

## The Lynching of James T. Scott: The Underside of a College Town

Patrick J. Huber

Between 1885 and 1922 mobs lynched 4,154 victims in the United States. More than three-fourths of the victims were black, and almost nine-tenths of the lynchings were executed in the South.<sup>1</sup> Although white apologists justified lynching as the only way to protect white women from rape by black men, lynching had little to do with rape. As sociologist Arthur Raper and other scholars have noted, only one-sixth of all lynch victims were even accused of rape. Rather, lynching was a tool of social control used to impede black progress, especially economic progress. Walter White, who investigated forty-one lynchings for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), recognized this fact. He explained: "Lynching has always been the means for protection, not of white women, but of profits."<sup>2</sup>

Unlike most lynchings, the 1923 lynching in Columbia, Missouri, of black janitor James T. Scott occurred in a city whose most prominent feature was a state university.<sup>3</sup> The University of Missouri's presence and alleged student participation in Scott's murder attracted front-page headlines and criticism from newspapers across America and drew public outrage from the NAACP and other black organizations. The Scott lynching is also significant because of the public role that Columbia's business and political elite played in the murder. Traditionally, liberals, social scientists, and Southern elites have saddled working-class whites with the blame for lynchings.<sup>4</sup> However, upper and middle class whites customarily joined members of the working class to lynch blacks. In the Columbia case, members of the upper and middle classes initiated the call for a lynching, led the mob, and afterwards publicly applauded its actions.

Columbia rests in the heart of Missouri's "Little Dixie," historically Missouri's largest slaveholding region, and an area that consciously maintained Southern traditions, including Southern attitudes towards race. Reflecting its Southern heritage, Columbia was segregated, and, except for two small enclaves, black residents were confined to a large, crowded, dilapidated section of the city. While black women found jobs as domestics, cooks, and laundresses, employment opportunities were bleak for black men, many of whom left the area in search of work. In 1938 a local black woman remarked: "A colored man has to earn his living in the hardest way there is. Here in [Columbia] if he gets a job as a cook or a porter or a janitor he's really in the upper crust among the workers."<sup>5</sup>

On the eve of Scott's murder, however, African-Americans were chipping away at the entrenched system of racial subordination, making incremental yet significant economic and social gains. The Frederick Douglass School, erected in 1917, became the wellspring of the community. In 1920, two black congregations constructed new churches in Columbia, and a third congregation announced in 1922 that it planned to erect a thirty-five thousand dollar Sunday school and community center.<sup>6</sup> Some segments of the white population became alarmed at local blacks' growing prosperity and assertiveness. Black economic and social advancements frequently triggered violence in whites; in Columbia such violence erupted on Saturday night, April 28, 1923, at the Boone County jail and culminated early Sunday morning at Stewart Bridge in the presence of almost two thousand spectators.

A tense, smoldering atmosphere had gripped Columbia since Friday, April 20, when an unidentified black man attacked Regina Almstedt, a fourteen year old white girl, in a wooded area near Stewart Bridge, an automobile and pedestrian overpass close to the university campus in the city's south end. According to the girl, the daughter of University of Missouri German professor Hermann B. Almstedt, an unfamiliar black man lured her down to the M. K. T. railroad tracks below Stewart Bridge and assaulted her in the nearby woods around 3:30 p.m. The stranger reportedly struck her several times in the face, choked her with his belt, gagged her, and threatened to kill her. However, he was scared off by a passing railroad crew before a sexual assault could be committed.<sup>7</sup>

As news of the attack spread, hysteria clutched the white community, and the local press, especially the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, stoked the combustible situation with inflammatory coverage of the assault. "[Regina's] clothing was torn to shreds," the newspaper reported, "and her person was lacerated by the hands of the impassioned beast. Her lower limbs were scratched and bleeding and other parts on her person were torn and bruised." The brushfire of small town gossip swept through Columbia's white community. Whispered rumors circulated that, contrary to the news reports, the "black brute" had raped the girl, and other accounts described how he had used his knife "to cut her underclothes." Incensed, residents flooded the police department and sheriff's office with telephone calls anxiously inquiring whether the assailant had been apprehended. The day after the assault, the *Kansas City Post* reported that a "Lynching [is] expected if enraged citizens capture fiend." The white community united to ensure the apprehension of the assailant. Local government and civic organizations composed of Columbia's "leading citizens" contributed a \$1,125 reward for any information leading to his arrest, and working-class men formed armed posses and combed the city's black districts for the perpetrator.<sup>8</sup>

The Columbia police force and the Boone County sheriff's department conducted an intensive, week-long search for the man who accosted Regina Almstedt. Shortly after the alleged assault, Police Chief Ernest Rowland and his patrolmen tracked the assailant with two bloodhounds, on loan from the Moberly, Missouri, police department, but their efforts proved unsuccessful. Sheriff Fred C. Brown also dispatched deputies to McBaine and Rocheport, two Boone County towns with sizable black populations, and posted others to watch trains running out of Columbia. In addition, he telephoned Boone County farmers and several central Missouri sheriff's departments and alerted them to watch for a twenty-five to thirty year old black male, with a Charlie Chaplin mustache, wearing brown trousers, a dark coat, and a cap.<sup>9</sup>

Over the next several days, Columbia law enforcement officers devoted all of their resources to the case. Any black man in Boone County—regardless of whether he fit Regina Almstedt's description—became suspect. Officers harassed the local African-American community, arresting suspects, grilling them, and taking them before the victim for identification.<sup>10</sup> On Friday, April 27, one week after the attack, authorities located an anonymous witness who had seen James T. Scott—a thirty-five year old suspect who had been jailed since the previous Saturday—walking near the university campus around 4:15 p.m. on the afternoon of the attack. This contradicted Scott's claims that the entire afternoon of the assault he had been on the university campus at the Medical Building, where he was employed as a janitor. Confronted with the witness's allegations, Scott denied ever having left the campus and maintained that he had worked

at the Medical Building all afternoon, cleaning and polishing the floor, stairs, and woodwork until he locked up at 5:00 p.m. Two white witnesses saw Scott at the building about 3:00 p.m. and again at 5:00 p.m., but no one had seen him for the intervening two hours.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, Columbia police arrest records are not extant for this period but other documents provide us with relatively detailed profile of James T. Scott. The only physical description of Scott described him as "a copper colored negro," with a Charlie Chaplin mustache, weighing about 130 to 135 pounds, and standing about 5 feet 4 inches. His death certificate states that he was born on October 5, 1887, in New Mexico, the son of James Scott and Sarah Brown. He served overseas in the U. S. Army with the Eighth Illinois Infantry during World War I and had received a decoration for valor. It remained unclear exactly when he moved to Columbia, but he was relatively new in town he probably relocated sometime in 1919 or 1920 from Chicago, Illinois, where he had lived for many years. Presumably a widower, Scott was the father of three children, Anna, Helen, and Carl, who lived with relatives in Chicago. Both of Scott's parents also lived in Columbia, but little is known about them.<sup>12</sup>

In February 1921, Scott had married Gertrude C. Carter, the twenty-four year old daughter of a local couple, in a ceremony performed by the Rev. J. Lyle Caston at the Second Baptist Church. A Columbia native, Gertrude Scott had graduated from Lincoln Institute's Normal School and taught first and second grades at Frederick Douglass Grade School, probably beginning sometime in 1921 or 1922. The Scotts were members of the Second Baptist Church and lived near most of the community's other teachers at 501 North Third Street in a black middle-class neighborhood two blocks from Douglass School. As one of only fifteen black teachers in Columbia, Gertrude Scott would have been regarded by her peers as a professional and a community leader.<sup>13</sup>

