Hon. David Sholtz,
Governor of Florida,
Tallahassee, Fla.

My dear Governor:

RE: Lynching of Claud Neal.

Following is a report of the events leading up to the lynching of Claud Neal, in chronological order, as requested by you. I will gladly elaborate this, either verbally or in writing.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18th

Miss Lola Canaday left home about noon to go to a water pump about one-quarter of a mile south of her home in a field, and did not return.

Neal went into a field south of his home just after dinner, and came back two hours later, changed his clothes, and went away from home. He spent that night in Mr. John Daniel's crib after obtaining permission to do so. He worked for Mr. Daniel.

Family and friends of Lola Canaday searched all night for her, without success.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19th

6:00 A.M.: Sheriff notified of missing girl.

6:30 A.M.: Body of girl found in woods about one-eighth of mile southeast of water pump, with head crushed.

6:45 A.M.: Sheriff views body in woods; finds piece of cloth near body, which was fitted into Neal's shirt that night.


9:30 A.M.: Mr. Neal arrested on suspicion by Deputy
Chipley and Panama City Jails for Neal within thirty minutes after he is removed from Panama City.

9:00 P. M: Piece of cloth fitted into torn sleeve of Neal's shirt, and the ring is fitted into the watch.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20th

2:30 A. M: Crowd of about 50 men come to Sheriff's home and demand to know whereabouts of Neal, but information is refused.

10:00 A. M: Sallie and Kitten Smith questioned at length by Sheriff and State Attorney, at Chipley jail.

11:00 A. M: Sheriff persuades mob to leave Chipley jail, but they threaten to come back.

4:30 P. M: Proposition to Sheriff that if he will cut down size of guard transporting Neal after conviction mob would probably let him be brought to trial, flatly refused.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21st

10:30 A. M: Chipley Sheriff phones Deputy Davis that mob had been there that morning demanding the two Smith women, and were coming back with torches to cut into jail.

11:30 A. M: Kitten Smith admits washing Neal's clothes after he came back to the house from field, and says there was blood on clothes.

11:30 A. M: Deputy Davis left Chipley with two women and delivered them to Pensacola jail.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22nd

9:00 A. M: Circuit Court convened, and order made to re-convene grand jury Wednesday A. M.

2:00 A. M: Pensacola Sheriff phones Sheriff that Neal has made complete confession and implicated
a negro named Herbert Smith of Malone, and requested Sheriff to arrest Herbert Smith and bring him to Pensacola to confront Neal. Sheriff immediately made investigation and located Smith.

9:00 A. M: Coroner's jury completed its investigation, and found that Lola Canaday was murdered by Neal and the two women.

9:00 A. M: Trial of criminal docket of Circuit Court begins. Malone bank robbers brought over from Chipley for jury drawing. Special venire drawn for bank robbers' case on Wednesday, and special venire drawn for Godwin murder case on Thursday. Grand jury subpoenas issued for Wednesday.

9:00-10:00 A. M: Pensacola Sheriff requested by wire and by phone not to let Neal sign written confession implicating Herbert Smith until confronted by Smith and further investigation made here. Pensacola Sheriff advises he is sure Smith implicated, and requests that he be brought to Pensacola that night to confront Neal.

10:00 A. M: Deputy Coulliette requested to investigate whereabouts of Smith on day of murder, and, if circumstances suspicious, Sheriff would pick Smith up at dark and take him to Pensacola without knowledge of people.

11:00-2:00 P. M: Smith's movements day of murder found suspicious; whereupon he was taken into custody by Coulliette and brought to Marianna and immediately transferred to Tallahassee jail.

Neal makes written confession implicating Smith.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23rd

Criminal cases tried in Circuit Court all day. That night, Smith transferred from Tallahassee to Pensacola, through Georgia and Alabama, and turned over to Pensacola Sheriff to confront Neal.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24th

9:00 A. M: Grand Jury convenes, but recesses until Friday. State attorney not prepared to submit case to them because of no word from
Pensacola Sheriff concerning further implication of Herbert Smith.

