

Fort Wayne Sentinel, October 14, 1878

THE INDIANA LYNCHERS.

[Chicago Times Special.]

Evansville, Ind., Oct. 12.—There has been intense excitement in Mount Vernon and Evansville all day over the tragic work of last night. The bodies of Jim Goode, Jeff Hopkins, Billy Chambers and Edward Warner were allowed to hang all day, the citizens indorsing the action of the mob to the extent of declining to have them cut down until after the funeral of Oscar Thomas, the murdered deputy sheriff. This took place at 2 o'clock this afternoon, attended by a large concourse. At 5 o'clock the bodies were cut down and the inquest began. The streets were thronged with people all day, but no disorder or violence is reported. It was rumored that the others had been caught and would be hanged to-night, but this is probably false. Gen. Harvey and Maj. Menzies, the latter state senator and a prominent lawyer of Mt. Vernon, were retained to defend Jeff Hopkins, and they state that the man was innocent beyond question. They say that prominent men will swear that at the time the rape was committed Hopkins was closeted with prominent politicians, in whose pay he was, arranging work for the election next day. This was what Hopkins said half an hour before the mob broke in the jail but it was thought he was relying on the negroes to prove his alibi. It appears also that old Harrison's house had been attacked by an armed crowd of friends of the women ravished, who had threatened his life if he did not tell where his son was, and in fear of their threats he made preparations for them and the officers were resisted by mistake. The death of old Harris is a profound mystery. While the mob was waiting for the door of the cell to be cut through some of the men gathered about old Harris and told him to get up and prepare to die. He said he was not able to rise and if they wanted his life they must take it there. What occurred then no one of that great crowd outside can tell to-day. It is a secret which is locked up in the breasts of the mob. In the jail it is said that men were dispatched for a butcher's cleaver and that on the floor the old man was chopped up alive in mince-meat, and that the pieces were flung into the sink. Others say that a hand was on his throat and that a knife was buried in his heart and his body quartered. Still others say he was spirited out to a carriage near by and driven rapidly out, where, no man

knows, and burned to death. Whatever was the mode of death, the old man disappeared as if he had been a myth, and no man but those who were his executioners can tell where or how his soul went out. A carriage filled with men did draw off at a dead gallop about the time in question, but nobody saw the occupants. The floor of the jail was covered with lime this morning and no traces of lime were visible. Some of the mob afterward tried to give out the impression that the man had slipped out in the excitement and escaped, but that is idle talk, for he was unable to walk from loss of blood. The members of the mob are, of course, known, but it is safe to say that they will never be punished. They could not be convicted in the county, and even a United States court could hardly grapple with the matter successfully. Some of the best men in the city were in their ranks, and it was owing to their presence that the affair was conducted without a general disturbance. Four of the accused negroes are still at large, and there have been rumors of their capture all day, but it is probable that Mount Vernon has had its fill of vengeance, and that justice will hereafter be meted out in the courts.