Compared to others in the African-American community, James Scott was well paid. Employed as a janitor, he had steady year-round work that paid sixty-five dollars a month—a substantial income during a period when most of the areas black men found it difficult to find even part-time employment. Scott was so financially secure that he was able to purchase a "practically new" Hupmobile car for almost six hundred dollars. At the time, few blacks in Boone County owned automobiles, and even many whites were unable to afford one; a 1938 Columbia study reported that only fifteen black families out of eighty-nine surveyed owned automobiles. As a newcomer with a good job who had married a teacher and owned a car, Scott was undoubtedly a highly visible member of the African-American community. In a town in which whites feared black progress, prosperity, and independence, being visible could be dangerous for a black man.<sup>14</sup>

On Saturday, April 28, one week after his arrest, authorities officially charged Scott with criminally assaulting Regina Almstedt. At 10:30 a.m. Scott, accompanied by his white attorney, Emmett Anderson, whom he retained by signing over the deed of his car, appeared before Judge Henry Collier at the Boone County Circuit Court. Anderson entered a plea of not guilty for his client, and Judge Collier set Scott's trial date for May 21 and ordered him held without bond in the county jail.<sup>15</sup>

Columbia's most influential paper, the *Daily Tribune*, provided the spark that ignited the town's smoldering outrage. The *Daily Tribune's* Saturday edition reported that Regina Almstedt had "positively identified" James T. Scott as her assailant. "It is generally believed," the newspaper asserted, "that Scott is guilty of the crime and Miss Almstedt's

identification makes certain now that he is the man that attacked her." The *Tribune's* editor, Edward Watson, explicitly challenged all white men to assume their roles as champions of womanhood and mete out "swift justice" to Scott and two other jailed black men, Ollie Watson and Jadie Scott, who had been charged with raping two black school girls. Watson's inflammatory editorial, "Columbia's Proud Pre-Eminence," read in part:

Columbia has the distinction of having in jail three rapists...These brutes and super-criminals should be dealt swift justice by the courts, of course...Murder and homicide can be committed under stress of anger or insult, but the rapist is guilty of premeditation, malice—in fact every degrading and criminal act. A man killer is a mild-mannered and desirable citizen compared with a despoiler and ravisher of innocent girlhood...This trio should feel the "halter draw" in vindication of the law.<sup>16</sup>

Less than eight hours after the newspaper hit the street, white Columbia residents responded to the *Tribune's* plea for justice.

According to city policeman Ples T. King, a mob composed of fifty men gathered at the corner of Eighth and Walnut streets, on the Boone County courthouse square, around 10:00 p.m. At 10:45 p.m. the mob approached Sheriff Fred C. Brown and Deputy Sheriff Wilson C. Hall, the only officers on duty at the jail that night, and demanded Scott.<sup>17</sup> After Sheriff Brown and Deputy Hall refused to hand over the prisoner, mob members regrouped in the jail yard and plotted another approach. At 11:00 p.m. one of the vigilantes returned with a sledge hammer and chisel from a nearby garage, broke the padlock off the jail's outer door, and the mob rushed into the jail. Meanwhile, the sheriff telephoned

Boone County prosecuting attorney Ruby M. Hulen to come and help disperse the mob.<sup>18</sup>

By this time, many more people had rushed from their homes to watch the expected lynching. Nearly a thousand curious men and women, including approximately two hundred university students assembled outside the jail on the courthouse lawn, anxiously awaiting the opportunity to witness a lynching, and two uniformed policemen stood idly by, conversing with spectators. Approximately fifty blacks also gathered and nervously waited on the fringes of the crowd. Shaking his head in disbelief, an unidentified black man remarked, "I never thought this could happen in Columbia." Although Sheriff Brown had ample warning of the mob's intention, he had taken no extra precautions to protect the prisoner. He did not fortify the jail, swear in any extra deputies, or move Scott to a different county jail.<sup>19</sup>

Realizing that the local authorities had no intention of preventing the lynching, prominent black St. Louis attorney and special NAACP representative George L. Vaughn telephoned the governor around midnight and urged him to assemble the National Guard to disperse the mob. Vaughn had arrived in Columbia earlier that evening to assist in Scott's legal defense, at the request of Reverend Caston, the minister of Columbia's largest black church.

At approximately 12:15 a.m., Governor Arthur Hyde returned Vaughn's call and told him that he had contacted the commanding officer of Battery B, 128th Field Artillery, Missouri National Guard, headquartered in Columbia, and ordered him to mobilize the

battery to disperse the mob. The Reverend Caston recalled that the governor "said that he had ordered the battery out and that they should appear in a few minutes. Vaughn and I then went to the corner of Seventh and Ash streets where we waited for about a half-hour, expecting the battery to arrive."<sup>20</sup>

Battery B never did arrive. By 12:30 a.m. only commanding officer Col. John F. Williams and four of his men had assembled in the armory across the street from the courthouse. More than fifty of the battery's members failed to report, largely because they were among the crowd on the courthouse lawn. Meanwhile, inside the jail the mob continued unhindered, hammering on the first of two steel doors that separated them from their quarry. By this time, nearly five hundred men had crowded into the narrow jail corridor, shouting encouragement to those swinging the sledges. Unmasked and calling one another by name, mob members worked "quietly and determinedly," but the steel door proved more stubborn than expected, and they sent for an acetylene torch. By 12:30 a.m. the vigilantes had sheared off the jail door's hinges with the torch. The mob poured into the other cell block, reserved for black prisoners, and men applied the acetylene torch to the large steel lock on Scott's cell door, the last barrier between the self-appointed executioners and the doomed black man.<sup>21</sup>

The mob quickly burned through the lock on the final door with the torch, and two vigilantes entered the cell that confined both Ollie Watson and James T. Scott, asking the occupants which one was Scott. Lying calmly on his cot wrapped in a blanket, Scott, without hesitation, answered them. A mob member slipped a noose around Scott's neck and dragged him out of the cell. Men fought each other to get close enough to kick and punch the prisoner. Scott resisted as the mob jerked him through the corridor and out into the warm, moonlit night. On the courthouse lawn, a sea of spectators, which had grown to fifteen hundred, greeted the triumphant vigilantes with enthusiastic cheers.<sup>22</sup>

On the porch of the jail the mob paused briefly, and Scott regained his feet. Asserting his dignity, Scott asked to be treated like a man. "Don't pull me. I will go," he said to the men holding the rope. He then turned to the reporter for the student-operated *Columbia Evening Missourian*. "I am not guilty, I swear it," he said, "but I have no chance." Meanwhile, Sheriff Brown, Prosecuting Attorney Hulen, and Judge Henry A. Collier attempted to dissuade the mob. "Men, do not kill him now," the judge pleaded. "I will promise you a fair trial and swift justice if he is convicted." Finally, the sheriff cried, "Is there a man here who will aid me in preserving law and order?" The crowd answered the officials' pleas for Scott's life with shouts, "Take him to Stewart Bridge. Hang him."<sup>23</sup>

