Chronology of the Leo Frank Case  
Part III

By Donald E. Wilkes, Jr.

June 22, 1915 In an item in today's The Atlanta Constitution the Mayor of Atlanta, James Woodward, referring to Georgians, asserts: "The larger part of the population believes Frank guilty and that the commutation was a mistake."

Enraged by the commutation, a surging mob of 2,000 approaches and attempts to attack Gov. Slaton's home at 2962 Peachtree Road, N. E., which has been barricaded and is protected by police, deputized citizens and the Fifth Georgia Infantry Regiment. After it rains stones and bottles on the troops, the mob is driven back by soldiers with fixed bayonets.

Also on this day Gov. Slaton's act of commutation is praised in editorials in The New York Times, The Atlanta Journal, and The Atlanta Georgian. The Times says: "[Gov. Slaton] has raised himself [to a high place] in the esteem and admiration of the whole country. Had Georgia sent Frank to the gallows, the good name of the State would have been blackened and its people would have been under reproach. Governor Slaton has saved Georgia from herself. He has made his name illustrious." The Journal says "The governor has shown wisdom and courage in his performance of an act of simple justice," and the Georgian says, "The Georgian believes that Governor John M. Slaton deserves the commendation of the people of Georgia." Several other Georgia newspapers, including The Augusta Chronicle, also support Slaton's act. However, most Georgia newspapers oppose the commutation.

June 26, 1915 Today is Gov. Slaton's last day in office. Just after 2 a.m. a mob of 200 armed men attempt a second attack on Slaton's home and are driven off by the Fifth Georgia Infantry Regiment. Later in the day, at the inauguration ceremony in the state capitol building for the incoming governor, Nathaniel E. Harris, Slaton is hissed by the audience, and as he is emerging from the room where the ceremony took place, what Slaton sees is (in his own words) "people on the stairs and in the vestibules gnashing their teeth, shaking their heads, and exhibiting various evidences of hostility." Shortly thereafter Slaton is almost assassinated.

As he and the new governor are departing the state capitol building, a strong, rough-looking man holding in both hands a heavy piece of iron pipe about five feet long darts from the crowd and attempts to crush Slaton's skull. The murder attempt fails when at the last moment an officer of the state militia seizes the attacker before he can strike his blow.

Later, Slaton is asked to speak at a luncheon at a hotel (the Ansley Hotel, according to Onley, the Piedmont Hotel, according to Harry Golden, author of a 1965 book on the Leo Frank case) in honor of the new governor, and delivers this statement:
"Honest people may disagree with me, but we realize that we must be measured by our consciences. Two thousand years ago another Governor washed his hands of a case and turned a Jew over to a mob. For two thousand years that Governor’s name has been accursed. If today another Jew were lying in his grave because I had failed to do my duty I would all through life find his blood on my hands and would consider myself an assassin through cowardice."

June 28, 1915 John M. Slaton and his wife depart Atlanta on a passenger train bound for New York. They will be absent from Georgia for three months.

Also on this day, according to Oney, "[a]round the time the Slatons departed Georgia, a number of powerful Mariettans [file] into a building on or just off the town square," for the purpose of plotting the lynching of Leo Frank. The persons in attendance include Joseph M. Brown, Newton Augustus Morris, Eugene Herbert Clay, John Tucker Dorsey, Bolan Glover Brumby and Fred Morris. The "staggeringly audacious" plan is to arrange for a lynching party to abduct Frank from prison and string him up in Cobb County.

July 2, 1915 In a letter to a friend, Leo Frank writes of the commutation: "This is the breathing spell in the present phase of my life to gain the strength and reserve for the spurt to freedom, vindication and that honor which is justly and rightfully mine.

July 12, 1915 As chairman of the Georgia House of Representatives Penitentiary Committee, John Tucker Dorsey, accompanied by the Prison Commission members and a contingent of other legislators, visits the state prison in Milledgeville, ostensibly to investigate sanitary problems there with the prison sewage system, but actually to make arrangements to facilitate the planned abduction of Leo Frank. During a private meeting with the three commissioners and the warden and the prison farm superintendent it is, according to Oney, secretly arranged that the lynching party will have safe passage into and out of the prison.

July 13, 1915 The lynching party, which today was going to drive from Marietta to the state prison to abduct Leo Frank, aborts today's mission after law enforcement authorities receive a tip about the proposed mission and take steps to prevent it from succeeding.

July 17, 1915 Around 11 p.m., while he is in bed in the prison dormitory, a convicted murderer and pathological killer named William Creen, armed with a butcher knife stolen from the prison kitchen, creeps up and stabs and slashes Leo Frank in the neck, inflicting a seven inch wound and severing a jugular vein. Frank also receives a stab wound on his right hand. Fortunately, Frank gets prompt, first-rate medical treatment from three nearby doctors who close and treat the wounds, narrowly saving his life.

