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WE ALMOST DID IT, BUT FLORIDA MARS A CLEAN SLATE

By Chesley E. Corbett

At the end of the year, December 31, 1945, only one lynching occurred in the United States, yet this was one too many. The State of Florida was responsible for this one blot on Civilization.

It's a crying shame that this one traversity upon justice had to occur after we have witnessed crime, atrocities, brutalities, and undemocratic and hellish acts of barbarism by various nations of the world.

How can we blame Japan, Germany, Italy and other nations for what we claim is unhumane, unjust, illegal and contrary to law and order when in this continent mobs lynch, burn and torture human beings?

Of course some will say that we have improved; that there were times when the record showed over a hundred of lynchings during the year and now it is reduced to one. That's good. But why that one? There is no justification for lynching and this barbarous and uncivilized practice must be stamped out. I will review the record and let you see just why I say "One, is too many."

THE LYNCHING RECORD

Florida's one lynching in 1945 prevented a perfect score in the reduction of this form of lawlessness as reported in the annual lynching record compiled by the Tuskegee Institute's Department of Records and Research.

The nation's reaction as revealed in editorial comments in daily newspapers was one of elation that mob violence is "on the way out".

Some southern dailies, however, smarting under the discussions incident to agitation for an Anti-Lynching Bill, hailed the 1945 record as proof that, as The Rome (Georgia) Tribune (itself perhaps mindful of the Roland Hayes incident) says, "the South itself is handling the lynching questions in an eminently satisfactory manner and intervention by the Federal Government is not warranted in the slightest degree."

The Roanoke (Virginia) World-News, Greenville, (South Carolina) News, Chattanooga (Tennessee) News-Free Press, Birmingham (Alabama) Age-Herald, and even the Butte (Montana) Post express somewhat the same view with respect to Federal anti-lynching legislation.

However, the Atlanta (Georgia) Constitution said that since the Florida Negro was in prison "there was no reason for the mob to take the law out of the hands of the court."

Florida's Governor Caldwell, finding himself on the defensive from public censure for his state's "one blot upon the record," attempted first to condone the sheriff's action at Madison in leaving the jail unguarded, despite rumors of a threatened lynching, by saying that "stupidity and ineptitude" on the part of a sheriff was "no cause for removal from office."

Even before the Tuskegee record was published public criticism of his state was so pronounced that the Governor attempted to challenge the interpretation of the incident in his state as a "lynching".

This puny defense which brought prompt rebuttals from Dr. Guy Johnson of the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta and Dr. R. B. Eleazer of the General Education Board of the Methodist Church, Nashville, together with caustic editorials from daily newspapers in his own state added further discomfort to the Governor.

The Tampa (Florida) Tribune expressed amazement that "Governor Caldwell contented himself with giving the sheriff a mere slap on the wrist" and demanded to know why the lynch mob "had a key to the jail enclosure and removed their victim without interference although Sheriff Lonnie Davis lived nearby." To which The Daytona Beach (Florida) Evening News added:

"The Governor's rationalization of his position in the lynching matter seems to us not merely curious, but preposterous."

Reasons for the decline in lynching over a period of two decades are cited as better education, improved economic position of the South and an increasing demand that law enforcement officers discharge their full duties while in office. The last reason was aptly expressed by The Spartanburg (South Carolina) Herald which said:

Pay-offs Coming In November

WASHINGTON — (ANP) — What will be the political color of the next congress following the general elections which for the most part come in November of this year? very representative in the house faces his electorate this year and two-thirds of the senators will come up for reelection.

The Republicans see a great chance to re-capture control of the house and they longingly eye the upper house where they have been in the minority too long. The lower chamber, too, has its interests and there are many Democrats now holding seats who are uneasy.

Without paying much attention to the rural areas where politics seldom if ever change, both parties are centering their efforts for election in the urban industrial areas where Democrats under Roosevelt surged into power.

On those areas, where unemployment was ripe, the Roosevelt program filled a great need—made employment, food, shelter and money which turned the trick and brought Democratic representatives to congress from sections which had hitherto been rockribbed Republican areas.

Up in Massachusetts there is an interesting situation developing. Young Henry C. Lodge, former senator who resigned to accept a commission in the army, is back and itching to return to politics. Former Gov. Loverett Salsonstall has done a good job while he has served, and the other senator is a Democrat of long standing, David I. Walsh, chairman of the senate naval affairs committee, and a strong man in his own right. Walsh is up for reelection this year.

Then, in Connecticut, the present Republican incumbent, a former navy admiral, Thomas C. Hart, named to the senate as a Republican, avers he will not seek reelection.

Republican senators facing reelection this year are William B. Knowland of California; Raymond E. Willis, Indiana; William A. Stanfill, Kentucky; Owen Brewster, Maine; Arthur Vandenberg, Michigan; Henrik Shipstead, Minnesota; Hugh Butler, Nebraska; Alexander Smith, New Jersey; William Langer, North Dakota; Warren Austin, Vermont.

The terms of Democratic senators expire in six states outside the solid south, but they are all normally Democratic strongholds. They are New Mexico, Rhode Island, Utah, Maryland, Montana and Nevada.

The 11 Democrats up for election this year are James M. Tunnell of Delaware; Charles C. Gossett, Idaho; David I. Walsh, Massachusetts; Frank P. Briggs, Missouri; James M. Mead, New York; James W. Huffman, Ohio; Joseph P. Guffey, Pennsylvania; Hugh B. Mitchell, West Virginia; Harley M. Kilgore, Virginia; Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Wyoming.

