

Murder at Lake Surprise

By Regina McElwain

Lee College

The year 1900 was by far one of the most catastrophic in history for citizens in the southeastern part of Texas. Having endured the most horrific hurricane and the subsequent the loss of so many family members, friends, and neighbors, people were on high alert for anything that might further shake the foundations of their security. On November 15, 1900, an article in *The Galveston Daily News* told of the mysterious disappearance of Chambers County Sheriff John Lighter Frost, who was last seen delivering sequestration papers to trespassers on Colonel William L. Moody's hunting preserve at Lake Surprise in Chambers County. The sheriff's horse was found wandering through the prairie with the reigns cut and blood covering the saddle, but the body of the missing sheriff was not found. The loss of the popular sheriff induced a tidal wave of fear and prejudice that swept through Chambers, Galveston, and Harris Counties. Three men were charged with murder and stood trial in both Harris and Montgomery Counties; however, without a body it was impossible to convict them of the crime. Frost's disappearance left many fearful and others very puzzled. Although the mystery surrounding his disappearance was never solved, the story of the missing sheriff continues to captivate Chambers County residents.

John Lighter Frost was born on January 14, 1862 in Jessamine County, Kentucky, to parents, Samuel C. Frost and Nancy Ann Merriman Frost. He was the only

child of Mr. and Mrs. Frost, as their first child, Charles Porter Frost, died on July 14, 1851, two months shy of his first birthday. The Frost family left Jessamine County when John was a child and moved to Denton County, Texas, and finally settled in Chambers County circa 1878.¹ Frost spent his youth in the area of Old Fort Anahuac, where he was considered a well-mannered child. *The Age* in Wallisville reported that “the latch-string of every house was out to this bright, courteous laughing boy.”² Frost began his career as county surveyor and, having gained popularity and a good reputation, was elected sheriff and tax collector for Chambers County on November 3, 1896 and again in 1898. Re-elected again on November 8, 1900, he held his third term for two days before mysteriously disappearing on November 10, 1900. In 1980 *The Age* observed of Frost that “he was identified with every progressive movement in the country. A trustworthy, steadfast and faithful friend; forgiving and lenient toward his enemies but uncompromising in the discharge of his duties.”³ At the time of his disappearance, Frost was thirty-eight years old, owned a significant amount of property, and had never married. The events leading up to his disappearance were puzzling and inconclusive, as there were several accounts of the story. Some believed the sheriff was murdered, and others wondered if he had simply vanished of his own accord. Whatever the case may have been, the sheriff was never seen again. The story began over a dispute concerning Colonel Moody’s hunting preserve at Lake Surprise in Chambers County.

Claiming he intended to farm rice, Colonel Moody, a wealthy Galveston businessman, acquired the hunting preserve at Lake Surprise in 1892 from Governor James Steven Hogg. According to Forest McNair, a professional duck hunter and previous caretaker of the property, Colonel Moody “bought a twenty-five cent bag of rice

and threw it in the lake. That was how he got title to it for agricultural purposes.”⁴ Lake Surprise, situated on the north side of East Bay, a section of Galveston Bay, was approximately six miles inland from Smith’s Point. The lake measured about one mile wide and one-and-a-half miles long. Due to the plentiful growth of wild celery, the lake was a popular feeding area for wild ducks prior to the 1900 storm. Thousands of ducks, from canvasbacks to redheads, wintered in the area. The hunting preserve was often used by the colonel to entertain guests such as William Jennings Bryan, who spent time there hunting and fishing.

Colonel Moody hired William Kennedy and his family as caretakers of his preserve on Lake Surprise, where they were allowed to live, hunt wild ducks, and sell them for profit. The Kennedy family consisted of William Kennedy and his wife; their son, Lee Kennedy; Robert Heiman, an eighteen-year-old family friend; and a servant by the name of Carleston.* After twenty-two months of residing on Colonel Moody’s preserve, the Kennedys attempted to claim the property in accordance with the Presumption of Abandonment Statute. According to the general provisions of Texas Property Code 72.101 and 72.102:

Personal property is presumed abandoned if, for longer than three years:
(1) the existence and location of the owner of the property is unknown to the holder of the property; and
(2) according to the knowledge and records of the holder of the property, a claim to the property has not been asserted or an act of ownership has not been exercised.⁵

The property, in any case, was not abandoned by Colonel Moody, and he, in turn, filed a civil case petitioning that the Kennedys be evicted from his hunting preserve. Judge Lewis Buckner Hightower of Liberty County signed off on the writ.⁶ Frost was

responsible for delivering the sequestration papers to William Kennedy, whose reputation as a hot-tempered-man preceded him.

