

**Vol. 01**

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# The Hideous History of Mississippi

LYNCHING'S IN OUR  
STATE



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## Content Warning

Please take caution while reading and looking at this zine. It contains graphic images and content on death by lynching. I chose to include these images because they are an important piece to understanding the very depth of this zine's purpose.



## Introduction

Lynching is the act of killing someone without a legal trial, usually by hanging (Cambridge U, 2023). Ever since the Civil War came to an end, lynching has become a major component of racial violence in the United States. Joe Coe, Isadore Banks, Emmett Till, and Jesse Washington are just a few of the nearly 4,000 victims to lynching here in the U.S.. While every race has dealt with some kind of violence towards their people, most lynchings were taking place in the South and a majority of the victims that were lynched were black men, women, and children (BlackPast, 2017). It is estimated by Conservative that 476 of the 3,786 lynching victims in the United States were in the state of Mississippi between 1889 and 1945. That's nearly 13% of lynchings in the U.S that took place in the state we call home (MS Encyclopedia, 2017). It is important that we learn as much history about our state as possible, even if it may be ugly. Part of Mississippi's hideous history that residents should know is the lynchings that took place here.



# THE SHAME OF AMERICA

Do you know that the United States is  
the Only Land on Earth where human  
beings are BURNED AT THE STAKE?

In Four Years 1918-1921, Twenty-Eight People were publicly  
BURNED BY AMERICAN MOBS

## 3436 People Lynched, 1889-1921

The Worst Crimes Have Mobs Nullified Government and Inflicted the Death Penalty?

| The Worst Crimes         | The Crimes | Why Some Mob Victims Died                      |
|--------------------------|------------|--|
| Murder                   | 1,235      | For carrying a gun or other fire arms they are |
| Robbery                  | 1,117      | Being a witness of a crime or the one charged  |
| Witness against the Mob  | 457        | Jumping a fellow citizen                       |
| Witness against Property | 457        | Being a member of the Non-Partisan League      |
| Witness against Citizens | 457        | "Talking back" to a white man                  |
| Witness against Citizens | 457        | Refusing to give up                            |

### Is Rape the "Cause" of Lynching?

(Of 3,436 people lynched in 1889-1921, only 175, or less than 5% per cent, were even accused of the crime of rape.)

83 WOMEN HAVE BEEN LYNCHED IN THE UNITED STATES  
The lynchings occurred that they were lynchings for "the most common"

AND THE LYNCHERS GO UNPUNISHED

## THE REMEDY

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill Is Now Before the United States Senate

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was passed on January 29, 1922, by a vote  
of 219 to 159 in the House of Representatives.

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill provides:

That anyone who aids and abets shall be fined or imprisoned  
in case of failure of these means to act, and that a person who  
is lynchings shall be fined \$10,000, punishable in a Federal  
Court.

The Principal Objections Raised Against the Bill is upon the Ground  
of Constitutionality.

The Constitutionality of the Dyer Bill has been affirmed by:

The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives  
The Judiciary Committee of the Senate  
The United States Attorney General, Joseph C. Campbell  
Judge C. C. Coffey, of the Department of Justice.

The Senate has been petitioned to pass the Dyer Bill by:

25 Lawyers and Jurists including one former Secretary General of  
the United States

10 State Supreme Court Justices

14 State Governors

3 Academies, 20 colleges and prominent churches

10 Ministers of large cities, north and south

The American Bar Association at its meeting in New Orleans, August  
6, 1922, adopted a resolution asking for further legislation by  
Congress to punish and prevent lynching and mob violence.

Eleven State Conventions of 1922 (11 of them Dominions) have passed  
in their party platforms a demand for national action to stop mob  
violence.

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill is not intended to protect the public, but  
to punish every person who aids and abets the crime of lynching.

**THE DYER ANTI-LYNCHING BILL IS NOW BEFORE THE SENATE  
TELEGRAPH YOUR SENATORS TODAY YOU WANT IT ENACTED**

If you want to help the organization which has brought to light the facts about lynching, the organization which is fighting for 100 per cent enforcement,  
and for some of the people who are the victims, but for all of the people, white or black, all of the time.

Send your check to J. E. SPENCER, Treasurer of the

A flier called "The Shame of America" courtesy of  
BlackPast.org



## A Closer Look at Lynching's in Mississippi

Dit Seales and Peter Bolen were two black men that were publicly lynched in Starkville, Mississippi on Friday, August 13th in 1915 after they were accused of murdering Willie Taylor, a black teenager who worked as a porter for The Mobile and Ohio railroad at Mississippi A&M (now Mississippi State University) even though little evidence existed to prove their guilt and they didn't receive a trial. The account of these two victims and this horrific event has been suppressed over time. This account being in Starkville is extremely important because we call this small town home. Many people who live here are here for school, and most don't know of the horrific events such as lynching's that occurred here. The residents of Starkville and this state need to be educated and learn of these oppressed lynching accounts that are a huge part of this state's history. They could receive this education about their state's history by reading The Starkville Daily Newspaper. The Starkville Daily News company was founded in 1875, and they were the source for local news for Starkville and all of Oktibbeha County.



