

JURY PREPARES TO CALL FIRST LYNCH WITNESS

Wicomico Panel To De- vote Whole Time To Investigation

REFUSES COMMENT ON NEGROES' ABSENCE

Bailey To Give Berger's Complaint To Chief Judge Of Circuit

[By the Associated Press]

Salisbury, Md., March 15—The State's investigation into the lynching of Matthew Williams, colored, began today as the Wicomico county grand jury prepared to summon the first of the 102 witnesses who have been directed to appear to testify.

Judge Joseph L. Bailey, presiding jurist of the Circuit Court, said he had not received any communication from the International Labor Defense League today and would not comment on it before its arrival.

Protests Absence Of Negroes

Louis Berger, secretary of the league, said in Baltimore today that he had sent a telegram to the judge criticizing the absence of Negroes and poor farmers as members of the investigating grand jury and asking that a committee of Negroes and white workers be permitted to "investigate the grand jury to learn whether any of its members were part of the lynch-mob leaders."

Judge Bailey said that when he receives the telegram he will turn it over to John R. Pattison, chief judge of the First Judicial Circuit.

Considers Other Cases

The grand jury went into session early today to hear testimony in a few other criminal cases which have been cited for study. It will devote its entire time to the investigation of the lynching of Williams here December 4 shortly after he had shot and killed Daniel L. Elliott, prominent lumberman and his employer.

The evidence in the lynching case will be presented by Attorney-General William Preston Lane, Jr., whose participation has been requested by Gov. Albert C. Ritchie, and by State's Attorney Levin C. Bailey and Deputy Attorney-General Anderson.

Lynched Near Courthouse

The colored man was lynched in the yard of the Wicomico County Courthouse, a stone's throw from where the investigation is taking place, early in the evening of December 4.

Williams was taken from the Peninsula General Hospital, where he was being treated for gunshot wounds, marched across the street to the green and hanged to a tree. His head was swathed in bandages at the time and he did not know where he was being led. The body later was cut down and burned.

Shot By Man's Son

Williams is said to have shot his employer during an argument over low wages and then turned his gun on himself, inflicting a slight wound. He dropped the gun and ran, but was shot by Elliott's son, who ran to his father's office at the sound of the first shooting.

Miss Helen V. Wise, superintendent of the hospital, from whom the colored man was taken by members of the mob that hanged him, was among the witnesses called before the grand jury.