*It is unclear if his name was Carleston or Carleton, as there are two versions of the name found in various publications. For the purpose of consistency, he is referred to as Carleston.

Sheriff John Frost was known as a mild-mannered man who gained the respect of most people in Chambers County. His pleasant disposition, however, caused some people to believe he was a coward and “somewhat of a pansy,” according to Bob Scherer, a current member of the Chambers County Historical Commission.⁷ *The Galveston Daily News* reported on Saturday, December 29, 1900, that Frost paid a visit to the Kennedys on Friday, November 9 and spoke with Mrs. Kennedy, who told him that the men were not present. Later on the witness stand, Carleston reported the events of the following Saturday, stating that Frost came that morning and had a talk with William Kennedy. Kennedy told Frost that “his wife was sick and he could not put him out.”⁸ He also stated that the sheriff returned that evening, spoke with Kennedy, and ate dinner with him. Carleston added that Frost left the Moody preserve around 6:15 p.m. and that “Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Frost seemed very friendly before it.”⁹ As he was leaving, Frost told Kennedy that he was going to see George Wallis and Kennedy informed Frost that he would be going to Galveston and Houston to make a reprieve bond to hold the preserve. The Kennedys were concerned that the sequestration papers did not address the issue of their personal property and the bond would give them time to dispute the writ. The sheriff left the Moody preserve that night and was never seen again.

The Galveston Daily News was the first newspaper to report the missing sheriff, stating that a vigorous search had been conducted.¹⁰ Fearing that the sheriff had met with

foul play, a posse of almost a hundred men was organized by Deputy Sheriff Pascal McNeir and other deputies, who worked under Frost. The *Galveston Daily News* reported that “when the news of the missing Sheriff Frost reached Wallisville on Monday night last, two days from the time he went to his death, the little town was almost deserted in a few hours.”¹¹ Every man and boy who was able to carry a gun and ride a horse had left town for the thirty-five-mile ride to Lake Surprise to help uncover the mystery of the missing sheriff’s body. On December 15, *The Galveston Daily News* reported that the search led to “the arrest of two young men in Galveston yesterday morning, and the apprehension of an old man, father of one of the young men, in Houston yesterday afternoon.”¹² Subsequently, William Kennedy, Lee Kennedy, and Robert Heiman were charged with the murder of Sheriff John Frost.

The news of the missing sheriff riveted the communities of Chambers County and created a hostile atmosphere. On November 17, *The Galveston Daily News* reported that “a fight occurred at the lake yesterday morning between the citizen’s posse and some men living in that section, resulting in the killing of one of the citizens and two horses.”¹³ Sheriff Henry Thomas of Galveston, one of the arresting officers, secured a statement from one of the three men charged with Frost’s murder. Robert Heiman indicated that Frost had been shot around 8 p.m. after he left the hunting lodge on the Moody preserve and that his body was wrapped in his slicker and deposited into the lake. Heiman claimed to have been assisted in the disposal of the body.¹⁴

The Galveston Daily News reported that “Sheriff Frost was well known all over Texas, especially in the southern part of the state. He has served as sheriff for many years and is noted for his bravery. He was very popular and his disappearance has created a

great sensation throughout this section.” According to Bob Wheat, Chairman of the Chambers County Historical Commission, Judge Hightower feared that the Kennedys and Heiman would be lynched and, with their safety in mind, had the case transferred to Harris County where they would get a fair trial.¹⁵

