
Must Defend Hop Pickers

[events of Aug. 3, 1913]

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Sacramento, Cal., August 15 [1913].

Two workers and two of the opposing class were killed at Wheatland, Cal., August 3. Nine workers are held in jail to answer the charge of murder. All parasites are freed by the finding of the coroner's jury.

These are the facts: Durst Brothers, millionaire hop ranch owners, prior to August 3 had sent out advertisements inviting all who wished to enjoy a picnic and pick their hops to assemble at their camp, described as a little heaven on earth. When 2300 workers, men and women and children, assembled, they found on the place only six single toilets. These were promptly turned over to the women, who every morning stood 20 and 30 at each little house waiting their turn, before the gaze of all the camp. The heat was often more than 116 degrees, yet Durst Brothers had made no provision for water. They had, however, employed people to sell acetic acid lemonade to the workers at five cents per glass. Water carts for the care of the crop often passed through the field, but no worker was permitted to fill a bottle at these carts. Durst Brothers needed the nickels.

Due to IWW agitation, demands were made for a change of these conditions and a flat rate of \$1.25 per hundred pounds of hops picked. Durst Brothers made dilatory promises of remedy of the conditions "as soon as possible," but refused a raise of wages. While the workers were considering the firm's ultimatum Durst Bros. telephoned the sheriffs. They came, the sheriffs, nine deputies, and the district attorney, E.T. Manwell. All were armed. Without a moment's notice they began firing. A woman rushed and seized the sheriff and tripped him to the ground. Women and children elsewhere were in the wildest panic, trampling each other in their efforts to escape the murderous sheriff's posse. In the tumult an unidentified Puerto Rican seized the sheriff's gun. With it he killed the district attorney and a deputy named Reardon and stopped their firing on the crowd. This Puerto Rican was killed in his tracks by Deputy Sheriff Dakin with a sawed-off shotgun. Then all the deputies fled, leaving their sheriff in the hands of the strikers, who nursed his wounds and carried him from the ranch to the town of Wheatland. During the melee either Ralph Durst or Dakin shot the

arm off one of their own men with a charge of buckshot. Several other workers were wounded, among them women and children. The state militia was called out. Nine workers were then arrested and held under a charge of murder. None of them is known to be an IWW card man, but they must be defended.

Local 71, Sacramento, has undertaken to handle the defense. It is now estimated that it will cost about \$1,500. We want the help of all. If every local will send \$10 or \$15 we will have enough. There will be hundreds of witnesses who will need a jungle camp to live in. The authorities know absolutely nothing about the facts, which will make it all the worse as the sheriff's posse which fled will have to resort to their usual tactics in such a case. The only way to win is to overwhelm them with bona fide witnesses. Help us with the money: we will do the rest.

Send all funds to Andy Barber, Secretary, 119 Third St., Sacramento, Cal.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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