

**Newspaper Account of the Murder of  
Pat Wood (abt 1874 – 1898)  
In the  
Athens Banner Newspaper  
October 21, 1898 and October 28, 1898**

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The several news articles were transcribed by Robert Darius Wood, Jr. a great-grand nephew to Pat Wood, full name, John P. Wood on 11 February 2012. Pat is the son of Green C. Wood (~1845 – unknown) and Missouri Venable (1845 – 1885).

Every effort was made to faithfully transcribe the news articles without regard to spelling, grammar or punctuation in order to preserve the “flavor” of that time in our history. I accept responsibility for any injected errors resulting from my transcription.

The original newspaper articles can be viewed and searched at the following URL:

<http://athnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/athnewspapers/search>

There may well be additional newspaper articles relating to this story that I have not discovered. If subsequent articles are found I will add them to this document.

Please contact Robert D. Wood, Jr.

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From "The Weekly Banner" Oct 21, 1898 page 1

**NOTE:** *The first few paragraphs of the scanned newspaper article were not visible. This story opens in the paragraph below:*

.... openly accuses him of killing Pat Wood and the further fact that he ran as soon as the killing occurred, the story which he tells sounds rather fishy.

He declares that he did not have a hand in the killing of Wood and implicates Jenkins and another man named Jim Davis who lives near Bogart.

Mr. Tom Wood, an uncle of the dead man conveyed this information to The Banner reporter yesterday afternoon.

Said Mr. Wood: "I met Joel Griffeth on the street yesterday and was talking to him concerning the murder of Pat Wood."

Griffeth told me that he had seen William K. Smith the night previous in a swampy place near his father's home in the upper part of this County and that Smith had talked to him on the subject of the killing.

Griffith said that Smith told him that he was not guilty of the crime of killing Wood, although he was present at the killing. He said that S. H. Jenkins and Tim Davis were the guilty parties and that he himself had nothing to do with it.

Tim Davis, who according to this story, is implicated in the murder, is a young farmer living near Bogart. He has made no attempt to get away since the killing, and when he hears of Smith's story, will no doubt have a statement to make in his behalf.

Jenkins is the private soldier who first brought the news of the murder to Athens and who for several days stayed around police headquarters giving information as to the killing.

Not much stock is taken in the story told by Smith, as it is a settled opinion that he did the killing, although he doubtless had an accomplice.

Jenkins story and the flight of Smith, coupled with other facts go to make out a strong prima facie case against him.

Governor Atkinson yesterday afternoon offered a reward of \$200 for the apprehension of the murderer or murderers of Pat Wood, and a renewed interest is given to the search for the fleeing murderer.

All day yesterday Sheriff Wier and four deputies searched for Smith along the Oconee River up in Bradberrys district, but their search availed them nothing. They came back to Athens without Smith or any trace of him. The search will be kept up, however, as long as there is any hope of success.

# **A BULLET SENT THROUGH HIS BRAIN.**

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**Wm. K. Smith Shot and Killed  
Pvt. Wood Saturday  
Afternoon.**

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**Both were privates in Company G., 2nd Georgia Regiment  
and were playing a game of Five Up.**

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**Wood was killed instantly, and when his body was found his  
right hand held 6 cards.**

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**Smith Made His Escape  
Upon Finding He Had  
Killed Wood and The  
Officers are Now After Him.**

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# Soldiers are Indignant

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Pat Wood, a private soldier in Company G., 2nd Georgia Regiment, has been mustered out of the United States service forever.

A 38 caliber bullet from a Smith & Wesson pistol in the hands of William K Smith, another member of the same company, traced in blood the order that ended Wood's military career.

The city was thrown into considerable excitement Saturday afternoon about five o'clock when Private S. H. Jenkins, of company G., came rushing into the city from the direction of the cemetery and hurriedly notified chief Culp that a murder had been committed.

Jenkins told chief Culp that Pat Wood, William K. Smith, John E. Harris, and himself were together in the woods just beyond the cemetery trestle and that Smith, Harris and Wood were engaged in a game of cards, when Smith shot Wood through the head and made his escape.

Chief Culp at once set the machinery of the law to moving, and the story of the murder proceeded to grow in interest.

It appears that there were but four parties present at the time of the killing, viz., Smith, Harris, Wood and Jenkins, all private soldiers in company G.

Smith is from Bogart, Georgia and is about 25 years of age. Wood was from the country near Athens and was about 22 years old.

As near as could be obtained last night the details of the killing are as follows.