With its victim in tow, the mob set off at a slow trot, snaking down Seventh to Cherry Street where it turned west a block to Sixth Street. The "death march" continued down Sixth Street past the University of Missouri campus to Stewart Road. Twice along the route, mobsters brutally knocked Scott to the ground and dragged him several yards before he could regain his feet. A quarter of a mile from the campus, the crowd, which had swelled to almost two thousand, swarmed out onto Stewart Bridge, near the site of the assault on Regina Almstedt. Many spectators had driven their cars to the scene, arriving before the vigilantes and their battered victim. Most the black spectators, their worst fears already realized, did not venture to the bridge. Only about a dozen blacks hovered on the outskirts of the crowd on the east side of the bridge. "Well let's go," a shaken black youth told his family, "We done seen all I want to see."<sup>24</sup>

The mob rushed Scott to the railing on the south side of the bridge before the

ringleaders discovered that the rope around Scott's neck was only about ten feet long, too short for its intended purpose. In addition, it was less than a quarter inch in diameter, hardly enough to support the weight of a body. While the aroused crowd anxiously waited for ringleaders to find another rope, Professor Almstedt, Regina's father, arrived from his home and attempted to reason with the mob. "I am the father of the girl," he declared. "As an American citizen I plead with you to let the law take its course with this man. I ask it of you in the name of law and order and the American flag." Members of the antagonized throng howled, "Shut up or we'll lynch you too." Humiliated, Professor Almstedt pressed through the crowd and returned home.<sup>25</sup>

Battered and bleeding from his nose and ears, his shirt torn, Scott leaned weakly against the railing and pleaded for his life. "I am an innocent man," he declared to those close enough to hear. "I have fifteen year old daughter and it would be impossible for me to commit this crime. I have never touched a white woman my life." The crowd jeered and cursed him. Inexplicably, Scott waited until he had reached the bridge to accuse his cell mate of the assault he was about to be lynched for: "Ollie Watson confessed to me in the cell this afternoon that he did it." Scott then pleaded to a young journalism student standing next to him: "I know I haven't a chance. They won't listen to me. Won't you say something?"<sup>26</sup>

However, the impatient crowd had tired of delays. A large, burly man with a twenty-five foot, half-inch manila rope in hand pushed his way through the crowd hurriedly tied one end of the rope to the bridge railing and slipped a noose over Scott's head. Realizing he had but a few minutes to live, Scott dropped to his knees looked to the heavens and prayed in a calm voice, "Lord, thou knowest the truth. Have pity on an innocent man's soul, O Lord. Thou knowest my innocence. Will thou allow an innocent man to suffer?" Some of the spectators demanded, "Over with him." The large man picked Scott up, balanced him on the railing for a moment, and pitched him headlong off the bridge. Scott's body plunged down, crashing through the limbs of a small tree. The ecstatic crowd shrieked with approval. As the rope jerked taut, Scott's neck snapped audibly in a sickening crack. A convulsive twitch or two and his lifeless body, naked to the waist and dangling twenty feet from the ground, twisted and swayed in the early Sunday morning breeze. It was approximately 1:40 a.m.<sup>27</sup>

A hush fell over the crowd. Then a mobster howled, "That'll teach them. Let him hang there now as an example." The man who threw Scott over the railing immediately disappeared into the crowd; the other ringleaders quickly followed. Half an hour later, the crowd had abandoned the scene. Only a few curious spectators remained gaping at the dangling corpse. Sheriff Brown had removed Ollie Watson and Jadie Scott to Jefferson City for their protection after the vigilantes had taken Scott, but the sated mob did not return to the jail for the two other accused rapists. At 3:00 a.m. Sunday, April 29, Coroner Benjamin Barker cut down Scott's body and removed it to the Parker Funeral Home. Examining the body, Dr. Lloyd Simpson concluded that death had been instantaneous, caused by a broken neck. The corpse's neck was swollen and burned from the rope, and the left temple had a small cut, but there were no other marks on the face.<sup>28</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the lynching, the Missouri press, especially the St. Louis and Kansas City papers, and the nation's metropolitan dailies blasted Columbia and the University of Missouri in particular in their coverage of the incident. The *New York*

*Times* headlined its front-page story, "Missouri Students See Negro Lynched, Co-Eds Join Crowd Which Cheers the Storming of the Columbia Jail." The largest midwestern daily, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, captioned its account, "College Town Mob Kills Negro, Missouri 'U' Students Join In Lynching." But the militant African-American press supplied the most damaging articles and editorials, at least for the university. "College Students Lead Missouri Lynch Mob" splashed across the front page of the prominent black weekly, the *Chicago Defender*. With his characteristic sarcasm, W. E. B. Du Bois published a scathing editorial entitled "A University Course In Lynching" in *The Crisis*, the official organ of the NAACP:

We are glad to note that the University of Missouri has opened a course in Applied Lynching. Many of

our American Universities have long defended the institution, but they have not been frank or brave enough actually to arrange a mob murder so that students could see it in detail... We are very much in favor of this method of teaching 100 per cent Americanism; as long as mob murder is an approved institution in the United States, students at the universities should have a first-hand chance to judge exactly what a lynching is... We are glad that the future fathers and mothers of the West saw it, and we are expecting great results from this course of study at one of the most eminent of our State Universities.<sup>29</sup>

The university's presence at the site of the lynching intensified the press's coverage of the incident and sharpened its criticism of Columbia. The state and national newspaper accounts reflected the media's unquestioning acceptance of the still-current notion that universities and colleges impose a progressive, tolerant influence on the communities in which they are located. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* observed that the Columbia lynching proved "a deeper stain upon the honor of Missouri" because its scene "was the center of education of the state, where its university is located, where its youth are instructed—in law as well as in other things—and where learning and enlightenment might be supposed to have a humane and steadying influence upon the whole community." "A lynching in a small town," the *New York Times* editorialized in a similar tone, "of which a State university is the most prominent feature—and should have been an effective influence for maintaining the theories and practices of civilized life—is rather worse than like affairs in other places."<sup>30</sup>

Despite this harsh criticism, the University of Missouri's Board of Curators did not publicly respond to the charges directed at them by the press, and although some probably abhorred mob violence, the board never officially condemned the lynching. Most likely, they thought of the lynching as a "town issue," and one that did not concern the institution. However, some image-minded state and university officials, especially acting university president Isidor Loeb, realized that the lynching had tarnished the university's reputation and that they needed to respond to the press's allegations. Following the charges published in the New York City and Chicago papers, Loeb issued a statement to the *New York World* calling the allegations that students were active participants in lynching "absolutely false." Loeb later confided that he had done "everything possible to counteract the false statements... regarding participation of students in this affair." Likewise, Missouri attorney general Jesse W. Barrett denied any

student involvement and demanded that a Chicago paper, presumably the *Defender*, retract its article implicating students in the incident.<sup>31</sup>

For its part, the university newspaper took a determined stand against the mob violence. In its April 30 editorial, "Punish the Guilty," the student-run daily newspaper, the *Columbia Evening Missourian*, condemned the lynching and demanded that the vigilantes be prosecuted: "Violators of the law in Boone county must answer for their crimes... Mob law is dangerous and cannot be tolerated. It is the duty of every law-abiding citizen in Columbia, in Boone County, and in Missouri to see those guilty of mob action are punished. The lynching cannot be undone, but Columbia can, in part, clear its name if speedy action against those who committed the crime is taken."<sup>32</sup>

The *Missourian* continued its crusade. In the following week it published two articles on the lynching from a black perspective: Reverend Caston's account and a shortened version of Vaughn's NAACP lynching report. Almost every issue for three weeks following Scott's murder it also reprinted three or four editorials from various state and national newspapers condemning the incident.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast, the town newspaper, perhaps sensing its own complicity in Scott's death, proved to be the most vehement apologist for the lynching. For example, the *Tribune* devoted two editorials to castigating university sociologist Charles Ellwood, who had commented to his class that a community in which a lynching occurs "has lower moral ideals than communities which do not tolerate lynchings."<sup>34</sup>

