

EASTERN SHORE AUTHOR TELLS STORY OF CENTURY-OLD RACIAL INJUSTICE IN “THE ISAIAH FOUNTAIN CASE”

Author Joseph Koper examines a searing case of racial injustice, leading to the last legal hanging on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

SALISBURY, MD, UNITED STATES, December 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Author [Joseph Koper](#)

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Kirkus Reviews

has released the first book-length account of a sensational rape trial from a century ago--[The Isaiah Fountain Case: Outrage and Jim Crow Justice on Maryland's Eastern Shore](#). It is a riveting account of racial injustice and the last legal hanging on Maryland's Eastern Shore, painstakingly pieced together from hundreds of newspaper articles and voluminous court records.

In the wake of World War One and the “Spanish flu”

pandemic, economic and racial tensions flared across the country. The Eastern Shore of Maryland was not immune.

In April 1919, a successful Black farmer named Isaiah Fountain set out by foot from his home in Williamsburg, Maryland, to Easton, Maryland, the county seat, in search of his missing wife. He had dispatched her on their wagon to withdraw money from their bank in Easton, but she failed to return.

Traveling to town and finding his wife had made the withdrawal as planned, but had then left their horse and wagon behind in Easton, Fountain suspected she had headed north to her parents' home in Camden, New Jersey.

The next day, Fountain bought a train ticket and followed his wife north. Happily, when he reached Camden, she agreed to return home in a week. Unhappily, the timing of this domestic spat - precipitating his trip out of town - was about to kindle the most dire and vengeful suspicions in Talbot County, becoming a living nightmare for Isaiah.

A teenage White girl who also lived near Trappe reported having been raped by a Black man on the same afternoon that Fountain was in Easton searching for his wife.

These coincidences set off a catastrophic chain of events for a man who was almost certainly innocent: a hurried investigation, arrest, trial, 9-minute deliberation by an all-White jury, conviction, appeals, retrial, second conviction, and hanging.

Along the way Fountain narrowly avoided being lynched by angry mobs and unbelievably,

escaped twice from custody, evading massive manhunts before being recaptured.

Unfortunately, not even three unimpeachable White witnesses who testified that Fountain was in Easton at the time the rape occurred could save him.

In July 1920, Isaiah Fountain earned the bitter distinction of becoming the last person to be legally executed on the Eastern Shore - on a custom-built gallows inside the Talbot County jail.

In telling this harrowing story, Koper also chronicles a secondary story line - a "media war" between Easton and Baltimore newspapers, which saw the case very differently from each other and blazed away with one accusatory salvo after another.

Reviews

"This rigorous account clearly shows that Isaiah Fountain suffered a fate he didn't deserve." - [Kirkus Reviews](#)

"The story of Isaiah Fountain is a must read, particularly for anyone seeking to learn more about America's difficult past. This century-old story was new to me and I am grateful to Joe Koper for this magnificent book." - Paul Brandus, Dow Jones/MarketWatch and USA Today columnist and White House correspondent, West Wing Reports

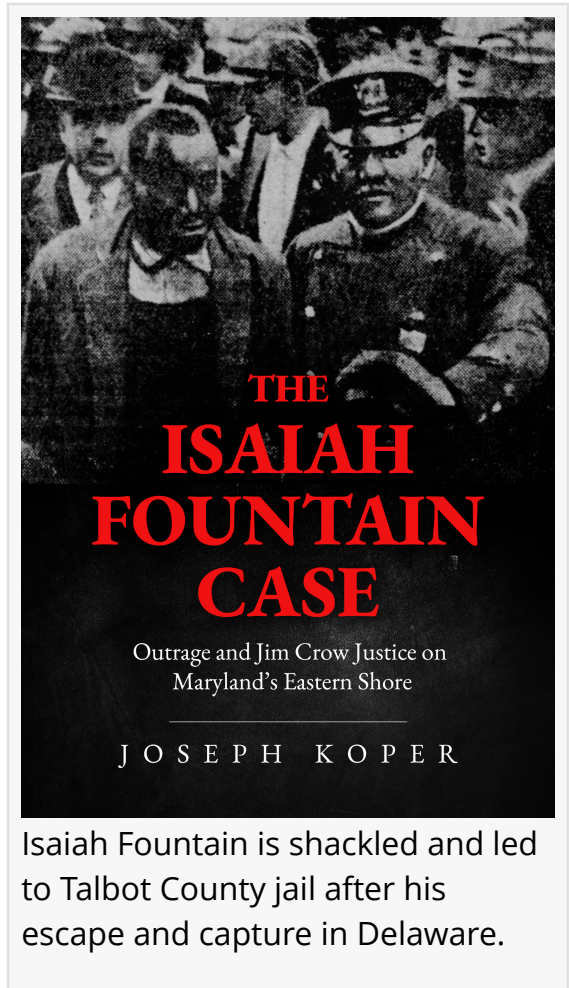
"A well-researched tragic story." - John R. Wennersten, historian and professor emeritus of environmental history, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore

About the Book

The Isaiah Fountain Case is available in hardcover (\$26.95, 326 pp, illustrated with historic photos and indexed) from leading independent bookstores on the Eastern Shore, including Vintage Books & Fine Art in Easton; Mystery Loves Company in Oxford; Chesapeake Trading Company and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels; The Unicorn Bookshop in Trappe; and Browseabout Books in Rehoboth Beach. It can also be ordered directly from the publisher at www.secantpublishing.com and from leading online retailers in both print and e-book format.

About the Author

Joseph Koper is a "come here" to Talbot County, Maryland, where he retired with his wife, Jackie, following service in the U.S. Army and a career spent largely in human resources management. A



Isaiah Fountain is shackled and led to Talbot County jail after his escape and capture in Delaware.

graduate of Gannon College and George Washington University, he has become fascinated with the long and rich history of the country and the Eastern Shore. The Isaiah Fountain Case is his first book. See www.josephkoper.com .

About the Publisher

Secant Publishing is an independent press in Salisbury, MD, the crossroads of Delmarva. It specializes in Eastern Shore-related fiction and nonfiction. See www.secantpublishing.com.

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