

# A HORRIBLE AFFAIR!

**A Negro Brutally and Outrageously Assaults a Little White Girl.**

## Her Assailant Lynched.

**HUNG TO A TREE IN THE STREETS OF CHESTERTOWN.**

**SHERIFF PLUMMER'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE PRISONER.**

**A Masked Mob Bursts Open the Jail Door With a Sledge Hammer and Axe and Secures Their Victim.**

Nellie, the little eleven-year-old daughter of Mr. John Silcox, a farmer living on the outskirts of Kennedyville, was brutally outraged by a negro named James Taylor, on Sunday morning last. Mr. Silcox, the father of the little girl, with the white man employed on the place, were out in the barn, feeding the stock, greasing the carriages and making other preparations to leave the place for the day. About eight o'clock Mr. Silcox went into the house, and going into the kitchen found his daughter, Nellie, there washing the dishes. She was crying and seemed to be very nervous and excited. The father inquired what the matter was, and the little girl said she was not feeling well. The father told her she better go lay down, and then went out. Her mother who is very deaf, being in the cellar skimming milk, and attending to other duties, came up in the sitting-room sometime after, and found her daughter lying on the lounge; she was crying, and told her mother she was sick. Her mother sent her up to her bed, and during the afternoon went up to see how she was. She found her very nervous and still crying, and laid down on the bed beside Nellie to quiet her. She soon after discovered some spots of blood on the child's clothing, and upon examining found the little girl's underclothing saturated with blood. Dr. J. K. H. Jacobs, of Kennedyville, was hastily summoned, arriving about 5 P. M., and found the little sufferer in a critical condition from her injuries and loss of blood. She had taken off some of her underclothing which she wore in the morning, and these have the appearance of having been dipped in blood. It was sometime before she would tell how she had received her injuries, but after much coaxing and persuasion by the doctor and her mother, she told the story. She said that that morning, while her father was at the barn and her mother in the cellar, James Taylor, the negro man employed on the farm, had come into the kitchen where she was at work. He caught her around the waist, pulled her up in his lap, placed his hand on her mouth to prevent her making any outcry, and outrageously assaulted her.

Although her mother was so near she did not hear any commotion whatever, being very deaf. After accomplishing his purpose the negro left the farm threatening her if she told any one. As soon as the above facts were learned the alarm was given and soon an armed crowd started in search of the brute. They at once went to the house along the railroad near Kennedyville where the negro lived, but were told he was not there, he having gone to a house a short distance away. The crowd went to this house, surrounded it, knocked at the door and inquired if Taylor was there. As soon as the negro heard his name called he attempted to escape through the back window, but he was confronted by guns and pistols and retreated back into the house where he was captured by the crowd. There were many threats of lynching the villain but he was brought to Chestertown and lodged in jail about nine o'clock that night. There were spots of blood on his clothes and some parts of his clothing had evidently been recently washed. On Monday State's Attorney W. M. Slay was sent for to take the little girl's deposition, it being thought she would not live until night, but upon his arrival, he found her much better, the doctors having succeeded in relieving her to some extent in the meantime. Justice Dodd accompanied Mr. Slay, and the statement made to them by little Nellie is in substance as previously given.

## TAYLOR REMOVED FROM THE JAIL.

Sheriff Plummer received notice on Monday that Taylor would be lynched that night, so he removed Taylor and Moses Brown between eight and nine o'clock from the jail, and placing them on Mr. Joseph Turner's steam tug Gracie, carried them down the river to Wilmer's wharf on the Queen Anne's side, where he kept them aboard of the tug moored to the wharf until about two o'clock A. M., when they steamed noiselessly back in the harbor at Chestertown.

Moses Brown is a witness in the Dr. Hill murder case, but the sheriff, with his usual amount of forethought, moved Brown for fear that the mob might lynch him after finding Taylor was gone. Despite the fact that several were about the jail and court house yard at the time, the sheriff succeeded, with skill and judgment, in getting the prisoners out the back way without their being discovered, and safely conveyed them to the wharf, where they were put aboard the tug. The sheriff and the tug's regular crew went with the prisoners. Great excitement and indignation prevailed in the town when it was discovered that the prisoner had been removed, and groups could be seen here and there on the streets discussing the situation. It was at first thought that the sheriff would carry them to Baltimore, so a large crowd at once went to Quaker Neck wharf to head off the tug, and the shores of Kent from Chestertown to Quaker Neck wharf, were watched until a late hour, the crowd hoping to discover the whereabouts of Taylor.

Teams from every quarter, from Sassafras in this county, to Kent Island, the extreme end of Queen Anne's began to pour into Chestertown and by eleven o'clock it was estimated that fully from five to eight hundred people were gathered about the jail, court-house yard and Dugan's corner waiting developments, and the greatest excitement prevailed. Every effort was made to find Taylor but no satisfactory theory could be reached, and not being thoroughly convinced that Taylor had been carried away a large crowd made a thorough search of the jail about 10 o'clock ransacking every cell, room, closet and corner, and even attempted to enter the private bed-room of Mrs. Plummer, but were prevented from doing so. At twelve thirty a squad of men of numbering fifty or seventy-five men closely masked marched upon the jail porch and being met by deputy Sheriff Frank Plummer, demanded of him to surrender Taylor, but both Mr. Plummer and town balliff Kalley, who was also present assured them that Taylor had been taken away.