Although many probably disapproved of mob violence, Columbia's townspeople never collectively condemned the lynching, and few whites—other than those affiliated with the university—openly opposed it. The pressure to conform loomed large for the white general public, with community consensus in favor of shielding the lynchers. Like countless other lynching investigations, the Boone County coroner's inquest reported its findings: on Sunday, April 29, Scott "came to his death by hanging at the hands of a man or men unknown to this jury."<sup>35</sup>

Although it is certain that an outraged African-American community discussed and condemned the lynching in church and lodge meetings, they left no public record of collective protest. Even more than whites who might have opposed the lynching, vocal Columbia blacks faced the possibility of economic sanctions or violent reprisals. Scott's pastor, the Reverend Caston, the only community leader willing to publicly oppose the lynching, received a note warning him to leave town. This looming threat of additional racial violence against the local community may have extinguished any other indigenous black protest. Furthermore, the absence of a NAACP chapter or other politicized civil rights organization in the city, and the virtually nonexistent tradition of mass protest among Columbia's blacks, left the community politically impotent.<sup>36</sup>

Pressure to prosecute the lynchers came from outside Columbia, spearheaded by the NAACP national office in New York and its St. Louis chapter. The NAACP executive secretary, James Weldon Johnson, wired Governor Hyde on April 30: "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People... trusts that every individual who participated in the brutal lynching of James T. Scott whether or not a student of the University of Missouri will be tried for first degree murder and convicted if guilty[.] [T]he eyes of the nation," he reminded the governor, "are upon Missouri to be shown whether anarchy or law will prevail."<sup>37</sup>

The Columbia lynching occurred during one of the NAACP's most intensive anti-



lynching campaigns. Ironically, Missouri Congressman Leonidas C. Dyer, a Republican representing St. Louis's predominately black Twelfth Congressional District, had been touring the midwest and western United States to promote his federal anti-lynching bill when Scott was murdered. After Scott's murder, Congressman Dyer said that he would "continue on my journey with a bowed head, shamed by the atrocity at Columbia." James Weldon Johnson called the lynching and Missouri authorities' inaction "one of the best concrete arguments for the passage of a federal anti-lynching bill."<sup>38</sup>

In a follow-up letter to Governor Hyde dated May 7, Johnson inquired, "Is any step being taken to fix the responsibility for the failure of the National Guard Unit which you ordered to take action to prevent that lynching?" He termed the inaction of the National Guard officers and the city and county law enforcement officials "one of the grossest examples of neglect of duty and cowardice ever laid at the door of Americans." Two days later, Governor Hyde responded to Johnson's inquiries in a brief letter. "There was no failure of the National Guard Unit at Columbia," the governor asserted. He maintained that less than thirty-five minutes passed between the time he was notified of the mob and the time the mob removed Scott from the jail. "You can readily see," the governor explained to Johnson, "that it was impossible for them to operate rapidly enough to prevent the lynching."<sup>39</sup>

Governor Hyde felt increasing pressure to justify his actions, and the actions of the National Guard, although he had in fact responded with direct steps to attempt to prevent Scott's murder. In addition to unsuccessfully calling for National Guard intervention, he dispatched the commander of the Missouri National Guard and several other prominent state officials to Columbia only hours after the lynching to investigate reports of possible race riots in an effort to prevent Scott's murder from leading to widespread racial violence. Nevertheless, over the next two weeks concerned citizens and various black and white political organizations, fraternal orders, women's clubs, and church groups across Missouri flooded Governor Hyde's office with telegrams and letters condemning the lynching. They also demanded that the guilty parties be brought to trial and encouraged the governor to send the attorney general to head the prosecution. In response to the public outcry, Governor Hyde publicly condemned the "infamous outrage," and offered Prosecuting Attorney Hulen and Sheriff Brown state assistance, promising them "to do anything and everything that the state could do, up to declaring martial law, if they desired."<sup>40</sup>

Several factors compelled Governor Hyde to respond to the incident of racial violence with state intervention. First, the Columbia incident was the second lynching in the state during his administration. On April 29, 1921, a Bowling Green, Missouri, mob lynched a nineteen year old black man convicted of assaulting a fourteen year old white girl. Many Missourians felt that the state authorities had failed to adequately respond to the 1921 lynching. "We beg respectfully to remind you," a concerned Kansas City group wired the governor after the Scott murder, "that this is the second lynching in the state during your administration and urge that the state employ greater diligence in investigating and prosecuting this shame of Columbia than was shown in the case in Bowling Green." Second, personal concerns and Republican party politics motivated Governor Hyde. As a result of interstate migration and urbanization during the 1910s and 1920s, a growing and increasingly important black Missouri electorate determined the outcomes of many state and county elections, and politicians—especially Republicans—had become increasingly

dependent on black voters to win elections. Third, the National Guard's failure to prevent the lynching drew the state deeper into the affair and laid at least partial responsibility for the lynching at the door of the governor's mansion in Jefferson City.<sup>41</sup>

In his response to outraged citizens, Governor Hyde denied that either the National Guard or the state bore any responsibility. He reviewed the state's immediate efforts to prevent the lynching, and emphasized the powerlessness of the National Guard to maintain law and order due to the late request for state troops: "The Battery was ordered out within five minutes after the first information reached here," he explained, but "altogether the Battery had less than 30 minutes to dress and come from their homes. This they were unable to do in time and in sufficient numbers to stop the lynching. I want you to know these facts in order that you may know the state acted with great promptness...Had the information reached me earlier there is no question but that this lynching could have been stopped."<sup>42</sup>

In his report of the lynching, Colonel Williams, commander of Battery B, concurred with the governor "that if the battery had been called an hour sooner, it could easily have dispersed the mob and prevented the lynching." The large number of curious spectators, and the presence of women and children in the crowd, he asserted, "would have made it difficult to stop the work of the mob unless an early start was made." Colonel Williams specifically faulted Sheriff Brown for the lynching, noting that the sheriff "could have asked for troops a full hour before any request was made." In addition, the colonel agreed with the governor's assertion that the troops had less than thirty minutes to mobilize before the mob removed Scott from the jail.<sup>43</sup> But St. Louis attorney George Vaughn, who had telephoned the governor about the lynching, claimed that the battery's commanders had "a little more than an hour" to mobilize their troops. "Being a stranger I do not know personally any of the members of Battery B," Vaughn charged, "but I heard both colored and white people state that many of the members of Battery B were among the members of the mob, and assert that that is the reason it was not possible to get them out."<sup>44</sup>

City and county officials, especially Sheriff Brown, also encountered harsh criticism from outraged citizens. Chester A. Franklin, editor of the black weekly, the *Kansas City Call*, wrote Governor Hyde: "The sheriff is criminally liable for failure and neglect to exercise supervision over the county jail according to the law." Another black newspaper editor, Nick Chiles, of the *Topeka [Kansas] Plaindealer*, reminded the governor of his "sworn duty" to "see that the sheriff who had this man in custody at Columbia should be dismissed from office." However, unlike many states, Missouri had no statute to suspend or discharge elected county law officers for failing to prevent a lynching.<sup>45</sup>

