

7/03/1899

EVIDENCE THOMAS WILSON a blacksmith, of Gatton, deposed to M'Neill's arrival at the Brian Boru Hotel at half-past 9 o'clock on the morning of the 27th December, and announcing that the three Murphy's were lying dead in a paddock.

He accompanied the party to the scene. He saw wheel tracks turning into the paddock, the sliprails lying across the opening. He thought the wheels went over the rails, and that there was a break in the tracks in consequence; but he did not look closely.

He explained that he found the girl Norah lying on a rug with her skull broken in, and her hands tied behind her back.

There was no appearance of a struggle.

He described also the position of the brother and the other sister.

He said Norah's hands were tied, while Michael's were behind his back, and he saw no indication that they were tied; but a strap lay over the body.

Either Gilbert, one of the party, or M'Neill took the purse, which was in Michael's hands.

Witness described then the position of the horse and trap.

He saw no signs of a struggle or footprints.

There was a blood-stained stick near Michael's head.

A thorough examination was made, but there was no indication of a struggle or how many persons had been engaged in the tragedy, or how the murderers came or went.

He saw signs of a horse, which had one shoe on.

The tracks were freshly made and going in the direction of the sliprails.

The tracks may have been made by M'Neill's horse when he was there before.

They had not noticed what horse he was riding when he came to the hotel.

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Thos. Wilson, J.P., stated Witness walked from the sliprails.

M'Neill, who was a little in front when they were about four or five yards off, said the first body was that of Norah.

Witness recognised it as her body.

There was no sign of a struggle round any of the bodies.

Their first idea was to keep the place clear, and not disturb the ground. Witness and a man named Devitt were left to protect the scene.

Two persons arrived first, and then M'Neill and the mother came.

He told the people to keep back; but he had a difficulty about it.

Witness came to the conclusion that they received the injuries on the head where they were lying, because of the position of the heads.

There was not the crowd on the ground that had been represented.

When he left at 1 o'clock there were not more than twenty persons on the ground.

Mr. Devitt, bootmaker, of Gatton, gave corroborative evidence.

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