
Memphis, Tennessee*

Center City

First Presbyterian Church
166 Poplar Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38103