

Judge Leonard Roan:

Gentlemen, I have thought about this case more than any other I have ever tried. I am not certain of this man's guilt. With all the thought I have put on this case, I am not thoroughly convinced that Frank is guilty or innocent... But I do not have to be convinced. The jury was convinced. There is no room to doubt that. I feel it is my duty to order that the motion for a new trial be overruled.

Leonard S. Roan (1849–1915)

Trial judge.



Leonard S. Roan, c.1913.

Courtesy of the New York Times Company Records, Adolph Ochs Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Governor John Slaton:

"I can endure misconstruction, abuse and condemnation," Slaton said, "but I cannot stand the constant companionship of an accusing conscience which would remind me that I, as governor of Georgia, failed to do what I thought to be right . . . It means that I must live in obscurity the rest of my days, but I would rather be plowing in a field than to feel that I had that blood on my hands."

"Two thousand years ago another governor, Pontius Pilate, 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."



Governor John M. Slaton, c. 1935.

Tom Watson:

"If Frank's rich connections keep on lying about this case, SOMETHING BAD WILL HAPPEN."

"Our grand old Empire State HAS BEEN RAPED! ... Jew money has debased us, bought us, and sold us — and laughs at us ... Hereafter, let no man reproach the South with Lynch law: let him remember the unendurable provocation; and let him say whether lynch law is not better than no law at all."



Tom Watson, c. 1900.

*Courtesy of the Keenan Research
Center at the Atlanta History Center*

Leo Frank:

"Gentlemen, I was nervous. I was completely unstrung. Imagine yourself called from sound slumber in the early hours of the morning ... To see that little girl on the dawn of womanhood so cruelly murdered – it was a scene that would have melted stone."



Leo Frank, 1914.

Jim Conley, referring to a comment allegedly by Leo Frank:
"Why should I hang? I have wealthy people in Brooklyn."



Jim Conley, c.1914

*Courtesy of the New York Times
Company Records, Adolph Ochs
Papers, Manuscripts and Archives
Division, The New York Public
Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden
Foundations*

Former GA governor Joseph Brown to Governor Slaton:
"Now in all frankness, if your excellency wishes to insure lynch law in Georgia, ... you can strike this dangerous blow at our institutions ... by retrying this case ..."



Joseph Brown, c.1915.

*Courtesy of the Marietta Museum
of History*

Leo Frank, at his lynching:

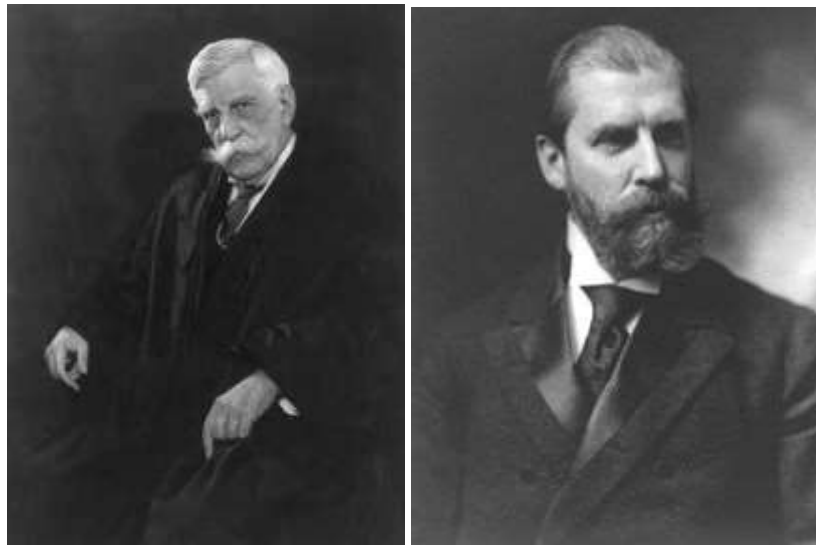
"I think more of my wife and my mother than I do of my own life."



Lucille Selig and Leo Frank at Grant Park in Atlanta, July 17, 1909.

Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Evans Hughes,
Supreme Court Justices, in their dissent:

"Mob law does not become due process of law by securing the assent of a terrorized jury...I very seriously doubt if the petitioner (Leo Frank)..has had due process of law... because of the trial taking place in the presence of a hostile demonstration and seemingly dangerous crowd, thought by the presiding judge to be ready for violence unless a verdict of guilty was rendered."



Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Justice Charles Evans Hughes

In 1986 the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles pardoned Frank, stating:
"Without attempting to address the question of guilt or innocence, and 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 State Board of Pardons and Paroles, in compliance with its Constitutional and statutory authority, hereby grants to Leo M. Frank a Pardon."



Minister at Mary Phagan's church:
"This one old Negro would be poor atonement for the life of this innocent girl."



*The Phagan family at the funeral of Mary Phagan,
April 29, 1913.*

Marietta Vigilance Committee flyer:

"NOTICE: You are hereby notified to close up this business and quit Marietta by Saturday night... or else stand the consequences. We mean to rid Marietta of all Jews by the above date. You can heed this warning or stand the punishment the committee may see fit to deal out to you."



Postcard depicting the newly reorganized Knights of the Ku Klux Klan at Stone Mountain Park, Atlanta, Georgia, 1915.

Ralph McGill (Atlanta Constitution)

John Slaton's obituary:

"A giant of his day, it was one of destiny's mocking ironies that his great integrity should have cost him his political life..."



Ralph McGill

Seeking Justice: The Leo Frank Case Revisited **Conclusion – Quotes on the Leo Frank Case**

Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to reflect on the events that unfolded in the Leo Frank Case and the points of view that emerged from the facts and the press.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Recount the events of the Leo Frank Case
- Review the protagonists of the case
- Identify various points of view that emerged from the facts
- Identify points of view that emerged from the press coverage
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Recognize bias
- Draw conclusions and make generalizations
- Identify cause and effect
- Compare similarities and differences

Resources and Materials:

Quotes and photographs of the protagonists in the Leo Frank Case

Activities:

1. Find quotes that reflect the following:

- There exists real doubt about Leo Frank's guilt or innocence.
- It is worth the risk to do what is right.
- Inflammatory language and language of hate can lead to violence.
- Leo Frank was innocent.
- Leo Frank was guilty.
- Politicians should bend to the will of the people.
- Politicians should not bend to the will of the people.
- Threats should be taken seriously.
- People should do what they think is right in the face of threats.

2. Choose one of the quotes on the handout. Answer the following questions about the quote:

- Why did you choose this quote?
- Do you agree or disagree with the quote? Explain your answer.
- Who made the statement? What do you know about that person? How does the quote reflect the person who made it?
- At what point in the case was the statement made? How do you know?
- What position does the quote take regarding the case and its outcome?
- What do you suppose was the purpose of this statement? Do you think its author was successful in persuading others to agree? Explain.