

Burial Site of Captain Eli McCarty
Daviess County
14.1993.1

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Marker Text

Burial Site of Captain Eli McCarty. During the Civil War, on October 3, 1864, Daviess County draft officer Eli McCarty was murdered by antiwar draft protestors. Five men were convicted of his murder. Reportedly, several other men involved fled west.

Report

This marker was under review because no sources were on file at the IHB and sources were not easily available for all the information. However, more in-depth research has confirmed the accuracy of this marker.

The *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, May 20 and 30, 1865, contains accounts of the Circuit Court proceedings. W. H. Terrell's 1869 *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* gives a brief account of the incident and attributes the murder to the Sons of Liberty. However, G. R. Tredway's 1973 *Democratic Opposition to the Lincoln Administration in Indiana* notes that Terrell made a "totally unsupported claim" that the Sons of Liberty were behind the murder.

McCarty's headstone states that he was murdered "by eight members of the Peace Democrat organization." However, IHB suggested the change to "antiwar draft protestors" since no source substantiated the Peace Democrat description. It is clear from the newspaper accounts of the trial that the military draft was the murder motive. The testimony of John McAvoy, printed in the *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, May 30, 1865, provides the following, "These men gave as a reason for killing McCarty that, if he was killed they would not then be drafted into the abolition army. There was no other reason for killing him."

Several secondary and primary sources describe the men involved in the murder. John McAvoy pled guilty, and a jury convicted the other four: George Y. Scott, George W. Hedrick, William Whiteside[s], and Dan Scales. An 1886 *History of Knox and*

Daviess Counties Indiana reads, "The Slicer boys and young Madden, who were equally guilty, managed to entirely escape [and] went West." An October 10, 1864 *Indiana Daily Journal* article as well as McAvoy's testimony in the *Indianapolis Daily Journal* on May 30, 1865 confirm that others were involved who were not prosecuted. It is difficult to prove that other men involved in the murder fled west. We do know from McAvoy's testimony that he fled west before being apprehended in St. Joseph, Missouri.

One of the non-prosecuted men was Thornton A. Slicer, Jr. who was listed as T. A. Slicer, Jr. in the 1860 census. Interestingly, a T. A. Slicer of the same age and birthplace does appear in the 1870 and 1880 censuses for California and Missouri.

McCarty was buried at Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery, south of Washington, Indiana and his headstone can be viewed at

http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~indiana42nd/Eli_Mccarty_Bio.htm.