

REBUKES NATION FOR LYNCHINGS

To the Editor of the Times:

Sir—Please print this letter, received from Waco, Texas, in regards of burning a human being.

The population of Waco, Texas, in 1890 was 14,445; in 1900 it had increased to 20,654 and in 1910 to 26,425. The white population in these twenty years has almost doubled. The colored people have increased 23 per cent. of the population.

Waco is well laid out, the streets are broad and over sixty miles of them being paved. There are thirty-nine white churches and twenty-four colored ones. By denomination the white churches are: Baptist, 14; Methodist, 9; Christian, 4; Presbyterian, 3; Jewish, 2; Episcopal, 2; Evangelistic, 1; Lutheran, 1; Catholic, 1; Christian Science, 1, and Salvation Army, 1. The churches have been mentioned to show what Christianity will really stand for.

Near the county of Robinson, some six miles from Waco, lived a white family of four, named Fryar, who owned a small farm. This they cultivated with the help of one hired man, a colored boy of seventeen, named Jesse Washington.

Jesse was a big well-developed fellow but ignorant, being unable to read or write. He seemed to have been sullen and was no doubt mentally deficient with a strong temper. It is said that the Saturday night before the crime, he had a fight with a neighboring white man and the man threatened to kill him. Monday, May 8th, while Mr. Fryar, his son, aged fourteen, and his daughter, aged twenty-three, were hoeing corn in one part of their farm, Jesse was plowing with his mule and sowing cotton seed near the house where Mrs. Fryar was alone. Jesse went to the house for more cotton seed. As Mrs. Fryar was scooping it up for him in a bag which he held, she scolded him for beating the mules. He knocked her down with a blacksmith's hammer, and as he confessed, criminally assaulted her, finally killing her with the hammer.

The boy then returned to the field, finished his work and then went home to the cabin where he lived with his father, mother, brothers and sisters. When the murdered woman was discovered, suspicion pointed to Jesse Washington. He was found sitting in his yard, whittling a stick. He was arrested and taken to the jail in Waco.

Tuesday a mob visited the jail, coming in about fifty automobiles. They looked for him quietly but could not find him for he had been taken to the next county jail. Then another mob went to this county seat. The Robinson people promised not to lynch the boy if the authorities acted promptly.

Sunday, May 15, at midnight, Jesse Washington was brought from Dallas, where he had been taken from Waco. A confession was obtained, of course under duress, and was perhaps suspiciously clear, not entirely in the boy's own words. It seems probable, however, that the boy was guilty of murder and possibly of premeditated assault.

In the meantime, the exigences of the Waco politics are said to have demanded a lynching. Our investigator says they brought the boy back to Waco because a lynching was of political value to the county officials who are running the office.

Meantime the tip went; the crowd began pouring into the town the day before the trial and continued early Monday morning. The court room was packed and many thousands were on the outside. I asked the judge if he could have cleared the court room. His answer was, "Do you want to spill innocent blood for a nigger?"

The boy was dragged down the stairs, a chain put around his body and then hitched to an automobile. Women and children saw the lynching and burning. One man held his boy above the heads of others so he could see it. People pressed forward, each eager to be the first to light the fire. The fire was soon started and the great crowd of people acted as if mad. They pressed closer and some hacked the body to pieces. The body was burned to a crisp. Photographers took pictures of the scene.

We are wild about Belgium and how the Germans are treating the women, about what the Germans are doing on the high seas, and how Mexico is treating our people. Yet the Ninth Regiment went to the border of Mexico and could not ride on the same car with the Mexicans. Can we call this a free country?

All of our big men are making great speeches, even my friend, Mr. Hughes, but they never say that we must stop lynching. How do you expect some one to stop fighting in their house when you never have peace in your own. Charity begins at home or it will never get there. This is supposed to be a free country; yes, for white people and dogs.

Speaking of Red Crosses, listen to this record! Here is what Uncle Sam allowed since 1885: 1885, 78 were lynched; 1890, 90 were lynched; 1893, 155 were lynched; 1900, 107 were lynched; 1915, 80 were lynched; 1916, 31 were lynched in five months. This record shows just how much right we have to interfere with some other country about being civilized.

WM. H. YOUNG (Colored).

Princeton, N. J., Sept. 21, 1916.