

SPRINGERVILLE

**NEWS NOTES FROM THE GREAT AGRICULTURAL AND
GRAZING SECTION OF THE COUNTY**

Detailed Statements of the Killing of Ike Clanton,
By Detective Brighton, and the breaking up of a
Well Known Gang of Desperadoes.

Correspondence to the *Critic*.

The season here is very dry, but the crops on the Colorado River look promising. The grass is short on the extensive mesas and plains north, and east of Springerville, but in the mountains the grass is good. The crop of calves is as large, if not larger, than ever was known in this section and the cattle are looking well. The stockmen are today branding and have a more satisfactory air about them than do the farmers.

Tony Long and P.H.Snow are building good substantial adobe shops, which will be completed in a few days. They will then hang out their sign as "Wheelwrights and Blacksmiths." They are well known in this section as square men and first class mechanics. George E. Kenther the county surveyor was in town this week, assisting in laying out a new road south-east, from Springerville to Luna Valley, via the Ranch of A.L.Morrison and Sons.

Springerville which had for years bore an unenviable reputation for lawlessness and ruffianism, is now the most orderly and quiet place in Arizona. We commenced a purging process just before the first of January, and now the worst of the desperado and rustler element, who infested the south-eastern border between Arizona and New Mexico, have either changed their post-office address, been killed, or are in irons awaiting the action of the August term of Court.

It will perhaps not be uninteresting to give the readers of the *Critic*, the particulars of the tragic and swift death of Ike Clanton, as related by Detective Brighton, who killed him.

At the last term of the district court, for Apache County, the grand jury found divers and sundry indictments, and it was generally understood that the Clanton's and several of their associates had drawn praises in the shape of "true bills," for irregularities such as horse and cattle stealing, murder, arson and most all the rest of the crimes in the long, dark catalogue of felony. The finding of the indictments was brought about mainly through the clever work of Detective Brighton, and here let a note be made that to Detective Brighton, more than to any other man, is due the

credit of breaking up one of the most desperate, daring and smartest gang of outlaws that ever preyed upon any community.

I make this divergence in my story in justice to Detective Brighton, and in order that it may be a matter of record as to how these indictments were found, against a gang of outlaws, who had become possessed with a conviction that there was neither law, officers, or arbiters of the law, whom they were compelled to obey or respect.

But, to return to my story: The killing of poor, deluded, witty, smart and most unscrupulous Ike Clanton. After the adjournment of the last term of the district court in this county our county officials seconded by the Apache county stock association, and every citizen of the county interested in its welfare, set about hunting down these offenders.

The first important blow struck was the very clever apprehension and lodging in jail of an older brother of Ike Clanton, who is now awaiting trial, under several indictments, and about the 14th of May, Detective Brighton, accompanied by an officer of the Apache County Cattle Association, started on a "still hunt" after Ike Clanton, a man away above mediocrity in point of native intelligence, and who, if he had had an education and had chosen to follow an honorable course of livelihood, would have been a leader among the honorable citizens of the territory. As it was, he was a leader of that class upon whose head a price is set, and who are hunted like wild animals and savages; and when you bear in mind that Ike Clanton was a leader with this sort of following, it required a little bit of nerve for two men to go on the hunt of such game, in their wild mountain retreat, where one or two desperate and determined men would be more than a match for ten men should they be taken unaware.

But the good dame, Fortune, seemed to be on the side of Detective Brighton and his companion. They left here on the 14th of last month and went first to the camp of the Horton brothers, on Black River, there they struck the trail of a band of horses which had been stolen from old man Wahl and a mule which had been taken from the Horton's. One of the Horton brothers, who was acquainted with the mountains, accompanied Detective Brighton and the special deputy sheriff who accompanied him.

They trailed the horses and mule, over the roughest country imaginable, direct to the Clanton rendezvous, and when they had got within a mile of the camp, they discovered a drag that had been used to destroy the trail. They then followed the drag which took them on into camp, but found it deserted and the trail of the stolen stock leading south. On their way they passed an intrenched ramp, which consisted of a large log on one side, with a semi-circle of rocks built up to it. Within this intrenchment four or five men could make down their beds, and it served as a warning to the officers that they they must use every precaution as the game they were after were on their guard, and that they meant to fight.

Leaving the Clanton camp the officers went to Solomonville, Graham County, and had a consultation with Sheriff Crawford, who treated them very courteously and extended them every facility within his power. After resting themselves for a couple of days Brighton struck out for the railroad to see what information he could get in regard to the parties he

was after, and Miller went to Fort Thomas on the same errand.

After several days hard riding and diligent search, they were satisfied that the men they were after had not gone south and by agreement they met again at Solomonville and retraced their steps back into the mountains, arriving on the evening of the 31st of May, at Jim Wilson's Ranch, on Eagle Creek, where they remained for the night.

The next morning, while they were at breakfast, Ike Clanton came riding up to the door. Mr. Brighton got up from the table, walked to the door, and was familiarly saluted by him. Just at this time, Mr. Miller stepped to the door, to be ready to render any assistance needed, and when Ike saw him he wheeled his horse and attempted to get under cover of the thick cover which grows close to Wilson's home, at the same time pulling his Winchester from its scabbard. Both Brighton and Miller ordered him to halt but instead of doing so, when about twenty yards distant where the trail took a turn to the left, he threw his rifle over his left arm attempting to fire; at this instance Detective Brighton fired, the ball entering under the left arm and passing directly through the heart and out under the right arm. Ike reeled in his saddle and fell on the right side of his horse, his rifle falling on the left.

Before the fall, Brighton fired a second shot which passed through the cantle of the saddle and grazed Ike's right leg. When Brighton and Miller walked up to where Ike lay they found he was dead. Mr. Wilson, at whose ranch their tragedy occurred, notified the nearest neighbors and four men came over and identified the deceased and assisted in giving him as decent a burial as circumstances would admit.

Thus ended the wild career of poor deluded, misguided Ike Clanton. He "sowed to the wind and has harvested the whirlwind", and his harvest is gathered into a narrow house, six feet by two, and the panther, wolf and bear growl a fitting requiem over his grave. His end was typical of his life --- swift, rough and the hardest that could be the fate of any mortal man. Let us hope it is for the best.