

Finds Mob Spirit Rules Eastern Shore; Lynching May Embarrass Ritchie

Chicago Tribune Writer Says Entire Section Approves Of Hanging Of Negro Williams And Doubts If Anyone Ever Will Be Punished

[Chicago Bureau of The Sun]

Chicago, Dec. 26—The Chicago Tribune, which sent a staff correspondent to Salisbury, Md., to investigate the lynching there of Matthew Williams, Negro, on December 4, tomorrow will publish the following:

By TOM PETTEY

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Salisbury, Md., Dec. 26 (Special)—A Negro man was lynched here about a month ago and today mob spirit, revived after 20 years, still rules on the Eastern Shore. Maryland has slipped half-way into the fold of the backward States, its people are bitterly divided against one another and Gov. Albert C. Ritchie, a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, is seriously embarrassed by a local situation that may assume national importance.

Nobody has been punished for the hanging and burning of Matthew Williams, Negro murderer. A coroner's jury has taken no action. The entire Eastern Shore of the State thoroughly approves of the lynching and doubts that anyone ever will be punished for a "little demonstration that has done more for law and order than anything else down here."

Ritchie Sends Legal Aid

Governor Ritchie has said that the members of the mob must be "apprehended and vigorously prosecuted", and has instructed W. Preston Lane, Jr., Attorney-General of Maryland, to assist Wicomico county authorities. Further than this Governor Ritchie has not gone. He considers himself extending his own powers to the limit in directing Mr. Lane and his office to take part in the investigation. Then, also, there is the danger of further alienating the eastern half of his State, which

votes dry and does not subscribe to Governor Ritchie's wet views.

Chesapeake Bay divides Maryland. It might as well be the Atlantic Ocean. The Delmarva Peninsula is a country to itself. When its people speak of the outside world they include Baltimore in that category. Salisbury, a town of 12,000, is the metropolis of the Eastern Shore. It is the home of Amos W. W. Woodcock, and it once was Bishop James Cannon, Jr.'s place of residence.

More Hate Than Good Will

A lighted Christmas tree stands on the Courthouse lawn near the oak from which Williams dangled on the night of December 4, but there is more hate than good will prevalent in the community. The Tribune correspondent was received courteously by the more intelligent citizens, suspiciously by others and not at all by some. The Eastern Shore people prefer to talk about a lynching that took place in Brooklyn, a Baltimore suburb, on Christmas Night, 1911.

Flaming bitterness was expressed against Baltimore and particularly against the Baltimore Sunpapers because of a series of editorials denouncing the lynch spirit. H. L. Mencken, famous for his bombastic writings, fanned the flames with such linotype vitriol as, "... A public obscenity worthy of cannibals" and "... A natural culmination of a degener-