Son Kidnapped, Beaten, Jailed, Ordered From Town Over Property

BY JASPER T. DUNCAN

NEW ORLEANS -- "Hitler nor I'nohito in all their 'goriness' was not arrayed as one of these." This may well be the theme of the ghastly and atrocious acts perpetrated upon the Simmons family of Amite County, Miss, second district, as related here by the past week-end by Eldredge Simmons, native-born farmer of the community, who escaped death after being kidnapped, beaten, slugged, abused, and forced to witness the brutal inhuman slaying of his father, the Rev. Isaac Simmons, March 26, by a mob of six white men, all of whom the former knew as recognized.

Simmons, the eldest of seven children of a family of farmers, escaped the fate of his father and finally made his way to New Orleans where he has been for several weeks in practical "fear and trembling," afraid to "talk" until now, from fear of reprisals against relatives and himself.

Property Background to Kidnapping-Lynching

According to Mr. Simmons, an intelligent mustached-man in his late forties, the Simmons estate, heir property descending from his grandfather, Anthony Simmons, comprises 265 acres of debt-free land, which at Anthony Simmons' death came to the Rev. Isaac Simmons and his seven children.

They had farmed the land, and lived good, peaceful lives, until about two or three years ago, when some white men began to try to make them sell the property and get possession.

"We refused to sell as we were getting along alright," Mr. Simmons said. "But they kept on hounding us and even went so far, about 18 months ago, to burn my barn full of corn, destroying it and a fine span of mules I had.

My father, a few months ago, went to Jackson, Miss., and employed a lawyer to straighten out the property, and fix it up so that they couldn't legally take it from me.

(Reaching in his pocket) he produced a receipt from the sheriff showing that he, Eldredge, had paid the taxes on the property as late as February 1, 1944.

"My father had learned," he continued, "that there was the possibility of an oil vein running through our property, and he wanted to keep it for us and our children since all of us but one, Rollin, who is in Chicago, were tending the land.

Called Smart "Niggers"

The outwitted whites who were trying to get possession became angrier over Rev. Simmons' getting the lawyer, and on the morning of March 26, came to Eldredge Simmons' home, called him out and asked him to show where some "line" was down the road, he said.

But let Simmons tell the rest of the story:

"The men were Noble Riley, the man who seemed to be the one most interested in getting the property..."
PREACHER

(Continued From Page 1)

his two brothers, Harper Dawson, and Rabbit Shillman, and a man whose name I can't recall just now, but I know.

After we went down the road a few yards we came to a car and stopped. They cursed me, kicked me, beat me, tore my shirt off me, called me a smart 'nigger' and told me that they were going to kill me. I begged them not to.

"Well, get in the front seat of that car, we’re going to get that preacher, (speaking of my father). There was a double-barreled shotgun in the back seat. I noticed, and all had pistols.

When we got to my father’s house, they held guns on me, and three went in for him. My father was in the kitchen, washing his face and getting ready for breakfast. They called him out, called him a smart 'nigger' for going and getting a lawyer about this property.

Saw Father Murdered

He begged them and prayed with them not to hurt him nor me, as they drove down the road, still beating him in the back seat and had guns on me in the front seat. Some distance down the road the car was turned into a side road where there were lots of thickets. They drove a piece in there and then stopped the car.

'Get out! We’ll fix you,’ they told my father. He got out and, although past 66 years of age, he started to run for the road. They grabbed the shotgun and fired twice at him and he fell. Right before my eyes, they reloaded the shotgun, and the three that were in the back with him went down to where he had fallen. I heard another shot, and blows evidently from sticks they were beating him with, between the times I was begging the three who had me to spare my life.

'You all know you are doing wrong to kill my father like this, he ain't done a think to you all, I said.

In a little while the three returned to the car, but instead of making me get out, I was begging and praying so hard, they stopped and talked behind the car in low tones.

Finds Tongue Cut Out

Finally they came and got into the car and said, ‘alright “nigger,’ we’re going to let you go and give you ten days to get everything you got on that place and clear your hands off.” I had two tenants, A. B. Robinson, and Willie Huff, who lived on the farm and worked for me and an old, old man who had no place else to stay.

