

# **Encyclopedia of American Race Riots, Volumes 1 & 2**

*Edited by  
Walter Rucker  
James Nathaniel Upton*

**Greenwood Press**

# **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RACE RIOTS**

**Greenwood Milestones in African American History**

Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition

*Edited by Peter Hinks and John McKivigan*

Encyclopedia of the Great Black Migration

*Edited by Steven A. Reich*

Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion

*Edited by Junius P. Rodriguez*

Encyclopedia of the Reconstruction Era

*Edited by Richard Zuczek*

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RACE RIOTS



Volume 1, A–M

Edited by  
Walter Rucker and  
James Nathaniel Upton

Foreword by  
Dominic J. Capeci, Jr.

Greenwood Milestones in African American History



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Black Women and Lynching  
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Lynching  
National Association for the  
  Advancement of Colored  
  People (NAACP)  
Niagara Movement  
Rape, as Provocation for  
  Lynching  
*Rope and Faggot: A Biography  
  of Judge Lynch* (White, 1929)  
*Strange Fruit* (Allan, c. 1937)  
Terrell, Mary Church (1863–1954)  
*Thirty Years of Lynching in  
  the United States: 1889-  
  1918* (Gruening and  
  Boardman, 1919)  
Wells-Barnett, Ida B. (1862–1931)  
White, Walter (1893–1955)

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Black Church Arsons  
Black Power  
Black Self-Defense  
Bloody Sunday (1965)  
“Bombingham”

Brown, Benjamin (d. 1967)  
Brown, H. Rap (1943– )  
Carmichael, Stokely (1941–1998)  
Civil Rights Movement  
Civil Rights Organizations and  
  Their Responses to Race Riots  
Cleaver, Eldridge (1935–1998)  
Congress of Racial Equality  
  (CORE)  
Deacons for Defense and  
  Justice  
Desegregation  
Freedom Rides  
Freedom Summer (Mississippi)  
  of 1964  
Integration  
Journey of Reconciliation (1947)  
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Kennedy, Robert F. (1925–  
  1968)  
King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929–  
  1968)  
Lowndes County Freedom  
  Organization (LCFO)  
Malcolm X (1925–1965)  
Marshall, Thurgood (1908–1993)  
Meredith, James (1933– )  
National Association for the  
  Advancement of Colored  
  People (NAACP)  
National Urban League  
Newton, Huey P. (1942–1989)  
*Radio Free Dixie*  
Randolph, A. Philip (1889–  
  1979)

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Segregation  
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Jackson, Jesse (1941– )  
King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929–  
  1968)  
Malcolm X (1925–1965)  
Marshall, Thurgood (1908–  
  1993)  
Meredith, James (1933– )  
Newton, Huey P. (1942–1989)  
Randolph, A. Philip (1889–  
  1979)  
Sellers, Cleveland (1944– )  
Wilkins, Roy (1901–1981)

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Chicago Commission on Race Relations  
 COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program)  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
 Federal Records on Race Riots  
 Government Responses to U.S. Race Riots  
 Hoover, J. Edgar (1895-1972)  
 Kennedy, John F. (1917-1963)  
 Kennedy, Robert F. (1925-1968)  
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 Kerner Commission Report  
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 Mitchell, Arthur Wergs (1883-1968)  
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 Red Scare and Race Riots  
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 War on Poverty

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 Black Manifesto  
 Black Nationalism  
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 Black Self-Defense  
 Desegregation  
 Frontier Justice  
 Integration  
 Jim Crow  
 Nonviolence  
 Racism  
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 Reparations  
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 Byrd, James, Jr. (1949-1998), Murder of (1998)  
 Charles, Robert (d. 1900)  
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 Randolph, Benjamin Franklin (c. 1820-1868)

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 Washington, Jesse (d. 1916), Lynching of  
 White Mobs

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 Black Power  
 Black Self-Defense  
 Civil Rights Movement  
 Cotton States and International Exposition (Atlanta, 1895)  
 Desegregation  
 Double V Campaign  
 Exodusters  
 Freedom Rides  
 Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964  
 Gentrification  
 The Great Migration  
 Harlem Renaissance  
 Integration  
 Journey of Reconciliation (1947)  
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 Du Bois, W.E.B. (1868-1963)  
 Forman, James (1928-2005)  
 Fortune, T. Thomas (1856-1928)  
 Press Coverage of Racial Violence  
 Press Instigation of Racial Violence  
 Trotter, William Monroe (1872-1934)  
 Villard, Oswald Garrison (1872-1949)

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. (1862-1931)  
White, Walter (1893-1955)

### Organizations, Civil Rights

Anti-Lynching Bureau  
Anti-Lynching League  
Atlanta Civic League  
Black Panther Party (BPP)  
Civil Rights Organizations and Their Responses to Race Riots  
Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)  
Deacons for Defense and Justice  
Equal Rights League  
Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU)  
Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of Colored Women (NACW)  
National Urban League  
Niagara Movement  
Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)  
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

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Farrakhan, Louis Haleem Abdul (1933- )  
Garvey, Marcus (1887-1940)  
Hoover, J. Edgar (1895-1972)  
Jackson, Jesse (1941- )

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Wilkins, Roy (1901-1981)  
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- Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898
- York (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1969
- Racial Violence and Discrimination, Forms of**
- Antiwar Protests
- “Bombingham”
- Castration
- Disenfranchisement
- Frontier Justice
- Jim Crow
- Labor Violence
- Lynching
- Racial Stereotypes
- Racism
- Rape, as Provocation for Lynching
- Redlining
- Rumors
- Segregation
- White Capping
- White Mobs
- White Supremacy
- Racial Violence, Incidents and Victims of**
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# FOREWORD: AMERICAN RACE RIOTING IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots* provides interpretive accounts of collective violence involving black and white Americans from the Civil War through the early twenty-first century, often with reference to related forms of bloodshed and implications for other minorities throughout our history. In nearly 265 entries written by eighty scholars from various fields, it identifies key incidents, individuals, and organizations, as well as concepts, events, themes, and trends associated with the acts of bloodshed and responses to them—including song and poetry. Thus the encyclopedia presents riots, lynching, vigilantism, and murders in the context of everyday life for specific eras and regions, revealing the human agency of participants and victims, the role of racism in these purposeful bloodlettings, and the transformation of racial violence over time. It also provides twenty-three primary sources, an extensive bibliography, a related topics guide, a chronology of American race riots and racial violence, a detailed subject index, and powerful illustrations. Above all, it raises critical questions: What are riots? Why do they occur? When do they happen? How do they differ from one another and from other forms of collective violence? Who riots, and why? Why are riots and rioters significant? How do they compare with other forms of mob violence and participants?

The key to answering these queries lies in the interaction of several factors, none more significant than the ideology of white racism. Seventeenth-century English colonists entered the Americas as the Western world was experiencing its commercial revolution and nascent industrial revolution. In this context, Europeans came to see themselves racially and culturally superior to less advanced colored peoples. They wrongly equated progress with technological change alone and wrongly believed the rest of the world to be static and without historical worth. They forgot, dismissed, or denied, past recognition of complex West African kingdoms, for example Mali, whose Mansa Musa (1312-1337) appeared on European cartography from 1339 to 1750. Whiteness, Christianity, and Civilization connoted more than ethnocentrism—the uniqueness that all groups experience—and evolved into cultural arrogance.<sup>1</sup> It advanced over the next three centuries as European industrialism widened the technological gap, increased military might,

and laid the basis for imperialism and pseudo-scientific proof of white supremacy.

The self-image of English colonists paralleled that of their counterparts in England and occurred amid slave trading and slavery in the Western Hemisphere. By 1750, as their view of Africans evolved from prejudice to racism, and as their need for laborers increased, they established slavery throughout the thirteen colonies. If English colonists judged Africans as threats to their identity and civilization, they deemed Native Americans as obstacles to their success; they considered both racially, religiously, and culturally inferior, yet blacks, viewed as individuals, needed subjugation while Indians, seen as nations, required removal. The latter also died in horrific numbers from Afro-Eurasian diseases.<sup>2</sup>

Believing Africans and Indians barbaric, English colonists considered sexual intercourse with them fatal to establishing Western civilization in the Americas. Because miscegenation frequently occurred between blacks and whites, they prohibited it in every plantation colony (as well as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania). Believing further that white women embodied the future of white society while black women embodied passion, white males practiced a double standard: permitting themselves miscegenation with black females, usually slaves; linking the status of mulatto children to that of their mothers; and shielding white women from black men, who were punished for crossing the line.<sup>3</sup> White men alone enjoyed sexual freedom while white women bore the burden of upholding a false morality and black women endured abuse by men of both races.

Moreover, even as the institution of slavery steadily changed over time, its maintenance required whites to forcefully extract unwilling labor, impose discipline, punish disobedience, and—by the nineteenth century—wage a “state of war” with black bondsmen, women, and children endeavoring to survive without obeying unconditionally. Day-to-day slave resistance existed amid the routine brutality of whites whipping and maiming run-aways and the calculated terrorism of whites suppressing revolts by indiscriminately killing innocent slaves.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, English colonists experienced less miscegenation and greater collective violence with Native Americans. Initially, natives and colonists exchanged overtures of friendliness because of Indian etiquette and the white need for assistance to survive in the earliest settlements. This friendliness soon turned to conflicts and led to massacres by both sides, wars that whites usually won and treaties that they nearly always broke (particularly under federal policies in the nineteenth century). Indians experienced defeat, sometimes extermination, from the Pequot War (1637) to the Plains Wars (1868–1890) and, according to a leading historian of collective violence, probably unleashed the most “brutalizing influence on the American character.”<sup>5</sup>

The violence among these three races who dominated North America revealed the pattern of intergroup conflict that would apply to all subsequent immigrants to America. That conflict emanated from competition over “scarce resources and incompatible values” and carried the potential for violence.<sup>6</sup> Thus, English colonists competed with Africans and Native

Americans at a time when they judged black and red skin, pagan religion, and tribal culture inferior. Their decision to enslave one race and defeat the other, however, depended on needed scarce resources—black labor and Indian land—and greater numbers and military power than their rivals. Significant for the Civil War era and later, interracial conflict heightened possibilities for violence when groups like these shared a history of blood-letting and sharp ethnocentric differences.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly the racism that triggered legacies of African slavery and Indian conquest was an important part of a broader violent heritage that influenced the emergence and prevalence of later race riots and lynching. In part, the rise of vigilantism in South Carolina (1767–1769) to impose law and order in unruly frontier areas led to the tradition of groups attacking marginal whites and undesirable blacks, Mexicans, Chinese, Indians, Jews, and Italians.<sup>8</sup> Despite regional variations, *lynching* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries manifested characteristics associated with the killing of southern blacks: unlawful death at the hands of three or more people for alleged reasons of “justice, race, or tradition.” And occasionally victims were tortured outside the South, blurring further the line between Colorado vigilantes and southern lynch mobs.<sup>9</sup>

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonists also engaged in rioting, which evolved from popular disorder and bloody rebellions to become another ritualized means of maintaining community solidarity and morality. Paradoxically, rioters contributed to the move toward independence without creating enormous carnage; they targeted property and symbols, not people. Significantly, the American Revolution “unleashed democracy,” thereby creating numerous competing groups along racial, ethnic, and class lines that sparked the most devastating and longest period of collective violence in national history. That carnage embodied a second paradox: self-proclaimed defenders of the public good sought “an exclusive democratic heritage” for themselves through extralegal violence, coupling rioting (urban vigilantism) with popular sovereignty (white dominance).<sup>10</sup>

A third paradox of American Revolutionary ideology set in motion events that initially delayed, and then ignited, the major era of rioting and lynching from the Civil War to World War II. The egalitarianism of the Declaration of Independence secularized the budding Quaker anti-slavery movement of the 1770s that abolished slavery in every state above the Chesapeake states and Delaware by 1804. Meanwhile, the framers of the U.S. Constitution recognized the legality of slavery where it already existed by agreeing to the three-fifths compromise, the Atlantic slave trade (until 1808), and the fugitive slave law (in 1790). This inconsistency between freedom in the North and slavery in the South accentuated the sectionalism that exploded into the Civil War in 1861, and revealed the underlying assumption of the Founders that free whites alone comprised the citizenry.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, whites agreed on the inferiority of African Americans, if not on their enslavement. Throughout the nineteenth century, white voters in thirty-eight states outlawed mixed marriages, excluded black people from the democratic process, and established “*Herrenvolk* democracy,” that is: democracy only for the dominant race, subjugation for all other races.

Although more structured and restrictive in the South, it was present in the North and later Midwest, where racial exclusion and discrimination laws stemmed black incursion and other legalities fashioned a system of race caste and economic exploitation.<sup>12</sup>

White exclusiveness also manifested itself spatially. It emerged in agrarian slave settings as social distance, characterized by paternalism and dominance; and in urban-industrial areas (regardless of region) as physical distance, marked by competition and uncertainty. Historically, aspects of the patterns overlapped and sometimes resulted in a crisis of “contradictions and ambiguities,” yet whites always imposed them to keep blacks in their ascribed socioeconomic or political places—and used violence as the final arbiter. As such, each pattern suggested the contexts and events in which racial rivalry could spark a crisis and ignite specific forms of bloodshed.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, most antebellum white leaders and citizens never equated the freedom of black people with equality, which resulted in African American challenges to a democratic society that relegated them to slavery and quasi-freedom. Whatever the period, well established racial lines tended to minimize intergroup tension; but when lines blurred in times of transition the resulting ambiguity threatened whites, emboldened blacks, and sparked interracial clashes. When whites perceived real or imagined assaults anywhere along the color line, they lashed out at blacks, who fought back in these *communal* riots.<sup>14</sup> From the mid-1820s and extending deep into the next century, for example, the rioting transcended politics, exacted greater violence, and produced various intergroup conflicts, including nearly forty race riots in northern and midwestern cities and towns in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. During this period, while southerners resisted anti-slavery incursions and repressed slave revolts, northern whites struck at abolitionists of both races and at blacks seeking to better their living condition.<sup>15</sup> They opposed mixed marriages with life-threatening violence, presaging the horrific lynching spree of southern blacks that lay ahead in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>16</sup>

The pattern of these outbursts evolved into draft riots during the Civil War, combining multiple white grievances with higher levels of violence than experienced previously. More than any other city in the North or Midwest, New York recorded the greatest carnage and destruction between July 13 and 17, 1863, when the New York City draft riots resulted in nearly 120 dead, including several black men lynched, and millions of dollars in property losses. Rioters—white Protestant and Irish Catholic workers, including many immigrants, who aligned with the anti-war Democratic Party—opposed conscription as a duty placed on them by the Republican Party to free slaves, whom they feared would pour into the North, take their jobs, and abuse their women. They considered the draft a burden from which wealthy men could buy exemptions at a time when ordinary white workers competed with black strikebreakers on the waterfront. Given the volatile mix of political, economic, class, and racial animosities, rioters soon channeled their furor toward African Americans, attacking individuals, neighborhoods, and institutions, including the Colored Orphan Asylum. Rioters overwhelmed local police and drove thousands of blacks from the city before Union soldiers quelled the violence.<sup>17</sup>

The upheaval indicated one type and several characteristics of future race riots. The channeling of several grievances into a *pogrom*, that is, a unilateral, relentless attack to obliterate the black community, occurred because its members successfully challenged the color line in politics, economics, or status; and because the depths of racism required scapegoats for white fears and failures. Ironically, given its origin, the pogrom soon became more common in southern cities and rural communities throughout the last third of the nineteenth century. The violence in New York City bore occasional sexual undertones, as when the body of one hanged black victim was dragged through the street by his private parts. Though not all riots were pogroms, and not all were as destructive, many other interracial labor and draft riots took place in 1862 and 1863, producing a cluster effect that emanated from wartime conditions.<sup>18</sup> This pattern would reappear in twentieth-century wars. Similarly, in several later race riots, political leaders would play important roles in generating or quelling the violence, black and white citizens would endeavor to assist riot victims in the aftermath, and few rioters, particularly in pogroms, faced legal consequences.

In this shifting pattern, which was neither linear nor without ambiguity, the Civil War served as the bridge between rural and urban worlds that had overlapped, intersected, and coexisted in the past. However, the once dominating agrarian sector appeared on the threshold of losing that favored position to its increasingly industrial counterpart, which controlled the war-forged Nation State. Such a transformation took several generations to complete, but the differences between societies partly explains their respective types of racial violence long before 1861; and, given the Confederate defeat and postwar Reconstruction, the heavily agrarian South reacted to external northern interference in its racial affairs with intensified violence against black residents.<sup>19</sup>

Simultaneously, northern racial violence continued, albeit related to the broader issue of labor strife and increasing levels of racism nationally. Blacks found themselves on the economic margin of the industrial revolution, with men excluded from most white unions and exploited by white managers as strikebreakers and women relegated to servile work or prostitution. They experienced *de facto* segregation, little political influence, and ultimately virulent depictions of themselves as white society embraced racist popular culture and social science as truth. The nation's industrial ideology of white supremacy, survival of the fittest, and gospel of wealth dovetailed with imperialist notions of "The White Man's Burden," particularly with acquisition of a commercial empire following the Spanish-American War (1898). Unlike European imperialists who lacked sizeable numbers of colored residents within their mother country, American racist oppression reinforced itself at home in the Plains Indian wars, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and African American labor exploitation, and abroad in the Filipino insurrection. North, South or West, before and after the Civil War, racial violence transformed itself.<sup>20</sup>

Within this context, racial violence erupted during Reconstruction and continued relentlessly until the beginning of World War I in 1914, reaching its regional apogee along a timeline from the turn of the century to the



onset of the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North. The violence began in the South as a crusade to preserve white supremacy politically, economically, and socially. Given legalization of black freedom, citizenship, and suffrage by the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1869), and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments, black-white conflict heightened over class, status, and power—greatly intensified by race hatred due to slave emancipation and defeat in war.<sup>21</sup> Rioting became, in the words of a major scholar, the “most violent and nastiest” in national history, punctuated by initial black assertiveness, followed by a barrage of white retaliation in cities, small towns, and rural areas. Nor was it coincidental that much of this “race feud” spanned the amendment ratification period and included pogroms (New Orleans, Louisiana, 1866) and communal riots (Memphis, Tennessee, 1866), as well as lynching, murder, and whipping that extended into 1876. The bloodletting was undertaken by whites acting through formal organizations or informal alliances—prominent officials and ordinary laborers united in white skins.<sup>22</sup>

This “counterrevolutionary violence” succeeded into the late 1870s, benefiting from the ineffective federal response to it and the Republican Party’s abandonment of Reconstruction in the Compromise of 1877. White southern home rule came with a vengeance, systematically undoing Radical Reconstruction through U.S. Supreme Court decisions, Jim Crow laws, and political gimmicks over the next twenty-five years. African Americans again found themselves socially segregated, economically exploited, and politically disfranchised in a race caste system. They were expected to abide by *racial etiquette*, unwritten rules of personal conduct toward white people that punctuated their inferior status and, for many whites, subhumanity. Disobedience opened them to verbal and physical retaliation, most fatally, lynching.<sup>23</sup>

Lynch law, begun in the previous century by South Carolinian Charles Lynch as vigilante corporal punishment, came to mean mob killing of a person who allegedly violated community codes of race and justice: popular sovereignty writ large. In its most gruesome expression, lynching by the 1880s had transmogrified—under Ku Klux Klan influence during Reconstruction—into a predominantly southern, anti-black ritualized psychosexual murder of black males.<sup>24</sup>

Although mob types differed in motive and method, most of the 2,314 black victims between 1880 and 1930 died horrific, spectacle deaths at the hands of white mass mobs in ten former Confederate states.<sup>25</sup> They were targeted by men who shared the concept of southern honor, which centered on “white female virtue” and, when violated, demanded extralegal action. Yet the selection of victims also revealed white anxieties over socioeconomic and political changes occurring at the time.<sup>26</sup> Although 29.2 percent of these victims died for alleged sexual assaults, which their murderers considered an attack on all white women and white civilization itself, a much greater percentage met their death for alleged murder (37.3 percent) and non-capital crimes (28.5 percent).<sup>27</sup> The 1899 mutilation and lynching of Sam Hose in Palmetto, Georgia, for the murder of his employer and the rape of his employer’s wife represented the fate of all black men killed by archetypal mobs during the immediate post-Reconstruction period. In fact,

Hose acted in self-defense and never touched the woman, yet died for so-called heinous crimes that justified public retribution.

Ordinary African Americans responded to this terror and the Jim Crow system that it upheld in various ways, including retreat, accommodation, retaliation, and exodus. Although leaving the South represented resistance, more direct protest emerged from the national and international anti-lynching crusade of Ida B. Wells-Barnett in the 1890s and the Georgia civil rights efforts of W.E.B. Du Bois in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, as their efforts evolved into more organizational challenges and as the nation progressed toward more formal, sanitized criminal punishment, the South hung on to tradition and carried lynching—albeit less frequently and with altered attitudes on crimes demanding mob rule—into the new century as a response to past conditions and contemporary change.<sup>28</sup>

Rioting resurfaced at the turn of the century in both the South and the North. Pogroms in Wilmington, North Carolina (1898), and Atlanta, Georgia (1906), bore sexual and political dimensions, while New York City (1900) experienced its first race riot since the Civil War, a white free-for-all sparked by the black killing of a plainclothes policeman that was portentous for police-community strain and black self-defense in future upheavals.<sup>29</sup> The major northern racial outburst before the Great Migration occurred in Springfield, Illinois (1908), the result of a failed lynching attempt of two black men independently accused of murder and rape that led whites to attack stores and the homes of black achievers. When rioters became too violent, white elites, who initially had supported them, moved to protect black employees and customers, and requested the state militia, which quelled the riot. This action signified the class war within white ranks, wherein white leaders desired racial reform, not black annihilation, and acted to regain community control from working- and lower-class whites: a recurring theme in collective racial violence nationally whether or not elites supported rioters.<sup>30</sup> Significant, too, those rioting were predominantly single, unskilled, and semiskilled white males in their mid-twenties, Illinois born and bred, who knew one another. Participants contained few foreign-born ethnics or southern-born whites, yet followed leaders of shady reputations; but very few of them were found guilty by racially prejudiced jurors who feared reprisal. Nevertheless, their working-class profile challenged the impressionistic stereotypes of white rioters as riffraff, maladjusted, and criminal that was put forth by contemporaries and later scholars.<sup>31</sup>

The Springfield riot also revealed the variation among progressives, whose predominantly white middle-class reform movement endeavored to humanize the industrial revolution and expand democracy from 1900 to the U.S. entry into World War I in 1917. Despite moralistic intentions and pragmatic views of improving society through government intervention, they usually ignored race and racial violence, perhaps because their self-identity, indeed their historical context and civic education, exhorted Americanization: political and cultural loyalty to bourgeois values and white supremacy. Hence President Theodore Roosevelt summarily punished African American soldiers for racial violence involving whites and Mexicans in Brownsville, Texas (1906); southern progressives remained basically mute on lynching

and abided by Jim Crow, a “reform” that made other reforms possible; and most northern progressives ignored the plight of blacks in their midst, while ethnics in the process of acculturation and competition understood that their whiteness—rather than ethnicity, class, or religion—set them apart from blacks and pointed the way to the privilege, opportunity, and law of becoming American.<sup>32</sup>

And yet, aghast that the Springfield riot occurred in the North, indeed in Abraham Lincoln’s hometown, a tiny contingent of northern progressives created the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Inspired by a socialist, called by neo-abolitionists, and comprising white social workers and black activists such as Mary White Ovington and W.E.B. Du Bois, the NAACP was organized to obtain public safety and first-class citizenship for African Americans through agitation, court action, and federal legislation. Over the ensuing five decades, the NAACP led the fight against mob violence and Jim Crow policies, establishing chapters nationwide, changing public opinion, and awakening black militancy.

The latter gathered momentum particularly during World War I (1914–1918) and the Great Migration, themselves aspects of modernity, which ushered in a new era in racial violence that would run through the mid-1930s. Dismal economic conditions—depressed wages, boll weevil invasions, major floods—struck the South in 1914–1915 and, with debt peonage, racial proscriptions, and desires for freedom, drove 500,000 blacks into midwestern and mid-Atlantic industrial centers where labor opportunities opened as the war in Europe stemmed immigration.<sup>33</sup> This demographic shift overtaxed living conditions, challenged the color line in employment, and, in July 1917, sparked white violence in East St. Louis, Illinois, which claimed thirty-nine black and nine white lives within two months of American entry into the war. It was quickly followed by several incidents between black soldiers of the 24th Infantry, U.S. Army, and white residents and policemen of Houston, Texas, in late August, which culminated in twenty deaths (sixteen whites) and eighty courts martial verdicts (seventeen soldiers hanged and sixty-three imprisoned).<sup>34</sup>

These outbursts signaled the continuity and change of racial violence that became more bloody and varied in the post-war era. In East St. Louis, whites fought in great numbers to kick blacks back in their place and benefited from police and militia indifference. Yet blacks armed and defended themselves, and the NAACP protested the carnage in a silent parade of 10,000 in New York City. Similarly, the Houston riot recalled the Brownsville Affair as white townfolk, officials, and police united in their harassment of black soldiers from nearby Camp Logan, who afterwards were punished by military superiors. In Houston, however, over 100 men of the Third Battalion armed themselves and retaliated with deadly force; the paramount reason many whites died and federal officials reacted so harshly. If black migration heightened interracial competition nationally, the black experience of fighting for democracy and self-determination abroad heightened black expectation for postwar improvement at home. Forty-two thousand combatants, many honored and all treated equally by the French, returned changed men. W.E.B. Du Bois warned, “Make way for Democracy!”<sup>35</sup>

In response, whites unleashed an epidemic of mob violence throughout the nation in 1919: lynching seventy-eight victims, including ten black veterans, mostly in the South and rioting in twenty-five towns and cities. Untold numbers of African Americans were killed in largely northern and border states. James Weldon Johnson called it the “Red Summer,” as black blood ran profusely from April to October. The violence occurred within less than a year of the armistice ending World War I and paralleled the Red Scare of radicals at home. It reached unprecedented levels because the war atmosphere extended into peacetime as blacks competed on several fronts for greater opportunity, and whites feared the loss of socioeconomic status and enemies within. They focused their nationalism and aggression—unspent in the short twenty months of war—on each other, perennial enemies, whites generalizing their hatred of all black people who, in turn, fought back fiercely in an ongoing escalation of bloodshed. Most of the rioting was communal, interracial combat that began in Charleston, South Carolina, and reached its apex in Chicago (twenty-three blacks and fifteen whites dead), often involving veterans from both races, war terminology (such as invasion), and “gut-level animosities.”<sup>36</sup>

The serial bloodshed ended in a southern pogrom that slaughtered approximately 200 sharecroppers seeking to unionize in Philips County, Arkansas. The latter violence, like the lynching, indicated traditional efforts to check black society and preserve white supremacy in an increasingly modern—meaning urban, industrial, and international—world that stimulated greater black participation and threatened white status. Pogroms carried into the new decade at Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921), and Rosewood, Florida (1923), where allegations of rape against a black man, followed by failed attempts to lynch or locate the suspect because of black defense, provoked overwhelming white slaughter of black people and obliteration of their communities. Their actions furthermore assay riot theories and suggest parallels with ethnic violence globally.<sup>37</sup> Tulsa whites also chafed over black prosperity, and in both outbursts, white officials and residents united in the carnage of hundreds of black people (whose exact numbers may never be known).<sup>38</sup>

In the wake of these upheavals, racial relations and violence shifted anew. Black migration continued throughout the 1920s, adding perhaps one million residents to black urban communities that evolved into compact ghettos of collective racial awareness, whose numbers and militancy provided security from white rioting (particularly pogroms). Wartime events combined with cultural and institutional advances to create, in Alain Locke’s spirited term, “the New Negro,” a proud race seeking first-class citizenship and willing to defend itself. Still, living conditions worsened as blacks found themselves hemmed into increasingly limited space and sporadic, traditional violence flared. The 1925 Detroit shoot-out involving Dr. Ossian Sweet in the white neighborhood where he purchased a home, seemed a replay of events that preceded the Chicago riot.<sup>39</sup> Relatively fewer racial outbursts occurred during the Great Depression (1929–1940), perhaps due to reduced opportunities for employment and housing competition and federal relief programs in black and white communities. However, the Harlem riot

(1935) introduced a new disorder, in which abject living conditions, police action, and rumor ignited large-scale violence among blacks who believed themselves without effective means of redress. Believing a shoplifter had been killed by a policeman, black residents turned on symbols of white power in their community: police officers and white-owned stores. Although short in duration and small in size and damage, this *commodity* riot—characterized in part by looting—signaled the prototype for more deadly and destructive ghetto protests in the 1960s and beyond.<sup>40</sup>

Lynching in several states also pushed into the 1930s, but the killing of Claude Neal (1934) in Marianna, Florida, signaled the closing of mass lynching. Technological developments such as photography that initially empowered the racist act now ironically made a spectacle of it, and drew public and official backlash. Black leaders allied with white liberals, communists, and southerners to press for a federal anti-lynching bill, sponsor exhibits of anti-lynching art, and build a national biracial coalition.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's agricultural programs reduced socioeconomic causes for violence and sharecropper-tenant farmer protest, and unintentionally dispossessed agricultural workers; unforeseen long-term mechanization reduced their ranks permanently. In fact, lynching everywhere had declined steadily since the early twentieth century as urbanism spread, national media exposed local killings, and state governments responded to middle-class pressure for officially sanctioned, sanitized executions to replace economically disruptive and publicly embarrassing vigilantism. It became known as *legal lynching* because the disproportionate number of black and ethnic men executed evinces continual white dominance and social control. This trend emerged last in the South, where the pace of modern development varied from Louisiana (1900) to the black Belt (1930). Ultimately, the Scottsboro Case (1930-1937) exemplified an historic, failed attempt at legal lynching in Alabama.<sup>42</sup>

World War II (1939-1945) completed the transition to commodity rioting and legal lynching, albeit haltingly for the latter as southern mobs occasionally lynched blacks. The 1942 killing of Cleo Wright in Sikeston, Missouri, prompted U.S. Justice Department action to punish his murderers. That effort failed, but signaled federal opposition to vigilantism and created a legal theory for prosecuting lawmen who killed civil rights workers in the 1960s. More problematic for deterring enemy propaganda and internal violence, race rioting exploded near southern military installations and in defense industrial centers of every region, usually involving black and white participants but also including Mexican youths and white sailors in Los Angeles.<sup>43</sup>

However, Detroit recorded the most destructive and paramount of all major clashes, most of which occurred in 1943. In addition, deadly riots exploded in Mobile, Alabama; Beaumont, Texas; Los Angeles, California; and Harlem in New York City. Detroit's violence combined historic, perennial, and war circumstances, notably black participation in defense industries and expectations for democratic victories over racism at home and fascism abroad—"Double V"—in the face of white opposition to upgrading black workers, hiring black women, integrating neighborhoods, and sharing recreation parks such as Belle Isle. Ignited on the Isle, spread by rumors of racial

and sexual taboos and by combatants to the black eastside and surrounding white areas, the violence divided along demographic lines; it became a commodity riot within the ghetto and a communal riot around its borders with policemen separating black and white participants. Thirty-four persons died (25 black and 9 white), 765 received hospital treatment, and \$2 million in property was damaged.<sup>44</sup>

Although black and white newcomers reinforced stereotypes and tensions, most rioters were longstanding residents. Black males, a median age of twenty-seven, were married laborers, while black women, a median age of twenty-four and one-half, were single (albeit over half had been separated, divorced, or widowed), and employed as service workers or common laborers. Both genders lacked police records and rioted within one-half mile of their homes inside the ghetto. In contrast, white males, a median age of twenty, were single laborers without police records, three-quarters of whom left their home districts, many over two miles away, to secure the perimeter of the black community and mount unsuccessful invasions into it. White female rioters were ignored by prejudiced, outnumbered police, who feared males most, especially black men, and concentrated on them. Each protested the color line, blacks for its continued insistence and whites for its threatened disappearance.<sup>45</sup>

These side-by-side riots portended both the course of future commodity riots and the disappearance of communal riots. They also exposed police animus for blacks and official favoritism of whites, local-state rivalry with federal authorities over suppressing the outbursts, and even-handed, bloodless restoration of order by U.S. Army troops—features that would reappear in the riots of the 1960s. Important, too, the Detroit riot happened at the war's height, revealing the impact of its democratic war aims, martial atmosphere, and racist enemies on American society. Black and white leaders and citizens nationwide sensed racial stirrings for the post-war world, which they advanced locally through the creation of permanent municipal agencies for interracial peace in Detroit (1943–1945) and elsewhere, and which others later accomplished internationally through the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights (1947).

Yet violence in America also punctuated this change in race relations, as unreconstructed southern whites futilely endeavored to suppress it in a reign of terror. Within two weeks of Japan's surrender on August 25, 1945, a Mississippi mob lynched a black veteran for entering into business with his father-in-law rather than work for his former white employer. Early the following year, South Carolina policemen blinded a black army sergeant in uniform for appearing haughty to the bus driver carrying him home from war. Before 1946 ended, six blacks were lynched and several riots erupted, the worst in Columbia, Tennessee, where a failed lynching turned into open warfare as blacks, including veterans, defended themselves from white citizens, local and state police, and the National Guard. Over 100 blacks were arrested, two of whom died in jail. This outburst signified a post-war transition from white mob to police violence against blacks. In separate federal and state cases, jurors respectively acquitted white lawmen and black arrestees. The latter benefited from representation by the NAACP, which created the National Emergency Committee for Justice in Columbia, Tennessee.<sup>46</sup>

Ultimately this bloodshed and the response by southern blacks, NAACP officials, black celebrities, and white liberals reshaped the civil rights effort and drew President Harry S Truman into its vortex. The violence troubled many citizens, perhaps reminded of Hitler's ultimate objective and aware of social scientists finding white supremacy mythical. This biracial coalition provided the president with a liberal, gradual alternative to more leftist, radical positions as the Cold War with the Soviet Union emerged. National and international politics merged in executive action as Truman sought to address violence domestically and seek non-white allies worldwide. In 1946, he appointed the President's Committee on Civil Rights, which documented the persistence of lynching and police brutality in the South and recommended federal action to stem it and sponsor civil rights legislation.<sup>47</sup>

Meantime, less publicized violence raged northward in Chicago, where blacks and whites fought for contested neighborhoods. As public opinion, scientific evidence, and federal activity shifted from centuries of supporting white violence to challenging it, the changeover occurred incrementally, sacrificed leftists in the postwar Red Scare, and unleashed even more carnage when judicial decisions initiated by civil rights advocates overturned public school segregation in 1954 and 1955.<sup>48</sup>

The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* overturned the separate-but-equal doctrine and threatened the entire race-caste system, resulting in the formation of white citizens' councils and the third Ku Klux Klan. In 1955, the lynching of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi, and his mother's national crusade, stimulated the civil rights movement. From 1955 until 1968, bombings, burnings, beatings, and killings covered the region, numbering 530 incidents in the four years following *Brown*. Each advance toward racial equality seemingly drew white violence in an unending cycle of protest and backlash, including the 1961 Anniston–Montgomery, Alabama, assaults on Freedom Riders that finally compelled the mobilization of federal marshals; the 1963 Birmingham, Alabama, bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church that killed four girls and signaled the extremist response to the March on Washington; the 1964 Philadelphia, Mississippi, abduction and murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner that manifested Klan-lawmen collusion and the vulnerability of civil rights workers; and the 1968 Memphis shooting of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that ended the movement and evinced Reconstruction Era assassination as a strategy to destroy reform efforts—including those of regional and local leaders in Mississippi throughout the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>49</sup>

King's murder also sparked black rioting nationwide, singular in motive yet familiar in form. In 125 cities, these protests resulted in 46 deaths and 35,000 injuries, and culminated five years of continuous outbursts in northeastern, midwestern, and western ghettos whose residents found civil rights objectives wanting.<sup>50</sup> Crowded in sizeable communities by waves of migrants and sharing a collective racial identity that had evolved over the previous fifty years, they experienced isolation, abject socioeconomic conditions, and strain between police and community. Thus, they related more to the

human rights, separatism, and self-defense of Malcolm X than the civil rights, integration, and nonviolence of King. Still, they understood the inequity and violence endured by southern protesters, who rarely received federal protection, and they experienced increased alienation toward the Vietnam War. King's crusade and gains accentuated their own position without relieving it, while Malcolm X's rhetoric urged action, including retaliatory violence if necessary, and challenged fighting abroad for democracy that was unattainable at home. In this edgy atmosphere, riots erupted.

