

# BARRACCA FIENDISH VENDETTA VICTIM.

## Feudist Falls From Shot From Masked Murderer Close,

## While With Little Son Plowing in His Field.

## Slayer Then Chops Out Tony's Brain and Escapes.

## End of Long Series of Crimes Here and Sarpy, Near Campisciano Farm.

(Special to the Picayune.)

Sarpy, La., April 13.—The Black Hand, the dreaded agent of Sicilian vengeance, was sent down upon Anthony Barracca, a farmer, while he was at work in his field near Sarpy, at day-break this morning. The assassin fired upon his victim from the rear, sending three bullets through the body, and then completed the ghastly deed by splitting the skull in two and removing the brains of his fallen foe with a penknife.

The deed was perpetrated in the  
**PRESENCE OF JOSEPH BARRACCA,**

the 12-year-old son of the victim, who was at work hewing down weeds about twenty feet from the spot where his parent was murdered and butchered. The lad ran when he saw the murderer, with a red handkerchief over his eyes, fire three shots. He was unable to give the authorities a comprehensive story of the tragedy.

"I saw the man when he came out of the woods," he told R. E. Torrogrossa, chief deputy sheriff of the Parish of St. Charles. "He wore a red handkerchief over his face and carried a gun. When he started shooting I ran home and told my mother that they had killed my pa."

The crime was committed with fiendish precision, and bears all the elements of a deed of the vendetta. The Barraccas, Joseph and Giovanni, brothers, of Sarpy, and John Barracca, of Sellers, were marked for death. The three men, in company with Ciro Cosimano, a brother-in-law, were shot down in the home of Pietro Giacoma, a wealthy Italian wine merchant, on the morning of June 17, 1908. The Giacoma family had been harassed with letters demanding money, and the Barraccas were suspected. A feast was prepared by the Giacomas, and the Barraccas and their allies were invited to come and talk over the terms. While the men dozed over their wine glasses, the Giacomas opened fire, and Joseph, Giovanni and John, father, son and uncle, fell with bullets through their hearts. Ciro Cosimano died afterwards in the Charity Hospital.

The feud was renewed on the night of Sept. 10, 1909. A band of men drove past the Giacoma house and fired upon what appeared to them to be figures seated in rocking chairs. After the fusillade, the men drove away. The chairs were literally torn to pieces. Fortunately, the occupants had gone into the house but a few minutes previous. Joseph and Tony Barracca, brothers, sons of Giovanni Barracca, slain by the Giacomas, were arrested for the assault. They were tried last March and

### ACQUITTED BY A JURY

in Section A, of the Criminal District Court, before Judge Baker.

Last March, in the dead of a night, Tony Moreci, said to have been associated with the Giacoma family, was fired upon from ambush at the foot of Poydras Street. A bullet plowed its way into his skull. He lingered in the hospital many days, and after a delicate surgical operation he recovered. The hand of the Barraccas appeared in the investigations which were made of the shooting, but they were never arrested. Moreci, said to be one of the strong men of the Giacoma clan, swore that it was the Barraccas who attempted his life.

The Barraccas lived in a state of mortal terror, fearing that each moment would bring them to the awful doom which was sworn against them. After his trial Tony returned to his home at Sarpy, close to the Good Hope plantation. He went to his field each morning at the break of day with a gun slung across his shoulder. He was not molested. He left his little shack yesterday morning earlier than usual. It was still dark when he trudged his way to the farthest end of his field, close to the thick woods and swamp land on the other side of the railroad tracks. He did not carry his gun with him. He worked until long after daybreak, and then went to another part of the field, near the road, where he met his son Joe, who carried breakfast. After the meal father and son started to work with the plows.

The two had separated when a shot was fired from the thicket. At the first shot Barracca fell across his plow, and at the second the mule started up the road, throwing the body from its resting place to the ground. A third shot was fired. At the third shot the boy turned. He saw a man wearing a red handkerchief over his eyes fire a fourth shot. The boy dropped his hoe and fled. He alarmed the farmers living on adjacent farms, but the news struck terror in their hearts, and they hesitated before going to the side of the dead man. Manager B. J. Milleret and George St. Martin, of the Godechaux plantation, rode out to the spot, and found the body lying in the road. The arms were folded across the breast, and on a piece of paper at its side were the brains of the murdered Italian.

