

ONE ARREST MADE FOR DELAWARE LYNCHING

Others, It Is Announced, Will Be
Taken Into Custody.

BOY WAS FATALLY SHOT

12-Year-Old Lad Was in Mob That
Stormed the Jail—How the
Lynching Was Planned
and Carried Out.

WILMINGTON, Del., June 23.—The excitement attending the gruesome tragedy enacted last night outside the city limits when George F. White, the negro murderer of seventeen-year-old Helen S. Bishop, was burned at the stake, has subsided. The swift and dire punishment meted out to the perpetrator of the terrible crime is the sole topic of conversation, but to-night the details are calmly rehearsed. Public sentiment appears to deplore the resort to mob violence, but the consensus of opinion is that summary vengeance alone could atone for the brutal outrage upon the life and honor of the young girl.

It is generally believed that had the courts brought the murderer to speedy trial last night's tragedy would have been averted. The Judges who had postponed action upon the case of the confessed assailant of Miss Bishop to-day explain their action by saying that popular prejudice and indignation would have precluded the possibility of a fair trial for the culprit.

It is not known as yet what action the State authorities will take. Gov. Hunn says he will confer with Attorney General H. H. Ward. The latter made a brief statement to-night, in which he said that the State will await the result of the Coroner's inquest, and that every effort would be exerted to ascertain the names of the leaders. Coroner McCormick has not fixed the date for the inquest.

An arrest was made to-night by State Detective Francis. The name of the man taken into custody is said to be Arthur Corwell. It is said that he came from Baltimore. He is held on the charge of murder.

Col. James McComb, a wealthy retired capitalist of Claymont, near here, called on the police authorities to-day and told them he would go bail for all persons arrested in connection with the lynching. When he heard of to-night's arrest he again called at the police station and offered to go bail for the prisoner, but this the authorities would not allow.

Attorney General Ward said to-night that he expected more arrests, that there were twelve leaders in the mob and that they would be arrested as soon as the police could locate them.

It is said that State and city detectives were in the crowd last night and recognized some of those who participated in the burning.

During the show of resistance made by the police and the jail officials when the mob attacked the Newcastle County Workhouse, Peter Smith, a twelve-year-old boy was shot in the back. The bullet which struck him evidently came from a pistol in the crowd, as it is said by the prison warden that his guards fired over the heads of the lynchers. Smith's condition is critical, and he is not expected to live. Another young man, whose name is unknown, was slightly injured. The only other persons known to have been hurt were a man who was kicked in the abdomen by White, when the negro attempted to escape from his torturers, and another man who had his arm burned.

Mrs. Bishop, mother of the murdered girl, is in a state of extreme nervousness. White was put to death within a few hundred yards of the Bishop home, and the glare of the fire and howls of the mob could be plainly seen and heard at the house.

PROTEST FROM CLERGYMEN.

Nearly all of the clergymen in the city held a meeting at Y. M. C. A. Hall to-day and adopted the following:

Whereas, A revolting and fiendish crime has been committed in our community; and

Whereas, The crime has been violently and fiendishly expiated by lynching the self-confessed perpetrator; and

Whereas, The execution of the law has thereby been taken from the courts of our State, and their majesty and dignity dishonored; therefore be it

Resolved, That we put on record our sense of sorrow, indignation, and shame at the lawlessness and Anarchistic demonstration that has brought reproach upon our Commonwealth; that we call upon all classes and conditions to condemn and repudiate such lawlessness and inhumanity as have shocked not simply our own people, but the Nation at large; that we in and through the pulpit insist upon the sanctity of the law and the necessity for confiding in the wisdom and integrity of our courts of justice.

Judge Grubb of the County Court to-day made a public statement, in which he deplores the lynching of White and its consequent reflection upon the good name of Delaware. Judge Grubb also explained the action of the court in refusing to call a special session of the Grand Jury for the indictment of Miss Bishop's murderer. He says the trial would have been attended by such public clamor and prejudice that a fair trial would have been impossible and the court would have been compelled to grant the motion of the prisoner's counsel for a change of venue. Once the prisoner was moved to the insecure jail of Kent County or Sussex County, he might have escaped.