10:00 A.M.: Trial of three Malone bank robbers begins and continues all day.

Neal confronted by Smith, and admits that Smith had nothing to do with crime. Smith held in Pensacola.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25th

9:00 A.M.: Trial of Malone bank robbers consumes most of day; jury convicts all three at 4:30 P.M.

5:00 P.M.: Jury impaneled to try Godwin First degree murder case; and witnesses sworn.

7:00 P.M.: While Sheriff and Deputy Ham are transporting two of bank robbers back to Chipley, Mears pulls pistol which was concealed on his person and shoots Deputy Ham, and Ham shoots McKinney, the other robber.

Neal anoints written confession by leaving Herbert Smith out of it.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26th

8:00 A.M.: Sheriff advised by phone by Pensacola Sheriff that mob stormed Bruton, Ala., jail at 2:00 A.M., got Neal, and headed toward Milton, Fla.

9:00 A.M.: Trial of Godwin murder case held up on account of absence of Deputy Ham, a material witness for the State.

Ways and means of saving Neal from mob discussed and considered, but whereabouts and destination of mob not known.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27th

5:00 A.M.: Bank robber McKinney dies at Marianna hospital of wounds.

6:00 A.M.: Body of Neal discovered by Sheriff hanging to tree in Court House grounds. Taken
down by Sheriff and taken to jail yard. Body was cold; had been dead some time. Now understand that dead body was hung there just before daylight.

8:00 A. M.: Marianna full of people, demanding to see body and demanding that it be hung up again; all of which was refused by Sheriff. Circuit Judge requests that crowd be permitted to view body at the jail in orderly manner, which was done.

9:30 A. M.: Circuit Court adjourned on account of mental condition of people, and the five criminal cases were continued until Tuesday, Oct. 30th.

10:00 A. M.: Body of Neal buried.

12:00 noon: Negro named Bud Gammons seized by angry mob of about 100 white people at Court House, which accused him of striking a white man with a bottle. Deputy Sheriff Davis rescued Gammons from mob and got him into Sheriff's office on second floor of Court House. Mob storms office, demanding the negro be taken from the Sheriff and lynched. Sheriff manages to hold them off, with aid of several good citizens, Circuit Judge Lewis, Justice Buford of the Supreme Court, and others. About an hour required to quiet down this mob, and negro held in office.

12:00-3:00 P. M.: Numerous outbreaks against negroes in Marianna, consisting of kicking them off the streets by crowds of white people, mostly drinking, and mostly from Alabama and Georgia, and surrounding counties. These mobs forced their way through several private dwellings searching for negroes, and presented themselves to numerous business establishments in Marianna demanding the negro employees. Several business men kept them out at the point of a gun.

12:30 P. M.: Governor's Office asked to send troops.

1:00 P. M.: Deputy Sheriff Ham dies in Chipley of wounds inflicted by negro.

2:00 P. M.: Lots of talk about lynching Learns for killing Deputy Ham. Learns and Linder moved from Chipley to Panama City for safe-keeping; and brought back to Chipley about 9:00 P. M.

4:30 P. M.: Troops arrive, and order restored.
6:00 P. M: Negro Gammons moved from Sheriff's office to jail, guarded by troops.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28th

1:00 A. M: Mears and Dudley brought from Chipley jail to Marianna jail, under guard of troops.

Everything quiet; part of troops leave.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29th

9:00 A. M: Malone bank robbers sentenced to life imprisonment; and taken back to Chipley jail, guarded by troops.

1:00 P. M: Negro Gammons released from jail, after ascertaining that he would be safe at home.

Remainder of troops leave at dark.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30th

9:00 A. M: Trial of criminal cases resumed in Circuit Court.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31st

After ascertaining that Herbert Smith would be safe at Malone, he was brought back from Pensacola and released.

The two negro women are yet in custody of Sheriff Cedar, of Pensacola.

I have not been able to learn any of the details of the seal lynchings, and do not know whether he was killed in Alabama or Florida. I am making further investigation along this line, and will advise you of results.

Yours very sincerely,

W. F. Chambliss
Sheriff, Jackson County.