### A BLOOD-COVERED AX

told its silent, horrible story of the manner in which the skull was cleaved open. A hurry call went to Hahnville brought Dr. Lammon, the parish coroner, who made an examination of the wounds. He found that three were sufficient to cause death. One bullet entered the right side just below the nipple, and passed through the body; another entered the back just below the right shoulderblade, and a third grazed the right side of the neck. The skull was split open with the ax and the brains cut out and placed on a piece of paper near the body. The parish authorities are of the opinion that the brains were removed by the murderer to convey his hatred to the relatives and friends of the victim.

The movements of the assassin were easily traced by the footprints in the freshly-plowed earth, and showed that he undoubtedly remained in hiding throughout the night, awaiting his victim at the first break of day. A short distance from the spot where Barracca had been at work Tuesday evening the authorities found a number of footprints, which gave rise to the belief that the assassin awaited his victim

there, expecting him to return to the place and finish his planting. From this spot the prints were traced across the railroad tracks, and were lost in the thicket. The assassin evidently made his way through the heavy growth to the spot where he saw his victim starting his work this morning.

The bullets were fired at close range, and appear to have been made by a Winchester rifle of heavy bore. The bullet which passed through the breast entered from the rear, and was probably

### FIRE AT TEN YARDS

distance. The bullet in the shoulder appears to be of smaller bore, and more resembled a pistol ball. The detection of two different and distinct footprints led the authorities to believe that Barracca was attacked by two men.

A mysterious phase of the tragedy is the fact that Joseph Barracca, a cousin of the murdered man, was at work a short distance from where his relative was shot down. He admitted to Deputy Torrogrossa that he heard the shots, but did not see anyone running away. He explained that he was more than an acre away from Tony when the shots were fired. Joseph Barracca was first reported as dead when the news reached Hahnville.

The boy, Joe, told conflicting stories. He first told the officers that he did not see anyone run away. He heard the shots, he said, and ran when he saw the mule running up the road with the plow. He said that it was too foggy for him to see any distance ahead. He afterwards told Peter Rodow, an Italian working in the Good Hope Plantation, that he was cutting weeds with an ax about twenty feet from where his father was at work. He declared that he saw a man shoot three times, and noticed that he wore a handkerchief over his eyes. The boy told the Picayune correspondent that he saw the man running away towards the railroad and he wore a

### RED HANDKERCHIEF OVER HIS EYES.

"It was too dark for me to see what he looked like," he said. "I started to run just as soon as the shooting was over. I heard my papa scream, and I ran faster. I am sure that I saw the man running away just as soon as the shooting stopped."

The tragedy adds another bloody chapter to the neighborhood. Within the past five years three men have met swift and violent death on the same farm, almost in the same spot. The last victim was an Italian named Montre, who was slain by an Italian named Campisciano, said to be a brother of Ignazio Campisciano, who is serving a life term in the Penitentiary for the murder of the Lamana child. The previous tragedy was the slaying of an aged uncle of the Barraccas by a farm hand during a quarrel.

The name Barracca has a conspicuous place in the history of crime of St. Charles Parish. The dead man figured several years ago in the theft of a horse and buggy belonging to Constantine Weaver, of the Fifth Ward. He was also suspected of having a hand in the kidnapping of little Walter Lamana, whose mutilated body was found in a swamp near St. Rose. He was arrested, but was never charged.

The Barraccas came to this country from Sicily more than fifteen years ago. The murdered man is survived by a wife and eleven children. His eldest child is a girl of 14. His youngest is a son of 8 months. He also leaves a mother, several aunts and numerous cousins, all living in the vicinity of Sarpy. Barracca owned about thirty acres, some planted in cane and some in garden crops.

The body will be interred in the burial ground at Rest.

JAMES W. MEADE.