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State Historical Society

# THE MONITOR

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NEBRASKA'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF COLORED AMERICANS

THE REV. JOHN ALBERT WILLIAMS, Editor.

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## WOMAN SHOTS HUSBAND--IS FREED

### NEIGHBORS ALLEGE WIFE DELIBERATELY SHOTS HUSBAND

Alius Wright, Pullman Porter, Victim of Wilful Murder at Hands of Spouse, According to Story of Witnesses

### FREED BY CORONER'S JURY

Many Spectators Who Attended Inquest Express Disappointment and Astonishment at Verdict

According to the story of several neighbors and witnesses to the tragedy, Alius Wright, aged 54, a Pullman porter, residing with his family at 2627 Charles street, was wantonly and deliberately killed by his wife, Alma, aged 41, on Twenty-seventh street, between Hamilton and Charles, not far from their residence, shortly after 6 o'clock Tuesday night, following a quarrel which it is alleged, started in their home.

Mrs. Wright told the police that the quarrel began when her husband came home and found the meal prepared but not on the table and that he struck her with a chair and pulled a gun on her and in the tussle to get the gun away and save her life, the gun was discharged. Her story is in direct conflict with the facts as given to the police and to The Monitor by witnesses.

However, the quarrel may have started in the home, it is alleged by witnesses that Wright had left the house and that Mrs. Wright went hunting for him with a gun. She asked some children which way he went. As she emerged from the alley she intercepted him and shot him. After he had fallen to the ground she fired two more shots at him. This was on Twenty-seventh street between Hamilton and Charles and in broad daylight.

The inquest was held at Jones & Company undertaking parlors, Tuesday afternoon at which the coroner's jury exonerated her. The verdict disappointed and astounded the spectators who had crowded the room to hear the testimony.

Only a few witnesses had been subpoenaed. Robert A. Morton, white, residing at 2639 Charles street, testified that about 6:20 p. m., he was sitting on his north front porch when he heard a revolver shot, followed at a short interval by two other shots. He did not see who fired them.

Jessie Wright, aged 17, daughter of the couple, testified that she arrived home from Technical high school about 5 o'clock, having left school about 4:30 and walked home. She found her father and mother fighting at the front door and as he was attempting to strike his wife with a chair, the daughter warded it off. She said she heard her father say to her mother, "I'll kill you." She didn't hear her mother say anything. She sat on the front porch, according to her testimony, until after 6 o'clock and knew nothing of the shooting.

Dr. McCleneghan, coroner's physician, testified as to the two gunshot wounds found in the left thigh and right leg, and stated that the cause of death was a hemorrhage from the puncturing of the large blood vessels in the left leg.

Douglas Munson, brother of Mrs. Wright, testified that "just about 6 o'clock" his sister and her husband were "fighting in the kitchen" and that Wright was attempting to hit her with a chair and said he would "knock her damn brains out, or something like that." He made them stop and they went into "one of the other rooms," he didn't know which one. He didn't know who owned the revolver.

Mrs. Mary Dorransen, 1314 North Twenty-seventh street, heard one shot and then two, and saw the man lying on the ground. She didn't see who fired the shots.

Joe DeGrinder, 2811 Charles street, testified that as he was on his way home he saw a crowd of people watching Mrs. Wright, who was

standing in front of 2725 Charles street, (the residence of T. H. Dyson) acting like she was drunk. She was swearing and he heard her say, "You'd better give me that gun." Some man gave her the gun. "I saw her put it in her bosom first, but she then took it out and put it under her arm and went down the alley. She said, 'I'll get the dirty son of a ———.' In a few minutes I heard three shots."

T. H. Dyson, Pullman porter, 2725 Charles street, testified that between five and six o'clock, Wright came to his house, just as he was about to have supper and said that he had been having trouble at home. He invited him to have supper, which was declined, and Dyson left Wright sitting on the screened porch while he was eating. Mrs. Wright, with a gun in hand, pushed open the screen door and calling her husband a vile name, they clinched and began fighting. He was on top of her and trying to get the gun. Dyson separated them, took the gun away from her and put them out. Shortly after 6 o'clock she came back and demanded the gun, saying that it belonged to her brother, and that "I didn't give it back there would be trouble." Dyson gave her the gun. She took the gun and went away. He identified the gun in answer to a question, saying, "Yes, sir, that's it."