After more than a week of combing through the marsh for the missing sheriff’s body, the citizens of Chambers County, with the help of Sheriff Thomas of Galveston, offered a reward of \$500 to anyone who could locate the body. The *Galveston Daily News* on November 21, 1900 described Frost as follows: “Height, 5 feet 11 ½ inches; weight, 175 pounds; blue eyes, curly auburn hair and mustache, teeth filled with gold; minus middle finger on right hand. When he left home he wore a white Stetson hat, gray coat, dark trousers, and wore No. 10 shoes.”¹⁶

Due to the aftereffects of the September 1900 storm, which killed an estimated 6,000 people, the search for and retrieval of Frost’s body was impaired by the presence of debris, dead livestock, and the occasional discovery of storm victims. It was further hindered by Heiman’s changing confessions, which had authorities scrambling in different directions in search of the missing body. The *Galveston Daily News* reported that Heiman, who had previously confessed to murdering Frost, changed his story, stating that he and his partner, Lee Kennedy, hid in the tall grass along the road that leads to Lake Surprise and shot Frost in the back with a Winchester rifle. They dismembered his body, placed the pieces on the boat, and threw them into Galveston Bay.¹⁷ According to *The Galveston Daily News*, Chief of Police Gus Amundsen of Galveston stated that the search for the sheriff was “futile” and that his body “will never be found.”¹⁸ Heiman’s mental health was questioned during the trial, and he was perceived to suffer from mental

retardation by many in his community. It was reported by the *Houston Post* on November 23, that “the mother of witness was a lunatic and her mother’s mind had also been affected.”¹⁹ To further complicate the case, J. M. Hagan said he saw Frost alive and well in Shreveport, Louisiana, and claimed that Frost applied for a job with his construction company under the name Randall. Hagan recognized him, at which time the man, supposedly Frost, “turned pale and placing his hands in his pocket ripped out an oath. Hagan claims that the man acted as one deranged.”²⁰ Hagan’s description of the man, which matched the description of the sheriff, included a missing finger on the right hand. Interestingly, Hagan was not aware that the sheriff was missing at the time he claimed to have seen him.²¹

The *habeas corpus* proceedings against William Kennedy, Lee Kennedy, and Robert Heiman began on November 21, 1900, in Harris County. District Attorney McCall, assisted by Attorney L.B. Hightower Jr. of Beaumont, took charge of the prosecution.²² During the trial, Emmet Swinney testified that he had gone with Frost to deliver the writ of sequestration to the Kennedys on Friday, November 9 and Saturday morning, November 10, adding that Frost stayed the night with him on Friday night.²³ Swinney said, “I met him at Double Bayou; he made me special deputy; when we got there on Friday saw Carlston and Mrs. Kennedy; on Saturday saw the same and Mr. Kennedy and others; he wanted me to go there to hold the place; he said that if they (Kennedys) would not leave he would have to use physical force.”²⁴ Swinney claimed that Frost and Kennedy retired to another room where they discussed the writ of sequestration. Upon returning, Frost informed Swinney that Kennedy was unwilling to leave the Moody preserve and asked Swinney to ride to town and deliver some papers to

one of his deputies by the name of W. L. Kerr. Swinney left the Moody preserve that morning to deliver the papers and did not return home until Sunday evening. Frost left the Moody preserve Saturday afternoon and went to Swinney's house in hopes of finding him there. When he did not find Swinney at home, he left him a note:

Lake Surprise, Nov. 10. 2:30 pm – Emmet: I want to tell you to keep your eyes open, as the old man is wrathful [sic] and I am going to have trouble with him. I am going out like I am going to see George Wallis about staying here, but in reality to get help, teams etc., to put the old man off. I will be the first here and ready to watch the old man and Lee when the others come; that is, I will be here, and if he makes any kick when the teams etc. come. I don't know what it is but they are playing some kind of a game; don't know just what; wait and see. Lee has been gone all day with the horses and the old man is going to start to Galveston to get bond filled all the time, but don't go. He is waiting for something to get ready and I am going to watch out. You look sharp too.

J. L. Frost

P. S. – 4 p. m.: Mrs. K. is sick abed and placing me in the most uncomfortable position possible, making me turn a sick woman out of doors. I have waited until now to see if Tom H. will not come, but he ain't, and I am going, as I can't wait any longer. Be careful and watch out when you come to-morrow. You left the window by the cistern open and I come in that way and left this.

