

Washington Post, 28 Sep 1900

ACCUSED BY GIRL PUPIL

Rev. J. C. Beahm, Principal of Brentsville School

Arrested on Grave Charge.

Special to the Washington Post

Manassas, Va., Sept. 27 – A sensation was caused here to-day by word that at a late hour last night Prof. J. C. Beahm, principal of the Brentsville Normal School, had been arrested and brought here, charged with having criminally assaulted an eighteen-year-old girl pupil about three months ago. The girl, who has always been very shy and retiring, has been forced to disclose the story to her parents. She says the offense was committed at the school, and that Prof. Beahm threatened to kill her if she told. She could not appear at the preliminary examination to-day, but bail will probably be present to-morrow.

Prof. Beahm is a minister of the Dunkard, or German Baptist Church. He is about thirty-five years old, married, and has two children. He vigorously denies the charge, and his church is faithfully standing by him.

Two days ago he received an anonymous note warning him that a grave charge would shortly be laid at his door, and advising him to leave. Professing not to understand it, he showed this to a friend, and finally laid the matter before the faculty of the school. He made no effort to escape, and last night was arrested.

Washington Post, 10 Nov 1900

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Prof. Beahm's Pupils Spied Upon His Movements

SUSPICIONS, BUT FOUND NO PROFF

Witness Saw the Clergyman Kiss His Hands to Miss Akers, She Enjoyed Privileges Denied Other Pupils, but Could Not Substantiate Any Detail of Girl's Story – Neighbor Suspected for Months, but Did Not Warn Parents.

Special To The Washington Post

Manassas, Va., Nov. 9, - Miss Ethel Akers upon whose complaint Rev. J. C. Beahm, her instructor at Brentsville academy, is being tried here on a charge of betrayal, was recalled to the witness stand this morning to make plain certain details of her testimony. She was followed by her mother, who testified that Prof. Beahm visited their house frequently on various errands – pretexts, she called them – sometimes to borrow a book or return a paper, or to consult about the children's studies. He also frequently visited a neighbor's house.

“At one time, when Ethel was sick,” said Mrs. Akers, “Mr. Beahm called and urged that we employ Dr. Bowen, who was our old family physician, instead of Dr. Hall. He appeared to be a gentleman. He frequently called while I was at home. He assigned as a reason for desiring Ethel to return to school that she would graduate in another year. He proposed that a debt he was owing her father should pay her tuition. When this proposition was refused he offered to let her teach for her tuition.”

Suspected but Did Not Warn

Mrs. J. B. Lynn testified as to the frequency to Mr. Beahm's visits at the home of the girl, especially on Saturdays, at which time her mother was absent, although the other children were at home during the week. She never saw him enter the house nor did he visit elsewhere very much. She saw him go home from the Literary Society of the School with Ethel and her sister. She saw him lean over the fence once and pat the girl on the face. Her suspicions were first

aroused about a year and a half ago, she said, but she did not mention the matter to the girl's parents, although her husband is a cousin of Mrs. Akers. She also saw Prof. Beahm kiss his hand to Ethel, and she returned the kiss while in the public road.

Young Spittle testified that Ethel was permitted to stay in Prof. Beahm's office a good deal, and while a pupil at the school he went in frequently to see what was going on. He had no business there, and was ordered out of the office. During these periods the doors were unlocked and pupils were in the house. Witness admitted having had some difficulty with Prof. Beahm. He was requested to leave under threat of expulsion, but the breach was healed, and he remained until his means were exhausted. The trouble grew out of Prof. Beahm's having charged that gambling was permitted in witness' house.

The office door, he said, was locked one day, but he did not know who was closeted with Prof. Beahm had ever explained why the door was fastened.

Mr. Shacklett, of Stafford County, testified that he attended the school during the session of 1899-1900, and having his suspicions aroused, kept watch with Spittle. One day, after school, he saw a man and woman in the office together, but did not recognize either. He recalled the circumstance of the door being locked, and that Prof. Beahm had explained to the school next morning that he was removing from the blackboard something he did not wish seen.