When they put me out, I went to my father’s house all bloody, ragged, battered and blind to tell what happened. The news spread, Church meeting broke up and we all went down to where my father lay in the thickets (This was between 12 and 1 p.m.)

When we got to the thickets, there we saw my father lying half on his side, shot three times in the back of the head, all of his teeth knocked out with a nearby club, his arm broken, and his TONGUE CUT OUT.

"Unknown Parties"

Someone went and got Constable George Hazenwood, who went and got the high sheriff.

They came and held an inquest with the verdict that my father met his death at the hands of ‘unknown parties.’

We buried my father Wednesday, March 28. In the meantime I moved out all my stuff, sent my wife to live with her brother, and got places for all of my tenants except the old man. I couldn’t find a place for him so I left him there. He had nowhere to go and is very old.

Sheriff Gives Letter

The day following the funeral, the high sheriff picked me up and took me to Magnolia, Miss., and placed me in jail, he said, for safe-keeping, as those men might kill me. He said of course I hadn’t done anything but they might come and get me if I stayed around Amite.

I remained in jail there until April 8 when they let me out and Sheriff Smith, who was very nice to me, gave me a letter.

"Here it is.”

(Ex: of letter is varbatim)

"To whom it may concern, this man can do good car repair, will work handy around timber lodging or auto repair. Whoever hires him, if he be in Jackson, Miss., keep in touch with Sheriff Gordon Jackson.

I would like to know his whereabouts. His name is Simmons from Liberty, Miss.

Signed: Sheriff Smith, Liberty, Mississippi.

"I made it to New Orleans where I am trying to do odd jobs to keep eating, and see if I can’t get some help from some organization, organization or people to see if we can’t get some kind of justice done.

I was born and reared in Amite and have never been in trouble at all.”

At the end of his story, the battered, tattered Simmons, as season as he is, was almost in tears.

"What I’d like to find out, mister, is can’t something be done to those men for kidnapping me and murdering my father in cold blood? Can’t somebody be made to pay for my crops in the fields, my property damage, and being deprived of my property and rights to make an honest living on the soil where I was born and reared? Can’t some ends of justice be met to aid us in this case?"

WHAT’S YOUR ANSWER?

Following his interview, he later called back and stated that he had contacted the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Ernest J. Wright of the People’s Defense League, who arranged for the frightened victim to talk.

The names of the relatives, immediate kin, with the exception of a brother, Rellin, whom Mr. Simmons believes immune from reprisals at his Chicago home, as well as the New Orleans address of the victim, are purposely withheld at his request for fear of violence to them as reprisals for his telling of his father’s murder, his kidnapping and beating, and being forced to leave his property for confiscation.

He walked twenty-five blocks back to the office in a broiling New Orleans noon-day sun to make this request, which we honor.

They are, however, on file in our


STATEMENT OF ELDRIDGE SIMMONS
MADE TO JOHN E. ROUSSEAU, JR.,
CITY EDITOR OF THE NEW ORLEANS
INFORMER-SENTINEL

New Orleans, La.
August 1, 1944.

AFFIDAVIT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My name is Eldridge Simmons. I am 48 years of age. I am the
son of the late Reverend Isaac Simmons, of Liberty, Mississippi,
Amite County. I am the eldest of my father's seven children.

I had lived on our family estate in Amite County all of my
life until about March 29, 1944 at which time I was forced to leave.
I am married and father of one daughter who lived on the estate
near the house occupied by my wife and me.

Our estate came to my father, Reverend Isaac Simmons, and his
seven children at the death of my grandfather, Anthony Simmons, who
died about 1929. This estate consisted of 220 acres of debt-free
land, a large part of which was covered with timber.

We--my father and his children and his grandchildren--farmed
the land and lived there on the estate without any trouble until
two or three years ago when a white man wanted to take possession
of our property. This man was named Noble Rider.

Several months ago, my father went to Jackson, Mississippi,
and hired a lawyer to straighten out the property so that no one
could take it away from the legal heirs.