John L. Frost²⁵

Frost left Swinney's and rode back to the Moody preserve alone that afternoon. He ate dinner with Kennedy, as Carleston had stated on December 29, and the discussion between the two men was allegedly friendly. After Frost left around 6:15 p.m., Carleston stated that the boys, Lee Kennedy and Robert Heiman, returned around 10 p.m. with a hack covered in blood and carrying approximately fifty dead ducks. He claimed that he could hear gunfire throughout the day; however, he did not hear any at all after Frost left the Kennedys. Swinney, after reading Frost's note, went looking for the sheriff the following Monday, November 12, 1900.²⁶

Gordon Jones took the stand and testified to have last seen John Frost on November 7. However, Jones saw Kennedy in Galveston on the Sunday after the alleged murder, at which time Kennedy informed him of the writ of sequestration. Kennedy expressed his concern to Jones regarding Frost's intentions of taking possession of the horses, based on the presumption that they were included in the writ. Jones stated that Kennedy told him he would kill Frost if he tried to take the horses. Jones stated, that "Kennedy further said that there was some personal difficulty to be settled between Frost and his son, Lee."²⁷

The next witness to take the stand was a African American man by the name of Louis Alexander. He stated that he saw William Kennedy in Galveston on Friday morning telling Eli Hill that Kennedy was headed home because Frost was trying to evict him from the Moody preserve. Kennedy claimed that his wife was sick and that he would shoot Frost if he attempted to run him off of the property. Alexander said he overheard Kennedy tell Hill: "If Frost undertakes to put my wife out I'll kill him."²⁸

Robert Heiman, one of the defendants in the *habeas corpus* case, was the next person to testify on the afternoon of the hearing. Heiman stated that, on the evening of November 10, Kennedy took the sheriff into another room and told Heiman to go next door to the other house to get the gun and ammunition. Kennedy told Heiman that he would wave a white flag from an upstairs bedroom, signaling that the sheriff had left. Kennedy further told Heiman that he would give him the boat and possession of the lake if he assisted in the murder of the sheriff. Heiman stated that Frost left the house a little after dark, and he and Lee Kennedy were behind the hackberry tree waiting for the sheriff. When Frost passed by, Lee fired a single shot into the sheriff's back. Frost fell

from his horse and said “Oh Lord, I am murdered!”²⁹ Heiman said that they wrapped the sheriff’s body in his own slicker and hauled the body in the hack to the boat. Then, they stripped the sheriff and cut him open. Lee told Heiman that the body would never float if it were cut open. They took the body out on Lake Surprise, about 120 yards from shore, and threw the body in the lake. Furthermore, Heiman stated that the Kennedys had threatened his life if he told about his actions. Originally, he had said the body was in the lake, then stated that it was in the bay, and later claimed that it was in the Boliver channel.³⁰ He claimed that the Kennedys told him to change his story to keep authorities from finding the body of the murdered sheriff. Having earlier stated that they had stripped the sheriff, he then contradicted himself by saying that they never removed the sheriff’s clothes.³¹

Heiman’s changing stories kept the investigation on a cold trail. In another version related to authorities, Heiman stated that they buried the body in the muck, and there have been reports that they may have buried the body in a cow pen, hoping that the cows would continue to trample the body deeper and deeper into the ground.³² However, the story that the sheriff’s body was cut up on the boat and thrown into the bay may have some credibility.

