

The
1933 Conspiracy

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Dedication

I'd like to dedicate this paper to my beloved mother and father, Mr. Angel and Eulalia Romero. To my dearly departed uncle Mr. Arturo Romero and to the greatest brother this world has ever seen, Mr. Angel Romero Jr, who kindly provided the art work for my paper. Whenever I was stumbling over an obstacle in life he was always there to pick me up and put me back on my feet.

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Introduction

John Holmes and Thomas Thurmond, where two all American. They were well liked by family and friends."However they possessed a secret that that thier family and friends didn't know of. from the inside the two men were yelling "murder! "

Thomas Thurmond met John Holmes had met at the gas station where Holmes worked at. Several of the customers there *were people who* already had some sort if clash with the law. Thurmond and Holmes seemed to idolize these people. They had the mentality that they could commit the perfect crime and get away with it. They had already been sucessfyul in two situations in which they held two men hostage till thier families paid the randsome, Having never been charged with the crimes, the two men were left to roam the streets and cause more pain *to* people

During the thirties San Jose was the home of several wealthy prosperous families. One such example was the Hart family. They were a Jewish family whose ancestors had emigrated to America in the 1800s. Alex Hart was a wealthy business man who owned a department store in Downtown San Jose. His store was popular with the people of San Jose. In-fact most people did their shopping there and some where employed there as well. His life was well. He had two sons and was happily married. He was grooming his eldest son Brooke, with hopes of one day retiring and leaving his store to his son. One normal day he asked his son to escort him to a meeting. Brooke agreed and headed for the garage where his car was at. He told his father he'd be back. Mr. Hart didn't know at the moment that this would be the last time

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he would see his son alive. The following events marked San Josean history.

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The Cause

San Jose had been a tranquil little city from its beginnings as claimed Spanish territory. However in 1933 a series of unfortunate events lead to one of San Jose's biggest uprisings. This uprising shook the world and shocked millions of people nationwide. San Jose had lynched two men!

In A few months before the Brooke Hart Murder, the decomposed body of the son of Charles Lindbergh, the first man to fly over the atlantic ocean solo , Charles Lindbergh Jr. had been found. The twenty month old baby had been kidnapped and then killed a few months back. During the Brooke Hart murder, the killer of the Lindbergh baby, Richard Hauptmann, hadn't been convicted yet. This made the public angry. How could such terrible crime be done? Why was it taking so long for the accused murderer to be convicted? Would he get away with it? Would no justice be served the the Lindberghs? Because of this the people of San Jose were motivated not to let something like that happen to their city. When the news went out that a beloved local young man had been killed, the people weren't afraid to stand up show other criminals within the community that crime of any sort would not be permitted.

uprising

Brooke Hart/ the Hart Family

Though it might seem unheard of now, the ears of San Joseans once rung with the words "Hang them!" over seventy years ago the people of San Jose were outraged and were set on bringing justice to a recent murder of a young man. It all started in 1933. A Alex Hart was a prosperous Jewish man whose father, Leopold Hart, had pioneered San Jose starting his familys' first retail store, L. Hart and Son Company (Harts) which was located on Market and Santa Clara street. He was married and had three children. His two sons. Alex Hart Jr. and Brooke Hart, and his daughter Aleese. His eldest son Brooke had recently graduated from Santa Clara University. Mr. Hart Dreamt in one day handing down his store to his son just as his father had done, because of this he had recently elevated Brooke to jr. vice president of Harts.

Brooke was a handsome young man that was considered at the time to be one of the bay areas most desirable bachelors. He was also well liked by the growing San Jose community. Everyone that met Brooke couldn't help but like him. The community was well aware of his financial status and of how some day Mr. Hart would pass down his dynasty to his son. Everybody was alright with it. Brooke had been working at the store since he was a youth. Everyone that worked alongside with him knew and loved him. Brooke wouldn't effect the store by taking over. If anything his popularity would bring more clientele. Everything seemed in place and the community was peaceful.

Brookes Kidnapping

On the afternoon of November 9, 1933 Mr. Hart was scheduled for a meeting. Brooke had recently bought a brand new Studebaker roadster. He agreed to escort his father to the meeting in his brand new car. Brooke left Harts as usual and headed for the downtown parking garage. This would be the last time his father would see him alive. As Brooke was leaving the garage Holmes stopped him at gun point. He entered the car and ordered Brooke to continue driving on Market street. A little distance away from the parking garage Thurmond was waiting in Holmes' Chevrolet Coach. He followed Brooke and Holmes about ten miles away in what is now Milpitas. Thurmond and Holmes put Brooke in the back of the Chevrolet and continued driving till they reached the San Mateo Bridge.