Chief Justice Lore of the State Supreme Court, which had declined to hold the trial until next September, would not make reply to this statement, saying it would not be in keeping with the court's policy to answer such criticisms.

Justice Pennewill stated that at the proper time, if any person were brought before the court on a charge of participating in the lynching, the court would perhaps have something to say.

LYNCHING CAREFULLY PLANNED.

There is no doubt that the lynching was planned carefully several days in advance. Invitations were tendered various men to participate, and they were given notice of the time and place where the mob was to assemble. Originally the plot was to have been executed Saturday night, but through some misunderstanding the attempt failed.

Early yesterday morning word was passed around that the attack was to be made on the prison at 10 o'clock last night and that the men who were to participate in it were to meet at Price's Corner half an hour before that time. The report gained wide circulation, but most people who were not actually concerned in the plot were of the opinion that the plan would not be carried out. As a result of the reports, however, people flocked toward the workhouse early in the evening. The majority of these were there out of curiosity, although after they

reached the prison many joined the attacking party.

The Police Department was advised during the day of the contemplated attack, and thirty policemen in charge of Chief Black and Capt. Evans and Kane went to the workhouse. This was at 8 o'clock last night. There were already several thousand persons outside the prison, and the officers concluded that their best course would be to go inside and resist efforts to gain admission.

They did not have to wait long for trouble. There were at least 5,000 people around the workhouse, but the men who actually took part in the lynching did not number over 500. The leader was a man who said his name was Baker, and that he was from Virginia. His face was familiar to most of the people, and it is believed he is a resident of Wilmington, although some say he had been imported for the purpose of leading the mob. Led by him, the crowd advanced into the front vestibule, or reception hall, and demanded admittance to the jail. Their demand was refused by the guards, and they were deluged by a stream of water from the fire fighting equipment of the institution. This did not lessen the eagerness of the besiegers, who immediately began an assault upon the iron doors.

It was during one of these rushes that the Smith boy was hurt.

The shooting did not have any effect on the crowd, other than to frighten a few off the lawns surrounding the workhouse, but they returned with reinforcements and aided those who were striving to get to the negro's cell.

Chief of Police Black shouted to the crowd: "The first man that comes into this corridor will be killed!"

A man, said to be from the South, grasped one of the heavy sledgehammers, and as he attacked the steel grating cried:

"Then you had better kill me for the first one."

Another man, said to be from the West, shot out the cluster of incandescent lights in the vestibule. The mob and guards exchanged shots, but did not aim at each other.

In addition to Peter Smith, a youth, name not known, was wounded during this fusillade. He had the skin torn from the side of his nose, but he is not seriously injured. It is thought these two persons were accidentally shot by people in the crowd.

While about 500 men and boys were storming the front of the jail, several thousand of sympathizers were lined up outside, and, while they took no active part in the attack, were plainly in favor of lynching White.

SMASH IN CELL DOORS.

After forcing their way into the lower corridor on the west wing, the crowd surged up to the front row of cells on the third floor. The leaders, who wielded the sledges and rivet-cutting appliances, were calm and determined, and cut straight to the cell of the man they were after. That no other doors were demolished is due to the calmness of the leaders, who quietly told Chief of Police Black and Warden Meserve that they intended to get the negro if they had to break every steel door in the place and argued that it was a useless expense to the county to have unnecessary damage done to property. The officials saw the strength of their argument, and informed the leaders that White was in Cell No. 13, on the front row, third story. This was enough, and the door to this row of cells was at once attacked.

"This is the only door between us and our man," shouted one of the mob, "and if you will stand back we will cut it open in an hour."

The crowd stood back for a while, but became impatient and surged forward so strongly that the work was delayed. While this door was being cut another party with sledges and chisels attacked the large steel box containing the levers that opened and closed the cell doors including White's cell. It was just twenty-two minutes of 12 o'clock when the mob, with yells, curses, and cheers, rushed into the corridor past the cell doors of the frightened prisoners to the cell occupied by White. Here more trouble was encountered, for in smashing the lever box the mechanism was damaged and the door to the cell of White could not be opened.

