

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Ashland Tragedy (II)

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Come people dear from far and wide,
And lend a willing ear to me.
While I relate the cruel facts
Of Ashland's greatest tragedy.

George Ellis was one of the men,
But Ellis Craft was in the lead;
And Wiliiam Neal, the other one,
That did this awful, awful deed.

They crept up to the Gibbons home,
The parents dear had gone away;
They entered there in dead of night,
These little children for to slay.

Now Bobby was a crippled boy,
He saw them, so George Ellis said;
Then Ellis Craft, that dark eyed fiend,
He turned and crushed poor Bobby's head.

They stood beside poor Fanny's bed,
She slept there with her little friend;
Poor children, little did they dream
This night would prove their tragic end.

They murdered both these little girls,
And left their outraged bodies lie,
They threw a torch inside the house;
Poor Bobby's body lay close by.

The town was filled with angry men,
They searched the country far and near;
George Ellis was a coward at heart,
His guilty soul was filled with fear.

At last he turned State's evidence,
"Protect me from the mob!" he said.
But from the jail they dragged him forth
And hung him by the neck till dead.

The soldiers guarded Craft and Neal,
And tried to save them from this fate;

They took them from the county jail
On board the steamer Granite State.

But Ashland blood was running high,
The ferry boat was full of men;
A pistol shot, and hell broke loose,
The soldiers started firing then.

The frightened women cried and prayed.
But when the guns had ceased to roar,
Three Ashland men lay stiff and cold,
A woman wounded on the shore.

But Craft and Neal were hung at last,
For this same crime their lives did pay.
"We're innocent!" said Ellis Craft,
"John Russell swore our iives away."

So let this tale a warning be,
For crime will find you out at last;
You'll meet the fate George Ellis met
With William Neal and Ellis Craft.

From Ballad Makin' in the Southern Highlands, Thomas
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