

Monday April 17. 1882 @ 19th day of term

Court met pursuant to adjournment.

Present; Hon. W<sup>m</sup> S. Sherman Judge  
Sam D. Cowan Clerk  
R. H. Thomas Sheriff @  
O. M. Spencer Pres. Atty.

Comes now the Grand Jury @ return into open Court here 11 indictments each marked "a true bill" @ "Isaac J. Hasew foreman."

State of Missouri

Murder 1st degree.

Charles Ford @ Robert Ford, Comes now the Prosecuting Attorney @ dismisses suit as to the second count of the indictment. Comes now again the Prosecuting Attorney and the defendants Charles Ford @ Robert Ford being in open Court are each formally arraigned @ each enter a plea of guilty of murder in the first degree by the killing of one Jesse W. James as charged in the indictment against them @ being now asked by the Court if they had any legal cause to show why judgment should not be pronounced against them according to law, @ still failing to show such cause, it is therefore sentenced, ordered @ adjudged by the Court that the said defendants Charles Ford @ Robert Ford having pleaded guilty as aforesaid, be, on the 19th day of May A.D. 1882 between the hour of 12 M @ 2 o'clock P. M. by the Sheriff of Buchanan County Missouri, or some of his deputies at or near the City of St. Joseph Missouri, hanged by the neck until he is dead. And it is further ordered by the Court that the said defendants be now remanded to the County Jail of the County aforesaid ~~and~~ there be securely kept @ treated in the manner directed by law until the said day of their execution.

Ordered that Court adjourn until 9 1/2 o'clock tomorrow morning  
Judge

## THE DEMISE OF JESSE JAMES

By Harold Slater

Buchanan County courtrooms are in history and high drama. Perhaps the most famous incident was the sentencing of the Ford Brothers for the killing of Jesse James. The killing itself attracted national attention and has inspired many books and movies since.

This is an authentic reproduction of the historic court document of the event. On April 17, 1882, just 14 days after the killing of Jesse James, the Ford brothers were indicted, pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to "hang by the neck until dead" for shooting Jesse in the head while his back was turned.

The sentencing did not disturb the tough Ford brothers. They had the word of Missouri governor Thomas J. Crittenden that they would be pardoned. They had also been promised a \$10,000 reward.

News accounts of the sentencing reported that Bob Ford smiled and indicated a laughing contempt for a "trivial circumstance of this nature." Charles Ford, one reporter wrote, "entertained a fuller appreciation for the gravity of the situation."

Both Fords were pardoned the next day and released from jail with only a part of the \$10,000 reward that had been promised for Jesse James dead or alive.

The Ford brothers from the time of their arrest until the day they were freed from jail were treated like celebrities. Protected by their promised pardon, they talked freely about their crimes.

Charles Ford even volunteered that a gold watch found in Jesse's home was the one that he, Charles, had stolen from the Governor of Arizona in 1875.

The Fords went west from here and lived lives of debauchery with their money and ill fame. Charles committed suicide and Bob was fatally shot in a Colorado dance hall.