Distinct from civil rights clashes in southern municipalities, these riots begin in New York City and recurred throughout the summers of 1964–1966 before exploding in 1967. That year recorded 164 disorders in 128 cities nationally: 8 major (including Tampa), 33 serious, and 112 minor. The worst of these followed the pattern of Los Angeles (1965), itself presaged by Harlem (1935 and 1943); they occurred in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan—cities of over 250,000 and centers of riot clustering, yet cities of 50,000 persons or less accounted for 23 percent of all upheavals. As in 1943, Detroit recorded the greatest death and destruction to become the worst urban riot of its era: forty-three dead (thirty-three black, ten white) and \$40 million in property damage. However, in 1967, black rioters looted the stores of Chaldeans (Iraqi-Catholic immigrants who had replaced Jewish proprietors in predominantly black neighborhoods), and whites—albeit only 12 percent of arrestees—joined the rioting against police. The sheer scope of violence in a modern liberal society fighting an unpopular war impelled presidential creation of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, chaired by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, which in 1968 produced the most extensive study of race riots ever undertaken.<sup>51</sup>

Condemning the disorders, the commission nevertheless dispelled stereotypes of black male rioters and their motives, and stressed the significance of their outbursts for society. Rioters tended to be young (fifteen to twenty-four years old), unattached, lifelong residents; high school dropouts somewhat better educated and much more politically aware than non-rioting neighbors, yet under- or menially employed like them; racially proud, believing blacks “superior to whites in some respects,” more likely to be active in civil rights, and “extremely hostile” to whites and “almost equally” to middle-class blacks. Neither riffraff nor criminals, rioters distrusted the “political system” and lashed out at mounting racism, unchecked violence toward black people, and poverty in a period of prosperity, but appearing most provoked by police activity.<sup>52</sup> Given this comprehensive rioter profile, made possible by modern social science methods, the commission concluded that the nation was moving toward “separate and unequal” societies of black and white that “threatened the future of every American.” Perhaps unknowingly echoing both Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and King's “I Have a Dream” speech, it contended that this could be averted by creating expensive programs and initiatives to complete the “unfinished business of the nation” and “make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens” regardless of race or ethnicity.<sup>53</sup>

Despite this clarion, short-term action by federal agencies, and promising local efforts by the New Detroit Committee (1967) and black organizations,



ghetto conditions in riot cities remained largely unchanged. This resulted from inherent problems of commissions, bureaucracies, and intergroup rivalries; and especially from the impact of persistent discrimination, white flight, shrinking tax bases, and deindustrialization, paralleled by political rightward shifts, extrication from Vietnam, and national economic and energy problems.<sup>54</sup> Juxtaposed to these setbacks, the civil rights movement desegregated the South, reduced discrimination in employment, widened educational opportunities, and enhanced black political power, which assisted the black middle class but inadvertently isolated lower working-class blacks further. They became increasingly insecure with the introduction of drugs, gangs, and violence in their neighborhoods, and continued white hostility beyond them. For example, the killing of Yusef Hawkins in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn (1989), by Italian-American youths who wrongly believed he was dating a local girl represented a ghostly remnant of white racism, interethnic rivalry, and sexual taboo.<sup>55</sup>

Ghetto residents soon experienced more intractable conditions and, in some cities, interethnic competition indicating demographic shifts first apparent in the 1967 Detroit outburst. Four riots disrupted Miami during the 1980s, when most blacks believed that their socioeconomic and political opportunities were being trumped by Cuban newcomers aligned with white society. Police incidents precipitated the violence.<sup>56</sup> The latter also combined with ongoing white hostility, socioeconomic transformations, and deteriorating living circumstances to cause extensive rioting in Los Angeles from April 29 to May 4, 1992. Against the backdrop of very high unemployment and female-headed households, reduced government assistance programs, and numerous police brutality complaints, the acquittal of four policemen, who had been videotaped beating an African American named Rodney King months earlier, led to 52 deaths, 2,383 injured persons, and over \$750 million in property damage. Blacks ignited the violence, but Latinos and whites joined them to demolish Korean, Latino, and Chinese businesses, evincing multiethnic aggression, interethnic competition, and status changes heavily impacted by white flight and the 1965 Immigration Act. More Latinos (51 percent) than blacks (36 percent) rioted, while Koreans and Latinos comprised most of the storeowners, signifying the second major demographic shift of the century, as well as the future of rioting in cities of sizeable ethnic and immigrant communities.<sup>57</sup>

Nearly a decade later in April 2001, a police shooting following several controversial deaths and ineffective outlets for community redress triggered disorder in Cincinnati. Smaller in scale and unique for claiming no lives, it seemed a replay of the Los Angeles upheaval, less its pronounced multiethnic and interclass dimensions. Both riots occurred primarily over unjust treatment by police departments, municipal courts, and city governments, and both induced post-riot federal activity resulting in prison for two of King's four assailants and stricter guidelines for Cincinnati policemen. Perhaps most reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s, black Cincinnatians staged a yearlong economic boycott that cost local businesses over \$10 million. Bridging this intercentury rioting, lynching-like murder reappeared as hate crime (committed by prejudiced individuals without community support),

and police shootings recurred periodically: respectively, the dragging and dismemberment of James Byrd, Jr., in Jasper, Texas (1998), and the killing of Amadou Diallo in New York City (1999).<sup>58</sup>

Since the Civil War, white violence has erupted whenever African Americans sought to advance beyond freedom to first-class citizenship. Initially, it endeavored to terrorize blacks into giving up hope for equality. It served—opines an encyclopedic author of racial violence—as the “ultimate weapon” to protect white economic advantage, political privilege, and social status by denying blacks true democracy and equal opportunity. Pogroms, communal riots, and lynchings paradoxically revealed both white power and its “failure of hegemony,” as well as black resistance, resilience, and revival.<sup>59</sup> The latter accelerated during the two global wars of the twentieth century, which altered race relations. World War I and, especially, World War II, emphasized democratic aims and complete participation, providing African Americans with greater self-awareness, collective experience, and ideological leverage. Thus, blacks renewed their commitment to the American Dream and fostered the civil rights movement. Ultimately, the rational white self-interest undergirding both dream and movement collapsed, limiting the struggle for racial equality, spawning the Black Revolution, and inciting white violence that begat black violence.

Ghetto blacks protested racism and brutality through commodity riots that became *uprisings* in the 1960s and 1980s, and arguably *rebellion* in Los Angeles in 1992. For the most part, rioters from the 1960s onward struck police and property without taking life or destroying public service buildings.<sup>60</sup> They revealed a commonality of purpose: rejecting the system’s legitimacy without endeavoring to overthrow its government. Spontaneous and largely unorganized, black rioters considered their actions justifiable challenge to white racial views and official policies. They spoke for themselves and stimulated federal programs, serving as momentary change agents and extensions of the civil rights struggle.<sup>61</sup> Although participants in the Los Angeles riots never sought out police per se, their burning and looting “was targeted, systematic, and widespread, encompassing much of the legal city” and their numbers were astronomic, including over 16,000 arrestees. Indeed, it required 27,720 lawmen, soldiers, and firemen to suppress the rioters. The extent of violence, the magnitude of the riot area, inter-ethnic grievances, and absence of redress (between ethnic groups or with government) combined to turn the black-initiated uprising into a multiethnic, multidimensional rebellion for protest, payback, and profit.<sup>62</sup>

Since 2001, a tenuous peace has existed, but justice for African Americans remains incomplete—especially for poor people. If racial violence, to quote H. Rap Brown, is “as american [*sic*] as cherry pie,” where does it go from here?<sup>63</sup> Doubtless rioters require more attention than given thus far, for they provide a view from the bottom, “an index” of race relations locally, and specific breakdown points of nonviolent negotiation. More than ever, the inarticulate need to be heard and their words and deeds compared across generations of rioters and victims; so do those of police officials and patrolmen because community-police strain has been the perennial grievance of black urbanites and the flashpoint of most uprisings. Significant,

too, is that the studies of rioters reveal them to be longtime residents, not newcomers or outsiders, verifying that ghetto conditions promote “long-term factors which build toward violence” (including political awareness).<sup>64</sup> Poverty and isolation have refashioned community values so that economic opportunity and community status includes shady, even criminal behavior, which reinforces a “subculture of violence.” Though many black residents oppose these activities, which victimize them, they also resent one-sided policing of their neighborhoods and view repressive policemen regardless of race as latter-day rioters in blue coats.<sup>65</sup> Until violence within the black community can be channeled into constructive energy akin to earlier civil rights and Black Revolution efforts and until policing of the black community can be even-handed and open to effective redress, the potential for rioting will continue to exist. Thus, peace requires addressing the interrelationship of race, poverty, and policing, aware that rioting since the 1960s has included numbers of white and Latino participants whose targets have included ethnic storeowners.<sup>66</sup>

Rioting is a legacy of slavery and racism, and it and racism have evolved over time from Civil War mobs wreaking “vengeance on every nigger” to black rioters attacking “motherfuckin’ cops.”<sup>67</sup> Whites sought to obliterate and oppress black people; blacks rioted in response to an unjust system of sometimes rising expectations and always blocked opportunities. Modern events, including war, escalated riot destruction and death: blacks incurred the most injuries and deaths in all types of riots (over 300 dead in Tulsa’s pogrom in 1921).<sup>68</sup> Migrations and ghettos, among other factors, expanded the numbers and altered the composition of rioters. Latinos in Los Angeles (1992) turned an uprising into a multiracial, multiethnic rebellious surge for several purposes. Females played roles in all riots, as documented in Atlanta (1906), where one black woman organized others to “fight until the last pea is out of the dish” and in Springfield (1908), where Kate Howard led white male rioters. As gender roles and police attitudes changed in the mid-twentieth century, black female rioters in Detroit rose from 4.5 percent (1943) to 12 percent (1967). That dropped in Los Angeles from 13 percent (1965) to 4.3 percent (1992), where all female participants comprised 11.7 percent. Whites rioting alongside blacks in Detroit (1967) and multiethnics in Los Angeles (1992) diminished from 12 to 10.7 percent, indicating ongoing poverty for some whites and increased isolation of impoverished urbanites.<sup>69</sup> Nor can reparations due for the role played by officials in the 1920s pogroms of Tulsa and Rosewood alleviate government from its responsibility for rioting, or for leadership and programs to render violence unnecessary.<sup>70</sup> Hopefully, knowing all this will promote what is required to end racial, ethnic, and class bloodshed in a society where rioting no longer represents a simple black-white dichotomy. And yet, it is imperative to resolve that racial divide as prerequisite for becoming a Nation of Nations. Such is one purpose of this encyclopedia.

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*Dominic J. Capeci, Jr.*

## Notes

1. Philip D. Curtin, *Precolonial Africa History* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 2000), 3–9; Robert I. Rotberg, *A Political History of Tropical Africa* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), 42–43. This occurred against the periods of the Renaissance, Reformation, and New Monarchy that respectively: stressed human potential, religious divergence, and political stability; sharpened competition at a time of mounting population pressure; and fostered seafaring advances beyond existing levels of technology.

2. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), 44–98; Philip D. Curtin, *The Tropical Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1991), 10–11. See also Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975), for white indentured servants pressing for greater economic opportunities.

3. Jordan, *White over Black*, 136–144.

4. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), xx, quoting Olaudah Equiano; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Random House, 1956), chapters III and IV; John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), chapter IV.

5. Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Indian in America* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), chapters 6–7 and Richard White, “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*”: *A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), chapter 4, for the history; Richard M. Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 26, for the quotation.

6. Gary T. Marx, ed., *Racial Conflict: Tension and Change in American Society* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 2.

7. Donald L. Noel, “A Theory of the Origin of Ethnic Stratification,” in *The Origins of American Slavery and Racism* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972), 106, 114; Marx, *Racial Conflict*, 7. Europeans also considered primitive the African and Indian ways of life for extolling community, cooperation, and harmony over individualism, competition, and mastery.

8. Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 20–25. The Ku Klux Klan (1866–1871) terrorized African Americans in the Reconstruction era and, in turn, influenced the White Cap movement, which originated in the Midwest (1887) to uphold moral standards and spread to check blacks in the South and Mexicans in the Southwest; poor Mexicans also adopted white capping to challenge their wealthy landowning counterparts. Unlike the Ku Klux Klan, however, white cappers flogged rather than lynched transgressors.

9. Christopher Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch: Extralegal Violence and Punishment in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), deems “lynching” indefinable due to its use as political rhetoric by various interest groups and contends—correctly—that little attention has been given to an agreed upon definition of lynching by scholars or to its study outside the South before 1882 or after 1930; Michael J. Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 6-7, combines the 1940 Tuskegee Institute definition with that of southern historians to compare the evolution of extra-legal lynching to state-sanctioned execution—legal lynching—in seven states representing each region of the nation; Stephen J. Leonard, *Lynching in Colorado, 1859-1919* (Boulder: University of Colorado, 2002), *passim*, for the example of torture (though less sadistic than in southern black lynching).

10. Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 10, for the quotation, 36, 58-59, and 86; Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 56-63, for development of popular sovereignty during the American Revolution.

11. Jordan, *White over Black*, chapter IX; Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), 1-6; Reed Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1994), 18.

12. Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1967), 16-18, for the theory of *Herrenvolk* democracy; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1971), 61 and *passim*, for its application; Mary Frances Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 129, for miscegenation law statistics, which indicated anew that whites considered race-mixing threatening to their racial existence, black females as immoral, and black males as potential rapists; V. Jacques Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 1-2, for various discrimination laws in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

13. C. Vann Woodward, “The Strange Career of a Historical Controversy,” in *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 245, for the quotation, and 234-60, for his insightful comments on the origins of segregation from which I wove the theories of Pierre L. van den Berghe and Philip Mason.

14. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2000), chapter 6, for the quasi-freedom concept; Allen D. Grimshaw, “A Study in Social Violence: Urban Race Riots in the United States” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959), 160-163 and *passim*; Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, “The Formation of Contrast Concepts,” in *Racial Conflict*, ed. Gary Marx, 268-273.

15. Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 61 and 87-91; Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 206-207.

16. Berry and Blassingame, *Long Memory*, 127-132 and 137-141, for black views of mixed-marriages; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “‘The Mind That Burns in Each Body’: Women, Rape, and Racial Violence,” in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 330-346.

17. Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 91-94; Leslie M. Alexander, “New York City Draft Riot of 1863” entry, for eleven lynchings. Rioters comprised most of the dead.

18. Gilje, *Ibid.*; Grimshaw, “Urban Race Riots in the United States,” 32 and 160, refers to these outbursts as “southern style” race riots that resemble pogroms because of their

one-sided dimension. Contemporary scholars prefer the term *pogrom* to distinguish it from a communal riot in which both races engage in combat.

19. Collective racial violence, the racism that generates it, and the contexts that shape it changed as society evolved from an agrarian-rural-isolationist society to an industrial-urban-international society; that is, from the traditional to the modern. See Melvin L. Adelman, "Modernization Theory and Its Critics," in *Encyclopedia of American Social History*, eds. Mary Kupiec Clayton, Elliot J. Gorn, and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), vol. I: 347-358, for the controversy over modernization theory, its redefinition, and "new orientation" to specific subjects, which should include collective racial violence.

20. Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson*, New Enlarged Ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1965); Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, chapters 8-10; Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), chapter 3; Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, chapter 15.

21. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 119-123 and 604; Marx, *Racial Conflict*, 48, for Max Weber's insight that a major source of intergroup conflict stems from inequality and the distribution of "three scarce social resources . . . class, status, and power"; and Gary Marx's conclusion that much of race conflict in the United States stems from competition over these resources, which obviously increased with the end of slavery.

22. David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams, eds., *The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. Du Bois* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 60, for the first quotation of Du Bois; Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 94, for the second quotation, and 95-100.

23. Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response*, 11, for the quotation; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); William J. Harris, "Etiquette, Lynching, and Racial Boundaries in Southern History: A Mississippi Example," *American Historical Review* 100 (April 1995): 387-410.

24. Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 21 and 214-215; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), chapter 1, for the variety and complexity of southern lynching by terrorist, private, posse, and mass mobs. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) and Richard Gambino, *Vendetta* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), respectively, for the celebrated cases of Jewish and Sicilian victims in the South; Leonard, *Lynching in Colorado* and Pfeifer, *Rough Justice*, for lynching in various regions.

25. Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 92, Table 4-1, and 271, Table C-3, for 2,314 blacks lynched by white mobs; the states included the Confederacy, less Texas. An additional 148 blacks were lynched by black mobs. For these acts of intraracial popular justice, which sometimes were brutal, see chapter 4; and Tolnay and Beck, "When Race Didn't Matter: Black and White Mob Violence against Their Own Color," in *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 132-154.

26. Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 5, for the quotation, and 13, for the socioeconomic and political changes.

27. Tolnay and Beck, *A Festival of Violence*, 92, Table 4-1. Unknown offenses accounted for 3.2 percent. If rape and murder were added to sexual assault, the figure

increases to 31.1 percent. In comparison, albeit with a more detailed set of categories, black victims of black mobs allegedly committed fewer sexual assaults (25.7 percent), more murders (46 percent), and fewer noncapital offenses (22.3 percent); if the categories of (1) "Murder and rape" and (2) "Miscegenation or other sex offense" were added to sexual assault of black victims, that category increases to 31.8 percent for black mobs and 35.4 percent for white mobs. See Tolnay and Beck, "When Race Didn't Matter," 141, Table 1.

28. Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997); David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), chapter 12; Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 14-15.

29. Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 46-50.

30. Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Jack C. Knight, "Reckoning with Violence: W.E.B. Du Bois and the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot," *Journal of Southern History* LXII (November 1996): 741-746, for an example.

31. Roberta Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), chapters 1, 3, 5, and Appendix, 205-210; Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 174-180, for rioter historiography.

32. Roger Daniels, *Not Like Us: Immigrants and Minorities in America, 1890-1924* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 89-93; Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawn: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972); William L. O'Neill, *The Progressive Years: America Comes of Age* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975), 77-79; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 144-150 and 180, for Irish in the nineteenth century; Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 78-79 and 146-149, for Poles in the twentieth century.

33. John R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), chapter 1.

34. Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 50; Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1976), 167-170 and 322-323, for information in this and the following paragraph unless cited otherwise. In all, 181 soldiers were accused of mutiny-riot.

35. Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: Free Press, 1986), chapter 8; Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 579.

36. William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), viii, for the quotation, 1-31, and 246-248.

37. William M. Tuttle, Jr., "Black Uplift, White Fury: The Shame of America's Red Summers, 1917-1923," 7-8 and 15-16, Mid-America Conference on History, Springfield, Missouri, October 1, 2004. See also Grif Stockley, *Blood in their Eyes: The Elaine Massacres of 1919* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001). See also Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), *passim* and 500-501, for this type of violence worldwide, including the United States,

which receives insightful yet scant coverage and distinguishes little between ethnic and race rioting.

38. Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921, Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 60; Michael D'Orso, *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996), 84 and 324–326.

39. Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004), chapter 5.

40. Cheryl Greenberg, "The Politics of Disorder: Reexamining Harlem's Riots of 1935 and 1943," *Journal of Urban History* 18 (August 1992), 408, for the statistics: 0 dead, 64 injured (including 7 policemen), and 626 windows broken; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Black Violence in the 20th Century," in *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Leon Friedman, reprint ed. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1983), III, 9, for the prototype interpretation.

41. Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 222–227; Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909–1950*, chapters 6 and 7; Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response*, chapter 11; Dora Apel, *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), chapters 1–4. The coalition included the NAACP, the Communist Party of the United States, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, and the Association of Southern Women for Prevention of Lynching.

42. Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 247–259; Pfeifer, *Rough Justice*, chapter 5; Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*, chapter 8; Dan Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

43. Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., *The Lynching of Cleo Wright* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 187–193; James A. Burrin, III, "Racial Violence in the South during World War II" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1977); Mauricio Mazon, *The Zoot-Suit Riots: The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984).

44. Capeci and Wilkerson, *Layered Violence*, 31 and 144–159; Janet L. Langlois, "The Belle Isle Bridge Incident: Legend Dialectic and Semiotic System in the 1943 Detroit Race Riots," *Journal of American Folklore* 96 (1983): 183–198; Marilyn S. Johnson, "Gender, Race, and Rumours: Re-examining the 1943 Race Riots," *Gender & History* 10 (August 1998): 252–277.

45. Capeci and Wilkerson, *Layered Violence*, 56, 61, 69, and 218–219, Table 3.

46. Philip A. Klinkner (with Rogers M. Smith), *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 202–205; Zangando, *The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909–1950*, 7, Table 2, for the lynching statistic; Gail Williams O'Brien, *The Color of the Law: Race, Violence, and Justice in the Post-World War II South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). That ad hoc committee led to the creation of the National Emergency Committee against Mob Violence by the NAACP and the American Council on Race Relations in August of 1946.

47. George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 129–132; Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1990*, 2nd ed. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 18–27; Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1973), chapter 3.

48. Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*, chapter 2.



49. Klinkner (with Smith), *The Unsteady March*, 246, for the statistic of James Sundquist; Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 11–15, for political assassination on the national level; Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey, Volume II: Since 1865*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2006), 570–571, Table: Violence and Civil Rights Movement, for evidence of political assassination on local-regional levels.

50. Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 597, for the statistics.

51. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1968), 35–41 and 112–116. Of seventy-five disturbances in sixty-seven cities, Detroit and Newark accounted for more than 80 percent of the dead and over 50 percent of the injured (p. 115); Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanagh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 11, 293–294, for the Chaldeans. Jewish-owned stores were looted in the Twelfth Street, Dexter, and Linwood area.

52. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, 128 and 129, for the quotations. The commission profiled only black males, the overwhelming majority of the rioters; it omitted white male and all female participants.

53. *Ibid.*, 1–2, for the quotations; Michael P. Johnson, ed., *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War: Selected Writings and Speeches* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), 263, for the Gettysburg Address, and August Meier, Elliott Rudwick, and Francis L. Broderick, eds., *Black Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1975), 346–351, for the “I Have a Dream” speech.

54. Anthony Platt, “Introduction,” and Andrew Kopkind, “White on Black: The Riot Commission and the Rhetoric of Reform,” in *The Politics of Riot Commissions: A Collection of Official Reports and Critical Essays*, ed. Anthony Platt (New York: Collier Books, 1971), 1–54 and 378–391, for an overview of riot commissions and an evaluation of the Kerner Commission; Richard W. Thomas, “The Black Community Building Process in Post-Urban Disorder Detroit, 1967–1997,” in *The African American Urban Experience: Perspectives from the Colonial Period to the Present*, ed. Joe W. Trotter, Earl Lewis, and Tera W. Hunter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 209–240, for black community efforts; Thomas J. Sugrue, “The Structures of Urban Poverty: The Reorganization of Space and Work in Three Periods of American History,” in *The “Underclass” Debate: Views from History*, ed. Michael B. Katz (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 85–117, for a history of socioeconomic conditions, racial discrimination, and impoverishment in Detroit as representative of northern industrial cities.

55. Capeci and Wilkerson, *Layered Violence*, 202–203.

56. Marvin Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 265–314. Major riots occurred in 1980, 1982, and 1989. The acquittal of the police officer, whose shooting death of Nevel Johnson had ignited the 1982 riot, sparked violence anew in 1984; but it was suppressed quickly.

57. Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson, Jr., and Walter C. Farrell, Jr., “Anatomy of a Rebellion: A Political-Economic Analysis” and Sumi K. Cho, “Korean Americans vs. African Americans: Conflict and Construction,” in *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Violence*, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Routledge, Inc., 1993), 118, for the injured-damaged statistics and 205, for the business statistics; Joan Petersilia and Allan Abrahamse, “A Profile of Those Arrested,” in *The Los Angeles Riots: Lessons for the Urban Future*, ed. Mark Baldessare (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), 140–142, Table 6.1, for the rioter statistics (based on court data for April 30–May 5).

58. See John A. Wagner, “Cincinnati (Ohio) Riot of 2001” entry in this book; a federal jury acquitted the other two policemen of violating the civil rights of Rodney King; Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*, for the definition and history of hate crime.

59. Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response*, xii and 9, the latter quoting Jonathan Wiener.

60. See Louis H. Masotti and Jerome R. Corsi, *Shoot-Out in Cleveland: Black Militants and the Police, July 23, 1968* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969) and Capeci and Wilkerson, *Layered Violence*, 201, for exceptions: snipers who killed officers in Cleveland (1968) and rioters in Miami (1980) who, according to historian Marvin Dunn, “set out to kill white people.” These bloodlettings did not become a pattern in other uprisings, though remnants of the Miami riot reappeared in the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, including the acquittal of policemen for beating a black resident that sparked the riot and the attack of a white truck driver by a mob of black rioters.

61. Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., *The Harlem Riot of 1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), 179, for a summary of the riot-revolt theses for the riots of World War II and the 1960s; Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 1–3, for riots as “mechanisms for change,” including those of the 1960s.

62. Oliver, Johnson, and Farrell, “Anatomy of a Rebellion,” 118, for the quotation, 120, for the enforcement personnel statistic, and 120–132, for the rebellion interpretation; David O. Sears, “Urban Rioting in Los Angeles: A Comparison of 1965 with 1992,” in Baldassare, *The Los Angeles Riots*, 238, for the arrestee statistic and 247–253, for the view of several riots occurring simultaneously that defy a single theory. See Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 1–17, for interchangeable references to the 1965 Los Angeles riot as an uprising, rebellion, and revolt. Most scholars consider it an uprising, and question his contention that it resulted from the repression of the left since the 1950s.

63. H. Rap Brown, *Die, Nigger, Die!* (New York: Dial Press, Inc., 1969), 144.

64. Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 186, for the first quotation; Elliot D. Luby, “A Comparison between Detroit Negro Riot Arrestees and a Riot Area Control Sample,” American Political Science Association Meeting, 1968, 2, for the second quotation; Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn, *Ghetto Revolts: The Politics of Violence in American Cities* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1973), 48–49.

65. Marvin E. Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, *The Subculture of Violence: Towards an Integrated Theory in Criminology* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1967) and Feagin and Hahn, *Ghetto Riots*, 151–159, for the issue of cultural violence and community-police strain in the 1960s which, given the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion and the 2001 Cincinnati uprising, remain applicable.

66. Oliver, Johnson, and Farrell, “Anatomy of a Rebellion,” 135–138, for emphasis on the need to reevaluate existing poverty programs and include community representatives in the process.

67. Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 28; Fine, *Violence in the Model City*, 162, quoting Michael Lewis, nee, “Green-sleeves.”

68. Tuttle, “Black Uplift, White Fury,” 10.

69. Charles Crowe, “Racial Massacre in Atlanta September 22, 1906,” *Journal of Negro History* 53 (July 1968): 165, for the quotation; Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot*, 30 and 38; Capeci and Wilkerson, *Layered Violence*, 169, for the Detroit (1943/1967) statistics; Petersilia and Abrahamse, “A Profile of Those Arrested,” 141–142, Table 6.1, for the Los Angeles (1992) statistics and 144, for the Los Angeles (1965) statistic of 13 percent for all females. Though blacks, who comprised 94 percent in that riot, made up the overwhelming number, black females represented the largest number of women rioters (43 percent) in 1992. Arrest data indicated that female rioters were fewer in

number than males; but post-riot surveys revealed that their participation was much greater (though never the majority), perhaps because of police bias and perception that male rioters acted more provocatively: *Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders*, 130.

70. See Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland*, 103–109, and D’Orso, *Like Judgment Day*, 205–213 and 278–292, for the issue of reparations.

# PREFACE

The *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots* introduces readers to the history of race riots in the United States with a particular emphasis on the twentieth century. In this regard, the selection of entries was far from a random exercise. While race riots are the clear focus of this project; other closely related phenomena (e.g., lynching, urban riots, white capping, and assassinations) are included. The many forms of racially motivated violence, whether involving mobs or not, are intrinsically linked together. For example, the act of lynching is interpreted as a micro-scale race riot in this work. Lynchings were often racially motivated, involved mobs of attackers, and were frequently linked to full-fledged race riots. A representative instance of this would be the 1919 Omaha lynching of Willie Brown, which accompanied an anti-black race riot. In a similar vein, discussing the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riot while excluding analyses of the controversial film *Birth of a Nation*, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or the initial ruling to exonerate the police officers who beat Rodney King would not seem logical—especially since each of these instances generated waves of race riots.

The principal emphasis in these volumes is on the white–black racial binary, and this is due to the explicit focus on race riots. Clearly, there have been a large number of Native American massacres and acts of racially motivated violence. Likewise, Latin Americans and Latinos/as faced severe repression and suffered numerous racist atrocities. Other groups—Jews, Asian immigrants, Asian-Americans, Arab-Americans, the Irish, Italians, Eastern Europeans, and others—have dealt with an inhospitable set of circumstances in the United States. As will become evident in the present work, the overwhelming number of race riots in North American history has involved whites and African Americans as either instigators or victims. Other groups are not completely ignored, they just are not the emphasis of this encyclopedia and would fit better in a work that deals more broadly with racial violence in North America. This work does attempt a broader analysis in its chronological and geographic scope. Beginning with the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, this study covers race riots and other disturbances from the Civil War to the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Geographically, the entries cover disorders in the South, the North, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the West.

Offering more than 260 entries, the *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots* will prove a handy and highly usable information resource for both specialist and nonspecialist users. Scholars and graduate students in the social sciences and humanities, especially history and African American studies, will find these volumes to be excellent sources of quick and current information. Students, both undergraduate and high school, will find the entries to be engaging and informative introductions to the subject of American racial violence, while the interested general reader accessing these volumes through public libraries will quickly and easily find much important and eye-opening information.

Averaging 500 to 1,000 words in length, with many of the discussions of specific riots running much longer, the entries contain many bold-faced (e.g., **Accommodationism**) cross-references to other entries mentioned in the text and “*See also*” lines at the end of entries that refer readers to other related entries. Each entry concludes with a Further Reading section offering one or more additional information resources, including books, journal articles, and Web sites. Biographical entries provide life dates in the heading, and entries on books, reports, and films provide author names and publication dates in the heading.

Among the encyclopedia’s other useful features are a compilation of primary document excerpts, including eyewitness descriptions of particular riots, newspaper accounts, statistics on incidents of lynching and other racial violence, court testimony, and passages from major government reports on race riots, such as the report of the Kerner Commission and the Tulsa Race Riot Commission. A “Guide to Related Topics” breaks down the entries into useful categories, allowing readers to quickly make connections among broad themes and topics. A chronology allows quick look-up of the dates of important events related to the history of American race riots and racial violence, and a clear and detailed foreword and introduction put that history into context for nonspecialist readers. A detailed subject index allows even greater access to the information contained in the entries.

# INTRODUCTION

Racial violence has a long, tragic, and ironic history in North America. The frequency of race riots defies any attempt to describe them as anomalies; their ferocity illuminates the savage inequalities present in the United States. Indeed, the very presence of race riots becomes one of the most vexing components of the American paradox. In some important ways, race riots reveal certain truths about American society. Sociologists, political scientists, and historians have been at the forefront in the study of race riots in the United States and have greatly broadened understanding of these phenomena. This topic has spawned an enormous amount of scholarly attention and has even been the focus of fictional treatments, both in print and on film. Federal, state, and local governments have formed commissions to analyze the origins of race riots. Churches, religious associations, and civil rights organizations have also voiced concerns about violent racial disturbances; few sectors of American society have been unaffected by racial violence. This pervasive influence may be due to the fact that many of the defining moments in North American history were shaped, in profound ways, by racial conflict. Thus, a closer study of these phenomena, with a particular focus on race riots, may deepen our collective understanding of the American past and present.

In the twentieth century, race riots became the most frequently encountered form of race conflict in the United States. Highlighted by the Red Summer of 1919, the 1943 race riots, and the urban rebellions of the mid-to late 1960s, these examples of racial conflict demonstrate how race, white supremacy, urbanization, and various socioeconomic factors can contribute to violent race relations in the midst of a pluralistic society. The presence of frequent race riots has become one of many paradoxes in U.S. history. While heralded worldwide as the paragon of freedom, justice, tolerance, and opportunity, the United States has seen its history warped by such forces as racial slavery, racial injustice, violent intolerance, and prejudice.

## **Colonial Era Encounters: Racial Conflict in the Birth of a Nation**

Although the modern idea of race clearly was a creation of eighteenth-century Enlightenment, North American history was at its start (during the

founding of Jamestown in 1607) defined by racial conflict and the elevation of whiteness as a status. The uniquely English notions of civilization prefigured the disastrous relations the early colonists established with the local Algonkians and other Native American groups. In addition to constrictive and ethnocentric definitions of civilization, the early English settlers in the Chesapeake brought a sense of religious superiority and an enormous thirst for acquiring more land. All these factors converged in 1676 with the first race war in North American history—Bacon’s Rebellion.

Although he came to Virginia with a fair amount of wealth, Nathaniel Bacon created a doctrine that would inspire the thousands of poor and landless Englishmen, who had rapidly multiplied in the colony. In the decades before the rebellion, impoverished Englishmen were lured to the colony with the hope of gaining land and becoming yeomen farmers. In exchange for their passage across the Atlantic, however, they had to give their allotment of land and between four and seven years of labor as indentured servants to tobacco planters who financed their voyage. Once their term of indenture was finished, these former servants would receive freedom dues—a small allotment of land, tobacco seed, guns, livestock, and some currency. Because this system created a steady stream of competitors for the tobacco-planter elite, they conspired to eliminate the land allotment portion of the freedom dues, which allowed them to monopolize all arable land in the colony. As a direct result, Virginia had a growing population of landless, hopeless, but armed, young Englishmen in the decade leading up to 1676.

Although this growing group of landless poor could have vented their collective anger and frustration at the white landed elite, Nathaniel Bacon found a different solution—one that would doom American race relations from that time forward. Bacon’s doctrine elevated the status of the landless poor by reinforcing the notion of white supremacy. His plan was to attack all Native Americans—friend and foe alike—and take their land. This diverted the anger of the English poor away from the English elite and toward a common racial enemy. His war, “against all Indians in general,” allowed poor whites to rally around notions of white supremacy and racial scapegoating in an all too familiar pattern.<sup>1</sup> This unique form of race consciousness worked against attempts to forge collaborative efforts across racial lines in the colonial and antebellum South. It may also explain why poor southern whites supported, and even fought to protect, the system of racialized slavery, despite the fact that slavery’s very existence guaranteed them a degraded socioeconomic status.

During the decade leading up to Bacon’s Rebellion, another terrible transformation was underway. When the planter elite realized that indentured servitude would not be a permanent solution to their labor needs, they turned to a group that had recently been imported into the colony—Africans. Between 1619 and 1641, some 300 Africans had entered Virginia. Ironically, they were not legally defined as slaves. Instead, they were treated much like other indentured servants; once they gave four to ten years of labor, they would be freed and given freedom dues. For a variety of complex reasons, the landed elite moved to legalize racialized slavery in 1667.

One of the most compelling reasons for this shift was Bacon's Rebellion, which provided the best rationale for the permanent substitution of black slaves for white servants. The legalization of racial slavery was not only the crowning moment in the creation of the American paradox, it also prefigured an enormous amount of racial violence in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

### **From Revolution to Reconstruction: The American Paradox Expands**

Although a number of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century conflicts had racial components—the First and Second Powhatan Wars, King Philip's War, the Seven Year's War—the two conflicts with the greatest potential impact on modern race relations were the American Revolution and the American Civil War. Both wars began with the hope of inaugurating a new era of peace, prosperity, and justice. Both ended with bitter disappointment and continued racial strife. Fueled by classical liberal ideology, the American Revolution promised to bring liberty, justice, and prosperity for all. However, when Thomas Jefferson penned the famous words "all men are created equal," neither he nor other members of the American elite sought to extend this statement to Native Americans or African Americans. Instead, a war was fought to bring freedom to the country, but not to the half-million slaves whose labor helped generate revenue for the war effort. The American Revolution, therefore, added yet another dimension to the growing American paradox, and slavery would continue to have a firm base in the land of freedom.