Given the widespread negative publicity that the lynching attracted, image-minded state and Boone County authorities likely felt compelled to prosecute the lynchers to protect the interests of the University of Missouri. At least one unidentified black man in Columbia believed this was the case. "The authorities feel they've got to do something on account of the state university," he wrote to relatives in Chicago. "Even without dragging the students into the affair," the *St. Louis Star's* editor observed, "the University has suffered serious harm from mere proximity to the disgraceful affair."<sup>46</sup>

After a conference on Monday morning, April 30, in Jefferson City, Attorney General Barrett and Prosecuting Attorney Hulen announced that a special Boone County grand jury would be called on Wednesday to investigate the lynching. Characterizing it as a

"deplorable violation of our laws" that "strikes at the very foundation of all law and order," Hulen optimistically promised at least a dozen indictments within twenty-four hours of Wednesday if provided with a grand jury "composed of citizens with respect for the law." He was convinced that the mob's ringleaders could be convicted of at least second degree murder charges, and he was reasonably sure authorities would have no trouble identifying them. "We know who the leaders of the mob were," he declared. "I know some of them, and my officers and deputies know them all and can testify against them." However, Hulen, in an effort to protect Columbia's reputation, wrongly saddled the town's working-class whites and outsiders with the blame for the lynching: "The leaders were among the roughnecks of the town and some of them farmers from the county."<sup>47</sup>

Attorney General Barrett provided state assistance in the prosecution of the vigilantes, furnishing the services of the assistant attorney general, Henry Davis. "I know the people of Boone County," Barrett declared at the press conference, "and I know that they are not the kind to let this assault upon law and order go unpunished." Despite the attorney general's contention, many whites did not want to see the mob members go to trial. Prosecuting Attorney Hulen received a letter postmarked in Arkansas and signed "K.K.K." warning him not to seek prosecution in the lynching investigation.

Many Columbia residents just wanted to forget the lynching. "I just wish that the papers would let the matter rest now," Sheriff Brown told a reporter. "The Columbia Tribune, I think, said enough before this thing came off." Professor Almstedt commented in a statement to the press, "We want to try to forget this trouble as soon as possible and lift the cloud that has been hovering over my home for more than a week." He maintained that his daughter had "absolutely identified" Scott, and he was convinced that the guilty man had been lynched. While he had opposed the mob violence, his statement echoed the traditional assertions by lynchers and pro-lynchers of the victim's absolute guilt.<sup>48</sup>

On Thursday, May 3, a special Boone County grand jury returned indictments against four Columbia men, including a prominent businessman and a city councilman's son, and one man from Harrisburg, a small, northwestern Boone County town, for involvement in the lynching. George W. Barkwell, a forty-nine year old local contractor and former city councilman, was arrested and charged with first degree murder in the death of James T. Scott. H. H. "Hamp" Rowland, a forty-six year old Harrisburg farmer and a relative of Columbia's police chief; Marvin M. Jacobs, a forty-six year old harness maker; and Estill B. Davis, a twenty year old bricklayer and the son of a city councilman, were arrested and charged with obstructing an officer. A member of Battery B, Sergeant Elmer Woods, a twenty year old auto mechanic, was also charged with obstructing an officer, a crime which carried a maximum sentence of five years in prison.<sup>49</sup>

Many members of Columbia's white elite sanctioned the lynching by posting bond for Barkwell, Woods, and Davis. Seventeen prominent business associates, including two bank presidents, two contractors, three lumber yard owners, the county collector, and the city administrator, posted Barkwell's twenty thousand dollar bond within half an hour of his arrest. According to the *Kansas City Post*, the men who signed Barkwell's bond represented an aggregate worth of one million dollars. After he had signed the bond note, Boone County Trust Company president William A. Bright told Sheriff Brown, "Fred, if any more of the fellows who were in that mob come up here for bond you send for me. I

will make bond for them until you fellows around the court house holler enough." Four men signed Woods's five thousand dollar bond, including his prominent employer, former mayor Emmett C. Clinkscales. Presumably, Columbia Councilman Ira L. Davis, owner of Davis & Phillips Construction Company, posted his son's five thousand dollar bond.<sup>50</sup>

Columbia and Boone County's middle-class community followed suit. Ten carloads of Harrisburg farmers accompanied Rowland into Columbia when he was arrested to post his five thousand dollar bond, and twenty-two friends affixed their names to his bond ten minutes after it had been prepared. Four Columbia middle-class entrepreneurs who owned businesses near Jacobs's South Eighth Street harness shop and five retired farmers posted his five thousand dollar bond. Not only did white men recognize the need for solidarity in defense of their neighbors, but at least one white woman advocated that members of her sex collectively came to the defense of the alleged lynchers. Mrs. Nina Akeman March, who signed Rowland's bond with her husband, Andrew D. March, remarked, "I think all women should be interested in this matter." Mrs. March challenged other women to join her in supporting the men who had attempted to defend women's honor and status in the community.<sup>51</sup>

The defendants' attorneys—Lakenan Price, George Starrett, former Democratic state senator Frank G. Harris, and Democratic U. S. Congressman Samuel C. Major of Fayette, Missouri—united to form a team defense.<sup>52</sup> On Tuesday, May 8, the four attorney defense team entered not guilty pleas for Barkwell, Rowland, Woods, Jacobs, and Davis, and Judge Ernest S. Gantt of Mexico, Missouri, ordered the five cases tried separately in the following term of the Boone County Circuit Court. Two months later, on Monday, July 9, Boone County Circuit Court opened at 9:00 a.m. with Barkwell's case for first degree murder. The selection of the jury graphically reflected most Columbia and Boone County residents' aversion to prosecuting any of the alleged lynchers. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, one-quarter of the eighty-three veniremen questioned were disqualified from jury duty because they believed in mob law in certain situations. Five others were disqualified because they expressed objections to prosecuting a white man for "hanging a nigger." The capacity crowd in the courtroom applauded and cheered every prospective juror who declared he favored mob law, and at one point, the crowd became so boisterous that Judge Gantt threatened to close the trial to the public. This circus-like atmosphere continued for over two days. Finally at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, the prosecution and the defense agreed on an all-white male jury, composed almost exclusively of farmers or retired farmers.<sup>53</sup>

"We expect a conviction if a jury which will consider the case on the evidence submitted is obtained," Assistant Attorney General Henry Davis optimistically declared. "I believe that such a jury has been obtained as it is my impression that most of the residents of Boone County are in favor of upholding the law in all cases." He added that the prosecution had compiled enough evidence to prove Barkwell "guilty beyond a doubt." But few others shared Davis's optimism. Nich Chiles, a Topeka newspaper editor, wrote Governor Hyde, "we have very little faith in what the court may do in this matter, as this being a Colored man, who belongs to a Race [that] the white people have imposed on... for the last three centuries." Missouri juries had returned a conviction against lynchers only once prior to 1923. In 1903, a jury sentenced Samuel Mitchell to ten years imprisonment for second degree murder in the lynching death of Thomas

Gilyard, a black Joplin, Missouri, man, but a subsequent appeal overturned Mitchell's conviction.<sup>54</sup>

