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The Sad, Sad Story of Lula Viers

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The Sad, Sad Story of Lula Viers

BY RICHARD H. UNDERWOOD*
WITH SHARON RAY

Introduction

Those brave souls who still have the nerve to read their morning papers are likely to start their day digesting yet another story about a missing or murdered girl.¹ The brutal truth is that the murder of a young woman who has become inconvenient, pregnant, or both (usually both) is an "All American" theme.² Even more distressing is the fact that so many cases are "closed" without justice. Is this a new phenomenon? Of course not. This sad, sad story is also an old, old story.

Consider the ballad *Omie Wise*, which was inspired by an 1807 murder in Randolph County, North Carolina.³ Naomi or Omie Wise was an indentured servant who had been impregnated by Jonathan Lewis, a store clerk. Lewis wanted to move up by marrying his employer's daughter, but that meant he had to get rid of some baggage.⁴ He talked Little Omie into eloping, but he drowned her "below the mill dam."⁵ According to one version of the song he tied her skirt up over her head, threw her into the river, and rode away. He was caught in short order, escaped, and was rearrested, but if he was ever convicted of anything, he did not serve a long sentence. The most reliable sources indicate that he was released a pauper and ultimately confessed on his deathbed. Whatever the reason, justice was denied.⁶ In a widely known version of the ballad recorded by

* Spears-Gilbert Professor of Law, College of Law, University of Kentucky. The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Sharon Ray, a recent graduate of the University of Kentucky (Biology) and a distant relative of Lula Viers. I ran across Sharon on the Internet, where she was searching for a recorded version of the ballad. Sharon and I shared our "finds," and I must admit that hers outnumbered mine.

G.B. Grayson on October 18, 1927 in Atlanta, Georgia,⁷ the narrator reports that Lewis joined the Army and avoided prosecution. That interesting touch, the murderer making away as a soldier, was not accurate, but it may have been inspired by a similar Kentucky murder that occurred a hundred years later. It is entirely possible that Grayson or some other balladeer confused or conflated the two stories.⁸ The later murder, the murder of Lula Viers, is the subject of this Article.

The Ballad of Lula Viers

Lula Viers is mentioned in a number of folk anthologies.⁹ The most commonly quoted version was preserved by Jean Thomas, a court stenographer who collected mountain ballads in the 1930s as she traveled the circuit with a judge and a "passel" of lawyers.¹⁰ However, there are many versions of the song,¹¹ all with curious variations in the spelling of the names of the principal actors in the tragedy. That is not surprising given the oral tradition in handing down mountain ballads. Lula's name appears as Vowers,¹² Varse, Vares, and even as Luly Barrs.¹³ Her murderer's name, John Coyer, often appears as John Collier.¹⁴ A newspaper reporter who was instrumental in drawing attention to the case, Ira Dent, appears variously as Arodent, Arrey Bend, and Edward Went.¹⁵

The story line of the ballad follows the "true facts," although there are some interesting deletions. It is a "topical" song, almost certainly inspired by the newspaper accounts of the murder. The balladeer calls upon the people to listen and learn from the story of yet another "poor young girl."¹⁶ The girl, from the town of Auxier, a "coal camp" in Floyd County, Kentucky, loved John Coyer.¹⁷ Coyer had "ruined her reputation" and "would later take her life."¹⁸ Coyer took her to Elkhorn City in Pike County, where he told her they would be married. He put her up in a hotel, but later, during a stroll by the river, he threw her in the river (the "Big Sandy") with a "piece of railroad steel" tied around her.¹⁹ Like Omie Wise, the poor victim pleaded for her life — "I'll go back to my mother, If I cannot be your wife."²⁰



Morgan Viers and his wife Charolett "Lottie" Hatfield Viers with their daughter Lula. 1903. *Photograph courtesy of Sharon Ray.*

Coyer then joined the Army, hoping that he would be far away if the body were ever discovered. Four months later Lula's body was found near Ironton, Ohio, at a place called "Hanging Rock."²¹ Speculation was that it had somehow drifted into the Ohio River.²² For a time Lula went unidentified, but a reporter named "Arodent" wrote up the terrible story, and "around the world it went."²³ Lula's mother saw the story, went to Ironton, and identified the body by its clothing.²⁴

John Coyer was arrested, but escaped justice when an "army officer came, and took him off to France."²⁵ "John Coyer never went to trial, nor sought to clear his name."²⁶ Some other versions of the ballad have Coyer punished — in two versions he is executed in the electric chair.²⁷ After all, the traditional ballad form served to warn potential female victims of the evil in

the world, and the male perpetrators of the consequences of their actions.²⁸ Unfortunately, the ballad was true to the facts. Coyer escaped whatever justice the *law* provided.