Warden Meserve then rushed into the cell corridor to prevent the mob taking the wrong man. He saw that the men with hammers were about to demolish the cell door, and told them how to disconnect the door so that it could be operated. As soon as the door to White's cell slid open there was a deafening cheer and cries of:

"Don't hurt him, hang him; don't hit him, burn him at the stake. Take him to the place where he murdered Miss Bishop, for we have driven a stake there and will burn him."

White fought desperately for his life in the little iron cage cell, and knocked down the first man who approached him. The leaders again showed their clearheadedness, and one of them, a powerful man, stepped forward before any one could strike the prisoner and threw his arms around the frightened wretch, thus protecting him from violence.

The lawn in front of the prison was a sea of faces when viewed from the porch, and White's custodian became convinced that unless strategy was used there would be little chance of getting their man to the spot on Price's Road where it was planned that the negro should be burned to death. This danger was overcome by a quiet order to extinguish lanterns or keep them concealed. In the darkness there was a confused rush, and after this no one seemed to know where the prisoner was.

THE NEGRO CONFESSES.

On the way White begged to be allowed to say a few words to the crowd before he was killed, and the promise was made to him that he should be allowed to make a statement. When he found that his case was hopeless the negro confessed to having committed the deed, and did not spare himself in telling of it. He again confessed as he was standing near a hedge a few feet from where the outrage was committed. He prayed fervently to God to forgive his sins, and seemed anxious to do as much talking as possible in the few minutes he had to live.

While White was praying and confessing three or four stern-faced men began splitting rails with which to burn the wretch. It took so long to get the fuel ready that the crowd impatiently cried to the leaders to proceed with the execution.

When everything seemed to be about ready a man on a white horse rode into the crowd. It is said his home is in Kentucky. Taking off his broad-brimmed felt hat, he bowed to the crowd and said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: Me and this hoss are going to get some straw to start this fire."

He rode to a near-by farmhouse, and in a short time reappeared with two stacks of straw. The straw was placed around the stake, and White was brought bareheaded into the circle. His nerve seemed to be good, and he held his head up while he addressed the crowd. He made another confession, and appealed to God for mercy. A strong rope was then brought, and the negro was wrapped in its coils from shoulders to feet. His mouth was working while this was going on, and he seemed to be trying to finish his statement. The crowd was in a hurry to get through with its gruesome task, and called out for the executioners to hasten. After the rope had been adjusted the negro was fastened to the stake, and the torch was applied to the straw.

THROWN BACK INTO FIRE.

The flames leaped up and licked the man's bare hands. He was held erect by one of the lynchers until his clothing was burning fairly, when he was pushed into the bed of the fire. He rolled about, and his contortions were terrible, but he made no sound. Suddenly the ropes on his legs parted, and he sprang from the fire and started to run. A man struck him in the head with a piece of fence rail and knocked him down, and he was thrown again into the flames. He rolled over several times, but was promptly returned. While this was going on shouts, cheers, and gibes went up from the crowd.

When the negro had ceased to show sign of life the body was placed on its back, and fuel was piled upon it until a roaring fire was soon consuming it.

It was about 2 o'clock when the crowd began to disperse.

At noon to-day Deputy Coroner Killmer went to the scene of the lynching for the purpose of securing some of the remains of the negro so as to go through the legal form of holding an inquest. But according to the story of those who had left the place an hour previous there was little probability of his finding anything substantial, as the relic hunters had made off with the pieces of bones that were left.

White's confession, made just before the torch was applied to the pile of oil-soaked burlap around him, was an admission of everything, and more, than had been charged against him. He is stated to have said:

"I was sent by Mr. Woodward to the cornfield to try some corn. I saw Mr. Woodward's daughter and intended to attack her, but a couple of men came along in a wagon and I did not disturb her. Then I saw the Bishop girl and I followed her. I seized her and asked her if she had any money she would give me to let her go. She gave me 60 cents. Then I again seized her, and she cried: 'Please don't hurt me,' but I paid no attention to this."