July 24, 1915 Today, one week after Leo Frank's prison stabbing, Gov. Nathaniel E. Harris visits Frank in prison. He notices that Frank's stabbing "gash extended from ear to ear and was so frightful in appearance that I wondered at his being alive." After a brief talk with Frank, Gov. Harris decides that Frank has "a queer sort of laugh" indicative of "a hard, careless heart," and concludes that Frank is "undoubtedly a hardened criminal or a reckless prisoner." As a result of this interview Harris' concern that Frank might be innocent is "lessened greatly."

Aug. 11, 1915 In a letter to a friend, Leo Frank writes of his near-miraculous recovery from the stabbing:

"Certainly my escape was providential, and the good Lord must surely have in store for me a brighter and happier day when that honor, justly mine now, will be restored to me. I have been victorious in my struggle with death and I await impatiently for the date of vindication and liberty."

Aug. 16, 1915 In a letter to a friend written this Monday morning, Leo Frank says:
"I have gained and am gaining right along in strength. My appetite is good and I sleep well. I can move my head and neck (within limitations) reasonably well for the time being and this will improve a whole lot in the course of a few weeks. My wound is all healed except in one little place where drainage still obtains. This also will be healed in a few days. In time, I think I will be all right again."

Late in the afternoon, Leo Frank has a long visit in the prison with his wife, Lucille.

Also in the afternoon, the 25-man lynch party departs Marietta in small groups. Outside of town the members of the lynch party join up and climb into seven automobiles, which begin speeding in a motorcade over the dirt roads toward Milledgeville. According to Oney, three members of the party are its commanders: George Exie Daniell, Gordon Baxter Gann, and Newton Mayes Morris ("Black Newt"). Around 9 p.m. the lynch party reaches the outskirts of the state prison in Milledgeville. This affair has been so meticulously planned that the Lynchers have a map of the prison grounds and even have been tipped off as to where in the prison Frank is being housed. The Lynchers, all armed, force their way into the prison without being seriously resisted, and several of them rush up the 20 concrete steps of the prison's main building. They enter and find Leo Frank awake lying in bed wearing a nightshirt. They seize and handcuff the frightened man and take him, barefooted and still in his night clothes, out the door to the top of the stairs. "There," in the words of Oney, "two men [take] him by the arms, two by the legs, and another by the hair, dragging him outside." They force him into one of the automobiles and someone sadistically brandishes a noose in Frank's face. The seven automobiles then speed off, the lynch party having been inside the prison only 10 minutes. Not a shot has been fired. It is shortly after 10 p.m.

Using dirt back roads, the caravan begins racing along an all-night, circuitous, 175-mile route through rural counties (including Jasper, Newton, Walton and Barrow) back to Marietta. Frank is, according to Oney, in the second car seated between two brothers, Luther and Emmet Burton.

Aug. 17, 1915 Shortly after 6 a.m., the cavalcade arrives at Frey's Gin, a wooded piece of land in Cobb County two miles east of Marietta. (Frey's Gin is owned by one of the Lynchers, William J. Frey, a former local sheriff, who is believed to have fashioned the noose and may have been the person who actually put it around Frank's neck.) One end of the Lynchers' noosed rope is thrown over the limb of an oak tree, and the noose at the other end is tightened around Leo Frank's neck. The doomed man is lifted onto a table (placed there earlier by prearrangement), and utters his last words: "I think more of my wife and my mother than I do of my own life." At 7:05 a.m. the table is kicked away by lynch Newton Augustus Morris. Frank dies a lingering painful death as he slowly chokes to death, his shivering body shaken by violent convulsions, his bare feet jerking spasmodically four feet above the ground. Then the body is still and sways in the wind. The Lynchers scatter.

Soon people are flocking to Frey's Gin. Today's The Atlanta Journal reports:

"They swarmed the road from both directions. They seemed to rise up out of the ground, so fast they came. The automobiles came careening, recklessly disregarding life and limb of occupants. Horse-drawn vehicles came at a gallop. Pedestrians came running.

"The vehicles stopped in the road at the grove and soon packed the road and overflowed into the fields. As the vehicles would stop, their occupants would jump out and run to the grove, bending forward, panting, wild-eyed.

"Women came. Children came. Even babes in arms."
By 8:30 a.m. 1,000 people have swarmed to the lynching site, and soon the crowd will number 3,000. Among the gawkers there is, according to Oney, "a grim and terrible satisfaction... [and] [t]heir emotions [range] from jubilation to rage to something approaching sexual rapture." One man runs up to the swaying corpse and shouts: "Now we've got you! You won't murder any more little innocent girls!"

At 10:17 a.m. Frank's corpse is cut down, and after a demented individual in the crowd grinds his boot heel into Frank's face more than once, the body is with difficulty spirited away and driven by automobile to an undertaker's establishment in Atlanta.