The "True Facts"

While the ballad gets the ending right, it leaves out a lot of juicy detail about the relationship between the murdered girl and her killer. It also makes no mention of another possible player — another woman. This is not surprising, because the popular formula for the "murdered girl" ballad, and even the formulary journalistic model of the day, often left out details that might complicate the story or appear unfavorable to the victim.²⁹

According to the local lore,³⁰ Rosa Lula Viers was the daughter of coal miner Morgan Viers and Charolett (Lottie) Hatfield Viers. Lottie was a cousin of the famous "Devil Anse" Hatfield, of "Hatfield and McCoy" fame.³¹ Lula was born in 1897. In 1910, at the age of thirteen, Lula met the son of one of the "bosses" of the North-East Coal Company, which built the town of Auxier. The boy's name was John Coyer. Because of the children's young ages, Lula's father did not approve of their relationship. However, the relationship continued on the sly. In 1915 Lula gave birth to a son named Russell. Lula was apparently small, and the delivery was very hard. The child's neck and shoulder were broken in the process. The damage was never repaired, and Russell grew to manhood with his head leaning over on his shoulder.³² Lula named John Coyer as Russell's father. It is reported that, from this time on, the two families were openly hostile, although the relationship between Lula and John continued.³³

On December 17, 1915, Lula's father, as "next friend" for Lula, filed a civil action against John Coyer in the Circuit Court of Floyd County, Kentucky, for the seduction and carnal knowledge of Lula, now age seventeen.³⁴ The complaint charged that Coyer had seduced her with a promise of marriage and had gotten her "pregnant and sick with child" (the child Russell).³⁵ The initial complaint sought damages in the amount of \$50 medical expenses and \$2000 for "humilia[tion]" and "physical and mental pain."³⁶ Another pleading or affidavit by Lula referred to damages in the amount of \$5000 for "breach of . . . promise."³⁷ For his part, Coyer denied that there was any

promise of marriage and pleaded the statute of limitations if there was such a promise. Coyer counterclaimed alleging malicious prosecution and accused Lula of lewd and lascivious conduct “with divers and numerous men other than” Coyer.³⁸

This and related litigation can be traced in the journal entries of the Floyd Circuit Court. For example, on February 11, 1916, there is a routine entry regarding a seduction charge, which is styled as if it were a criminal case — “Commonwealth of Kentucky v. John Coyer.”³⁹ This was apparently a parallel criminal prosecution instigated by the Vierses. On February 18, an entry notes that the seduction charge was “resubmitted to the Grand Jury.”⁴⁰ On March 22, 1916, this “seduction” case was continued at the request of the defendant after a motion to dismiss was denied.⁴¹ There is a gap in the court records of the civil case. Local lore is that Lula won annual support payments in the amount of \$25, which John Coyer claimed he could not pay.⁴² The actual record does not reflect this award. It is fair to assume that a curtain of responsibility was falling on Coyer.

In July 1916,⁴³ Lula’s forty-eight-year-old father, Morgan, became ill after returning from a drinking bout at the company coal tipple with a group of men, one of whom was John Coyer. Lula and her mother believed that Morgan had been poisoned by Coyer — that his elderberry wine had been laced with carbide or arsenic. By the time Dr. Archer, the company doctor, arrived, Morgan was already dead.⁴⁴ The death certificate listed the cause of death as “acute gastritis. 10 dys. duration. cause unknown. but from symptoms & history cause probably was due to drinking alcohol.”⁴⁵ Following Morgan’s death, Lula’s mother, Lottie, was substituted as Lula’s “next friend” in the ongoing litigation against Coyer.⁴⁶

Then there was another interesting development. Coyer’s sister, Goldie, and his first cousin, Hazel McKenzie, had long been openly opposed to Lula’s relationship with John. There had been words and worse between the factions.⁴⁷ On August 2, 1916, Hazel filed for a divorce from her husband, Vent McKenzie, alleging abandonment of her and her two young children.⁴⁸ The divorce was one-sided since Vent had run off for good and did not appear in the action or offer any evidence. Hazel’s case was presented by deposition — hers and those of two helpful male witnesses who claimed to know the couple.⁴⁹ They agreed

that nineteen-year-old Hazel was an innocent and virtuous person. Vent was no good and had run off to join the Army. A "black-eyed girl" had been involved somehow.⁵⁰ Was Hazel part of a love triangle — a rival to Lula?⁵¹

