

PRISON HEAD, IN IRONS, SAW MOB SEIZE FRANK

Capt. Burke Handcuffed and Taken to Hospital to See Lynchers at Work.

Special to The New York Times.

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga., Aug. 17.—Captain J. M. Burke, Superintendent of the State Prison Farm, gives the following account of the seizure of Leo M. Frank.

I was called to the door just as I was preparing to retire, and following my usual custom I walked out. When I passed the threshold two strong men grabbed me and in an instant snapped handcuffs upon my wrists. Four others stood guard over me, two with shot guns and two with heavy pistols.

I remonstrated and they declared it was no use for me to squirm, as they had come for Leo Frank and were going to get him. I told them that Frank was not at my house and they said they knew that, but they were going to take me where they knew Frank was quartered.

I was marched up to the penitentiary building by a guard, which was redoubled as we proceeded. When we reached the building a demand was made for the gate to be opened and one of the men began cutting the wires and informed me that the prisoner would be killed as soon as an entrance was effected.

The gate was unlocked and Night Guard S. Hester came forward, but he was immediately covered and ordered to throw up his hands. Half way up the steps I was halted while half a dozen men rushed by me and made a dash for Frank's room. One of the prisoners who witnessed this scene declared that four men seized Frank by his arms and legs, while a fifth grabbed him by the hair and he was dragged out of the hospital and bumped down the stone steps with me looking on.

Frank never uttered a word, but apparently he was suffering intensely and groaned as from pain inflicted in handling him in his wounded condition.

The crowd informed me that they did not intend to harm anybody except Leo Frank and told me not to have any fear. The affair was completed within the space of five minutes, it seemed to me, and almost before we realized the enormity of the occurrence it was a written chapter.

During the entire performance I was handcuffed and under guard. When the crowd brought Frank down and started off I asked the fellow who had snapped the handcuffs to unlock them, but he laughed and said that if I would accompany them they would take off the irons. I retorted that I'd be damned if I'd go anywhere with them.

The whole procedure was a well-timed and a well-ordered and methodical proposition and only a few words were spoken, it evidently being agreed for a leader to do the talking. Only two of the men were masked, but I did not recognize any of them. Then in less time than it takes to tell it, they were off and I could see the lights flashing as they went over the hill toward Meriwether, the road that leads to Atlanta.

The Warden's Story.

Warden James E. Smith of the State penitentiary system, described the attack as a very carefully planned affair. He said:

I was spending the night at my home adjacent to the main building, as I usually do under normal conditions. I had just gone in when I was called from the front. I inquired who it was, and then some name was given in a conciliatory tone which I did not understand. But as my name was called familiarly I went to the door with a lantern in one hand and my other hand on my pistol.

When I opened the door half a dozen men confronted me with pistols and guns thrust into my face. They commanded me to throw up my hands, and there was nothing else to do. At this juncture my wife rushed up and fell swooning in my arms, and the men ordered me to come on and go to the camp.

My wife interposed and they told her they were my friends and her friends and for her not to be afraid, but she kept clinging to me. Then one of the men told them to go on, but he reconsidered and said one or two more of them had better remain with me. They kept me covered for probably five or six minutes, then took my pistol, jumped into an automobile passing by and were gone. The affair was finished so quickly it is hard to say how it was carried out and I am completely at my wits' ends in the matter.

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