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THE MONITOR

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A NATIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF COLORED AMERICANS.

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Wave of Lawlessness Has Spread to Omaha

Attempt to Lynch Mayor Defending Prisoner

Frenzied Mob Fires Magnificent Douglas County Court House, Lynches Man Accused of Criminal Assault and Burns Body.

WILLIAM BROWN, accused of criminally assaulting Agnes Lobeck, a 19-year-old girl, last Thursday night, was taken from the county jail, situated on the top floor of the magnificent million dollar stone court house, Sunday night by a mob, shot, hanged and his body burned. He was allowed to be given into the hands of the mob only after the flames and smoke imperilled the lives of all the prisoners, numbering 130, Sheriff Clark and his deputies, and other officials who were defending the jail. Mayor Ed P. Smith was hanged and wounded and almost miraculously escaped death at the hands of the frenzied mob. The court house was burned, one white man was shot and killed, and two since have died from wounds, and scores were wounded, including twenty-one policemen.

Prompt, Vigorous Action Needed.

If vigorous action had been taken when the mob, composed chiefly of boys and youths, began to assemble at 2:30 in the afternoon the awful orgy of Sunday night would not have been. The supposed impregnable position of the county jail and the apparent impossibility of getting any prisoner out of it, unless he were voluntarily given up, of which no one believed there was the remotest possibility, may account for the apparent leniency with which the police authorities regarded the incipient mob. Failure to stop things at the start proved a costly mistake.

When the Mob Started.

About 2:30 Sunday afternoon a crowd numbering less than 100, and composed mainly of boys and youths ranging in age from 12 to 20, assembled on the south side of the court house and boasted that they had come "to get the nigger." There was no leader among them and few, if any of them, were armed. This crowd was gradually increased until at about 5 o'clock the mob, for it was now assuming this temper, approached the door of the court house and began to break windows. The police drove them back. Leaders began to appear in the crowd and direct the attack on the county building. Securing a heavy plank the mob surged forward and broke down the massive doors. The few police opposing them turned on the hose and they were again driven back. Arming themselves with stones and brick the mob charged the police who took refuge within the building, without firing a single shot in their defense. The mob continued to increase in numbers, while thousands of spectators lined the streets.

Mob Begins to Show Frenzy.

A little before 6 o'clock members of the mob entered the building. They were met with a fusillade of shots from the police. Chief of Police Eberstein attempted to talk to the mob urging them to let the law take its course. He was hooted down and a brick whizzed near his head. The lives of others who attempted to talk to the irrational beast—for that is what a mob is—nearly paid for it with their lives. Among those who were attacked and injured was Commissioner Harry B. Zimman. When Eberstein pleaded that the man be given a trial; the mob shouted:

"Hand him over to us, we'll give him a trial. We don't want any talk from you, we want that nigger."

When Zimman appealed to them, some one shouted: "Lynch the damn Jew; he can make Mayor Smith give up the nigger." Members of the mob pumelled him and he protesting was hurried by friends back into his office.

As night began to fall the frenzy of the mob increased. Mayor Smith, Commissioner Ringer and Chief Eberstein, who had gained entrance to the jail, were with Sheriff Clarke and his deputies and the inadequate force of police, battling to defend the prisoner and the county's property.

Police Driven Back.

The mob drove the police to the second floor of the court house. Ammonia bombs were hurled into the mob to prevent their reaching the floor. But while the defenders were busy the increasing mob without was

active. Ladders were secured and they began to scale the walls and entered the building through battered-in windows.

Someone suggested that Brown had been secretly removed to the city jail.

"Let's go there and see," yelled half a dozen men.

Five Men Search City Jail.

Captain of Police Heitfeld allowed five members of the crowd to search the jail. The man wanted was not found. The men reported this to the others. Then the men returned to the court house.

It was not until about 8 p. m. that the crowd started its violence.

By this time every street around the building was literally crowded with people. Some estimated the number at 25,000.

With a few policemen stationed on the second floor, every advance of the crowd was met with a fusillade of bullets.

Injured men were carried out by their comrades.

Continual shooting on the inside, instead of frightening the crowd, seemed only to increase its fury.

"What we need is some weapons," yelled an excited man.

Guns Looted From Stores.