In four of those states, Massachusetts, Ohio, Missouri, and Wisconsin, Republicans were elected to the United States senate in 1944. In three others, Wyoming, West Virginia and Delaware, Republicans won in 1942.

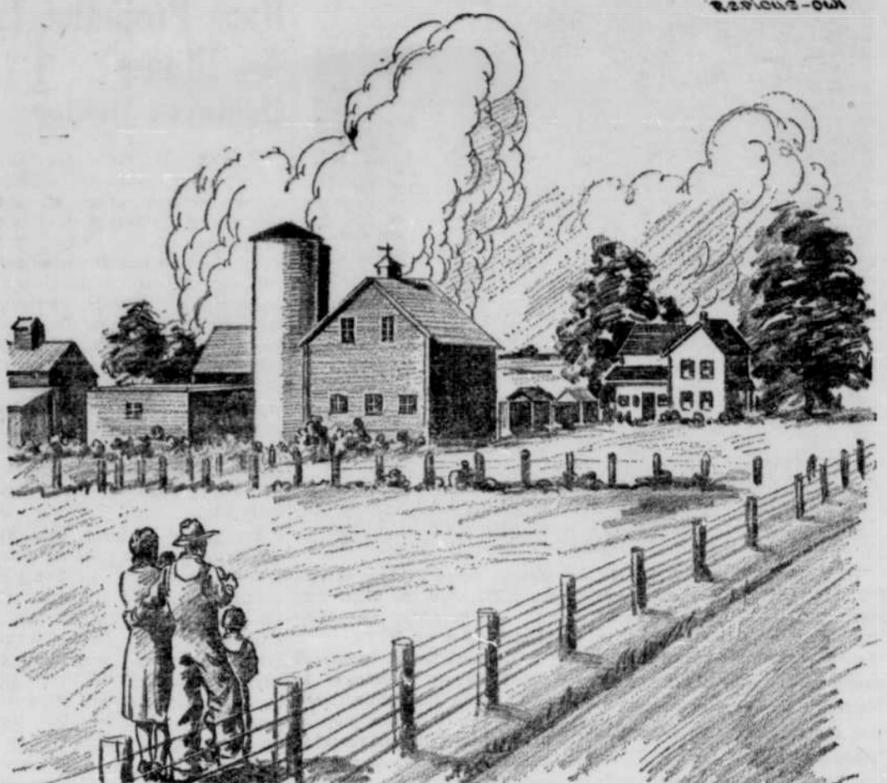
Of the 340 seats in the house, Republicans now hold 191, but to obtain a majority, they must hold 218 seats. Ninety-five of these seats are in the solid south and are eliminated from consideration. Most of the remaining seats held by Democrats are in the urban centers discussed previously.

There are solid Republican delegations in the house from six states, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, North and South Dakota.

Meanwhile, President Patterson and Mrs. Guzman, acting director of the Department of Records and Research, safely supported by established definitions of "lynchings", justifiably reserve comment and accept the statement of The Roanoke (Virginia) World News that "Tuskegee's records are regarded as authoritative."

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**"PLAN FOR THE FUTURE—
REDUCE THAT MORTGAGE NOW!"**

ta. In New England, the Republican control all seats outside those of a few urban districts, normally Democratic. In New Jersey, the only two Democratic representatives are from "Haguetown"—Jersey City.

The states in which the Republicans believe they have good prospects of winning more than one seat next fall are Connecticut and Illinois, with four each; Missouri, New York, California and Ohio, three each; Pennsylvania, Minnesota and West Virginia, two each. The party will battle largely for single seats in Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, Michigan, Washington and Wisconsin.

And the Negro vote in most of these unsettled areas will play a most important part. Of chief concern to Negroes now are the PEPC bill, the anti-poll tax bill, health legislation, minimum wage, and several others which have been before the house and the senate and have been blocked in some form or fashion by some of the persons now sitting in the legislative halls.

No Navy Gestapo On Picket Lines

NEW YORK CITY.—(WDL)—The Workers Defense League does not want "a gestapo along the nation's picket lines." This is what Rev. Aron S. Gilmartin, national chairman of the League, told Secretary of the Navy James Forrester in a letter protesting a policy statement of the Third Naval District.

The statement calls upon the shore patrol to question all pickets wearing navy uniforms, and to return them to their duty stations. If the pickets are wearing uniforms illegally, the shore patrol is to turn them over to the FBI.

Issuance of the statement came after shore patrolmen removed Charles Rosio, Negro discharged sailor, from the picket line at the Newark, N. J., plant of the Westinghouse Electrical & Mfg. Co.

The League's protest urged Forrester to "instruct the Third Naval District to rescind its order and to make it clear that picketing is legal."

Pastor Practices Preachments

WASHINGTON — (ANP) — Following an address to the D. C. League of Women Voters' one-day school on minorities Wednesday by the Rev. A. Powell Davies, white, minister of All Souls Unitarian church, a white woman member from Roanoke, Va., approached him with the following question:

"Reverend, I am Mrs. _____ from Roanoke and I want to know one thing. You said that we must all get closer together but do you let niggers in your church?"

His reply was, "Madam, all people are welcome in my church. As a matter of fact, several colored worshippers attend regularly. Why did you ask?"

"Well, how do the white members feel about this?" she persisted.

Answer: "Some of them don't like it, of course, but they are free to transfer their membership elsewhere. For the most part my congregation understands that the doors of my

church are open to all and they accept that principle and are not disturbed."

The lady turned away half-surprised, but with a look on her face that seemed to say, "I just wanted to know if you practice what you preach."

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