As the story goes, John Coyer convinced Lula that he would marry her after all. He left Auxier, Kentucky on December 9, 1916, supposedly to obtain a marriage license and lodging for the couple. Lula left on the morning train on December 10th.⁵² There is conflicting evidence as to whether her destination was Prestonsburg or Elkhorn City in Pike County.⁵³ Lula was escorted to the train station by her mother and a family friend, Hester DeCoursey.⁵⁴ It is said that Hester made Lula's wedding dress, the same dress she wore when she left on the train.⁵⁵ At this point Lula disappeared, and worried relatives began to seek information as to her whereabouts. Needless to say, foul play was suspected from the start.

Lula's body was not found until June 1917, at Hanging Rock, by a Mr. Eicher. W. H. Hayes, who was serving as an undertaker's assistant and a special officer, began an investigation aimed at identifying the body.⁵⁶ Lula's mother identified the badly decomposed body by Lula's clothing and a gold cap on a front tooth. News accounts mentioned that Lula had put on new shoes the day she left Auxier and that the shoes bore damage consistent with being dragged along the river bed.⁵⁷ John Coyer had many relatives in Lawrence and Jackson Counties, Ohio, and some thought he might have murdered the girl in Ironton. Others theorized that Lula had been killed on the Kentucky side of the river and had been thrown into the Big Sandy River and that spring freshets had carried the body to Hanging Rock. Lula's death certificate lists the date of death as "Dec. 1916." The cause of death is reported as "Murdered and thrown in river — body found @ Hanging Rock, Ohio."⁵⁸

About thirty days before the body was found, John Coyer left Prestonsburg for Louisville to join the Army. Hearing that he was about to leave, Lula's mother ran to the train station in time to confront him.⁵⁹ Witnesses heard her exclaim, "John, this is your last chance to tell where Lulu is for I intend to kill you if you don't tell me."⁶⁰ He had hardly finished denying that he had any knowledge of Lula's whereabouts when Lottie pulled a revolver from her handbag and snapped the trigger twice — two

misfires. She was restrained, and Coyer made away and joined Company C of the First Kentucky Regiment. "God knows I tried my best to kill him," Lottie sobbed, "but I guess it was not so ordered [ordained?]." ⁶¹

After identifying Lula's body, Lottie went to Cattlettsburg to visit her lawyer, Walter S. Harkins. The lawyer directed Lottie to swear out an affidavit against Coyer before Judge May in the Floyd Circuit Court. Floyd County officials in turn wired authorities in Louisville. Coyer was placed in the regimental guardhouse. ⁶² He was taken to Prestonsburg on June 11 to await trial. On June 28 Coyer was bound over to the Grand Jury under a \$10,000 bond, which he could not make. ⁶³ A newspaper account ⁶⁴ reported that, during the hearing, the determined Lottie attacked Coyer with a club and that Coyer fled the courtroom pursued by armed officers who ran him to ground.

The rest of the story had to be pieced together from the journal entries of the Floyd and Pike County Circuit Courts.

On February 19, 1917, John Coyer and Hazel McKenzie were charged with "Obstruction," and bail was set at \$500. ⁶⁵ It was widely believed that Hazel was an accomplice in the killing. Coyer was admitted to bail on July 19 and McKenzie on July 21. The old seduction charge was dismissed on August 13, and the obstruction case was continued to the next term of court. ⁶⁶

On August 17 the couple was indicted for murder, and the trial was scheduled for September 5, 1917. ⁶⁷ Bond was set at \$6000 for Coyer and \$1500 for McKenzie. ⁶⁸ Both were remanded to custody after they failed to make bail. ⁶⁹ The case was continued several times throughout the fall at the request of the prosecution. Hazel McKenzie finally made bail in October. A witness list appears in the journal entry of December 11, 1917.

A January 4, 1918 entry contains an interesting preview of the prosecution's evidence. Earl and Harry Litteral are named as witnesses. They saw John Coyer at Williamson, West Virginia on the Tuesday after the Saturday that Coyer and Lula left Auxier. They said they traveled with Coyer down the Tug River by train, and Lula was not with him. Wesley Eicher was named as the man who found the body. W.H. Powers and Nora Powers were named as the persons who sold Lula the shoes that she had on when she was found. ⁷⁰



Lula and her cousin Marion Hatfield one year before her death. 1914.
Photograph courtesy of Sharon Ray.