On May 12, 1975, Rene Sisson Morris, 84 years of age, stated in an interview that she was in Galveston around that time in 1900, buying groceries for the family store. Unaware at the time that Frost was missing, she remembered seeing the Kennedy’s boat, with much blood on it, coming into Galveston. Later, she was told that the blood was duck blood. Ms. Morris also recalled hearing Heiman’s story that he and Lee had killed

Frost and buried his body. Fearing that his body would be recovered, they dug him up and “put the body on the boat and cut it into pieces and threw it into the water.”³³

The *habeas corpus* hearing rested for the remainder of December and resumed on January 9, 1901. Judge Allen allowed the period of rest so the defense could procure certain depositions necessary to prove that Frost was seen alive after his disappearance.³⁴ The day the proceedings resumed, Dr. T. W. Shearer, treasurer of Chambers County, was called to the witness stand to give testimony concerning Frost’s assets and possible debts. It was discovered during the questioning that John Frost’s taxes had been paid and that he did not seem to have any outlandish debts. “I think that \$600 would settle all of his indebtedness,”³⁵ stated Mr. Shearer during a cross examination. He said that he saw Frost the day he left Wallisville en route to the Moody preserve and that there was nothing unusual about his behavior. He spoke highly of Frost, stating “If there ever was an honest man he was one, and was fully trustworthy.”³⁶ The prosecution, through the tireless questioning of several witnesses, established Frost’s good character and left much doubt concerning earlier reports of Frost being seen alive after his disappearance.³⁷

Charged with Frost’s murder, Lee Kennedy, was questioned about the events leading up to the sheriff’s disappearance. He denied having anything to do with Frost’s sudden vanishing or murder. He stated that he and Frost had had a disagreement concerning a young woman approximately one year prior to Frost’s disappearance, but they had never had any unfriendly words after that incident. Some time after their argument, Lee claimed to have played a friendly game of checkers with Frost at the printing office.³⁸ Further testifying that he was hunting for ducks the day and evening of November 10, 1900, when Frost came by the lodge Lee stated, “I don’t know anything

about Sheriff Frost leaving there that night; he was not with us.”³⁹ He added, “I wouldn’t hurt an officer for trying to arrest me if he didn’t go beyond his duty; don’t know what I would do if he did go beyond that.”⁴⁰ In response to that, Attorney Hightower asked, “Didn’t you tell the sheriff (Thomas) that if you had been the man who killed Frost there would be another sheriff killed when he came to arrest?”⁴¹ Lee replied “What I did tell him was that if I had killed Frost, I could have killed another sheriff, and that I would have done it.”⁴²

On January 13, 1901, *The Galveston Daily News* reported “*Ex parte*, William L. and Lee Kennedy, *habeas corpus*, charged with the killing of Sheriff John L. Frost of Chambers County, Judge Allen handed down his decision, remanding both of them to the custody of Galveston County without bail.”⁴³ The defendants were held in Galveston for a week and then transferred to Harris County on January 18, 1901.⁴⁴ They remained there for several months while investigators tried to find clues that might lead them to Frost’s body. On March 22, 1901, in General Minute Book No. 11, roll 1008694, page 330, section 12130, it was recorded that “it is the opinion of this court that there was error in the judgment in the court below; it is therefore ordered, adjudged and decreed that said judgment be reversed and appellants be admitted to bail in the sum of ten thousand dollars each.”⁴⁵ On March 25, 1901, a change of venue transferred the case to Montgomery County, where the judge declared “*nolle prosequi*” on April 8, refusing to further prosecute the case due to insufficient evidence and the absence of a body.⁴⁶

After months of searching and combing through the marsh, hopes of locating Frost’s body were abandoned. Less than two weeks after the case had been thrown out of court, *The Beaumont Age* reported on April 19, 1901 that Frost’s body had been found.

Swinney stumbled upon a hand protruding from the ground in the area of Lake Surprise. The badly decayed body was “buried near where the dead man’s hat had been picked up.”⁴⁷ According to Kevin Ladd, Director of Wallisville Heritage Park, the right hand had been severed from the body.⁴⁸ The *Liberty Vindicator* reported on April 26, that “the news received here this morning of the finding of the body has created a great sensation.”⁴⁹ It appeared that whoever murdered the sheriff had severed the disfigured hand to conceal the victim’s identity. Although investigators tried to identify the body, it was so badly decomposed that a positive identification was not possible. It was later determined that the body was that of a victim from the hurricane and it was buried in a pauper’s grave in Wallisville.⁵⁰

The disappearance of Sheriff John L. Frost and the subsequent investigation and trial created quite a stir in Chambers and surrounding counties. However, the law took great effort in securing the defendants’ rights. One of the mainstays of the American way of life is that everyone is entitled to equal justice and protection under the law, and the justice system overcame widespread hatred, anger, and prejudice to protect the rights of the accused in this case. Regarding the evidence presented during the trial and the circumstances on the Moody preserve, it is possible that the Kennedys murdered Sheriff John Frost and disposed of his body somewhere in the vicinity of Galveston Bay. However, this begs the question as to why they would have done something so apparently obvious. Many people were aware that the Kennedys were discontent with Frost’s plans of executing the writ of sequestration, and his disappearance, as the Kennedys must have known, would have immediately implicated them as suspects.

