

GRAND JURY REPORTS IT FOUND NO ONE REMOTELY CONNECTED WITH LYNCHING

After Exhaustive Investigation For Three And Half Days And
Examination Of 124 Witnesses Body Was Unable To Find
Sufficient Evidence To Indict

FINDS COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS EXIST
IN OTHER PARTS OF STATE BUT NOT IN WICOMICO

"No Dishonesty In Levying, Or Expenditure Of Public Monies",
Is Reported After Tribunal Makes Preliminary Examination
Of County Board And Treasurer

Concluding three and a half days of investigation and the examination of 124 witnesses, the county grand jury at 5:45 o'clock Friday afternoon reported it had not unearthed sufficient evidence to return an indictment in the lynching of Matthew Williams, negro, confessed slayer of Daniel J. Elliott, here on December 4.

The report concluded an exhaustive inquiry into the murder of Mr. Elliott, the mob hanging of Williams and of communist activity which preceded the two crimes. The body had the services of Attorney General William Preston Lane and Assistant Attorney General Anderson, assisting State's Attorney Levin C. Bailey in presenting the evidence and the added aid of four Baltimore city detectives who for several days conducted a quiet investigation in the city.

The grand jury's report read:

"After a thoroughly energetic and complete investigation of all the evidence, direct and indirect, rumors and every lead indicated by the evidence given by more than one hundred witnesses produced to us by the Attorney General and Assistant Attorney General, the State's Attorney for Wicomico county and members of this grand jury, we find that there is absolutely no evidence that can remotely connect anyone with the instigation or perpetration of the murder of Mathew Williams."

Reporting the result of the probe of communist activity here preceding the crimes, the grand jury said:

"After a thorough and complete investigation of all the evidence direct and indirect, presented to us by Attorney General William Preston Lane Jr., and Assistant Attorney General G. C. Anderson in reference to communistic activities, we find that while such organizations do exist in other parts of the state there is no evidence to justify the belief that such an organization exists in Wicomico County."

Reports have been current that Williams attending a communist meeting here on the night before he murdered his employer, a prominent lumber manufacturer.

Immediately after making its report, the grand jury was adjourned by Judges Joseph L. Bailey and Robert L. Duer, sitting in Circuit Court.

Among the witnesses who testified were physicians, nurses and orderlies at Peninsula General Hospital from which Williams was taken by mob leaders. State, county and city police and scores of persons attracted to the scene of the hanging in court house square. These witnesses were unable to identify any of the mob leaders.

Concerning the charge to the grand jury made last Monday by Judge Bailey that from \$100,000 to \$150,000 was "illegally levied and woefully and wastefully spent" during the last year, the grand jury reported:

"After a preliminary inquiry into the conduct of the office of the county commissioners of Wicomico county and the county treasurer, we do not consider that there is any dishonesty in the levying or expenditure of public monies or paying of the same thru the treasurer's office. But due to the general condition of the country and the financial condition of the property owners of this county we strongly recommend economy in the expenditure of public monies wherever possible."

The county board and Treasurer Charles W. Bennett, invited the grand jury to make a thorough investigation of those offices and return a complete report of what the body found.

Mr. Bennett and Rex. A. Taylor, counsel to the board, were among those to testify concerning the county finances.