Although it would be difficult to label slave rebellions as race riots, in many ways they became violent attempts to overthrow the white southern aristocracy and to challenge white supremacy. Gabriel Prosser, Charles Deslondes, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner each led movements that sought—at the very least—to kill whites who directly benefited from the labor of the enslaved. Only two of these rebels—Charles Deslondes (1811) and Nat Turner (1831)—managed to carry out these plans. While abolitionists fought each other over the right of slaves to rebel against their masters, one particular abolitionist—John Brown—took matters into his own hands. His 1859 raid on the Harper's Ferry federal arsenal was a clear attempt to foment an anti-white, anti-slavery revolt in Virginia. Although his attempt was ultimately unsuccessful, Brown did force the nation to address the central paradox in American society, and his raid was one of a series of events leading directly to the Civil War.

One of the worst race riots in U.S. history occurred in the midst of the Civil War. In July 1863, a mostly Irish mob engaged in an orgy of violence in New York City that left eighteen dead (not including the more than seventy black men reported missing) and dozens injured, and caused more than \$4 million in property damage.<sup>2</sup> Convinced that the Civil War had become a crusade for the benefit of African Americans and angered at losing industrial jobs to black men because they were drafted into the Union army, thousands of unskilled Irish workers attacked draft offices and any African Americans they could find. Ironically, a number of Irish were



convicted and hanged in 1741 after they had allegedly formed a conspiracy with slaves to destroy New York City and establish a biracial regime. A century later, there was no room for such collaborations and any appeals to the common ground between the black and immigrant poor fell on deaf ears. Again, a unique sense of racial consciousness allowed Irish workers to attack black workers, but not the wealthy whites in New York who could purchase exemptions from the draft. Nor would they think to attack white factory owners or other employers who actively hired African American men as cheap labor or used them as strikebreakers and scabs. Even as late as 1863, the doctrines of race consciousness, white supremacy, and racial scapegoating—promoted two centuries earlier by Nathaniel Bacon—continued to determine race relations in North America.

Like the American Revolution, the American Civil War was greatly anticipated as a force for positive change in the United States. With the coming of the Thirteenth Amendment, the paradox of racial slavery was finally brought to an end, although this did not mean an end to racial strife. Perhaps the epitome of this notion was the emergence, in 1866, of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Established as a social club for former Confederate soldiers, the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations began a campaign of political terrorism using arson, rape, threats, intimidation, beatings, and murder to force newly freed slaves and their Republican Party allies into a subordinate position in the South. Groups like the KKK, the Knights of the White Camellia, the White Caps, and others violently upheld the tenets of white supremacy in their attempts to redeem the South after defeat during the Civil War. More importantly, these groups were responsible for the increasing number of anti-black riots and lynchings that convulsed the black South beginning in the 1870s.

With the premature end of Reconstruction in 1877, a new set of paradoxes emerged. The end of Reconstruction inaugurated a reversal of rights that African Americans and their northern allies had fought for between 1865 and 1876. Democracy in the South was short-lived as southern states assumed control over civil rights and the federal government seemingly supported this troubling reversal. For example, the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court ruling gave federally sanctioned form to the substance of segregation and the nearly insurmountable color line that had long been a major component of American society. By establishing the “separate but equal” doctrine, this pivotal decision essentially rendered two previous civil rights acts (those of 1866 and 1875) and the Fourteenth Amendment null and void. Without protection provided by the federal government, the collective fate of millions of African Americans hung in the balance.

Southern blacks were forced to suffer through what Rayford Logan refers to as the Black Nadir, as they faced the five-headed hydra of sharecropping, political disenfranchisement, social segregation, anti-black propaganda, and racial violence during the century following the Civil War. In 1903, when W.E.B. Du Bois prophetically announced that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,” he, like many of his contemporaries, saw the 1896 ruling as the pinnacle of the movement by state and federal government officials to make white supremacy the official law of the

country.<sup>3</sup> Unprecedented amounts of racial violence were the most visible outcome of these various initiatives.

### **The Great Migration: Racial Violence in the Midwest and North**

The oppressive weight of southern racism became a major push factor, as thousands—then later, millions—of African Americans left the only homes they knew for new opportunities elsewhere. The growing tide of race riots and lynchings were key forces providing enormous impetus to these migrations. In the 1890s alone, lynching claimed the lives of 104 black men, women, and children annually. As historian Leon Litwack notes, between 1882 and 1959 “an estimated 4,742 blacks met their deaths at the hands of lynch mobs. As many, if not more blacks were victims of legal lynchings (speedy trials and executions), private white violence, and ‘nigger hunts,’ murdered by a variety of means in isolated rural sections and dumped into rivers and creeks.”<sup>4</sup> Lacking the ability to serve on juries, hold political office, or even vote, African Americans throughout the South were virtually powerless in the face of violent anti-black repression of this sort.

Roughly 40,000 black southerners were part of the Exoduster movement. Between 1879 and 1898, the Exodusters established independent, all-black communities in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. More importantly, the largest internal migration in U.S. history witnessed close to two million African Americans leaving the South between 1910 and 1940. This massive wave of migrants concentrated primarily in the Midwest and North, although many made it as far as California during the Great Migration. While the push of the Black Nadir explains much of this movement, the various socioeconomic pulls of better job opportunities, better housing, and higher living standards played important roles in the decision of African Americans to leave the South. Similar to the utopian views of the Midwest and North shared by many enslaved African Americans before 1850, these regions were envisioned as the “Promised Land” for millions of black migrants during the early portion of the twentieth century. These dreams would soon be dashed as African American settlers realized there was no escape from the Black Nadir or the American paradox.

One set of responses to the influx of such large numbers of African Americans into the Midwest and North was an increasing number of race riots. Two riots in Illinois—Springfield (1908) and East St. Louis (1917)—proved that the Midwest would not necessarily be more hospitable for African Americans. Accusations of raping white women and intense labor competition led to the deaths of dozens of African Americans and hundreds being forced or displaced from their homes. Despite the intensity of these incidents, nothing matches the Red Summer of 1919 in which two dozen race riots occurred throughout the country. Pioneering historical and sociological assessments of this violent summer have explained it as the outcome of labor competition, anti-black propaganda in the media (especially the 1915 release of *Birth of a Nation*), and the influx of white supremacist doctrines into midwestern and northern states.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the specific causes of the numerous race riots in 1919, they proved once again that the American

paradox was alive and well in the twentieth century. The irony of sending more than 300,000 young black men to fight to make the world “safe for democracy” during World War I was made more glaring by the number of anti-black race riots and overt attempts to deny these same men full citizenship.

Mirroring the anti-Jewish pogroms in Eastern Europe, the savage destruction of two black communities in the 1920s became additional proof that the United States had not found an effective way to negotiate the widening gulf between African Americans and whites. In 1921, the Greenwood section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, suffered through an all-out war, complete with death squads and incendiaries dropped from airplanes by whites. What was once a prosperous black community lay in ashes after days of uncontrolled rioting. In addition, more than 200 black residents were killed in what can be described as a massacre.

In 1923, the all-black community of Rosewood, Florida, suffered a similar fate. After a white woman in a neighboring community claimed that she had been raped—apparently to hide an extramarital affair she was having—hundreds of whites descended on Rosewood. After a week of rioting, the entire town was destroyed and as many as 300 African Americans were killed. Again, a prosperous black community was razed at the hands of a white mob. What both of these cases prove is that economic competition and white supremacy were not the only provocation for race riots in the United States. Jealousy and the fear of African Americans acquiring wealth and property were also significant factors.

During a renewed effort to make the world safe for democracy, the country witnessed another wave of race riots in 1943. Major disturbances occurred in Detroit, Harlem, and Mobile. Again, labor competition was among the principal causes in these examples. Although there would be a number of white-on-black murders, civil rights assassinations, and at least two more lynchings—Emmett Till (1956) and Mack Charles Parker (1959)—the tide of racial violence shifted dramatically in the aftermath of World War II. With a handful of exceptions, the vast majority of race riots in the postwar era were urban revolts that involved black mobs attacking white business owners and police officers. White flight, which resulted in the creation of impoverished black urban ghettos, created a volatile powder keg. It was the frequent examples of police brutality and “justifiable homicide” that often served as the spark. The result of these combined factors was massive and destructive riots in Los Angeles, California; Newark, New Jersey; and Detroit, Michigan, among others. These examples continue to epitomize race riots even in the twenty-first century.

### **White Flight and Black Ghettos: New Patterns of Race Riots**

The radicalism of the mid- to late 1960s reflected a growing acceptance of militancy in blacks. Leaders like Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, and Stokely Carmichael called for self-defense initiatives and economic self-help for the black urban poor. These endeavors reflected, perhaps, the notion that the civil rights movement had benefited the African

American middle-class but had done little to improve the condition of the black masses. This circumstance was compounded by specific sociological phenomena that convulsed black communities around the country. One of the most significant responses to successful civil rights legislation and court rulings by whites was urban flight. As the doctrine of social integration became more of a reality in the United States, white Americans began leaving major cities and created exclusive all-white suburbs. In the wake of this considerable white flight, jobs, services, and tax funding for local schools disappeared. In addition, banks, grocery stores, and restaurants left inner-city neighborhoods and relocated to the expanding white suburbs. This reshaping of the urban-suburban landscape across the country created what can be called the Doughnut Effect—essentially, once prosperous cities became impoverished, mostly black cores surrounded by affluent white suburban peripheries. Thus, the “black ghetto” was created.

As high school dropout rates, unemployment, underemployment, crime, and drug use began to soar in inner-city ghettos, the hope that once provided impetus for the civil rights movement began to fade. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the last year of his life, sought to reorient the movement to deal with the growing problem of poverty in the United States. His “Poor People’s Campaign” was short-lived, and no relief for the spreading problem of urban poverty seemed to be in sight. Combined with worsening economic conditions in black inner cities, police brutality became a growing issue. In addition to alleged beatings, a number of unarmed black men had been killed by white police officers in incidents that were later deemed justifiable homicides. Without hope, lacking any support from federal, state, or local government institutions, black urbanites created their own solution to the enormous problems they faced—urban rebellions.

Beginning with the 1965 Watts riot in Los Angeles and continuing into the twenty-first century with the 2001 Cincinnati riot, a new pattern of racial strife emerged. In more than three dozen cases—including examples in Detroit, Michigan (1967); Augusta, Georgia (1970); Miami (1980) and Tampa, Florida (1987); Los Angeles, California (1992); and Cincinnati, Ohio (2001)—race riots or urban rebellions began in impoverished black communities typically after instances of police brutality. The only exception to this rule was the 1992 Los Angeles riot, which was sparked after three white police officers were initially found not guilty of various charges in relation to the videotaped beating of an African American, Rodney King. The ensuing riot was linked more to the perception of injustice by an all-white jury than to the actual beating, which occurred several months prior to the controversial ruling. In every case, however, black urban residents looted and burned businesses owned by non-blacks who reportedly had long histories of either not hiring African Americans or of treating black customers with disrespect. In addition, white motorists were attacked and white police officers and firefighters became targets of black rage.

It was in the aftermath of the 1967 urban rebellions in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, that President Lyndon B. Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, headed by Gov. Otto

Kerner of Illinois. In their final report, published in 1968, the eight-member commission concluded as follows:

There was, typically, a complex relationship between the series of incidents and the underlying grievances. For example, grievances about allegedly abusive police practices, unemployment and underemployment, housing, and other conditions in the ghetto, were often aggravated in the minds of many Negroes by incidents involving the police, or the inaction of municipal authorities on Negro complaints about police action, unemployment, inadequate housing or other conditions.<sup>6</sup>

In the estimation of the Kerner Commission, poverty, more than anything else, created the necessary conditions for the twenty-three urban riots that occurred between 1964 and 1967. In addition to poverty, the Kerner Commission cited white racism as a cause of urban rioting, noting that the United States was “moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” In fully implicating white Americans in the creation of black ghettos, the Kerner Commission created a long list of recommendations for government reform to address these issues. Although the Johnson administration did not enact any of the specific recommendations of the Kerner Commission, the concerns the report raised became a linchpin in Johnson’s “War on Poverty” and his goal to create “the Great Society.”

## Conclusion

As watersheds and defining moments in American history, race riots represent one of many ways to track the continuation of various paradoxes in American society. From, quite literally, the opening act of American history to the dawn of the twenty-first century, racial strife has been a constant in a country known more for its various political liberties and economic opportunities. By assessing the nature of racial conflict in the American context, we not only expand our understanding of this country’s nuanced history, but we can perhaps more accurately gauge the troubles and dynamics inherent in any pluralistic society.

## Notes

1. Nathaniel Bacon quoted in Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 259.

2. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, *The History of Violence in America: A Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), 536.

3. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: New American Library, 1982; originally published in 1903), xi.

4. James Allen, Hilton Als, Leon Litwack, et al., *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000), 12.

5. See, for example, William Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1972); Lee Williams and Lee Williams II, *Anatomy of Four*

*Race Riots: Racial Conflict in Knoxville, Elaine (Arkansas), Tulsa, and Chicago, 1919-1921* (Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1972); Arthur Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In: A Study of the Connection Between Conflict and Violence* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1966); H.O. Dahlke, "Race and Minority Riots—A Study in the Typology of Violence," *Social Forces* XXX (May 1952), 419-425; Allen D. Grimshaw, "A Study in Social Violence: Urban Race Riots in the United States" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959); Allen D. Grimshaw, "Urban Violence in the United States: Changing Ecological Considerations," *American Journal of Sociology* LXVI (September 1960), 109-119.

6. Quoted in Allen D. Grimshaw, ed., *Racial Violence in the United States* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 330.



# CHRONOLOGY OF AMERICAN RACE RIOTS AND RACIAL VIOLENCE

## 1863

January President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation takes effect.  
July Draft riots erupt in New York City.

## 1865

c. December Ku Klux Klan is founded as a social club for Confederate veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee.

## 1865–1877

Era of Reconstruction.

## 1866

May Memphis, Tennessee, riot.  
June Charleston, South Carolina, riot.  
July New Orleans, Louisiana, riot.

## 1868

July Ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.  
October Ku Klux Klan-ordered murder of Benjamin Randolph, Republican Party activist and African American delegate to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention.

## 1869

Knights of Labor are founded in Philadelphia.

## 1870

March Ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment.

## 1872

White League is active in attacking and intimidating blacks and Republicans in Louisiana.



**1875**

White Democrats regain political control of Mississippi by employing a campaign of violence known as *shotgun policy* to prevent blacks and Republicans from voting in state elections.

**1890–1960**

More than 4,700 African Americans are lynched during this seventy-year span.

**1892**

Ida B. Wells-Barnett publishes her first anti-lynching pamphlet, “Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases.”

May

Ida B. Wells-Barnett publishes her editorial “Eight Men Lynched.”

**1894**

Monett, Missouri, riot.

**1895**

Ida B. Wells-Barnett publishes her second anti-lynching pamphlet, “A Red Record.”

September-  
December

The Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta showcases the racial achievements of the New South; Booker T. Washington delivers a speech, later called the “Atlanta Compromise” speech by critics, at the opening of the Exposition on September 18.

**1896**

May

U.S. Supreme Court upholds the “separate but equal” doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

July

National Association of Colored Women (NACW) is formed in Washington, D.C.

**1898**

November

Wilmington, North Carolina, riot.

**1898–1899**

Coal mine riots at Pana, Virden, and Carterville, Illinois.

**1899**

Anti-Lynching Bureau is established.

Anti-Lynching League is founded.

Publication of Sutton Griggs’ first novel, *Imperium in Imperio*.

April

Sam Hose is lynched in Palmetto, Georgia, for allegedly killing his white employer and committing sexual assault on the man’s wife.

**1900**

Ida B. Wells-Barnett publishes her third anti-lynching pamphlet, “Mob Rule in New Orleans.”

July

New Orleans, Louisiana, riot.

August

New York City riot.

**1901**

Publication of Charles Chesnutt’s novel, *The Marrow of Tradition*, which was based on the Wilmington, North Carolina, riot of 1898.

Pierce City, Missouri, riot.

**1903**

Publication of W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*.

Joplin, Missouri, riot.

July

In what is known as the Boston riot, militant activist William Monroe Trotter and his supporters disrupt a Boston speech by Booker T. Washington.

**1904**

March

Springfield, Ohio, riot.

**1905**

Publication of *The Clansman* by Thomas Dixon, Jr.

May

First issue of the *Chicago Defender*.

July

The Niagara movement, an organization for young black intellectuals committed to ending racial prejudice, is founded by W.E.B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, and others.

**1906**

Springfield, Missouri, riot.

January

Chattanooga, Tennessee, riot.

April

Greensburg, Indiana, riot.

August

Brownsville, Texas, riot.

September

Atlanta, Georgia, riot; the Atlanta Civic League is organized in the weeks following the riot.

**1908**

William Monroe Trotter founds the all-black National Equal Rights League.

August

Springfield, Illinois, riot.

**1909**

February

W.E.B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and others found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an interracial organization dedicated to legal and social reform.

**1910**

*The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, is founded by W.E.B. Du Bois.

July

Palestine, Texas, riot.

**1911**

National Urban League founded.

**1914**

Marcus Garvey establishes the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

November

William Monroe Trotter confronts Woodrow Wilson in the White House over the president's support for segregation in federal offices.

**1915**

Debut of the D.W. Griffith film, *The Birth of a Nation*.

Failure of African American lawsuit against the U.S. Treasury Department for compensation for labor rendered under slavery.

November William J. Simmons refounds the Ku Klux Klan at Stone Mountain in Georgia.

**1916**

Madison Grant publishes *The Passing of the Great Race*, detailing his drastic prescription—including eugenics—to save the white race from being overwhelmed by “darker races.”

May Jesse Washington, a seventeen-year-old illiterate black farm hand, is lynched in Waco, Texas.

**1917**

May–July East St. Louis, Illinois, riots.

August Houston, Texas, mutiny of black soldiers at Camp Logan.

**1918**

After protesting the lynching of her husband, Mary Turner, then eight months pregnant, is herself brutally lynched in Valdosta, Georgia.

April Congressman Leonidas C. Dyer of Missouri introduces an anti-lynching bill into Congress (the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill is defeated in 1922).

July Chester and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, riots.

**1919**

NAACP publishes *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918* by Martha Gruening and Helen Boardman.

May Charleston, South Carolina, riot.

Summer Known as “Red Summer” because of the great number of people killed in various race riots around the country.

July Longview, Texas, riot.

Publication of Claude McKay’s sonnet, “If We Must Die.”

Chicago, Illinois, riot.

Washington, D.C., riot.

August Knoxville, Tennessee, riot.

September Omaha, Nebraska, riot.

September–October Elaine, Arkansas, riot.

**1920**

Founding of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, a major interracial reform organization in the South.

**1921**

April Tulsa, Oklahoma, riot.

**1922**

Anti-Lynching Crusaders are formed to educate Americans about lynching and work for its elimination.

Chicago Commission on Race Relations issues its influential report on the 1919 Chicago riots.

**1923**

- January Rosewood, Florida, riot.
- February U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Moore v. Dempsey* leads to eventual release of twelve African Americans in Arkansas who were convicted in perfunctory mob-dominated trials of killing five whites during the Elaine, Arkansas, riots of 1919.

**1929**

Publication of Walter White's *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*.

**1930**

Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) is founded in Detroit, Michigan, by W.D. Fard.  
 Formation of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, the first organization of white women opposed to lynching.

October

Sainte Genevieve, Missouri, riot.

**1931**

Scottsboro Case occurs in Alabama; the case comprises a series of trials arising out of allegations that nine African American youths raped two white girls in Scottsboro, Alabama.

**1932**

Supreme Court renders a decision in *Powell v. Alabama*, a case related to the Scottsboro, Alabama, incident of 1931.

**1934**

Elijah Muhammad assumes leadership of the Nation of Islam.

**1935**

March

Harlem, New York, riot.

**1936**

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt addresses the annual conventions of both the NAACP and National Urban League.

**1939**

Billie Holiday's first performance of the anti-lynching song *Strange Fruit* occurs at Café Society, New York's only integrated nightclub.

**1941**

Supreme Court decision in *Mitchell v. United States* spurs integration of first-class railway carriages.

**1942**

February

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is founded as the Committee of Racial Equality.  
 Double V Campaign is launched to popularize the idea that blacks should fight for freedom abroad to win freedom at home.

**1943**

May

Mobile, Alabama, riot.

June

Beaumont, Texas, riot.

- June “Zoot Suit” riots in Los Angeles, California.
- July Detroit, Michigan, riot.
- August New York City (Harlem) riot.
- 1944**
- Publication of Karl Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*.
- 1947**
- Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) join forces in the Journey of Reconciliation, a precursor to the Freedom Rides, which tested a Supreme Court decision declaring segregation on interstate buses to be unconstitutional.
- 1948**
- Publication of Walter White’s autobiography *A Man Called White*.
- 1949**
- August–September Peekskill, New York, riots.
- 1954**
- May U.S. Supreme Court renders decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* case, declaring a segregated educational system to be “inherently unequal.”
- July Robert Patterson founds the White Citizens’ Council in Indianola, Mississippi.
- 1955**
- Queen Mother Audley Moore founds the Reparations Committee of Descendants of the United States Slaves.
- Foundation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a southern-based civil rights organization led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other black ministers.
- August Fourteen-year-old Emmett Louis Till, an African American boy from Chicago, is murdered for allegedly whistling at a white woman.
- 1956–1971**
- The FBI Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) investigates and disrupts dissident domestic organizations, including civil rights groups.
- 1957**
- September President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first piece of civil rights legislation since Reconstruction.
- 1959**
- February Mack Charles Parker is lynched in Mississippi for allegedly raping a white woman.
- 1960**
- February Four black college students stage a “sit-in” at Woolworth’s whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina.
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded.
- April Biloxi Beach, Mississippi, riot.

**1961**

May First Freedom Ride.

**1962**

Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU) is founded.

Robert F. Williams publishes *Negroes with Guns*, exploring Williams' philosophy of black self-defense.

October Two die in riots when President John F. Kennedy sends troops to Oxford, Mississippi, to allow James Meredith to become the first African American student to register for classes at the University of Mississippi.

**1963**

Publication of *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin.

Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) is founded.

April Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., writes his "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

June Civil rights leader Medgar Evers is assassinated in Mississippi.

August March on Washington; Rev. King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech before the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

September Four African American girls—Carol Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins—are killed when a bomb explodes at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

**1964**

June–August Three Freedom Summer activists—James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—are arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi; their bodies are discovered six weeks later; white resistance to Freedom Summer activities leads to six deaths, numerous injuries and arrests, and property damage across Mississippi.

July President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act.

New York City (Harlem) riot.

Rochester, New York, riot.

Brooklyn, New York, riot.

August Riots in Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Chicago, Illinois, riot.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, riot.

**1965**

February While participating in a civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, Jimmie Lee Jackson is shot by an Alabama state trooper.

Malcolm X is assassinated while speaking in New York City.

March Bloody Sunday march ends with civil rights marchers attacked and beaten by local lawmen at the Edmund Pettus Bridge outside Selma, Alabama.

Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) is formed in Lowndes County, Alabama.

First distribution of *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, better known as *The Moynihan Report*, which was written by Undersecretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer.

July Springfield, Massachusetts, riot.

August Los Angeles (Watts), California, riot.

### 1965–1967

A series of northern urban riots occurring during these years, including disorders in the Watts section of Los Angeles, California (1965), Newark, New Jersey (1967), and Detroit, Michigan (1967), becomes known as the Long Hot Summer Riots.

### 1966

May Stokely Carmichael elected national director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

June James Meredith is wounded by a sniper while walking from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi; Meredith's March Against Fear is taken up by Martin Luther King, Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and others.

July Cleveland, Ohio, riot.

Murder of civil rights demonstrator Clarence Triggs in Bogalusa, Louisiana.

September Dayton, Ohio, riot.

San Francisco (Hunters Point), California, riot.

October Black Panther Party (BPP) founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

### 1967

Publication of *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton.

May Civil rights worker Benjamin Brown is shot in the back during a student protest in Jackson, Mississippi.

H. Rap Brown succeeds Stokely Carmichael as national director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Texas Southern University riot (Houston, Texas).

June Atlanta, Georgia, riot.

Buffalo, New York, riot.

Cincinnati, Ohio, riot.

Boston, Massachusetts, riot.

July Detroit, Michigan, riot.

Newark, New Jersey, riot.

### 1968

Publication of *Soul on Ice* by Eldridge Cleaver.

February During the so-called Orangeburg, South Carolina Massacre, three black college students are killed and twenty-seven others are injured in a confrontation with police on the adjoining campuses of South Carolina State College and Claflin College.

March Kerner Commission Report is published.

- April Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.  
 President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968.  
 Washington, D.C., riot.  
 Cincinnati, Ohio, riot.
- August Antiwar protestors disrupt the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.
- 1969**
- May James Forman of the SNCC reads his Black Manifesto, which calls for monetary reparations for the crime of slavery, to the congregation of Riverside Church in New York; many in the congregation walk out in protest.
- July York, Pennsylvania, riot.
- 1970**
- May Two unarmed black students are shot and killed by police attempting to control civil rights demonstrators at Jackson State University in Mississippi.  
 Augusta, Georgia, riot.
- July New Bedford, Massachusetts, riot.  
 Asbury Park, New Jersey, riot.
- 1973**
- July So-called Dallas Disturbance results from community anger over the murder of a twelve-year-old Mexican-American boy by a Dallas police officer.
- 1975–1976**
- A series of antibusing riots rock Boston, Massachusetts, with the violence reaching a climax in April 1976.
- 1976**
- February Pensacola, Florida, riot.
- 1980**
- May Miami, Florida, riot.
- 1981**
- March Michael Donald, a black man, is beaten and murdered by Ku Klux Klan members in Mobile, Alabama.
- 1982**
- December Miami, Florida, riot.
- 1985**
- May Philadelphia police drop a bomb on MOVE headquarters, thereby starting a fire that consumed a city block.
- 1986**
- December Three black men are beaten and chased by a gang of white teenagers in Howard Beach, New York; one of the victims of the so-called Howard Beach Incident is killed while trying to flee from his attackers.



**1987**

February–April Tampa, Florida, riots.

**1989**

Release of Spike Lee's film, *Do the Right Thing*.

Representative John Conyers introduces the first reparations bill into Congress—the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act; this and all subsequent reparations measures fail passage.

August

Murder of Yusef Hawkins, an African American student killed by Italian-American youths in Bensonhurst, New York.

**1991**

March

Shooting in Los Angeles of an African American girl, fifteen-year-old Latasha Harlins, by a Korean woman who accused the girl of stealing.

Los Angeles police officers are caught on videotape beating African American motorist Rodney King.

**1992**

April

Los Angeles (Rodney King), California, riot.

**1994**

Survivors of the Rosewood, Florida, riot of 1923 receive reparations.

February

Standing trial for a third time, Byron de la Beckwith is convicted of murdering civil rights worker Medgar Evers in June 1963.

**1995**

In the *Cato v. United States* decision, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denies African Americans \$100 million in reparations and an apology for slavery.

**1996**

August

A federal indictment is handed down against the Ku Klux Klan, which was charged with arson in the burning of more than seventy African American churches in South Carolina.

**1997**

Oklahoma Legislature creates the Tulsa Race Riot Commission to document and make reparation recommendations regarding the 1921 Tulsa riot.

Debut of the movie *Rosewood* about the riot in Rosewood, Florida, in 1923.

**1998**

June

Three white men in Jasper, Texas, murder James Byrd, Jr., an African American man, by dragging him behind a truck for three miles.

**2000**

Representative Tony Hall proposes bill H.R. 356, which would acknowledge and apologize for slavery; the measure does not pass.

**2001**

April

Cincinnati, Ohio, riot.

**2002**

March

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown) is found guilty of shooting two white deputies and is sentenced to life in prison.

**2003**

Debut of Stanley Nelson's film, *The Murder of Emmett Till*, about the death of a black Chicago boy in Mississippi in 1955.

**2004**

Survivors of the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma, riot receive reparations.

**2005**

September

U.S. Senate passes the Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act (known as the "Till Bill"), forming a new federal unit within the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department to investigate and prosecute unsolved civil rights-era murder cases.



# **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RACE RIOTS**



# A

## Accommodationism

Accommodationism refers to an ideology that endorses cooperation and concession to the viewpoint or actions of the opposition. **Booker T. Washington** and, to a disputable extent, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, are examples of black leaders who have embraced this concept as a strategy against racial **segregation**. Competing ideologies developed largely in response to the mass violence that blacks experienced at the hands of whites.

Washington, an influential black leader during the **Jim Crow** era, is widely recognized as a prominent accommodationist. He promoted black acquiescence to the system of discrimination and **disenfranchisement** of post-**Reconstruction** life as a tactic to bring about social and political empowerment. He frequently collaborated with white leaders. However, Washington's philosophy is believed to have "increased anti-black violence" (Reiland, 3). In contrast to Washington's accommodationism, **W.E.B. Du Bois** and others advocated protest and **black self-defense** and launched public attacks against segregation and white aggression. Blacks aggressively confronted discrimination and violence in the **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**.

Although supporters of the quieter, more gradual process of change via participation in municipal politics believed that the **civil rights movement** was a radical response, the nonviolent protests of the 1950s and 1960s were fundamentally accommodationistic in their general concession to retaliatory white violence and cooperation with white-dominated institutions. Frustration with the mounting brutality, particularly during the **Freedom Rides** and **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**, caused young blacks to break away from the philosophy of **nonviolence** in favor of a more militant and separatist approach. By the mid-1960s, violence was the widely employed strategy of protest in black **ghettos**. *See also* Black Panther Party (BPP); Black Power; Malcolm X.

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Gladys L. Knight

**Alabama.** See Mobile (Alabama) Riot of 1943; *Powell v. Alabama*

***An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (Myrdal, 1944)**

*An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* was the largest social, political, economic, and psychological study of African American culture ever attempted in the United States. Specifically, *An American Dilemma* was a study of race relations in the United States, particularly of those obstacles, like **segregation**, racial discrimination, and mob violence that barred African Americans from full participation in American society and enjoyment of their constitutional rights.

*An American Dilemma* had its genesis in 1938, when Dr. Frederick P. Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation, invited **Gunnar Karl Myrdal**, a Swedish sociologist and economist, to conduct a two-year study of African Americans. The extent and complexity of Myrdal's study is suggested by the six years it took to complete. The final draft contained two volumes of nearly 1,550 pages. Myrdal was specifically selected to head this project because, as a citizen of a country devoid of a history of colonial domination or imperialism and aggression toward other countries, he would bring with him a fresh and invigorating perspective unblemished by particular biases in regard to racial relations. To help complete *An American Dilemma*, Myrdal assembled a distinguished coalition of social scientists, including numerous African American scholars such as Ralph Bunche, Allison Davis, St. Charles Drake, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, and Kenneth Clark.

Prior to *An American Dilemma*, there was a general consensus among many social scientists that the basis of "the Negro problem" was the Negro. This line of thinking concluded that African Americans' inferior status in American society was due to an inherent or genetic inferiority complex that made them less capable of competition with whites. In other words, the Negro, or individuals of African ancestry, were naturally inferior. Interestingly enough, many of these same theories of racial superiority were applied to southern and eastern European immigrants who were also viewed as genetically inferior, amid concerns that if the flow of immigration from these countries was not stemmed, the United States would be committing a form of racial suicide.

Paradoxically, **Booker T. Washington**, founder of Tuskegee Institute in Macon County, Alabama, and one of the most prominent African Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also subscribed to the philosophy of white superiority. Although throughout his life he continued to encourage African Americans to be industrious and self-reliant and built a monument to those endeavors he, nevertheless, believed in the superiority

of white civilization and that slavery rescued Africans from the barbarity of the wild of Africa and brought them under the civilizing influence of white society.

This controversy over what constituted “the Negro problem” generated, in part, the subtitle of Myrdal’s study: *The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. Myrdal concluded that the so-called Negro problem was, in reality, a white problem that stemmed to a large extent from white people’s perceptions of African Americans. But perception alone did not account for the violent racial division that existed in the United States. He stated that from his investigations he discovered that African Americans were inherently not much different from other people, and their “subordinate status” in American society was the consequence of the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of white people who controlled the majority of political, economic, and social power—a consequence of slavery that continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

Another problem African Americans faced in American society, according to Myrdal, was the discrepancy between white Americans’ purported belief in justice, liberty, and equality and the treatment of African Americans who, because of their subordinate status, both *de facto* and *de jure*, were unable to achieve any of these noble ideals. On a daily basis, white Americans witnessed black people being denied their constitutional rights but continued to believe in, and practice, the principles outlined in the covenant of their country, which had become the binding legacy of the Founding Fathers. To negate the very ideals that they professed to believe in was another aspect of “the Negro problem” that white Americans could not overcome, ignore, or make go away. *An American Dilemma* exposed these contradictions and many others. However, Myrdal was a true optimist in the sense that he believed that one of the fundamental ways of improving race relations in the United States was to highlight these conflicts and tensions, and that through education, white Americans would learn to adjust their beliefs and actions to be more in line with the promise articulated by the Founding Fathers. Myrdal was not alone in his belief. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and members of the **civil rights movement** articulated the same ideals in their struggle for liberty, justice, and equality.

Having discarded the genetic or inherent inferiority theory to justify African Americans’ circumstances in American society, Myrdal searched for another explanation to clarify the discrepancies between blacks and whites. He employed the “vicious circle” or culture-of-poverty thesis to explain the difference between African Americans’ achievement (or lack of achievement) in a society dominated by a white power structure influenced by **racism, racial stereotypes**, and other forms of violent discrimination. According to this thesis, white prejudice and discrimination played a significant role in the **disenfranchisement** of African Americans in terms of impoverished living standards, lack of adequate health care, employment, and education. These circumstances give credence to white prejudices and stereotypes about African Americans being low achievers: as a result of their inability to achieve, blacks must somehow be inferior to whites, who were capable of rising above their own difficult circumstances.



The conclusions drawn from this study influenced American social policy regarding race relations for several decades and set the standard for social science research. It is even possible that *An American Dilemma* played an important role in ending segregation when the U.S. Supreme Court cited the work as a footnote in the 1954 landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. See also Myrdal, Gunnar Karl (1898–1987).

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*John G. Hall*

### Anti-Lynching Bureau

The Anti-Lynching Bureau was established in 1899 in response to the increasing brutalization of African Americans during the post-**Reconstruction** era. A division of the National Afro-American Council, the Anti-Lynching Bureau was dedicated to the investigation of incidents of **lynching** and other atrocities committed against African Americans. Founded by **T. Thomas Fortune** in 1898, the National Afro-American Council espoused a less militant ideology of resistance than its predecessor, the National Afro-American League. Through the creation of the Anti-Lynching Bureau, the Council hoped to put an end to the most savage mode of white-on-black intimidation. In its efforts to combat **disenfranchisement** and to right the wrongs perpetrated against members of the African American community, the National Afro-American Council served as a precursor of future civil rights organizations such as the **Niagara movement** and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**.

While serving as chair of the Anti-Lynching Bureau, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** published a series of pamphlets and articles condemning the practice of lynching as a crime against humanity that threatened the nation's moral fiber. Detailing the torture, hanging, burning, and dismemberment of victims, Wells-Barnett sought to arouse public sentiment. Unfortunately, the Anti-Lynching Bureau's desperate financial situation seriously hampered its efforts. With only 300 members, the organization lacked the funds to publish the very documents intended to pressure Congress into passing federal anti-lynching legislation. In a letter dated January 1, 1902, Wells-Barnett implored the Bureau's members to renew their memberships and encourage others to join the organization so that the Bureau might continue its efforts to end mob violence and eradicate lynching. Wells-Barnett's untiring devotion to the Anti-Lynching Bureau and its cause earned her the title of the nation's foremost anti-lynching crusader. See also Anti-Lynching Legislation; Fortune, T. Thomas.

