

# MOB HAD PLOTTED CRIME FOR WEEKS

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Had Perfect Organization, with  
a Leader Whose Word  
Was Law.

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## SENT SCOUTS IN ADVANCE

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Studied Prison Surroundings  
and Planned Lynching "Like  
a Business Undertaking."

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*Special to The New York Times.*

ATLANTA, Ga., Aug. 17.—How the lynching of Leo M. Frank was planned and executed was frankly revealed this afternoon by a business man of Marietta, who branded the act as a piece of justice tardily but efficiently administered. He said:

"The public will never know the identity of the twenty-five brave and loyal men who took into their own hands the execution of a law that had been stripped from them by Governor Slaton. I would not advise inquisitive authorities or persons to try to reveal them. They are as zealously banded together now and as relentless as at the moment they invaded the State Prison."

This man knew of the movements of the lynching clansmen, of their organization, of their plans and of their painstaking system of advance preparations. He would neither admit nor deny that he was a member of the mob.

"The men who hanged Leo Frank," he continued, "did not go about it with a spirit of lawlessness or vindictiveness. They felt it a duty, a duty to their State and Commonwealth, a duty to the memory of Mary Phagan, whom all Cobb County loved and whose memory is cherished in every household in the hills you see over there to the west.

"They would have lynched him more than a month ago if some one hadn't got careless and permitted a 'leak.'

Governor Harris was apprised of the plans and ordered the militia to be in readiness. That was the day when the county police were scouting in the edge of Fulton and Cobb Counties, on the lookout for automobiles from Marietta. Governor Harris and the military authorities no doubt received widespread censure for this apparently unnecessary action, but if the truth were known it gave Leo Frank at least one month of grace he would not have received from the hands of the men who were about to go to Milledgeville for him.

#### **Lynching Long Contemplated.**

"Ever since the day Governor Slaton commuted the sentence of Frank this morning's work has been under consideration. Minute and definite plans were drawn, and there was not a missing thread from the fabric of the perfected scheme when the twenty-five men set out early last night on their journey to Milledgeville.

"Meetings were held in a spot so conspicuous that you would be astonished to hear its name called. A leader was chosen, a man who bears as reputable a name as you would ever hear in a lawful community. He was a man respected and honored.

"The chosen twenty-five, (although this wasn't the entire number available,) were men whose worth was known collectively and individually. I doubt whether you would find anywhere a body of patriots more loyal, faithful, obedient, and determined. They were resolved to bear whatever burdens arose as though it fell upon individual shoulders and to go through with their plans at any cost. They were business-like as well as determined.

"As in business ventures, they would not go into it without first knowing every lay of the ground and every detail so far as could be foreseen. The business of getting the men was the first undertaking. There was a great deal of sifting and weeding.

"I have learned from my father's lips, and from those of my various kin who served in the reconstruction days, the modes and methods of the Ku Klux, but even that noble institution, for perfection of organization, determination, and daring could not equal this modern exploit, done in the interest of a justice of which we had been denied by the man we put in office.

"In the first place, the organization of the body who lynched Frank was more open than mysterious. It was more on the order of a plain, open-and-shut business proposition. The purpose of the Ku Klux was more to overawe and frighten than anything else.

The determination of the men who brought retribution to the memory of Mary Phagan was of grim vindication even if at extreme peril.

#### Scouts Studied the Ground.

When the business of organization was finished the next object was to acquaint themselves fully with conditions and contingencies in Milledgeville, the first seat of action. Advance men were sent to the scene. They went in automobiles that they might familiarize themselves with the roads and draw maps of them. In Milledgeville they made thorough observation of the prison grounds, took into contemplation the barbed wire entanglements, and made themselves acquainted with the telegraph and telephone connections.

"The plans were perfect when the hour came to strike. Two men were sent in advance of the main body. They were to reconnoiter and to sever telegraphic and telephonic communication with the outside world so that the Milledgeville authorities could not notify other towns to intercept them as they carried Frank to the place selected as the scene of his death.

"Early on Monday night the automobiles assigned to the journey were sent along their respective routes to pick up the chosen men. Their wives in most cases were not aware of their departure. The automobiles went quietly to the houses, signals were given, and the men joined them.

"When they returned to their beds in the break of Tuesday dawn it is doubtful if any members of their households knew that they had been absent after midnight. It won't be possible to disclose the identities of the twenty-five, even through their wives or children.

"The men proceeded to Milledgeville in individual fashion, never grouped until they reached the outskirts of the town. They took circuitous routes so as to avoid the larger towns. Approaching Milledgeville a car was sent ahead to inform the advance men who were to cut off communication.

"Every man was fully armed and had it come to a question of a fight, there wasn't one among them who wouldn't have given his own life's blood before he would have surrendered.

"It was originally planned to carry Frank to the cemetery in which Mary Phagan's body is buried, but daybreak overtook his captors. They were speeding over the road that leads to Marietta in the neighborhood of Mary's birthplace when the sun rose. There was much discussion over the proposal to hold the lynching in the Frey neighborhood, the more daring members of the clan wishing to carry out their first plans, and continue boldly to the grave of Frank's victim, but a word from their leader silenced all opposition and Mary Phagan's death was vindicated in the same grove where she used to play when a barefoot girl, long before she ever dreamed of going to work in the pencil factory."