



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Crisis Vol 13. No. 3

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cap, has paid her debt and has just held a conference of far-reaching importance on the subject of Negro education. Representatives of Negroes, South and North, and of white men, North and South, were on the program and all the visitors were firmly impressed with the wide influence of this school as a center of good work and with the indefatigable work of her president.

In the same way Atlanta University, long frowned upon because she persistently stood for the bigger things, is trying to raise on her fiftieth anniversary, a fund of \$500,000. No school in the South has done a work for Negro uplift that can for a moment be compared with that of Atlanta University.

Fisk University, which has fortunately reached the edge of approval or Organized Philanthropy, asks for a conservatory of music in memory of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. The response to this appeal should be immediate and generous and should come from black people and white.

We must rally in defense of our schools. We must repudiate this unbearable assumption of the right to kill institutions unless the conform to one narrow standard.

LYNCHING

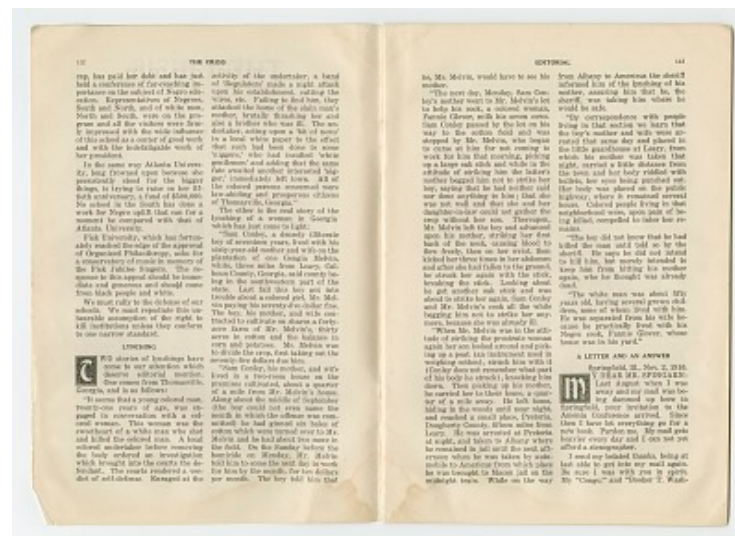
TWO stories of lynchings have come to our attention which deserve editorial mention. One comes from Thomasville, Georgia and is as follows:

"It seems that a young colored man, twenty-one years of age, was engaged in a conversation with a colored woman. This woman was the sweetheart of a white man who shot and killed the colored man. A local colored undertaker before removing the body ordered an investigation which brought the courts the defendant. The courts rendered a verdict of self-defense. Enraged at the activity of the undertaker, a band of 'Regulators' made a night attack upon his establishment, cutting the wires, etc. Failing to find him, they attacked the home of the slain man's mother, brutally thrashing her and also a brother who was ill. The undertaker, acting upon a 'bit of news' in a local white paper to the effect that such had been done to some 'niggers,' who had insulted 'white gentleman' and adding that the same fate awaited another interested 'nigger,' immediately left town. All of the colored persons concerned were law-abiding and prosperous citizens of Thomasville, Georgia."

The other is the real story of the lynching of a woman in Georgia which has just come to light:

"Sam Conley, a densely illiterate boy of seventeen years, lived with his sixty-year-old mother and wife on the plantation of one Gengia Melvin, white, three miles from Leary, Calhoun County, Georgia, said county belonging in the southwestern part of the state. Last fall this boy got into trouble about a colored girl, Mr. Melvin paying his seventy-five dollar fine. The boy, his mother, and wife contracted to cultivate on shares a forty-acre farm of Mr. Melvin's, thirty acres in cotton and the balance in corn and potatoes. Mr. Melvin was to divide the crop, first taking out the seventy-five dollars due to him.

"Sam Conley, his mother, and wife lived in a two-room house on the premises cultivated, about a quarter of a mile from Mr. Melvin's house. Along about the middle of September (the boy could not even name the month in which the offense was committed) he had ginned six bales of



cotton which were turned over to Mr. Melvin and he had about two more in the field. One the Sunday before the homicide on Monday, Mr. Melvin told him to come the next day to work for him by the month, for ten dollars per month. The boy told him that

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he, Mr. Melvin, would have to see his mother.

"The next day, Monday, Sam Conley's mother went to Mr. Melvin's lot to help his cook, a colored woman, Fannie Glover, milk his seven cows. Sam Conley passed by the lot on his way to the cotton field and was stopped by Mr. Melvin, who began to curse at him for not coming to work for him that morning, picking up a large oak stick and while in the attitude of striking him the latter's mother begged him not to strike her boy, saying that he had neither said nor done anything to him; that she was not well and that she and her daughter-in-law could not gather the crop without her son. Thereupon, Mr. Melvin left the boy and advanced upon his mother, striking her first back of the neck, causing blood to flow freely, then on her wrist, then kicked her three times in her abdomen and after she had fallen to the ground, he struck her again with the stick, breaking the stick. Looking about he got another oak stick and was about to strike her again, Sam Conley and Mr. Melvin's cook all the while begging him not to strike her anymore, because she was already ill.

"When Mr. Melvin was in the attitude of striking the prostrate woman again her son looked around and picking up a peat (an instrument used in weighing cotton), struck him with it (Conley does not remember what part of his body he struck), knocking him down. Then picking up his mother, he carried her to her home, a quarter of a mile away. He left home, hiding in the woods until near night, and reached a small place, Pretoria, Dougherty County, fifteen miles from Leary. He was arrested at Pretoria at night, and taken to Albany where he remained in jail until the next afternoon when he was taken by automobile to Americus from which place he was brought to Macon jail on the midnight train. While on the way from Albany to Americus the sheriff informed him of the lynching of his mother, assuring him that he, the sheriff, was taking him to where he would be safe.

"By correspondence with people living in that section we learn that the boy's mother and wife were arrested that same day and placed in the little guardhouse at Leary, from which his mother was taken that night, carried a little distance from the town and her body riddled with bullets, her eyes being punched out. Her body was placed on the public highway, where it remained several hours. Colored people living in the neighborhood were, upon pain of being killed, compelled to inter her remains.

"The boy did not know that he had killed the man until told so by the sheriff. He says he did not intend to kill him, but merely intended to keep him from hitting his mother again, who he thought was already dead.

"The white man was about fifty years old, having several grown children, none of whom lived with him. He was separated from his wife because he practically lived with his Negro cook, Fannie Glover, whose house was in the yard."

A LETTER AND AN ANSWER

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 2, 1916.

MY DEAR MR. SPINGARN:

Last August when I was away and my mail was being dammed up here in Springfield, your invitation to the Armenia Conference arrived. Since then I have left everything to go for a new book. Pardon me. My mail gets heavier every day and I can not yet afford a stenographer.

I send my belated thanks, being at last able to get into my mail once again. Be sure I was with you in spirit. My "Congo," and "Booker T. Wash-

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