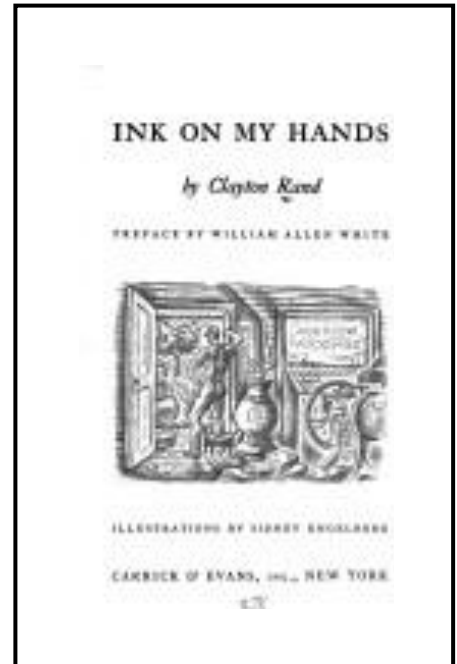


# Ink On My Hands

## by Clayton Rand

The below paragraphs are taken from the book, *Ink On My Hands*, by Clayton Rand. The book, published in 1940, is about events in Neshoba County, Mississippi while Clayton Rand worked as editor of the county newspaper, *The Neshoba County Democrat*. The words below are taken from the book verbatim. The only additions that I have made are that I have added the real names of the individuals discussed in parentheses.



### From *Ink On My Hands*:

Neshoba County's slaughters and other concomitant crime became so reprehensible that the editor was chided all over the state, while some country editors even predicted that he was a marked man and that his days were numbered. One friend at the state capital, who had never visited the county, promised to make a trip there provided the editor would stage a good killing to provide excitement. On the day of his arrival, as he walked from the train up the hill; crossed the square and turned the corner to the printing office, he was amused to witness a scene in which one man was shooting another down at the door of the editor's office. He thought for a moment that the scribe had perpetrated a practical joke, until he heard the kneeling victim beg for mercy and saw him collapse in a pool of blood. The shooting scrape, like so many others, had its origin in a grudge. Hardage (**Aldridge**), the man who was killed at my threshold, had lost his right hand in a previous clash with the son of his last assailant, Pringle the father (**John Franklin Tingle**), was simply putting on the finishing touches to an old feud.

This murder had three sequences. Hardage (**Aldridge**) had lost a hand in the first fracas, and the younger Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) had been charged with "assault with intent." Testifying at the trial in his defense, the younger Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) stated that he and Hardage (**Aldridge**) met earlier in the day and Hardage (**Aldridge**), with his hand in his bosom, as if to draw a weapon, not only cursed him but forced him to say "howdy." Later in the day, according to Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**), he was helping his wife milk the cows, and had crossed the road from the barn to the house, when he heard a horse approaching, and before he could get within, his front door, Hardage (**Aldridge**) drove his horse through the open gate,

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swearing at him. He testified that he then entered his house, got his shotgun, and when Hardage (**Aldridge**) approached him in the twilight, flourishing what appeared to be a weapon, he shot him in self-defense. He affirmed that he was living on a farm he had bought from Hardage (**Aldridge**) and that: Hardage (**Aldridge**), being dissatisfied with the trade, had not only constantly picked a quarrel with him, but had even driven his field hands off the place.

In telling his side of the first episode, Hardage (**Aldridge**) stated that Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) was the aggressor. He testified, under oath, that, as he passed Pringle's (**John Marvin Tingle's**) home on the way from town, Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) stepped from behind a honeysuckle vine that trellised his front porch and fired at him without warning.

"The horse I was riding," he said, "became frightened, jumped from under me, throwing me to the ground, and Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**), pursuing me, fired again at close range, shooting away my hand."

When Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) was acquitted for "assault with intent to murder" Hardage (**Aldridge**), another shooting followed. In this second episode Pringle (**John Marvin Tingle**) was fired upon from ambush near his residence. Hardage (**Aldridge**) owned a shotgun, the shells for which he loaded himself with powder and bits of iron. Finding homemade gun wadding near the scene of this shooting, officers placed Hardage (**Aldridge**) under arrest. He had just been released from the county jail on a peace bond when the third and final sequence transpired. Hardage (**Aldridge**) had walked by the front door of the Democrat office when Pringle's (**John Marvin Tingle's**) father waylaid him and emptied his gun into him.

At the father's (**John Franklin Tingle's**) preliminary hearing for the murder of Hardage (**Aldridge**) he affirmed, in his defense, that Hardage (**Aldridge**) had threatened to take his life as soon as he was given his freedom. He testified that as he passed the jail a few days before Hardage (**Aldridge**) was released, Hardage (**Aldridge**) had shouted threatening words from the window of his cell, saying, "I'll get you when I get out." The older Pringle (**John Franklin Tingle**) stated that Hardage (**Aldridge**) had a coat over his arm when he approached him, following his release from jail, and was apparently reaching under it for a weapon when he shot him in self-defense. Pringle (**John Franklin Tingle**) was later tried for murder in the circuit court and acquitted.