Mrs. Wright testified that they had been married for twenty-three years and had two surviving children, one child having died; that for the last year her husband had frequently fought her, and was mean when he was drunk, which "lately was most any time." He was mad about supper, and grabbed up a chair to hit her. She told him to go away and leave her alone. She said she went out to get protection and "hid in a store." She was not questioned about the shooting by the attorney for the state. Her head was bandaged where she was said to have been hit by her husband and she showed bruises on her arm.

A minister, a lawyer, a doctor, two business men and two or three women expressed themselves to The Monitor as being surprised at the coroner's verdict.

Alius Wright came to Omaha ten years ago and had been in the employ of the Pullman company since 1920, where he left a clear record. His widow, two daughters, Jessie and Edna, his father, who lives in Kosiusko, Miss., and two sisters survive him.

### PENNSYLVANIA LABOR FEDERATION ASKS END OF COLOR BAR BY UNIONS

New York, N. Y.—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, has received from John P. Troxwell, of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, copy of resolutions unanimously passed by that body at its 26th annual convention in Harrisburg, May 10 to 13, in which all labor unions are urged to admit Negroes to membership on equal terms with white men. The resolution also instructs the Pennsylvania delegate to the convention of the American Federation of Labor to introduce a similar resolution there. The resolution as sent to the N. A. A. C. P. by Mr. Troxwell is in full as follows:

WHEREAS, many of our unions exclude Negroes from membership, sometimes by explicit constitutional provision, and sometimes by subtleties and technicalities; and

WHEREAS, such exclusion is contrary to the very fundamental of democracy and brotherhood, upon which our labor movement is built; and

WHEREAS, the Negro has time and again shown that he can be a loyal union man, often more loyal than the white worker at his elbow; and

WHEREAS, if we bar the Negro from our unions, he will work as a non-union man, for he must make a living, and the employers are hiring him in constantly increasing numbers; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we declare in favor of full and open membership

### EDITORIAL

In the last few months Omaha has had far too many homicides among Negroes for which no one has received punishment. Several of these have been at the hands of women who have shot and killed in some cases their husbands, in others their paramours and have gone scot free.

One of the most recent of these cases occurred this week. Contrary to The Monitor's policy, which as our readers know, is never to play up crime, we have devoted an unusual amount of space to this case, because we desire to call attention to its flagrancy as a sample of those which have shocked the community and gone unpunished. We feel that the attention of the county attorney should be called to the fact that the self-respecting and law-abiding Negro citizens do not look with favor on, and indeed protest against what seems to be unusual leniency in the prosecution of cases of this character where all the parties involved are Negroes. Whatever be the cause, it is nevertheless true, that there have been very few convictions in the case of homicides among Negroes.

We listened carefully to the testimony given at the Wright inquest and we cannot understand how the jury could recommend the release of the defendant. We believe that among the many witnesses to the tragedy and the events leading up to it were others who should have been subpoenaed. But be that as it may, from the testimony submitted it was clearly shown that Alma Wright did not shoot her husband in self-defense and that therefore it was not justifiable homicide. If she had shot her husband in the house or on the street in tussling over the gun, that would have been justifiable homicide. That, however, was not the case. No matter how great the provocation had been at the Wright home, Alius Wright had left home and was neither attacking nor threatening his wife, but was apparently trying to get away from her. She wilfully and wantonly took a deadly weapon and went gunning for her man. She shot him on the street as he was going from her and not coming towards her. Three shots were fired, according to witnesses, and two wounds were found in his body from one of which he died.

Despite the verdict of the coroner's jury, the testimony shows—and this can be corroborated by others whose names The Monitor has—that this was not justifiable homicide but in our opinion, murder, and the defendant should have been bound over to the district court to be tried for her crime.

There has been entirely too much leniency shown in such cases.

to the Negro in all unions, on exactly the same terms as white men; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we pledge ourselves to work for the removal of whatever discrimination prevails against the Negro in our own locals and internations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that our delegate to the coming A. F. of L. Convention be instructed to introduce a resolution of the same effect as this one; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the officers of our federation be instructed to give this resolution the widest practicable publicity throughout the labor press.

### RACE QUESTIONS RECEIVE LIBERAL CONSIDERATION

National Conference of Social Work in Des Moines Re-Elects Eugene Kinckle Jones to Executive Committee

Des Moines, Iowa—

The National Conference of Social Work, composed of more than 3,000 delegates closed eight days of meetings on Wednesday, May 18th. This conference, composed of leading social workers from all over America, discussed many problems connected with the life of the people throughout the country, and throughout the discussion was a lively and sympathetic consideration of questions in which colored citizens are particularly interested.