## Details of the Murder

The killing occurred on the lands of Mrs. Compton, within 50 yards of the Macon & Northern railroad track at the far end of the cemetery trestle.

About 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon, Smith and Harris left the city and started in the direction of the cemetery.

All had been in Athens during the day. Smith had been sick for several weeks and had been home on furlough. He was at Jake Epstein's place on Jackson Street a short while yesterday before leaving the business portion of the city.

Wood called in at E. H. & W. F. Dorsey's store about noon and bought a pair of pants. The pants were left at the store, and Wood remarked as he went out that he didn't know whether he would get back to call for them. They are there now and in them the dead young man will be buried.

On the way out to the cemetery, Smith and Harris met up with Jenkins and Wood and a game of five-up was suggested by one of the crowd.

Wood consented to play against Harris. Smith offered to back Harris, and the crowd instantly set out for a convenient place to play the game. Arriving at a little clump of bushes within a stone's throw of the trestle, they set down near the path and began playing.

Smith backed Harris and Wood was winning. Smith pulled out two half pints of whiskey and insisted on Wood drinking. Wood refused. Smith insisted and again Wood refused.

In the meantime the game proceeded and luck remained with Wood. This irritated Smith, and he began making significant and suggestive remarks. Finally Wood replied in a manner that Smith did not like, and a heated argument arose between them. The game had been in progress about thirty minutes, and Smith, it is alleged, had taken several drinks. He accused Wood of unfairness and Wood started to rise.

Instantly Smith sprang to his feet and snatched a 38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver from his hip pocket. Jenkins had his legs crossed and before he could rise Smith placed the pistol within 2 inches of Wood's face and pulled the trigger that sent a ball crashing through Wood's head just above the left ear.

Wood fell forward on his face and died instantly.

Realizing that he had killed Wood, Smith made a dash for the woods at once, and succeeded in making his escape. Harris also went in the direction taken by Smith. Jenkins came immediately to the city and notified Chief Culp, who secured two horses and sent Officer Joe Saye and Jenkins in pursuit of the fleeing murderer.

### **Scene of the Killing.**

Parties were sent over into the woods to get the body of Wood and bring it to Undertaker Dorsey's establishment where it could be prepared for burial.

When they arrived on the scene everything was just as it was when the bullet was sent crashing through Wood's brain.

Wood lay upon his face, with his legs in a crossed position. He never knew what killed him. Death had been instantaneous and his body had simply pitched forward upon the ground.

The stakes of the game were there undisturbed. On one side of the dead man lay for nickels; on the other side were a nickel and a dime. Over this insignificant sum of thirty-five cents arose the difficulty in which Wood lost his life. The money was picked up and turned over to Undertaker Dorsey who now has it.

Near by were the two empty half pint bottles that had been the chief agents in bringing about all the trouble. The deck of cards were to the side of the dead man and the king of hearts was turned up as a trump. Several cards were scattered all around on the ground.

In the right hand of the dead man were clutched 6 cards, among them the ace of hearts. He had no weapon on him, and had evidently made no effort to get one, as the cards were gripped in his right hand when the body was first seen after the killing.

The deadly bullet had gone through the head, entering behind the left ear and coming out near the nose. In the

dead man's pockets was a picture of a handsome young woman whose name is unknown.

A member of company G said last night that both Smith and Wood were addicted to gambling, but that Wood had the reputation of being a very quite young fellow.

# **WOOD WAS STABBED AS WELL AS SHOT.**

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**2 Men No Doubt Connected With The Murder.**

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## **SMITH ALLUDES ARREST.**

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**No Clew as Yet to His Whereabouts - Suspicion That More Than Two  
Were Engaged In A Game Of Cards - Harris Was Not Present as at  
First Stated.**

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**From Tuesday's Banner.**

The murder of Private Pat Wood, of the Second Georgia Regiment, in this city Saturday has not been cleared up yet.

It was at first thought that Wm. K. Smith, of Bogart, was the only one connected with the killing.

Now it is believed that the man who was playing cards with Wood also had a hand in it.

Right here it may be stated that it was an error in the published accounts of the killing when it was stated that

Private John E. Harris was the man who was playing five-up with Wood at the time Wood was killed. This was given out as a fact Saturday night but it turns out that Harris was not there.

Private Jenkins says that the fourth man in the party was not Harris, but was a young man he had never seen before Saturday afternoon. He was a friend of Smith and was about five feet nine inches, a brunette and had a black mustache. He ran off with Smith after the shooting of Wood.

