

They Saw No Evil

HUNDREDS of people, according to the accounts at the time, witnessed the lynching of Matthew Williams at Salisbury three months and a half ago. There was nothing secret about this barbarous crime. The victim was taken from the hospital to the Courthouse square. There, in the plain view of the assembled citizenry, he was hanged. Later his body was dragged through the streets. God knows, it was all open enough.

Yet the grand jury of Wicomico County, after making a belated investigation, finds that there is no evidence to connect anyone with this brazenly flaunted outrage against justice and decency. The grand jury examined a hundred or so witnesses. We must conclude that they knew nothing, at least told nothing, for nothing came of the examination.

'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, that no one should know anything about this dastardly murder. Here is a community where everyone knows almost everyone else; and yet a committee of executioners, in the full glare of publicity, could do its work of slaughter and none of the assembled onlookers be any the wiser.

The conclusion is hard to avoid that the people of Salisbury and of Wicomico County do not wish the lynchers punished, in which case the murder of Matthew Williams becomes sanctioned by the community. And thus the blot against the fair name of that community will remain.