The forty colored delegates were tendered all the privileges of the conference, including luncheons, dinners, receptions and dances. The outstanding social event of the conference was the public reception tendered by the governor to the president of the conference, John A. Lapp, held in the Capitol, where under the rotunda on the main floor, the governor of Iowa, the mayor of Des Moines, leading citizens, and the officials of the conference mingled freely with the delegates and the townspeople in making merry to the strains of a twenty-piece orchestra.

R. Maurice Moss, executive secretary of the Urban League of Baltimore, spoke at a dinner session on "Publicity for Unpopular Causes;" his subject being "When Prejudice Must Be Overcome." Mr. Moss also led the discussion under the neighborhood and community life division on the subject "Ways in Which Families as Families Participate in Neighborhood Projects in Cities."

Eugene Kinckle Jones, executive secretary of the National Urban League, address an inter-racial dinner of 200 guests on the subject "Racial Co-operation;" and participated in the section on social work training, and at a special luncheon on the subject of "Supervision of Recent Graduates of Social Work Schools."

Charles S. Johnson, director of Research and Investigations of the National Urban League, spoke on "American Migrant: The Negro," at a joint session of the division on Industrial and Economic Problems.

Eugene Kinckle Jones was re-elected a member of the executive board for a term of three years—Mr. Jones receiving the second largest number of votes of the five candidates elected from the slate of 13 nominatives. It was the second time in 54 years that the conference had elected a colored person to the executive committee, and is considered a compliment to the grade of work performed by the Negro social workers.

Mr. Jones' new term will make six consecutive years of his incumbency—which is a very unusual procedure in connection with membership on this important governing and policy-forming committee.

The colored citizens of Des Moines joined the white citizens in making the delegates comfortable and in adding to their enjoyment. Several receptions were arranged and meetings were held under the auspices of the colored citizens of Des Moines.

The conference, after considerable debate, decided to go to Memphis in 1928. In order to gain the final vote for Memphis, the Memphis delegation assured the conference that there would be no discrimination in the seating of the delegates at the conference sessions there, and that arrangement would be made to make the luncheon and dinner meetings inter-racial.

Much satisfaction was expressed by the colored delegates at the conference that the outstanding leaders in the conference insisted on getting these assurances before they would sympathetically consider the going to

### OMAHA DISTRICT CONFERENCE HERE

The Omaha District Conference and Missionary Convention of the A. M. E. Church opened its three days' session at St. John's church, Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Rev. J. W. Baker preached the sermon. Rev. John Adams, D. D. P. E., president-organizer and was assisted in the services by Rev. S. L. Miller. The remainder of the afternoon session was devoted to reports of charges and a study hour at which Dr. Adams presented an instructive lecture on "The Origin and Development of Church Courts; the Law of Church Trials; the Judiciary."

The night session was given over to a symposium on "Why I Am an African Methodist," discussed by Rev. J. H. Grant, the Rev. I. B. Smith of Nebraska City, assisting in the service. A study hour in hymnology was conducted by Rev. I. B. Smith, and this was followed by a course in homiletics on "The How and History of Preaching," sub-topics being discussed by Rev. W. M. Bell, Rev. M. C. Knight and Rev. T. W. Kidd. In the afternoon among the principal features was a sermon address by Rev. W. S. Metcalfe.

The Women's Mite Missionary convention had a busy and interesting program. The sessions closed Friday night. The Rev. W. C. Williams, former pastor of St. John's and the Rev. W. C. Peck of Kansas City, Mo., were among those present.

Thursday there were three sessions, morning, afternoon and night. The evangelistic sermon was by Rev. J. H. Grant, the Rev. I. B. Smith of Nebraska City, assisting in the service. A study hour in hymnology was conducted by Rev. I. B. Smith, and this was followed by a course in homiletics on "The How and History of Preaching," sub-topics being discussed by Rev. W. M. Bell, Rev. M. C. Knight and Rev. T. W. Kidd. In the afternoon among the principal features was a sermon address by Rev. W. S. Metcalfe.

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### WALTER WHITE IN FLOOD AREA INVESTIGATES FOR N. A. A. C. P.