After Frank's body arrives at the undertaker, thousands of persons surround the place and demand to be allowed in. Police yield to their demands, and 15,000 persons are permitted in orderly fashion to enter the establishment and view the corpse lying in a casket. Most react, Oney notes, "without so much as a look of horror." Outside the establishment, where (as Oney notes) "people linger on the streets and talk excitedly," vendors sell photographs taken of Frank dangling from the tree at the end of a rope.

In Marietta's town square, hundreds of men gather to celebrate and gloat. (There is a photograph of the crowd in Oney's book.)

Today's The Atlanta Journal carries the headline "Marietta Officials Didn't Know of Mob" over this statement by Marietta Mayor E. P. Dobbs (now known to have been of the lynchers, having lent his automobile to the lynching party):

"I desire in the interest of justice and truth to say that Marietta and county officials had no knowledge of any automobiles leaving Marietta last night nor were they apprised of the return of any machines today.

"None of the officials had any intimation of such an undertaking until the body was found about two miles from the city this morning."

Aug. 18, 1915 Leo Frank's remains are taken to the Atlanta train station and placed aboard a passenger train car for shipment to New York City.

In today's The New York Times Atlanta Mayor James Woodward is quoted as saying: "Seventy-five percent of the people of Georgia are convinced that the man lynched [Tuesday morning] committed the deed, and they are on the ground and ought to know."

Also in today's Times Georgia's new governor, Nathaniel E. Harris, is quoted as saying:

"I am greatly shocked and aggrieved [by the lynching]... and I am extremely sorry it occurred...

"I will use my every power to see to it that the members of this mob receive fitting punishment for their crime... "

Today's The Macon Telegraph reports that the investigation Gov. Harris has ordered probably won't amount to much: "There are of course to be investigations - the usual thing presumably. It is said every effort will be made to apprehend these men. Doubtless they can be apprehended - doubtful they will."

Today's The Atlanta Constitution's front page headline is "Mob's Own Story in Detail."

Another article on the front page of the Constitution carries the banner "Mob Hanging Better Than Judicial Murder Says John M. Slaton." Slaton is quoted as saying that, tragic as things were, it was better for Leo Frank to be illegally executed by a mob than legally executed in the name of the law, for "one reached the soul of civilization, the other merely reached the body."
The lynching is denounced in editorials in today's Constitution and The Atlanta Journal. The Constitution's editorial appears under the headline, "GEORGIA'S SHAME!," and begins with this sentence: "No word in the language is too strong to apply to the deliberate and carefully conspired deed of the mob." Most other Georgia newspapers condemn the lynching, including notably The Augusta Chronicle, The Columbus Enquirer, The Macon News, The Macon Telegraph and The Savannah Press. One of the few newspapers in Georgia refusing to rebuke the lynchers is The Marietta Journal and Courier, which announces: "We regard the hanging of Leo M. Frank as an act of law abiding citizens."

Aug. 19, 1915 Leo Frank's remains arrive at Pennsylvania Station in New York City.

An article in The New York Times reports:

"Nobody talks seriously of the investigation Governor Harris is promising, and there are very few who believe there is the slightest chance of any of the murderers being put to any grave trouble, much less punished. They are known to many of the citizens of Marietta, who would rather die than reveal their knowledge or even their suspicion...

"[Marietta's] mood is one of determination to protect the men who, in its eyes, executed the law after it had been trampled on. It is resolved that not a hair on their heads shall be harmed."

Without naming names, another article in the Times reports the following about the Leo Frank lynch party:

"The word mob does not seem descriptive, for these men did not display the ordinary characteristics of a mob. Lynching mobs are usually composed of riff-raff, but this one consisted of leading citizens in the community, men prominent in business and social circles."

Also this day, in an interview with reporters published in the Times, Newton Augustus Morris (now known to have been one of the lynchers, in fact the man who kicked the table out from under Leo Frank's feet as Frank stood bound with the noose around his neck), is quoted as saying: "I believe in law and order. I would not help lynch anybody. But I believe Frank has had his just deserts."

Aug. 20, 1915 Leo Frank is buried in a cemetery in the Cypress Hills section of the New York City borough of Queens. The burial service, conducted by a rabbi, is attended by Frank's immediate family and 30 invited friends.

Also on this day The New York Times reports that Frank had been lynched by "leading citizens in the [Cobb County] community, men prominent in business and social circles, and even in church." The newspaper also reports that in Cobb County the lynchers were regarded "as men who prevented a miscarriage of justice and saved the law from being set aside and mocked by the man who happened to fill the Governor's chair... They [the lynchers] are known to many of the citizens of Marietta, who would rather die than reveal their knowledge."

Under the headline "Frank Lynching Due to Suspicion and Prejudice," another Times article concludes that a primary reason for Frank's lynching was "the belief that the Jews of the country... had banded themselves together to save a criminal because he belonged to their race and religion and thus ranged themselves in opposition to men of other races and religions. Against this belief no argument was effective, no denial was listened to."