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*Carol Goodman*

## Anti-Lynching League

The Anti-Lynching League (also referred to as the British Anti-Lynching League) was founded in 1899 by journalist, activist, and philanthropist **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, who also founded the **National Association of Colored Women (NACW)**. Wells-Barnett became the single most influential individual in history to levy an anti-lynching campaign. The Anti-Lynching League was used as a mechanism to illuminate the systematic practice of **lynching** and lynch law that was practiced overwhelmingly in the southern United States. Always outspoken, her commitment to combat lynching began after three of her friends, who were prominent Negro businessmen, were lynched in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1892. They were targeted because their business, the People’s Grocery Store, had become successful competition for the white grocery store in the community. As a result of this occurrence, Wells-Barnett began challenging the longstanding belief that lynchings were in response to white men protecting the chastity of white women, and suggested that the true motivation behind this extra-legal activity was the fear that Negroes could become economic competition (see **Rape, as Provocation for Lynching**).

Wells-Barnett traveled throughout the United States, Scotland, and Great Britain illuminating the condition of Negroes in the United States. The establishment of the Anti-Lynching League came as a result of Wells-Barnett’s second tour of Great Britain, which focused on informing the English of the atrocities occurring in the United States against Negroes in the form of lynchings. She appealed to the British to assist her in the anti-lynching crusade not only because of the sense of honor and justice of the British, but also because of the historical commitment of the English in combating other wrongs against American Negroes, such as slavery. Upon return from her second tour of speeches to British community organizations, churches, and political figures, the British contributed £5,000 to establish the Anti-Lynching League. This funding was to be used specifically to investigate and make public the lynching activity occurring in the United States. The organization worked to promote the creation and passing of anti-lynching legislation. *See also* Lynching; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.

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*Nia Woods Haydel*

## Anti-Lynching Legislation

**Lynching** permeated American life for almost 100 years. Lynchings often focused on African Americans and their perceived violations of **Jim Crow** etiquette, whether real or not. The result was mob action and the violent death of men who were usually innocent. The list of transgressions that resulted in a lynch mob was long and varied and included everything from rape and murder to indolence, unruly behavior, and acting suspiciously.

Often times, lynchings were treated like circuses with whites enjoying the spectacle of the execution as entertainment, taking pictures and saving them as souvenirs. Less than 1 percent of participants were ever convicted. Most of the almost 5,000 reported lynchings between 1882 and 1968 (3,445 were of blacks) occurred in the South, but the problem was nationwide and, by 1918, all but six states had experienced lynchings.

The lynching of a black person by a **white mob** was rarely investigated, even more rarely prosecuted, and almost never punished. This was despite the fact that by the 1930s most southern states had specifically outlawed lynching. These laws were often ineffective because they were not enforced. In the rare instance where an indictment was issued, juries would not convict, even though the incidents and perpetrators were often common knowledge.

Local sheriffs tended to be apathetic toward the laws and commonly took no action to prevent mobs from taking possession of the prisoner and killing him. In addition, rarely was an attempt made to apprehend the lynchers. Finally, not only was law enforcement usually absent, but often, the very person charged with preventing the lynching took an active part.

At the federal level, all three branches of government failed miserably. Federal judicial interference was rare. In one case, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in, because, as Justice Holmes noted in *Moore v. Dempsey* (1923), the conviction of five black men in Arkansas under the shadow of threats of mob violence amounted to judicially sanctioned lynching. If the state courts could not provide minimal procedural fairness, then the federal courts had a clear duty to “secure to the petitioners their constitutional rights” (Bennett 1999).

Congress also failed to respond. Early on during **Reconstruction**, Congress passed several civil rights acts to outlaw **black codes**, provide for criminal sanctions against any person involved in private conspiracy to violate another’s federal rights, and stifle the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. However, many of these laws were declared unconstitutional, and those that were not were later repealed by Congress. In addition, more than 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in Congress with none becoming law. Although the House of Representatives passed anti-lynching bills three times, the legislation was blocked repeatedly by senators from the South. During the Woodrow Wilson administration, Congress not only failed to pass anti-lynching legislation but entertained at least twenty bills calling for more segregation.

Congress came closest to passing anti-lynching legislation in 1921, when the House passed the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, but it failed in the Senate (see **Dyer, Leonidas C.**). The debate in the House, although rooted in

constitutional and legal arguments, revolved mostly around racist attacks that were practically a defense of lynching. The bill passed 231–119. In the Senate, the argument of unconstitutionality and a threatened filibuster, which Republicans made no real effort to block, stalled the bill without a vote.

The Dyer debate exposed the fear that such a bill would give southern blacks social equality, which was unacceptable to most southern whites. An anti-lynching bill would ignite unruly blacks and incite demands for equality.

The election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 gave the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** hope that lynching would end. These hopes proved false. Pressure from his wife, **Eleanor Roosevelt**, failed to convince the president to act and, in 1935, Roosevelt did not support the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill that would have punished sheriffs who failed to protect their prisoners from lynch mobs. Roosevelt feared white voters in the South would reject him and cost him the election of 1936. Even the lynching of Rubin Stacy in 1935 failed to change Roosevelt's mind. Stacy was lynched while six deputies were escorting him to a jail in Miami, Florida. He was taken from police protection by a white mob and hanged. The national attention the incident drew did not sway Roosevelt.

President Harry S Truman also feared alienating the southerners who controlled Congress. But, in the end, he supported anti-lynching laws, set up a president's commission on civil rights, and, through Executive Order 9981, ended formal segregation in the armed forces.

Thus, by the 1950s, with little help from the government, lynching had subsided. Occasional incidents still occurred that shocked the country and stirred action. In 1955, **Emmett Till**, a fourteen-year-old Chicago boy who was visiting his family in Mississippi was beaten and thrown in the river for the alleged offense of insulting a white woman. In response to the Emmett Till incident, growing racial violence in the wake of court-ordered **integration**, and the growing fight for the right to vote by African Americans in the South, President Dwight Eisenhower established a Committee on Civil Rights in 1957. Although he did endorse anti-lynching laws, **desegregation** of the armed forces, ending poll taxes, and an end to **segregation** in federal employment, Eisenhower was reluctant to use federal power because he thought blacks could achieve their goals through the vote.

The last recorded lynching occurred in 1964 with the murder of three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, in Mississippi (see **Freedom Summer [Mississippi] of 1964**) with Congress never having passed an anti-lynching statute. Finally, in June 2005, the Senate passed a nonbinding resolution to apologize for its past failure to enact anti-lynching legislation. Ironically, twenty southern senators declined to originally cosponsor the resolution, which stated that the Senate “expresses the deepest sympathies and most solemn regrets of the Senate to the descendants of victims of lynching, the ancestors of whom were deprived of life, human dignity, and the constitutional protections accorded all citizens of the United States” (U.S. Senate 2005). *See also* Anti-Lynching Bureau; Anti-Lynching League; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.

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Gary Gershman

### Antiwar Protests

Protests against the undeclared war in **Vietnam**, which occurred from 1963–1975, first appeared in 1963, grew in magnitude as the war escalated, peaked in 1969, and began to wane after the Kent State University shootings on May 4, 1970, and the **Jackson State University** shootings on May 14, 1970. Although Vietnam was not the first American war to be protested, demonstrations against America's involvement in Vietnam were larger, more sustained, and, hence, more influential—not only on public opinion but also on the government's reaction—than protests against the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, and World War I.

Unlike the **civil rights movement**, the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s lacked centralization and the definitive leadership that **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, provided to that movement. The protests took many forms, such as full-page newspaper advertisements, petitions, letters to the three presidents (**John F. Kennedy**, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard M. Nixon) who served during the war as well as to other elected officials, vigils, income tax withholding, draft refusal and evasion, desertion from duty in the armed forces, self-immolation, acts of nonviolent disobedience, destruction of draft board records, property destruction, campus strikes, and organized peace marches.

The people who were involved in the antiwar protests were a diverse group, although the media tended to focus more on college students and hippies, which gave the public the impression that a young, unruly segment of American society primarily interested in rejecting authority led the movement. In reality, the protests were sustained by a coalition of various organizations, including religious groups. Some of these organizations were aligned with the civil rights movement; others were not. Historians note that lifelong pacifist A.J. Muste, who was seventy-seven years old in 1963, was instrumental in the creation of the antiwar movement.

Antiwar protestors, although primarily Caucasian, differed in age, occupation, region of the country, and socioeconomic status. The activists had a common bond: They opposed the war on moral and constitutional grounds. Vietnam veterans participated, as did grandmothers and celebrities such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, a renowned pediatrician credited as having a major

influence on the childrearing practices for the very generation called to serve in this unpopular war. Housewives, blue-collar workers, educators, and priests such as Philip and Daniel Berrigan (also known as the Berrigan Brothers) participated, to name a few, but students did play a major role not only in marches, but also by participating in teach-ins and moratoriums.

Student consciousness, raised by racial segregation in the South, sent many students to the South in the summer of 1961 on **Freedom Rides**, where they worked closely with civil rights organizations, such as the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, to end segregation and promote voter registration. This student involvement in the civil rights movement acted as a catalyst for student involvement in other pressing social issues of the day, primarily poverty, disarmament, and the Vietnam conflict. In 1962, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) issued the Port Huron Statement, which was a call to political action. Robert “Al” Haber and Thomas Hayden, based at the University of Michigan, were the primary authors of this document. The SDS organized numerous protests against the war. One of the most violent protests occurred in April 1968, during one of the bloodiest years of the war, when Mark Rudd, leader of Columbia University’s SDS chapter, aided by hundreds of students, occupied five campus buildings and held a dean hostage. Approximately 700 were arrested, 148 injured, and 120 charges of police brutality were filed. Another protest, which took place August 25–30, 1968, coincided with the **Democratic National Convention** in Chicago. This protest resulted in one death, incurred 658 arrests, and required medical attention for 425. The leaders of participating groups such as SDS, Youth International Party (Yippies), the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, National Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam (the Mobe), and two academics were arrested and became known as the Chicago Eight, later changed to the Chicago Seven when the trial of Bobby Seale, a Black Panther, was separated from the trial of the other seven—David Dellenger, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Lee Weiner, and John Friones. The SDS was a force in the antiwar movement, although it collapsed by 1969 when the Weathermen, an extremist faction of SDS, emerged. Proclaimed anticapitalists, they promoted revolution by the use of violence, which occurred during the Days of Rage in Chicago during the conspiracy trial of the Chicago Seven in October 1969. In a four-day spree, they inflicted much property damage on the Gold Coast of Chicago; later they were responsible for bombings, actions that damaged the nonviolent peace movement’s image, as people did not separate them from the nonviolent protestors. Weathermen leaders Mark Rudd, Bernadine Dohrn, Cathy Wilkerson, and John Jacobs surrendered themselves in the 1980s.

Campuses across America erupted in protests after the deadly confrontation that left four dead and nine wounded at Kent State University during a confrontation between students and the National Guard, who were called in on May 4, 1970. The action prompted eighty colleges to close. Fourteen days later in Mississippi, two Jackson State College students were killed by the National Guard, and twelve were wounded. Nevertheless, most antiwar protests were nonviolent. The effectiveness of the protests in stopping the

war is still being debated by scholars, but most agree that the sustained dissent to governmental policy is notable. *See also* Vietnam War and Race Riots.

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*Claudia Matherly Stolz*

**Arkansas.** *See* Elaine (Arkansas) Riot of 1919

**Arson.** *See* Black Church Arsons

### **Asbury Park (New Jersey) Riot of 1970**

The 1970 July 4th holiday weekend began with a period of civil unrest for Asbury Park, New Jersey. Although the trouble started Saturday evening with a few groups of young people breaking windows, Asbury Park's West Side community had been plagued by a significant lack of jobs, adequate housing, and recreation facilities that contributed to the unrest for many years. The number of citizens involved in the riots steadily escalated over the following nights, as did the level of destruction. Before peace was to return, much of the West Side would be severely damaged. In brief, the seven nights of unrest resulted in \$4 million of building and personal property damage, 167 arrests, 165 civilians wounded or injured, 15 police officers injured, the loss of an estimated 100 jobs, and an undetermined number of families made homeless ("Second Week," 1).

The small disturbances of July 4th received little immediate attention from the local and national press, but the city's entire police force was called to duty. By the early hours of Monday, July 6, the number of Asbury Park residents involved in the rioting significantly increased, as did the amount and extent of property damage. At this time, Police Chief Thomas S. Smith called almost 100 police officers from surrounding communities into the West Side to assist Asbury Park's police force. Mayor Joseph F. Mattice declared a state of emergency and, later that day, ordered a curfew from 10:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. for the city. The curfew would remain in place for the following three days, but its starting time would change as the violence decreased.

On the morning of Tuesday, July 7, West Side African American leaders presented a list of twenty demands to the Asbury Park City Council. Two new demands would be added during the following days. Demands such as amnesty for those arrested and the immediate removal of outside police forces were directly related to the current period of unrest. Many of the demands, however, addressed the pressing needs that created the

atmosphere in which such violence had erupted. For example, residents demanded the development of a Recreation Commission and the immediate employment of at least 100 West Side youths ("City Council," 1).

The economic disenfranchisement and lack of resources underlying the events had long been a reality for the city's African American West Side residents. In fact, citizens of the West Side made these pressing needs known to Mayor Mattice and the city council long before the events of the July 4th weekend. City officials also had recognized these growing problems. Unfortunately, requests for increased funding for the West Side remained unanswered from local, state, and federal levels. The state and federal government considered the needs of this community less pressing than those of other struggling cities.

By Wednesday, July 8, the majority of the West Side business district was damaged, and the city struggled to handle the increased demands resulting from the riots. The annex to the Monmouth County Jail in Asbury Park was at capacity, and conditions in the jail were described as almost unbearable at times (Wheeling, 1). Reports from the local hospital indicated that at least 32 of the 56 injured in the previous night of violence were treated for gunshot wounds (Wheeling, 1).

Citizen peace patrols started walking the most heavily damaged street on Wednesday. The citizen patrols encouraged members of the community to observe the imposed curfew. State police also remained in the West Side throughout the evening, patrolling the streets by car. When the sun rose the next day, the community had experienced a full night of calm. Throughout the rest of Thursday, July 9, the relative peace continued. New Jersey Gov. William T. Cahill toured the West Side and requested that President Richard Nixon declare Asbury Park a major disaster area.

Meetings between African American community leaders and the city council also took place on Wednesday. Although the parties involved succeeded in continuing the dialogue, the demands previously presented remained unanswered. Discussions of the West Side community's demands continued through Friday, July 10, but the city council failed to provide the answers promised the previous day. The city council's slow response to these demands and complaints of police misconduct added to the community's injury. West Side citizens felt disappointed by the failure of the local government to accept responsibility for its part in the underlying causes of the unrest.

Willie Hamm, the leading spokesman for the West Side, announced that further communication would be halted until the city council addressed the community's demands. Talks resumed later that day with a definitive goal of addressing the current demands. By late Friday evening West Side leaders and the city council came to terms, and all demands were at least minimally addressed.

The West Side remained calm for the following two days, and the state police left the neighborhood on Saturday. Disheartened by the violence that destroyed their neighborhood and injured their friends and families, West Side citizens united in efforts to aide those left homeless. African American community leaders continued lobbying for much-needed resources, while still facing many of the same obstacles that existed prior to the riots.



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*Elizabeth M. Webb*

### **Atlanta Civic League**

The Atlanta Civic League was founded in the wake of the horrendous **Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906** that occurred in September of that year. These events were instigated by numerous articles in Atlanta newspaper publications that repeatedly castigated Negroes as rapists and vagrants. Blacks and whites were killed in the rioting that caused deep turmoil in the city of Atlanta and was recounted in numerous autobiographical accounts of both black and white Atlanta citizens during that period. Noted author and sociologist, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, a resident of Atlanta, wrote a poem entitled “A Litany of Atlanta” lamenting the viciousness of the riot.

In the weeks following, Attorney Charles T. Hopkins worked to organize the Civic League, an interracial group of Atlanta residents focused on fostering racial harmony, healing, and enforcement of the law. This organization of blacks and whites involved local leaders of both communities, including Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor, J.W.E. Bowen, P. James Bryan, George Muse, and W.H. Crogman. By December 1906, the organization had grown to over 2,000 members who were part of either the black or the white side of the Civic League. The Civic League worked for months to improve race relations in the city of Atlanta during the aftermath of the race riots. Tuskegee University’s president **Booker T. Washington** endorsed the Civic League and their activities to fight injustice. Washington noted the Atlanta Civic League’s work to exonerate a Negro man accused of raping a white woman several months after the riot. Members of the Atlanta Civic League worked diligently to ensure that the real culprit was captured and tried for the assault. This task accomplished by the Atlanta Civic League was instrumental in preventing the **lynching** of an innocent black man and quelling racial tensions in Atlanta.

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*Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

**“Atlanta Compromise” Speech.** See *The Cotton States and International Exposition* (Atlanta, 1895); Washington, Booker T.

**Atlanta Cotton States Exposition.** See *The Cotton States and International Exposition* (Atlanta, 1895)

## Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906

On a humid September evening in 1906, in the shadow of the state capitol and three blocks from police headquarters, a race riot broke out in Atlanta that paralyzed the city for three days. While authorities scrambled to quell the violence, mobs of fierce white men roamed the streets attacking black citizens, vandalizing black businesses, and searching train stations, freight yards, trolley cars, and hotels for black workers. Hundreds were beaten, dozens murdered. Hospitals overflowed with casualties, and undertakers received daily calls to retrieve bodies discovered in the morning light. The official death toll counted ten black and two white victims. Unofficial reports estimated over fifty fatalities. How did one of the most populous cities in the country, known for its relatively progressive race relations, descend into mob rule and stall the cause of social reform in the South for decades?

Atlanta occupied an unusual place in the post-Reconstruction South. At the turn of the century, while much of the region was stagnating economically and culturally, Atlanta was one of the bustling metropolises of Progressive era America. In 1900, the city's population was 90,000; by 1910, it was 150,000 (roughly one-third black). Eleven major railroads used it as a distribution center, its strategic location at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains made it a prime link between the Tennessee Valley and the Eastern Seaboard. Bank clearings in 1900 totaled \$96 million; in 1906 they rose to \$235 million. Among U.S. cities, only Los Angeles enjoyed faster growth.

A racial/economic philosophy underlay Atlanta commerce, one at odds with the radical racism of the time. In what was called the New South vision, Atlanta business leaders and politicians crafted a plan whereby the rural South would be complemented by centers of industry, commerce, and transportation—and these would be operated by a white management/black worker division of labor. Whereas the South was largely an agrarian society in ruins after the Civil War, enterprising men such as *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry Grady conceived a region open to expanded trade and Northern investment. Grady saw opportunities in the South for modern business methods, with farmers cooperating with railroads and consumer markets to keep prosperity on the rise. One advantage that Grady and other New South believers offered was a ready working class: African Americans. In bringing black men into the industrial system, albeit at the bottom, the New South ensured the investment of Northern capital, promoted economic stability among the lower classes, and eased racial tensions by allowing blacks an acknowledged place in the economy while not infringing upon white supremacy in social and political matters. They found their black counterpart in **Booker T. Washington**, who in his famed "Atlanta Compromise" speech assured white employers that "Casting down your bucket among my people . . . you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories" (Washington, 223).

As a result, Atlanta in 1906 boasted a thriving middle-class black population and culture. Busy enterprises along Auburn Avenue and blocks of trim

houses in the Fourth Ward testified to a stable bourgeois community despite the ever-present indignities of **Jim Crow**. In the city, except for the colored-only enterprises, jobs were limited mainly to the freight yards, warehouses, hotels and restaurants, and private residences, but they were plentiful.

Intellectual life for African Americans was vibrant as well. Atlanta had the largest concentration of Negro colleges in the world, including Atlanta University and Spelman Seminary, where **W.E.B. Du Bois**, John Hope, J.W.E. Bowen, and other prominent scholars and teachers taught classes and hosted conferences. The churches were large and active, run by men such as Bishop **Henry M. Turner**, a militant black nationalist and advocate of emigration to Africa. Booker T. Washington maintained a loyal following in the city, while his rivals edited the most sophisticated African American periodical in the country, *The Voice of the Negro*.

The visible signs of black success and interracial cooperation prompted Atlantans to claim to have solved the "race problem" in America. Business leaders and politicians were quick to discourage race baiting and to encourage black employment. As a 1902 Chamber of Commerce publication put it, "The white man and the Negro have lived together in this city more peacefully and in a better spirit than in any other city, in either the North or the South" (Martin, 25).

And yet, alongside the genuine progress, could be found all the customary troubles of urban growth, compounded by racial tensions. Downtown Atlanta was the hub of luxury hotels, the largest convention center in the South, state office buildings, and specialty shops, but certain sections open to African Americans catered to lower habits. In the backwash behind Marietta Street stood a dozen brothels, while along Decatur Street ran a series of saloons and "club rooms" offering corn whiskey and draft beer. Pool rooms, pawn shops, dance houses, and gambling dens beckoned to passersby and regular members who paid one dollar a month to earn a reduced cover charge. Fights and domestic disturbances happened nightly. Fugitives paid for hiding places while proprietors stored up funds to post bail for cohorts seized in the police sweeps that passed through now and then to round up drunks and loiterers. All too many rural blacks searching for work found no gainful prospects and ended up joining the underworld economy. Typhoid and tuberculosis were common, as were alcoholism and cocaine addiction.

Crime and punishment were an overt fact of life. In 1906, Atlanta recorded over 21,000 arrests. By contrast, Milwaukee, with three times the population of Atlanta, had only one-quarter as many arrests. Most of the cases were run through the City Recorder, a hasty trial court in which suspects were brought before a judge on charges of drunkenness, vagrancy, larceny, and other misdemeanors for quick judgment. Defendants appeared before the bench without counsel, and the credibility of witnesses and levying of punishment stood solely with the judge. Most cases lasted no more than a few minutes, with convicted persons paying a fine or serving short sentences in the city stockade. Longer sentences were passed to county courts, where criminals ended up doing time on the chain gang or in the convict lease camps.

The chain gang and convict lease systems were an integral part of the city and state economy. Prisoners in the former were made to build roads, clean thoroughfares, and haul materials for public projects. Prisoners in the latter were “rented” to private firms for a daily fee—mines, brick factories, turpentine plantations—where the overseers worked prisoners mercilessly while providing minimal nutrition and health care. The annual death rate for convicts sometimes reached 5 percent. Reformers protested the system, but the state coveted the free labor and private revenue. In 1906, funds from private contracts surpassed \$300,000. Cotton farmers claimed that without convict labor they could not harvest their crops, and county officials maintained that without convict revenue the county would go broke.

A growing city, an African American underclass, a penal system with perverse incentives, a prominent black intelligentsia, and a rising black middle-class—these were some of the ingredients that led to race-based upheaval. The only missing factors were spokesmen and provocateurs who might whip these elements into an inflammatory mix, preparing the social atmosphere in which mob rule might arise. The figures with the greatest power to shape public opinion were the same in 1906 as they are now: politicians and journalists. They surfaced early in the year, when a heated gubernatorial campaign inside the Democratic Party descended into race baiting and demagoguery. Two factions were fighting for control over the state, the conservatives and the reformers. Led by candidate Clark Howell, the conservatives followed the New South party line of promoting the corporate agenda, lobbying for railroad causes, and downplaying race tensions. The reformers, led by candidate Hoke Smith, mistrusted moneyed interests. They drafted a mild populist agenda, accusing Wall Street of keeping wages low and prices high, railroads of inflating freight costs, and lobbyists of controlling the legislature. In the spring, Smith hit upon a wedge issue: the black vote. With support from Tom Watson, a former Populist who had become a rabid white supremacist, Smith started to cast his campaign as a crusade for white privilege and power. Touring the rural districts, he punctuated his speeches with racist battle cries. His main platform on the issue called for a simple expedient: Remove the black man from the polling booth.

What this meant was that the very progress that Atlanta hailed as a marker of success became a target of reproach. A steady black middle-class entailed a black political bloc, Smith and others warned. With voters roughly divided between conservative and reform Democrats (at this time, the Republican Party was a negligible power in the South), the black vote could become a swing vote, exercising power disproportionate to its actual numbers. With evidence of black uplift coming from Atlanta, and with politicians demonizing it into a grave challenge to white society, Negro **disfranchisement** became the prime issue in the campaign. Howell disdained such demagoguery, but finding that Smith’s white supremacism attracted cheers, he joined in decrying the black vote. By the end of spring, both candidates were calling themselves the white people’s savior.

The candidates’ racist speechifying was echoed in the newspapers. Rural periodicals always found race a profitable topic, and Smith’s cautions of **Black Power** produced fittingly vivid headlines. In Atlanta, the media

situation was aggravated by competition for readership between four newspapers, the *Constitution*, the *Journal*, the *Georgian*, and the *Evening News*. The *Constitution* dated back to Reconstruction, the *Journal* to the 1880s, and both represented clear political wings (Howell was a former editor at the *Constitution*, Smith a former owner of the *Journal*). The other two were upstart papers looking to increase subscriptions and popularity. None of them could afford to downplay the politics of race and, as the election approached, editorials and headlines (sometimes trumpeted in multiple “extras” throughout the afternoon) raised the black threat in ever more menacing terms. An *Evening News* headline announced a typical sentiment: “Vigorous Appeal for White Supremacy” (January 11, 1906).

But political power wasn’t the only threat amplified in the newspapers. Editors and commentators sounded a deeper, more frightening prospect: miscegenation. Ever since Emancipation, fears of sexual mixing had haunted white communities, with white supremacists predicting a society of degenerate mongrels should southern culture embrace equality. Politicians such as Sen. Ben Tillman from South Carolina and Mississippi Gov. James K. Vardaman warned of roving black men intent on copulation with white women. Journalists in the South seized upon an isolated sexual incident as a harbinger of widespread depravity. Up until 1906, Atlanta had been largely free of sexual alarmism, even though a tide of Negrophobia (a term used by black commentators for the wild fears of whites) had been sweeping the South since the 1890s. But with the gubernatorial candidates playing the race card and newspapers jostling for readers, the few cases of assault early in the year were too convenient to be treated as ordinary events in a large city. Politicians could use them to castigate the black vote and promote themselves as the white people’s candidate. Newspaper editors could recount them in bold headlines and lurid images.

On July 31, when a young white girl on the outskirts of Atlanta was attacked by an itinerant black man, the inevitable result was lynch law. While walking through a neighbor’s field with some fruit for breakfast, she was grabbed by him and dragged into the bushes. Maybe he was just hungry or maybe he had more sinister intentions—in such a heated environment, getting to the facts was impossible—but moments later the girl raced home with her clothes torn. Within hours, the sheriff had posted an \$800 reward, posses with dogs covered the countryside, and a crowd of armed white men skulked around the girl’s home waiting for a suspect to be brought to the victim and identified. Later in the day, one man appeared held fast by a dozen captors as 100 others surrounded him and law enforcement officers stood by. When the girl stepped out on the porch to face him and cried out, “That’s him!” judgment was instantaneous. The *Constitution* counted over forty shots fired at close range, one of them wounding the victim’s father. The man expired in the front yard, mounted county patrolmen took charge, and the lynchers drifted away without a word. No inquiry was made into the lynching, and Governor Terrell of Georgia declined to offer a reward for any further information.

The episode proves that Atlanta had reached a fever pitch by mid-summer. Headlines in the newspapers harped on an “epidemic of Negro

crime." After the lynching, the *Evening News* implored "Let Us Give Protection to Our Suburban Population" (August 3, 1906), and proposed a network of vigilantes to scout the countryside at night and seize wandering black men. Another case of suburban attack at the end of August produced a fierce manhunt for days, with private citizens forming their own neighborhood watch committees. The *Journal* advised, "Let the Women Arm Themselves" (August 23, 1906), while the *Evening News* pondered "How To Prevent Crime against White Women" (August 23, 1906). Black leaders tried to curb Negrophobia with reasoned statements about every race having its share of criminals and lynch law being a travesty of civilized society, but the race feeling was too powerful. Hoke Smith declared in a widely publicized speech, "We will control the Negro peacefully if we can, but with guns if we must" (*Atlanta Evening News*, July 1, 1906). Booker T. Washington opened the annual convention of the National Negro Business League in Atlanta and stated publicly, "The Negro is committing too much crime, North and South." Days later, he noted privately, "When I got there I found the feeling between the races intensely strong, almost to the breaking point" (Harlan et al., 70). Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor, the leading African American minister in Atlanta, addressed the city council and advocated that the bars be shut down before a riot broke out.

The final weekend of the summer began with a visit from the Great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan. On Thursday, September 20, the Populist leader and presidential candidate stayed in Atlanta to speak on the issues of the day, attracting thousands of citizens from all around the state. That night, as the dignitaries savored a banquet at the Piedmont Hotel, the sheriff of Fulton County sidled up to Governor Terrell to inform him of another assault outside Atlanta. Lynch parties were forming, and word of the incident was spreading around the city. The next day's newspapers asked, "Negro Clubs the Cause of Assault?" and "Men of Fulton, What Will You Do To Stop These Outrages against the Women?" (*Atlanta Georgian*, September 21, 1906). On Friday, stories circulated of a drunken black man invading a white family home the previous night, and police officers the next morning began a slow circuit through all the colored saloons in town. The *Constitution* urged, "Drive the Loafers and Vagrants to the Chaingangs!" (September 2, 1906). Several loiterers and inebriates were arrested and, in one bar, pictures of partly nude white women were found and confiscated.

Despite the crackdown, by midday the sidewalks of shadier streets downtown were jammed with loafers, delivery boys, streetwalkers, and tourists. In black neighborhoods, parents expecting trouble advised their children to stay close to home, but the same expectation led many curious or angry white youths downtown. Saloonkeepers and restaurateurs served drinks and pan-fried lunches all afternoon, expecting a heavy crowd by evening. On some corners, groups of white men and boys stood and grumbled about the previous days' assaults. The first issue of the *Evening News* offered minor cases of black effrontery—a porter clasping a white woman's arm to help her onto a car, a smirking black man struck by an indignant white man at the station, and liquor licenses refused for "Negro vice dens."

Around 4:00 P.M., a shout echoed from the street. "Negro Attempts To Assault Mrs. Mary Chafin Near Sugar Creek Bridge" (*Journal*, September 22, 1906) was the headline of the *Journal's* first extra, cried out by dozens of newsboys scattering across the downtown area. A suburban dairyman's wife, it reported, barely escaped assault by a strange black man hiding in her barn. The extra was passed through the white saloons and restaurants, and men began collecting in the street. Soon after, the words "Second Assault" (*Evening News*, September 22, 1906) echoed down the thoroughfare. It was an extra of the *Evening News* recounting a black man grabbing a white woman on her back porch, then running away when her family heard her screams and came running. An hour later, the *Evening News* issued another extra, "Third Assault," recording yet another white woman seized in her backyard by a "fiendish Negro" (September 22, 1906).

Rambunctious newsboys stationed themselves around the train stations, theaters, hotels, and restaurants. They clambered aboard trolleys and sold hundreds of extras to riders entering the downtown area and to conductors heading out to the suburbs. Along Decatur Street, 2,000 white men congregated and traded stories while a few policemen scanned the crowd for pickpockets and hooligans. A man mounted a dry-goods box and brandished an extra to the crowd. Random conversations ceased and others collected around him as he commenced a panicky diatribe on black rapists. Onlookers shouted back in accord as whites in the vicinity made their way toward the shouting. He harangued the city and its white inhabitants for tolerating the crime, for allowing a single perpetrator of insult to escape immediate retribution.

People on the fringe of the gathering ran to tell friends and cohorts that a mob was forming. A black messenger boy passed by on a bicycle and was knocked down. Another black bystander on the edge of the crowd was taunted and pushed. When he struck back, a dozen men beat him senseless and left him bleeding on the pavement. Five thousand white men and boys soon made up the tumult. The mayor appeared and ordered water hoses turned on the crowd. Men split up into gangs of enraged whites, half-drunk observers, and rowdy boys racing down the streets and alleyways looking for black pedestrians to harass. Bars emptied as news of a riot in progress spread.

Policemen swarmed the area, but heavily outnumbered and, in some cases, in secret sympathy with the mob, they were helpless to stop the attacks. By 8:00 P.M., about 10,000 howling men and boys roamed the city blocks. One mob of 200 began working its way down Decatur Street invading the black saloons and clubs, destroying storefronts and chasing customers out the back entrances. Other gangs focused on the streetcars, many of which carried black janitors and dishwashers unaware of the pandemonium into town for the night shift. At one point, thirteen streetcars were stalled at one intersection, the white passengers allowed to descend while the black passengers were treated as prey. Usually, if a black man or woman was caught, the mob inflicted a few blows and let him or her pass. If he or she fought back, however, the assailants closed in, sometimes with lethal force. Some gangs, however, were immediately bent on murder. One group

of white men poured into Leland's Barbershop. A single shot sounded and a young bootblack slumped to the floor. The black barbers, too terrified to speak or flee, continued "mechanically snipping hair and shaving the faces of white men" (*Evening News*, September 2, 1906), the newspapers recounted.

Mobs controlled the downtown area. Black men and women sought whatever refuge and hiding place they could find. Cabbies at the railroad stations abandoned their carriages and scurried into the pitch-dark freight yards. Dishwashers and hotel porters huddled in back alleys behind refuse piles. With blacks in flight and white gangs on the prowl, it wasn't so much of a riot as it was a hunt. The atrocities accumulated for hours. A young man was clubbed to death on the Forsyth Street viaduct. A railroad porter was dragged out of his Pullman car and shot to death on the tracks. To handle the overflow of cases at Grady Hospital, police headquarters was turned into an emergency clinic. The night's carnage did not end until after midnight when a light rain began to fall and state militia arrived in the city.

The morning revealed an Atlanta never seen before. Small detachments of soldiers marched from corner to corner. Shop windows lay in fragments on the sidewalk. Pawn shops that a day earlier offered hundreds of guns for sale were empty and quiet. Trolleys were running, but with extra cabmen armed with shotguns. Hundreds of citizens wandered along, gazing at signs of the night's disorder. Most churches canceled their evening services.

Nobody thought the violence was over. Then, men who perpetrated the alleged assaults were still at large, a fact licensing hordes of white vigilantes to comb the suburbs with dogs and armaments. The newspapers advocated deputizing more white men to constrain the white gangs and to prevent black reprisal. A black man in a suburb to the south was arrested for carrying concealed weapons and placed in a rickety shack serving as a jail.

In the black community, citizens were readying for another round of attacks once night fell. Soldiers monitored the downtown streets, but many neighborhoods remained defenseless. Furthermore, black citizens saw little evidence that the authorities would act preemptively against the gangs. The sheriff of Fulton County had spent most of the previous night at home. (He claimed his phone line had been cut and learned of the tumult only when a messenger showed up hours after it started.) The newspapers still ranted about "Negro crime," blaming the sexual assaults for the killings, not the killers.

Small incidents began soon after dusk. The man arrested in the suburbs was taken quietly from his cell by a dozen citizens and hanged to death in a stand of Georgia pines. At his home on Houston Street, Walter White, Sr., mail carrier, was told by friends of a mob forming several blocks away boasting of entering black residential areas to "clean out the niggers!" (White, 11–12). White procured a gun for himself and one for his son, extinguished the lights in the house, and settled behind the front door for the night.

Just before midnight, a rumble sounded, then a crash—an arc light smashed in the street. Mrs. White rushed to the rear of the house, while Mr. White perched at one front window, his son Walter at the other. A vanguard appeared waving torches and clubs. A voice cried out, "That's where



that nigger mail carrier lives! Let's burn it down!" Walter recognized it as the voice of the son of the White's grocer. Mr. White hissed, "Son, don't shoot until the first man puts his foot on the lawn and then—don't you miss!" (White, 11–12).

Vandals mustered at the curb. "In the flickering light the mob swayed, paused, and began to flow toward us," Walter recalled years later in his autobiography, *A Man Called White*. With his fair hair and blue eyes, he had moved among whites as white. He had lived among blacks as black, knowing that a fraction of black blood placed him squarely on one side of the racial divide. As he faced the mob, a new race consciousness grew inside him. "I knew then who I was. I was a Negro, a human being to be hunted, hanged, abused, discriminated against, kept in poverty and ignorance, in order that those whose skin was white could have readily at hand a proof of their superiority" (White, 11–12).

When the crowd surged forward, White took aim. But a gunshot from the house next door sent the would-be arsonists into flight. Years later, White rose to the top of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. He also worked as an expert investigator of lynchings. Shielded by his fair skin and blue eyes, he would journey to regions in which a **lynching** had occurred, passing as a traveling white man curious about local news. Barely escaping lynching on a few occasions, White mustered information, took names and stories from witnesses, and entered them in NAACP archives.