The circumstance that seems to indicate that more than one man had a hand in the killing is the fact that Wood was stabbed as well as shot.

The bullet entered Wood's head just to the left temple, ranged through the brain and lodged in the skull behind the right ear.

Just about an inch above the entrance of the bullet was a cut about one third of an inch under and extending to the skull. It was a clean cut and could not have been made by a rock. It was not the slash of a knife. It was a perfect stab, though the force behind the blow was not sufficient to cause the knife to penetrate the skull.

This fact also furnishes an incentive for flight on the part of the stranger who was playing with Wood, it was in all probability this man who stabbed Wood as he fell over after having been shot by Smith.

#### **Where is Wood's money?**

It also develops that Wood had money on his person when he was in the city Saturday about noon. Some say he had over fifty dollars, others less, but several people saw him with money. When his dead body was found there was not a copper cent upon it. Where did his money go?

#### **How Many In The Game?**

Another interesting surmise is that more than two men were in the game. The deck of cards was a new one and it is not probable that any of the cards had been lost previous to the game. Wood had 6 cards in his hand after he was dead, and the deck with the trump card on it was near at hand. But all those cards added together fall far short of a full deck. A number of the cards are missing. Where are those missing cards?

#### **Jenkins Didn't See The Stab.**

Private Jenkins was asked yesterday if he saw anyone stab Wood, to which he replied that he did not. He said that if the dead man was stabbed he did not see it.

Wood fell over on the right side of his face, the wound being up, and it was impossible for the cut above the bullet hole to have been inflicted in the fall. In fact nothing but a knife could have made the wound. A rock could not possibly have made it.

#### **Searching for Smith.**

The officers of the law have made a vigorous search for Smith, but thus far have failed to find him. They have had several clues as to his whereabouts, but each time they followed up the clues, they came to naught.

The search for the stranger was also made quite vigorously. Mr. Jim Burch



says that a man answering his description got on the Seaboard Air Line passenger going toward Atlanta at three o'clock Sunday morning.

The officers will continue their search for Smith and he will be caught if possible. Governor Atkinson will be asked to offer a reward for the apprehension of the murderer or murderers of Wood, and the reward will probably be offered.

#### **Wood Burial Yesterday.**

Sergeant Hauser, Mounted Orderly Moon, and Privates John Dennard, Jim Browning, Will Guest, Emory Patat, and Garnett Saye, of Company G, acted as pallbearers and contributed toward the fund for meeting burial expenses.

#### **History Of Wood's Life.**

At the time of his death Pat Wood was 23 years of age. From childhood he had led a quiet, uneventful life, and gambling was his one besetting sin and ruling passion. His father, Mr. Green Wood, is at present living in Texas. His mother is dead. He has one brother, Mr. Charlie Wood, whose present whereabouts are unknown. His sister, Miss. Julia Wood, lives in Jefferson.

Wood was considered by his associates and companions as being a congenial good fellow, and every member of company G, of which he belonged, speak in the highest terms of him. While a slave to gambling, Wood

would never touch liquor and would never play at cards when a disagreement arose. He has been known to surrender his rights rather than engage in a difficulty or dispute.

#### **Reported Dead Before.**

While company G was in Huntsville Wood mysteriously disappeared and was absent several days. At the time his friends thought that he had met with foul play, and the report gained circulation that he had been killed. His relatives did not know that he was in Athens and some of them were under the impression that he was dead.

#### **Smith is a Tough.**

"Give a dog a bad name and you might as well kill him." is an old adage trite and true. Smith's reputation is an unsavory one. His friends among his associates are few and far between. His misdeeds seem to date back from the time he was a child on his mother's knee. During the course of his life Smith earned a name that is now counting against him. His deed of Saturday was predicted years ago, and that too by those who prayed that it might be different. Public sentiment is decidedly against him. Verily, the way of the transgressor is hard.

# **JENKINS DID NOT PLAY CARDS WITH PAT WOOD.**

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**A Warrant Sworn Out Against Him for  
Gambling by Tom Wood.**

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**HE WAS DISCHARGED**

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**By Judge Foster Yesterday and His Innocence  
Was Clearly Established --A Statement From  
Mr. Joe Griffith Denying That he Ever Talked  
to Tom Wood.**

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S. H. Jenkins was arraigned before Judge Foster yesterday morning at 10 o'clock on the charge of gambling.

The warrant was sworn out Saturday afternoon by Mr. Tom Wood, who charged Jenkins with being in the game of five-up with his nephew, Pat Wood, at the time he was killed by W. K. Smith.