From the time the sheriff was missing, the Kennedys and Heiman were the only suspects in the case. Robert Heiman's continuously changing confessions kept investigators looking in the direction of the Kennedys. Heiman's mental illness could have been used to incriminate him and the Kennedys. It was reported in the *Liberty Vindicator* on December 7, 1900 that "a number of people have expressed the opinion that Heiman, after being put through the third degree, confessed to a crime that was never committed--that it was not at all voluntary--and that there is a bare possibility that he lied -- possibly in the hope of extricating himself from his unfortunate dilemma."⁵¹

Swinney was the last person to see Frost or receive any kind of correspondence from him. Also, Swinney was the person who found the body only eleven days after the case was dismissed; however, he was never suspected to have had a hand in Frost's disappearance. The area where the body was found had been repeatedly searched for months by authorities and volunteers, yet the sudden discovery of the body by Swinney was not questioned. Furthermore, Swinney claimed to have seen the ghost of John Frost at a séance where Frost's ghost told Swinney that the body he found was indeed Frost's.⁵² By his own admission, Swinney left the Moody preserve the morning of November 10, and stated that he did not return home until Sunday evening, November 11. In spite of these circumstances, Swinney was never asked to provide authorities with an alibi. Kevin Ladd, Director of Wallisville Heritage Park in Chambers County, commented on this aspect of the investigation during an interview, stating that "in today's times, circumstances could possibly point the finger toward Swinney" and that "a good defense lawyer could have turned him into a suspect."⁵³

The mystery of the missing Chambers County Sheriff John Lighter Frost--a handsome, young, prosperous bachelor who had secured the favor of most everyone in Southeast Texas—still invites speculation. In spite of a report that he was seen alive after November 10, it is unlikely that Frost vanished of his own accord. Public opinion remains little changed from the statement on December 14, 1900 in the *Liberty Vindicator* that “In the minds of Chambers County people there is not the slightest doubt that Frost met death by foul play while near Lake Surprise. The confession of Heiman admitting that he had a hand in the tragedy and stating that the body was chopped to pieces and thrown into the bay is, in absence of other developments, very generally accepted as the true explanation of the mystery.”⁵⁴ Perhaps it can be explained as a crime of passion or as a poorly organized premeditated execution. Perhaps the explanation is that someone else, aware of the situation on the Moody preserve, shot and killed Frost, thereby framing the Kennedys and Heiman. Whatever the case may have been 105 years ago, Frost’s disappearance remains unsolved.

In 1904, a local chapter of the Woodmen of the World erected a tombstone in Frost’s memory in the Wallisville cemetery. Friends and neighbors gathered to honor the beloved Sheriff, whose life ended prematurely while executing his legal duty. During the memorial service, Hazel Fulks recited the last four lines of a poem:

The Old and the Young
The Low and the High
Shall molder to Dust
And together shall lie.⁵⁵

In June 1998, in accordance with the Memorial Eligibility Criteria rule Section 229.5 (a) (1) and (6) and section 229.10 (a) (1) of the Texas Commission on Law

Enforcement, Sheriff John Lighter Frost was memorialized as a Texas Peace Officer killed in the line of duty.⁵⁶ The sheriff has become a local legend in Chambers County, and his reputation still commands the respect of the community. Bob Wheat stated in an interview that the Kennedy's reputation has not changed either, remaining as tainted today as it was in 1900.⁵⁷