On Monday, September 24, the authorities struck back. It was clear that the simple presence of soldiers in the downtown area would not halt the skirmishes in different neighborhoods or discourage the troublemakers roving around the freight yards and suburbs. In the City Recorder's Court, the judge started to work through a docket crowded with men arrested for rioting, looting, and drunkenness. A military order prohibited the further sale of firearms, and saloons were closed by order of the mayor. The police chief declared that any officers failing to suppress violence would be terminated, and no males under age twenty-one were allowed on the streets after 5:00 P.M. Six hundred state troops patrolled the streets.

Citizens remained nervous, though. W.E.B. Du Bois jumped off a train from Alabama where he had been doing census work when he heard of the outbreak. He raced home to his wife and daughter, loaded a shotgun, and stood guard throughout the evening. Eugene Mitchell, an attorney and real estate developer, heard from a neighbor that blacks bent on revenge might leave the Negro colleges and march through their district at dusk. He, too, began an all-night vigil, interrupted only by his small daughter Margaret when she brought him an old Confederate sword from the attic as another weapon of defense. Thirty years later she wrote *Gone with the Wind*. In Brownsville, a black village to the south, a gunfight erupted between local citizens and a group of policemen and deputies sent to disarm them. One officer and several residents were killed, and more than 100 men were rounded up and charged with murder.

On Tuesday, more state troops filed into the city as hundreds of black refugees were seen on the roads leading away from Atlanta. With blacks now

armed and ready to shoot back, a stalemate had set in. Soldiers and police officers conducted some house-to-house searches in black neighborhoods to confiscate weapons (there was no effort to disarm whites), but sniping between white and black gangs continued. Business leaders stepped in. The chamber of commerce convened a gathering of white and black leaders and invited black leaders to speak out. A few hours later, the chamber of commerce hosted a larger meeting at the county court house to condemn the violence and restore the city to law and order. The damage to Atlanta, it declared, was not measured only in terms of casualties: "Saturday evening at eight o'clock the credit of Atlanta was good for any number of millions of dollars in New York City or Boston or any financial center; today we couldn't borrow fifty cents" (Baker, 20). A committee of ten was appointed to work with the mayor and governor to disperse the troublemakers. A drizzle began at 10:00 P.M., sending the temperature down into the sixties. The night passed without incident.

On Wednesday, the *Constitution* headline announced, "Atlanta Is Herself Again; Business Activity Restored and the Riot Is Forgotten" (September 26, 1906). Officials and business leaders set about calming relations between the races and repairing the city's damaged reputation. The Fulton County Grand Jury begged witnesses to killings to come forward and testify. At a City Council meeting held on September 28, 1906, the mayor stated that while "several beastly crimes attempted by black brutes upon white women" had transpired, "I do not believe that violence would have been resorted to if it had not been for the inflammatory, sensational newspaper extras that were continually flooding the streets." A relief fund was set up for the families of victims, and white leaders visited black congregations to apologize for the outbreak and promise better protection in the future. Some racist editorials cropped up in the newspapers, but citywide disapproval and the list of casualties curbed the public's appetite for race baiting.

Legal action proceeded. A police board charged several officers with misconduct (allowing assaults to take place, releasing rioters from custody, failing to disarm gangs). In the City Recorder's Court, dozens of white men were brought to the bar. Those guilty of misdemeanors received a 30-day term in the stockade or a \$100 fine. More serious criminals were turned over to Superior Court. About sixty black men from the Brownsville shoot-out were charged with murdering the police officer, but only one man was convicted. Of the others, the trial jury determined, "We think the Negroes were gathered together just as white people were in other parts of town, for the purpose of defending their homes if they were attacked" (*Atlanta Georgian*, December 12, 1906). In November, a black man was acquitted of rape, even though a white woman on the stand identified him as her assailant.

The larger implications of the riot took months to materialize. For Atlanta's black intelligentsia, the riot was a disaster. Booker T. Washington spoke out on the riot in the **accommodationist** terms he'd used for years, always seeking to avoid stern criticism of whites. But this time, his attempt to attach a silver lining to the riot and claim that it would produce better understanding between the races fell flat. Washington had always predicted

that solid working-class modesty and thrift would protect blacks from race terrorism, but the rioters targeted all black citizens they could find, upstanding or not. Many black men and women lived exemplary Washingtonian lives and still they suffered.

Black intellectuals living in Atlanta were intimidated and distraught. The editor of *The Voice of the Negro* was run out of town for having sent an anonymous telegram to the *New York World* accusing “sensational newspapers and unscrupulous politicians” (*New York World*, September 27, 1906) of stoking race hatred with trumped up stories. (The Western Union operative passed his name to the police.) W.E.B. Du Bois returned to his scientific work in Alabama and said little about the affair. Disillusioned with Atlanta, he left his post at Atlanta University a few years later and moved north to help manage the newly formed NAACP. Bishop Henry M. Turner renewed his call for mass emigration to Africa: “In the name of all that is good and righteous, what do you see in this country for the black man but constant trouble?” (*Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1906).

For Atlanta’s white community, the riot was a mark of shame best overcome by returning the city to regular operations of commerce. A *Journal* editorial urged, “Obey the Law and Get Back to Business” (September 24, 1906). Business leaders worried that an exodus of black families would create a labor shortage and depress real estate values. In the ensuing months, business recovered, but the city’s reputation for progressive race relations was shattered. In the coming years it would become just like any other southern city in its periodic outbreaks of race-based incident. In 1915, Leo Frank was lynched a few miles north of the city, and later that year the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** was resurrected in a midnight ceremony atop Stone Mountain, ten miles east of downtown. For years, Klan headquarters would be located in an Atlanta suburb. It would take decades for Atlanta to become a home of racial progress once again. *See also* Atlanta Civic League; Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1967; Disenfranchisement; Hopkins, Charles T.; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Urban Riots; White, Walter; White Mobs.

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### Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1967

The summer of 1967 involved a series of high-profile racial riots in urban areas such as Tampa, Florida; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; and

Newark, New Jersey, that sparked seemingly irrational violence and destruction of property. A riot in Atlanta, Georgia, that was sparked by a minor incident on June 17 of that year had a different outcome than the other cities mentioned. Efforts by police and community officials and the mayor quickly brought a potentially volatile situation under control.

In 1967, Atlanta was in the process of positioning itself to be the model city for the New South. Rapid post–World War II industrialization along with the annexation of outlying communities turned the city into a vigorous metropolitan area. Atlanta, whose African American citizens in the city accounted for around 44 percent of the population by the mid-1960s, was in the process of racially integrating many of its municipal services; the number of black police officers was higher than those of most major cities in the nation. The **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** along with its prominent and controversial president, **Stokely Carmichael**, was headquartered in Atlanta. The city, despite plans to be a progressive southern metropolis, also maintained a very large membership of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**.

Despite its progressive posture in the 1960s, conditions in inner-city Atlanta had been less than desirable due to overcrowding, economic depression, discriminatory practices, and generally poor living conditions; these conditions were similar to those of Detroit and Newark that year. There was a very sharp differentiation between white and black salaries, and median incomes for black families were less than those of whites. Local newspapers continued to advertise job openings separately by race, and even when blacks were able to obtain decent employment, chances for advancement were still slim. In addition, overcrowding in residential areas and schools were daily realities in black communities. Education was substandard in the black schools as *de facto* segregation continued to separate students. Recreational resources that could reduce levels of restlessness and idleness were largely absent in the area. African American citizens began to vocalize their grievances over these conditions increasingly as tensions between blacks and whites in the city began to grow. With few acceptable outlets to vent frustrations, troubles began to brew at a shopping center that was an area gathering place in a community known as Dixie Hills.

In June 1967, when a black security officer refused to let a young black man carrying a beer can into a restaurant at the Dixie Hills Shopping Center, the two tussled and were soon joined by the young man's two friends. Police were called to the scene to assist the security guard and arrested the three youths outside the shopping center as a large crowd of 200 to 300 people grew to watch the activity. The crowd quietly dispersed when directed to do so by police.

The next day, another young African American man began banging on a fire alarm bell at the same shopping center where the other arrests were made; the alarm had apparently short-circuited and the youth was hitting it with a broom handle. Officers who were responding to the fire alarm directed the young man to refrain from hitting the bell. He refused to stop and a scuffle ensued. Soon, some onlookers who had gathered to observe

the activity decided to jump into the fray. One of the officers fired his revolver into the crowd and shot the youngster, who received minor wounds during the confrontation.

A meeting that night in the community was attended by many local citizens and had several speakers, including Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael, who had just been bailed out of jail after an altercation with police the previous day, gave a rousing speech and the audience poured out into the street in protest. The crowd grew to over 1,000 and threw rocks and bottles at police cars and broke car windows as acts of defiance against the police, who became concerned that they were being fired upon. Other officers quickly responded to the scene and fired their weapons over the heads of the crowd, which acquiesced. In the end, only ten people were arrested, most of them young.

A few days later, another community gathering produced another fracas between residents and police. The citizen protestors numbered 200 and the strength of the officers was around 300. When a small incendiary device exploded near some of the officers, weapons were fired into a crowd, killing one man and seriously injuring one boy. Community workers quickly worked to deter any future violence and Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., paid a visit to the area to request calm. Efforts by militant activist **H. Rap Brown** to incite another demonstration by the residents failed and politicians and black leaders desiring to remove Stokely Carmichael from the area drew up petitions for his ouster.

Improvements to the area that had been promised prior to the events of June 17 and 18 were put into place the next day. A black youth patrol similar to one that had begun earlier in Tampa, Florida, began in Atlanta although it was met with opposition by SNCC, which felt the idea was a sell-out to the white power structure. The establishment of the youth patrol possibly assisted in staving off future racial outbreaks in the city.

According to a 1968 commission that investigated the race riots of 1967, there were several factors that contributed to the violent outbreaks. These factors included crowded and unsafe inner-city living conditions made worse by the heat of that summer, a large number of unsupervised young people on the streets, unsatisfactory police–community relations, slow and inaccurate responses from the police, and the transmission of inaccurate information. During that “long, hot summer,” Atlanta had these same contributing factors but efforts made by city officials helped prevent the extensive destruction that was encountered in Detroit, Newark, and other areas. *See also* Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906; Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967.

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*Leonard A. Steverson*

### **Augusta (Georgia) Riot of 1970**

The Augusta (Georgia) Riot of 1970 began on the evening of May 11 and ended before dawn the next day. During the riot, six people were killed, all

black men, each one shot in the back by police. In addition to those deaths, 80 people were injured, 200 were arrested, and 50 businesses in the city's center, many owned by Augusta's Chinese residents, were burned.

The riot occurred at the close of a decade marked by protest and urban unrest (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). The events that framed the riot clearly demonstrate the nature of resistance and of government response to that resistance in the period. One week before the riot, on May 4, Ohio national guardsmen killed four students at Kent State University, where they were part of a group protesting the **Vietnam War** (see **Antiwar Protests**). Three days after the Augusta riot, Mississippi Highway Patrol officers killed two of the students protesting the alleged murder of Charles Evers, the brother of slain civil rights leader **Medgar Evers**. Although these events were a part of life in the United States in the late 1960s, the riot in Augusta, the "Garden City of the South," was the first major riot of the new decade and the largest riot of the period in Georgia.

In 1970, 70,000 people lived in Augusta. Half the city's population was black. The city was rigidly segregated; blacks were concentrated within the city's limits while whites lived in the surrounding county and in North Augusta. Eighty percent of rental housing in the city was in violation of the housing code, and black high school attrition rates were abysmal. Unemployment among African Americans was widespread, despite economic growth in the city as a whole, much of it brought by Fort Gordon and the Atomic Energy Commission, both federal projects. Augusta is also home of golf's fabled Masters Tournament. In the months before the riot, blacks bristled at the fact that the tournament hosted a white South African participant. Housing, unemployment, and blatant **racism** created the backdrop for the riot, making the city a powder keg ready to explode. As occurred in many other riots of the period, an instance of police misconduct was the riot's precipitating event (see **Police Brutality**).

The riot began when a sixteen-year-old mentally disabled boy, Charles Oatman, was killed in the Augusta jail on May 9. The jail had long been an issue of concern for blacks in Augusta. Many of the town's residents were unhappy with the conditions there; they were particularly upset with the practice of holding youth offenders with members of the adult population. A group known as the Committee of 10 asked for a federal investigation of the Augusta Police Department and of the city and county penal system six months before the riot, after police arrested and allegedly manhandled Grady Abrams, a black city councilman. Police initially reported that Oatman sustained fatal injuries after he fell from his bunk, but an autopsy determined that he had been tortured over several days. His body was covered with cigarette burns and bruises, all in different states of healing. The coroner determined that he had endured numerous severe beatings. Upon these revelations, the police changed their story and charged two of his cellmates with the murder.

As news of Oatman's death spread among Augusta's black community, its leaders met with the chairman of the county commission at the county municipal building and negotiated separate juvenile detention within the jail. When they emerged from the meeting, a crowd of 500 had gathered around

the building. Some members of the crowd tore down the Georgia state flag, which was emblazoned with the confederate battle flag, and burned it. Rev. A.D. Sims, a leader of the local **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** branch, urged those assembled to meet for a rally. As the crowd made its way to the appointed location, the riot began. People threw rocks at motorists, looted stores in the area, and eventually destroyed at least fifty stores.

The unrest was quickly contained, but as the smoke cleared it became apparent that police and other leaders, including Georgia's Gov. Lester Maddox, were guilty of overreacting. The governor immediately adopted a scorched-earth policy toward the rioters, whom he claimed were stirred to action by communists and members of the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**. Concerned about snipers, although none were actually ever found, Maddox also ordered the police to deal with them by razing "any building they're in to its very foundation if necessary to get them out" (Southern Regional Council, 25–26). At 1:00 A.M. on the morning of May 12, 1,200 national guardsmen arrived on the scene. Although the riot was over before dawn, the National Guard did not leave the area until May 18.

Autopsies confirmed that the six men killed in the riot were all shot in the back—one was shot nine times—with police-issued shotguns. According to witnesses, as many as four of these men were bystanders. In any case, not a single one of the victims was armed and two were teenagers. After the riot, police arrested the city's "one true militant," Wilbert Allen, and charged him with inciting a riot (Southern Regional Council, 38). The Committee of 10 negotiated the creation of the interracial Human Relations Committee to deal with race relations surrounding the issues of employment, education, housing, and law enforcement in Augusta. The committee still exists today.

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*Shatema A. Threadcraft*

# B

## Beaumont (Texas) Riot of 1943

A little-known World War II race riot occurred in Beaumont, Texas, on June 15 and 16, 1943. East of Houston near the Gulf of Mexico, Beaumont became heavily populated as workers moved there to support the war effort through shipbuilding and petroleum production. The city's inhabitants expanded from 59,000 in 1940 to almost 80,000 by 1943. While the African American community remained approximately one-third of the overall population, overcrowding and unparalleled integration created serious tensions in city services, such as housing, health care, and transportation. War-related food shortages and espionage and sabotage rumors also plagued the city.

Several episodes in early 1943 served to foretell the impending riot. A series of violent bus incidents in January between whites and blacks led city officials to set up a segregated transportation system. Hostility also permeated the Pennsylvania Shipyards, Beaumont's largest defense contractor, after large numbers of black workers arrived, creating competition for the bitter white workforce. Preparations for two upcoming meetings stirred hostilities between the races as well. The local chapter of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** arranged for a regional convention to take place in Beaumont at the end of June. And the African American community organized their annual *Juneteenth* commemoration of emancipation for June 19, when hundreds of area blacks planned to visit the city. Rumors of a Juneteenth armed black revolt began to circulate among Beaumont's whites.

Relations turned particularly dismal on June 5, after information surfaced that a black man purportedly raped, beat, and stabbed an eighteen-year-old telephone operator, whose father worked at the already tense Pennsylvania Shipyards. The woman escaped, and the police promptly shot and apprehended a twenty-four-year-old black defense worker and ex-convict at the scene of the crime. As the alleged assailant lay dying in the hospital, both of Beaumont's newspapers circulated stories of the incident. A group of around 150 men gathered outside the hospital with the intention of **lynching** the man, but later dispersed after being persuaded that he would soon die of his wounds anyway.



Another rape accusation less than two weeks later amplified rampant rumors of black aggression and quickly incited the race riot. In the early afternoon of June 15, a young woman, the wife of a shipyard worker, reported to police that a black man invaded her home and raped her as her three children lay sleeping nearby. News of the alleged rape spread swiftly, especially among workers at the Pennsylvania Shipyards. That evening around 2,000 workers left the shipyards for the downtown jail, where they assumed police held a suspect. Another 1,000 joined the mob, and they demanded that the suspect be given to them. The police, and even the alleged victim, convinced them that they had no suspect incarcerated. But the crowd remained agitated and turned toward Beaumont's two black districts.

Fifteen hours of brutality followed. Whites wielding guns and other weapons burned and looted black-owned structures and attacked any African American they encountered. Three blacks and one white died, and some fifty people suffered injuries. A Texas State Guard battalion and other law officials rushed to Beaumont on June 16, and the acting Texas governor declared the city under martial law for four days, sealing it off and setting a curfew. Police never found evidence of sexual assault, and the woman left quietly after the riot. Some 2,000 black residents fled Beaumont as well. Although police arrested over 200 riot participants, most went free due to insufficient evidence. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Ann V. Collins*

**Baldwin, James.** *See The Fire Next Time*

### **Bensonhurst (New York) Incident (1989)**

The widely publicized death of **Yusef Hawkins**, a young African American man killed by a group of whites in Bensonhurst, New York, in August 1989, created outrage across the country and severely aggravated racial tensions in New York City.

On August 23, 1989, sixteen-year-old Hawkins and a group of his friends traveled from his Brooklyn neighborhood to the Italian-American neighborhood of Bensonhurst to respond to an advertisement for a car for sale. While he was traveling to Bensonhurst, a woman of the neighborhood was arguing with Keith Modello, telling him that he was going to be beaten up by her black boyfriend and a group of his friends who were en route to the neighborhood. Modello gathered a group of his friends armed with sticks and a bat and waited for the black men to arrive. When Hawkins and his friends arrived, they were met by the angry white men, but Hawkins explained why they were in the neighborhood. As Modello and his friends were about to let Hawkins and his friends proceed with their mission of seeing a car for sale, another teen came on the scene with a gun and began firing shots.

Hawkins was hit and died before paramedics arrived on the scene. The alleged shooter was Joey Fama. Black leaders and community activists, led

by the **Rev. Al Sharpton**, marched through Bensonhurst to protest Hawkins' death. The protesters were met by angry whites, who shouted death threats at the marchers. During the trial, both Keith Modello and Joey Fama were acquitted. Protesters marched from the courthouse to Hawkins' house, looting some stores and throwing rocks at TV news vans. Citizens of New York, especially those of the black community, were outraged by the verdicts. Tensions were already high over earlier incidents like the 1986 **Howard Beach** incident. Many of the black protestors felt justice was not served and that the outcome of the incident was another example of the inherent **racism** in a judicial system that provided unequal protection under the law for blacks. The incident later inspired Spike Lee's film, *Jungle Fever*. See also Hawkins, Yusef (1973–1989).

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*Catherine Anyaso*

### **Biloxi Beach (Mississippi) Riot of 1960**

The 1960 Biloxi riot represented the first indigenous African American protest in Mississippi during the Civil Rights era and began when local blacks attempted to use segregated beaches. In 1955, Dr. Gilbert Mason opened a medical practice in the coastal town of Biloxi. The area's beautiful manufactured beach immediately appealed to the young physician, a Mississippi native, and his new family. Yet Mason quickly discovered that local police only allowed whites to use the twenty-six-mile shoreline. He joined the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** branch in nearby Gulfport and tried to make beach integration its primary objective. For several summers, Mason repeated his appeals at group meetings but never received a satisfactory response. On May 14, 1959, Mason decided to act without NAACP support. He and six of his black neighbors went to the forbidden beach and entered the surf. A city policeman made them leave, but Mason met Biloxi's Mayor Laz Quave later that day to inquire about the specific laws he had violated. The mayor could cite no existing statutes but threatened Mason with arrest if he used the beach again. Undaunted, Mason asked the local board of supervisors why blacks could not use the facility. The group claimed that beachfront property was privately owned and that neither the city nor county, therefore, could determine who used it. Yet Mason investigated the claim and discovered that the county obtained federal funding to construct the recreational area. To ensure receipt of the needed financing, the state senate passed a bill promising to open coastal beaches to all citizens. Ironically, then, a Mississippi law made segregation of state beaches illegal. For the remainder of 1959 and into 1960, Mason prepared organized local blacks to use the beach during the coming summer. He named the project Operation Surf.

On April 17, 1960, Mason's plan commenced. Numerous blacks promised to participate in the so-called wade-in, but none appeared and Mason carried out the protest alone. After Mason swam in the gulf for nearly twenty

minutes, two Biloxi police officers arrested Mason for disorderly conduct. The apprehension represented a turning point in the Biloxi civil rights movement because most local blacks reacted to it with shock and anger. An unshakable Mason planned to use the beach again the following Sunday, but this time he had the help of an inspired community. On the night before the demonstration took place, a cross was burned on the beach as an ominous warning to blacks who wanted the area integrated. The threat only galvanized the resolve of area African Americans.

At approximately 1:00 P.M. on April 24, 1960, over 100 black men, women, and children walked upon Biloxi beach to hold a "wade-in" in the Gulf of Mexico. It was the first locally organized nonviolent direct action protest in Mississippi during the post-World War II period. A mob of agitated whites met the group and told them to leave the area. When blacks ignored the warnings and stepped into the water, whites attacked them with pool sticks, clubs, chains, blackjacks, lead pipes, and a wire cable made into an 18-inch whip. The incident began what the *New York Times* called "the worst race riot in Mississippi history" (*New York Times*, April 26, 1960). Local law enforcement officers watched approvingly and directed traffic while whites beat elderly blacks unconscious, hit women in the face with brass knuckles, and attacked teens with baseball bats. White airmen from nearby Keesler Air Force Base were attacked when they tried to protect fallen blacks. One white crowd even set fire to items that protestors left on the beach when they fled their assailants. Mason was patrolling the area in his car when he witnessed the violence begin. As the doctor exited his vehicle, five whites attacked, but Mason wrestled a pool cue from one ruffian and fought off the men. An officer who witnessed the incident arrested only Mason for disturbing the peace and obstructing traffic.

As the initial beachfront violence subsided, violence spread throughout Biloxi. Hostile whites surrounded the city police department, bus stations, restaurants, and bars to assault Negro passersby. Gunshots wounded four blacks, three of whom were women, while whites pulled others from their vehicles and left them bloodied in the streets. At dusk, nearly 500 blacks met in front of Mason's home to protect the doctor. Yet Mason turned himself into city police after treating injured blacks at his office and spent the night in a nearby city to avoid potentially deadly situations. As the night progressed, those present at Mason's home refused to leave. Others flooded the police station with calls requesting protection for their families and property. Deputies spent the night escorting blacks from their jobs to their homes, and many who could not obtain rides remained at their workplaces. Arsonists even tried to destroy Mason's medical office. Some blacks, though, exchanged gunfire with whites and wounded two attackers. Before the tumultuous night ended, officers arrested twenty-two blacks and two whites.

On the morning after the Biloxi riot, NAACP President **Roy Wilkins** sent Mississippi Field Secretary **Medgar Evers** to the coast to investigate the incident. The visit resulted in the formation of a Biloxi NAACP branch and initiation of a legal battle to open local beaches to people of all races. On May 17, 1960, exactly six years after the release of the *Brown v. Board of Education* verdict, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against

public officials in Harrison County and Biloxi to desegregate area beaches. The case marked the first of its kind filed by the federal government due to the acceptance of federal funds by a state in exchange for a public recreation area. In 1972, over six years after the original trial occurred, the long battle to desegregate Mississippi beaches ended with all citizens legally free to use the public area. The final verdict represented a formality, as local officials had long accepted the inevitability of beach integration and had allowed blacks use of the facilities since the mid-1960s.

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*J. Michael Butler*

### ***The Birth of a Nation (1915)***

*The Birth of a Nation*, a film by director **D.W. [David Wark] Griffith**, represented a watershed for both the entertainment industry and race relations in the United States. It debuted in 1915 and is recognized as one of the most important films in American history. The movie displayed unprecedented artistic mastery and pioneered such techniques as the close-up, long shot, chase scene, and climatic triumph of the hero. Yet, it also depicted Reconstruction as a lawless period because it politically empowered blacks, who were intellectually incapable of self-rule and consumed by their lust of white women. *The Birth of a Nation*, therefore, continued the dehumanization of African Americans that characterized national culture in the early twentieth century and fueled the rise of organized terror against blacks, particularly in southern states.

D.W. Griffith, a southerner whose father served as a colonel in the Confederate Army, based *The Birth of a Nation* on two novels that North Carolina minister Thomas Dixon authored. Those works, *The Clansman* and *The Leopard's Spots*, portrayed the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** as a heroic organization that saved white southerners from the clutches of sex-starved black rapists and the North's Republican rule. Griffith used the books as inspiration for his epic drama in part because the nation prepared to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil War's end. When filming completed, Griffith had produced the longest and most expensive movie ever made. It featured large outdoor battle scenes, nighttime fighting, and a celebrated twenty-minute ride by hooded Klansmen. The spectacle recreated cotton fields and an exact replica of Ford's Theater, employed thousands of extras with hundreds of horses, and used over 23,000 square yards of white sheeting. Yet, it also conveyed the clear message that blacks could not be trusted with basic freedoms. *The Birth of a Nation* championed Klansmen as the heroes of Reconstruction who returned order and stability to a region ravaged by the Republican Party in the war's aftermath. The film also demonized blacks as the reason national reunion in the post–Civil War era took as



NAACP members picketing outside the Republic Theatre, New York City, to protest the screening of the movie *Birth of a Nation*. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

long as it did, and provided justifications for the atrocities whites committed against blacks during the period. In various scenes, freed slaves assaulted whites on the streets, attempted to rape white women, prevented whites from voting, and used their political power to pass laws that legalized interracial marriage. The film's final version ran for ninety minutes and used twelve reels at a time when most movies were no longer than five reels. It cost over \$110,000 to complete, but Griffith had his masterpiece.

The movie debuted on February 8, 1915, at Clune's Auditorium in Los Angeles under the title *The Clansman*. The local NAACP protested the picture because of its inflammatory and racist content and obtained a court order that delayed the initial screening. Several blacks boycotted the premier of *The Clansman*, but over 100 police officers stationed at the theater prevented violence. The presence of actors dressed as Klansmen who rode horses outside of the theater undoubtedly infuriated the demonstrators. Yet, audiences and critics responded with such enthusiasm to Griffith's project that he changed its name to fit its grandiose vision

before the film premiered in New York City. He now called his work *The Birth of a Nation*.

In the days before its New York premier, an enormous billboard that portrayed a hooded Klansman overlooked Times Square and deemed the film "a red-blooded tale of true American spirit." But the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** tried desperately to have the film banned in their city before it arrived and produced numerous pamphlets that attacked the movie as racist propaganda. One such piece was titled "Fighting a Vicious Film: Protest Against *The Birth of a Nation*" and called the film "three miles of filth" (Lavender 2001). New York Mayor John Mitchell, however, ignored the protests. As black denunciations of the film mounted, Thomas Dixon planned to undermine his critics. He asked President Woodrow Wilson, a former classmate at Johns Hopkins, fellow southerner, and published historian, to view the film. On February 18, Wilson hosted the first private screening of a movie at the White House. He concluded that *The Birth of a Nation* "is like writing history with lightning. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true" (Chadwick, 122). The film opened on March 3 in New York City to organized protests, but became the city's most financially successful film during the era of silent movies.

In some areas, black protests proved more successful than they did in New York. In Chicago, for instance, the mayor refused to give the film a viewing permit. Cities such as Denver, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Philadelphia followed suit, if only for a temporary period. Yet, it was during the Boston screening where opposition to *The Birth of a Nation* sparked a violent confrontation between blacks, whites, and local police. The Boston NAACP, in imitation of branches throughout the United States, tried but failed to obtain an injunction against any presentation of the film in the city. When the film premiered at the Boston Tremont Theater on April 17, approximately 500 blacks protested its arrival. Some blacks bought tickets to the show and pelted the screen with eggs when Klansmen appeared. Others ignited stink bombs near the movie's finale. When blacks refused to leave the lobby of the Tremont after the film concluded, police moved among the crowd swinging their nightsticks. The interracial brawl rapidly spun out of control as other blacks and whites quickly joined the fray. Mayor James M. Curley deployed 260 officers to stop the riot. The following day, Curley held a public hearing to discuss the film's future, which D.W. Griffith and approximately 25,000 blacks attended. Curley decided to ban the movie for one day, but NAACP leaders wanted it banished permanently. When the meeting concluded, the unsatisfied blacks moved to the Massachusetts State House and demanded that Gov. David Walsh make *The Birth of a Nation* illegal throughout the state. Walsh initiated a bill to ban the film and all racially provocative films, but the bill did not pass a legislative vote. The Boston NAACP organized no other protests of the feature.

*The Birth of a Nation* had its most immediate impact on American race relations when it opened in Atlanta, Georgia. On November 24, 1915, a week before the film premiered in the Peach City, **William J. Simmons** revived the Ku Klux Klan by burning a 15-foot cross on nearby Stone Mountain. The group had virtually ceased operations when Reconstruction ended in 1877. On the morning the film opened in Atlanta, Simmons placed an advertisement soliciting members for his new organization in the *Atlanta Constitution* next to information concerning *Birth of a Nation's* premier. Simmons and fellow Klan members paraded in front of the theater where the movie opened and gave a 21-gun salute before the viewing began. Trains even brought rural residents to the city en masse to the event. Inside of the theater, vendors sold Klan hats and other related souvenirs. The movie inspired newly formed Klan chapters to redesign their costumes and adopt the practice of cross burning in imitation of the heroes of *The Birth of a Nation*. In 1920, the Ku Klux Klan claimed 4.5 million members.

*The Birth of a Nation* became the highest grossing silent film in cinema history, earning more than \$10 million at the box office in 1915. By 1949, it had earned \$50 million (Chadwick, 132). Yet it continued to attract protests in many cities after its original run ended. In 1938, a manager of an East Orange, New Jersey, theater planned to show the movie for a week at his facility. He stopped playing the film four days early because two prominent black physicians gathered a petition signed by 609 residents that demanded he cease. The petition claimed that interracial fighting erupted in local schools each day that *The Birth of a Nation* was shown. During

the 1940s, the national NAACP continued to boycott any theater that screened the picture. Even its presence at film festivals and historical presentations sparked controversy. In 1978, a museum in Riverside, California, scheduled a viewing of the film but local blacks pressured city leaders to cancel it. An area Klan chapter decided to show the film in a nearby park as part of a recruitment drive, but over 200 citizens disrupted the viewing and attacked Klansmen with baseball bats and tire irons. The melee lasted over five hours and resulted in the hospitalization of five policemen. Two years later, twelve protestors stormed a San Francisco theater where *The Birth of a Nation* played, chased over 100 audience members out of the auditorium, and destroyed the film. In 1995, Turner Classic Movies canceled their broadcast of a restored version of the film because of the racial tensions that engulfed the nation in the wake of the O.J. Simpson murder verdict.

*The Birth of a Nation* has been selected for preservation in the United States Film Registry, but its importance far exceeds its artistic innovation. The movie seemingly justified white **racism**, perpetuated an atmosphere of racial hatred that lasted for decades, and inspired the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. Few elements of popular culture have had the effect, positively or negatively, that *The Birth of a Nation* continues to have on American race relations. See also *The Clansman*; Griffith, D.W. (1875–1948); Ku Klux Klan; Lynching; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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J. Michael Butler

## Black Church Arsons

Black church arsons are slowly becoming a reemerging problem across the American South. Civil rights activists are confronted with terrorist acts by groups such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and other white supremacist organizations that seek to regain the absolute power that whites held prior to the **civil rights movement**. White supremacists have targeted black churches because they consider any type of African American community practice a detrimental threat to white culture.

### *The Ku Klux Klan*

In 1866, the Ku Klux Klan originated in Pulaski, Tennessee, as a social group for Civil War veterans. On August 16, 1996, a federal indictment charged the Ku Klux Klan with a string of black church arsons in South Carolina, and more than seventy since 1995. Klan members Gary Cox and

Timothy Welsh both confessed their violation of civil rights laws when admitting their role in the torching of the Mount Zion AME Church in Greeleyville, South Carolina. Cox and Welsh were also implicated in the burning of Macedonia Baptist Church in Bloomville, South Carolina.

Arthur Allen Haley and Hubert Lavon Rowell were arrested on conspiracy and arson charges of a black church, labor camp, a Clarendon County Service Center, and a black man's automobile. Haley and Rowell were also suspected of providing Cox and Welsh with deadly explosives. South Carolina's attorney general's office claimed that the Ku Klux Klan instructed their members to regard black churches as a threat to white power because black community actions advocate racial equality. Recent statistics show that the Ku Klux Klan has burned approximately fifty-seven churches with black congregations over the past decade. Although cases of black church arsons are on the rise, they typically receive scant media attention. News groups usually cover a story of vandalism against sacred African American grounds with few follow-up reports.

### *Relief Organizations*

In contrast, the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR) is the main group that conducts research on patterns of black church arsons. CDR is an organization whose primary goal is to work with "progressive activists and organizations to build a movement to counter right-wing rhetoric and public policy initiatives" (Fumento, 1). Mainstream conservatives are portrayed as racist criminals by the CDR. CDR researchers discovered that the great majority of individuals that are detained or arrested in connection with black church arsons are black. Racially skewed studies conducted by the CDR have labeled accidental fires as intentional. Furthermore, the CDR failed to report blazes set by African Americans themselves.

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** plays a significant role in highlighting cases of arson against African Americans. On Thursday, February 8, 1996, the Department of Justice launched a civil rights investigation into a string of arsons across Alabama and Tennessee. The investigation was launched one day after the NAACP released a statement that they delivered to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno asking the federal government to probe into how black church arsons violate civil rights laws. According to Wade Henderson, director of the NAACP's Washington, D.C., division, black church arsons are resurrections that bring back historically troubling memories for African Americans (Fletcher, A04). The work of the NAACP demonstrates a sharp rise in black political power in the United States.

NationsBank Corporation offered a prize of \$50,000–\$100,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those involved in over ten incidents of arson in the American South. NationsBank's efforts were meant to eliminate any possibility of future arson against black churches.

The Christian Coalition joined forces with black church officials to offer a repentant gesture for centuries of senseless violence. Uniting two powerful organizations brought peace between black pastors and the Southern



Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention was created by an antebellum division between northern and southern Baptists over slavery. An apology was later issued by the Southern Baptist Convention for its racist perspective on black bondage. Ralph Reed, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention, asked that its affiliate churches run a special charity collection on July 14, 1996 in an effort to raise approximately one million dollars to rebuild several burned churches. Black pastors have received assistance from the National Council of Churches—a New York City-based faction composed of thirty-three Protestant and Orthodox denominations. Widespread cooperation among predominantly white religious groups and black churches is a symbol of a growing trend to terminate racial conflict in the United States.

### ***Arson or Accident Debate***

A great debate exists on whether most black church arsons are intentional or accidental. Investigators often interrogate pastors and other church officials of their whereabouts when a particular blaze commenced. Judiciary committees are usually skeptical about how moral the research methods used by investigative groups like the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) are. Government officials noted that ten ATF agents were discovered participating in an annual “Good O’ Boy” meeting featuring Uncle Tom shows. Such practices have generated great distress among Americans residing in the southern states concerning whether their civil rights are being safeguarded by responsible officials. *See also* White Supremacy.