On Wednesday, July 11, testimony in *State of Missouri v. George W. Barkwell* began before a capacity crowd of six hundred. After Judge Earnest S. Gantt had instructed the jury, sixty-one witnesses, including prominent Columbia bankers and merchants and practically all city and county law officials, were called before the bar and sworn. In the prosecution's opening address, Hulen laid out the state's case. "I believe testimony will trace the defendant from the courthouse columns until he tied a rope around the neck of the negro and pushed him backwards from Stewart Bridge." In the defense's opening remarks, Frank G. Harris admitted that Barkwell, whom he characterized as a "law-abiding, respected citizen," was present at the lynching, just as two thousand others were; however, Harris argued, instead of leading the lynch mob, the defendant had tried to prevent Scott's murder. He also tried to make Scott the focus of the trial rather than Barkwell. "The deceased in this case is a negro," he asserted. "Just a few days prior to the alleged lynching, he was charged with the heinous crime of rape. I think the evidence will show that a heinous offence had been committed on a white girl." Preying on the residues of the racist hysteria that had gripped the white community, Harris graphically recounted the details of the attack.<sup>55</sup>

As witness for the prosecution, Columbia and Boone County law officials were tentative in their testimony against Barkwell. Those who were elected officials realized the danger of opposing the community's prevailing support for the accused. Sheriff Brow, for example, testified that he saw Barkwell, "Hamp" Rowland, Marvin Jacobs, and Elmer Woods outside Scott's cell, but he did not know who had burned the locks off the jail doors. Incredibly, the sheriff could not identify any other mob members except the five indicted.<sup>56</sup>

The state's key witnesses were two University of Missouri journalism students. Sophomore Foster B. Hailey from Barry, Illinois, testified that Barkwell was one of the first men into Scott's cell when it was opened. He also observed Barkwell "monkeying around with the [acetylene] tank" and conferring with the men operating the torch. Charles Nutter, a freshman from Sedalia, Missouri, who had covered the lynching for the *Kansas City Star*, testified that he stood alongside Barkwell when the defendant put the rope around Scott's neck and pushed him off the bridge. Nutter declared that he had seen Barkwell "in a bright light" and could not be mistaken, but under the defense's cross-examination, Nutter could not recall what Barkwell wore that night, except to say that the defendant was "in his shirt sleeves."<sup>57</sup>

The defense produced several prominent Columbia businessmen and merchants to testify on Barkwell's behalf. W. E. Smith, the cashier of the Exchange National Bank who had signed Barkwell's bond and the city administrator, testified that he and Barkwell were talking on the north side of Stewart Bridge when Scott was thrown over the south side railing. The son of a prominent Columbia businessman, Pierce Niedermeyer, an insurance salesman, claimed that Barkwell was standing next to him on the north side of the bridge when Scott was hanged.<sup>58</sup>

The prosecution started its closing argument at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 12. Assistant Attorney General Davis charged the jurors to "send the word across the state of Missouri that Boone County would not tolerate acts against organized government." He emphasized Nutter's testimony and questioned W. E. Smith's motives. "I am not saying

Smith testified falsely, but I will say that he had such an intense interest in the case that he said Barkwell was on the north side of the bridge." In his final argument, defense attorney George Starrett asserted that Columbia had lived "in peace and equanimity" for years until April 20 when a black man committed a "fiendish crime" and a "white girl was ravished and despoiled." Contrasting Nutter and Smith's testimony, he assailed the student: "Now this man Nutter was one of these newspaper reporters who is always going around after news. All of them feed on publicity. I do not believe a word of what Nutter said. If you are to believe him, you have to call W. E. Smith, one of our best citizens, a liar!" Starrett declared he was more apt to believe Smith than a "whole basketful of Nutters."<sup>59</sup>

The jury retired at 2:10 p.m. and returned eleven minutes later with a verdict. Only one ballot had been taken. Despite Nutter's testimony, the jury found George Barkwell not guilty.

The ecstatic courtroom spectators erupted in cheers and whistles at the pronouncement of the verdict, and dozens of men crowded around the defense counsel's table, patting Barkwell on the back, shaking his hand, and congratulating him and his triumphant attorneys. Friends celebrated Barkwell's acquittal that night at a banquet thrown in his honor. In a statement made immediately following the trial, Assistant Attorney General Davis and Prosecuting Attorney Hulen claimed that even though Barkwell was acquitted, the trial would have a positive influence upon the preservation of law in Columbia. "Although the defendant in this case was acquitted," Hulen declared, "I believe the fact that there was a vigorous prosecution should deter others from joining lynch mobs in the future." Less than an hour after Barkwell's acquittal, Hulen dismissed the charges against "Hamp" Rowland. Several days later, an unknown number of Columbia residents presented a signed petition to Prosecuting Attorney Hulen requesting him to dismiss the charges against the remaining three defendants because "the signers do not believe the defendants guilty; that the Barkwell case has demonstrated that it will be impossible to secure a conviction against any of these defendants; that the cost of these trials will be great and the benefits small and that the trial will keep alive bad feeling." The other three cases were "continued indefinitely" in a confidential agreement between the state and the defense.<sup>60</sup> Like most other lynch mob members, the men who murdered Scott escaped punishment.<sup>61</sup>

Two days after Barkwell's acquittal, the *Daily Tribune* dismissed the university newspaper's assertion that the lynching had been racially motivated: "The *Missourian* yesterday... again libeled this fine city... One statement in the comment which this notoriously unreliable sheet makes is that the lynching was a result of race prejudice...The lynching would have happened just as surely if a white man had committed the atrocious, outrageous crime."<sup>62</sup> The *Daily Tribune's* assertion notwithstanding, Scott's murder was clearly racially motivated; Scott was brutally killed because he symbolized black economic aspirations to a community that felt threatened by black mobility.

In retrospect, James T. Scott, like countless other blacks lynched in America, appears to have been innocent, guilty only of asserting his manhood at a time when the acceptable roles for black males were restricted to those of "boy" and "uncle." As a decorated war veteran, a wage earner, and the owner of a car—a commodity fast becoming entrenched

as a symbol of masculinity and sexuality—Scott challenged white conceptions of appropriate black behavior. Scott's prominence in the community maximized the social impact of his murder. At his ritualized lynching, Scott served as a symbol for all the aspiring members of his race, and, thus, he was also meant to serve as a warning.

Traditionally lynchings have united white communities where they occur because they tend to minimize class distinctions in support of racial solidarity.<sup>63</sup> However, in the Scott case, the conflicting responses of the University of Missouri and the larger white Columbia community exacerbated already present "town-gown" tensions between the two groups. Nonetheless, by leading the mob that lynched James Scott, and by supporting those accused in the aftermath of the murder, Columbia's elite reinforced their social position among non-university whites. In so doing, they also reinforced their ability to exploit black labor.