On February 15 and 16, 1918, the prosecution again sought to continue the case and even moved to dismiss after the judge refused to grant another continuance!⁷¹ Was the prosecutor losing interest or losing his nerve? Was something else going on? Finally, on February 18 there was a flurry of activity. The case was dismissed at the request of J.D. Smith, Commonwealth Attorney, on the ground that the crime had not been committed in Floyd County.⁷²

At this point the record takes us to Pike County, Kentucky, where the defendants faced murder and obstruction-of-justice charges based on the assumption that Lula had been killed at Elkhorn City after all. Again the case was continued several times. Then on June 6, 1918, we find the tell tale journal entry.

Hazel is admitted to bail in the amount of \$1000 after Coyer was "taken out of Jurisdiction of this Court by Habeas Corpus proceedings in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Ky."⁷³ John Coyer was indeed removed from the Pike County jail and taken off to fight in France. Supposedly no one in Coyer's family knew where he went after the war.

On September 16, 1918, Hazel's case was continued, and we hear no more about it. So the story ends.

Come all you good people
From all over the world;
And listen to a story
About a poor young girl.

Her name was Lula Vires,
In Auxier she did dwell;
A place in old Kentucky,
A town you all know well.

She loved young John Coyer,
Was engaged to be his wife;
He ruined her reputation,
And later took her life.

They went to Elkhorn City,
Sixty mile away;
And put up at a hotel,
Until the close of day.

And as dark did gather,
They went out for a stroll;
It was in bleak December,
The wind was blowing cold.

They went down to the river,
Cold water was running deep;
John then said to Lula,
"In the bottom you must sleep."

“Do you really mean it John?
It surely cannot be.
How could you stand to murder
A poor, helpless girl like me?”

She threw her arms around him,
Before him she did kneel.
Around her waist he tied
A piece of railroad steel.

He threw her in the river,
The bubbles they did rise.
They burst upon the water,
What a sad and mournful sight.

He hastened to the depot,
And boarded a train for home,
thinking that his cruel crime
Never would be known.

Poor Lula she was missing,
Nowhere could she be found.
They searched the country over,
For many miles around.

John Coyer joined the army,
Four months has come and past,
But in the Ohio River
The body was found at last.

They took her from the river,
And to the near-by town;
The steel that was around her
Weighed over thirty pound.

They held an inquest over her,
The people were in doubt.
They could not recognize her,
They could not find her out.

They sent for a reporter.
His name was Arodent.
He printed it in the paper
And around the world it went.

Her mother was seated in her home
When she read the news.
She quickly left her chair,
To a neighbor told her views.

Saying, "I will send a message,
Or, I will go and see,
It is my daughter, oh!
It surely can not be."

She boarded a train for Ironton,
And arrived right at the place.
It was in a morgue so drear,
She looked on her child's face.

She recognized the clothing.
The poor girl now still wore.
The mother looked upon the corpse,
Fell fainting to the floor.

John Coyer was arrested,
And placed in Floyd County's jail;
But for that awful murder
No one could go his bail.

Soon an army officer came,
And took him off to France.
John Coyer never went to trial,
Nor sought to clear his name.⁷⁴

ENDNOTES

1. As I begin writing, my local paper's "City/Region" section carries a story about a 20-year-old young woman sentenced to 20 years for complicity in the murder of another young woman. The pregnant murder victim was a rival in a love triangle — a twenty-first century version of the Tom (Dula) Dooley story (ballad)? See Steve Lannen, *Scott Woman Pleads Guilty in Teen's Slaying*, LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER (KENTUCKY), Aug. 26, 2005, at B1.

2. See Richard H. Underwood & Carol J. Parris, *Crimesong: Some Murder Ballads and Poems Revisited*, 12 J. SOUTH. LEGAL HIST. 5, 9 (2004) (citing THEODORE DREISER, *AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY* (1925)), a novel based loosely on the murder of Gracie Brown by Chester Gillette. See also the murder ballad musings of Chicago newspaper columnist Eric Zorn on the disappearance and murder of Chandra Levy, July 19, 2001, *available at* web.archive.org/web/20020618222630/ericzorn.com/columns/2001/july/.