Upon arriving at the San Mateo Bridge the two men dragged Brooke out of the Car. Brooke tried resisting, but was hit over the head with a concrete block. When he tried calling out for help he was hit over the head once again. That was enough to knock Brooke out. Thurmond and Holmes then bound his body with wire and tied some concrete blocks to it to serve as a weight, to bring Brooke down. However in those days the altitude of the water was only a few feet high and Brooke tried getting out. When the men saw that they proceeded in shooting and killing Brooke.

The Negotiating

After the murder the two men called the Hart residence and ordered that they give them 40,000 dollars or else Brooke would never be seen again. Day after day the men tried negotiating, while the police tried finding them with no luck. Finally one last phone call was made to the Hart residence. Alex Hart Jr. Picked up and talked to Thurmond. The police were able to trace the phone call. They instructed Alex Hart Jr. to continue talking to him until they caught him. Alex stalled Thurmond long enough. Just as Thurmond was about to hang up the pay phone he was approached by the police. They took him to the san jose jail for intense questioning. After hours of questioning he admitted to killing Brooke and named his accomplice. Once Holmes was caught they took down his testimony. They were guilty.

Thurmond and Holmes were scheduled to go to court. Then the people of San Jose got news that sparked anger. Thurmond and holmes wanted to get off charges by claiming insanity.

The Uprising / the Lynching

infuriated after hearing that Holmes and Thurmond might try to get off charges by claiming insanity. The people decided to take matters in to their own hands. On the night of november 1933, the people headed towards the court house where Thurmond and Holmes were being held at. Armed with torches and anger they formed a crowd around the court house. "Give them to us" the people demanded the sheriff and the police officers helping them that day. The sheriff didn't obey their orders instead he advised his assisting officers to go to the second floor of the court house and throw tear gas out at the rioting people. He insisted that all guns were to be put away and that no source of force was to be used against the people he wanted no civilian to be hurt that day. Instead of calming the people down with the tear gas the people just became angrier. The outburst of anger within the people caused them to go over to where a new post office was being built, they ripped off its tiles and other materials. The materials salvaged from the post office were thrown through the windows. The helpless police officers had only one resort, that was to throw more tear gas at the people. As the day grew old more people joined the crowd. Alas a beam of wood was used to take down the door. Some people waited outside, while others didn't hesitate to take matters into their own hands and go into the court house and get the men. Some 3,000 people were gathered for this event which was at the time one sixth the population of San Jose. As the night got old, the people became impatient "String em' up!" the people yelled as they dragged Thurmond and Holmes across the street to St. James park for the lynching. Their last moments were of agony. The infuriated people tried to make them live out Brooks' fate. They were beaten with bricks and branches. As well as anything else that

would inflict pain on them. The crowd grew louder as spectators joined the crowd. The metaphorical flames of anger inside each person grew. Impatience was felt ! in the atmosphere. Two ropes were thrown over two trees just a few yards apart from each other and the nooses were wrapped around the necks of the men. within a few seconds it was all over, The men dangled from the tree's lifeless as onlookers cheered. Their feet were burnt with lighters in hopes of bring a bit more justice to Brooke. All the momentum that had built inside the people was gone. They had succeeded in serving Brooke Justice.

The Aftermath/ Conclusion

The news of the lynching were on the front page of the newspapers all over the United States. Some states congratulated San Joseans, while others were hesitant in responding. The governor of San Jose at the time the time Governor James Rolph didn't feel like the people should be punished. He felt like this served as a lesson to criminals. He dismissed the case. However when a new sheriff came along they tried six people. No one was ever convicted. This event in San Jose's history is very important. It shows how a small community like San Jose can come together and fight. The people saw that something had to be done to prevent further crimes from happening. They taught anyone who had any intention on performing a crime a lesson that day. This was the last public lynching in California.

A year after the lynching was done a movie based on it was made. "Fury" starring Spencer Tracy. This year a new movie is being made based on this event as well "Vally of the Heart's Delight." Today the trees where Thurmond and Holmes were lynched no longer exist. Souvenir hunters kept ripping pieces of bark off the trees as souvenirs. As a result the trees became very damaged, and they had to be chopped off. However the court house and St. James Park still exist.

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