

*Make file
"lawlessness of
late 1800s"*

The traditionally hot temper of the Rions, as noted particularly in the case of Kitt McMaster's grandfather James H. Rion, may have been another reason the Thomas K. Elliotts objected to their daughter Nell's marrying him.

At General Sessions Court held at Fairfield Courthouse on the first Monday after the fourth Monday of March in 1858, a Solicitor Melton charged James H. Rion with murder in the death of John A. Player. The charge said that "James H. Rion, late of the District and state aforesaid, attorney at law not having the fear of God before his eyes but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil on the 5th day of November 1857 with force and arms at the Fairfield Courthouse in and upon John A. Player in the peace of God did make an assault (with) a certain pistol of the value of one dollar, then and there charged it with gunpowder and one leaden bullet, held it in his right hand and did charge and shoot it off." The charge further stated that Rion inflicted upon the left breast of John A. Player, who instantly died "one mortal wound of the depth of four inches and the breadth of half an inch."

The indictment continued "and so th jurors aforesaid (none were listed but rather there was a blank space in the document where the names could have been entered) upon the call aforesaid, do say James H. Rion did feloniously and wilfully kill John A. Player against the peace of the state."

The defense lawyers listed were Rutland and Boyleston. This is the only document for the case in the file at the S

C. Archives, officials saying the other papers had apparently been removed.

There is no record of the case at the Fairfield County Courthouse.

The family legend is that Player made an insulting remark about Rion's wife and refused to retract it or apologize for it. I had understood from Daddy that that the man his grandfather killed was a stranger. But James Gabel, a descendant of James H. Rion has written a paper delivered to a group in Iowa that says Player and Rion were friends and former classmates and that Player had moved to Winnsboro because of his friendship with Rion. (Perhaps the News & Herald or The State carried accounts of the trial.)