

## Charles Keys' Dog

Not every case that was brought before the court in 1888 is worthy of talking about 120 years after the fact. This case might be one of those, as it's not about murder, robbery or assault, and did not even require a jury. However, it was a big deal for Charles Keys.

In August of 1888, S. R. Lowe of Independent Hill had again found his sheep dead from what appeared to be a dog attack. He had complained to Charles Keys that he suspected it was his dog killing the sheep. But, without proof, what could he do? Keys said his dog was not involved and "would talk no more of it."

On September 10, a man by the name of John Pearson, along with S. R. Lowe went to C. M. Copen, a Justice of the Peace. Under oath both declared they witnessed the dog of Charles Keys kill a sheep belonging to Lowe. Justice Copen sent for Keys to tell him the dog would have to be killed. Keys replied that he would not come and that no one was going to take his dog. Copen immediately sent for D. C. Norman, a constable, and ordered him to go to Charles Keys' place and kill the dog. That order would go unfulfilled as Keys would not produce the dog.

A day later, Constable Norman returned to the Keys' house with a warrant for Charles to appear before Justice Copen at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of September 14<sup>th</sup>. Charles accepted the warrant but failed to show for the hearing. The case was continued on the Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> with Keys' still refusing to come to court. The case was re-scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup>. Keys again was a no show for his case.

The court seemed to be out of options other than putting Keys in jail. The Judge ruled without Keys present that the fine would be \$4.00 per day amounting to \$24 for concealing the dog, \$1.00 for warrants, 50 cents for trying the case, 50 cents for witnesses, 60 cents constable fees, and a fee of \$1.25 for Justice Copen. Furthermore, it was ordered that, if the dog were ever found, it should be killed.

The court records show that all the fines and assessments were paid by the defendant Charles Keys. He must have really loved that dog.

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