I have a tax receipt showing that I, Eldridge Simmons, paid
taxes on the property as late as February 1, 1944.

My father had learned that there was the possibility of an
oil vein running throughout our property and he wanted to keep it for
us and our children since all of us except one, Rollin who is in
Chicago, were tending the land.

I have a letter in my possession that was received by my
father on February 1, 1944 from Attorney Frank Mize of Forest,
Mississippi, concerning the property.

During February, my father cut some timber off the land. Two
white men, Vaughn Lee and Noble Rider, left word for him not to
cut any more timber off the land.

My father wrote to the lawyer about it and was told not to
cut any more timber off the land until the lawyer had straightened
the matter out. My father obeyed that advice.

Between 11 a.m. and 12 o'clock noon, March 26, 1944--which
was on a Sunday--a group of white men including Noble Rider, two
of his brothers, Harper Dawson, Rabbit Spillman, and a man I did
not know, came to my house which is located about a mile from my
father's house, both being on property owned by us.
Eldridge Simmons'  
Statement--page 2

The men asked me if I knew how the property line ran. I told them I thought I did. They told me to come and show them.

I went down the road with them for some distance then we came to a car. The car was a late model Studebaker, I believe, with the gear shift on the steering wheel. It was grayish in color.

They began cursing and kicking me. They beat me and tore my shirt off; called me a "smart nigger" and told me that they were going to kill me. I begged them not to kill me.

All of them beat and kicked me, then told me to get in the car. One of them leveled a double-barrelled shotgun at me and told me to get into the car.

I got in the back seat of the car and they drove about a quarter of a mile from my father's house. The man I didn't know did the driving. They kept telling me that my father and I were "smart niggers" for going to see a lawyer.

Three of them remained in the car with me; three walked up to my father's house.

Some time later, I saw the three men returning with my father. They were Noble Rider, Harper Dawson, and another man (I can't remember whether it was one of the Rider brothers or Spillman).

Noble Rider and the other man were walking on either side of my 66-year-old father, Isaac Simmons, while Dawson walked behind him kicking and punching him.

When they reached the car, they made my father get in the front seat. They all got in the car.

My father begged them and prayed with them not to hurt him or me as they drove down the road. Two of them kept beating me as I sat in the back seat.

Some distance down the road they stopped the car near a side road where there were lots of thickets. "Let's take them down here," one of the white men said.

They told my father to get out of the car. He got out and started to run from the road. One of the men leveled the shotgun and fired twice at my father. One reloaded the gun, the other two ran in the direction my father had taken. The man who reloaded the gun ran off in that direction also, then I heard another shot. I begged the men in the car to spare my life.

A while later, the other three returned. They all talked in low tones behind the car.

Finally, they came around and told me, "Alright, 'nigger', we're going to let you go."

One of them told me to get out of the car; another said, "I'll tell him when to get out."
Eldridge Simmons' Statement

Noble Rider asked me "You don't want to get beat up any more, do you?"

I answered, "I sure don't."

He said, "If this comes up again, you had better not know anything about it."

They told me that they gave me ten days to get off the place and clear off my tenants. I had two tenants, Willie Huff, and A. B. Robinson, who worked for me. And also an old man, S. B. Moton, who had no other place to stay.

When they put me out of the car, I was bloody, ragged and half-blind. I went to my sister's house and told what had happened.

The news spread. Church meeting broke up and we all went down to where my father lay in the thickets. That was about 1 o'clock p.m.

When we got to the thickets, we saw my father dead, lying half on his side. He had been shot three times in the back and some one said his arm was broken. Nearly all of his teeth had been knocked out, and his tongue was cut out.

Some one went and got Constable George Hazelwood. The constable went and got the high sheriff.

They held an inquest and gave the verdict that my father had met his death at the hands of unknown parties.

We buried my father on Wednesday, March 29. In the meantime, I moved out all my stuff, sent my wife to live with her brother, and got places for my tenants.