New York, N. Y.—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recently received a preliminary report from its assistant secretary, Walter White, who is in the Mississippi flood district investigating reports that the disaster was being used by white landlords to hold colored tenants in peonage.

Mr. White reports he conferred at Red Cross headquarters in Memphis, with Dr. William R. Redden, chief medical officer of the flood area and that Dr. Redden authorized the following statement:

"The Red Cross emphatically disapproves of any attempts to use this disaster by landlords to enslave further Negro tenant-farmers and share-croppers. Aid is given directly to the individual sufferer. It will be an interesting problem to see that attempts by landlords and others to charge relief against tenants are checked when such relief is given to refugees after they have returned to their homes."

### PREACHER LOSES LIFE IN KANSAS TORNADO

Topeka, Kansas—The Rev. Buford Johnson, 60 years old, colored Nazarene pastor near Medoria, Kansas, and his four-year-old grandson were killed in a tornado which swept across McPherson county.

the South.

On Tuesday evening Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, gave a special dinner to Miss Florence Kelly of the Consumers League, to which she invited sixteen selected delegates from the conference group, among whom were the president of the conference, Dr. Lapp; Miss Grace Abbott, chief of the Federal Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.; T. A. Hill, director of the Department of Industrial Relations, National Urban League; Eugene Kinckle Jones, executive secretary of the National Urban League; Miss Mary McDowell, former director of Public Welfare, City of Chicago; Royal Meeker of Carleton College, Northfield, Minn.; and Miss Amelia Sears of the United Charities of Chicago.

### NEGRO IN SOUTH AWAKENING POLITICALLY, SAYS BAGNALL

Supreme Court's White Primary Decision Having Profound Effect

New York, N. Y.—A new era of political awakening among Negroes in the Southern states is reported by Robert W. Bagnall, branch director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who has just returned from a month's tour of Southern cities.

Mr. Bagnall said that Negroes are not hesitating to register in the democratic primaries and to vote the democratic ticket where they feel the votes are to the advantage of their race, having been advised of their opportunity by the United States supreme court's decision in the Texas white primary case fought and won by the N. A. A. C. P.

"Everywhere I went in the South I saw indications of the rapid passing of the old feeling that the democratic ticket should be taboo," declared Mr. Bagnall. "Negroes are using the ballot where they are convinced it is for the best-advantage of the race.

"In Savannah, Georgia, the mayor of the city sent for a Negro minister who is president of the Baptist as well as of the Interdenominational Ministerial Union. After stating how good a mayor he had been to all citizens regardless of color, and what he intended to do for the Negro if re-elected, he asked that all the ministers should work for the registration in the democratic primary and the voting of colored people. I was informed by this minister that definite steps were being taken to organize the colored people, by block, precinct and ward, for registering in the democratic primary and voting.

"In Atlanta, despite the professional politicians, definite steps have been taken to register colored voters in this way and to instruct them regarding the matters to be voted upon. In Columbia and Charleston, Negroes are making preparations to organize by block, precinct and ward to offer themselves for registration at the democratic primary election and to contest any refusal to register them. In Raleigh, North Carolina, it is generally conceded that the mayoralty election recently held there was determined by the Negro vote cast for democratic candidates by Negroes. Negroes were brought to the polls in large numbers by colored and white people and registered to a large extent to vote the democratic ticket.

"It looks as if the day of bossism—of leadership by the old type of Negro politician in the South is rapidly coming to an end. A new era of enlightenment is dawning to Negroes as to how they may use the ballot to gain their rights and privileges.

"Everywhere I heard the opinion expressed that the decision of the United States supreme court in the Texas white primary case had opened the eyes of colored voters to these possibilities. Many expressed the opinion that Negroes throughout the South, by voting the democratic ticket in large numbers, would of necessity end the present one-party system and produce a two-party system, inasmuch as it will make it respectable for white men to be in the republican party.

"The realization of the awakening of Negro voters and their growing power is not confined to colored people. White people are realizing it too. It is leading to a much greater interest on the part of white politicians in the opinions and the welfare of their colored constituents. Negroes are realizing that the ballot is a weapon, not a mere matter of sentiment; that the democrats are in power; and that if the Negro vote is to determine what kind of man is to be elected at present, it must be cast for a democratic candidate."

### MASS MEETING

A mass meeting is called for 5:30 Sunday afternoon at St. John's A. M. E. Church to hear a report from the executive committee, elected at the meeting held Sunday, May 22, to interview the city commissioners and others with reference to jobs for our people.