3. A very thorough discussion of this ballad can be found in Edward E. Baptist, *My Mind Is to Drown You and Leave You Behind: "Omie Wise," Intimate Violence, and Masculinity in OVER THE THRESHOLD: INTIMATE VIOLENCE IN EARLY AMERICA* 94-110 (Christine Daniels & Michael V. Kennedy, eds., Routledge 1999).

4. *Id.* at 96.

5. *Id.* at 94.

6. *Id.* at 96-97.

7. Grayson's archaic "saw-stroke" fiddle style is quite catching. The tune was featured in a CD accompanying *THE ROSE & THE BRIAR: DEATH, LOVE AND LIBERTY IN THE AMERICAN BALLAD* (Sean Wilentz & Grey Marcus, eds., 2005). In the book, Anna Domino conjures up a letter from Omie (Naomie) to her Aunt Esther, telling her aunt of her hopes for the future as she is going to elope with Johnathan Lewis. "As for me, my heart is fairly singing with hope and with a new love of the bounty and goodness of life and every living thing in God's Creation!" Anna Domino, *Naomi Wise 1807*, *supra* at 79.

8. One version, which appears in a curious pamphlet styled "The Lula Viers Tour," sponsored by the Auxier Historical Society (provided to the author by Sharon Ray), contains some of the phraseology of the Omie Wise ballad — "John Collier said to Lule, *I'll tell you my mind, My Mind is to drown you and leave you behind.*" *THE LULA VIERS TOUR* 23 (sponsored by the Auxier Historical Society). This entrepreneurial booklet states that the Ballad was "probably written by Albert Frassure,"

who was said to be Lula's cousin and a teacher at the Auxier Grade School. *Id.*

9. See, e.g., G. MALCOLM LAWS, JR., *NATIVE AMERICAN BALLADRY* (1964); Kenneth D. Tunnell, *Blood Marks the Spot Where Poor Ellen Was Found: Violent Crime in Bluegrass Music*, 15(3) *POPULAR MUSIC AND SOCIETY* 102 (1991); CHARLES K. WOLFE, *KENTUCKY COUNTRY: FOLK AND COUNTRY MUSIC OF KENTUCKY* 8, 165 (1982). In Tunnell and Wolfe the ballad is referred to as "Lula Vower." See also Underwood & Parris, *supra* note 2, at 10.

10. JEAN THOMAS, *BALLAD MAKIN' IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KENTUCKY* 150-53 (Oak Publ'ns, Inc. 1964) (1939). Because of her "traipsin" from courthouse to courthouse, Thomas was nicknamed the "Traipsin Woman" by the mountain folk.

11. For a recorded version (if you can find it) see Paul Clayton's album *BRITISH AND AMERICAN MURDER BALLADS* (Washington Records WLP 727, 1956). The same tracks may appear on another Clayton album called "Bloody Ballads" issued by Riverside (RLP 12-615). The Clayton recording appears to be based on the Thomas version, although it suggests that Coyer will be caught and punished. At one time Clayton was said to be the most recorded young folksinger in America; and he was a friend of Bob Dylan. Clayton appears to have been a troubled soul, and he committed suicide in 1967 at the age of 36. Dylan's song "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," is said to have been inspired by his death.

12. Tunnell, *supra* note 9, at 102.

13. WOLFE, *supra* note 9, at 163. "[Loretta Lynn] remembers a song she sang in school about 'Luly Barrs who got pregnant by this man but he wouldn't marry her. He tied a piece of railroad steel around her neck and threw her into the Ohio River, and they found her three months later.'" *Id.* at 163.

14. Sharon Ray told me that the name Collier led her on a wild goose chase as she tried to find out more about her unfortunate ancestor.

15. THOMAS, *supra* note 10, at 152; *THE LULA VIERS TOUR*, *supra* note 8, at 24.

16. THOMAS, *supra* note 10, at 150.

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. *Id.* at 151.

20. *Id.*

21. *Alleged Slayer of Lulu Viers is now Under Arrest*, DAILY REGISTER (Ironton, Ohio), June 8, 1917, at 1 [hereinafter *Alleged Slayer*].

22. THOMAS, *supra* note 10, at 151.

23. *Id.* at 152.

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.*

26. *Id.*

27. Several of these versions are preserved in the Special Collections Department of the Alderman Library, University of Virginia. For example, "Lulie Varse," collected (1940) by Mrs. Vertie Tolliver of Norton, Virginia, ends with

"John Collier was arrested,
Content without a bail,
They sent him on to the electric Chair,
It forced him on to hell."