Aug. 21, 1915 The Atlanta City Council enacts an ordinance making it unlawful to sell a photograph of a person who has been hanged illegally.
Aug. 24, 1915 After a hearing lasting just one day, the Cobb County coroner's inquest into the death of Leo Frank results in a verdict by the coroner's jury - reached after three minutes of deliberation - that Frank died "at the hands of unknown parties." The inquest is conducted by two Lynchers - John Tucker Dorsey and Gordon Baxter Gann - and one member of the coroner's jury also is a lynchman, "Coon" Shaw.

The next day The New York Evening Post comments: "The Coroner's inquest at Marietta deserves to rank with any Dogberry's day for a sense of the bounds of human penetration: it is doubtful if the most shrewdly stupid Elizabethan villager could have seen less of what was unsafe than some of the witnesses called yesterday."

Sept. 2, 1915 After two days of solemnly going through the motions of hearing evidence presented to them by prosecutor Eugene Herbert Clay and his specially appointed assistant, John Tucker Dorsey - both of whom were among the Lynchers - the Cobb County grand jury fails to indict anybody for the lynching of Leo Frank, claiming that "[w]e have been unable to connect anybody with the perpetration of the offense or to identify anyone who was connected with it ... We... regret to report to that we find it impossible to indict anyone." According to Oney, seven of the grand jurors are members of the lynching party.

Oct. 1, 1915 On the front page of The Augusta Chronicle, Lucille Frank, Leo Frank's widow, makes her only public statement on the lynching:

"I am a Georgia girl, born and reared in this State, and educated in her schools. I am a Jewess; some will throw that in my face, I know, but I have no apologies to make for my religion. I am also a Georgian, an American, and I do not apologize for that either...

"I only pray that those who destroyed Leo's life will realize the truth before they meet their God - they perhaps are not entirely to blame, fed as they were on lies unspeakable, their passions aroused by designing persons. Some of them, I am sure, did not realize the horror of their act. But those who inspired these men to this awful act, what of them? Will not their consciences make for them a hell on earth, and will not their associates, in their hearts, despise them?"

Jan. 13, 1919 Shortly after midnight, while breaking into an Atlanta drug store, Jim Conley is shot in the chest by the store's proprietor. After recovering, he will be tried and convicted of burglary and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. He will serve 14 years and not be released until 1933.

Feb. 2, 1931 The Atlanta Journal reports that Monteen Stover (who as a prosecution witness had testified at Leo Frank's trial that on the day of the Mary Phagan murder Frank was not in his office from 12:05 p.m. to 12:10 p.m.) has just been indicted for luring married men to a hotel room and then trying to blackmail them.

"The indictment of Monteen Stover for participating in a badger scam," Oney writes, "offer[s] further evidence of how disreputable many of the prosecution witnesses [against Leo Frank] had indeed been."

Aug. 1, 1933 The Atlanta Constitution and The Atlanta Journal report that Gov. Eugene Talmadge has just granted a full pardon to William Creen, the psychotic murderer who slashed Leo Frank with a knife in prison.

Oct. 20, 1941 An article appears in The Atlanta Constitution, headlined "Star Witness in Frank Case Arrested Here," which reveals that Jim Conley has just been charged with gambling and public drunkenness. This is believed by Oney to be the last recorded appearance of Conley in the press during his lifetime.

Mar. 4, 1982 In Tennessee, 83-year old Alonzo Mann, who at the age of 14 had been employed as an office boy at the National Pencil Company Building in 1913, who had been in the building at about the time Mary Phagan was murdered, and who had testified briefly as a defense witness at Leo Frank's trial, signs a
notarized affidavit in which he swears:

"I was called as a witness in the murder trial [of Leo Frank]. At that time I was put on the witness stand, but I did not tell all that I knew. I was not asked questions about what I knew. I did not volunteer. If I had revealed all I knew it would have cleared Leo Frank and would have saved his life... Jim Conley, the chief witness against Leo Frank, lied under oath. I know that. I am certain that he lied. I am convinced that he, not Leo Frank, killed Mary Phagan. I know as a matter of certainty that Jim Conley - and he alone - disposed of her body.

"Jim Conley threatened to kill me if I told what I knew. I was young and frightened. I had no doubt Conley would have tried to kill me if I had told that I had seen him with Mary Phagan that day.

"I related to my mother what I had seen there at the pencil factory. She insisted that I not get involved. She told me to remain silent. My mother loved me. She knew Conley had threatened to kill me. She didn't want our family's name to be involved in controversy or for me to have to be subjected to any publicity. My father supported her in telling me to remain silent. My mother repeated to me over and over not to tell. She never thought Leo Frank would be convicted. Of course, she was wrong. Even after he was convicted my mother told me to keep secret what I had seen.

"I am sure in my own mind that if the lawyers had asked me specific questions about what I had seen the day of Mary Phagan's death I would have told the whole truth when I testified at Frank's trial. Of course they didn't suspect what I knew. They asked me practically nothing. I was nervous and afraid that day. There were crowds in the street who were angry and who were saying that Leo Frank should die. Some were yelling things like 'Kill the Jew!'