Much time was consumed in controversies between counsel, and it finally became necessary for the court to call them all to order.

Mrs. Arthur Woodyard testified to the frequency of Prof. Beahm's visits to the Akers' house, and said he "seemed very fond of children." Edward Kincheloe, of Washington, stated that while at his home in Brentsville his attention had been called to the marked attention Prof. Beahm seemed to show Miss Akers, and once he saw him slip her what appeared to be a note. It was explained that this was a diploma. Witness said. "He received his diploma in a more public manner." Witness said he had had differences with Prof. Beahm, and admitted that some time ago there had been some hostile correspondence between them, in which he denounced Prof. Beahm as a liar, but said that had been settled, and he now cherished no ill will.

W. W. Kincheloe ex treasurer of the county noticed the frequency of Prof. Beahm's visits to Miss Akers' home during the absence of her parents and that the girl was frequently late from school.

Seen Throwing Kisses

Marion Calvert, aged about fifty years, whose home is near the schoolhouse, testified he had suspected Prof. Beahm for two years. He had seen Beahm kiss his hand to the girl, and once saw him stand with his arm around her at the fence at night, about two years ago. Witness admitted that without glasses his sight was very defective, but with them he could see "tolerably well."

Miss Hall, a sister of Hugh Hall, the young man, the story of whose trip with Ethel Akers was excluded, yesterday, stated that she had been a pupil at the school, and while there had observed nothing peculiar, except that Ethel was admitted to the office while the other girls were not.

Viola Davis, one of the pupils who lives opposite the school, frequently saw Ethel leave school very late. Her attention was first called to this in the spring of the current year.

Dr. Hall, the physician who attended the girl, testified that she had accused Mr. Beahm. Witness several times noticed that the girl left school later than the other pupils, and that Prof. Beahm left afterward. His attention was first called to this in May 1900, and several times after.

Strong Evidence of Good Repute

The State rested with this evidence, and the defense offered a number of witnesses who testified in the highest terms to Prof. Beahm's character and reputation. Superintendent Sterne, of Roanoke County; the Commonwealth's attorney of that county; John A. Hooker, of Philadelphia; Attorney Barker, of Bedford; Commonwealth's Attorney Hooker, of Patrick County; Vice President Allen, of Bedford College, and A. J. Gillespie, of Bedford County, all spoke of him in flattering terms.

Members of the grand jury, with the consent of the State, testified to Miss Akers' story, on which the indictment was found. They said the girl swore Prof. Beahm first kissed her in May, 1900, in the presence of Prof. Boorman, her music teacher, and several others.

To accommodate witnesses from a distance a night session was held. Miss Daisy Early, a former pupil, stated that upon one occasion she tried to get into the office, or reading-room, but found the door locked. She then looked in through the window and saw Prof. Beahm; No one else was in the room, a full view of which was commanded by the window. The next morning Mr. Beahm made a rational explanation of the locking of the door, and also made witness a personal explanation about five minutes after the incident. He was erasing something from the blackboard when Miss Early saw him.

The janitor, Mrs. Seese, testified that she always began to sweep out the school house immediately after school closed. Her opinion of Prof. Beahm was of the highest.

Dr. Brown stated that he had examined the office, and one at the window could command a view of the whole room.

Prof. Boorman, music teacher at the school, testified that Miss Akers was in his class. He had no recollection of seeing Miss Akers and Prof. Beahm together in his room. He saw nothing improper whatever between them, and knew Mr. Beahm's reputation to be good. Dr. J. C. Meredith testified that he had always heard Prof. Beahm spoken of as a moral man.

The last witness examination to-night was a pupil, who stated that he was frequently around after school, and never saw anything to excite his suspicions. Prof. Beahm will probably make a statement in the morning.

Washington Post, 11 Nov 1900

PROF. BEAHM ON THE STAND

Denies charges Made Against Him by Miss Akers

Wide Interest in Trial

Special to the Washington Post

Manassas, Va., Nov. 10. – Interest in the trial of Rev. J. C. Beahm upon a charge brought against him by Miss Ethel Akers, a pupil at his school in Brentsville, is widespread as the end draws near. The Dunkards, who have looked up to Prof. Beahm for years, are especially anxious as to the outcome, and every detail of the evidence is being made the subject of debate and argument. Both sides have warm supporters.

