

THE MONITOR

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE INTERESTS OF COLORED AMERICANS

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THE REV. JOHN ALBERT WILLIAMS, Editor
W. W. NOBLEY, Lincoln, Neb., Associate Editor
LUCYDA W. WILLIAMS, Business Manager

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ARTICLE XIV, CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizenship Rights Not to Be Abridged

1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

DOES THIS SHOCK YOU?

"DAMN the United States, I'm going to get out of it as soon as I can and raise my family in a country that is civilized. I'm going to South America."

It was a Negro in his late thirties, who is a graduate of two of the best colleges in America, one an eastern college where he took his degree in liberal arts, and another in the middle west where he has taken his professional training, who made this fierce outburst upon reading of a brutal lynching in the South. Moreover, he is a man who earned a commission and served with distinction in the American Expeditionary Forces abroad in the recent World War. He is successful in his profession, a home owner and a real worth-while citizen.

He continued: "It isn't only outrages of this character that make me hot, but it is the thousand and one insults to which we are subjected in this country, to which we have given our best, and things seem to grow worse instead of better. The sham and hypocrisy of America make me sick."

Is this young man's outburst against the United States justified? What do you think about it? Do you think he would be really happier in South America?

Another young man, not yet twenty, a student in one of our leading western universities, where he ranks high in scholarship and athletics and is well liked, plans to complete his studies at Yale, and devote himself to a literary career. He has his eye on Europe.

"When I complete my course at Yale, I intend to go abroad, where one's race or color does not count against him, but where one stands on his merit and ability to produce the goods."

He made this remark quietly and without any show of feeling or resentment. He is a youth of fine character, high ideals and a winning personality.

Do you think he is right? Our advice to him was this:

"Fight it out here, my young friend. You can win out here despite the apparent handicap, which I do not under-rate. The entrance of our people into the literary world, the acceptance of manuscripts by the best magazine of the country, are most hopeful signs and are mornings which give promise of a glorious day. Fight it out here. America, which has been the scene of the Negro's deepest degradation, will be the scene of his greatest triumph and exaltation."

You man not agree with us, but with the young men quoted above. We would like to have your opinion.

COMMON LAW MARRIAGES

One of the great evils of our community is the prevalence of "common law" marriages among both races. People do not seem to realize that for a man and woman to live together out of wedlock is sinful and immoral. Police records show that many of the tragedies which have been enacted in Omaha have been among these common law couples. There ought to be some legislative enactments which would forbid such associations. If a man and a woman love each other, and there is no impediment or barrier to their conjugal union, then they ought to be honorably and lawfully married, or else they ought not live together as man and wife. Such cohabitation is sinful and wrong, whether the state permits it or not. It may be that some people do not know any better. People who want to be decent and considered as decent and respectable should be honorably and lawfully married. "Common law marriages," in many of the states, are treated as adulterous

unions with a heavy penalty attached. Such should be the law in Nebraska.

A STREAK OF DAWN

That a Georgia judge was had the courage to sentence nine men to terms in penitentiary for terms of from four years to life for lynching a man, is a hopeful sign. True, the victim was a white man; had he been black it is doubtful that any sentence would have been imposed. Be that as it may, a beginning has been made and a precedent set which will eventually demand punishment for the lynching of a Negro in Georgia. It is a streak of dawn.

THE WEEK'S EDITORIALS

I.

UP TO GOVERNOR McLEOD

(From The Constitution, Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 12, 1926)

What is the Governor of South Carolina going to do about the recent lynching of three Negroes, one of whom was at woman, at Aiken?

It is a pertinent question and the entire nation is awaiting the answer. Governor McLeod does not condone lynching. No self respecting, law abiding white man in South Carolina—or in the nation, for that matter—can possibly condone lynching.

And yet, for some reason or another, this disgraceful act of mob violence has not been avenged, nor has any definite action been reported.

The law that was crucified by a masked gang of white men, whose names, it is said, are known, and whose affiliation with a secret order has been openly charged and not denied, has not reached out to bring to the bar of justice those who defied it.

And who, in defying it, struck at the very foundation of our system of government, and made a mockery of constitutional authority.

The lynching of the three Negroes at Aiken was one of the most dastardly crimes ever committed in this country. The more reprehensible it was because of the undenied charges that several officers of the law either took an active part or looked passively on while the mob wrought its vengeance upon a trio of helpless, terrorized human beings whose guilt, even, of the charge of murder that had been preferred against them was seriously in question. One of the victims, indeed, had been discharged, after a fair and impartial trial, on account of the lack of any evidence of guilt, even circumstantial.

The execution of the lynching was of the most brutal type. Ropes were fastened tightly around their bodies, according to report, and they were dragged for many a mile behind rapidly moving automobiles. Then they were riddled with bullets to end their agonizing cries.

In the black days of inquisition greater barbarity in human persecution was not resorted to.

An official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has made an exhaustive investigation of the lynching and has furnished Governor McLeod with a list of names of people of the Aiken community that he alleges were guilty of the outrage. Among them is the name of the Sheriff, the one official who was charged, by virtue of office, with the sacred duty of enforcing the law, and preserving the integrity of the judiciary system.

