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Leo Frank's Trial Is Attracting Universal Interest in Georgia

By Britt Craig.

There has never been a trial in Georgia's records rivaling the Frank case in general interest throughout the state, even the Grace case being a poor second.

The Myers trial—the famous Will Myers murder case which is yet to receive its final chapter—created considerable interest, both locally and throughout the state, but was a mere shadow beside the present case.

The Appelbaum case was a short one; was put through the courts more as a matter of routine than anything else. Mrs. Appelbaum is still in Atlanta, and attending the Frank trial.

Will Cause Three Weeks.

There is no doubt that the Frank trial will run into its third week. That much has already been predicted by attorneys for both the state and defense. Since they are naturally conservative in their estimates it is possible it may last longer.

There will be at least twenty or more days of it—twenty or more days of feverish interest, with the excitement growing as each day brings closer the climax. The jury may be a long time in reaching a verdict.

Interest is not confined to Atlanta. There is not a remote rural section in the highlands of northeast Georgia, or the swamplands bordering the south, that has not caught the contagion. If you're from Atlanta, they'll talk Frank trial instead of the weather, and if you know anything whatever about the case, you're a popular visitor.

Of course, the present case does not exceed the Grace case in national interest. Mrs. Grace was a woman of a very interesting type, and he was a southerner, member of a prominent family. She was a native of the north, and naturally this caught the papers.

Papers Follow Suit.

The Philadelphia papers carried much of the Grace story, and, naturally, the New York papers followed suit. Not that New York papers pattern after the Philadelphia papers, but the former have much circulation in the Quaker City. And, when anything becomes interesting to New York, it spreads nationally.

That illustrates why the Grace and Frank cases differ. The Grace case attracted wider interest simply because Mrs. Grace happened to come from Philadelphia. The Philadelphia papers "played up" the story, and the New York papers did likewise, in a kind of self-defense. Anything that goes in New York, it may be taken for granted, will go in any community from Jersey City to Lakeland, Fla.

If the Frank case had happened in New York, the Associated Press wires would be red hot with the story each morning and night. Just because it's in New York, it's interesting, whatever

it might happen to be. Although you were a thousand miles from them, you'd know just as much about Leo Frank and Mary Phagan and the National Pencil factory as you now do. It's purely a question of perspective.

Because it's in New York it happens to be big. Because New York is connected with the matter, it happens to be big. Because it is in Atlanta, it doesn't happen to be so big. "Play it down," order the editors, and they do.

It's Different in Georgia.

But, in Georgia it's different. It's different, even to the entire southland. Atlanta is the most interesting spot in the south and consequently are interested in what happens to happen therein.

Atlanta is Georgia's New York—it is the New York of that territory this side of the Mason and Dixon line. It is, therefore, quite natural that state-wide interest should exist in the Frank case. But, outside of that, if the case should have occurred in Ebenezer, Ga., or Cherokee, N. C., it would be just as interesting, purely for the fact that it was an exceptional mystery, and mysteries, like the regret that Eve bit the apple, will never grow old.

Here is a little girl, pretty, pure and in the bloom of life, found murdered in the blackness of a factory basement, an ideal spot for crime of the foulest character. Two notes, as mysterious as the murder itself, are discovered beside her body.

Suspicion soon points its finger at the superintendent of the factory, a college graduate, man of culture and conspicuous in business. He is arrested, put under the police third degree, held by the coroner and indicted by the grand jury.

Interesting Events Result.

Event follows event—one thrill paved the way for another. As a result of the investigation, a dictagraph scandal arises which involves an entire police department and a legal figure of prominence in the south. A negro confesses completely in the murder, and accuses the suspected superintendent of the actual deed.

The interest is intense. The trial begins. It is the most sensational of the state's history. The newspapers are full of it.

Is it not enough to stir a nation? But yet, because it is not in New York, the papers of that fickle metropolis have not, in all, carried more than a column of the entire case.

The trial promises to be more interesting as it progresses. The bulk of the expert testimony is yet to come, and, in a big trial, what is more interesting than the testimony of experts? Only the statement of one expert has thus far been submitted, and it furnished the most thrilling phase of the case, so far.

There will be experts of all kinds

giving testimony for both the state and the defense. Jim Conley's statement is yet to come. Many are banking upon it to create the biggest sensation. Yet, one can never tell but there will be sensations bigger than Jim Conley's story.

Ordeal Lasts Three Weeks.

Will Frank withstand the ordeal for three weeks? It has already been established by the defense that he is of an extremely nervous nature, and that he is easily upset. Once, it was stated upon the stand, a wordy argument with one of his officials threw him into a nervous state which lasted throughout the entire day.

And, on another occasion, when he witnessed a street car accident in which a child was killed, he was so unnerved that for the remainder of the afternoon he was unable to work upon his books. It is surely a more trying ordeal to sit and watch the scales of justice waver at a trial in which an effort is being made to send him to the gallows.

During the earlier sessions he maintained composure, but Saturday morning there was evidence of a weakened nervous system, and it was obvious that the strain was having a telling effect. He is a small man, wiry and of nervous temperament—of the type that is more easily affected.

Strong Argument for Defense.

If he retains his strength and undergoes the trial as well as many expect of him, it will be a strong argument for his defense.

It might well be stated that the Frank trial has what one might call just bogun. The state is yet to play its trump card, although it has, up to date, welded a chain which the solicitor says is satisfactory. The weightiest portion of the case is yet to come. The defense is yet to show its hand.