



Tribune City Editor
Hollis Edwards

Bio & Character Sketch of Hollis Edwards

August 7, 1874 – June 30, 1943

Age in April, 1923: 48 Age at Death: 68

Age when picture was taken: (est) 55

Hollis Edwards was born on August 7, 1874 in Columbia, Missouri. He attended the local public schools and then entered the Law School at Missouri University but left early to enter the US Army when the Spanish-American War began. He enlisted in the university's Company I and served as the "Drummer Boy" until the unit was disbanded with the war's end.

He was married twice, but his true love was the newspaper business./ He began on the mechanical staff of the Stephens Publishing Company, and he also worked for the Columbia Herald Newspaper eventually becoming a foreman of their mechanical department. Then the Columbia Daily Tribune

Began operation in 1901, Edwards was among the first to join the ranks, but he soon left to become a Reporter for the Kansas City Star. Afterwards, he was a publisher of a newspaper in Hallsville, Missouri but he was lured away from that position by Edwin Watson after he purchased the Daily Tribune and made Edwards the associate editor. He worked for the Tribune continuously from 1905 until his death in 1943, with the exception of 1917 when he took a leave of absence to serve as the city editor of a newspaper in Madison, WI.

In Columbia, Edwards was known for his avid interest in politics and the development of Columbia. His beat was city hall and the courthouse. His favorite and only pastime was fishing.

When Edwards died of a heart attack in 1943, he left behind a son and grandson, two brothers and a sister.



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Character Sketch

Hollis Edwards was the City Editor for the Columbia Daily Tribune. He must have worked several other newspaper jobs, and at various newspapers, before reaching the City Editor position.

As the City Editor, Edwards' job would be to oversee field reporting staff, but he likely also did some newsgathering and reporting himself as well.

A case like the Almstedt rape must have presented Edwards with a decent opportunity to dig for an angle on the story and "scoop" his competitors at other newspapers.

Edwards greatest fault was in not knowing the power of the pen. His inflammatory front page story about a "Negro Getting Nervous" and that "Summary Justice" should be dealt to him is profound. The fact that his story brought a mob of thousands to action within hours of the story's publication is a deep reminder of the press' ability to incite and motivate truly evil actions.

Add to this, the fact that Edwards freely gave up the sources for his story in court. Perhaps the Press' freedom was not as great in 1923 Missouri as it was elsewhere, but for a reporter to give up his sources almost gleefully, was a despicable act by anyone's measure.



Summary Justice Partners, llc

SIDE

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EDWARDS

Jake, tell me if this sounds OK to you. It's about that negro the cops arrested for attacking the Almstedt girl. (reading out) "Circuit court is now in session. A trial could be had immediately and with the community in its present frame of mind there could be but one outcome, or, in the event, a swifter justice is dealt to the brute, it is just as important that no mistake be made."

FELLOW REPORTER

Sounds good. Edith told me last night that they should hang whoever did it! .

The editor, COLONEL ED (30's, White, chubby) walks past.

COLONEL

This about that negro who attacked the white girl at Stewart Bridge?

EDWARDS

Yeah boss. They got a guy in custody but so far no charges. The chief says that Hulen is holding things up. Maybe this'll put ants in his pants.

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EDWARDS

Happy Saturday boss. This read OK ? They're charging that negro, Scott with raping the Almstedt girl. Looks like his lawyer, uh Anderson, wants to try it here.

COLONEL (reading)

Many men of sound judgment... Taxpayers saved... Summary justice... Mmmm, that term yours or theirs?

SIDE

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EDWARDS

That would be mine.

COLONEL

OK. Are the "men of sound judgment" on the record?

EDWARDS

No Colonel they were off the record. But they all said Scott was definitely guilty.

COLONEL (pause to think)

Alright, Good work Hollis. See layout then typeset and get this on page one!

Colonel Ed pulls his copy out of his typewriter and passes it across his desk to Edwards.

COLONEL

Take this too Hollis. It's for today's editorial page. Busy day in College Town.

EDWARDS

Thanks boss. It's on the way!

Edwards grabs the papers and exits quickly.

COLONEL (Yells to Edwards)

Above the fold on your story Hollis! ABOVE the fold!

Then Colonel Ed takes another draw on his cigar, rolls back from his desk, and leans back satisfied.