The day following the funeral, the deputy sheriff picked me up and took me to Magnolia, Mississippi and placed me in jail, he said, for safekeeping. He said that those men might kill me if I stayed around Amite County. The deputy sheriff was Nick Travers. He treated me nice.

I remained in jail at Magnolia until April 8 when Sheriff Wiley Smith of Liberty, Mississippi had me released and gave me a letter of identification.

About the last of April, I arrived in New Orleans. I am now living at 2615 South Johnson Street.

/s/ Eldridge Simmons

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of August, 1944.

Notary Public

My Commission Expires at Death.
August 4, 1944

Thurgood Marshall, Esq.,
Special Counsel, NAACP,
69 Fifth Avenue,

Dear Thurgood:

Enclosed find affidavit of Eldridge Simmons, which is self-explanatory. Since this time, a Negro was shot down in cold blood in Jackson Mississippi without the local Authorities in Jackson taking any action.

Mr. Simmons has applied to the New Orleans Branch for aid. Our only course is to refer this matter to the National Office requesting that they pass it on to the Department of Justice and not be so complacent about the brutality being placed upon Negroes.

Any further suggestions that you may have in this matter will certainly be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Daniel E. Byrd
Daniel E. Byrd, President
New Orleans Branch, NAACP

Enc.
August 9, 1944

Governor Thomas L. Bailey
State Building
Jackson, Miss.

Dear Governor Bailey:

We are enclosing herein copy of affidavit of Eldridge Simmons, formerly of Amite County, Miss., and now residing at 2615 South Johnson Street, New Orleans, La.

Mr. Simmons states in his affidavit how he was forced to abandon his land in Amite County, Miss., following the brutal murder of his father, Rev. Isaac Simmons, for daring to seek the advice of legal counsel in an attempt to protect his property.

This case clearly represents a conspiracy on the part of certain individuals (named in the affidavit) to injure, threaten, and intimidate these citizens in the free exercise or enjoyment of rights secured to them by the State Constitution and laws thereunder.

We are, therefore, requesting your office to institute a vigorous investigation into this matter so that the guilty parties may be properly punished.

Respectfully yours,

Edward R. Dudley
Assistant Special Counsel

ERD: OS
uopwm-19-C10
Enc.

c.l. copy
WUF120 DL=ATLANTA GA AUG 15 1210

Ref. 8/13/44

Rtl. to

Ack.

O.O.

JUST RECEIVED FULL REPORT ON LYNCHING OF REV ISAAC SIMMONS ARMER AT LIBERTY MISS MARCH 26. UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE CASE A

ADVISE COLLECT IF WISE TO RELEASE NAMES OF ACCUSED AND ANY

BRIEF COMMENT=

ATLANTA DAILY WORLD 26 210P

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE
JNE 1 DL COLLECT AUGUST 16, 1944
ATLANTA DAILY WORLD
ATLANTA, GA.

REV. ISAAC SIMMONS CASE RECEIVED BY US AUGUST 7th WE HAVE RECEIVED AFFIDAVITS BY ELDRIDGE SIMMONS, HIS SON, AND FORWARDED SAME TO ATTORNEY GENERAL BIDDLE AND GOVERNOR THOMAS L. BAILEY, OF MISSISSIPPI, REQUESTING IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION IN PROSECUTION OF THIS CRIME ELDRIDGE SIMMONS STATES MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MURDER: NOBLE RIDER, HARPER DAWSON, VAUGHN LEE, RABBIT SPILLMAN. NO OBJECTION TO RELEASE AT THIS TIME.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE.
EDWARD R. DUDLEY
Sub. Asst. Special Counsel NAACP
Re: Isaac Simmons case received by us August 7. We have received affidavits by Eldridge Simmons, his son, and forwarded same to Attorney General Biddle and Governor Thomas L. Bailey, of Mississippi, requesting immediate investigation in prosecution of this crime. Eldridge Simmons states men responsible for murder: Noble Rider, Harper Dawson, Vaughn Lee, Rabbit Spillman. No objection to release at this time.

