



MARYLAND LYNCHING TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

VICTIM PROFILE AND CASE FILE CHECK LIST

VICTIM PROFILE

NAME OF VICTIM: George Peck

ALIAS:

RACE: African American

GENDER: Male

AGE: 22. Born 1858

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: According to the Baltimore Sun paper of January 13, 1880, Peck was “Of rather slight build, very dark complexioned, and weighed about one hundred and fifty pounds”

LITERATE: Unknown

MARITAL STATUS: Unknown

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

FAMILY: Unknown

COMMUNITY: Montgomery County remained rural throughout the 1880s, consisting primarily of small farms. Of the 24,800 county residents recorded in the 1880 census, nearly one-third were Black. A few churches and schools such as Elijah Rest Methodist Episcopal Church and Pleasantville School were established in post-Civil War Montgomery County by formerly enslaved and free Blacks, including those in Poolesville’s Black community of Sugarland. Racial tensions remained high as evidenced by the 1880 lynchings in Montgomery County of both Peck and John Diggs.

CHILDREN: Unknown

OCCUPATION: Laborer. Employed at the time of his lynching by Beallsville, MD storekeeper Lemuel Beall.

TOWN: The alleged assault occurred in Beallsville Montgomery County, MD. Peck was lynched in Poolesville, approximately 2.5 miles away.

BIRTHPLACE: Unknown, but likely Montgomery County, MD

RELIGION: Unknown but likely Methodist as were many Blacks in the Poolesville area

ORGANIZATIONS: Unknown

PERSONAL HISTORY: Formerly enslaved by William Poole near Poolesville. The January 13, 1880 *Baltimore Sun* reported Peck as a former convict. Additional research is underway to determine if this is a valid claim. Worked as a farm laborer in 1870 for Howard Griffith.

TANGENTIAL CASES (RACIALLY MOTIVATED HOMICIDES): John Diggs was also lynched in Montgomery County in 1880. Maryland resident James Carroll was lynched at Loudon County, VA near Point of Rocks, MD in April of 1879 and Michael Green was lynched in 1878 in Prince George's County, MD.

LYNCHING INVESTIGATION

RATIONAL FOR LYNCHING: Peck was allegedly caught in the act of the attempted rape of Ada Hayes on January 10, 1880. Hayes was the adopted daughter of local farmer H. M. Reeves and was employed by and living at the home of Beallsville storekeeper Lemuel Beall and on whose property Peck is supposed to have assaulted Hayes. The alleged assault was interrupted by a local preacher who held Peck at gunpoint until the County Constable arrived at which time Peck fled but was recaptured. The local judge ordered Peck taken to the Rockville jail but en route the constable was overwhelmed by the mob and Peck was hung in a nearby field

KEY INDIVIDUALS/WITNESSES (White unless otherwise specified):

Ada Hayes, alleged victim

H. M. Reeves, adoptive father of Ada Hayes

Lemuel Beall, Peck's employer and Hayes' employer and in whose home she lived

Rev. Calvin Amy, interrupted the alleged assault and detained Peck

Constable James Mills, arrested Peck and later lost him to the lynch mob

Judge Stephen G. Donohoe ordered Peck jailed

Charles Elgin, Tremont Jones, Frank Williams, William Griffith, Lemuel Beall, Richard Spates, Frank Spates, Frank Sparrough (sic), Charles Matthews, G. Mackintosh, Thomas Davis and Thomas Fiffe, all inquest jurors who determined the lynch mob members as "unknown"

KEY LOCATIONS:

Lemuel Beall's Beallsville property on which the alleged assault of Hayes occurred
Rev. Amy's home near Beall's property from where Amy allegedly heard Haye's screams
Odd Fellows Hall in Poolesville, Md where Constable Mills detained Peck en route to Rockville
Constable Mills home where Mills allegedly attempted to take Peck in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid the lynch mob outside of the Odd Fellows Hall
W. T. Walters Poolesville store near the Odd Fellows Hall where Constable Mills stopped en route to his home
Poolesville Presbyterian Church near the field where Peck was lynched

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS:

There were no short-term political implications following Peck's murder as was the case in nearly all lynchings occurring during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. National and local politicians often shared the views of the lynch mob members and the political will to effectively prosecute or enact appropriate laws did not exist. Lynchings, however, highlighted the social and legal injustices which would lead to the successful Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century.

PUBLIC AND POLITICAL REACTIONS:

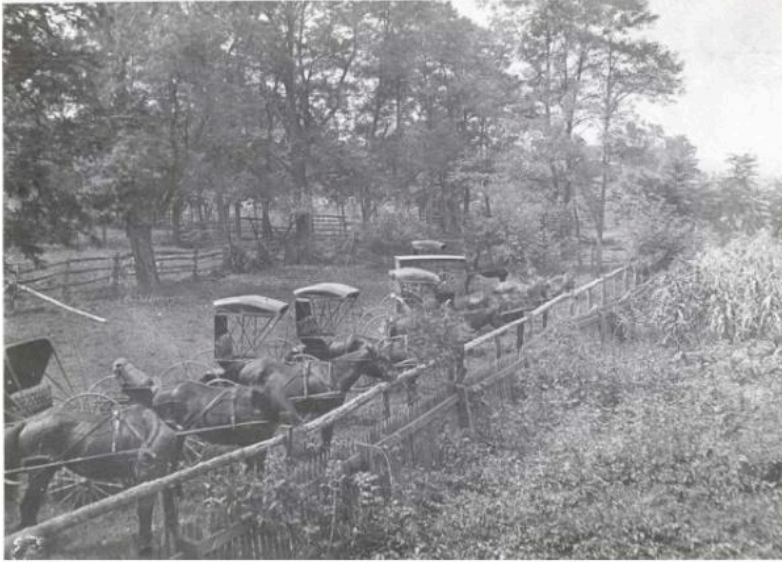
There were no known political reactions. Blacks in Montgomery County were intimidated, did not react outwardly but continued to forge relationships and build institutions to serve their segregated communities. The White community, including the local and national Press, expressed outrage at the alleged assault and demonized Peck.

SOURCE & INVENTORY CHECKLIST:

[Archives of Maryland, Volume 0812, Page 0049 - Montgomery County Slave Statistics, 1867-1868](#), accessed 9/12/2024
Maryland State Archives Biographical Series, *MSA SC 3520-18233*, accessed 9/3/2024
[The Story of George Peck \(c.1858-1880\) \(montgomeryhistory.org\)](#), accessed 9/10/2024
[community-cornerstones-brochure.pdf \(heritagemontgomery.org\)](#), accessed 9/10/2024
United States Federal Census 1870, Montgomery County-District 3, Beallsville
Baltimore Sun Paper, January 13, 1880, P. 1
The Washington, DC Evening Star, January 12, 1880, P. 1

DEATH CERTIFICATE:**CORONER'S REPORT:**

PHOTOGRAPHS:



The fence across the road from Poolesville Presbyterian Church, as it appeared c. 1890s. The location shown in this photo is believed to be the closest approximation of the site where George Peck was killed in 1880.

EPHEMERA:

DIGITIZATION REQUEST:

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