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Indict Ruth Auteberry for Manslaughter

July 31, 1942
Coles County Grand Jury Finds
True Bill Against Three Women
for Death of Baby Last April

Charleston, July 29.—The recalled April grand jury returned indictments against Ruth Zike and Wilma Amanda Zike of Mattoon and Ruth Juanita Auteberry of Newton for manslaughter in the Coles county circuit court, late Monday afternoon. Judge Caspar Platt fixed their bonds at \$1,500 each.

Mrs. Zike is serving a sentence at the women's prison at Dwight and her daughter and Miss Auteberry are in jail at Charleston.

The indictments following the smothering to death of a baby son last April 24, four hours after its birth to Mrs. Zike. Nine other indictments were returned before the grand jury adjourned.

All Confessed

In confessions a month ago, the three women told State's Attorney W. H. Kidwell of Coles county that Mrs. Zike said she didn't want the child which was born to her four hours earlier and suggested that it be smothered to death, Kidwell said. In the confessions, they said the infant was laid on a bed, covered with blankets, placed in a cardboard box and then buried a foot and a half deep under boards of the garage floor.

The crime was discovered late in June when Mrs. Alice Caton of Mattoon, probation officer, met a Mattoon physician and he asked her how the baby born to Mrs. Zike was getting along. When she expressed surprise, he said that he had examined Mrs. Zike in April and had ordered her to stay home as she was about to give birth to a child. The baby was born without medical attention and there was no record of its birth.