Edward R. Dudley
Asst. Special Counsel
LYING OF MINISTER LAST MARCH REVEALED BY SON'S AFFIDAVIT

New Orleans, La.—A lynching of a 66-year-old minister last March 26 in Amite county, Miss., because he hired a lawyer to safeguard his title to a 220-acre debt-free farm, has just been revealed in an affidavit sworn to by Eldridge Simmons, son of the murdered man.

Rev. Isaac Simmons was going peacefully about the business of running his farm and had no trouble until it began to be suspected that there was oil on his land. Whites then tried to "muscle in" and take his property away. When they found he had consulted a lawyer they got together a small mob and killed him in the presence of his son, who was later driven from the county.

Eldridge Simmons sent his affidavit to the NAACP in New York which in turn has asked Governor Thomas L. Bailey of Mississippi to investigate. The NAACP also has asked Attorney General Francis Siddle to examine into the possibility that Federal conspiracy statutes have been violated.

The dramatic story of the lynching is told in the following paragraphs from the affidavit:

"Between 12 noon and 1 o'clock noon, March 26, 1944— which was on a Sunday—a group of white men including Noble Rider, two of his brothers, Harper Dawson, Rabbit Spellman, and a man I did not know, came to my house which is located about a mile from my father's house, both being on property owned by us.

"The men asked me if I knew how the property line ran. I told them I thought I did. They told me to come and show them.

"I went down the road with them for some distance then we came to a car. The car was a late model Studebaker, I believe, with the gear shift on the steering wheel. It was grayish in color.

"I got in the back seat of the car and they drove about a quarter of a mile from my father's house. The man I didn't know did the driving. They kept telling me that my father and I were 'smart niggers' for going to see a lawyer.

"Three of them remained in the car with my three walked up to my father's house.

"Some time later, I saw the three men returning with my father. They were Noble Rider, Harper Dawson, and another man (I can't remember whether it was one of the Rider brothers or Spellman).

"Noble Rider and the other man were walking on either side of my 66-year-old father, Isaac Simmons, while Dawson walked behind him kicking and punching him.

"When they reached the car, they made my father get in the front seat. They all got in the car.
"My father begged them and prayed with them not to hurt him or me as they drove down the road. Two of them kept beating me as I sat in the back seat.

"Some distance down the road they stopped the car near a side road where there were lots of thickets. 'Let's take them down here,' one of the white men said.

"They told my father to get out of the car. He got out and started to run from the road. One of the men leveled the shotgun and fired twice at my father. One reloaded the gun, the other two ran in the direction my father had taken. The man who reloaded the gun ran off in that direction also, then I heard another shot. I begged the men in the car to spare my life.

"A while later, the other three returned. They all talked in low tones behind the car.

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"When they put me out of the car, I was bloody, ragged and half-blind. I went to my sister's house and told what had happened.

"The news spread. Church meeting broke up and we all went down to where my father lay in the thickets. That was about 1 o'clock p.m.

"When we got to the thickets, we saw my father dead, lying half on his side. He had been shot three times in the back and some one said his arm was broken. Nearly all of his teeth had been knocked out, and his tongue was cut out.

"Some one went and got Constable George Hazelwood. The constable went and got the high sheriff.

"They held an inquest and gave the verdict that my father had met his death at the hands of unknown parties."

In the letter to both the Governor and the U. S. Attorney General, the NAACP pointed out "This case clearly represents a conspiracy on the part of certain individuals (named in the affidavit) to injure, threaten, and intimidate these citizens in the free exercise or enjoyment of rights secured to them by the United States Constitution."
appeared before the United States District Court in the Northern District of Alabama, August 21, to argue the case of W. L. Patterson v. Registration Board of Birmingham, Alabama.

The complaint in this case was filed in August, 1942, when several Negroes presented themselves to the registrars for the purpose of qualifying for the privilege of voting. The complaint states that the Board of Registrars unlawfully combined and conspired together to prevent Negro residents of Jackson county from being registered.

