



Character Sketch of Henry Allison (Jack) Collier

March 26, 1883 – September 7, 1932

Age in April, 1923: 40 Age at Death: 49

Age when picture was taken: (est) 49

Judge Henry Collier

Character Sketch

Judge Henry Allison “Jack” Collier was born in Saline County, Missouri in 1883. He obtained his law degree from Missouri University at age 22. Soon after he married and had two children., a boy and a girl.

At the time of James Scott’s dilemma, Judge Collier was a probate judge, not serving as a circuit court Judge until 1928, when he was elected to what was intended to be a seven-year term. He died four years into the term. However, on April 3, 1923, Collier was also appointed as a “Special Judge” with the ability to decide more than just probate cases. This was due to the illness of Judge David Harris who needed to immediately retire from the bench due to illness. Members of the Columbia Bar elected Collier to fill the position until the end of Judge Harris’ term.

Collier was called into service at the jailhouse on the night of the mob assault. Newspaper accounts place Collier at the scene that Saturday night, making an impassioned plea to the mob.

In his obituary, Collier was referred to as a popular and warm man, one of the most outstanding jurists in the state. His decisions on the bench withstood upper and appellate court oversight.

Though Collier was out-ranked by Ruby Hulen among the six men in the Jailer’s kitchen who struggled with how to wrangle Scott out of the mob’s clutches, it was Collier who was the first to plead with the mob, not Hulen or Sheriff Brown. Perhaps he had a greater propensity for courage than the others.



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SIDES

James sits handcuffed at the defense table with Anderson. Hulen occupies the prosecution table. JUDGE HENRY COLLIER presides. Caston and Gertrude sit behind the defense. Reporters scribble in their pads.

COLLIER

Mr. Hulen, would you like to begin?

HULEN

Your Honor, the state has filed an indictment against the defendant James T. Scott, a resident of Columbia, for the crime of rape upon a child of fourteen years of age.

A collective GASP ripples through the press gallery. Pencils scratch furiously across notepads.

HULEN

The state has the sworn testimony of the victim who has positively identified the defendant by sight, by the sound of his voice and by the scent of his clothing. The state also has sworn testimony from an eye witness who places the defendant in the vicinity of the crime that afternoon, contrary to his assertion that he was working at the university at the time of the assault.

COLLIER (to Scott)

Sir, is your name James T. Scott?

JAMES

Yes Judge.

COLLIER

Very well, Mr. Hulen the first name in this indictment says "Charles." The court orders the name be changed to "James" T. Scott.

HULEN

Yes your Honor. My apologies to the court.

COLLIER

How does your client plead, Mr. Anderson?

SIDES

ANDERSON

Not Guilty, your Honor.

COLLIER

Bail Mr. Hulen?

HULEN

Your Honor, due to the particularly vicious nature of the attack on such an innocent victim, the state requests remand.

COLLIER

Mr. Anderson?

ANDERSON

Your Honor, the defendant is a well-known and respected member of the community. He's married with a family who depends on his income to survive. He also has two eye witnesses who place him at work on the afternoon of the assault. This man has never been arrested before and is an active member of his church. The defense requests no bail.

COLLIER

Sorry Mr. Anderson, the gravity of the charges is impossible to ignore.

Judge Collier fills out a form and checks his calendar.

COLLIER

The defendant will be held without bail. I'll set trial for Monday, May 21st. Anything else gentlemen??

Both Anderson and Hulen shake their heads. Collier gavel the session closed. Reporters surge forward, surrounding both attorneys with questions and camera flashes.