

Excitement in Laurens.
From the Sunday News, June 19.

LAURENS, June 18.—Hoover, who recently caused so much trouble in Georgia and made himself notorious throughout the country, is said to have visited Laurens County. Whether it was Hoover or some other like character the fact remains that Hoover's influence pervades the colored population. Near Cedar Grove, Young's township, the negroes have organized themselves into secret organizations known as Knights of Labor. Each member is sworn to perpetual secrecy, and to mutually sustain and protect each other. The meetings are all held with closed doors and armed doorkeepers and armed pickets. Notwithstanding the very great precautions of secrecy, some of the purposes of the organization are known. The meetings are held from two to three times each week. Among other things that are known are that the negroes have been made to believe that this county belongs to them—at least, they say so—and that they will maintain these extraordinary claims with their lives. They think that they will obtain their rights quickest by exterminating the older whites and enslaving the young men. The young women they will take for their wives. The whites in the neighborhood are alarmed, but they are determined to brave men to defend their hearthstones and the women with their blood, if need be.

A cavalry company has been organized with Dr. W. J. Westmoreland as captain, and application has been made to the Governor for arms.

Col. J. H. Trayham, of the Governor's staff, under instructions from Columbia, will proceed at once to the scene of action to investigate and report such steps as may be necessary to protect the country from violence and bloodshed. Capt. L. E. Irby, of the Laurens Guards, will accompany Col. Trayham.

I have just read a letter from W. P. Cooker, a very reliable and substantial citizen, in which he says: "I am no alarmist; the emergency is upon us and we must prepare for it. The scene of the trouble is about eighteen miles from here, and I can give no further information today."

The News at the State House.

COLUMBIA, June 18.—The whites in Laurens County are evidently alarmed about the possibility of an insurrection among the negroes, and perhaps their fears are well founded. Governor Richardson and the adjutant general have been communicated with. While Governor Richardson knows that the alarm may possibly be a false one, he has taken immediate action, and if it should be ascertained that there is really danger of an outbreak, the militia of the State will be ordered to a short summer encampment at Laurens. Governor Richardson has placed himself in a position to obtain reliable information from Laurens. The following letter was received by the Governor today:

CEDAR GROVE, LAURENS Co., S. C.

Governor Richardson, Columbia—Dear Sir: The negroes under the Hoover influence have organized themselves and hold weekly meetings. They meet from midnight to 2 o'clock and make speeches, saying they will kill out the white men and old women, take the young ones for wives and make the white children work for them. They say they will burn the whites out. They are exhorted to die like brave men, to go to their graves with bloody feet. They bind their members by an oath never to reveal their secrets. At their meetings they are guarded by pickets. An outbreak may occur at any time. We have met and organized a cavalry Company of fifty members and would be glad to be furnished with State arms at once with all necessary appurtenances. The negroes are watched by a committee of whites. The negroes are all armed. They are armed by the club. We don't know where or how they get them.

The letter is signed by the secretary of the new company and the names of all the officers are given.

Clipped By:



ottg

Tue, Jan 24, 2017