CRIME OF LYNCHING

HEARINGS
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
EIGHTIETH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION
ON
S. 42, S. 1352, and S. 1465
BILLS TO ASSURE TO PERSONS WITHIN THE
JURISDICTION OF EVERY STATE DUE PROC-
ESS OF LAW AND EQUAL PROTECTION
OF THE LAWS, AND TO PREVENT
THE CRIME OF LYNCHING, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

JANUARY 19, 20, 21, FEBRUARY 2, 18, AND 20, 1948

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INVESTIGATION INTO THE LYNCHING OF CHARLIE LANG AND ERNEST GREEN AT QUITMAN, MISS., OCTOBER 12, 1942

Charlie Lang and Ernest Green, approximately 14 years of age, were accused of attempted rape, consisting of efforts to entice a young white girl under a bridge. According to Sheriff Lloyd McNeal, both got a "fair and square" hearing before the local peace justices. The boys were taken from jail by a local lynch mob and hanged from the bridge which was reported to have been the scene of the crime.

An NAACP investigator visited Quitman and learned through inquiry that the young girl, the purported victim of the attempted rape, had long been a playmate of Lang and Green and was accustomed frequently to chase and play with them in local surroundings. On the particular day in question the young girl was seen to have run from the vicinity of the bridge. On being questioned, she suggested their attempt to rape.

INVESTIGATION INTO THE LYNCHING OF HOWARD WASH, NEAR LAUREL, MISS., ON OCTOBER 17, 1942

Howard Wash, a Negro 40 years of age, was hanged from a bridge near Laurel, Miss., a community of about 20,000 inhabitants. Charged with the murder of his employer, Wash had been found guilty and because the verdict was split, the judge was given a life sentence. On the eve of the day he was to have been sentenced a lynch mob removed him from the jail and carried him to the isolated bridge. His abduction was carried out at a time when the temper of the community reaction to the lynchings was high against Negroes. 'We get to keep niggers in their place,' he said.

INVESTIGATION INTO THE LYNCHING OF ROBERT HALL AT NEWTON, BAKER COUNTY, GA., JANUARY 30, 1943

Sheriff Claude Screws, official of Baker County, Ga., announced on February 8 that Robert Hall, a Negro, had died at Putney Hospital in Albany, Ga., on January 30. His death resulted from his attempt to take the life of the sheriff making it necessary for Screws to use physical force to protect himself. Screws stated that he had been given a warrant to charge Hall with the theft of a tire. On the night in question he had come with a local police officer, Frank Jones, to arrest the accused.

Hall's death was caused by 21 burns and body concussions and by a fracture of the skull according to the white physician who attended him.

Hall's widow testified to the NAACP that Frank Jones, of Newton, had aroused Hall at midnight on January 30. Hall was ordered to dress and accompany him. Hall refused, and then Jones slit his throat and was electrocuted. Hall was lynched, and his body was burned. The sheriff was not present at the scene of the lynching.

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Jones, who maintained he carried with him a warrant for theft of tires from George C. Durm and John C. Durm. Hall was handcuffed, his shotgun was removed from his home, and he was placed in an auto occupied by Screws. All drove off in the direction of the jail.

INVESTIGATION INTO THE LYNCHING OF CEllos HARRISON AT MARIANNA, FLA., JUNE 16, 1943

The facts in the case are these:Cellos Harrison was accused along with several others of the murder of one Johnny Mayo on February 5, 1940. Harrison was released without charge and remained in Marianna 15 months, working directly across the street from the Jackson County Courthouse. Soon after the election of a new sheriff, Harrison was rearrested, a confession was reportedly obtained.

INVESTIGATION INTO THE LYNCHING OF REV. ISAAC SIMMONS AT LIBERTY, MISS., ON MARCH 26, 1944

This report, consisting of an affidavit signed by Eldridge Simmons, sworn to in New Orleans on August 1, 1944, is summarized below:

Eldridge Simmons, 48 years of age, the son of the late Isaac Simmons, of Liberty, Miss., reported that until March 29, 1944, he and his family resided on their farm at Amente County, Miss. The farm was owned by his father, who had inherited it, debt free, from his own parents. Eldridge Simmons reported that the entire family lived on this farm without trouble until 1941. At this time the father learned of the possibility of oil on the land. He went to Jackson, Miss., and hired a lawyer to straighten out the matter of property rights. The elder Simmons intended that the property should be legally inherited by his children after his death.

During February of 1944, Reverend Simmons was warned not to remove timber from the land by two whites interested in possessing the property. He consulted his lawyer.

Between 11 and 12 noon on March 26, a mob of white men, including those interested in Reverend Simmons' property, rode up to the home of his son. He was enticed into the car with the statement that the men were interested in tracking down the exact location of property lines. Eldridge was beaten and cursed. The mob drove to the home of his father and son were taken to an isolated country spot, where the elder Simmons was slain. Eldridge was released. An inquest was held and a verdict given that Reverend Simmons had met his death at the hands of parties unknown. Eldridge was whisked to Magnolia, Miss., for safekeeping.