

TIME

May 5, 1923

NEGROES

Saturday Night

James Scott is dead. It happened this way:

A girl about fourteen years old, daughter of the German professor at the University of Missouri, is walking one Spring day in the country outside the college town of Columbia. She approaches a railroad bridgehead. A Negro accosts her. He touches her. A car passes. He jumps back. The girl runs safely home to her parents.

A Negro is later arrested, identified by the girl, and cast into Columbia jail under the authority of a United States Sheriff. The little town begins to talk excitedly and then to whisper.

It is night, an hour before the Sabbath. A gang of sturdy white men, geared out with ropes and revolvers surround the jail. They curse the sputtering Sheriff, and sledgehammer at the steel walls. Then, acetylene flames; and soon the leader has dragged out a Negro. The gang, now quiet, packs for the country. Fifty automobiles follow, respectfully curious.

The German Professor, father of the girl, comes up panting: "Let him be tried by law." They reach the bridgehead. The leader calls for a stouter rope. Delay. The Negro whines: "Mister, before God, I'm innocent. That other nigger told me he did it. I would not die with a lie in my throat." The stouter rope is found, and one end is fastened carefully about the Negro's neck. He is thrust along the bridge. The other end of the rope is fastened to the bridge.

Bump—

James Scott is dead. He was put to death by the premeditated violence of yokels who believed in their gross way that they were maintaining the honor of the race that bred them. What they did, some people call murder; others, lynching.