The Chambers County Historical Commission hopes that the case will be solved one day. Certain commission members and local authorities of Chambers County have discussed exhuming the remains of the body buried in the pauper's grave. Their plans are to locate the burial site of Frost's parents and to compare the DNA of the cadavers.⁵⁸ Although there seems to be some contention among locals as to the events leading up to the sheriff's disappearance and the identity of the body located in the pauper's grave, their shared respect for the late sheriff and general feeling concerning the circumstances of his death are mutual. Perhaps an article printed in *The Age* reflects them best:

The noble, honest, brave John Frost went to his death while executing the laws of our country; and tonight the waves in the bay of Old Fort Anahuac come rolling in and seem to say "he is with us again but not as the bright, laughing boy, splashing in the surf," and the hoarse sound from far down the bay, seems to thunder Murder! Murder! Murder!⁵⁹

-
- ¹ “John L. Frost.” *The Age*, January 1, 1980.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Forest McNair, *Forest McNair of Texas*. (San Antonio, TX: Publishers of the Southwest, 1956), p. 74.
- ⁵ *State of Texas Property Code*, “Personal Property Code: Chapter 72 Acondonment of Personal Property” <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/PR/content/htm/pr.006.00.000072.00.htm> (accessed August 17, 2006).
- ⁶ Bob Wheat and Bob Scherer. Interview with author, Anahuac, TX, November 23, 2005.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ “Sheriff Frost’s Case,” *Galveston Daily News*, December 29, 1900.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ “Sheriff Frost Is Missing,” *Galveston Daily News*, November 15, 1900.
- ¹¹ “Sheriff Frost’s Case,” *Galveston Daily News*.
- ¹² “Sheriff Frost Is Missing,” *Galveston Daily News*.
- ¹³ “Frost Developments,” *Galveston Daily News*, November 17, 1900.
- ¹⁴ “Sheriff Frost Is Missing,” *Galveston Daily News*.
- ¹⁵ Wheat and Scherer, Interview.
- ¹⁶ “Large Reward Is Offered,” *Galveston Daily News*, November 21, 1900.
- ¹⁷ “What Became of Sheriff Frost.” *Liberty Vindicator*, November 23, 1900.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ “R. L. Heiman’s Horrible Story,” *Houston Post*, December 23, 1900.
- ²⁰ “Is Sheriff Frost Dead?” *Galveston Daily News*, November 24, 1900.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² “R. L. Heiman’s Horrible Story.” *Houston Post*.
- ²³ “Sheriff Frost’s Case,” *Galveston Daily News*.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ “R. L. Heiman’s Horrible Story,” *Houston Post*.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Wheat and Scherer, Interview.
- ³³ Rene Sisson Morris. Interviewed in Wallisville, TX, May 12, 1975.
- ³⁴ “The Kennedy Case Again,” *Galveston Daily News*, January 8, 1901.
- ³⁵ “The Kennedy’s Case,” *Galveston Daily News*, January 9, 1901.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*

-
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ “The Courts,” *Galveston Daily News*, January 13, 1901.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ *State of Texas v. William L. Kennedy and Lee Kennedy*, Mar. 22, 1901, cited in General Minute Book No. 11, Mar. 22, 1901, roll 1008694, p. 330, sec. 12130 (Texas State Archives, Austin).
- ⁴⁶ Kevin Ladd, Interview with the author, Wallisville, TX, November 29, 2005.
- ⁴⁷ “Frost’s Body Found,” *Beaumont Age*, April 19, 1901.
- ⁴⁸ Ladd. Interview.
- ⁴⁹ “Sheriff Frost’s Body Found,” *Liberty Vindicator*, April 26, 1901.
- ⁵⁰ Wheat and Scherer, Interview.
- ⁵¹ “John L. Frost,” *The Liberty Vindicator*, December 7, 1900.
- ⁵² Ladd, Interview.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ “Accounts All Square,” *Liberty Vindicator*, December 14, 1900.
- ⁵⁵ “John L. Frost,” *The Age*.
- ⁵⁶ Dennis R. Graffious of the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement to Kevin Ladd, Date unknown, Austin, TX.
- ⁵⁷ Wheat and Scherer. Interview.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ “John L. Frost.” *The Age*.