The oral arguments heard on August 21 are on defendant's motion to dismiss the complaint. The NAACP has filed briefs with the courts on this motion and is also opposing a motion made by the defense to have the case tried before a jury.
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.
August 19, 1944

Edward R. Dudley, Esquire,
Assistant Special Counsel
N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
69 Fifth Avenue
New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Dudley:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 9 enclosing the affidavit of Eldridge Simmons as to alleged violations of his civil rights. This case was reported to us by the United States Attorney and an investigation was ordered several weeks ago. I am forwarding the affidavit to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the hope that it may be of assistance to them in this investigation.

Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,

TOM C. CLARK,
Assistant Attorney General
Edward R. Dudley, Esquire
Assistant Special Counsel
N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
69 Fifth Avenue
New York 3, New York

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Respectfully,

For the Attorney General,

Tom C. CLARK,
Assistant Attorney General
AIR MAIL
SPECIAL
DELIVERY

September
5th
1944

A. P. Tureaud, Esq.  Mr. Daniel R. Byrd
618 Iberville Street  3330 La Salle Street

Dear Friends:

Can you get and send me as quickly as possible the following information regarding the lynching of Reverend Isaac Simmons at Liberty, Mississippi?

(1) Is there any indication that the Department of Justice is acting in the case?

(2) Is there any indication that Governor Bailey has taken action? Is there any indication that anyone else has done so?

(3) Mr. Byrd wrote us August 4th that a Negro was shot in cold blood in Jackson, Miss., since this incident. Do you have any further information on this?

(4) Is someone else working Reverend Simmons' property? Has oil been found? Does someone still hold the title?

(5) What happened to the tenants? What happened to Eldridge Simmons' family?

(6) Did any of the Mississippi authorities, for instance Nick Travers whom Simmons mentioned as being friendly, promise that any action would be taken in Mississippi?

(7) Do you have anything further on Isaac Simmons' education, background, etc.?

(8) Did Eldridge Simmons try to file suit against the men who beat him, civil or criminal? If
so, what happened to it. If no such suit has been filed, is such a suit planned?

We would appreciate receiving this information at the earliest possible moment.

Ever sincerely,

Secretary.
Hon. Francis Biddle, Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

May we ask what action Department of Justice is taking on lynching of Reverend Isaac Simmons on March 26th in Amite County, Mississippi, which was reported to you by this office in letter dated August 9th which was accompanied by affidavit of Eldridge Simmons, son of deceased? We have not had any acknowledgment of our letter. If it failed to reach you, I will gladly send copy.

Walter White, Secretary
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Mr. Walter White  
Secretary, NAACP  
69 Fifth Avenue  
New York 3, New York

Dear Walter:

Answering your inquiry of September 5th, the following information is furnished until such time as we can get more detailed information from Eldridge Simmons.

1. The Department of Justice is investigating the matter.

2. Governor Bailey has not made known any action taken by him. It is said that a representative of an "Agriculture Bureau" has been on the scene. Whether this is federal or state is unknown.

3. No information on this other than what appeared in Louisiana Weekly and which is perhaps the same information in Byrd's possession. Will check for further information, however. Could not contact Byrd today.

4. It is not known at present writing if anyone is working the property of Reverend Simmons. No oil was found. There has been no drilling on the land to determine if there is oil there.

5. Don't know about the tenants. Simmons' wife in Memphis with a brother.

6. No. On the contrary, Simmons urged to leave the State.

7. Nothing presently. He claims a membership in the NAACP from Jackson, Miss.

8. No legal action taken as yet. Eldridge Simmons is awaiting the outcome of the federal investigation, or perhaps assistance from other agencies.

In connection with the above reply which is hastened for such use as you contemplate, I have asked Mr. John E. Rousséau of the New Orleans Informer and Sentinel to send you an issue of the paper containing more detail and he and I will see Eldridge Simmons for additional information.

With best wishes, I am,  

Sincerely

/s/ TURRAUD
Mr. Walter White,
Secretary, NAACP,
69 Fifth Avenue,
New York 3, N. Y.

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With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,
September 11th 1944

Dear Tureaud:

Thank you for your letter of September 8 enclosing clippings and information regarding the lynching of Reverend Isaac Simmons. Please rush us any additional information you are able to secure.

