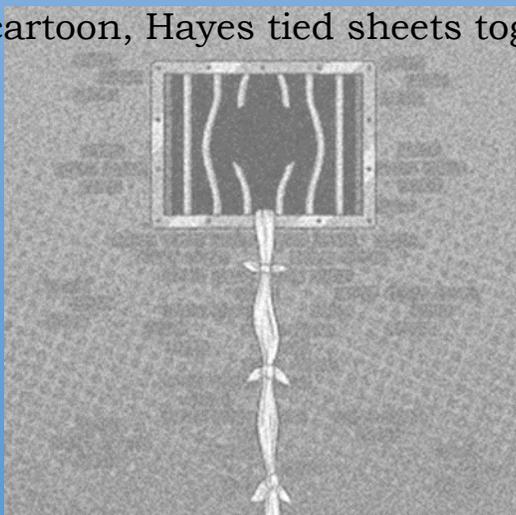


## Jailer Locked in Jail

On Saturday October 19, 1918, two gentlemen, Roy Keith and Ruffin Merrick, attended a late night poker game. As the drinks were passed around, Keith and Merrick were racking up the winnings. As the night came to an end, Keith and Merrick headed back to the “shanty” they lived in that was located at the Williams & McKeathern lumber plant. They were followed by the loser of the poker game, robbed and murdered as they slept. The shanty was set on fire and both bodies were significantly burned. Coroner A. E. Burton of Burgaw conducted the investigation into the murder and cause of death of Keith and Merrick.

A witness, Andrew Henry, testified before the coroner’s jury and the jury came back with the verdict that Keith and Merrick had been murdered by an “iron cuppler” at the hands of Motion Hayes. Hayes was arrested and placed in jail without bail to await his trial to be held in November. Hayes had previously been found guilty of breaking into a store in Willard, but did not receive his sentence for being charged with double murder.

On the morning of Wednesday November 20, 1918, the jailer delivered Motion Hayes breakfast and locked him in the cage on the second story of the Burgaw jail. Hayes had not been checked on the remainder of the day, but around 8pm, Hayes called down to the jailer requesting a soda because he was feeling colicky. The jailer informed the inmate that he did not have a soda but would send for the doctor if needed. Hayes declined the doctor stating he was “not very bad off”. The following morning, the jailer found the cell empty and cage locked. It was discovered that Hayes had escaped by digging a hole in the brick wall with a short piece of iron under a window. Just like a scene from a cartoon, Hayes tied sheets together and lowered himself to the ground.



## *Pender Jailer in the Cell; Prisoner Gone With Keys*

It was a few months before Motion Hayes was recaptured and taken back to the Burgaw jail to await his trial. He was found and arrested in Sampson County and transported back to the Burgaw jail. But true to his name, Motion Hayes would not remain in the jail for very long. He escaped again on Saturday March 15, 1919. Not by digging a hole this time. He simply walked out.

The jailer, E. R. Maulpass, entered the corridor of cells to remove a bucket and believed that Hayes was in his cell. Hayes, who was in fact in the corridor, slipped past the jailer, through the outer door and turned around to close and lock the door leaving the jailer locked inside. He flashed a grin at the jailer and walked out of the Burgaw jail carrying the keys with him.

The sheriff called for the bloodhounds to pursue Hayes. Meanwhile, the jailer remained locked up for some time to give deputies a chance to retrieve the keys because the sheriff did not want to break down the bars to release him. A carpenter was eventually called out to saw out the lock of the heavy outer door.

The grand jury could never find enough evidence to charge Motion Hayes with the murder of Roy Keith and Ruffin Merrick. It was said that it was a good thing Hayes took off and there was hope that he was far away from Pender County as to not be recaptured. He was having an "undesirable effect on others" who were held in jail.

### **PRISONER LOCKS UP JAILER**

**Then Makes Escape, Carrying Key  
With Him—Bloodhounds  
in Pursuit**

## *Pender Jailer in the Cell; Prisoner Gone With Keys*

Wilmington, Mar. 15.—A prisoner today escaped from his cell in the Pender County jail at Burgaw, locked the jailer in and fled with the keys. The sheriff telephoned here for bloodhounds to pursue the fugitive and recover the keys in order to release the jailer, who remains incarcerated because the sheriff does not want to saw away the steel bars.