Seales and Bolen didn't receive a trial, even though as citizens of the United States they were guaranteed the rights to a public trial, the right to a lawyer, the right to an impartial jury, and the right to know who their accusers were and the nature of the charges and evidence against them (Legal Info. Institute., 2017). They were guaranteed these very rights through the United States Constitution by Amendment VI (6). Even though Seales and Bolen had these rights, they were not given the opportunity to exercise them even though the sixth amendment already existed and was ratified in 1791 way before their lynching's

Like countless other lynching's, those of Dit Seales and Peter Bolen were displayed for the public to gather around and watch and even do politicing at. This was not just any public though, as they were mainly white Americans. Mothers, fathers, and even children would be in attendance for these lynching's. Parents would raise their children up so they could get a better look, men joked loudly about it, and women giggled at the sight of these lynching's of black victims. Children were brought to these lynching's so their parents could carry their awful beliefs to their children. These white Americans embraced the lynching's and got a sense of joy out of what they saw as a celebration (Lartey & Morris, 2018).



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The account of Seales and Bolen's lynching's were provided by Ryan Phillips, an editor for the Starkville Daily Newspaper. Phillips states in his opinion on page four, "Confronting our own Shameful Newspapers Histories" that "... this revelation honestly broke my heart and momentarily shook my faith in our newspapers." due to the fact that back then the Starkville Daily News was covering up the lynching's that occurred not only in the Golden Triangle but in the state of Mississippi as a whole (Starkville Daily News, 2020). He also goes on to say "...only taking ownership of the events when the integrity of the narrative came into question." which means the only account of lynching's they ever wrote about which occurred in 1915, was written to protect themselves and their stability. Phillip's dug up many lynching accounts that deserve to be hard about, and opened this town and state's eyes to Mississippi's hideous history.

Image of Ryan Phillips, an editor of The Starkville Daily News. Image from The Starkville Daily News.



**RYAN  
PHILLIPS**  
SDN EDITOR





Lynching Photograph from The Starkville Daily News  
Article Courtesy of Mitchell Memorial Library Special  
Collections.



## The Importance of Lynching Photographs

The lynching photograph in The Starkville Daily Newspaper article comes from the Mitchell Memorial Library Special Collections. This photograph is the 1909 lynching of Roby Baskins in Houston, Mississippi.

Roby Baskins was accused of killing a prominent Baptist Minister. The purpose of these photographs is to not give the viewers "shock value" or to disturb them. The stories of these victims cannot exist without these photographs. This is our history, and it is raw and real. This is a fact about a very little-known topic in this state's history. These pictures prove that these accounts are real, these victims are real, these lynchings being on display for white people is real, and the way the black community was treated is real.

The images also allow the stories to not be "sugar coated". It educates the people on the true severity of what was occurring here. We must see what's been done to not only hold this state accountable, but to also move this state forward to a better and brighter place.



## The Starkville Daily News' Long Awaited Response

Newspapers are important because they get information from not only their town but sometimes the country out to the people. Before Ryan Phillips issued these accounts through the Starkville Daily News (SDN), there hadn't been any issues from SDN over lynching's in Mississippi except for one. It was a verbatim account published by the SDN of the double hanging written by the Chicago Tribune. With newspapers writing about stories from other states, it pressures newspapers from that state to put an issue out over the topic. So then The SDN went on to say that they only published the article to show the "slander" that the Tribune committed. SDN wanted to play the victim and demand an apology for the coverage of these atrocious events. The Chicago Tribune could've written about these lynching's because maybe someone inside the company was connected to Mississippi, they could have wanted to pressure Mississippi newspaper companies to write about these awful occurrences, or it simply could've been them wanting to show the social injustices taking place here in the state of Mississippi. Ryan states on page four that newspapers in the state of Mississippi were trying to cover up these lynching's, and only took ownership when "...the integrity of the narrative came into question."



## The Significance of Lynching's

The Emmett Till Antilynching Law was only just passed in 2022 (?). It was passed 100 years after lawmakers first attempted to criminalize lynching. The law was named after 14 year old Emmett Till who was brutally murdered in Mississippi in 1955 after a racist attack (Zaslav, 2022). The law took so long to pass because the Senate continuously used the filibuster method on this bill when it would come through. The bill was filibustered more than 200 times (Bouie, 2022).

Citizens of this state need to know that the place they live in used to be racially motivated and that there's an extensive history of discrimination in our state. The residents of Mississippi should rejoice and celebrate the passing of this antilynching law. Since this law has been passed and with these accounts surfacing from below, we can learn from our state's past mistakes and continue to lead the state of Mississippi down the right path.



## Further Reading

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