Whether those cited are guilty or not is not the question for the public to decide. That is the duty and the function of the court.

The public, however, is concerned—and vitally—in the most important question as to whether South Carolina will allow this brutal affair to fade into history without every legal recourse open to law enforcement being engaged vigorously to make the guilty pay a just debt to society.

There was a lynching recently in Douglas county, Georgia—the first and only one of the year. Judge Harry Reed of that circuit convened the grand jury, and sixteen indictments were promptly brought, and the accused as promptly arrested and jailed. Their trial is set for an early date.

South Carolina should show an equal respect for the law.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S SHAME

(From The Nation, New York City, November 17, 1926)

To Walter White, Assistant Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, goes the credit for unearthing one of the ghastliest stories in American history. This young man, who has already distinguished himself in various Southern States by investigating race riots and lynchings that reflected discredit on local and state officials, went down to Aiken, S. C., alone, to find himself in the most lawless and brutal district that he had ever visited. The result of his investigation he communicated to Governor McLeod in a letter that might well have scorched His Honor's hands as he held it. Reminding the Governor of his promise to "do everything in my power to get at the truth in this matter and to fix the guilt upon the proper parties," Mr. White furnished details of the lynching, and ended with a list of names, occupations and addresses of a score of men who took part in it.

The data which Mr. White gathered in his courageous and careful search can, he declared, be amply substantiated by various citizens of Aiken whenever the Governor will guarantee them immunity from the wrath of the Ku Klux Klan. According to Mr. White, the Klan engineered the lynching, and effectively controls the community. But the state militia is at the Governor's call. The good name of South Carolina is in shadow; protection can be furnished if Governor McLeod wants it.

A law-abiding and industrious family of Negroes, the Lowmans, were accused of selling whiskey. A sheriff and four deputies, in plain clothes and with nothing to distinguish them as officers of the law, approaching the Lowman house, terrified the mother and her daughter, and brought about a fracas in which the mother was killed, the daughter, Bertha, and a son, Clarence, seriously wounded by gunshot; another son, Demon, shot but not seriously hurt, and the sheriff killed. Seventeen days after the affair five of the Lowmans were put on trial for murder, with lawyers for the defense appointed by the judge. Bertha, Demon and Clarence were found guilty, and were sentenced to death, and the girl to imprisonment for life. So outrageous was this trial that a Negro lawyer in South Carolina was able to present to the State Supreme Court a brief that resulted in a new trial. At the second hearing of the case, Demon was found noa guilty. Within one hour of the reversal of the verdict persons as far away as Columbia knew that the Lowmans would be lynched that night. And they were.

Mr. White, in his extraordinary story, which is now being substantially repeated by The New York World, charges that, far from being over-

powered, Sheriff Nellie Robinson opened the prison doors and helped to drag Bertha Lowman downstairs to her death. Officials of the law and relatives of high South Carolina officials were present at the bestial lynching. Here is the real shame of the South. Not that a bunch of hoodlums disguised in sheets and pillow cases can carry off a defenseless Negro and kill him, but that officers of the law, sworn to uphold the law, too often actually aid the murderers of the prisoners they have sworn to protect. The Governor of South Carolina is faced with a task which he cannot shirk. He must prove these charges false or he must bring the guilty persons to justice. Else he stamps himself as unworthy of his office and his State as unworthy of the Union.

The Community Chest gives the Community a soul and God knows she needs it.

NEW NEED FOR A FEDERAL ANTI-LYNCHING LAW

By Norman Thomas

(For the Associated Negro Press)
Lynchings, which in the last two years have shown a gratifying decline, are again on the way up in the United States. One of the most horrible crimes in recent years was the triple lynching of three Negroes in South Carolina. These victims were taken from the jail and killed, although one of them had just been declared innocent after trial, and the other two, one a woman, had been granted a new trial. It is alleged that the police officers were accomplices in this crime. The public authorities of South Carolina were as usual doing nothing until Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and later the New York World goaded them into action. It is yet too soon to predict that there is courage enough and decency enough in South Carolina to bring the lynchers to justice.

Not to be behind hand in crime Texas reports a triple lynching for reasons unknown. Two of the victims—a man and his wife—were burned to death in their cabin. This in the country of the fundamentalists who pride themselves on their religious zeal.

In view of these facts and others like them, it's high time to revive agitation for a Federal anti-lynching law. It would, of course, have been better if the states had taken care of this matter. A Federal law will not be self-enforcing. Nevertheless, if American citizenship means anything it means the right to life as against the mob. The United States is bound to guarantee that to its Negro citizens. Undoubtedly the previous agitation for the Dyer anti-lynching bill in Congress was partly responsible for the improvement in the South. This time support should be given to the bill in dead earnest. There is no room for sectional feeling in this matter, nor can the North in view of its own race riots assume a holier-than-thou attitude. All of us as decent citizens must get together to remove from the United States a disgrace which is not shared by the most backward peoples on the earth.

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