**Further Readings:** Fehr, Stephen C. “U.S. Historic Trust Puts Black Churches on Endangered List.” *Washington Post*, June 18, 1996, A03; Fletcher, Michael A. “U.S. Investigates Suspicious Fires at Southern Black Churches.” *Washington Post*, February 8, 1996, A03; Fumento, Michael. “A Church Arson Epidemic?: It’s Smoke and Mirrors” *Wall Street Journal*, July 8, 1996. See <http://www.fumento.com/wsfire.html>; *Mississippi Burning*. Directed by Allan Parker. MGM, 1988; Ortiz, Paul. *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

*Gerardo Del Guercio*

### **Black Codes**

Black codes were a series of laws that dictated rights and restrictions on the freedoms of the newly emancipated slaves in the South. Southern states established black codes in 1865 and 1866 during Andrew Johnson’s Presidential Reconstruction, which was established at the end of the Civil War. The codes were a devastating setback to blacks, who had expected greater freedoms and not a relapse back into slavery. Sympathetic white Republicans were outraged. They wanted the new southern governments to endow blacks with plenary civil rights and opportunities. Instead, the codes legalized corporal punishment, maintained black inferiority, and established a system analogous to slavery. Escalating the situation was the profusion of

attacks against blacks, culminating into two major riots in Tennessee and New Orleans. In response, the Republicans seized control over **Reconstruction**, thereby eliminating, albeit temporarily, the black codes.

The codes provided blacks with only a few privileges. Among them were the right to marry; to own, buy, and sell property; and to sue in court. The codes did not permit blacks to marry outside their race, to carry firearms or other weapons, to testify in court (except in cases involving other blacks), or to serve on juries. Labor contracts bound blacks to white plantation owners. Vagrancy laws made it illegal for blacks to be without employment or permanent residency. Apprentice laws permitted whites to subject blacks between the ages of two and twenty-one to forced labor. Blacks who broke any of these codes risked imprisonment, fines, lost wages, whipping, and being sold, often to their former slave masters. Other laws segregated public facilities and prohibited blacks from specific professions. These codes made it possible for whites to retain their former labor force, stifle black resistance and protest, and use violence against blacks.

The law was not the only implement used to subject blacks to oppression and violence. Private individuals and groups, such as the nightriders who dressed in white masks and robes, terrorized, intimidated, and threatened blacks on a regular basis. They also provided most of the brute force behind the enforcement of the black codes. There were cross burnings, **lynchings**, rapes, beatings, and other hostile attacks. In response, many blacks fled the rural South to establish settlements in the West, or moved to cities in both the South and the North. Some blacks found peace and prosperity. Most were met with hostility, poverty, and oppression. Riots would later erupt in several of the cities blacks had run to for refuge. Other blacks attempted to challenge the black codes. At conventions throughout the South in 1865 and 1866, blacks objected to the black codes, petitioned for their freedoms, rights, and opportunities, and threatened to boycott, but to no avail.

Racial tensions reached a climax when in 1866 riots broke out in **Memphis**, Tennessee, and **New Orleans**, Louisiana. That April, whites attacked blacks after a black veteran refused to step aside to let a white policeman pass on the sidewalk in Memphis. In July, Democratic and Republican supporters clashed outside the hall of the constitutional convention in New Orleans.

Infuriated by the failure of Presidential Reconstruction to avert oppressive laws and violence, Congress enacted Radical Reconstruction. Republicans did away with black codes, imposed military intervention, and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the **Fourteenth Amendment**, and the **Fifteenth Amendment**. By 1877, southern Democrats had regained political power through violence and intimidation. Rather than reinstate the former black codes, they created the **Jim Crow** laws, which turned the focus toward racial segregation. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Shotgun Policy.

**Further Reading:** Foner, Eric. *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984.

## Black Manifesto

The Black Manifesto, which was created in 1969, includes a demand for monetary **reparations**; a summary of the violence, crimes, and other oppressive acts that justify redress; and an outline of how the reparations ought to be spent for the creation of numerous black self-help programs, businesses, and institutions. The contents of the manifesto, as well as the way in which it was presented to the general public by **James Forman**, the director of international affairs for the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, generated harsh criticism rather than sympathy. The objectives of the manifesto were never brought to fruition.

The Black Manifesto reflected the radical switch from **nonviolence** to **Black Power** in the mid-1960s. The Black Power movement ushered in a new era of black assertiveness and militancy. Also during this period, black youth rioted to protest the gross wrongs of **racism**, racial violence, and oppression in the **ghettos**. Thus, the Black Manifesto was a radical response to centuries of racism and a demand for atonement by whites, particularly white churches and Jewish synagogues, whom Forman believed were largely to blame. Reiterated throughout the document are statements that express a willingness to seize reparations through violence. The actual document is addressed “to the white Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues in the United States of America and all other racist institutions.”

The introduction of the Black Manifesto was written by Forman himself. It includes an assertion of black consciousness and black achievement, and statements regarding the need for black self-determination and empowerment and the importance of bettering the lives of Africans around the world. He criticizes wealthy whites, capitalism, and imperialism. Forman also alludes to his reason for singling out Christians, whom, he states, “have been involved in the exploitation and rape of black people since the country was founded” (Schuchter, 195).

The list of demands was written by an unknown author. It begins with a demand for \$50 million and includes a list of programs that the money will fund, such as a southern land bank to help blacks acquire land, publishing and printing companies, TV networks, a research-skills center, and a national black labor strike and defense fund. There is also an appeal made for black support of these programs and a proposal for the election of a steering committee to lead the “battle” to “implement these demands” (Schuchter, 200).

In the final paragraphs of the Black Manifesto, it is acknowledged that violence is not desirable; however, blacks “are not opposed to force. . . . We were captured in Africa by violence. We were kept in bondage and political servitude and forced to work as slaves by the military machinery and the Christian church working hand in hand” (Schuchter, 202).

On May 4, 1969, Forman intentionally interrupted the services of the Riverside Church in New York. Although Dr. Ernest Campbell, the minister, had agreed to allow Forman to present the Black Manifesto to the congregation, he was taken aback when Forman intruded during the communion service, which Forman had specifically been requested not to do. As

Forman read the Black Manifesto, numerous members of the church walked out. News of the Black Manifesto was publicized across the nation. Dr. Campbell wrote a letter in which he asserted that “it is just and reasonable that amends be made by many institutions in society—including, and perhaps especially, the church” (Schuchter, 6). Amidst the clamor of protests from numerous churches and synagogues, his was the lone voice of empathy. *See also* Black Power; Forman, James (1928–2005).

**Further Reading:** Schuchter, Arnold. *Reparations: The Black Manifesto and Its Challenge to White America*. New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970.

*Gladys L. Knight*

## Black Nadir

The term *black nadir* refers to the period after **Reconstruction**, between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth when **racism** worsened, African Americans lost many civil rights, and **segregation**, racial discrimination, and anti-black violence, including riots and **lynchings**, increased. The term “nadir” was first used by Rayford Logan in a book titled, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir; 1877–1901*.

Although it was more acutely felt in the South, the United States as a whole became more racist during this period. Racism was the policy of the whole nation, not just the South. Black housing was segregated and, in many regions, African Americans could not serve on juries or vote. By the end of the nineteenth century, lynching mostly occurred in the South (e.g., Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia) and was racially motivated. Between 1882 and 1930, over 2,500 African Americans were lynched in the South.

The election of Ulysses S. Grant to the presidency in 1868 meant the disengagement of the government from Reconstruction. Southern Democrats recovered political dominance and began opposing Reconstruction and civil rights. Many white supremacist societies were founded, the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** being the best known. The Klan terrorized southern African Americans through destruction of property, whippings, and murder. On October 12, 1871, President Grant issued a proclamation ordering the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina to surrender its arms and disguises. Klansmen were arrested and put on trial. In 1873, President Grant pardoned them. Although destroyed as a public force, the Klan continued its illegal acts of violence.

The Klan was not the only racist group to attack African Americans. In New Orleans, the Democratic Club intimidated black voters during the 1868 and 1872 presidential elections. By 1874, they were known as the **White League** and were committed to destroying the political influence of African Americans and restoring white government. About 3,500 members of the League assembled in New Orleans on September 14, 1874, demanding the resignation of the Republican governor, William Pitt Kellogg. Despite the presence of white policemen and black militia troops, the leaguers occupied the city hall, the statehouse, and the arsenals. The Battle

of Liberty Place, as this encounter was known, amounted to thirty-eight people killed and seventy-nine wounded and signalled the effective end of Reconstruction in Louisiana.

In 1875, a campaign of violence against African Americans and white Republican voters, known as the Mississippi Plan, persuaded white voters to enable white Democrats to take over the government of Mississippi. White Democrats and veterans of the Confederate Army in Mississippi formed paramilitary groups that wore red shirts as a sign of defiance. They did their utmost to intimidate African Americans, killing, for instance, seventy-five blacks in Vicksburg during race riots there on December 7, 1874. Further riots occurred during July and September 1875. During the election on November 2, 1875, members of these paramilitary groups intimidated voters and thereby won control of the state. In 1876, similar groups employed the same tactics in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, where white Democratic governments were also established.

In 1876, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes won a disputed presidential election by promising that federal soldiers would be removed from South Carolina and Louisiana. On Hayes' inauguration day, March 5, 1877, black citizens were attacked and killed in Hamburg, South Carolina, making clear that black civil rights in the South had to be protected with federal troops. A new era of **disenfranchisement**, segregation, and terror was beginning. The end of Reconstruction saw the advent of the Redemption Period, in which the white planter class, or Bourbon aristocracy, held power in the South. White supremacists repudiated equal rights for blacks (see **White Supremacy**).

By 1877, thousands of African Americans, known as the **Exodusters**, chose to flee the racial oppression of the South. At first they were welcomed in northern and western states, such as Kansas, but immigration was discouraged when their numbers began to grow. It was said that all good land was already taken and that no more laborers were needed. As a result, immigration stopped and two-thirds of the immigrants returned to the South. This immigration was criticised by whites and some African Americans, such as Frederick Douglass, who thought that blacks should remain in the South to fight for their rights.

The later movement by blacks to northern and midwestern states is known as the **Great Migration**. Whites both encouraged and discouraged this migration, and a new outburst of racism occurred in those states. Monuments to Confederate War dead were erected, African Americans were warned against staying overnight in cities, black housing was segregated, and blackface shows were popular in the North. The culmination was the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which upheld racial segregation. The court developed the concept of separate but equal, and racial segregation under the law rapidly spread throughout the South and extended to most aspects of life.

States passed **Jim Crow** laws, which were intended to segregate blacks from whites. By the 1880s, the judicial retreat from civil rights was in full swing. In 1883, in a group of cases known as the civil rights cases, the Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional.

It also ruled that government could not discriminate against people because of race, but private organizations or individuals could. Railroads, hotels, and theaters began practicing segregation. Railroads quickly denied African Americans entrance to regular passenger cars or carriages; they were confined to Jim Crow cars set aside for black people. In Louisiana, the law requiring separate accommodation on trains was passed in 1878, and seven other southern states followed suit by 1891. The passage of the Separate Car Act in Louisiana enraged two New Orleans groups—the Crusaders and the Citizens’ Committee—which joined forces to raise funds and strike down the Louisiana act in the courts. This challenge was the origin of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. Plessy was a mulatto who, on June 7, 1892, bought a ticket to travel on an East Louisiana railroad coach bound to Covington, Louisiana. He sat down in a coach for whites and when asked to leave refused. The train stopped and he was taken to the police station. Judge Ferguson ruled that the Louisiana government could regulate interstate travel. The case eventually went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that segregation was constitutional. However, Associate Justice John M. Harlan dissented and denounced segregation, saying that the Constitution of the United States was color blind.

In education, segregation was also in effect. In 1897, Ware High School in Georgia was closed by the Richmond Board of Education. Ware was the first public high school for African Americans, and blacks protested its closure. In 1899, three black citizens of Augusta, Georgia, brought a case against the board based on the **Fourteenth Amendment**. The result of *Cumming v. Board of Education* was the closure of Ware and the increased passage of laws reducing the possibilities of education for African Americans.

Blacks were also **disenfranchised**. In 1890, Mississippi passed new and elaborate suffrage qualifications. Every qualified elector had to have paid the taxes legally required of him for the two preceding years, and must have resided in the state for two years and in the election district for one year before the election. They had to read or understand any section of the state constitution. These requirements restricted the number of African American voters. By 1900, each southern state had revised its constitution to include a number of electoral devices, such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and property requirements, designed to disenfranchise black voters.

Negative attitudes toward blacks at the end of the nineteenth century were reflected in the popular culture of the period. White audiences were entertained by Tom troops that enacted scenes from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851). Minstrel shows in which black characters were mimicked and ridiculed were also common. In general, popular representations of blacks were deeply racist. African Americans were shown as childish, incompetent, and inferior, as well as loyal and kind-hearted. In the early years of the twentieth century, a more sinister image emerged. In popular novels, African Americans were portrayed as savages. They were menacing figures who sought to rape white women (see **Rape, as Provocation for Lynching**). D.W. Griffith’s movie, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), was based on Thomas Dixon’s racist novel, *The*

*Clansman*. The movie was a success and a landmark in cinema history. It is one of the most racist films ever shot. Its underlying message is that Reconstruction had been a complete failure and mistake. The movie was praised by President Woodrow Wilson, who had introduced legislation to limit black civil rights.

The Hollywood view of the Reconstruction era in the early twentieth century supported some contemporary historians' views, most notably those of William Dunning and some pseudo scientific researchers who spoke of African American racial inferiority. These ideas were popular in the period and helped support segregation and racism.

The exclusion of blacks from white society meant that they developed distinctive black cultural forms and institutions. Cultural forms that had existed prior to the Civil War survived, and new forms developed as a consequence of the new social situation of ex-slaves. The more individualistic situation, new urban conditions, and technological advances allowed plantation songs and traditional ballads to evolve into the Blues. The exclusion of African Americans from white theaters and dance halls obliged them to search for their own entertainment, which accounts for the emergence of Ragtime and other jazz forms.

The African American community developed forms of social, political, and cultural resistance, including music. But associations, political and social pamphleteering, and demonstrations were also important methods of resistance and protest. **Booker T. Washington** and **W.E.B. Du Bois** were prominent early-twentieth-century African American leaders who awoke black consciousness and pride with their writings and political leadership. In 1887, the National Afro-American League was founded by **T. Thomas Fortune**. The League opposed the suppression of black civil rights in the South. It also fought discrimination and racism throughout the nation. It was a nonviolent organization that was hailed in the press but criticized by southern whites who said it would perpetuate racial violence. Despite its enthusiasm, it failed to appeal nationally and only had success on a local level.

On September 15, 1898, Fortune founded the Afro-American Council, which was soon influenced by Booker T. Washington. In 1905, a group of black intellectuals founded the **Niagara movement**. In August 1908, race riots broke out in **Springfield**, Illinois. Two blacks were lynched and six more assassinated, and over 2,000 fled the city. This event gave the Niagara movement white support. On the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, a group of whites, disenchanted with Washington's policies, joined the Niagara movement to call for civil rights and resistance against racism. On February 12, 1909, these groups formed the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The goal of the NAACP was integration of the races. It developed grassroots support to achieve its goals but still was seen as an elitist organization.

The NAACP, along with such other organizations as the **National Association of Colored Women (NACW)**, the Council for Interracial Cooperation (CIC), and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL), launched an anti-lynching campaign. Other prominent

African American leaders, apart from Washington and Du Bois, included **Marcus Garvey**, who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). They fought racism and helped pave the road to further African American improvements, such as the Harlem Renaissance, that took place in the twentieth century. *See also* Lynching.

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## Black Nationalism

Black Nationalism comprised diverse movements that advanced black social, economic, and political independence from whites. Violence, as well as the degrading social conditions for blacks in America, was a major reason blacks embraced the notion of self-autonomy. At other times, Black Nationalism was a voluntary or involuntary reflex to persistent **racism** and discrimination.

Black Nationalism movements began in the North in the early 1800s. Frustrated by white resistance to endow blacks with full rights and freedoms, Paul Cuffe spearheaded a plan to send blacks to Africa. In 1815, he transported thirty-four blacks to Sierra Leone in West Africa. In 1816, several prominent white leaders met in Washington, D.C., to establish the American Colonization Society (ACS). Their objective was to help abolish slavery and send free blacks and newly emancipated slaves to Africa. In 1821, the ACS established the colony of Liberia in West Africa.

Some blacks scorned the ACS and all back-to-Africa movements. They felt culturally removed from Africa and unable to claim it as their home. Others expressed contempt toward Africans. But some blacks supported the ACS. In 1820, Bishop Daniel Coker of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church led eighty-six blacks to Liberia. In 1824, 200 blacks left their homes in Philadelphia, New York City, and Baltimore and journeyed to Haiti. Blacks leaped at the opportunity to Christianize Africans, govern themselves, and reconnect with their ancestral heritage. However, these trips were not always successful. Many blacks returned to the United States. Failure to get along peaceably with the native inhabitants and to acclimate to the often harsh environments were common reasons for their return.

As a result of anti-black and anti-abolitionist sentiments, a maelstrom of race riots hit many northern cities starting in 1829 and continuing into the late 1850s. The most intense riots occurred in Cincinnati, Ohio; Providence, Rhode Island; New York City; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1829, local politicians incited a three-day riot in **Cincinnati**, Ohio. In 1831, white sailors instigated a riot in Providence, Rhode Island that obliterated a black neighborhood. In 1834, a white mob ravaged black homes, a black church, a black school, and the home of a white abolitionist. Philadelphia experienced riots in 1820, 1829, 1834, 1835, 1838, 1842, and 1849.



In the face of the sweltering violence of the mid-1800s, Martin R. Delany's Black Nationalism was a balm to many horrified blacks. Delany, a prominent black leader, physician, and novelist, believed blacks must form a separate nation, whether it be in Africa, Latin America, or the American West. Frederick Douglass, a former slave and influential black abolitionist, opposed Delany. He supported an integrationist ideology, believing that blacks would eventually assimilate into American society and achieve equality. The imminent Civil War of 1861 and the subsequent emancipation of slaves thwarted Delany's movement. With the advent of civil rights legislation and the promise of unprecedented freedoms, blacks were filled with optimism.

Expectations were crushed when the U.S. Supreme Court reneged on pivotal civil rights they had previously granted blacks, and the federal government failed to enforce the **Fourteenth Amendment**, abandoning blacks during the tumultuous period when white Democrats seized control over Republican governments at the end of **Reconstruction**. **White mobs** tormented blacks and assailed them with all manner of violence. AME bishop **Henry McNeal Turner** responded to the atrocities in the South by calling for a return to Africa. He believed Africa offered an opportunity for safety, dignity, equality, self-determination, and economic development. A few blacks, mainly poor farmers, rallied behind him.

The turn of the century ushered in another era of violence. Many riots took place, notably in **Springfield**, Ohio (1904); **Chattanooga**, Tennessee (1906); **Greensburg**, Indiana (1906); **Palestine**, Texas (1910); and **Chester and Philadelphia**, Pennsylvania (1918). **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** violence raged, and racist conditions flourished in northern cities. These conditions preceded **Marcus Garvey's** Black Nationalism and persisted long after the demise of his movement. Garvey garnered several million exuberant supporters and established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), multiple black businesses, and a newspaper. His economic pursuits and ability to engender racial pride and empowerment were more successful than his back-to-Africa efforts. He supported Pan-Africanism, desiring to empower the descendants of Africa from around the world. He also wanted to create a unified black-controlled nation. Many black leaders and whites objected to Garvey's ideas and influence. At the height of his popularity, the U.S. government infiltrated Garvey's organization. In 1925, Garvey was imprisoned for mail fraud and deported to England, where he died in 1940. Without Garvey, UNIA collapsed.

A massive, nonviolent grassroots movement sprang up in the 1950s, largely for the purpose of challenging discrimination and **Jim Crow** laws. Blacks and whites worked side by side, engaging in nonviolent protests, such as sit-ins, boycotts, and marches. More often than not, these protestors faced hostile white mobs and police violence. Fed up with the mounting and unrestrained violence, some originally nonviolent organizations, such as the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** and the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, turned militant. They ousted their white members and transformed themselves into separatist organizations and institutions. Like the ensuing **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, they adopted a new doctrine of **Black Power** and Black Nationalism. SNCC declined not long

after that, and the Black Panther Party met its end after federal operatives infiltrated it.

Altogether, these efforts to unite and empower blacks achieved some success. They spawned hope and relieved, albeit temporarily, the plight of blacks. However, they did not eliminate violence or racism in the United States or abroad. Blacks who escaped to Africa or other parts of America often faced adversity tantamount to their former conditions. Their separatist views, although a form of self-preservation and a reaction to racist institutions, bred suspicion and retaliation. Among blacks, nationalism never achieved mass acceptance. In the end, lack of funds and other extenuating circumstances shortened the life of Black Nationalism. *See also* Garvey, Marcus (1887–1940); Nation of Islam; Nonviolence.

**Further Readings:** Moses, Wilson Jeremiah. *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey*. New York: New York University Press, 1996; Van Deburg, William L. *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Black Panther Party (BPP)**

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was a black empowerment organization that promoted social, political, and economic equality in American society through socialist reform and tactical resistance against state repression. Originally named the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Merritt Junior College students **Huey P. Newton** and Bobby Seale founded the BPP in



Two members of the Black Panther Party talking to officer Lt. Ernest Holloway at the state capitol in Sacramento, California, 1967. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

October 1966. In the late 1960s, the BPP achieved international prominence, with vocal leaders, famed community service programs, and highly publicized standoffs with police officers. The organization dissolved in the late 1970s after withstanding infiltration, arrests, assassinations, and internal tensions directly and indirectly resulting from the **COINTELPRO** activities of the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**.

### ***Backdrop and Background***

In the 1960s, civil unrest mostly among college-aged adults who were ideologically socialist and opposed to the **Vietnam War** threatened the stability of the United States in the cold war era. The BPP was established one year after the murder of **Malcolm X** and two months after race-related riots erupted in 43 U.S. cities within a two-month period (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**).

Newton and Seale were members of Merritt Junior College's Afro-American Association, led by their mentor Donald Warden. In 1965, they participated in Warden's "Economic Night" at a storefront that later became the BPP headquarters. In October 1966, Newton, Seale, and David Hilliard drafted a blueprint for the BPP. They adopted the panther as their symbol from **Stokely Carmichael's Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)** in Alabama.

The six original Black Panthers were Reggie Forte, Sherman Forte, Elbert "Big Man" Howard, "Little" Bobby Hutton (treasurer), Newton (defense minister), and Seale (chairperson). Released from prison in December 1966, **Eldridge Cleaver** joined the BPP in February 1967.

### ***Early Development***

From its onset, the BPP was recognized as an exemplary revolutionary organization among antiestablishment groups of all races. With a solid platform built on a well-crafted ten-point plan the BPP summarized the needs of the black community by declaring as follows:

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our black community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people.
8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace.  
(Black Panther Party, 1)

Early in the BPP's development, its founders established sophisticated strategies to defend black communities against police oppression. By studying gun laws, Newton and Seale developed Panther police patrols—civilians armed with rifles—who publicly monitored police activity and defended citizens against **police brutality**. In 1967, Panther police patrols motivated California state legislators to pass the Mulford Act, which outlawed carrying firearms in public places. Twenty-six Panthers protested the bill by marching to the California State Capitol in Sacramento with firearms. The same year, Newton was arrested after he responded to a citizen's complaint against a police officer in Oakland. Seale was arrested for carrying a gun while trying to post bail for Newton.

Less than a year after its inception, the BPP organized an antiwar rally at the United Nations in New York and released its first publication, *The Black Panther Party: Black Community News Service*. The BPP nearly doubled its membership in 1968 after Newton recruited Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter while in prison. Carter was a former gang leader who started the Southern California BPP branch.

By the end of 1968, the BPP had 45 chapters and over 5,000 members. Branches were established in Chicago, New York, Baltimore, Denver, and New Orleans. New leaders emerged including Fred Hampton, Lumumba Shakur, and Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael). The BPP's national Serve the People Programs included the Free Breakfast for Children Program, which served more than 10,000 students, and a sickle-cell testing program, which was responsible for testing more than 500,000 African Americans. The Serve the People Programs received support from a cross-section of the population, spanning from black activists and white religious leaders, to industry giants such as Safeway Foods and the Jack-in-the-Box Corporation. The BPP also organized rent strikes, "liberation schools," free clothing drives, and campaigns for community schooling and policing.

### ***Rise to International Prominence***

The BPP achieved international prominence in late 1968 and early 1969. *The Panther*, the BPP weekly newsletter, reached an estimated circulation of 139,000 copies per week. In addition, ABC's 1969 TV special, "The Panther," revealed that 62 percent of the black community supported the BPP's philosophy.

In 1968, Eldridge Cleaver became the panthers' minister of information and released his acclaimed prison memoirs, *Soul on Ice*. BPP leaders lectured at the nation's most prestigious universities, including the University of California (UC) at Berkeley and Boston College. Panther member George Murray taught classes at the University of San Francisco, and Cleaver offered a lecture series at UC Berkeley, despite the opposition of then-Governor Ronald Reagan. Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard delivered a speech before an estimated 250,000 people in November 1969.

Alliances quickly emerged between the BPP and liberal political groups, as well as with inner-city black street gangs. White auxiliary organizations, such as the Los Angeles-based Friends of the Panthers (FoP), and the Portland-based White Panther Party, amplified BPP support among the New Left and the white counterculture. Academy Award–winning actress Jane Fonda and acclaimed playwright and college professor Donald Freed were among the more visible FoP members. In 1968, the mixed-race Peace and Freedom Party endorsed Eldridge Cleaver for president. Later that year, Chicago BPP leaders Fred Hampton and Bobby Rush negotiated a truce between Chicago street gangs and initiated talks with the P. Stone Rangers. A successful merger between the Chicago BPP and the P. Stone Rangers would have instantly doubled the BPP's national membership.

### ***COINTELPRO***

In 1968, **J. Edgar Hoover**, director of the FBI, expanded his COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist Hate Groups operation. Later that year, he initiated COINTELPRO-BPP, specifically targeting BPP members for assassination, arrest, and infiltration. In June 1969, he pledged to eradicate the organization by the end of the year.

The FBI primarily used local police officers and informants to carry out assassinations against BPP members. In 1968, Oakland police initiated a shoot-out with Panthers resulting in the murder of seventeen-year-old Bobby Hutton. Months later, Los Angeles police killed five BPP members in two separate incidents. The event sparked four days of rioting at the **Democratic National Convention of 1968** in Chicago. One month later, San Francisco police officer Michael O'Brien killed BPP member Otis Baskett. Random killings of BPP members continued over the next two years, including the Los Angeles metro squad killing of BPP member Walter Pope as he delivered BPP newspapers.

In 1970, many in the **Black Power** movement and the New Left believed George Jackson's murder in San Quentin Prison was COINTELPRO-related. George Jackson became a BPP member while serving a highly contested prison sentence at Soledad Prison in Salinas, California. He and two other inmates were collectively known as the Soledad Brothers. They became internationally known for exposing prison cruelty and admonishing capitalist oppression. George Jackson was killed three days before his highly publicized trial.

During COINTELPRO, BPP arrests were prevalent and usually unsubstantiated. Military-style police raids of BPP headquarters and homes were common during the COINTELPRO era. A BPP attorney noted that between 1967 and 1970 in Los Angeles alone, eighty-seven BPP members who had been arrested were exonerated before they went to trial. Although most charges were eventually repealed, the string of arrests greatly marginalized BPP leadership. In addition, nearly 100 Panthers and BPP affiliates, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, Sundiata Acoli, and Mululu Shakur remain in prison today.

In the summer of 1967, 111 panthers were arrested in Chicago, a sweep resulting in only a few minor charges. In the New York 21 case of 1969,

Panthers, including Sundiata Acoli and Afeni Shakur, were arrested in New York for conspiring to detonate New York department stores and the New York Botanical Gardens. All charges against the New York 21 were dropped, but only after members were detained for more than two years.

A tide of high-profile arrests, which seemed to target the more influential BPP members, continued throughout the late 1960s to early 1970s. Celebrated Panther Angela Davis was indicted and placed on the FBI's most wanted list for conspiring to free George Jackson from a courtroom in Marin County, California. In 1968, San Francisco police ransacked the home of Eldridge Cleaver and his wife, BPP member Kathleen Cleaver. Eldridge Cleaver was eventually arrested for violating parole and went into exile to avoid prison. David Hilliard was arrested and held on \$30,000 bail for threatening President Richard Nixon's life because of a benign comment he made during a speech. Bobby Seale, along with seven white men he recently had met, was arrested for organizing the Chicago riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Huey Newton was convicted of voluntary manslaughter for the murder of Officer John Frey. His ruling was overturned in 1970, but only after he spent more than two years in prison. Panther leader, Geronimo Pratt, was arrested in 1970 for kidnapping and murdering Caroline Olsen. He spent twenty-seven years in prison after being framed by Julius Butler, an FBI informant who had been previously suspended from the BPP for advocating violence.

By the time COINTELPRO-BPP officially dissolved in 1971, an estimated 7,500 BPP members were government informants. Figuratively speaking, there appeared to be a "weed and seed" initiative, whereby the FBI uprooted principled BPP members through assassinations and arrests, and planted ignoble infiltrators who corrupted the BPP with misinformation and criminal values. In 1969, the FBI paid out an estimated \$7.4 million to BPP informants.

Informants were credited with instigating tensions that prompted **Elijah Muhammad** to pull the BPP's newsletter from newsstands that he directed. FBI informants also created the conditions that led to the highly publicized feud between the BPP and Ron "Maulana" Karenga's United Slaves (US) Organization. Infiltrators within the US Organization were responsible for assassinating BPP leaders "Bunchy" Carter and Jon Huggins. The murders preceded a series of phony memos, bogus cartoons, and other feigned incidents that ultimately led to genuine animosities between the US Organization and the BPP, as well as the public perception that both organizations were violent.

The copious presence of informants also led to a witch hunt within the organization. Accordingly, the FBI exploited suspicions within the organization by circulating rumors that true members were informants. The most extreme case was when FBI informant George Sams tortured and murdered BPP recruit, Alex Rackley, after convincing the New Haven, Connecticut, BPP chapter that Rackley was an informant.

Informants were also responsible for assisting the FBI and police with assassinating key BPP leaders. William O'Neal, FBI informant and Fred Hampton's personal bodyguard, provided the FBI with a detailed floor plan of Hampton's home. Officers used O'Neal's information to assassinate

seventeen-year-old Panther Mark Clark and twenty-one-year-old Hampton as they slept. Police officers unloaded approximately ninety-nine rounds into the home, including one point-blank into the head of Hampton after he was wounded.

By 1970, the wave of informants within the BPP ultimately led to a culture of paranoia within the organization, culminating with a feud between Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver. Cleaver had been in exile for almost two years. He fled to Cuba to avoid prison for parole violation, did a stint in France, and eventually settled in Algeria, where he established the first international BPP chapter. During the same period, Newton spent more than two years in prison for manslaughter of a police officer. His ruling was overturned in 1970, and he immediately returned to the BPP, which was now replete with infiltrators and a substantial percentage of its members had been murdered or were in jail.

In 1970, the BPP was trying to reorganize and resolve the tyranny they were facing from the FBI. Many members of the New York chapters, some recently acquitted from the New York 21 case, favored enhancing BPP resistance to oppression by building an underground paramilitary infrastructure. At the time, New York chapters aligned with Cleaver who drew parallels between the BPP struggles and the revolutionary battles for Algeria. California chapters, which remained loyal to Newton, preferred to de-emphasize the military structure and focus on community service.

The FBI quickly capitalized on the opportunity to drive a wedge between chapters by using informants to deliver bogus messages to Newton and Cleaver. Cleaver received a series of messages in Algeria suggesting that California BPP leaders were trying to undercut his influence, and were generally disorganized. Cleaver responded by expelling three panther members, including interim leader David Hilliard. In turn, Newton received anonymous letters warning him that Cleaver and members of the New York chapter were plotting to murder him. Newton responded by expelling the New York 21.

Months later, Newton expelled Cleaver and the entire international chapter for disloyalty. Cleaver responded by asserting that he was the true leader of the BPP and suspended Newton. More bogus communiqués followed, even after Newton and Cleaver publicly denounced one another. The FBI's puppet show between the East and West Coast Panthers did not end until violence erupted between the New York and California chapters. The New York chapter, convinced that Newton was cooperating with the FBI, eventually abandoned the BPP.

### *The Aftermath*

As the FBI's two primary targets—Newton and Cleaver—both showed emotional scars from years of harassment, intimidation, and psychological trickery. By 1971, the once flourishing BPP was reduced to a small, predominantly female-led group of Newton loyalists in California. Newton's faction was rumored to engage in sexual indiscretions, extravagant spending, and illicit drug use. Newton eventually fled the country to Cuba, after being arrested for pistol-whipping a tailor and killing a prostitute. He eventually

returned to the United States and was acquitted of all charges in 1978. Newton returned to the University of California in 1980 and received a Ph.D. in social philosophy. His dissertation was titled *War Against the Panthers: A Study in Repression in America*. He was murdered in 1989, allegedly over a drug dispute.

Eldridge Cleaver returned to the United States with his wife, Kathleen Cleaver, in 1974. In a plea agreement, he avoided additional prison time. He became a born-again Christian and released an account of his religious transcendence in *Soul on Fire*. He also became politically conservative, and endorsed Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential bid. In the 1980s, he was arrested for drugs. Cleaver died in 1998 of unknown causes.

Bobby Seale formally left the BPP in 1974. In 1989, Seale and David Hilliard formed a community group to assist disadvantaged Oakland neighborhoods after the Loma Prieta earthquake. Seale is currently an author, lecturer, and community activist.

Members of the BPP and their families filed several lawsuits against the FBI. In 1970, Huey Newton filed suit, claiming that his civil rights were violated in the 1968 raid of his home. In 1975, the BPP sued the FBI for \$100 million for their COINTELPRO activities against them. In 1983, a Federal District Judge awarded \$1.85 million to the estate of Fred Hampton for wrongful death.

The FBI's annihilation of the BPP affected the poor black community in many ways. The FBI's reliance upon social degenerates within the black community to infiltrate the BPP, in effect, increased the capacity of criminals, particularly drug dealers, in the black community. Other black nationalists, disenchanted with the BPP's new agenda and convinced the federal government would not allow them political freedom, joined underground guerrilla organizations such as the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA). The SLA and BLA were both allegedly responsible for several bank robberies, police officer assassinations, police station firebombings, and high-profile kidnappings—incidents the FBI during COINTELPRO falsely accused the BPP of plotting.

### ***Conclusion***

The BPP was the indocile superego of American culture during one of the worst periods of international imperialism and social inequality in U.S. history. In a sense, the BPP split the conscience of U.S. society, shedding light on a silent majority ready to embrace the universality of liberation and a sinister force fanatically committed to maintaining the status quo. The rise and extirpation of the BPP bears lessons and antidotes to many problems facing the black community today. The explosive number of black men in the criminal justice system, the rise of crack and the subsequent war on drugs, and the marginalized presence of black male leadership in the poor black community are the natural degenerative effects of the federal government's overthrow of the BPP. More importantly, the BPP's legacy lays bare the universal potential of black empowerment and the undaunted spirit of a community responding to oppression. *See also* Black Nationalism.



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Ivory Toldson

## Black Power

The term *Black Power* was first used as a slogan and later expanded to encompass an ideology, a movement, and a cultural revolution. However, blacks were not unified in their expression of Black Power. Some blacks advocated black pride and political, social, and economic self-determination and empowerment, others advanced a militant activism. These responses reflected black frustration with the violent white riposte to the **civil rights movement**, the approach of the civil rights leaders, and the conditions that remained unchanged after the historic **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.

The civil rights movement began in the 1950s. Although it was a predominately black-led movement, whites also participated. These participants consisted of ordinary, largely middle-class men and women as well as



Stokely Carmichael standing at rostrum, speaking at the University of California's Greek Theater, 1966. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

churches, women's clubs, and college students. Prominent organizations included the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. The movement's main objective was to eliminate segregation and gain equal rights through nonviolent methods of protest such as boycotts, sit-ins, and marches. These demonstrations occurred in the South. Determined to maintain the status quo, **white mobs** intimidated, terrorized, lynched, and beat the participants. Police officers attacked the protestors with clubs, fire hoses, and dogs. Nevertheless, the nonviolent tactics brought about incremental gains toward integration.