Almost instantly several hundred men ran to the Walter G. Clark and the Townsend Gun company stores. Doors were smashed in and every weapon in sight, from a small .22 caliber to high-powered rifles were taken. Large quantities of ammunition also were confiscated.

Court House Is Set Afire.

Another portion of the crowd had obtained a large quantity of gasoline, which it poured on the first floor of the court house. It was ignited, and a mighty shout went up from the crowd as the blaze gained headway.

American flags were waved and the crowd went wild.

Hundreds of shots were fired into every window. A head seen any place in the building brought forth a shower of bullets.

A blaze broke out on the fourth floor, and the crowd again yelled itself hoarse.

None Allowed to Leave Building.

"We'll get the nigger if we have to burn the whole shack down," yelled a man as he jumped on a truck in Harney street.

"Now let's do this thing proper," he went on. "Don't allow a soul to leave this building until we get the nigger."

Men with rifles, shotguns and revolvers were stationed at every door.

Mayor Beaten by Crowd.

Mayor Smith, who had been upstairs with the squad of policeman attempted to leave through the east entrance. One of the vigilant watchers spied and recognized him.

"There's Mayor Smith," he cried.



The Hon. Ed P. Smith, Omaha's Heroic Mayor, Who Nearly Lost His Life Sunday Night Because of His Stand for Law and Order and His Firm Refusal to Turn Over Prisoner to Mob.

executive.

"He can give us the nigger if we will and save the courthouse," a man cried.

A dozen blows landed on the mayor's head, and he fell to the ground. Several men jumped upon him, but he was picked up by several friends, who attempted to get him away.

Try to Hang Mayor.

"Don't let them get Mayor Smith away," yelled a husky youth.

"Let's string him up. Shoot him. He's a negro-lover. They elected him. He's no better than they are!"

Hatless and covered with blood, the mayor faced his attackers.

"No, I won't give up the man," he cried. "I'm going to enforce the law, even with my own life."

The mayor was jostled down Harney street until an electric light pole was reached. The crowd dropped a noose around his neck and threw the end of the rope over the iron beam.

Cuts Rope and Saves Mayor.

Then an unidentified, well-dressed man cut the rope as it was being drawn tight. He disappeared before the crowd had time to catch him.

Another man, a friend of Mayor Smith's, argued with the crowd.

"He's a white man," he pleaded. "For God's sake use a little judgment. Don't do something you'll be sorry for. Don't be bolsheviki."

The crowd listened for a moment. Then it started to resume its work. The delay probably saved Mayor Smith's life. In the few minutes' pause police reinforcements arrived, and officers with drawn pistols, formed a ring about the mayor and he was hustled away.

It was done so quickly that the crowd hardly realized that its intended victim was gone. Then its anger doubled.

The police car, standing near, was (Continued on Page 2.)

MONITOR EDITOR MAKES STATEMENT

Declares That a Determined and Serious Effort Ought to Have Been Made By Police to Disperse Crowd at Beginning.

COMMENDS MAYOR SMITH'S HEROIC STAND FOR LAW

Charges Sensational Reports of Crime in Press Chiefly Responsible for Lynchings and Race Riots; Time for Cool Heads and Sane Counsel.

THE Rev. John Albert Williams, rector of St. Philip's Episcopal church, president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and editor of The Monitor, was requested by the Omaha Bee to furnish it a statement concerning the mob violence of Sunday. The following statement was given that publication:

"I am humiliated almost beyond expression that Omaha yesterday let slip her opportunity of demonstrating that here is at least one city where the forces of law and order are supreme over mobocracy, anarchy and vandalism. This opportunity passed when the police authorities made no serious attempt to disperse the mob at the very beginning, and again when failing here there was questionable delay in getting the federal troops on the ground to protect the jail. This outbreak is, unfortunately, symptomatic and impresses many of us as being part of a well planned propaganda to stir up strife between American citizens. This spirit is fostered, encouraged and nourished by the disposition of the press generally to play up in scare-crow sensational headlines the race of alleged criminals when they are Negroes. This is a reprehensible thing to which can largely be traced every lynching in this country.

