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Death Penalty Corrections

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DEATH PENALTY CORRECTIONS

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Based on information kindly furnished me by Watt Espy of the Capital Punishment Research Project in Headland, Alabama, I wish to correct several factual errors in my two-part article on the death penalty recently published in The Athens Observer. The first part of the article, "Sentenced to Death," appeared in the issue for June 30-July 6; the second part, "A Dying Penalty?," appeared in the July 7-13 issue.

The first error I wish to correct has to do with the date of the last (private) hanging in Georgia. In my article I stated that the last Georgia hanging occurred on May 18, 1926 when one Mack Wooten died on the gallows in Atlanta in Fulton County. Actually, there was one subsequent hanging in this state: on June 12, 1931 one Arthur Meyers was hanged in Augusta in Richmond County. This was the last execution by hanging in Georgia.

Second, adding Arthur Meyers to the list of persons executed in Georgia from 1924 to 1964 means there was a total of 421 executions (415 electrocutions, 6 hangings) during this period, instead of 420. Adding Meyers to the list of persons executed also means that the total number of executions in Georgia between 1930 and 1964 was 367 (366 electrocutions, 1 hanging), instead of 366. With the addition of the Meyers execution, the total number of persons executed in the history of Georgia must be increased from 1152 to 1153.

Third, in my article I stated that the last Georgia execution of a person who was 17 at the time the crime was committed occurred on Nov. 19, 1954 (when Joe Lee Jones was electrocuted). I was wrong. Georgia's most recent execution of a person 17 years of age at commission of the crime was nearly 40 years later, on Dec. 7, 1993, when Christopher Burger, age 33, died in the electric chair for a murder committed when he was a 17-year old.