

From the short story *an Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* by Ambrose Bierce

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners--two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as "support," that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest--a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it. Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view.

Bierce, A. (1890) *An occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Short Stories & Classic Literature for Readers & Teachers*. Available at: <https://americanliterature.com/author/ambrose-bierce/short-story/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge> (Accessed: 09 June 2023).

1. What was the setting of the scene described in the text?

- a) A railroad station in northern Alabama.
- b) A bridge over a river in northern Alabama.
- c) A temporary platform in a forest in northern Alabama.
- d) A military camp in northern Alabama.

2. How was the man positioned on the bridge?

- a) Standing with his hands bound and a rope around his neck.
- b) Sitting with his hands tied behind his back.
- c) Lying down with his hands and feet bound.
- d) Hanging from the cross-timber by the rope around his neck.

3. Who were the executioners of the man on the bridge?

- a) Two private soldiers of the Federal army.
- b) Two civilian deputies.
- c) Two Confederate soldiers.

d) Two officers of the Federal army.

4. What was the role of the officer on the temporary platform?

- a) He was overseeing the execution.
- b) He was observing the scene from a distance.
- c) He was guarding the bridge.
- d) He was preparing to cut the rope.

5. What was the role of the sentinels on the bridge?

- a) They were executing the man.
- b) They were blocking access to the bridge.
- c) They were guarding the officer on the platform.
- d) They were providing support to the man.

Answers:

- 1. A bridge over a river in northern Alabama.
- 2. Standing with his hands bound and a rope around his neck.
- 3. Two private soldiers of the Federal army.
- 4. He was overseeing the execution.
- 5. They were blocking access to the bridge.