At a late hour inst night counsel for the defense decided to send reputable parties to Brentsville to examine the room which was found locked at the school, and which has figured so prominently in the trial, to see if it were possible for anyone to entirely screen himself from observation from without. J. E. Randall, who made the examination, testified to-day that the window commanded a full view of the room, and his statement was substantiated by that of Prof. Christ, a member of the faculty. It was then decided that the jury should also visit the school later on.

A number of additional witnesses for the defense were heard. Some testified to Prof. Beahm's good character; others, including pupils and employees, to his general deportment, and especially as to his conduct towards Miss Akers. None had ever seen anything wrong or even suspicious.

W. W. Kincheloe, brother of a witness for the State, testified that while a pupil at the school, he had seen William Hall another pupil, kiss and hug Miss Akers in the presence of several of their school mates. As this proved to be subsequent to the dates charged in the indictment, it was ordered stricken out. Witness often studied in the much-talked-of office, but never saw anything wrong.

The court was again forced to-day to call counsel to order for indulging in too heated recriminations.

To refute the evidence of Mrs. Lynn, Mr. and Mrs. Bradshaw testified to conversations had with that witness, in which Mrs. Lynn had expressed firm belief in Prof. Beahm's innocence and had said that her daughter charged Miss Akers with being "not nice" in her conversation.

Prof. Beahm took the stand in his own behalf. He told of having had trouble with the Akers family, and emphatically denied Miss Akers' story in detail. The first intimation he had of any trouble was in September, 1900, when he received an anonymous letter, the contents of which he was not allowed to state. He tried to ascertain from whom the letter came and finally laid it before the faculty. Shortly afterward he was arrested.

Mrs. Beahm also testified for her husband. The case will be submitted on Tuesday.

Washington Post, 15 Nov 1900
REV. J. C. BEAHM CONVICTED
Jury Fixes Penalty at Five Years' Imprisonment
Defendant Breaks Down
Special to the Washington Post

Manassas, Va., Nov. 14. – The jury in the case of Rev. J. C. Beahm, whose long trial for the seduction of Miss Ethel G. Akers, an eighteen-year-old pupil at his Brentsville Academy, to-day returned a verdict of guilty as charged in the indictment. The penalty was fixed at five years in the State Penitentiary. Prof. Beahm preserved his self-possession throughout the entire trial until the verdict was announced, when he broke down and has since been completely unnerved. He is now in jail for the first time for a month, having been out on \$10,000 bail since the trial opened.

Motion for a new trial was made this afternoon before the trial judge, overruled, and papers are now being prepared for an appeal.

The case has been one of the most sensational and bitterly contested ever tried in this section of Virginia, and has attracted widespread interest. Prof. Beahm is widely known as an educator outside of Virginia, and his standing and reputation lend many to doubt the justice to the verdict.

The case was submitted to the jury at a late hour last night. The defendant's friends and many of those who believe Miss Akers' story were confident of a disagreement.

Mrs. Beahm sat by her husband's side all day, being the only lady in the court house. She steadfastly maintains Beahm's innocence.

Washington Post, 12 Sep 1908

ACCUSED BY GIRL BEFORE

Garrett County School Principal One Arrested in Virginia

Special to the Washington Post

Manassas, Va., Sept. 11. – Prof. J. C. Beahm, principal of the high school at Accident, Garrett County, Md., who was arrested night before last at Accident, charged with a serious offense toward a 15-year-old girl, was tried here in the year 1901 on a similar charge. Prof. Beahm was principal of the Brentsville High School, in this county. He was convicted, and sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. Upon a new trial, however, he was acquitted.

The two trials consumed more time and cost more money than any other criminal trial in this county within the past forty years. After his acquittal, Prof. Beahm resumed his school work at Brentsville, but after a year or two moved to Accident, Md.