In another version styled "Lulie Vares," ends with

"Johnny Collier was arrested, but seemed content without bail,
As he somewhat brooded in his cold cell in the Jail.
They sent him to the electric chair, although he would not
tell;
Of his horrible deed as the current sent his body down to
hell."

From Sharon Ray's collection.

28. See Underwood & Parris, *supra* note 2, at 6.

29. See ANNE COHEN, POOR PEARL, POOR GIRL! THE MURDERED GIRL STEREOTYPE IN BALLAD AND NEWSPAPER (1973).

30. See THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8.

31. *Alleged Slayer*, *supra* note 21, at 1.

32. I asked Sharon Ray if Russel was otherwise normal, and she said, "Yes, although people didn't like riding in the car if Russell was driving." Russell died in 1978.

33. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 1-2.

34. Viers Compl. 1, Dec. 17, 1915. Court documents and journal entries courtesy of Mark Stone, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky (on file with Author).

35. *Id.* at 2.
36. *Id.*
37. Viers Pet. 2, 3, 1915.
38. Coyer Answer 3; Coyer Am. Answer 1.
39. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 11, 1916.
40. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 18, 1916.
41. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 18, 1916. The fragmentary court records and journal entries are confusing. A copy of Coyer's answer in the civil case, attested to by John Coyer on March 1, 1916, contained two affirmative defenses, one based on the statute of limitations, and a second that alleges that the criminal case for seduction was tried to a jury, and that the case was dismissed by the prosecutor after the jury failed to reach a verdict. Coyer's lawyer apparently contended that this was a dismissal on the merits, and that the dismissal was a bar to further action in the civil case. A reply filed by Lula's lawyer rejected that argument, and argued that the statute of limitations had not begun to run because of Lula's minority. Pleadings courtesy of Sharon Ray (on file with Author).
42. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 3.
43. The Lula Viers Tour put the date at some time in October 1915, but the date of death on Morgan's death certificate is August 3, 1916. Death Certificate of Morgan Viers, Aug. 3, 1916.
44. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 2.
45. Death Certificate of Morgan Viers, Aug. 16, 1916. Severe gastric distress is consistent with arsenic poisoning, which in Victorian times was often called "gastric fever." See SERITA STEVENS & ANNE KLARNER, DEADLY DOSES: A WRITER'S GUIDE TO POISONS 11 (1990).
46. Viers Aff., Sept. 15, 1916.
47. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 3.
48. McKenzie Pet., July 24, 1916.
49. McKenzie Dep., Nov. 20, 1916. Depositions courtesy of Sharon Ray.
50. McKenzie Dep. 2, 6, Nov. 20, 1916.
51. One is reminded of the ballad of Tom Dula ("Tom Dooley"). See Underwood & Parris, *supra* note 2, at 11.
52. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 4.
53. G. Malcom Laws cites a July 26, 1948, letter from the Clerk of Floyd County, one Jarvis Allen, for the proposition that she was killed at Elkhorn City, where the couple was to meet. LAWS, *supra* note 9, at

65. As we shall see, that seems to be the consensus.

54. THE LULA VIERS TOUR, *supra* note 8, at 4.

55. *Id.* at 9.

56. *Alleged Slayer*, *supra* note 21, at 1.

57. *Id.*

58. Death Certificate of Lula Viers, 1916.

59. *Alleged Slayer*, *supra* note 21, at 1.

60. *Id.*

61. *Id.*

62. *Id.*

63. *Girl's Mother Strikes Coyer With a Club, Man Charged With Killing Lula Viers is Held*, WEEKLY REGISTER, June 18, 1917. The Author's copy, furnished by Sharon Ray, appears to be from the "Weekly Register," perhaps an Ironton publication.

64. *Id.*

65. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 19, 1917.

66. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Aug. 13, 1917.

67. Floyd County, Ky., Order, Aug. 17, 1917.

68. *Id.*

69. *Id.*

70. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Jan. 4, 1918.

71. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 15, 1918; Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 16, 1918.

72. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, Feb. 18, 1918.

73. Floyd County, Ky., Circuit Court Order, June 6, 1918. The old records of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky are not available locally, as they are stored in East Point, Georgia.

74. THOMAS, *supra* note 10, at 152-53.