

“Ohio’s Anti-Lynching Law,” *Cleveland Gazette*, 8 June 1901

Ohio’s Anti-Lynching Law.

Another Ohio jury has vindicated the primal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness by bringing in a verdict for \$300 to one of two colored men, who, with a white woman, were tarred and feathered and driven out of the town of West Liberty, O. To the other man was awarded \$1,000, and to the woman, \$700. Ohio does herself credit by such a law as this, and more credit by the action of her courts that enforce the law. Ohio has set a good example by her action in this particular. Indiana would do well to pattern after her.—Indianapolis News.

It might have been interesting to the readers to know that the anti-lynching law of Ohio, under which these verdicts were secured, is the result of a Negro’s efforts. Hon. Harry C. Smith, the editor of the *Cleveland Gazette*, while a member of the state legislature began the fight for this law almost single handed and alone. His earnestness and persistence attracted notice and finally won votes enough for his bill to enact it into law. But his fight for “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”

Ohio Historical Society



Harry C. Smith

did not end here. It was tested in every form of court in Ohio on the ground that it was class legislation and it was only a few months ago the supreme court of that great state held it constitutional.

The verdict giving \$700 to a white woman shows that there is no class legislation—no color line—in the law, which was just as Editor Smith intended. His fight was made on behalf of law and order, and in the interests of humanity, and he will no doubt rejoice as much over this award to the white woman as he will over that to either of the Negro men. The World agrees with the News that Indiana would do well to pattern after Ohio’s example. When the “good citizens,” who usually constitute the orderly mob, find out that the tax rate increases in proportion to the reign of mob law, they may be able to understand the argument. When education and moral suasion fails a good blow on the pocket book may do the business.—Indianapolis World.