International Labor Defense Survey Reveals Fifteen Lynchings in 1940

The International Labor Defense presents its survey of lynchings in the year 1940. These statistics are part of a general survey of violations of civic rights during the past year which is being prepared for publication in March 1941.

TOTAL for the year 1940: 15.

ALABAMA - 1 lynching - JESSE THORNTON, 27, Negro - Lynched in Luverne, Ala., on June 22, 1940 by a mob which chased, lashed and bashed his body out of the river on June 28. He was black-jacketed and arrested by a policeman who stated Thornton had "forgotten to call Mr. Mob formed at fall door where Thornton was stoned, chased three-quarters of a mile into a field, dunned in a truck and killed in a swamp.

ARKANSAS - 1 lynching - FLIVIAN MORRIS, a young Negro woman - Lynched in Wynne, Ark., on Christmas Day, 1940 by a mob which almost literally hacked her to pieces with tomahawks. She was accused of "boasting" of her relationship with a white man.

FLORIDA - 1 lynching - JOE GRIFFIN, Negro - His body was found in a ditch at Westminster, Fla., on May 18. He was killed on May 17, charged with writing a letter to a white girl. He was released "for safekeeping".

GEORGIA - 4 Lynchings - SARAH RAVEL, and BENJAMIN FORD, white - Lynched by the KKK on March 2 near Atlanta, Ga. Beaten to death by hooded mob which came upon them seated in a parked automobile. Charged with "immorality."

ISAAC GASTON, white - Lynched by KKK on March 2 near Atlanta, Ga. Flown to death with a rope. Body found in woods. Grand Jury investigation of his death disclosed 18 cases of KKK lynchings.

AUSTIN CALLOWAY, 18, Negro - Lynched in LaGrange, Ga., on September 8, 1940. Taken from jail where he was awaiting trial on charges of "attempting to attack a white woman." Marked gang of 8 white men forced jailer to surrender him "at point of gun" according to chief of police who also said, "Attorney was attracted away from incident by a fire." Caloway's body was found eight miles from town.

LOUISIANA - 4 Lynchings - ROBERT WILLIAMS, 10, Negro - Found dead on the highway near New Roads, La., on June 2. Body showed evidence of having been beaten to death. Had been threatened with lynching by his boss.

EDDIE GAY, Negro - Lynched by police-led mob of about 300 on November 24 at Hammond, La. Garrett was accused of killing a white farmer in an attempt at robbery. Police state he tried to escape whereas upon they formed a posse which shot him down in the woods. Mob continues to roam swamps hunting James Johnson, 33, said to be Garrett's "accomplice."

WILLIE REYES, Negro - Found beaten to death at Mansfield, La., on June 4. Reported slain by mob after alleged fight with white farmer.

JAMES SMITH, Negro - Found beaten to death at St. Francisville, La., September 14, 1940. Mob led by sheriff snatched victim from auto driven by attorney Smith had sued authorities for false arrest. Beaten with chains and brick-bats. Left to die in woods.

MISSISSIPPI - 2 Lynchings - "TEXAS RED" - Lynched by mob which trailed him for 24 days at Port Gibson, Miss., on February 3. Suspected of having shot a deputy sheriff. Mob assumed such proportions, the governor sent troops with sheriff's help.

EDWARD S. COOK, Negro - Lynched at Tutwiler, Miss., by at least three white men. Circumstances not yet investigated.

TENNESSEE - 2 Lynchings - ELBERT WILLIAMS, Negro - Lynched at Brownsville, Tenn., on June 29. This Negro leader of Negro Right-to-Vote campaign was found dead in the river, his arms and feet tied with rope, head battered in.

ROOSEVELT JONES, 20, Negro - Lynched at Dyersburg, Tenn., on August 2nd or 3rd. Shot to death.

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