

Comment Of Eastern Shore Newspapers On Lynching

Editorial comment in Eastern Shore newspapers on the lynching of Matthew Williams at Salisbury after the Negro had shot and killed Daniel J. Elliott, prominent lumber dealer, in the latter's office, follows:

SALISBURY TIMES:

The paper is today omitting the details of the demonstration here last night when Matthew Williams, confessed slayer of D. J. Elliott, was hanged in the courthouse square for the very obvious reason that almost every reader of our paper had had an opportunity to learn of them first hand from eyewitnesses.

The facts which formed the background for the demonstration and the direct causes are also well known and a repetition of them would be superfluous.

The slaying of Mr. Elliott was deplorable, as was also the mob scene.

Every person living on the Eastern Shore, realizing the background, should use his best judgment and pay little heed to the overdrawn pictures that will be painted by metropolitan newspapers, who have no obligation to this peninsula and whose only purpose is that of preparing news as to increase their own circulations. It becomes a contest among the larger papers to see which one can bring out new excitable features of such a story.

This paper is a part of the Eastern Shore, and always tries to serve the best interests of the peninsula. We at all times deplore violence, either of an individual or a congregation of individuals, but when violence is done it behooves every one of us to cooperate in speeding up a return to absolutely normal and harmonious conditions.

CAMBRIDGE DAILY BANNER:

The lynching which occurred yesterday in Salisbury will, undoubtedly and rightly, be charged to the misrepresentation campaign that has been carried on by some of the Baltimore newspapers. It is easy for anyone exercising the slightest degree of fairness to follow the psychology which led up to this unfortunate affair.

Several weeks ago a family of four persons was murdered. A Negro was arrested and confessed his guilt to several persons and gave them his reasons for committing the crime. One or two of the Baltimore city papers ran sensational headings and misleading news articles concerning the crime and as the result of this the International Labor Defense League got into the case. Then followed a series of delays in bringing to trial the man accused of the crime. Many attempts have been made to have the case removed to Baltimore for trial and those who have followed the case recognize the possibilities of justice being thwarted thereby in various ways.

The people on the Eastern Shore realize the fact that it is no longer safe to send prisoners to the Baltimore city jails for safe keeping because of the probability of agitators and radical organizations intervening to prevent prompt justice. They realize the fact that the most efficient cure for crime is prompt justice and that oftentimes justice delayed means a miscarriage of justice.

With the results of the Yuel Lee case before them, and in view of the many delays that have occurred in this case, it is easy to see how persons who would be influenced by sensational head lines and misleading news articles would decide that there should be no repetition of the Yuel Lee case in the crime committed yesterday afternoon in Salisbury.

(More misrepresentations.)

In an editorial carried by the Baltimore Sun this morning its campaign of misrepresentation of the Eastern Shore of Maryland is carried to the point of being insulting to every resident of this peninsula, although we do not suppose this

makes any difference to the publishers of that paper. We republish the editorial on this page.

We deny emphatically that mob violence has existed on the Shore for four weeks as alleged by *The Sun*. The only time there has been mob violence was when Mr. Ades was slightly mishandled at Snow Hill and on that occasion those composing the crowd had no desire to seriously injure Mr. Ades, but simply wanted him to understand that the people of that section resented the methods which he was employing in the Lee case. Of course *The Sun* feels impelled to defend, protect and nurture the organization that Mr. Ades represents that is its own business.

The editorial today states that the court and the State's Attorney petitioned Governor Ritchie for troops and police armed for any emergency. That statement is like many of the others that have appeared in that paper in connection with the Lee case and has no foundation. The first the court or the State's Attorney heard of troops and police was when on November 13 Governor Ritchie sent letters to the court and the State's Attorney advising that he had directed General Reckord to hold one or two companies of the Maryland National Guard in readiness for the Lee trial at Cambridge and had directed Commissioner Baughman to have a large number of the State police force present for the trial. The suggestion of the militia and of the State police came from the Governor and was not in response to any request or petition from the court or the State's Attorney.

The insinuation that the court was influenced in its decision to have this case tried in Cambridge is in keeping with the above statement about the "petition" for troops. The courts on the Eastern Shore of Maryland are neither influenced by popular clamor nor expediency and the suggestion contained in the editorial would sound as if it had been written by the organization of which the counsel for Lee is a member. It certainly is hardly worthy of such a paper as *The Sun* claims to be and we have no doubt that the publishers of that paper, up on more mature consideration, were heartily ashamed of themselves for publishing it.

The Eastern Shore has no pride in this lynching. The people here feel that it is very unfortunate but they also feel that the greater part of the responsibility for its results from the interference of Baltimore city in the affairs of the Shore, and we would suggest that the last lynching in Maryland occurred not on the Eastern Shore, but on the Western Shore not many miles from Baltimore.

The people on the Eastern Shore resent not only the interference of Baltimore city in the matters of crimes that are committed on the Shore, but we also very greatly resent the inexcusable insinuations that are made against the courts of this section, especially when such insinuations are the result of deliberate misstatements of facts and are made, apparently without any effort to ascertain the truth. Assaults upon the courts are attempts to break down the bulwarks of justice and liberty, to deliberately undermine the confidence of the people in their courts, and the ultimate results of such action, if successful, would be to bring about that condition in the nation for which it is believed certain organizations have been established. Possibly, that, too may be the attitude of *The Sun*.