

# The Blue Ridge

## Murder

THE  
FINALE

Suspect #1: William McGlen

Suspect #2: John Allen

Suspect #3: James Musgrave

Suspect #4: Fred J. Absolon

Suspect #5: Mrs. J. H. Allison

William McGlen and John Allen are both fake names assigned to real people who were arrested in the aftermath of the murder and robbery. The two men who had been found sleeping in the woods were never named in the newspaper.

They claimed that they had been target shooting in the woods, and that was why they were in the woods with guns. They were cleared of all wrong doing and released.

James Musgrave is a fake name for a fake person. There was never another person at the boarding house that was suspected of the murder or the robbery.

On Saturday February 19, 1921, after 36 hours of interrogation, Fred Absolon confessed to the crime and the murder. He claimed that Mrs. J. H. Allison had nothing to do with the crime beyond helping him to dispose of his bloody clothing. Both individuals are real people and these are their actual names.

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## THE EPILOGUE

Fred Absolon was convicted of the killing and sentenced to life in prison, but he died in 1922 after an explosion in the machine shop in the jail. Mrs. J. H. Allison attended the funeral, and the other prisoners collected enough money to buy him a nice memorial stone.

This was the first case in Fort Bend County to have been solved (and tried) based on fingerprints. Mr. George Lacey was the fingerprint expert for the trial and spent as much time on the stand explaining what a fingerprint was as he spent explaining that the prints belonged to Absolon. After the trial, Kirby's widow ended up falling in love and marrying Lacey. After Lacey's death, many years later, his wife continued his work with fingerprints.

This is a real case, and most of the research done was through newspapers that had been published at the time. Frank Heard's collection of research that is on loan to the Fort Bend Museum was also a treasure trove of information.