"I was very nervous. The courtroom was filled with people. Every seat was taken. I was interested mostly in getting out of there...

"I never fully realized until I was older that if I had told what I knew Leo Frank should have been acquitted and gone free. Instead he was imprisoned...

"I have spent many nights thinking about that. I have learned to live with it.

"I now swear to the events I witnessed that fatal day, Confederate Memorial Day, 1913, when Mary Phagan, who just about my age, fourteen, was killed.

"I came to work on time that morning, at about eight o'clock... [W]hen I walked into the building Jim Conley, the janitor, who was also called a 'sweeper,' was sitting under the stairwell on the first floor of the building. Although it was early in the morning, Conley had obviously already consumed considerable beer. He drank a lot, even in the mornings.

"He spoke to me. He asked me for a dime to buy a beer. A dime could buy a good-sized beer in those days.

"I told Jim Conley I didn't have a dime. That was not the truth. I had some money in my pocket, but I had let Conley have a nickel or dime for beer before. He never paid me back.

"I didn't like to be around Jim Conley.

"After I told Conley I didn't have any money, I went up the stairs to the second floor where my desk was located in the office of Leo Frank...

"[S]ometimes on Saturday mornings people who had worked at the factory during the week would come to the pay window in the office and collect their salaries...
"I was supposed to meet my mother that day about noon and go to the Confederate Memorial Day parade. When I left the premises, just before noon, Mary Phagan had not come to the pencil factory. She apparently came to pick up her pay shortly after I left to go meet my mother...

"... When I left the building, down the stairs, and out the first floor front door, Jim Conley, the janitor, was sitting where I had seen him when I came to work: in the darkened area of the stairwell...

"... It could not have been more than a half hour before I got back to the pencil factory...

"I walked into the building by the front door.

"Inside the door, I walked toward the stairwell. I looked to my right and I was confronted by a scene I will remember vividly until I die.

"Jim Conley was standing between the trapdoor that led to the basement and the elevator shaft. I have an impression that the trapdoor was partially open, but my eyes were fixed on Jim Conley.

"He had the body of Mary Phagan in his arms. I didn't know it was Mary Phagan. I only knew it was a girl.

"At that moment I couldn't tell if she was alive. She appeared to be unconscious, or perhaps dead. I saw no blood.

"He was holding her with both arms gripping her around the waist. I can't remember the color of her clothes, but I have an impression that she had on pretty, clean clothes. She was extremely short and her head was sort of on his shoulder, or over it. Her hair was not in braids when I saw her. It was hanging loose. I saw no blood on the part of her neck that was exposed. I did not know if she was dead, but she was at least unconscious. She was limp and did not move. Her skirt had come up to about her knees.

"It was as I suddenly barged into the first floor, prepared to go up the stairs to the office that I encountered Conley with the body of Mary Phagan.

"Conley was close to the trapdoor that led down into the basement by way of a ladder. I believe that from the direction he was headed and the attitude of the body that he was preparing to dump Mary Phagan down the trapdoor. I have no clear memory of whether the elevator had stopped on the first floor, but if it was not on that floor, the shaft would have been open. Conley could have dumped her down the empty elevator shaft. I believe for some reason Jim Conley turned around toward me. He either heard my footsteps coming or he sensed I was behind him. He wheeled on me and in a voice that was low but threatening and frightening to me said:

"'If you ever mention this I'll kill you.'

"I turned and took a step or two - possibly three or four steps - up toward the second floor, but I must have worried about whether the office upstairs was closed. I did hear some movement upstairs, but I can't be sure who was on the floors above. I was fearful that the office might be closed, and so I turned back toward Conley. I wanted to get out of there quick. He got to within eight feet of me. He reached out as if to put one arm or hand on me. I ran out the front door and raced away from the building.

"I went straight home. I rode the street car.

"Once at home I told my mother what I had just seen. I told her what Jim Conley had said to me about killing me. I didn't know for sure that the girl in his arms was dead.

"My mother was very disturbed by what I told her.
"She told me that I was never, never to tell anybody else what I had seen that day at the factory...

"When the detectives later questioned me I told only the part of the story up to the time I left that day to go meet my mother...

"Jim Conley was the chief witness against Leo Frank.

"He testified that Frank called him to his office a little after noon that day and told him that Mary Phagan's body was in the Metal Room on the second floor. He testified that Frank told him to get the body and take it on the elevator down to the basement. He swore that he tried to carry the body to the elevator but dropped Mary Phagan because she was too heavy for him to carry. According to Conley's testimony, Frank picked up her legs, while Conley lifted the upper part of her body. Conley said that Frank had pulled the rope to start the elevator down and that they went with the body directly to the basement, past the first floor without stopping there.