## References

1. The author wishes to thank Sundiata K. Cha-Jua, Robert Hinton, Susan Porter Benson, David R. Roediger, Gary R. Kremer, Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., Antonio F. Holland, and Christine M. Stewart for their encouragement, comments, and direction to sources. A debt is also owed to Eliot F. Battle, Arvarh Strickland, LeeAnn Whites, Daniel T. Williams, Wynna Faye Elbert, Sarah Belle Jackson, Karen Hayes, Grace Lee, Carolyn V. Atkin, F. Garland Russell, and all those in Columbia's black community who agreed to discuss the lynching. The lynching figure is based on Monroe N. Work, *Negro Year Book: An Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1925-1926* (Tuskegee, Ala.: Negro Year Book Publishing Co., 1925), p. 399; lynching percentages are from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (1919; reprint, New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), p. 7.
2. Arthur F. Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), p. 37. The quotation, italicized in the original, is from Walter White, *Rope and Faggo: A Biography of Judge Lynch* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), p.82.
3. At least four other lynchings occurred in college towns prior to the Scott lynching, including two in Columbia, in 1853 and 1889. *Columbia Statesman*, August 19, 1853; August 23, 1853; August 26, 1853; *Columbia Herald*, September 12, 1889; Ralph Ginzburg, *100 Years of Lynching* (New York: Lancer Books, 1962), p. 9; W. E. B. Du Bois, "A University Course in Lynching," *The Crisis* 26 (June 1923), p. 55.
4. See, for example, James E. Cutler, *Lynch-Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co 1905), pp. 276-77; Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching*, p. 11; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 3d ed. (1937; reprint, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1957), :332; Frank Shay, *Judge Lynch: His First Hundred Years* (New York: Ives Washburn, Inc., 1938), pp. 86-89.
5. On the impoverished conditions in Columbia's African-American community around the turn of the century, see William Wilson Elwang, *The Negroe. Columbia, Missouri: A Concrete Study of the Race Problem* (Columbia: University of Missouri Sociology Department, 1904). The quotation is from Audrey Nell Kittel, "The Negro Community of Columbia, Missouri" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri, 1938), p. 75

6. *Annual Report of the Public Schools, Columbia, Missouri, 1919-1922* (Columbia, n.d.), p. 14; Wilbur East, "A Descriptive Survey of the Negro Churches in Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri, 1938), pp. 14, 92; *St. Louis Argus*, March 24, 1922.
7. On Professor Almstedt, see *Missouri Alumnus* 25 (November 1936), p. 13; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 21, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1923; letter from George L. Vaughn to Walter F. White, May 2, 1923, "Lynching, Missouri, 1923," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Papers, Administrative File, group I, series C, box 361, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. (Hereafter cited as "NAACP Lynching Report, NAACP Papers." All subsequent citations to the NAACP Papers are from same group, series, and box number.) The approximate time of the attack remains uncertain. The *Missourian* reported that the attack occurred around 3:30 p.m., while the *Tribune* placed the attack "between 2 and 3 o'clock." The NAACP later charged that the assault occurred at 2:30 p.m., but when the suspect, James T. Scott, established an alibi, the time was subsequently changed to 3:30.
8. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1923; April 23, 1923; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 21, 1923; *Kansas City Post*, April 21, 1923. According to the doctor who treated her, Regina was "suffering from bruises and cuts on the face, head and body" and "from the shock of the experience," but her condition was "not dangerous."
9. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 21, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1923.
10. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 21, 1923; April 23-26, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1923; April 23-26, 1923.
11. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 27, 1923; "NAACP Lynching Report, NAACP Papers," p. 7.
12. The arrest records in "Columbia, Missouri, Police Records, 1882-1946," collection 2380, reel 5, volumes 9-11, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia, are extant beginning only in the early 1930s; the description of Scott is from the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 27, 1923; death certificate of James T. Scott, April 29, 1923, no. 11912, Bureau of Vital Records, Missouri Division of Health, Jefferson City, Missouri; *Chicago Defender*, May 12, 1923.
13. Marriage license of James Scott and Gertrude Carter, issued February 19, 1921, Boone County Recorder of Deeds Office, Boone County Courthouse, Columbia, Missouri; Charles A. O'Dell, comp., *Black Households in Columbia, Missouri, 1901-1909: A Directory* (Columbia: n.p., 1988), p. 10; *Forty-Eighth Annual Catalogue of Lincoln Institute, Jefferson City, Missouri, 1919-1920* (Jefferson City: Capital News Printing Co., n.d.), p. 93; "NAACP Lynching Report, NAACP Papers," p. 8; *Columbia and County Directory*, 1923, p. 157; *Annual Report of the Public Schools, Columbia, Missouri, 1919-1922*, pp.16-17.
14. "James Scott," Payroll Appointment Cards, Columbia, C:1/84/1, Box 1, Roll 3 (1916-1940, Ogle, G. C. Zwanzig, S. A.), University of Missouri Archives, Columbia, Missouri; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; Kittel, "Negro Community of Columbia, Missouri," p. 89. In 1922, the average monthly wage for a black farm laborer, a seasonal position, in the midwest was only \$47.14. Lorenzo J. Greene and Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro Wage Earner* (1930; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), pp. 204, 208.
15. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 28, 1923; April 30, 1923.



16. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 26, 1923; April 28, 1923. There appears to be no familial relationship between James T. Scott and Jadie Scott.
17. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; July 11, 1923.
18. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1923; May 1, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 30, 1923. For various accounts of the jail storming and lynching in white newspapers, see *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, April 29-30, 1923; *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, April 29-30, 1923; *Kansas City Star*, April 29, 1923. For accounts from a black viewpoint, see *St. Louis Argus*, May 4, 1923; *Kansas City Call*, May 4, 1923; and *Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1923.
19. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 30, 1923; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 29, 1923; quoted in "NAACP Lynching Report, NAACP Papers," p. 2. At the time of the lynching, the university was not in session: the 1923 winter term had ended on April 25, and the summer term was scheduled to begin on June 18. Otherwise, it seems probable that more students would have been among the crowd. *Catalogue of the University of the State of Missouri, Eighty-first Report of the Curators to the Governor of the State, 1922-23* (Columbia: n.p., 1923), pp. 152, 348.
20. "NAACP Lynching Report, NAACP Papers," pp. 1,3-4; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; May 3, 1923; May 5, 1923. Vaughn wrote an eight-page report of the lynching for the NAACP. For a reprint of his report, see *St. Louis Argus*, May 4, 1923. On Vaughn, see his obituary, published in *Journal of Negro History* 34 (October 1949), pp. 490-91; Lawrence O. Christensen, "Black St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations, 1865-1916" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1972), pp. 221-22, 250-51. Sheriff Brown claimed that he had telephoned Governor Hyde about the mob around 11:15 p.m., but the governor claimed that the first call he received about the intended lynching came from Vaughn.
21. Report from Col. John F. Williams to Adj. Gen. W. A. Raupp, n.d., Arthur M. Hyde Papers, collection no. 7, box 31, folder 796, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 30, 1923.
22. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, April 30, 1923.
23. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923.
24. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1923; *Kansas City Star*, April 29, 1923; *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, April 29, 1923; quoted in interview with Eula Jackson by Wynna Faye Elbert, John W. "Blind" Boone Community Center, Columbia, Missouri, "A Collection of Memories of Our Black Community," audiocassette, n.d.
25. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923. A traditional mob defense of lynching shielding white women and their families from the humiliation of testifying against their black assailants in court—would appear unfounded in this case since Professor Almstedt had pleaded for a trial. Arthur F. Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching*, p. 18.
26. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923.
27. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1923.
28. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1923; *Columbia Herald-Statesman*, April 30, 1923; May 3, 1923; May 5, 1923; *Chicago Defender*, May 26, 1923. James T. Scott's funeral was held at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 2 and his body was interred in the Columbia cemetery. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, May 18, 1923. After Scott's murder, Boone County

officials attempted to charge Ollie Watson, the man Scott accused, with attacking Regina Almstedt. However, authorities never brought Watson to trial on charges of assaulting the girl. On July 24, an Audrain County jury convicted Watson of forced assault on a black schoolgirl and sentenced him to twenty-four years in prison. The other defendant charged in the same incident, Jadie Scott, was presumably acquitted, because three years later in Jefferson City, Missouri, Scott shot and killed "Buddie" Rankin, a black taxi cab company owner, and seriously wounded Rankin's wife, Dorothy. On October 20, 1926, a Cooper County jury found Jadie Scott guilty of first degree murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 6-7, 1923; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 24, 1923; *Jefferson City Tribune*, May 10, 1926; October 20, 1926.

