Excerpt of Article from The Southern Argus, May, 1899

THE NEGRO QUESTION,
“A Political Blunder That is Worse Than a Crime.”


It is evident that the abolition of slavery has not settled the negro question.

Enfranchisement was one of those political blunders that is worse than a crime. It has been a curse instead of a blessing, and after thirty years of bloody tumult, the race problem remains the most portentous menace of our civilization.

The horrible tragedy at Newnan shocks the conscience of mankind, but up to a certain point the action of the mob is intelligible.

There are some crimes for which statutes or penalties, the verdict of juries, the sentences of judges, are inadequate.

The violation of women is one of them.

It is worse than murder, because the victim is condemned to living death. It destroys the family and the home, which are the foundation of the state.

The law fines and imprisons the adulterer, the seducer, the ravisher; but public opinion condemns him to death. If the husband, the father, the brother slays the invader of the home, though it is technically murder, the jury acquits and the people say “amen.”

This is the unwritten law of the Anglo-Saxon race, to which we belong.

La Rochefoucauld, the French moralist, says with equal truth and cynicism that it is easy to endure the misfortunes of our friends with fortitude.

We condemn the faults and sins of others with the same equanimity and composure.

It is not difficult to denounce the butchery of Sam Hose as a hideous crime against humanity, a bloodthirsty and sickening atrocity, a disgrace to American civilization.

The execration is deserved. No condemnation can be too severe. But no judgment of the people of Georgia is just that neglects to confess that there are many northern communities where similar crimes have been and would be similarly avenged, less the barbaric details, or that omits to take into consideration the environment, or which forgets that Massachusetts and New York are equally responsible with Georgia and South Carolina for the presence of the African race and the existence of human slavery on this continent.

Lynch law from the humanitarian point of view, admits neither of defense nor apology, but civilization is largely to blame for its decrees.

Justice is tardy. In 1896 there were 10,652 homicides in the United States and 122 legal executions.