"Conley claimed that Frank dragged the body from the elevator to a point in the rear of the building. Conley contended during the trial that after Frank dragged the body away from the elevator, Conley ascended in the elevator and Frank came back upstairs by way of the trapdoor to the first floor, and then came on up the stairway from the first to the second floor.

"I know that all of that testimony was false. It was Conley who had the body on the first floor. He was alone with the body. Frank was not there on the first floor. Conley did not tell the truth when he said the body was taken from the second floor to the basement. He had the body on the first floor...

"I am convinced that [Mary Phagan] had left the pay window and was coming down the stairs or had reached the first floor when she met Conley, who had been looking for money when I came in that morning. I am confident that I came in just seconds after Conley had taken the girl's money and grabbed her. I do not think sex was his motive. I believe it was money...

"Leo Frank was convicted by lies heaped on lies. It wasn't just Conley who lied. Others said that Leo Frank had women in the office for immoral purposes and that he had liquor there. There was a story that he took women down to the basement. That cellar was filthy. It was filled with coal dust. I was in the basement twice and remember the dirt and filth there. That was all false.

"Leo Frank was a good office manager. He was always proper with people who worked for him. There were witnesses who told lies and I remained silent..."

**Mar. 7, 1982** A Nashville, Tennessee newspaper, The Tennessean, publishes a special supplement headlined "An Innocent Man Was Lynched." It contains Alonzo Mann's affidavit, an interview with Mann, and photographs and other information relating to the Leo Frank case.

**Mar. 8, 1982** *The Athens Banner-Herald* publishes an article, "He Claims Wrong Man Was Lynched," about Alonzo Mann's statement affirming the innocence of Leo Frank.

**Mar. 9, 1982** An article by Sam Hopkins, "Frank Kin: Report Confirms Innocence," published in *The Atlanta Constitution*, explains that Alonzo Mann's statement confirms what has long been known by some - that Leo Frank did not murder Mary Phagan.

**Mar. 14, 1982** An article, "Leo Frank Case is Still a Whodunit," by Ron Taylor, is published in *The Atlanta Constitution*.

**Jan. 4, 1983** Three Jewish organizations - the American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation,
and the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith - file an application with the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles requesting a full pardon exonerating Leo Frank.

**May 15, 1983** Randall Evans, a former judge on the Georgia Court of Appeals, publishes a statement on the Leo Frank case in *The Augusta Chronicle-Herald*, claiming that the evidence of Frank's guilt "was overwhelming," describing the commutation of Frank's sentence as "the rape of the judicial process by [Gov. John M.] Slaton," and deriding the proposed posthumous pardon of Frank as "completely ridiculous."

**Dec. 18, 1983** In the expectation that Leo Frank will soon be posthumously pardoned, Esther M. Bauer's article "Ruling on Leo Frank Pardon May Put Case to Rest at Last," is published in *The Atlanta Constitution*. The article points out that Frank's "lynching has been cited as the worst single incident of anti-Semitic violence in American history."

**Dec. 22, 1983** The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles denies the application for Leo Frank's posthumous pardon, on the ground the applicants had failed to produce conclusive evidence proving beyond any doubt that Frank was innocent. The Board announces its decision by sending an employee with a printed statement to the state capitol building where scores of news representatives from national television networks, the wire services, and newspapers and magazines have gathered to hear the Board's decision. Alonzo Mann is also present.

**Dec. 19, 1984** In his final communication to the Georgia Board of Pardons and paroles, Alonzo Mann signs a letter which says: "Almost every day I think about Leo Frank and the fact that he was innocent. He did not kill Mary Phagan... I hope and pray that I live to see the day the board clears his name... I know Mr. Frank should be cleared and God knows it too. I urge you to please grant him a pardon before I go to meet my God."

**Mar. 18, 1985** Alonzo Mann dies. A story about his death appears tomorrow in *The Tennessean* under the banner "Alonzo Mann, Eyewitness in Leo Frank Case, Dies."

**Mar. 11, 1986** The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles grants an application for Leo Frank's posthumous pardon which had been filed earlier this year by Charles F. Wittenstein, counsel for the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, and Dale Schwartz, an Atlanta attorney.

The Board's order states that the pardon is being granted "[w]ithout attempting to address the question of guilt or innocence, [b]ut in recognition of the state's failure to protect the person of Leo M. Frank and thereby preserve his opportunity for continued legal appeal of his conviction, and in recognition of the state's failure to bring his killers to justice, and as an effort to heal old wounds..."

The granting of this pardon has been, Oney says, noisily resisted by Hugh Dorsey's son, Tom Watson's great-grandson, some descendants of the lynchers, and also by "Mary Phagan, [great] niece and namesake of the victim."

**Mar. 12, 1986** *The Atlanta Journal* carries a story on the pardon under the headline, "Leo Frank Pardon Decision a Victory for all Georgians," while the headline in *The Atlanta Constitution* is, "State Pardons Frank After 70 Years."

