

## TROOPS GUARD DULUTH AFTER LYNCHING OF 3 NEGROES HANGED IN DOWNTOWN STREETS FOLLOWING ATTACK UPON YOUNG GIRL

Inquiry Begun and Special Grand  
Jury Called to Consider  
Violence Act.

POLICE, OVERPOWERED,  
REFUSE TO FIRE ON MOB

13 Suspects Lodged in Jail by  
Rhinow Under Heavy  
Guard.

Duluth, June 16.—Following a night of rioting, during which three Negroes, suspected of an attack on a 17-year-old school girl, were taken from the city jail by a frenzied mob and lynched in the heart of the business district, the city had regained its usual aspect today. Nothing but the wrecked police station and state militiamen rushed here from camp at Fort Snelling, walking posts gave evidence of the scene of disorder that had prevailed.

Thirteen Negroes are under heavy guard in the St. Louis county jail today. They were brought into the city today in automobiles by Adjutant General W. F. Rhinow and an armed guard. The general was accompanied by Sheriff Frank L. Magle and Chief of Police John Murphy.

All of the 13 men are roustabouts of a circus which showed here Monday. The attack was committed by roustabouts. Six of the men had been arrested at Virginia by Chief of Police Murphy, who followed the circus to that city to arrest suspects. Four had been arrested here and three were brought over from Superior, where they had been spirited to guard against mob violence.

Led by County Attorney Warren E. Greene, officials today began an investigation in an attempt to fix responsibility for the lynching and punish the lynchers, and a special session of the grand jury has been called. Proceedings will follow whenever evidence of guilt is found, the county attorney said.

**Believe One Innocent Man Victim.**

Several of the officials express the opinion today that at least one innocent man fell victim to the mob, and they are not certain of the guilt of some of the others, they said. The girl victim of the attack is reported to have identified nine of the men held in the county jail as the ones who attacked her.

Indignation against the Negroes was at first so strong that the full horror of the lynching did not seem to impress itself on the men who discussed the hanging on the streets early today, but gradually the lawlessness of the proceedings began to make an impression, and the indignation was turned on the leaders of the mob that had brought the disgrace on the city.

Although the attack on the girl was committed late Monday, it was not until late yesterday that it became known to the general public, and the first indications that trouble was brewing came about 7 p. m., when automobiles filled with young men, said to be from the west end, the girl's home, drove along Superior st and called for volunteers to avenge the "wrong done to a white girl."

**3,000 Attack Jail.**

Within an hour the mob had swelled to 3,000 men who surged toward the police station where six Negro suspects were confined. The police had scented trouble and called in all available men, but there were only 30 of them to withstand the assault on the jail that followed.

For hours the battle raged. Bricks from a pile where a building nearby was under construction were utilized as missiles. Windows in the station were smashed and the back door leading to the basement was shattered down.

In an effort to stem the storming party, the police called in the aid of the fire department. Four lines of hose were laid and the streams turned on the mob, but after a short battle, the hose lines were wrested from the defenders of the jail and turned on the police, who were forced to retreat.

**Mock Trial Employed.**

By using an improvised battering ram made up of heavy planks, the front door to the station was forced. Sledges and axes were used in breaking down the steel cell doors and soon the six frightened Negroes were in the grasp of the mob.

Dragging their prisoners to the second floor of the building, the lynchers staged a mock court with "Judge Lynch" presiding. A jury of 12 men was picked, defenders and prosecutors appointed and the "trial" proceeded.

Three of the men were promptly found "guilty" and sentence of death pronounced. The other three were turned back to the police.

**Accused Beg for Mercy.**

Shouting and singing the mob dragged their victims to an electric light pole at First, st and Second av E and proceeded to carry out the execution, while the condemned men were crying out their innocence and begging for mercy.

The Negroes hanged were Isaac McGhee, Elmer Jackson and Nate Green, all about 22 years old, roustabouts with the John Robinson circus. They were lynched in the order named at 11:30, 11:32, and 11:45 p. m., respectively.