Ever sincerely,

Secretary.

A. P. Tureaud, Esq.
612 Iberville Street
New Orleans, La.
MEMORANDUM TO MISS WILSON:

Here is Mr. Tureaud's reply to your eight questions about the Reverend Isaac Simmons together with clippings from the New Orleans Informer.

WW:elj
WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Amite County Grand Jury returned indictment today of the six men connected with the slaying of the Rev. Isaac Simmons, last March 26 in Amite County, Mississippi. The indictments were returned against Harper Dawson, Roy Dor and Mann Dawson, Noble Ryder, Marvel Ryder and John Brown, all of Liberty, Miss. The men were arraigned October 26 before Judge R. E. Bennett.

Attorney General Biddle announced in Washington October 19th that Federal officials in southern Mississippi had been instructed to turn over to the Grand Jury the results of an investigation by the FBI into the slaying last March of the Negro minister.

After the murder which resulted from a dispute over ownership of land, Simmons' son, Eldridge was driven out of the state and now resides in New Orleans. In an affidavit turned over to the NAACP by the latter, it was shown that whites had tried to take the property away after discovery of oil on the minister's land.

In a letter to both the Governor and the U.S. Attorney General the NAACP pointed out "this case clearly represents a conspiracy on the part of certain individuals (named in the affidavit) to injure, threaten and intimidate these citizens in the full exercise or enjoyment of rights secured to them by the United States Constitution."
October 27, 1944

PM
164 Duane Street
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

May I both on behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and personally congratulate and thank PM and Elizabeth Wilson for the superb job done in getting indictments of the lynchers of the Reverend Isaac Simmons, 66-year-old Negro minister, in Mississippi because he refused to be cheated out of his property. The accomplishment is so considerable that I do not have words sufficiently eloquent to express adequately our admiration.

Ever sincerely,

Secretary.

WW: DW
National Assoc. for the
Advancement of Colored People,
69 Fifth Avenue,
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear Sirs:

The crime committed in Amite County, Mississippi, against the
person of a colored preacher and farmer has, if accurately reported
in the newspaper P.M., revolted me enough to make me feel that I ought
to do something about it. I am at present writing various persons
and agencies in order to acquire more information on the case. I am
naturally doing this in a purely personal capacity, being in no way
connected with any newspaper, organization, or official agency of
any sort dealing with this case.

I would greatly appreciate any information, of any nature whatever,
connected with the Nobel Rider trial and the Isaac Simmons murder case,
which your organization could furnish me and would be only to glad
to reimburse any costs which might be incurred by you in making same
available to me. Any statement on your part as to sources of information
would also be most valuable.

Eagerly awaiting an answer on your part, I am, dear Sirs,

Yours Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul M. Kattenburg

Paul Kattenburg
November 10, 1944

Mr. Paul M. Kattenburg
2500 K. Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kattenburg:

In answer to your letter of November 6th, requesting information concerning the Simmons matter in Amite County, Miss., please be advised that we were informed of this case in July by Mr. Simmons' son who sent to us affidavits of the entire affair.

During the first week in August, we submitted this matter to the Attorney General's Office in Washington, D. C., and also the Governor of the State of Mississippi. The F.B.I. made an extensive investigation of the case and found that it was a revolting crime and that the federal government had no jurisdiction since the killing was not the result of state action and therefore not a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

However, the information obtained by the F.B.I. was subsequently turned over to the state authorities who did submit the matter to the Grand Jury where the men guilty of this crime were subsequently indicted. The trial of one of the men was held last week before an all-white jury, and according to the papers this week, this man was acquitted. As to the other men and whether they will be tried or not, we have no information.

Very truly yours,

Edward R. Dudley
Assistant Special Counsel
1746 Balhoun, NN
Jacksonville 4 Fla. Oct. 14'45

N.a.a.c.p.
New York, N.Y. 26913 OCT 16'45

My dear Sir: I just thought it would be of interest to you to know what was going on in Fla. It appears to be a legal lynching.

Respectfully,
Peter H. Robinson