**Mar. 13, 1986** Because of last week’s pardon of Leo Frank, *The Atlanta Constitution* begins publishing six previously published, but now updated articles on Frank's case written by Celestine Sibley. The first, published today, is "Leo Frank Was the Last Suspect in Killing of Mary Phagan."

**Mar. 14, 1986** *The Atlanta Constitution* publishes the second and third of Celestine Sibley's articles, "Leo Frank's Trial: 29 Days of Summer Heat and Hatred," and "Prejudice Overpowering During Leo Frank’s Trial."
Mar. 15, 1986 *The Atlanta Constitution* publishes the fourth of Celestine Sibley's articles, "New Evidence in Frank Case Pointed to Factory Sweeper."

Mar. 16, 1986 *The Atlanta Constitution* publishes the fifth and sixth of Celestine Sibley's articles. The fifth, "The Lynching: 'Mary is Vindicated; Her Foul Murder is Avenged,'" delves into the facts of Leo Frank’s lynching and soberly reminds us: "For years, picture post cards of the lynched man's body swinging from a tree were a hot-selling souvenir item in Marietta stores." The sixth article, "Frank Case Came at a Moment Marked by 'Fear and Hatred,'" looks into the lives of the principals in the Leo Frank case, who are all now dead.

May 4, 1986 Bill Montgomery's article, "Accused's Lawyer Risked Safety After Taking Up Frank's Cause," which recounts the saga of attorney William M. Smith's efforts to save the life of Leo Frank, is published in *The Atlanta Constitution*.

Jan. 26, 1988 *The Atlanta Constitution* publishes Katie Long's article, "Mary Phagan's Great-Niece Says Miniseries Isn't History," which focuses on remarks made to the Metro Marietta Kiwanis Club by Mary Phagan, the great niece and a namesake of the little girl murdered on Apr. 26, 1913. In her remarks Phagan criticizes the historical accuracy of a recent TV miniseries "The Murder of Mary Phagan," starring actor Jack Lemmon as Gov. John M. Slaton. When asked by a member of the audience whether Leo Frank received a fair trial, Phagan responds: "For that time." When asked about the lynching, she says: "They didn't call it a lynching back then, but justice," and admits that such feelings have persisted through several generations of the Phagan family. Phagan also complains that "the supporters of Frank will not let this [case] rest."

Aug. 12, 1990 Steve Oney's article, "The Search for Jim Conley," is published in *The Atlanta Constitution*. It investigates the personal life of Conley, and the black working class section of Atlanta, Vine City, where he lived.

May 25, 1994 An article, "Owner May be Selling Historic State Prison," is published in The Athens Daily News, reporting that the now abandoned building in Milledgeville from which Leo Frank was abducted in 1915 is up for sale by the textile manufacturing company that currently owns it. Referring to the 20 concrete steps that lead up to the building's front entrance, the company's manager says, "Some people say that his head hit every one of those steps [when he was dragged from the building by the lynching party]."

June 6, 1994 *The Atlanta Constitution* publishes an article by Don Plummer, "Store Site Rich in History," reporting that on the previous day, June 5, 1994, The National Pencil Company Building, which in the 1950's had been embedded within the Rich's Store for Homes, had been demolished with explosives by a wrecking crew.


Nov. 11, 1998 An article, "Site of State's First Electric Chair May Be Razed," is published in *The Athens Banner-Herald* reporting that the abandoned building in Milledgeville from which Leo Frank was abducted is slated for demolition. The article includes a photograph of the building. Erected in 1911, the building was the central structure of the Georgia state prison until the Milledgeville facility was closed and a new state prison opened in Reidsville in the late 1930's.


Jan. 1, 2000 Stephen J. Goldfarb, an Atlanta librarian, creates a website, www.leofranklynchers.com, on
which he posts a facsimile copy of a previously undisclosed handwritten document listing the names of 26 persons (nine identified by Goldfarb, 17 unidentified) involved in the planning or execution of Leo Frank's lynching. The website includes Goldfarb's footnoted commentary on the document and the names it contains. According to Goldfarb, the nine identified lynchers, all from Cobb County, are:

Newton Augustus Morris (1869-1941) Described on the document as a "leader" of the lynching, Morris was an 1893 graduate of the UGA law school. He held numerous public offices during his career, and was a superior court judge of the Blue Ridge Circuit (which included Cobb County) in 1909-1912 and 1917-1919.

Eugene Herbert Clay (1881-1923) The son of a U. S. Senator, Clay was Mayor of Marietta in 1910-1911 and district attorney of the Blue Ridge Circuit in 1913-1918. The document describes him as a "planner" of the lynching.

Moultrie McKinney Sessions (1863-1927) Sessions was a prominent lawyer and banker, and the son of a judge. The document describes him as a "planner."