**Girl's Escort Threatened.**

The crime for which the three Negroes paid the death penalty was committed on the circus grounds, according to the story told by James Sullivan, 19 years old, of West Duluth, who was the girl's escort. While one Negro held a pistol to his head, he told the police, several others dragged her away and attacked her.

It was reported late today that the girl who was the victim of the attack will recover, although she is suffering from a severe nervous breakdown.

Clear skies with a cold wind from off the lake greeted curiosity seekers as they viewed the scene of the rioting today. While the mob was in action

there was a penetrating chill in the air and some rain fell during the night.

#### Special Jury Called.

Four judges of the district court today signed an order convening a special grand jury at the courthouse tomorrow at 11 a. m. to "inquire as to grave public offenses recently committed in this county."

Two of the judges, Judges A. W. Cant and Bert Fesler, witnessed the gathering of the mob last night in front of police headquarters, but neither saw the lynchings.

Efforts of judges of the district court, two priests and other well known Duluth citizens to stem the fury of the crowd bent on the lynching proved fruitless. The mob pushed the speakers aside and hooted them down with cries of "lynch the black snakes!"

Judge Cant made an appeal to the mob at police headquarters. He appealed to the fair mindedness of the citizens to observe law and order.

Judge Fesler asked several reputable citizens in the crowd to assist and some responded, but most of them would do nothing, Judge Fesler said.

#### Nine Injured in Water Battle.

Eight policemen and a newspaper reporter were injured during the water battle that took place while the jail was being stormed. Some of them were struck by bricks and others were hurled to the pavement by the force of the water pressure from the fire hoses that were taken away from them and turned on the defenders by members of the mob. None was seriously hurt.

#### Troops Arrive on Scene.

Adjutant General W. F. Rhinow ordered Company I of Long Prairie, commanded by Captain Wilbur Miller, and Company H of Fairbault, under Captain W. P. Townsend, from Fort Snelling to special duty in Duluth. The troops left from St. Paul at 1:30 a. m. and arrived in Duluth at 7:30 a. m. No disorder greeted the troops upon their arrival. General Rhinow took personal command.

#### No Shots Fired.

Not a shot was fired during the disturbance, the mob contenting itself with bricks and planks in the assault on the jail.

All available policemen were ordered in at the first sign of threatened violence and 26 men were gathered in the station when the attack was made, but proved inadequate to handle the situation.

The police were ordered not to use their firearms for fear of precipitating a riot that would have meant a possible great loss of life.

Chief of Police Murphy reached Duluth safely with four men he took from Virginia. They gave the names of Albert Smells, Charles Harris, Edward Black and Joe Lehorn. Sheriff Magsee made a trip to Virginia and arrested six more Negro employees of the circus and brought them to Duluth. They are Clarence Grain, Max Mason, Louis Hays, Norman Owsley, Frank Spencer and Eugene Jeffries. The 10 men are now in the county jail in Duluth, where they are considered safe, no disturbance having occurred since the soldiery arrived.

#### Victim Protests Innocence.

When the first Negro, McGhie, was dragged to the foot of the electric light pole and the noose adjusted round his neck, he screamed: "God be with me, I'm not the right man." But he was jerked to his feet and fell to the ground again when the rope parted. The hanging was repeated a second time with the same result, and it was not till the third trial that the execution was successful.

#### Priest Pleads With Mob.

One priest, Father F. J. Howard, climbed 15 feet up the pole and exhorted the mob to turn the Negroes over to the law courts, but he was met with hoots and cries of "Remember later, girl, lynch them!" A few minutes later Jackson and Green were dangling beside their companion.

Nothing had been said about the attack on the girl until late yesterday. Newspapers reported the attack and small groups began forming in the streets early in the evening.

"I know there was something doing," said Police Lieutenant E. H. Barber. "All of a sudden the groups seemed to melt into a big howling mob and they came tearing down Superior st. It sure looked like they meant business!"