29. *New York Times*, April 30, 1923; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 30, 1923; *Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1923; Du Bois, "University Course in Lynching," p. 55. In addition to the three newspapers, various Associated Press and United Press accounts of the lynching also appeared in the following newspapers: *Atlanta Constitution*, [Little Rock] *Arkansas Gazette*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Denver Post*, *Detroit News*, *Louisville CourierJournal*, *Montgomery [Alabama] Advertiser*, *New Orleans TimesPicayune*, *New York Sun*, *New York Tribune*, *New York World*, *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, and *Washington Post*. An edited version of *New York World's* account appears in Ginzburg, *100 Years of Lynching*, p. 169. See assorted newspaper clippings in "Missouri1923," Lynchings File, Tuskegee Archives, Hollis Burke Frissel Library, Tuskegee, Alabama.

30. *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, April 30, 1923; *New York Times*, May 3, 1923.

31. "University of Missouri Board of Curators Papers, 1839-1932," collection 920, reel 120, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia; telegram from Isidor Loeb to editor of the *New York World*, April 30, 1923, University of Missouri President's Office Papers, collection 2582, box 46,

folder 2114, *ibid.*; letter from Isidor Loeb to Mrs. Wayne N. Laidlaw, May 9, 1923, *ibid.*, box 46, folder 2114; quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, May 5, 1923. The Board of Curator's minutes for its May 7 meeting, the first meeting following the incident, contain no statement at all regarding the lynching.

32. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923.

33. *Columbia Evening Missourian* April 30, 1923; May 1-18, 1923. The *Missourian's* feature began on May 1, and with the exception of two issues appeared in every edition over the next three weeks, ending on May 18.

34. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, May 1-2 1923.

35. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923.

36. For Reverend Caston's remarks see *ibid.*, May 3, 1923; on the threatening letter, see *ibid.*, May 5, 1923.

37. Telegram from James Weldon Johnson to Governor Hyde, April 30, 1923, Hyde Papers, box 32, folder 797.

38. *Joplin Daily Globe*, May 1, 1923; on Congressman Dyer, see *Official Manual of the State of Missouri*, 1923-1924 (Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, n.d.), p. 56; quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, May 1, 1923: letter from James Weldon Johnson to the editor of the *New York Tribune*, May 2, 1923, NAACP Papers; on the Congressional struggle over the bill, see Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), pp. 51-71, *passim*.

39. Letter from Johnson to Governor Hyde, May 7, 1923, Hyde Papers, box:., 31, folder

- 796; letter from Governor Hyde to Johnson, May 9, 1923, NAACP Papers
40. Letter from Governor Hyde to Mrs. Russell Field, May 8, 1923, Hyde Papers, box 31, folder 796. The organizations that sent letters or telegrams expressing concern included the Benevolent Order of Peerless Knights of St. Louis, Twentieth Century Republican Club of Kansas City, Kansas City Athenaeum, Webster Groves League of Women Voters, Grand Knights of Pythias of Missouri, First Congregational of Church of Sedalia, Church Federation of St. Louis, Kansas City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, St. Louis NAACP Chapter, Kate F. Newton Women's Christian Temperance Union of Kansas City, Associated Vestries of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Dioceses of Missouri, Kansas City Negro Women's Republican League, Baptist Ministers Twin City Alliance of Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri, Ministerial Alliance of St. Louis, and A.M.E. Ministerial Alliance of Greater Kansas City. See Hyde Papers, boxes 31-32, folders 79-97.
41. *Bowling Green Times*, May 5, 1921; May 12, 1921. Telegram from John L. Love to Governor Hyde, April 29, 1923, Hyde Papers, box 32, folder 797; Franklin Dean Mitchell, "Embattled Democracy: Missouri Democratic Politics, 1918-1932," (Ph.D diss., University of Missouri, Columbia. 1964), pp. ix-x, 98.
42. Letter from Governor Hyde to Mrs. Russell Field, May 8, 1923, Hyde Papers; box 31, folder 796.
43. Report, from Col. Williams to Adj. Gen. Raupp, n.d., *ibid.*, box 31, folder 796.
44. Letter from George L. Vaughn to Governor Hyde, April 30, 1923, *ibid.*, box 32, folder 797.
45. Letter from C. A. Franklin to Governor Hyde, April 30, 1923, *ibid.*, box 32, folder 797; letter from Nick Chile' Governor Hyde, May 31, 1923, *ibid.*, box 31, folder 796; James H. Chadbourn, *Lynching and the Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), pp. 58-76, *passim*. By 1923, nine states—Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Tennessee—had enacted legislation which made provisions for the removal of law officers from office who failed to prevent lynchings. Two additional states, Georgia and Idaho, made such an officer guilty of a misdemeanor, while Pennsylvania imposed a felony charge.
46. Quoted in *Chicago Defender*, May 19, 1923; *St. Louis Star*, May 3, 1923.
47. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923.
48. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, April 30, 1923; Raper, *Tragedy of Lynching*, pp. 8-9. 49. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, May 7, 1923.
50. *Ibid.* *Kansas City Post*, May 7, 1923; quoted in *Columbia Daily Tribune*, May 7, 1923. Clinkscales owned a Ford dealership and, in addition to serving as mayor had served as president of the Columbia Commercial Club and as a trustee of Christian College; see *Columbia Kiwanis, Names of Officers and Communities and Short Account of Members and the First Year's Work* (Columbia: n.p., 1911), p. 5.
51. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*; May 4-5, 1923; May 8, 1923. Except for real estate agent William L. Goldsberry, New York Life Insurance representative William G. Stephenson and former sheriff Fred T. Whitesides, most who signed Rowland's bond were Harrisburg farmers.
52. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, May 9, 1923; June 18, 1923; on Harris, see *Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1922-1923* (Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, n.d.), pp. 39, 41; on Major, see *Official Manual of the State, 1923-1924*, p. 55.

53. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 12, 1923; quoted in *St. Louis Argus*, July 13, 1923; *Columbia Evening Missourian*, May 8, 1923; July 9-10, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, May 8, 1923; July 9, 1923.
54. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 9, 1923; letter from Nick Chiles to Governor Hyde, May 31, 1923, Hyde Papers, box 31, folder 796; Cutler, *Lynch-Law*, p. 255; *Joplin Daily Globe*, April 19, 1903; November 21, 1903.
55. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 11, 1923. Unfortunately, the court proceedings for this case are closed to the general public under provision 610.105 of a 1986 revised state statute regulating governmental records.
56. Ibid.; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 11, 1923.
57. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 11-12, 1923. *University of Missouri Catalog, 1922-1923*, pp. 289, 312.
58. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 12, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 12, 1923.
59. Quoted in *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 12, 1923; *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 12, 1923.
60. *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 12, 1923; on Barkwell's banquet, see *St. Louis Argus*, July 13, 1923; *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 21, 1923, in Lynching File, Tuskegee Archives; quoted in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 13, 1923; *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, July 13, 1923; petition reprinted in *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 14, 1923.
61. Chadbourn, *Lynching and the Law*, pp. 13, 78.
62. *Columbia Daily Tribune*, July 14, 1923. The editorial that asserted the lynching was racially motivated appeared in the *Columbia Evening Missourian*, July 13, 1923.
63. Raper, *Tragedy of Lynching*, p. 47; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 139-41.