"Then I asked her if she was going to tell on me. She said she was. I gave her a back in the throat with my knife and asked again if she was going to inform on me."

She said she was, and then I cut her throat twice again and left her."

During the day thousands of persons went to the scene of the lynching, many of them intent upon securing ghastly relics. In this, however, they met with little success, as the burning had been so effectual as to destroy almost every vestige of the victim's body. The only remains were pieces of his bones. In order to reach the scene many of these people walked the three miles from Wilmington in a drizzling rain, and those who rode on the trolley cars had to walk a mile before they reached the spot. But nothing could abate their ardor, and all day there was a constant stream of people traveling along the road.

Deputy Coroner Killmer, who visited the scene of the lynching, found little to view. All semblance of the human form in White's body had been obliterated by the avenging fire and the morbidly curious relic hunters. A small portion of the trunk and one or two charred bones were recovered and taken to the Morgue. One man carried away a foot that had not been consumed. Fragments of clothing, pieces of wood, cinders, and any article that bore mute testimony of the mob's work, were eagerly sought.

PREACHER EXPLAINS HIS WORDS.

The Rev. H. A. Ellwood of the Olivet Presbyterian Church, who last Sunday forcefully expressed himself in a sermon appealing to the Justices of the Supreme Court for an immediate trial of White, today dictated the following statement:

"I am very sorry it happened as it did. I believe the man should have had a legal trial, but I also believe that he should have had a speedy trial. The lesson we can learn from last night's outbreak is that the people are tired of the delays of the law. Certain terrible crimes require stern and speedy punishment, and when the machinery of the law is not set in motion the people, impatient of the delay, move themselves. I personally deplore the lynching. I believe, however, if the judges yesterday had announced that they would call a special session of the court and try the man at once the lynching would have been averted."

In the sermon referred to the Rev. Mr. Ellwood said:

"I call your especial attention to that part of my text found in the Constitution, which says: 'In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial.'"

"On the day of this terrible crime the officers arrested a man supposed to be guilty. He was taken before a Magistrate and held without bail. To-night he is in jail, with armed guards parading about for his protection, waiting until the middle of September. Is that speedy? Is that even constitutional?"

"O honorable Judges, call the court, establish a precedent, and the girls of this State, the wives of the homes and the mothers of our firesides, and our beloved sisters will not be sorry, and neither will you."

"And, honorable Judges, if you do not hear and heed these appeals and that prisoner should be taken out and lynched, then let me say to you, with a full realization of the responsibility of my words, even as Nathan said to King David of old, after his soldiers had killed Uriah, 'Thou art the man.' So I would say to you. The responsibility for lynching would be yours for delaying the execution of the law."

"Should the murderer of Miss Bishop be lynched? Yes, but only under one condition, and that is this: If his trial shall be delayed until September and then, though he be proved guilty, through some technicality of the law or any undue influence upon either Judges or jury, he be not given capital punishment, then the citizens of the State should arise in their might and execute the criminal and thus uphold the majesty of the law."

The Rev. Dr. E. A. Bishop, father of the murdered girl, in an interview to-night, deplored the mob law which had terminated the life of his daughter's assailant. He said, however, that it was the impression of the citizens that had a speedy trial been promised, the tragedy could have been averted. Mr. Bishop said that his wife was in delicate health, but since hearing of the lynching, and knowing of White's confession, she seemed much improved. It is his intention, he said, to take Mrs. Bishop to Burlington County, N. J., if her condition shall permit.

He had been aware for several days, he said, of the purpose of the citizens and had so notified the police of Wilmington and Warden Meserve of the Newcastle County Jail. Mr. Bishop sat up with his sick wife last night, and when the mob arrived with the victim shouts could be heard at the house, the bedroom windows of which command a view of the spot where the negro was executed. Mrs. Bishop, hearing the shouts and the pistol shots, became extremely nervous and asked whether the prisoner was in the hands of the mob. In order to quiet her Mr. Bishop replied that the crowd was only celebrating. No member of his family was present at the lynching.

The execution took place on a farm owned by William Armstrong, not more than 400 yards from Mr. Bishop's house.