"The action of Mayor Smith and others was heroic. The fate of these splendid men should be a solemn warning for the suppression and dispersion of mobs at the beginning. These are times for cool heads and sane counsel. The colored citizens of Omaha took no part in last night's orgy. They wisely remained at home, prepared to defend their homes and loved ones to the last ditch. They will be found on the side of law and order and ask only that they be protected. All citizens, white and black, must deplore the awful blot that has been cast upon Omaha by this mob murder."

GUARD FOR MAYOR

A detail of fifteen soldiers, under command of Lieutenant Thomas Christian of Fort Crook, was sent at 1 o'clock Monday to the Ford hospital, where they have been stationed as a guard for Mayor Smith, who is being cared for at the hospital.

RIOTERS ARRESTED FACE SERIOUS CHARGES

Husband of Woman Assassinated Two Years Ago, Under Arrest—Murder and Arson Charges to Be Filed.

BONDS ARE REFUSED BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES

Special Session of County Grand Jury Called October 8 to Investigate and Indict Persons Implicated in Riot.

Under orders of military authorities, police have arrested 55 men during the past two days for complicity in Sunday night's riot. Claude L. Nethaway, 8013 North Thirtieth street, whose wife was murdered in a railroad cut north of Florence two years ago, was arrested late Tuesday afternoon. He was booked for investigation. Nethaway is said to have led an attack Sunday night on the north doors of the court house.

All those arrested for complicity in the lynching of Will Brown will be charged with murder, according to County Attorney Shotwell. "Arson" will be charged against those known to have carried gasoline to the court house to set it afire, and "assault with intent to commit a great bodily injury," will be booked against those known to have had complicity in attempting to hang Mayor Smith, the county attorney stated.

Bonds Are Refused.

Following an order from military authorities to arrest everyone known to have been implicated in Sunday night's affair, detectives Tuesday made total arrests of 27 men in addition to 28 arrested the day before. The youngest one taken in custody was Sol Francis, 12 years old, 1201 Pacific street. Detectives arrested him Tuesday afternoon when it was learned that he was in the crowd of vandals that climbed firemen's ladders into the court house, and kept up incessant cries of: "Lynch the Negro." Three of those arrested Tuesday were booked for carrying concealed weapons. They were Negroes.

Positively no one arrested in connection with the riot is allowed release on bonds, according to Col. J. E. Morris, commanding the military troops.

Find Stolen Guns.

Max Cosgrove, 2814 Pinkney street, brother of Jimmy Cosgrove, who was recently committed to the Iowa penitentiary for conspiracy, was also arrested for complicity in the lynching. Many of the men now in jail for investigation are from other cities.

Guns stolen from pawnshops that were looted during the riot were found on James Brazoc, John Yoch and Jas. Maschek, according to detectives who arrested them Monday night. All three are from Chicago, they say.

One Negro Arrested for Inciting Riot.

George Harris, Negro, 922 North Twenty-seventh street, was the only man arrested, charged with inciting a riot. Harris was apprehended by police at Twenty-seventh and Cumming streets, Monday afternoon when he is said to have urged fellowmen of his race to arm themselves.

Tuesday's Arrests.

Those arrested yesterday for investigation in connection with the lynching, burning of the court house and attempted hanging of Mayor Smith are:

- Joseph Hoffman, optician, 1952 South Thirteenth street.
- Paul Eastman, 2205 Pratt street.
- Max Cosgrove, 2814 Pinkney street.
- C. L. Nethaway, real estate man, 8013 North Thirtieth street.
- Polk Knosko, Chicago, Ill.
- James Mitch, Hotel Rome.
- Louis Jacobi, New York City.
- N. A. Gavin, 2332 Farnam street.
- M. Borsky, 2332 Farnam street.
- Ernest Krause, 1914 Oak street.
- Frank Johnson, Des Moines, Ia.
- Camden Daniels, Dubuque, Ia.
- C. P. Gerandt, 704 South Twenty-fourth street.
- Frank Slater, 606 North Thirteenth street.
- C. A. Curtis, 2222 North Twenty-fourth street.
- Louis Hrabovsky, Thirty-second and Grover streets.
- Anton Munch, 2618 South Eleventh street.
- H. C. Sautter, 312 South Fifty-first street.



Active Mob and Spectators Numbering More Than 5,000 on North Side of Court House Late Sunday Afternoon.