#### Police Refuse Demand.

"They also came to the jail doors and demanded the Negroes. This, of course, was refused, but they said they would either get the Negroes or wreck the jail. Then they started wrecking things. We saw it was useless to resist the mob, but in the line of our duty we did the best we could to protect our prisoners."

"All six of the Negroes had been arrested on suspicion. I do not know positively whether any of them were guilty of attacking the girl, but I think two of them were. I believe the mob may have killed one innocent Negro."

"As soon as they got to the Negroes, the mob leaders decided only three of them looked guilty. They took them down the street a block to an electric light pole and strung them all up. Not a shot was fired. As soon as the Negroes were dead the mob dispersed and quiet reigned again."

"It all happened so quickly it doesn't seem possible. The bodies of the Negroes were put down shortly after midnight and taken to an undertaking establishment. The three Negroes who

were not lynched were taken out of town for safekeeping."

The three Negroes who escaped violence were Louie Williams, John Thomas and Harry Richardson.

#### Good Humor Prevails.

One noticeable feature of the mob was that despite the grim work in which it was engaged, good humor and comparative order pervaded it. With the exception of the storming of the jail, when doors and windows were broken, there was no destruction of property. The leaders went about the work they had set for themselves with unyielding determination, but when their idea of justice had been carried out, there was no further demonstration. None of the bodies of the hanged Negroes was mutilated.

County Attorney Greene, who is conducting the investigation and whose duty it will be to prosecute men suspected of participating in the lynching party, said today he faces a difficult problem, as no one appears to be willing to give evidence against any of the others, and the police say they did not recognize any of the active members of the mob.

#### Inquiry to Start at Once.

"It is a terrible thing to have happened," he said. "An investigation will be started at once and everything possible done to bring all offenders to justice."

So far as the police could learn today, the nucleus of the lynching party was formed by automobile loads of young men from West Duluth, where the girl lives. They are said to have driven rapidly down Superior st. Duluth's principal thoroughfare and asked for volunteers to avenge the wrong. Some of the pedestrians along the street met them with jeers, but others started toward the jail and soon the crowd was beyond the control of the police.

#### Plan to Stop Sheriff Rumored.

Detachments of guardsmen were sent out by General Rhinow to patrol the roads between Duluth and Virginia when it was rumored several truck loads of the lynching party had started for that city with the intention of intercepting the police chief and the sheriff who were rounding up other suspects from the circus grounds there. None of the party was encountered, however, and the police are inclined to discredit the rumor that such a plan had been formed. Other guardsmen were detailed to protect the county jail against attack, but no such attack developed, it was reported today.

Among the spectators to the lynching were many Duluth Shriners, who were in the Shrine auditorium preparing to leave for Portland, Ore., to attend the national convocation there. The lynching took place immediately outside the auditorium, a block north of the very heart of Duluth's business district.

Today the city is calm. Men stand in groups discussing the night's tragic work. Gradually the horror of the event is being driven home and a feeling of regret and abhorrence over the lawless act is expressed.

Although it was generally a laughing mob, it was learned today that a few instances of brutality had appeared. When McGhie fell as the rope broke, it is said that a white man grabbed him by the throat and tried to strangle him. Another white man is said to have climbed the pole and kicked one of the dying Negroes in the face. One member of the mob is reported to have attempted to shoot one of the Negroes before he was taken out of his cell, but the revolver was twisted out of his hand before he could fire.

The police force of Duluth was totally inadequate to handle a situation like that which developed last night, was the assertion of Commissioner of Safety W. F. Murnian today. Every effort was made to control the mob, but it was so large that the police as well as the sheriff's forces were handicapped from the start. Strict orders from Commissioner Murnian that under no provocation were any of the police to use firearms doubtless prevented much bloodshed, although many of the policemen were injured by flying stones. None of them was manhandled by the mob except Lieutenant E. H. Barber, who strove to the last to prevent the mob from reaching the prisoners.