

## **Starke County No. 52 - Shooting**

Sometimes in looking up history of Starke County, I find information about my own family.

### **Knox - 1927 -----**

Rum crazed Convict Shoots Knox Farmer-----Elmer Shilling, 39, a Knox farmer, lies seriously wounded in the Holy Family Hospital at LaPorte, a victim of a drunken prisoner's wrath. He is fighting for his life with a shotgun wound the size of a man's fist in his right side, just above the hip, and four inches of muscle torn from his right arm.

Meade Barr, age 42, drink crazed, paroled convict was found sleeping in a drunken stupor on the bank of the Yellow River. He was placed under guard and returned to the State Prison. An exchange of words lead to the shooting when Shilling warned Barr to stop drinking, as this violated the terms of his parole and he would have to go back to prison. The argument started as Barr was lying in bed. Shilling, it is said, threatened to call John Moorman, a State Prison Trustee, who lives in Knox.

Yes, Elmer Shilling was my uncle who farmed by the Yellow River on 500 east. (Photo attached) More details about the shooting were told to me by Gordon Byer when we interviewed him a few years ago. He said that quite often parolees were allowed to be farm hands and live with the farm family in a spare bedroom, but with tight restrictions on how to behave. Example - no alcohol.

This was the time of the Horse Thief Detective Association, a national organization that had a local organization in Starke County. It was a Sheriff-sanctioned vigilante group that helped the Sheriff to keep law and order in the county.

According to Gordon, after shooting my uncle, Barr must have regretted his actions. He told Elmer that he would call the doctor, if Elmer would promise to tell the doctor that it was an accident. Elmer agreed. However, when the doctor came and took Elmer to his office, Elmer related the true story. The Sheriff was called and the Horse Thief Detective Association members went to work. They found Barr hiding along the Yellow River bank. Before the Sheriff arrived to take Meade Barr into custody, the Association members had "worked on" him considerably, so the doctor had another patient.

Elmer survived.

**Jim Shilling**  
**Starke County Historical Society**

<http://www.starkehistory.com>

<http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/>

