

# The Lynching of Jacob Henson, in Howard County.

## CORONER'S INQUEST AND VERDICT.

He Died at the Hands of Persons Unknown to the Jury—Statements from His Religious Adviser and from Governor Brown—Various Happenings.

(Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.)

ELICOTT CITY, Md., May 27.—The lynching of Jacob Henson, Jr., the colored man under sentence of death for the murder of Daniel F. Shea in Elicott City, which took place at the jail early this morning, caused a great deal of excitement. As was stated in THE SUN the lynchers, numbering twelve or fifteen men, all armed, masked and disguised, broke into the jail, took the prisoner away and hanged him on a dogwood tree, leaving a placard pinned to his breast, on which was written: "We respect our court and judges. Governor Brown forced the law-abiding citizens to carry out the verdict of the jury. WHITE CAPS."

As soon as the police authorities were apprised of the lynching Justice Wallenhorst summoned a jury of inquest. The jury was empaneled before daylight. The names of the jurors are G. Butke, C. A. Frey, James F. Heavey, J. W. Lankford, Henry Talbott, Thomas E. Brian, W. G. Sykes, Albert Kern, C. Eckert, Martin Rody, Charles Meads and James T. Blerly.

By order of the coroner Undertaker Hill-singer lowered the body from the tree into a coffin and removed it to the jail. It was placed in the cell which Henson had occupied.

The jury reconvened at 10 o'clock at the jail and found the verdict in effect that the victim of the lynchers came to his death at the hands of persons unknown to jury.

Dr. Wm. E. Hodges, who made an examination, testified that death was produced by strangulation, there being no serious wounds on the body. The neck was much swollen and the tongue protruded, and one of the feet, from which the shoe had been lost in the hasty march of the lynchers from the jail over Institute Hill, was bruised and lacerated by stones and briars. The man's hands were securely tied behind him, but his legs were free.

State's Attorney McGuire was present at the inquest. He says he will insist upon a full investigation of the case by the grand jury. There is said to be no evidence obtainable implicating anybody in the attack upon the jail or in the hanging. The doors of the prison were broken open, as stated in THE SUN this morning, by a band of men who said nothing, but who went there in the dead of night prepared to carry out their purpose. Deputy Warden Robert H. Holtman told the story of the attack as it appeared in this morning's SUN.

An old colored servant at the jail named Joe Geurus had an encounter with the lynchers that he will not soon forget. Joe says he was held by one of the men, who drew a rifle on him as he was looking for a safer lodging-place than the inside of the jail. Joe was moving off cautiously toward a dark corner in the yard, when the man, he says, called to him to halt. Joe failed to recognize the direction from which the command came and he was afraid to run because he might run against greater danger. Then he turned slowly toward another dark corner, when the command was repeated and the click, click, of a rifle caught his ear. "At that last halt," said Joe, "I answered, 'I'm a-halting now right. Yes, sir, ain't I?' I found it no use to try to get away."

Rev. P. B. Tarro, of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, who had been unceasing in the work of instructing Henson and leading him toward repentance and sorrow for his sins, says that all his efforts were unavailing to get into the prisoner a desire to make restitution of the money he had taken from the murdered man. Henson told Father Tarro, from day to day that he would make a full confession touching that part of his crime, and only on the day before his death, at the time the doctors were at the jail to see him to inquire into his mental condition, Henson said he would tell all on Tuesday or Wednesday. Father Tarro thinks that Henson held to the opinion to the last that the physicians would declare him insane, and for that reason he kept Mr. Shea's money. The poor wretch, the priest says, probably would have confessed his sins and ceased to make a mockery of religion long ago had not the visits of so many doctors and the expected visit of the Governor himself turned Henson's head and distracted his attention. To a reporter today Father Tarro deprecated this feature of Henson's case, and said that under the circumstances the lynching, deplorable as it is, might have been expected.

It should be added that on Monday morning it was stated in THE SUN'S Elliott City dispatches that it was greatly feared there would be a lynching on account of the petition for executive clemency and the interest the medical experts were taking in the case. Yet it was understood here on Monday also that these experts would not report Henson to be insane. The doctors stated that they would report to the Governor immediately. They left the impression in the minds of persons with whom they conferred while here after leaving the jail that their finding in the case would not tend to influence the Governor to commute Henson's sentence. Perhaps the use of a little less red tape would have prevented the use of a good deal of rope by the lynchers.

#### What Governor Brown Says.

Governor Brown was outspoken in his indignation and condemnation of the lawless proceeding, which he considered a reflection upon the community in which it occurred and upon the Commonwealth.

He stated that he had received a largely signed petition from a number of citizens of Howard county some days since asking for executive clemency on the ground that there was grave doubt in their minds as to the mental and moral responsibility of the prisoner.

Following his usual custom in such cases, he first called upon the State lunacy commission to investigate the case. In addition to this he requested Dr. Robe, of the Maryland General Hospital for the Insane; Dr. Hill, of Mount Hope Retreat; Dr. Smart, assistant physician in charge of the Shepherd Asylum, and Dr. Dashiell to also examine the prisoner. These gentlemen, together with Dr. William Lee, secretary of the State lunacy commission, visited and examined the prisoner on Monday, and this morning reported that he was, in their opinion, both mentally and morally responsible.

"Under these circumstances, in advance of their report and without the slightest reason for apprehension that the sentence of the law would be interfered with, the action of the lawless mob in breaking into the jail and hanging the prisoner cannot," said the Governor, "be too strongly condemned. Indeed, no excuse whatever can be given for it, and no doubt it will be made the subject of inquiry by the grand jury at their next session."

Governor Brown further said: "This deplorable incident, so injurious to the fair fame of the State, strongly emphasizes the recommendation made by me to the last General Assembly, which was as follows:

"I, therefore, recommend the enactment of a law providing that all criminals who shall be sentenced to suffer the death penalty shall, as soon as sentence is pronounced, be conveyed to the Maryland penitentiary and there confined until the time of execution, and that the sentence shall in all cases be carried out under the direction of the sheriff of Baltimore city and of the respective counties of the State where the conviction was had.

"In this way the chances will be prevented of prisoners being lynched by excited mobs and the intention of the law carried out in having executions conducted privately as far as possible. I regret that the General Assembly did not act upon this recommendation, as it would have prevented just such occurrences as that of last night."