In the 1960s, CORE and SNCC led the **Freedom Rides** to challenge segregation on public transportation and in public facilities and initiated the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964** to garner black suffrage. Both types of demonstrations took place in the South. During the Freedom Rides, both black and white protestors were beaten and attacked by white mobs and the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. During the Freedom Summer, one black and two white volunteers were shot and killed. Also, "thirty homes and thirty-seven churches were bombed, thirty-five civil rights workers were shot at, eight people were beaten, six were murdered, and more than 1,000 arrested" (Hine et al., 521). Despite heavy resistance, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed on July 2, 1964, thereby eradicating segregation. While middle-class blacks in the South enjoyed greater freedoms, frustrations mounted for blacks in the North as conditions in the **ghettos** worsened. Disillusioned by the violence of the civil rights era, the philosophy of integration and **nonviolence**, and continuing **racism** and oppression, blacks looked for another solution.

Black Power was a term coined by **Robert F. Williams** to signify political empowerment. In 1966, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell used the expression in an address at Howard University to encourage the emergence of black institutions. But when **Stokely Carmichael**, the chairman of SNCC, used the term at a rally in 1966 in Greenwood, Mississippi, he sparked a major movement. Carmichael defined Black Power as "a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, [and] to build a sense of community" and urged blacks "to define their own goals, to lead their organizations, and to reject the racist institutions and values of American society" (Dulaney, 54–55). SNCC and CORE ousted their white members and developed new strategies to match their new philosophy and its abandonment of nonviolence.

Blacks also experienced a major physical and artistic transformation during this period. Blacks "took pleasure in wearing African-inspired hairstyles and fashions, particularly with the colors green, black, and red, symbolizing Africa, black people, and blood or revolution" (Altman, 31). Also, "the expression '*Black is Beautiful*' became popular everywhere, and the 'Black Power salute' was raised by athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos during the presentation of their medals at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games" (Altman, 31). Black Power encouraged blacks to solidify their relationships by calling one another brother and sister. It inspired new forms of

communication and a new sense of pride that blacks had been deprived of for centuries. For the first time in history, blacks unashamedly embraced their blackness and their heritage. In 1967, blacks inaugurated the eminent Black Arts movement. Larry Neal stated that this movement was “radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community” and proclaimed it to be “the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept” (Hine et al., 547).

A key aspect of the Black Power ideology was militancy. This was not a new concept for blacks. Prominent leaders such as **Henry McNeal Turner** (1834–1915), **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** (1862–1931), and **W.E.B. Du Bois** (1868–1963) had advocated **black self-defense**. During the Black Power movement, organizations that were willing and able to confront white violence flourished. The **Deacons for Defense and Justice**, comprised of war veterans, patrolled their communities and boldly challenged the Ku Klux Klan. **Malcolm X**, during the early years of his leadership in the **Nation of Islam**, not only promoted **Black Nationalism** but rallied young blacks to his call for retaliatory violence. Young blacks in the ghettos joined rifle clubs. In 1966, **Huey P. Newton** and Bobby Seale founded the **Black Panther Party** for Self-Defense in Oakland, California, largely in response to **police brutality**. They engaged the police in several violent confrontations. In 1967, **H. Rap Brown** was arrested for inciting a riot when, after encouraging blacks in Cambridge, Maryland, to revolt, “a fire erupted in a dilapidated school” (Hine et al., 534).

As the popularity of Black Power grew, a series of unprecedented riots (1965–1967) broke out in the nation’s black ghettos. Among the most devastating riots were those that took place in **Newark**, New Jersey (1967) and **Detroit**, Michigan (1967) during what came to be known as the **Long Hot Summer Riots**. Young blacks incited these riots within their own communities as a response to real or rumored police attacks on residents. They attacked homes and businesses as well as white bystanders. A significant distinction between black violence and white violence was that blacks generally did not kill their victims. Most of the deaths that occurred came about when law enforcement attempted to restore order. The extent and validity to which radical organizations and activities within the ghettos may have influenced or participated in the rising incidence of such riots remains under debate.

White and black reactions to the raging violence that swept the urban North, and to the Black Power movement in general, differed. Many whites faulted blacks—not the circumstances that triggered the violence. Consequently, the black riots reinforced their preexisting stereotypes, and whites responded by calling for tighter restrictions and increased law enforcement in the ghettos. President Lyndon Johnson established a commission that determined that **racism** was the main cause of the riots. He proposed several programs to alleviate the problems affecting blacks, such as crime, unemployment, drugs, and poverty. At the same time, the government was responsible for the dismantling of many black **vigilante organizations** such as the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, which had attempted to better the community with social programs and to provide protection to the residents.

Generally, whites were suspicious of the Black Power movement. Blacks who wore their hair naturally and sported afrocentric clothing were regarded as radicals and racists. Many whites were intimidated by blacks who no longer strove to be assimilated into mainstream society. In "An Advocate of Black Power Defines It," Charles V. Hamilton explained that some people believed Black Power was "synonymous with premeditated acts of violence to destroy the political and economic institutions of this country." He also stated that "the concept is understood by many to mean hatred of and separation from whites" (Hamilton, 124).

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, the spokesperson for the civil rights movement, was distressed by the rioting and condemned the separatist ideology of the Black Power movement. However, he did support black economic, political, and social empowerment, and the expression and promotion of racial pride and dignity. However, the extreme militants celebrated the riots and warned of more. Other proponents of Black Power empathized with the rioters but desired "to establish solid, stable organizations and action programs" led by blacks (Hamilton, 125) rather than to promote violence. Furthermore, they believed "Black Power must (1) deal with the obviously growing alienation of black people and their distrust of the institutions of this society; (2) work to create new values and to build a new sense of community and belonging; and (3) work to establish legitimate new institutions that make participants, not recipients, out of a people traditionally excluded from the fundamentally racist processes of this country" (Hamilton, 126). Within this framework, many blacks felt that they could work with, though separately from, whites.

In 1967, Black Power advocates held a conference in Newark (at the location of a riot that had occurred four days prior) to merge the factions within the black community and generate resolutions for the movement. Among the 286 organizations represented were the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the Black Muslims, CORE, the East Orange Housing Authority, the Fisk University Poverty Research Group, the NAACP, the New York Police Department, SCLC, and the Zimbabwe African People's Union. Out of over 80 resolutions concerning economic, political, educational, international, and other goals, the participants chose the **Black Manifesto**, which advanced Black Nationalism and self-determination.

During the Black Power movement, blacks were responsible for a number of changes in the black community and in the nation. Following in the steps of historical icons such as Carter G. Woodson, blacks helped establish black history programs in schools and black studies departments at colleges and universities. Television programs, commercials, and magazines represented more blacks, while "movies depicting black heroes (and heroines) who beat up evil whites were popular, though a number of people referred to these contemptuously as 'blaxploitation' films" (Hamilton, 126). Also significant was the fact that blacks felt better about themselves as a result of "[rejecting] the lessons of slavery and segregation that caused black people to look upon themselves with hatred and disdain" (Hamilton, 127). John Zippert, a CORE Task Force member, organized a sweet potato cooperative in Opelousa, Louisiana, and Antoine Perot, a CORE field secretary,

established a freedom school “with thirty teachers and 200 students, ranging in ages from eight to eighty” including “Negro history, art, music, and other aspects of black culture” (McKissick, 180). Other programs trained black leaders. Also, blacks made great artistic and literary contributions.

In contrast, many other blacks were more willing than ever to use violence as a means to revolt against racism. Although many of the more militant organizations helped defend blacks against police brutality and racist attacks, some helped fuel racial hate and the self-destructive violence that ignited in the ghettos. *See also* Black Manifesto; Boston (Massachusetts) Riot of 1967; Buffalo (New York) Riot of 1967; Cincinnati (Ohio) Riots of 1967 and 1968; Cleveland (Ohio) Riot of 1966; Dayton (Ohio) Riot of 1966; Jersey City (New Jersey) Riot of 1964; Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965; Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riot of 1964; San Francisco (California) Riot of 1966; Springfield (Massachusetts) Riot of 1965.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## **Black Self-Defense**

Many Americans associate the doctrine of black self-defense with the young male militant leaders of the **Black Panther Party** for Self-Defense and other groups that captured national attention in northern urban centers in the latter part of the modern **civil rights movement**. These groups often defined themselves in opposition to the predominantly southern-based nonviolent civil rights struggle. The tradition of black self-defense, however, emerged long before the modern civil rights movement. Black leaders argued for self-defense in response to the **lynchings** and race riots that plagued blacks during the **Jim Crow** era, phenomena which reached their apex during the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**. Blacks with political views as divergent as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, **A. Philip Randolph**, and Cyril Briggs used their media platforms, *The Crisis*, *The Messenger*, and *The Crusader*, respectively, to advocate black self-defense in these years. Even among blacks that subscribed to the tenets of **nonviolence** in their public political protest, there were few who extended this logic into their private lives and many vowed to protect their families if attacked. Historians

recognize the profound influence that civil rights activist and the most influential proponent of self-defense, **Robert F. Williams**, had on groups like the **Black Panther Party** and the lesser-known **Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)**, an important group in the development and dissemination of **Black Power** ideology.

Though women are often invoked as part of the justification for man's right to defend himself and what "belongs" to him, a woman is not usually the first person that comes to mind when one pictures an advocate of self-defense. **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, however, was an important early advocate. Wells-Barnett, among the more radical members of the middle-class black women's club movement and an often overlooked founder of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, was, for many years, the entirety of the anti-lynching campaign in the United States and abroad. In 1892, one of her friends was among three men lynched for daring to open a grocery store in Memphis and taking business from a nearby white store. Wells-Barnett, in her paper, *Free Speech*, urged blacks to leave Memphis, and many blacks heeded her call. The incident also propelled her to write "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases," an analysis of the ideology surrounding lynching and "A Red Record," a phenomenal investigation of the practice of lynching in the United States. Wells-Barnett found that even though **white mobs** used rape as the public justification for lynching, most lynching did not occur after a black man was accused of rape. Worse, she made the bold assertion that among the times that rape was the actual charge, there were instances when white women entered into voluntary sexual relationships with black men. Livid Memphis whites ransacked her paper. Luckily, Wells-Barnett was on her way to New York at the time. Famously, she promised to "sell [her] life as dearly as possible" if attacked (Wells-Barnett 1970).

As blacks migrated to urban centers, race riots joined the largely rural phenomenon of lynching in the theater of American racial terror. There were forty riots between 1898 and 1908 and twenty-five riots during the Red Summer of 1919 alone. W.E.B. Du Bois, in the pages of the NAACP's *The Crisis* condemned the cowardice of Gainesville, Florida, blacks who did not fight back against a white mob, a mob that blacks outnumbered. Du Bois was furious that Gainesville blacks allowed their women and men to be murdered and that they had finally surrendered the man the mob sought (Du Bois 1916). Du Bois did more than write about defending the race; ten years earlier, in response to an Atlanta riot, he had purchased a Winchester rifle to protect his family (Tyson 1998). The socialist publication *The Crusader*, coedited by A. Philip Randolph, who was later president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Chandler Owen, ran an editorial lauding black people's resort to self-defense in racial incidents in Memphis, Tennessee, and **Longview**, Texas. Although blacks were outnumbered, *The Crusader* argued that a significant factor bolstering the willingness of whites to take part in mob violence was the fact that whites believed that they would attack defenseless blacks. According to *The Crusader*, if any man in the mob thought that he might lose his life, he thought better of the attack. Moreover, law enforcement officials, who often argued that they were

powerless in the face of the mobs, were more likely to intervene when blacks were armed and there was a chance that a real battle might break out (*Crusader*, September 1919).

Black Marxist Cyril Briggs was also moved by the spike in racial violence in 1919. The year before he formed a secret organization, the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). The Marxist organization, because of the future orientation of Marxist theory, was not fond of concomitant black political efforts that looked to the past. ABB is perhaps best known for its critical stance regarding the nostalgic pageantry of **Marcus Garvey's** United Negro Improvement Association. But unlike mainstream Marxism, the group supported black self-government as well as black self-defense (Kelley 2003). Years later, Robert F. Williams would honor the organization when he named his popular newsletter after the ideological organ of the ABB, *The Crusader* (Tyson 1998).

The **Deacons for Defense and Justice**, a group that formed in 1964 in Jonesboro and Bogalusa, Louisiana, with a mission of defending **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** volunteers from **Ku Klux Klan** attacks, stand as evidence that the black self-defense tradition and the nonviolent arm of the modern civil rights movement could stand side by side. Nonviolent leaders did more than accept protection from those who believed in self-defense. Little Rock, Arkansas NAACP President Daisy Bates, who oversaw the integration of Central High School, often bragged about her .32 automatic (Tyson 1998). Amzie Moore, a Mississippi NAACP leader who suggested and helped **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** activist Bob Moses organize the voter registration drive that became known as **Freedom Summer**, carried a gun and kept his house well stocked and well lit, should he be attacked. Significantly, Moses, the quiet activist with an unmatched commitment to pacifism, was tested in one of the most brutal caldrons of unprovoked racial violence during the civil rights movement—Mississippi, which was well aware of Moore's arsenal (Tyson 1998).

Robert F. Williams, one of the most important proponents of black self-defense began his career in black politics with the NAACP, although he had participated in the organized labor movement during his time in Detroit and even penned an article for the *Daily Worker*, so he cannot be claimed solely within civil rights history. Williams, a war veteran, managed to assemble an NAACP chapter in Monroe, North Carolina, that was composed largely of working-class blacks. Others had abandoned the NAACP after black gains in *Brown* and the Montgomery Bus Boycott inflamed white passions in the area. Williams' first campaign with the NAACP was to integrate Monroe public swimming pools. This ran counter to the practice of the NAACP, which had, since the Scottsboro case, shied away from interracial conflict at the intersection of race and sex. Predictably, the Ku Klux Klan came after Williams and his associates, but he and his veteran allies demonstrated that they were armed; a move that deterred Klan attacks. The infamous "Kissing Case" in which two ten-year-old boys were imprisoned after one kissed an eight-year-old white girl, brought the Monroe chapter into the spotlight and Williams onto the national and international scene. **Malcolm**

X told his congregation that they had to support Williams' efforts on the war front. Sex and race were also at the center of the controversy that led to Williams' expulsion from the NAACP. After two trials in which the courts failed to punish white men after they attacked black women, Williams pledged to fight "lynching with lynching" a statement he later clarified (Tyson 1998).

Williams, still active after his expulsion, was content to follow the student activists during the North Carolina sit-in campaign. In the confusion surrounding white backlash over a CORE demonstration in Monroe, Williams was charged with kidnapping a white couple he had in fact sheltered during the fray. He and his family fled to Cuba. There, he broadcast his program, *Radio Free Dixie*, which reached blacks in New York and Los Angeles. He also continued to publish his newsletter, *The Crusader*, which he had started in 1959, and it reached many of the young black radical intellectuals today's students recognize from posters and movies. His book, *Negroes with Guns*, had a profound impact on Merritt College student **Huey P. Newton**. Williams and Malcolm X are cited as the two biggest inspirations for the formation of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Williams also influenced another organization, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), considered one of the key organizations in developing the ideology of Black Power. The young radicals did not fail to honor their debt to Williams. In 1968, when the BPP asked him to become its foreign minister, he was already the president-in-exile of RAM (Tyson 1998). See also "If We Must Die" (McKay, 1919); Nonviolence.

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*Sbatema A. Threadcraft*

## Black Soldiers and Lynching

**Lynching**, or mob violence, was originally a system of punishment used by whites against African American slaves. The term lynching probably derived from the name Charles Lynch, a justice of the peace who administered and condoned mob vigilantism in Virginia during the 1700s. Historically, records show that black men were the main targets of lynching, and during and after wartime, black soldiers were singled out for this cruel system of punishment. More than 4,700 Americans—most of them black—were lynched between 1890 and 1960, according to figures from America's Black Holocaust Museum located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Journalist **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** was one of the first anti-lynching advocates and she attacked the notion that lynching protected white women, proving with statistics that most black men who were lynched were never



accused of rape but were hung for a variety of real or concocted offenses. The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** also launched a major campaign against lynching. In 1919, the organization published *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*.

According to historians, there was a decline in lynching during World War I, but numerous blacks were murdered by lynching in the year after the war ended. Reportedly, more than seventy blacks, including ten black soldiers—some still in their Army uniforms—were among those lynched.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson issued a call for Americans to enter World War I to make the world secure for the sake of democracy. More than 200,000 Americans went to Europe in support of the war. Because of the strict segregationist policies of the U.S. Army at this time, many blacks went to France and joined the French forces. Despite heated debates about whether they should participate in a war abroad when they could not exercise their rights at home, many black men went to war out of the belief that when the war ended, justice would reign.

At the end of the war when black soldiers returned to the United States, they were shocked and unprepared for the greeting they received. Reportedly, some black soldiers were beaten by angry **white mobs**. Race riots erupted across the country in cities such as New York, Washington, D.C., and St. Louis.

Additionally, a disproportionate number of black soldiers were lynched during World War II, sometimes as Europeans and white American soldiers looked on. According to newspaper reports, most of the U.S. soldiers executed for capital crimes in Europe were black, and military courts sentenced a large number of black soldiers to be hanged in public between 1943 and 1946. At the time, less than 10 percent of the segregated Army was African American. For some black soldiers, post-wartime brought continued lynching and beatings of blacks across the country and such acts continued into the 1960s.

Some historians point out that the history of the lynching of blacks began with one incident at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, during the Civil War. According to numerous accounts, Confederate slaughter of black federal troops stationed at Fort Pillow took place in the mid-1800s. The action stemmed from southern outrage at the North's use of black soldiers. From the beginning of the war, the Confederate leadership was faced with the question of whether to treat black soldiers captured in battle as slaves in insurrection or, as the Union insisted, as prisoners of war. In 1864, Confederate Col. W.P. Shingler ordered those in his command to take no more black prisoners. In what proved to be one of the most heinous racial incidents of the war and in American history, Confederate forces under Gen. Nathan B. Forrest captured Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864, and took every effort to wipe out the black troops. Some were shot to death, others were burned or buried alive. A federal congressional committee investigation subsequently verified that more than 300 blacks, including women and children, had been slain after the fort surrendered. After the incident, black soldiers going into battle used the cry "Remember Fort Pillow!" Soon after the Fort Pillow Massacre, the

South agreed to treat blacks as prisoners of war. *See also* Anti-Lynching Bureau; Anti-Lynching League.

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*Frances Ward-Johnson*

## Black Women and Lynching

**Lynching**, or mob violence, was originally a system of punishment used by whites against African American slaves. The term lynching probably derived from the name Charles Lynch, a justice of the peace who administered and condoned mob vigilantism in Virginia during the 1700s.

Black women in the late nineteenth century were among the first to publicly protest racially motivated lynching, beginning a challenge that eventually turned into a key movement. Journalist **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** was one of the first anti-lynching advocates. She attacked the notion that lynching protected white women, proving with statistics that most black men who were lynched were never accused of rape but were hung for a variety of real or concocted offenses. Wells-Barnett's stand against lynching involved a strategy of investigation and exposure that eventually became the guide for all anti-lynching activism.

One of America's earliest and most successful anti-lynching campaigns was launched by Wells-Barnett from 1892 to 1900 by way of a writing campaign that included newspaper editorials and pamphlets, and national and international public speaking platforms. Through her pamphlets and other writings, she portrayed lynching as acts of terrorism and oppression.

Several incidents that changed Wells-Barnett's life and propelled her understanding of lynching began when three of her close friends were murdered. On the morning of March 9, 1892, the bodies of Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Lee Stewart were found shot to death in a field a mile north of Memphis, Tennessee. The men had owned and operated the People's Grocery Store, a store in competition with a grocery owned and operated by a white man. After writing an explosive editorial, Wells-Barnett was threatened with lynching if she returned to Memphis from her vacation in the North.

Once she experienced the horrors of lynching first hand, Wells-Barnett was determined to launch a campaign to terminate the violence. Her pamphlets painted vivid pictures of lynchings, describing them as incredibly brutal acts at the hands of a lawless mob. She chronicled and cataloged specific examples, documenting hundreds of cases in her pamphlet, *A Red Record*. She revealed racial and regional patterns in the numbers, highlighting, for example, that 160 of the 241 lynchings reported in 1892 were of African Americans and that 180 of the 241 occurred in southern states. She noted that the victims included five African American women; and that at least one group of victims was a fourteen-year-old girl and her sixteen-year-old brother, who were hanged alongside their father, the alleged criminal.

Wells-Barnett chronicled lynchings from January 1882 to January 1892 and identified the charges for which the 728 black men were killed. She also described the lynching in 1886 of one black woman in Jackson, Tennessee, accused of poisoning her white mistress. According to Wells-Barnett, the woman was dragged from jail, had the clothes torn from her body, and was hung in the public courthouse square.

More black women joined Wells-Barnett in her fight against lynching when the black women's club movement began in the 1890s. Clubwomen supported Wells-Barnett morally and financially in her efforts to publish two of her anti-lynching pamphlets, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* and *The Red Record*.

Moreover, after the founding of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** in 1909, scores of black women participated in anti-lynching activities. In the 1920s, the NAACP began an unsuccessful two-decade battle for federal anti-lynching legislation. An important part of black women's contribution to the NAACP campaign for the anti-lynching bill—the Dyer Bill—was the establishment of an organization that publicized the horrors of lynching and provided a focus for campaign fundraising. The Anti-Lynching Crusaders, founded in 1922 under the NAACP umbrella, was a women's organization that focused on raising money to promote the passage of the bill and the prevention of lynching in general. The Crusaders, led by educator Mary Talbert, sought to include white women but were largely unsuccessful. The Crusaders' slogan was "A Million Women United To Stop Lynching" and their aim was to get one million women to donate at least one dollar each toward the NAACP anti-lynching campaign. The Anti-Lynching Crusaders never achieved their fundraising or legislative objectives but did successfully publicize the issue of lynching and continued a tradition of campaigning begun by Wells-Barnett in the 1890s and later taken up by white women in the 1930s through Jessie Daniel Ames' Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching.

Black women, with Ida B. Wells-Barnett at the helm, catapulted the anti-lynching issue into the spotlight of American public sentiment and, for the first time, placed mob violence on the American agenda. Their anti-lynching campaigns revealed that the role of African American women, some of whom were former slaves, transcended boundaries as they used a public campaign to become champions of truth and justice and pioneers against violence, disorder, and lawlessness. *See also* Anti-Lynching Bureau; Anti-Lynching League.

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*Frances Ward-Johnson*

## Bloody Sunday (1965)

No event called more attention to the **civil rights movement** than the 65-mile march from Selma to the Alabama state capitol in Montgomery on March 21, 1965. What started out small and local grew into one of the most significant civil disobedience landmarks of the time and was a historical turning point in the voting rights struggle. However, the historic Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March is the result of two previous demonstration attempts, particularly the march now known as Bloody Sunday.

On March 7, 600 college students, community protesters, and grassroots leaders from the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** assembled to protest, among other things, the killing of **Jimmie Lee Jackson**. As the marchers walked toward the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the outskirts of Selma, they were intercepted by Alabama state troopers who attacked them with tear gas, whips, and clubs. This event was captured by cameras, and TV stations interrupted programming to show clips of the violence. In one instance, a station was showing a documentary on Nazi war crimes, *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Viewers were shocked when they realized that the images from Selma were not part of the film. Often regarded as the nova of the civil rights movement, the events in Selma helped usher in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 five months later. The passage of the act reshaped civil rights legislation in the nation by eliminating literacy tests, poll taxes, and other roadblocks, and finally opened the doors to black participation in the electoral process.

The journey from Bloody Sunday to the passage of the Voting Rights Act actually began in early 1965 when civil rights groups like SNCC and the SCLC began focusing their attention on voting registration issues in Selma, an area that had the lowest voter registration record in the Black Belt. Less than two months after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, along with 250 marchers, was arrested on February 1, 1965, during a peaceful voting rights demonstration in Selma. While in jail, King wrote the letter that was eventually titled “Civil Right No. 1—The Right to Vote.” Although less well known than his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” this letter from a Selma jail calls attention to the horrific measures used to prevent black voter registration and details his demands for immediate legislative action. The jailing of Dr. King in February led to several small local protests.

The killing of **Jimmie Lee Jackson**, a twenty-six-year-old black participant at one of these protests in Marion, Alabama, motivated workers to organize a march from Selma to Montgomery. Jackson, his mother, and grandfather were participating in a peaceful voting rights demonstration on February 18. State troopers attacked the marchers and both Jackson’s mother and grandfather were clubbed. Jackson, who was shot in the stomach by a trooper as he attempted to aid his mother, was arrested and charged with assault and battery before being hospitalized. Jackson’s death a few days later stimulated renewed mass protests, and in early March, SCLC announced plans to hold the Selma-to-Montgomery protest march.

On the afternoon of Sunday, March 7, some 600 marchers assembled under the leadership of Hosea Williams of SCLC and John Lewis and Robert Mants of SNCC. Although still a key figure in the voting rights efforts in Selma, Dr. King was not present at the march this day. As they proceeded toward the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers encountered a combination of deputies and state troopers led by Sheriff Jim Clark and Maj. John Cloud. Cloud told the protesters to leave, but when they refused, they were attacked by police using billy clubs. Sen. John Lewis, who was a college student at the time, would later recall in his autobiography *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*, how the marchers bowed in a prayerful manner as the troopers, many on their horses, attacked them with tear gas, whips, and clubs. Protesters' ribs and limbs were broken and many were hospitalized. Lewis' skull was fractured as a result of the attacks.

Upon his return to Selma, Dr. King led a symbolic march to the bridge on March 9. This march was also stopped short as troopers pushed protesters back with the threat of jail. **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** Legal Defense Fund lawyers petitioned the court for protection to hold a full-scale march from Selma to Montgomery. Federal District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., ruled in favor of the demonstrators, noting that "the right to petition one's government for the redress of grievances may be exercised in large group" (*Williams v. Wallace*, 240 F.Supp.100, M.D. Ala. 1965) and this included the right to march along public highways.

By March 21, three weeks after the first attempt, approximately 4,000 protesters left Selma for Montgomery once again. Although there were incidences of violence during and after the march, notably the killing of Viola Luizzo by the **Ku Klux Klan**, the march was deemed successful. By the time they reached Montgomery on March 25, more than 25,000 people were present as Dr. King handed a petition demanding voting rights for African Americans to Gov. George Wallace.

Although Bloody Sunday called the nation's attention to the violence in the South, it is also the key event that impressed upon Congress the urgency for a new bill to protect the rights of African Americans as guaranteed by the Constitution. Less than five months after the last of the three marches, under pressure from President Lyndon Johnson's White House, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which aimed to redress white resistance to black democratic participation. The Voting Rights Act sought to eliminate the various legal and cultural tactics administered by state governments, particularly in the Black Belt region where SNCC and SCLC workers devoted much of their efforts. *See also* Jackson, Jimmie Lee (1938–1965); Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

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Dara N. Byrne

## "Bombingham"

"Bombingham" was the nickname given to the city of Birmingham, Alabama, as a consequence of the domestic terrorism, consisting of more than fifty dynamite bombings that occurred between 1947 and 1965. Bombings began at the homes of blacks who moved to the fringes of white neighborhoods and eventually expanded to include pro-integrationist white activists and civil rights leadership and recognized movement centers, such as the historic 16th Street Baptist Church.

Known as the worst city for anti-black **racism**, Birmingham in the **civil rights movement** era was the site of escalating conflict between the city's whites against steadily increasing numbers of rural black immigrants drawn by the promise of jobs in the coal mines and steel mills. African American Birminghamians began legal and protest challenges to racial **segregation** laws in the 1940s, focusing on housing segregation.

Between the late 1940s and late 1950s, the likely undercount of the white Birmingham press acknowledged twenty-two dynamite bombings and four arson burnings. Between 1957 and 1963, a number of bombings occurred, including a cluster of unsolved bombings around the court-ordered integrated black enclave in a North Smithfield neighborhood that earned it the nickname Dynamite Hill.

In 1956, Birmingham had over 350,000 residents (nearly 40 percent black), and 400 African American churches, some of which founded the Alabama Human Rights Commission (AHRC), led by Bethel Baptist Church's Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth (whose house was bombed twice). A coalition between the AHRC and the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** undertook a signature moment in the movement, culminating with the confrontation with Public Safety Commissioner **T. Eugene "Bull" Connor** during the "children's marches" on May 2–6, 1963.

Revs. King, Shuttlesworth, and Ralph Abernathy announced a "truce" between the city and the movement that included **desegregation**, job opportunities, better communication, and release of all protestors. The next Saturday, bombs exploded at the A.D. King house, the First Baptist Church of Ensley Parsonage, and at the A.G. Gaston Motel, sparking violent black retaliation and the federalization of the Alabama National Guard by **President John F. Kennedy**. At a mass meeting at the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church on May 13, Dr. King referred to the city as "Bombingham."

When the first two African American children to desegregate Birmingham's public schools enrolled on September 4, **Ku Klux Klan** elements responded by bombing Attorney Arthur Schores' home on Center Street, in the Smithfield/Dynamite Hill neighborhood, for the second time in three weeks. Ten days later occurred the most memorable of the Klan's Birmingham bombings, that of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, which killed

four girls—Cynthia Wesley, Carol Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, and Carole Robertson. In May 2001 and 2002, respectively, Klansmen Thomas Blanton and Bobby Frank Cherry were convicted of these bombings. See also *Black Church Arsons*; Connor, T. Eugene “Bull” (1897–1973).

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*Gregory E. Carr*

### **Boston (Massachusetts) Riot of 1967**

The Boston, Massachusetts, riot of 1967 was a **ghetto** riot in which local businesses were destroyed and scores of people were injured after a peaceful demonstration broken up by the Boston police caused an angry mob to gather in support of the protesters.

The historically small black population of Boston began to grow in the 1950s as more African Americans and West Indians migrated to the city in search of jobs and improved political and economic opportunities. At the same time, Boston was undergoing many structural changes in the name of urban renewal as entire neighborhoods were demolished to make way for the city’s expansion. As **gentrification** set in and African Americans were pushed out of the largely black neighborhoods of the South End and lower Roxbury, ghettos began to emerge in the areas surrounding the Grove Hall section of Roxbury and North Dorchester. Although increased opportunity led to some occupational gains, income levels for blacks, compared to whites, remained low. Unlike other cities that had sustained periods of black migration, Boston’s black community had difficulty in achieving political parity with the longer established white ethnic population because of their relatively small numbers. Thomas Atkins, an African American, was elected as a districtwide city councilor, but without a large constituency, blacks were unable to win many seats in local and state government. African Americans also held few municipal jobs, which were often reserved for the relatives of white elected officials. While there was no shortage of causes for the rioting, the particular incident that sparked the riot on Saturday, June 3, 1967 occurred when a dozen demonstrators under the name of Mothers for Adequate Welfare (MAW) locked themselves inside a welfare office located in the Grove Hall section of Roxbury. The protesters, all women, read a list of demands and refused to leave until those demands were met. Police and firefighters arrived on the scene to remove the demonstrators from the welfare office, which had been locked by the women from the inside. The women padlocked and chained the door, locking themselves, about twenty social workers, and ten policemen inside. As police attempted to enter the building, a crowd gathered and began to shout at the officers. When the policemen finally gained entrance, they were met with a hail of stones, bottles, and other projectiles thrown by the protesters.

By the evening, only with the help of several black ministers and other city leaders called in to pacify the growing crowd, were police finally able to clear the building. However, as night fell, the rather large crowd moved to the streets and a full-scale riot ensued. Shards of broken glass littered the streets from rocks and bottles thrown at the police and the windows of police cruisers. By 11:00 P.M., the violence had escalated and the scene was one of mob violence. Homes and stores on Blue Hill Avenue burned while firemen, attempting to put out the blazes, were pelted with stones. According to reports, the rioting took place over as many as fifteen blocks and lasted for twelve hours. A command center was established at a nearby football stadium for the distribution of weapons and riot gear to men called in from other precincts. Store windows, particularly those of drugstores, liquor stores, and other businesses were smashed and merchandise was either destroyed or picked up by the rioters. Shortly after midnight, a group of black leaders met with the police commissioner to assess the damage estimated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Upwards of thirty people or more were arrested and scores of people, including a little girl who suffered a skull fracture when a stone struck her on the head as she was riding through the area in a passing car, were treated for injuries at Boston City Hospital. At least thirty policemen were also injured. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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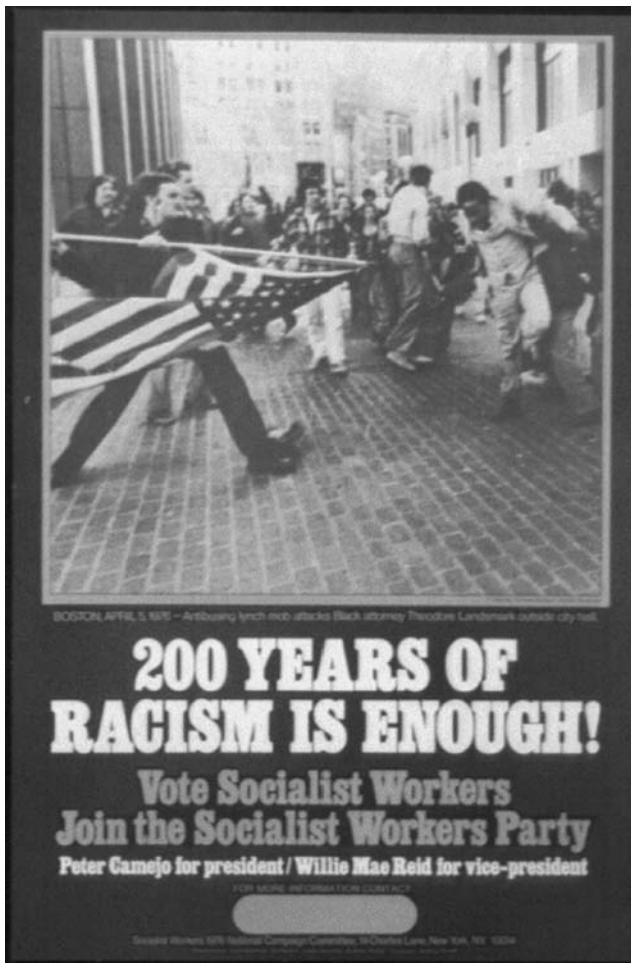
*Zebulon V. Miletsky*

### **Boston (Massachusetts) Riots of 1975 and 1976**

From 1974 to 1976, the court-ordered busing of students to achieve school **desegregation** led to sporadic outbreaks of violence in Boston’s schools and in the city’s largely **segregated** neighborhoods. Although Boston was by no means the only American city to undertake a plan of school desegregation, the forced busing of students from some of the city’s most impoverished and racially segregated neighborhoods led to an unprecedented level of violence and turmoil in the city’s streets and classrooms and made national headlines.

The reasons for the rioting were many and were bound up with the unique history and development of Boston’s tightly knit ethnic neighborhoods as well as with the economic changes brought about by the city’s rapid growth and development in the 1950s and 1960s. The black migration to Boston during World War I was much smaller than it was in other cities. The historically small black population of Boston began to grow in the post–World War II era when more African Americans migrated to the city in search of jobs and improved political and economic opportunities. Unlike other immigrants, however, notably Irish-Americans, blacks were not able to secure the government jobs that occupied a large percentage of the city’s workforce. In the 1970s, black workers earned only about two-thirds of what their white counterparts





Poster showing mob attacking black attorney Theodore Landmark outside City Hall, Boston, April 5, 1976. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

did. A legacy of **redlining** and discriminatory lending practices prevented blacks from moving into areas such as Hyde Park and West Roxbury where many working-class people owned their own homes. Blacks were also kept out of poorer white working-class neighborhoods, such as South Boston, Charlestown, and East Boston. As **gentrification** set in and African Americans were pushed out of the historically black neighborhoods of the South End and lower Roxbury, ghettos began to emerge in the areas surrounding Roxbury, Mattapan, and North Dorchester. The schools in these neighborhoods were inadequate and lacked basic resources. At the same time, Boston underwent many structural changes in the name of urban renewal as entire neighborhoods were demolished to make way for the city's expansion. The white working-class victims of the city's transformation responded by electing leaders who would defend the neighborhoods at all costs, including the right to retain their own neighborhood schools.

