

RACISM IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

BLACK FAMILIES FACING MOB VIOLENCE IN DETROIT

Fleta & Aldine Mathies

In April 1925, Aldine and Fleta Mathis moved into the lower flat at 5913 Northfield Street, on the city's west side. White crowds gathered and harassed the couple. A brick was thrown through their window. Fleta discharged a firearm from inside her home and was arrested and charged with "careless use of firearms."

Dr. Alexander Turner and Family

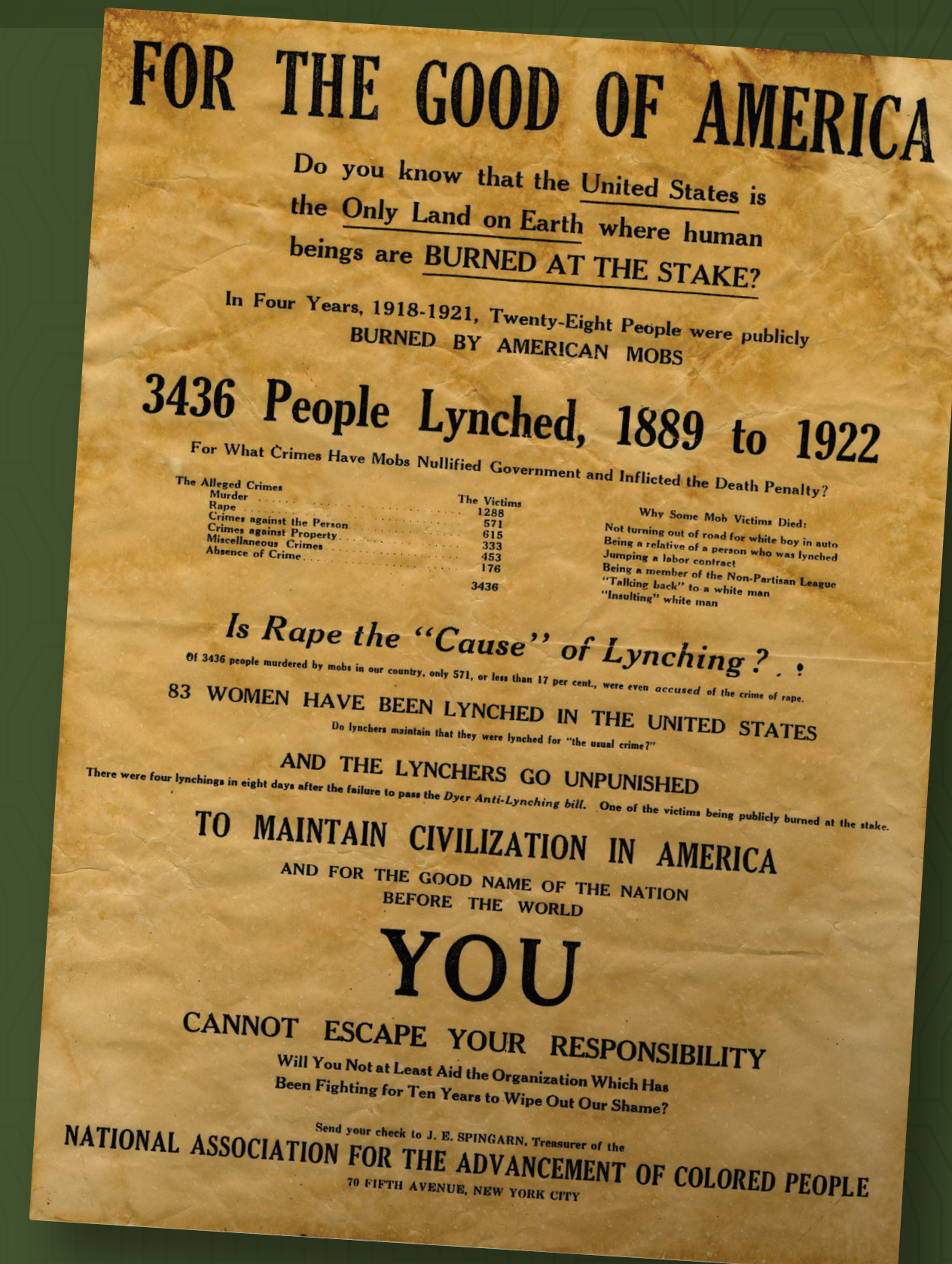
Dr. Turner was a well-respected physician and colleague of Dr. Ossian Sweet's. He owned a chain of pharmacies and was the co-founder and Chief of Surgery at Dunbar Hospital. Seventy-five percent of his clientele, overall, was white. But none of the prestige mattered when, on June 23, 1925, he moved his family into a home at 4755 Spokane Avenue, a white neighborhood on the city's west side.

Within hours, the house was surrounded by a mob of thousands, throwing stones and garbage. Dr. Turner was held at gunpoint by two men and he was forced to sign the deed over to them. The police escorted the Turner family out of the neighborhood. The family later moved to Ohio.

Vollington & Agnes Bristol

Bristol and his wife Agnes, who together ran a Black Bottom funeral home, owned a house at 7810 American Avenue, in a mostly white neighborhood. They tried renting to white and Black tenants, but found white tenants to be disrespectful of them and their property. However, each time they rented to Black tenants, threats from neighbors would scare the residents away.

The couple decided to move into the house themselves on July 6, 1925. A mob quickly formed. Stones flew, shots were fired, and nearly 200 police officers were called in. They arrested nineteen white men.



John Fletcher and Family

In July 1925, John Fletcher and his family sat down to a meal in their new home at 9428 Stoepel Avenue, when a white woman outside their dining room window started chanting racial slurs. A mob formed around the house, reportedly growing to 4,000 in total. People shouted, "Lynch them!" and threw rocks. Two gun shots rang out from the Fletcher's home. A bullet struck a white teenager in the thigh. Police arrested the Fletchers. They moved out the next day.