The mob retired to the court house yard for a few minutes, where a consultation was held, when they again proceeded to the jail and demanded of the deputy-sheriff that he tell them where Taylor had been taken, threatening him if he did not, to which he made a neat, but scrawny, little speech, declaring that he knew no more than they did. After some ugly and unwarranted threats being made by some of the mob against the sheriff, the crowd left the jail and dispersed. A crowd then gathered at Mr. Turner's wharf, at Scott's Point, to await the arrival of the tug, and concealed themselves in a shed on the hill. When the tug steamed up to the wharf at ten minutes past three, it was met by two gentlemen. The crew all left the tug and started off the wharf, when the two gentlemen looked in her, and al-

though both Taylor and Brown were aboard, they failed to see them. The crowd then left, and the sheriff guarded the tug until five o'clock, when he took the prisoners back and lodged them safely in jail.

It is reported that several other lynching parties were in town all prepared for their work.

#### THE LYNCHING.

All day Tuesday groups of excited men could be seen on the streets, and the excitement was intense. Men could be seen watching the jail all day, and it was generally known that when night came, another and more determined effort would be made to lynch the brute. Soon after sundown men could be seen coming into town from all directions, and by 9 o'clock a crowd, estimated to be between 500 and 1000 men, were congregated around the jail, in the court house yard and in the street from the Rockwell House to the Crawford House.

At 9.30 a body of masked men marched out of the Crawford House yard, armed with a large sledge hammer, axes, guns, muskets and pistols, and went directly to the side door of the jail, the same door out of which Tom Thompson walked to his death. The crowd demanded of the sheriff that the door be opened, but this not being complied with, the sledge hammer was brought into use, and the door was soon broken open. The crowd then rushed up to the cells, and the prisoners in the various cells could be heard to shout: "For God's sake get the right man!" Taylor's cell having been located, the men at once commenced to break the door open. It offered a stout resistance, but finally gave way, and the crowd rushed in and quickly overpowered Deputy Sheriff Plummer, Officer Kelley, A. I. Dugan and others who were on guard.

A light was produced and Taylor was seen seated on the bed with his coat and shoes off. Having fully satisfied themselves that they had the right man, a rope was quickly put around his neck and he was pulled down the steps and out of the jail yard into Cross street. When the crowd reached a point between the Rockwell House and the old Armstrong Hotel the rope was thrown over the limb of a tree, and Taylor was soon swinging in the air. Again and again he was pulled up until life was extinct beyond all doubt. Many men in the crowd had guns and pistols, and persons were afraid that some excited man might fire at him, and frequent cries were heard of, "Don't shoot." When the crowd felt sure that Taylor was dead, the rope was tied to the tree, and his body was left suspended two or three feet from the ground. The whole thing was over before ten o'clock, and the crowd then quickly dispersed.

Some one hung a lantern in such a position that the light shone on the body and it was viewed by many persons who shuddered as they saw the body of the brute swaying in the night air. About 11 o'clock the body was cut down by Officer Kelley, under the directions of Coroner Pippin, and placed in the old engine-house, where it remained all night.

#### THE INQUEST.

At 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning, Coroner Robert K. Pippin summoned a jury of inquest composed of the following gentlemen: Lewing S. Fowler, Thomas W. Ellison, Jr., Thos. S. Bordley, M. A. Toulson, W. T. Matthews, J. W. Lambert, Geo. B. Westcott, B. N. S. Wilkins, J. K. Aldredge, A. I. Dugan, John Brice and C. C. Morgan. Only a slight abrasion was found under the chin, and after viewing the body the jury rendered a verdict, that "James Taylor, colored, came to his death by hanging at the hands of a large body of masked men unknown to the jury."

The body was turned over to Undertaker John N. Dodd, who prepared it for burial, and took it out to the almshouse on Wednesday afternoon, at half-past four, and buried it in the pauper burying-ground.

#### NOTES.

Little Nettle Sileox is a pretty, bright and interesting child. She stands well in her classes at school and for one so young is well advanced in her studies and is a favorite with her school and classmates. Dr. J. K. H. Jacobs, the child's physician, reported her condition yesterday improved, and is much encouraged over the prospects for her recovery.

A representative of the TRANSCRIPT visited the jail on Tuesday afternoon and interviewed Taylor, but he denied all knowledge of the crime, except what he had been told by others. He has been living with Mr. Sileox for about two years. He said he was raised in Poundtown, Queen Anna's county, where he resided until seven or eight years ago, when he came to Kent and has been living in the neighborhood of Kennedyville ever since. Taylor was a copper-colored negro, aged twenty-three years, and weighed about 150 pounds.

The lynching of James Taylor, on Tuesday night last, is the first case of lynching that has ever taken place in Kent county as far back as the oldest citizens can remember, and we hope it may be the last. Whatever may have been the provocation, the stigma will rest upon our county for many years.

A large number of people visited the jail yesterday and Sheriff Plummer allowed them the privilege of passing through.

The colored citizens of the town, so far as we can learn by interviewing some of the most respectable ones, are in sympathy with the lynching.