John Tucker Dorsey (1876-1957) Dorsey, a lawyer, was a member of the lower house of the Georgia General Assembly in 1915-1917 and 1941-1945, and served as district attorney of the Blue Ridge Circuit in 1918-1920. The document describes him as a "planner."

Gordon Baxter Gann (1877-1949) Gann, a lawyer, was Mayor of Marietta in 1922-1925 and 1927-1929 and a member of the lower house of the Georgia General Assembly in 1919-1922.

John Augustus (Gus) Benson (1873-1960) Benson operated a mercantile store on Marietta Square.

William J. Frey (1867-1925) Frey, Cobb County Sheriff in 1903-1909, owned Frey's Gin, the place of Leo Frank's lynching. The document says of him: "doubled as hangman."


Ralph Molden Manning (1877-1940) Manning is described by Stephen J. Goldfarb as "a contractor and road builder."


June 11, 2000 An article, "A Murder, A Lynching, a Mystery," by Jim Auchmutey, is published in The Atlanta Constitution, reexamining the Leo Frank case in light of the list of lynchers recently posted on Stephen J. Goldfarb's website.

June 12, 2000 Carrick Mollenkamp's article, "An Internet Posting Raises the Ghosts of a Notorious Crime," appears in The Wall Street Journal. It discusses attitudes in Cobb County about Stephen J. Goldfarb's website, and notes that "[a] few people still adamantly maintain that Mr. Frank was guilty and that his lynching was justice served."


Also on this day law professor Jonathan Turley's article, "Statue at State Capitol is a Memorial to Hatred," is published in The Atlanta Constitution. The article notes that Tom Watson, whose 12-foot statue stands on the grounds of the state capitol building in Atlanta, "was a fervent anti-Semite who described [Leo] Frank as that 'satyr-faced New York Jew' and a 'lustful beast.'" Watson also, the article continues, claimed inflammatorily that Mary Phagan "died a horrible death defending her virtue against a rich depraved Sodomite Jew." Finally, the article reminds us that Watson encouraged and later defended Frank's lynching,
assuring his readers that 'lynch law is better than no law at all.'" Whether Watson's statue ought to be removed, perhaps to be replaced by a statue of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "must," the article says, "remain with the people of Georgia."

**June 20, 2000** Kathy Sawyer's article "A Lynching, a List and Reopened Wounds," is published in The Washington Post. It discusses the list of Leo Frank lynchers posted on Stephen J. Goldfarb's website. Of the lynching, the article says: "The lynching that August dawn was not a mob action, driven by inflamed passions. It was by all accounts, coldly calculated, planned well in advance with military attention to detail, with help from people in high places, and carried out over prolonged time and distance by at least two dozen and perhaps as many as 40 men, absolutely confident of their cause and their fellow conspirators. And, unlike most Lynchings, this one was not fueled by liquor."

**July 5, 2000** Stephen J. Goldfarb posts an addendum to his website in which he (1) reveals that the handwritten document listing the lynchers was written by Mary Phagan, author of The Murder of Little Mary Phagan (1987), a descendant and namesake of the little girl murdered on Apr. 26, 1913, and (2) identifies three more of the 26 listed names on the document, bringing the total of identified lynchers to 12.

The three newly identified lynchers, all from Cobb County, are:

George Exie Daniel (1881-1970) Daniel owned and operated a jewelry store on Marietta Square for 40 years and was a charter member of the Marietta Country Club.

Joseph M. Brown (1851-1932) Brown, the son of Georgia's Civil War governor, was himself Governor of Georgia in 1909-1911 and 1912-1913. As governor, he was the immediate predecessor of John M. Slaton.

Bolan Glover Brumby (1876-1948) Brumby owned a furniture manufacturing company, the Marietta Chair Company.

**Aug. 7, 2000** Law professor Jonathan Turley publishes an article, "Lawyers and the Lynching," in The National Law Journal. The article discusses the list of lynchers posted on Stephen J. Goldfarb's website and notes that the list "contains some of the most prominent lawyers in Georgia of that era." The six lawyers listed all played "a leadership role" in the lynching, Turley says. The lawyers are: Newton Augustus Morris, a judge; Eugene Herbert Clay, a district attorney; John Tucker Dorsey, a legislator; Gordon Baxter Gann, a Mayor of Marietta; Joseph M. Brown, a former Georgia Governor; and Moultrie McKinney Sessions, the son of a judge.

**Sept. 24, 2000** Robert Myers' play, "The Lynching of Leo Frank," opens at the Theater in the Square in Marietta.


**Oct. 7, 2003** Steve Oney's book, And the Dead Shall Rise: The Murder of Mary Phagan and the Lynching of Leo Frank, the definitive work on the Leo Frank case, is published. The books names 25 of Leo Frank's lynchers. The lynchers include a former governor, a district attorney, a judge, a state legislator, a mayor, a sheriff, a former sheriff, and various prominent lawyers and businessmen.

**Oct. 10, 2003** Steve Oney lectures on his new book to a packed house in the UGA Chapel.