

• It is understood that two colored people were found who had information regarding the murder and burial of a "Mormon" Elder, and the subsequent removal of the body from the place where it was originally interred. It is not improbable that the searchers were aided from that quarter in making the discovery, but, of course, details are not at hand, but soon will be. It is therefore needless to indulge in conjectures.

A somewhat singular incident connected with this sad tragedy is that a young missionary named Haslam, laboring in Indian Territory, dreamed a considerable time since that he saw Elder Richards murdered, the manner in which it was done, the locality—in the vicinity of Meridian—together with a number of details connected with the surrounding country. We are informed that many of the objects described by Elder Haslam, as having been seen by him in his dream, have been found to be correct, notwithstanding that he had never been within a thousand miles of Meridian.

The sympathy for the family of Elder Richards has been deep and widespread among the Saints. The discovery of the body of our murdered brother stirs this sentiment into renewed activity. Seeing Brother Richards has been foully murdered, it is well that the fact has been placed beyond a doubt, as it relieves his devoted wife, his fatherless children and his many friends from the strain of suspense under which they have been for the greater part of a year. There is also some consolation in the fact that his body is to be laid in the ground contiguous to the home he so much cherished in life. Having also died at the post of sacred duty, there remains no shadow of doubt in relation to the glorious character of his eternal destiny.

The following communication, written by Elder John Morgan, relative to the death of Elder Richards, will be read with much interest:

Owing to the general interest taken by the Saints in the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Elder Alma P. Richards, it has been thought prudent to give through your columns a detailed account of the main incidents connected therewith.

He reported for duty as a traveling Elder at the headquarters of the Southern States Mission in November, 1887, and was assigned to the Mississippi Conference, to travel in Jasper County, Mississippi, and Sumpter County, Alabama, which belonged in the Mississippi Conference. He and his traveling companions labored assiduously in this field, with varying success, during the winter of 1887 and 1888, making a few converts and many friends, with the usual number of enemies who spring up around an Elder's pathway. Elder Richards was possessed of a social disposition, and readily made friends wherever he went; confiding, frank and gen-

tle, he won the hearts of all he came in contact with, and was especially a favorite with the Saints, who placed the utmost confidence in him and relied implicitly on every statement he made.

In June of 1888, his traveling companion, Elder Harmon, was released to return home, which left Elder Richards alone, but with the prospect in the near future of a companion to take Elder Harmon's place. Owing to the demand for Elders, it was found impossible to supply the vacancy at once, and Elder Richards was counseled by President Spry to continue his labors and report through the president of the conference to the office at Chattanooga regularly. In the latter part of June he left Sumter County, Ala., to visit the Saints in Mississippi—with the promise to return and take dinner at Brother Odums, on the 5th of August, the anniversary of the latter's birthday. Visiting the Saints in Mississippi occupied his time during July. All the Saints that he came in contact with testified to his joyous and jubilant feelings.

His letters to his wife and parents were full of encouragement and good advice, and bore evidence of the spirit that actuated him in his labors. On the night of July 31st he stayed at Sister Tucker's, in Jasper County, Miss., going from there to Brother Kemp's, a distance of 17 miles, in the direction Meridian, Miss., en route to Brother Odums, to make the promised visit. Leaving Brother Kemp's on the morning of August 1st in fine spirits, he followed the main-traveled road toward Enterprise, on the line of the New Orleans & Northeastern Railway, stopping at a colored man's house to get a drink and wash his face and hands, doubtless to alleviate the fatigue caused by the extreme heat, then prevalent. As was his custom, he frankly stated who he was, where he was from and his destination. From thence he evidently made his way to the town of Enterprise, and was seen standing on the platform of the depot. The next trace we have of him, he stepped into the door of the Ragdale Hotel at Meridian, on the morning of Aug. 2, between daylight and sunrise, and handed a package containing his Bible, hymn book, two photographs, and a clean shirt, to A. D. Blank, the colored porter, with the request to retain them for a couple of weeks and he would call for them. Here all trace of him disappeared.

Brother Odum looked in vain for his arrival, and within a brief period the President of the conference reported his disappearance to the office at Chattanooga. Prompt steps were taken to ascertain his whereabouts, by President Spry. The Saints were corresponded with and Elders notified to make inquiry in every direction, but no tidings whatever could be obtained. The first Saturday and Sunday in November, a conference was held in Sumter County, Alabama, of the Mississippi Saints, and travelling Elders. After the close of the conference,

President Spry, accompanied by a number of Elders went to Meridian. Unfortunately they arrived there on the day of the Presidential election; the city was full of people, considerable political excitement prevailed and the crowd were more or less under the influence of liquor. The sudden appearance of so many strangers and their movements started the rumor that they were Northern spies, sent in to report the methods of Southern elections. The crowd became excited and a mob was soon organized. The information imparted by the Elders, that they were "Mormons," only added fuel to the flame and in a few moments a wild, crazy mob of five hundred men were howling around the brethren. Chief of Police Hugh Wilson came to their rescue, and calling a sufficient force of police, with drawn revolvers held the crowd at bay, standing nobly up in defense of the lives and persons of the brethren. Under the protection of the police the Elders met at the depot and together took the train to quieter and safer sections of the country.

During the excitement of the mob the colored Porter Blank, mistaking Elder Ruby for Elder Richards, there being some resemblance, handed him the package of books left with him by the latter and made a brief statement of how he came in possession of them.

After leaving Meridian two of the Elders were detailed to look up the matter, but their labors resulted in very little additional information, principally owing to the fact that public sentiment was so worked up on the question of "Mormonism," that it was unsafe for an Elder to be seen in that portion of the State.

In January President Woodruff appointed Elders S. B. Young, John Morgan and Wm. Spry a committee to endeavor to find Elder Richards dead or alive. A detective from Chattanooga was employed and sent to Meridian, but fear of jeopardizing his life, combined with natural worthlessness, prevented him from accomplishing anything. He made vague, contradictory and unsatisfactory reports, until all confidence was lost in him.

In April it was decided that Elder Morgan, accompanied by Brother James Tillman, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, should go to Meridian and see what could be done. On Monday, May 6, we met, and registered at the St. Charles Hotel, Meridian, Elder M. under the assumed name of Jas. Hinch. After consulting together we secured a room and went systematically to work: visited the section of country along Elder Richards' supposed route of travel after leaving Meridian, and carefully searched every suspicious nook and corner, in hopes of finding some evidence of his murder. The county coroner, Mr. Simpson, was visited, and from him it was learned that no unidentified body had been buried in the county during the past year. The records of the chancery court were searched, thinking it possible that he might have lost his mind and been assigned to an asylum. The asylum was also