

## Today in Columbus History:

On January 27, 1875, a lengthy article of several columns appeared in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun* entitled "B. F. Bagley," that told how Benjamin Franklin Bagley had made bail in the court of Barnard Hill in Macon, much to the dismay of many in Columbus. Judge Johnson and three justices of the peace ordered Bagley held without bail after his preliminary trial the month before. Bagley's attorney applied to Judge Hill for bail under a writ of habeas corpus. Several men (including Bagley's father) posted the bail after his trial in Macon.

This was the continuation of a story first reported in the *Columbus Sunday Enquirer* exactly one month earlier, on December 27, 1874. That article, entitled "Pistols," told of the shoot-out on the streets of Columbus on the day before. The confrontation resulted in the death of M. L. Bagley, brother of B.F. Bagley and the serious wounding Marshal Matthew Murphy at the hands of the dead man. Murphy died the next day.

The problem started at the store of Watt and Walker, under the Rankin House on Broad. Among the many witness providing affidavits as to the events of that day were Charles Watt, W. J. Watt, and J.A. Walker. Benjamin Franklin Bagley and his brother Melford Lafayette Bagley visited the store while armed and intoxicated. Charles Watt briefly disarmed B. F. Bagley but returned the weapon when they promised to go home. Marshal Matthew W. Murphy wanted them out of town and asked policemen McEachern and Duncan for assistance in sending them on their way. The Bagley's dislike of the police dated back to the previous summer when Melford Bagley spent time in the guardhouse after a clubbing from officer Duncan.

The Bagley brothers mounted their horses and started down Crawford Street, yelling, and cursing as they went. Murphy and policemen followed on foot to assure they kept going. B. F. Bagley made good progress while his brother lagged behind. Past the Springer, Murphy grabbed the bridle of M. L. Bagley's horse. Bagley drew a gun and McEachern grabbed Bagley's wrist while Murphy disarmed him. Bagley pulled another pistol and shot Murphy. Murphy got at least one shot off while Bagley rode away. McEachern fired on him, as well. Bagley took two bullets in his back and fell from his horse a short distance away. B. F. Bagley shot off a couple of rounds before he was captured as he rode up Jackson Street.

Twenty-five-year-old Benjamin and twenty-four-year-old Melford were the sons of William Bagley a wealthy planter in Chattahoochee County. The *Sunday Enquirer* described the Bagleys as "boasting bullies, local terrors and habitual pistol toters" that are "powerful ugly fellers to rile." Murphy was thirty-one years old, married, with two children who served Columbus for eight years prior to this confrontation.

He was born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. The *Sunday Enquirer* described him as, "universally esteemed as an honorable and upright citizen."

The incident helped give Columbus a "wild west" reputation and led one recent author to claim, "endemic violence has left a bloody trail through Columbus history." However, that author incorrectly states that the accused was hung. On the contrary, B. F. Bagley lived another fifty years and served Chattahoochee County as Tax Receiver, Sheriff and Representative in the Georgia House of Representatives.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

*Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.*

**B. F. BAGLEY.**

**Released on a Bond of \$5,000—Action of Judge Barnard Hill of Macon—The New Evidence Ad-duced—The Bondsmen—The Hearing in Macon.**

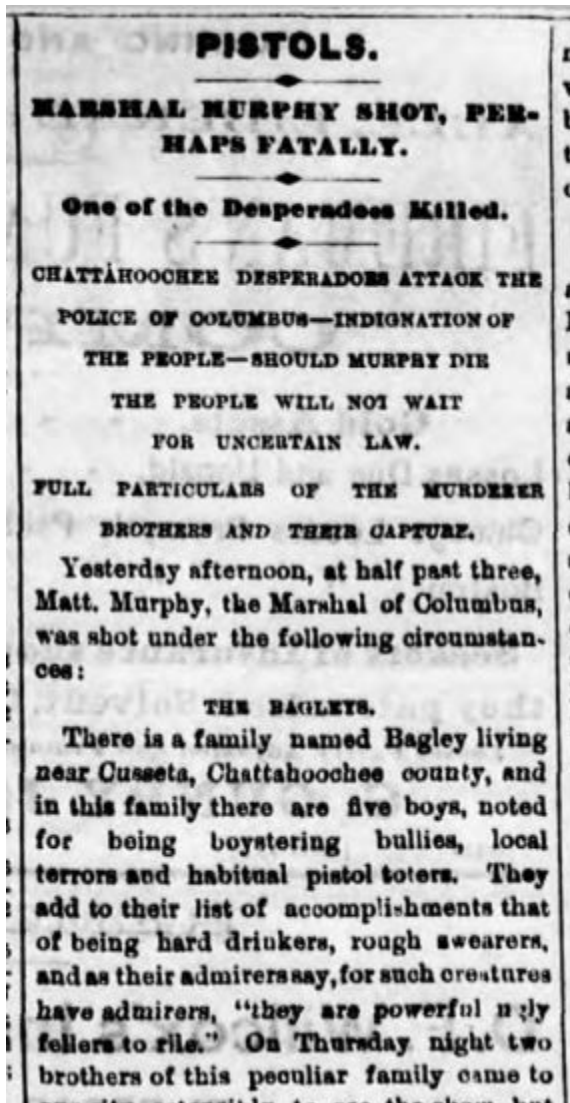
Many of our readers have asked us upon what new evidence was it that Judge Barnard Hill admitted B. F. Bagley to bail, when Judge Johnson and three Justices of the Peace of Muscogee county refused to do so.

**THE FACTS.**

Marshal M. W. Murphy, of Columbus, was killed on the 26th of last December while doing his duty as an officer of the city, by L. Bagley, of Chattahoochee county, who was himself killed by the Marshal or some one else. B. F. Bagley, a brother of the deceased, was accused of being an accessory to the murder. Judge Johnson and three Justices of the Peace, after a full hearing, committed him to jail for murder, without bail. Judge Johnson went to Washington about a week ago. During his absence counsel for the defence applied to Judge B. Hill under a writ of *habeas corpus* for bail. The writ was granted and the case heard in Macon on Monday.

**THE RESULT**

Article on the "B. F. Bagley" from the *Daily Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, January 27, 1875, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Article on the shooting of Marshal Matt Murphy from the *Columbus Sunday Enquirer* December 27, 1874, note the description of the "boastering bullies, local terrors and habitual pistol toters" that are "powerful ugly fellers to rile," <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Picture of Benjamin Franklin Bagley from FindAGrave.com

W. J. WATT.

J. A. WALKER.

C. H. WATT.

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Corner under Rankin House,

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Bacon Shoulders,	Bulk Shoulders,
Bulk Hams,	Bacon Hams,
Lard in Tierces,	Lard in Buckets & Kegs.

FLOUR of all Grades, including the Celebrated SILVER LAKE BRAND, the Best in the World.

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Osnaburgs, Sheetings, Shirtings, Checks, Stripes, Yarns and Pants Goods

ALSO A WELL-SELECTED STOCK OF

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Our Stock of SUGAR includes every grade and price, and our lot of SYRUPS cannot be surpassed in the city. It includes all grades of NEW ORLEANS in barrels and half barrels; also, several hundred barrels of choice Florida Syrup, which is superior to anything in the market, and much cheaper in price. It has a delightful flavor, and rich, clear color, and selected expressly for our trade. Cash customers can always save money by giving us a trial before purchasing elsewhere.

Jan 19 1875

WATT & WALKER.

Ad for Watt and Walker from the Columbus Daily Enquirer, January 27, 1875, note the well-selected stock of whiskies from \$1 - \$5 per gallon, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.