Jenkins was represented by Hon. E.K. Lumpkin.

The case against him was dismissed.

The evidence showed that Mr. Jenkins did not touch a card in the fatal game and that he had absolutely nothing to do with the killing of Wood. He was simply a spectator and witnessed the game from the start. He was present when Smith fired the bullet that ended

the life of Pat Wood, and that once came to the city and notified the officers of the tragedy.

Mr. Tim Davis, who was present when the game commenced and who remained until the tragic finish, swore positively that Mr. Jenkins did not play with Wood and stated on the stand that Jenkins was not in any way connected with the murder.

Mr. Jenkins had quite a number of the best citizens of Athens present who were there to testify to his good character but their evidence was unnecessary as Mr. Davis' testimony completely exonerated the accused.

Mr. Jenkins called at The Banner office yesterday afternoon in company with Mr. Joe Griffith, and the latter strenuously denies having any conversation with Mr. Tom Wood, who is an uncle of the murdered man.

"I never saw Mr. Tom Wood in my life," stated Mr. Griffith, "and the story published to the effect that I had a talk with him concerning the murder of Pat Wood is without the slightest foundation."

This brings up a new issue - a question of veracity between Joe Griffith and Tom Wood.

The conversation that Mr. Griffith denies having with Wood, was published in last Friday's Banner.

Mr. Wood stated to a Banner reporter Thursday that he met Joe Griffith on the street Wednesday and was talking with him concerning the murder of Pat Wood. He stated that Griffith told him that he had seen William K. Smith the night previous in a swampy place near his father's home in the upper part of this County and that Smith had talked to him on the subject of the killing.

According to Wood, Griffith said that Smith told him that he was not guilty of the crime of killing Wood, although he was present at the killing, he said that S. H. Jenkins and Tim Davis were the guilty parties and he himself had nothing to do with it.

"Griffith said that Smith told him that he ran away on account of being afraid that he would be lynched if caught, but that he intended within the next few days to return to Athens and give himself up."

Griffith denies making the above statement, and declares that he wouldn't know, Wood if he met him on the street.

## **The Wrong Mr. Griffith**

### **Mr. Tom Wood Says That It's a Case of Mistaken Identity.**

The mist has cleared away and with it fades a mystery.

Mr. Tom Wood was seen yesterday afternoon by a Banner reporter, who asked him about the conversation he had with Joe Griffith relative to the Wood murder case. The reporter informed Mr. Wood that Griffith denied having had the conversation with him and Mr. Wood explained that it was simply a case of mistaken identity. He had the

conversation referred to with a Mr. Wood of Elbert County and not with Mr. Joe Wood of Oconee County. Mr. Wood did not know man at the time, but the fellow told him his name was Griffith, and he didn't stay to look up his antecedents or search out his family history.

Thus another chapter of the Wood murder mystery is cleared up. It was not Joe Griffith but some other Griffith.

# **SMITH MAY BE IN PORTO RICO.**

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**Then Again He May Be Hid in a Swamp Near  
Athens.**

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## **HE HAS MANY FRIENDS**

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**Who Are Continually Sending Sheriff Wier On a Wild Goose  
Chase -- It's a Case of Now I Know, and Now I Don't, With  
the Sheriff.**

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Sheriff Wier sat in his office yesterday morning complacently puffing a good cigar and reading a letter from an anonymous writer telling him how to catch W.K. Smith, the murderer of Pat Wood.

When the Banner man wanted to know "If he had caught Smith yet," the cigar dropped from the Sheriff's lips and his mouth flew open with astonishment.

A look of annoyance came over his face of the handsomest Sheriff in Georgia, but it soon gave place to contain in one of interest as his eyes

rested upon a paragraph told how to catch Smith, and that is something the sheriff wants to do very much. But it proved to be a case of giving information that did not inform. The sheriff was told to go to Porto Rico and keep his eyes open and he would find Smith. But there was nothing shown to indicate that the author of the advice was not talking through his hat.

Sheriff Wier and his deputies have made the most diligent search for Smith and are no nearer success now than when the crime was committed.

"Smith has many friends," said Sheriff Wier, "who are on the lookout, and give us wrong information in order to throw us off the track."

"Haven't you any idea as to Smith's present whereabouts," asked the reporter.

"None whatever," replied the officer. "There is not even a possible clue to Mr. Smith's address, and while I have not ended the hope of finally catching my man, I am afraid that it will be some time before he is brought to justice."

*End of document as of 11-Feb-2012*