In the face of municipal power and the federal court, antibusing extremists resorted to violence to protest against school desegregation. The tension created violence in the

streets and erupted into almost daily fights in the hallways and classrooms of Boston's public schools. The installation of a police presence in the hallways of South Boston High as well as the use of metal detectors kept a lid on most tensions. However, hostile crowds gathered outside the school almost daily. In response, Judge Arthur Garrity, architect of the original Boston school desegregation plan, issued a judicial order in September 1975 that prohibited groups of three or more persons from gathering within 100 yards of the school. For the first time since the first turbulent year of busing, South Boston High opened its doors with the presence of 500 state troopers, an occupying force that would remain there for the next three years. Fights broke out on an almost daily basis. Altercations arose between students and even teachers were pulled into the fray. Troopers wearing riot helmets and carrying batons were forced to intervene. At Hyde Park High, on January 9, 1975, the second day back to school after the winter break, a

fistfight in the first floor corridor erupted into a series of confrontations that spilled out into the streets of Hyde Park, causing police to rush to the scene. Police arrested fifteen students, thirteen of whom were black, and classes were suspended after the third period. One female black student was charged with assault and battery for allegedly kicking a policeman, while the other fourteen were charged with disorderly conduct.

Calm lasted for about a month but ended abruptly when fighting broke out once again on February 12 and lasted for three days. Although no major disturbances occurred in the schools during the months of March and April 1975, hostilities erupted on April 7 at a political forum in Quincy where Sen. Ted Kennedy was giving a speech. Kennedy's address was interrupted by a rowdy antibusing delegation that peppered the senator with insults, jeers, and name-calling. Kennedy, once the pride of Boston's Irish community, had paid dearly for his support of busing. In this instance, he was chased to his car, which had already been vandalized by thugs. Kennedy had to be whisked away by police to the train station where the crowd hurled stones at the departing train. On May 3, a skirmish in South Boston involving local youths and members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) on a march against **racism** resulted in the arrest of eight people and at least ten injuries. Police estimated that 250 persons, nearly all of whom were from out of state, attempted to march from Dorchester to South Boston to the home of Boston City Councilwoman Louise Day Hicks, an ardent defender and prominent leader of the antibusing cause. Boston Police Superintendent-in-Chief Joseph M. Jordan said the violence along the route was initially provoked by the PLP's strike team when they encountered South Boston youths. About 100 persons, believed to be South Boston neighborhood residents, returned to the parade route with baseball bats, hockey sticks, and rocks in an attempt to disrupt the march as it passed Columbia Stadium in South Boston.

The PLP riot sparked another melee at Hyde Park High School that lasted for two days on May 7 and 8, when a black student reportedly waved a flag bearing the PLP symbol. On May 9, an angry crowd at South Boston High threatened to throw projectiles at black students attempting to exit the school. Leaders of the antibusing movement used tactics borrowed from the **civil rights movement** when the group Restore Our Alienated Rights (ROAR) staged a sleep-in at Boston Mayor Kevin H. White's penthouse suite in the Sheraton Boston Hotel to protest his failure to place the issue of forced busing before the forty-third session of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, then meeting in Boston. ROAR members also demonstrated on June 8 in front of the home of *Boston Globe* publisher John J. Taylor, for what they perceived as the newspaper's pro-busing slant. On June 21, ROAR members picketed the *Boston Globe* plant in Dorchester.

As summer began and the 1974–1975 school year drew to a close, the violence seemed to peter out until an incident involving some out-of-town blacks, unaware of the invisible lines separating the black and white neighborhoods of Boston, plunged the city into violence once again on July 27. The unwelcome black visitors were threatened by hundreds of white bathers who taunted and insulted them as they unknowingly attempted to swim at

Carson Beach, located in the heart of South Boston. They were forced to flee on foot after their rental car was destroyed and two of them were injured by crowds of angry whites who gave chase for several blocks. As the hot summer wore on, several other skirmishes filled Boston's newspapers and hopes for an incident-free opening to the 1975–1976 school year were not high.

With the start of the school year, the so-called Phase II plan of busing, which called for an increase of the total population of bused students from 19,000 to 24,000, went into effect. The plan rearranged school assignments, increased the number of schools, and expanded busing into other white working-class neighborhoods. The plan excluded East Boston with its limited access through the two tunnels that connected it to the rest of Boston. It did include Charlestown, which would now bring blacks into the neighborhood while white students would be sent to schools in Roxbury. Organizers and antibusing leaders quickly moved into action in preparation for the new school year, holding an antibusing rally of more than 10,000 people in Boston's City Hall Plaza the night before the school year was to begin. That same evening, several South Boston toughs attacked a building that housed National Guard troops. Rocks and bottles were thrown at the guardsmen. Later some 300 youths clashed violently with police in front of South Boston High.

When school opened the next day, attendance was down, with only 58.6 percent of students attending. At Charlestown High, only 314 students out of 883 enrolled showed up for class. While antibusing leaders made good on their threats to boycott the schools, the first day of classes was relatively quiet with only one school bus being stoned as it traveled from Roxbury to South Boston. On Friday October 24, police arrested fifteen students at South Boston High for fighting. Judge Garrity responded by holding hearings on the escalating violence in the schools. On the table was the idea of closing South Boston High altogether. On December 9, an order was issued that put South Boston High into federal receivership and Headmaster William Reid out of a job. The headquarters of the Boston **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the oldest chapter in the nation, was firebombed that night in retaliation for the order. On December 12, a large crowd of antibusing advocates tried to break into South Boston High and vandalize it. Some succeeded and were arrested as they scattered leaflets.

Violence broke out at Hyde Park High on January 21, 1976. Thirteen-hundred black and white students fought each other throughout Hyde Park High. Although East Boston High was not a bused school, fighting also plagued that institution while residents held a demonstration to block a plan that would have made East Boston a magnet school the following year. As the antibusing leadership split on tactics, creating divisions within the movement that would ultimately spell its downfall, the month of April 1976 saw some of the worst violence yet. On April 5, Theodore Landsmark, a black lawyer and executive director of the Boston Contractors' Association was on his way to a meeting at City Hall when he was intercepted by a delegation of South Boston and Charlestown High students who were leaving the city council chamber after having aired their views on busing. As Landsmark crossed through the plaza, he was accosted by the marchers, struck

several times in the side and back, and belted by the staff of an American flag. A *Boston Herald American* photographer snapped a picture of one of the students attempting to stab Landsmark with the flag. The picture earned a Pulitzer Prize and appeared in newspapers across the country, etching the hatred and bigotry that Boston was now becoming known for in people's memories.

Later that month on April 20, Richard Poleet, a thirty-four-year-old man from Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood, was brutally beaten by black youths in Roxbury. Poleet's car was stoned at a red light and collided with another vehicle. He was then pulled from his vehicle and received several blows to the head and face and had his skull crushed with rocks. He was rushed to the hospital where he slipped into a coma and eventually died. Many antibusing leaders claimed the attack was in response to the Landsmark beating and spoke out against it. On April 28, a bomb threat evacuated Hyde Park High, resulting in a melee between motorists and pedestrians who were being harassed by students as they passed the building. When the white students stoned some of the black students, a full-fledged riot began, which was only put down with the help of a large police unit.

Racial fights continued to take place in the schools through the end of the 1975–1976 school year. By opening day of the 1976–1977 school year, which was year three of busing, things were relatively calm in the schools. The newspapers reported rock-throwing incidents in Charlestown, South Boston, and other neighborhoods but compared to the preceding years, the antibusing crusade appeared to be running out of steam. Empty gestures on the part of President Gerald Ford and the refusal of the U.S. Supreme Court to hear further appeals on the issue of busing represented a major setback for antibusing forces. Although their leaders issued warnings about continued violence and promised to never give up the fight, the antibusing forces had failed to stop busing through legal or extra-legal means. By the end of the 1976–1977 school year, the antibusing riots had all but ended. *See also* Desegregation.

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*Zebulon V. Miletsky*

**British Anti-Lynching League.** *See* Anti-Lynching League

### **Brooklyn (New York) Riot of 1964**

The Brooklyn Riot of 1964 began on July 20 in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn after a rally held by the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. The riot was a part of the larger **New York City Riot of 1964**, which began two days earlier. During the entire six days of unrest, 118 people were injured and 465 men and women were arrested. Four thousand people in Harlem and another 4,000 in Brooklyn took part in the six-day protest. The riot inaugurated an era of urban unrest that would continue throughout the decade. Although more people were arrested during the

disturbance in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the event that sparked the unrest in 1964 can be traced to Harlem.

Bedford-Stuyvesant is often considered a “second city” to Harlem, the widely recognized capital of the black world. It is only fitting that it is overshadowed by Harlem when one considers that by the time Bedford-Stuyvesant became a black neighborhood, Harlem had already gone through a renaissance. Bedford-Stuyvesant, however, has a long black history. Free African Americans were among the first to buy land in the Bedford Settlement, settling in areas called Weeksville and Carrsville, in the southern part of what is now known as Bedford-Stuyvesant. Bedford saw an influx of wealthy homebuyers in the latter part of the 1800s; however the demand did not last. The community went through a period of rapid racial change that peaked in the middle of the twentieth century. In 1940, it was 25 percent black. By 1960, the black population rose to 74 percent. Though startling, this kind of racial change in cities was not uncommon during the period.

On the morning of July 16, Police Lt. Thomas G. Gilligan killed 15-year-old James Powell, a high school student. Members of CORE had planned a rally at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue (now Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard) on July 18 to protest the disappearance of three Mississippi civil rights workers. After Powell was slain, the group changed the topic of the rally to that of **police brutality**, a longstanding issue of concern for the group. CORE had often called for an independent review board to investigate crimes like the Powell–Gilligan incident. What began as a peaceful protest became the scene of unrest as the crowd moved to the police department’s nearby Twenty-Eighth Precinct. The following day, the *New York Times* reported “thousands of rioting Negroes raced through the center of Harlem last night” (July 19, 1964). Crowds pulled fire alarms and broke store windows. Those arrested faced charges of burglary, felonious assault, resisting arrest, and inciting a riot. On July 20, CORE held a follow up rally in Bedford-Stuyvesant, attended by 1,000 people that ended in similar unrest. The rioting in Brooklyn would continue for the next two nights.

Riots would break out that summer in **Rochester**, New York (July 24–25), as well as in nearby **Jersey City** (August 2–4), Patterson, and Elizabeth, New Jersey (both August 11–13); and **Philadelphia**, Pennsylvania (August 28–30). The New York City riot occurred less than two weeks after the passage of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, and the infamous Watts riot erupted the day after Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**).

The events shook white America’s self-image. No longer able to lay **racism** at the door of their less civilized countrymen in the South, all areas of the United States were forced to confront their own racial problems. And yet, when they did so, they did not have the image of the noble suffering of the followers of **Martin Luther King, Jr.** They did have the recent gains in civil rights, and so questions abounded as to why, in the face of such gains, northern protest took violent form.

The riots of the 1960s are often cited as the reason for the loss of moderate white support for the cause of black civil rights. The riots are held as a

symbol of the eclipse of King's message and the goals of racial civility in the South. Afterwards, the focus would shift to include a fight for economic justice in the post-migration urban centers, an issue that many residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant named as the underlying cause of the riot. King would recognize the logic of these rebellions and attribute them to official misconduct and economic conditions affecting black urban dwellers. In the latter part of his short life, he would shift his message to include justice on behalf of these populations. *See also* Civil Rights Movement.

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*Sbatema A. Threadcraft*

### **Brown, Benjamin (d. 1967)**

On the evening of May 11, 1967, civil rights worker Benjamin Brown was shot in the back during a student protest in Jackson, Mississippi. Jackson police and highway patrolmen blocked the path of several students marching toward downtown. When the marchers began throwing bottles, bricks, and rocks, officers fired their shotguns to disperse the crowd. The officers were supposed to shoot into the air, but an officer leveled his shotgun and shot into the crowd. Twenty-one-year-old Brown died early on the morning of May 12.

Brown's role in the protest is unclear. Some accounts claim he was a bystander, others that he threw a bottle, and others that he was on his way home to celebrate his twenty-second birthday. One account has Brown walking down Lynch Street to buy his wife a sandwich.

Who shot Benjamin Brown is also unclear. Jackson police and **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** inquiries were inconclusive. Jackson police witness report cited officers Jim Black and Dan Moulder as the frontline officers who fired into the crowd. Both denied involvement in Brown's death. Also, the police lab tests on the bullets removed from Brown's back were Number Zero shells, a heavier shell than the Number One shells that Jackson police used. The police report stated that the shells highway patrolmen used in their shotguns were Number Zero. The Brown case closed after a police investigation led to a jury blaming Buddy Kane and Lloyd Jones, a Jackson police officer and highway patrolman, respectively, for Brown's murder.

**Further Reading:** Morris, Aldon D. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: The Free Press, 1984.

*Reginald Bruster*

### **Brown, H. Rap (1943– )**

Hubert Gerold Brown, who as a civil rights activist during the 1960s was known as H. Rap Brown, is also an African American writer, Muslim cleric,



H. Rap Brown (later Jamil Al-Amin). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

and former member of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**. Brown was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on October 4, 1943, the son of Eddie C. and Thelma Warren Brown. In 1962, Brown left Southern University in Baton Rouge to devote his life to the struggle for civil rights. He moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked in an antipoverty program and as a librarian for the U.S. Department of Agriculture before becoming a member of the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), a local SNCC affiliate at Howard University. In 1964, he volunteered for the Mississippi Summer Project (see **Mississippi Freedom Summer**).

In 1965, Brown returned to Washington to become chairperson for NAG, and in 1966 he became the SNCC project director in Alabama. In May 1967, he succeeded **Stokely Carmichael** as national director of the SNCC. On July 24, 1967, Brown achieved lasting notoriety by delivering a speech in Cambridge, Maryland, in which he urged his listeners “to meet violence with violence,” and declared to them that “If this town don’t come around, this town should be burned down” (Carson and Hamburger, 11A). Within hours, Cambridge was in flames and Brown was charged with arson and inciting

a riot. From that night forward, he was associated with the infamous slogan “Burn, Baby, Burn!” and by 1968, when he joined the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, had completely abandoned the belief in **nonviolence** advocated by SNCC. His autobiographical political memoir, *Die, Nigger, Die!*, which was published in 1969, reflected the extremist views for which he had become famous. Imprisoned several times between 1967 and 1970, Brown appeared on the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** Ten Most Wanted List after avoiding trial on charges of inciting a riot and taking a gun across state lines. He was wounded during a shootout with New York City police in 1971, subsequently convicted of robbery, and incarcerated in Attica Prison until 1976.

In 1972, while in prison, Brown converted to orthodox Islam and changed his name to Jamil (beautiful) Abdullah (servant of God) Al-Amin (the trustworthy). When he was paroled in 1976, Al-Amin made a *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca, the birthplace of Muhammad and the most sacred Islamic site. After returning from Mecca, Al-Amin moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where his brother was director of the Voter Education Project. Between 1976 and 1993, he had little public exposure and no recorded encounters with the authorities. He operated the Community Store, a grocery he opened in one of Atlanta’s impoverished areas, and started the Community Mosque in one of Atlanta’s African American neighborhoods. In 1993, following the bombing of the

World Trade Center, Al-Amin was interrogated by the police. In 1995, he was arrested and accused of a shooting, but the charges were later dropped. Five years later, on March 16, 2000, two Fulton County deputies, both African American, were shot near the Community Mosque. One deputy died and the other suffered serious injuries. Al-Amin was charged with the crime and on March 9, 2002, was found guilty of the shootings and sentenced to life in prison. *See also* Black Power; Congress of Racial Equality.

**Further Readings:** Al-Amin, Jamil. *Revolution by the Book: (The Rap Is Live)*. Beltsville, MD: Writers' Inc. International, 1993; Brown, H. Rap. *Die, Nigger, Die!: A Political Autobiography*. New York: Dial Press, 1969; Carson, Clayborne, and Tom Hamburger. "The Cambridge Convergence: How a Night in Maryland 30 Years Ago Changed the Nation's Course of Racial Politics." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 28, 1997, 11A; Forman, James. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1972; Thelwell, Ekwueme Michael. "H. Rap Brown/Jamil Al-Amin: A Profoundly American Story." *The Nation*. March 18, 2002. See <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020318/thelwell>.

*John G. Hall*

## **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**

The Brownsville, Texas, riot in 1906 is a devastating event in the annals of American military history. The impact on the black soldiers involved is immeasurable. So far it is unclear if the truth surrounding the incident has been completely revealed, even after more than a century. Companies B, C, and D of the U.S. Army's all-black 25th Infantry were deployed to Fort Brown, just outside of Brownsville, Texas, in the summer of 1906. On the way, they were scheduled to stop in Austin and engage in field maneuvers with the Texas state militia before continuing to Fort Brown. These were the Buffalo Soldiers, a segregated unit. They had survived danger and death previously in the Great Plains, Cuba, and the Philippines. But receiving orders to participate in the proposed mock fighting with white militia men on the Texas border was most disturbing to many in the company. This would present a far different kind of challenge than they had experienced in the past. Thus, Col. R. W. Hoyt, the regiment's commanding officer, was prompted to write the authorities in the U.S. War Department. He warned them of the potential danger if the orders were carried out. His request not to participate in the maneuvers was accepted and the regiment went directly to Fort Brown. Even before they arrived, there was still lingering apprehension among the troops about the entire Texas assignment. Chaplain Theophilus G. Steward, the only black officer among the troops, recalled that the only time he had suffered verbal assaults from a U.S. soldier was at Fort Riley, Kansas. The soldier was from Texas. Steward wrote one of his superiors, telling him of his concern about the deployment to Fort Brown. Steward's fears turned out to be justified.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, tensions were rising between blacks and whites, in various places all over the country. In this environment, race riots were becoming more frequent. They erupted in New



**York City** (1900); **Springfield**, Ohio (1904); **Atlanta**, Georgia (1906); and **Greensburg**, Indiana (1906). The Brownsville incident occurred at a chaotic time for race relations in the country.

On July 25, 1906, the 25th Infantry entered Brownsville, a town of about 6,000 residents at the time. The custom officials harassed and treated them roughly. There were no welcoming signs for the servicemen. Business owners and townspeople met them with either stone silence or taunts, racial slurs, or other hostile gestures. There were signs that warned them not to use the parks or enter some stores in town. The 25th Infantry knew right away that its new community was not going to be a friendly place. This was quite demoralizing to the black troops for they had served with distinction and honor in previous assignments and had memories of decent treatment. Even though some had faced discrimination before, they were serving their country and were unprepared for outright blatant, hurtful treatment from American citizens, regardless of who they were and where they were located.

Meanwhile, back in Brownsville, the word spread in the white saloons on Elizabeth Street, the main street of the town, that a posse should be formed to meet the troops as they arrived and turn them back. That did not happen.

When the 25th Infantry arrived, they discovered that they could drink in the six Mexican bars in town but could not drink at the three white bars on Elizabeth Street. This did not present an insurmountable problem; they set up their own saloon just outside of the fort. It was on the corner of Sixteenth and Monroe. The bar was a joint venture between Pvt. John Holloman, the company's moneylender and Pvt. Ernest Allison, whose impending release from the military was imminent.

On August 12, 1906, about a week after the servicemen arrived in Brownsville, a white woman in the town claimed that she had been assaulted by one of the men from the 25th Infantry. The possibility that this could have happened and that the person responsible was one of the black soldiers infuriated many in the town. The soldiers were equally offended at the accusation. Recognizing the potential for trouble, Maj. Charles W. Penrose consulted with Mayor Frederick Combe before declaring an 8:00 P.M. town curfew the next day, hoping to prevent trouble. But around midnight on August 13, Brownsville was engulfed in a wild disturbance that included a shooting spree. The result was the death of Frank Natus, a local bartender; the injury of police official M.Y. Dominguez, who lost an arm; and other, lesser injuries. The incident was over in approximately ten minutes. It was very dark outside. Visibility was limited. Yet, there were twenty-two eyewitnesses who later came forward with testimony. Eight identified the attackers as blacks. The implication, of course, was that the attackers were black soldiers. At the barracks, the soldiers were summoned outside. The gun racks were opened and all of the guns were retrieved. According to Dorsie Willis, the last survivor of the Brownsville incident, all of the soldiers' rifles were inspected and none were found to have been recently used. The soldiers complied with a command for them to sign sworn statements denying any knowledge of who had done the shooting.

The white commanders at Fort Brown gave an official statement corroborating that the black soldiers were in their barracks. Officers and a sentry reported hearing rifle shots outside of Fort Brown while the soldiers were in their barracks sleeping. Nevertheless, some whites in Brownsville insisted that they found Springfield rifle clips on the scene of the disturbance. Black soldiers replied that the rifle clips must have been planted and that the entire affair was a set up against them. They claimed no knowledge of the incident. At that time, some of the military officers began doubting the black soldiers. For reasons not completely clear, the investigators accepted the version given by the white townspeople. Several civilian and military investigations were held. A citizen's committee demanded that the troops be removed. Maj. Augustus P. Bloxsom, an official in the army's Southwestern Division, demanded that the soldiers tell who among them was responsible. They were threatened that a refusal would mean being uncooperative. Again, the men denied knowing anything about the incident.

On August 17, 1906, a letter was sent by John Bartlett, the judge from Cameron County (the county in which Brownsville was located) to Samuel Willis Tucker Lanham, the governor of Texas, describing a city in grave danger from the black infantrymen and stating:

The committee of the citizens of this town, have found these facts to exist, after a full and thorough investigation . . . twenty to twenty-five Negro soldiers, by a concert of action and premeditated plot, broke out of Fort Brown about midnight August 13th, 1906, and attacked this city, shooting into houses, killing one man, seriously wounding one police officer, and wounding one other man. . . . We wish to call your attention to the fact that, by means of this unprovoked, wanton, and malicious attack upon our people and our homes, that our women and children are in a very nervous and excited condition, and are in constant dread of another outbreak, and that this continued strain and fear will soon be unbearable and intolerable, and it is the wish of the entire population of this city, that the said Negro soldiers be removed from this place at the earliest possible time and replaced by white soldiers before they leave. (Bartlett 1906)

William Jesse McDonald, a person with the reputation of being tough and a captain in the Texas Rangers, identified twelve black soldiers as having knowledge of the conspiracy. Yet, a Cameron County grand jury refused to indict the men. Inspector Gen. Ernest R. Garlington charged all of the soldiers in the 25th Infantry with a conspiracy of silence. The U.S. State Department demanded that the soldiers name the alleged perpetrators. Once again, each and every soldier denied, unequivocally, any knowledge of the incident in Brownsville.

In November, President Theodore Roosevelt, with the consent and support of Secretary of War William H. Taft, issued a dishonorable discharge for each of the 167 black soldiers in the 25th Infantry. Among those discharged by President Roosevelt, were two men who had served in the distinguished Bicycle Corps. They were Pvt. John Cook and Sgt. Mingo Sanders. At the time of the Roosevelt dismissal of the entire division, Brig. Gen. A. S. Burt

gallantly defended Sergeant Sanders, who had been sleeping at the time of the shooting. Yet, despite many strong commendations and an excellent service record including an outstanding record of fighting in Cuba and the Philippines, he too was a victim of President Roosevelt's decision to expel all of the 25th Infantry from the United States military. Sergeant Sanders had less than a year before his retirement.

President Roosevelt's decision made sure that the soldiers would not receive any military benefits. There was no trial. It did not seem to matter to him that some were near retirement. Some had earned the Medal of Honor and some, if not all, were innocent. There was no due process. President Roosevelt, in a harangue, said that some of those soldiers were butchers who should be hung. There was outspoken opposition to this act of justice. For instance, **Booker T. Washington**, who was a rather frequent visitor to the White House and served as a black confidant to the president, expressed concern in private. Prior to issuing the order to dismiss the black soldiers, President Roosevelt summoned Washington to the White House regarding Brownsville. He confided to him that he was about to dishonorably discharge the 167 black soldiers at Fort Brown. Washington tried to get the president to wait because he had related information he would like to share with the president. But the president's mind was made up already. He replied that there was no information that Washington could give him, because the information on which his decision was based came straight from the investigation of the incident. After a few days of political posturing connected with the 1906 elections, President Roosevelt announced his decision. Ironically, he did so at the same time he announced that Col. William Pitcher, a white officer of the 27th Infantry had made derogatory statements about all blacks in the military. Specifically, the officer's remarks included his disbelief that the United States would want to make soldiers out of blacks since they were not up to the challenge. Some viewed the simultaneous announcements as a political decision to soften the impact of his decision to summarily dismiss the Brownsville soldiers. However, there was a fundamental difference between the cases of the Brownsville soldiers and the colonel. The colonel would have the benefit of counsel and the opportunity to face his accusers and be accorded his day in court. The men of the 25th Infantry would not.

Another voice raised in opposition to President Roosevelt's decision regarding the Brownsville soldiers belonged to the Constitution League. Led by John Milholland, the Constitution League solicited the assistance of **Mary Church Terrell**, the Washington, D.C., activist and president of the **National Association of Colored Women (NACW)**. Milholland asked her to go to Secretary Taft and ask that he suspend the order to release the soldiers until a further investigation could be conducted. She waited nearly all day to see the secretary. In meeting with her, Secretary Taft commiserated that it was no wonder that she was proud of her soldiers' record. He agreed that they had served their country well. He then dispatched a confidential telegram to President Roosevelt at 7:15 that same night. The president was in Puerto Rico at the time. Taft informed the president that there was a lot of displeasure and opposition to his decision, even among the Republican

Party faithful. He recommended a rehearing on the issue of the colored soldiers.

The following day, Taft received a message from the president stating that discharge should not be suspended. Taft later wrote his brother, Charles, that although he was not responsible for the Brownsville order, he thought it entirely justified.

A *New York Times* editorial wrote of being astonished that there was no evidence gathered that proved a conspiracy on the part of the troops. The entire proceeding had been predicated on the assumptions of the officers who made the inquiry and assumed that those who did not take part in the riot at Brownsville must know the culprits.

At the 1908 meeting of the **Niagara movement**, the forerunner of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, along with other leaders, sent a letter to the *Oberlin Tribune* referencing the matter. The letter was published on September 4, 1908. In part, it read: "We say to voters, register and vote whenever and wherever you have a right, vote not in the past but in the present. . . . The dominant Roosevelt faction has sinned in this respect beyond forgiveness. . . . Remember Brownsville" ("Denounced Republicans" 1908).

Despite protests from some, a U.S. Senate committee investigated the Brownsville incident. In March 1908, the majority report from that committee upheld Roosevelt's decision. A minority of four Republicans found the evidence inconclusive. Another report by Sen. Morgan Bulkeley, a Republican from Connecticut, and Sen. Joseph B. Foraker, a Republican from Ohio, presented still another minority opinion. The latter report challenged the veracity of the evidence in the case. It further claimed that the witnesses were not credible and, in fact, were prejudiced, and that the investigators were biased. President Roosevelt's action in this matter was seen by many as a travesty of justice, giving rise to the establishing of two civil rights organizations—the NAACP and the **National Urban League**. This, along with similar political missteps by the party of Lincoln, contributed to the massive exodus of blacks away from the Republicans.

Senator Foraker is acknowledged as the key person in Congress to keep the issue of the Brownsville soldiers alive. He made speeches about it and wrote about it. His statement in defense of the soldiers was summed up appropriately when he said that the soldiers "ask[ed] no favors because they are Negroes, but only for justice because they are men" (Weaver 1997). He broke with Roosevelt over it. He chided his fellow politician from Ohio, William Taft, about it. From his seat on the Senate's Military Affairs Committee, he conducted related hearings. Penrose and Capt. Edgar A. Macklin, the officer of the day during the Brownsville incident, were finally cleared through courts martial, even as the hearings were held.

Almost as a footnote, on the last day of President Roosevelt's term in office, he signed a bill that would allow the soldiers of the 25th Infantry to reenlist. This gesture proved to be too little, too late.

In light of the conflicting nature of the reports from the senatorial committee, the Roosevelt administration in 1910 relented by appointing a group

of retired army officers known as the Court of Military Inquiry to review applications from the dismissed black soldiers for reconsideration of their military status. Inexplicably, only about eighty of the men were interviewed and fourteen were approved for reenlistment. Eleven chose to do so. The rest of the 156 black soldiers from the Brownsville incident never dressed in an official U.S. military uniform again.

On the evening before Taft's inauguration as president, the *Washington Post* reported on a special event by the colored citizens of Washington, D.C. It was held in honor of Senator Foraker at the Metropolitan AME Church, for the valiant work he had done on behalf of the men of the 25th Infantry. He recounted a speech he had delivered in the Senate in the midst of the Brownsville hearings. At that time, he had been told that he would pay a high price for his unrelenting support of the black troops from the 25th Infantry. To this he replied it would be for a cause he would never regret. Among the crowd of well-wishers in attendance that night was Sgt. Mingo Sanders from the 25th Infantry and the two black lawyers, Napoleon Marshall and Gilchrist Stewart, who had helped Senator Foraker prepare his defense of the men. They were thanked by the senator for their support. He also thanked Sen. Morgan G. Bulkeley of Connecticut who was the only other senator who had stood with him in signing the minority report declaring the soldiers innocent in the Brownsville incident. The senator was presented a silver-and-gold love cup. It stood on an ebony base. The three handles around the base bore the letters B, C, and D, representing the merged companies that comprised the old black 25th Infantry. The words of Senator Foraker were inscribed in the gold lining: "They ask no favors because they are Negroes, but only for justice because they are men."

Senator Foraker had already lost his reelection bid amidst what many believed were bogus charges designed to disgrace him. Roosevelt had been succeeded as president by Taft. The issue surrounding the soldiers of the 25th Infantry ceased to be heard and remained dormant for more than half a century.

Finally, in 1972, John Downing Weaver, a respected writer, published a book entitled, *The Brownsville Raid*, in which he wrote with great detail and compelling research about the grave injustice that the men in the 25th Infantry had suffered. He concluded that the black soldiers had been innocent. This was revealed at the height of the modern civil rights era. Brownsville became an embarrassment to the army and indeed to the U.S. government. Consequently, with new information along with the urging of Congressman Augustus Hawkins, a black Democrat from California, the infamous decision of 1906 was voided. The Buffalo Soldiers of the 25th Infantry were exonerated and reinstated by President Richard Nixon, a Republican from California. Two survivors were found by Congressman Hawkins. One was living right in the congressman's Los Angeles district. He was Edward Warfield, one of the few members of the black battalion whom the court of inquiry had allowed to reenlist in 1910. After serving in France during World War I, he was honorably discharged from the military and got a government job as a security guard. He also had a modest pension from the Veteran's Administration for twenty years of service in the military. In 1973, he was again asked who he

thought did the shooting. His answer was the same then as it had been sixty-three years earlier. He said that he thought that the citizens had done it. He died in September 1973, shortly before his ninetieth birthday.

There was only one other known survivor of the Brownsville incident. He was Dorsie Willis from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and he had spent about fifty-nine years in obscurity shining shoes in a Minneapolis barbershop. After tireless work by author John Weaver, Congressman Augustus Hawkins, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, and other sympathizers, a compensation bill was passed in Congress. The army dispatched Major General DeWitt Smith to present the compensation to the elderly soldier from the 25th Infantry. At a touching ceremony on January 10, 1974, in Minneapolis, the major general, on behalf of the government presented Willis with a \$25,000 check. A month later, the elderly soldier went to Los Angeles, where he was the guest of Mayor Tom Bradley during Black History Week.

Once, when asked whether he was bitter, he said, "You can't pay for a lifetime . . . Some people feel that the world owes them a living. I never thought that, but I did figure that the world owed me the opportunity to earn a living. They took that away from me. That dishonorable discharge kept me from improving my station. Only God knows what it done to the others" (Weaver 1997). On August 29, 1977, the last black soldier from the Brownsville incident was laid to rest in Fort Spelling, Minnesota, with full military honors. He maintained his innocence to the end. He was ninety-one years old.

**Further Readings:** Bartlett, John, to Hon. S.W.T. Lanham. Brownsville, Texas, August 17, 1906. Texas State Library & Archives Commission. See <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/governors/rising/lanham-brownsville-1.html>; Bergman, Peter M. *The Chronological History of the Negro in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969; Brown, Richard Maxwell. *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975; "Denounced Republicans: Leaders of the Niagara Movement Succeed in Carrying Resolutions, Convention Was at a Dead-Lock at Morning Session—Many from Out of Town." *Oberlin Tribune*, September 4, 1908. See <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/Niagara%20Movement/niagamain.htm>; Lane, Ann J. *The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black Reaction*. New York: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1971; Weaver, John D. *The Brownsville Raid*. College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1970; Weaver, John D. *The Senator and the Sharecropper's Son: Exoneration of the Brownsville Soldiers*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997.

*Betty Nyangoni*

## Buffalo (New York) Riot of 1967

The Buffalo, New York, riot of 1967 was one of an epidemic of black-incited disturbances that occurred in urban **ghettos** across the nation between 1964 and 1969. The riot was similar to other disturbances of the period in terms of its cause, its expression, and the community's response (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**).

The nation's black ghettos were plagued by poverty, poor housing, unemployment, crime, gangs, **police brutality**, drug use, **racism**, and a lack of opportunities and resources. The black ghettos were particularly neglected during two critical periods of prodigious change—the **Progressive era** and

the **civil rights movement** of the 1960s. But the **Black Power** ideology, which emerged in the 1960s, found fertile ground in the ghettos.

On June 26, 1967, a group of black teenaged boys were cruising the neighborhood and vandalizing cars and stores. Shortly thereafter, more young blacks joined in, and the violence intensified. Two hundred police officers were called in to restore order, but their presence provoked a violent encounter with the rioters, resulting in injuries for several blacks, three police officers, and one firefighter. The rioting continued with looting, arson, and property damage. An additional 400 police officers were called in for assistance. Finally, after forty people were injured, the riot ended on July 1.

In response, community representatives prepared a sympathetic report on the causes of the riot, laying the blame on the persistent neglect of blacks in the ghettos. They portrayed the riots not as random acts of violence but as a form of protest that blacks felt was their “only way to be heard” (Circle Brotherhood Association, 1). The representatives warned that in the absence of meaningful and lasting change, riots would erupt again. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

**Further Reading:** The Circle Brotherhood Association. “Circle Association’s African American History of Western New York State, 1935 to 1970.” See <http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/0history/1935-1970.html>.

*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Byrd, James, Jr. (1949–1998), Murder of (1998)**

On June 7, 1998, James Byrd, Jr., a forty-nine-year-old black man, was murdered by three local white racists in Jasper, Texas. The exceptional brutality of the racially motivated crime drew national media attention and spurred a demand in Texas for the passage of special hate crimes legislation, which was opposed by then Texas Governor George W. Bush.

While walking home along a country road near Jasper on June 7, Byrd was accosted by three white men in a pickup truck—John William King, 23; Shawn Berry, 23; and Lawrence Brewer, Jr., 31. The men beat Byrd, attempted to slit his throat, and then chained him to the back of their truck, dragging his body for over three miles. An autopsy later suggested that Byrd was still alive for much of the dragging, and that he died only when he struck a culvert, which severed his head and right arm. Byrd’s assailants were captured and tried for murder, with King and Brewer receiving death sentences and Berry sentenced to life in prison. These punishments led Governor Bush to oppose a call for new state hate crimes legislation.

Since the three white men had apparently been members of **white supremacy** gangs during earlier periods of imprisonment in Texas, African American leaders, such as **Jesse Jackson**, denounced the Byrd murder as the most vicious form of **racism**. Basketball star Dennis Rodman offered to pay for Byrd’s funeral and donated \$25,000 to a fund created to support the Byrd family, which later created the James Byrd Foundation for Racial Healing to advocate for the passage of state and federal hate crimes laws. In 2001, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who had succeeded to his office upon Bush’s election as president in 2000, signed the James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Act, which

amended existing state law on hate crimes to specifically cover and increase penalties for criminal acts undertaken on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

In 2003, two films about the Byrd murder were released. *Jasper, Texas* was produced and shown on the Showtime Network. The documentary *Two Towns of Jasper*, a collaboration between black and white filmmakers, which used segregated crews to document black and white reaction in Jasper to the murder and the subsequent trial, was shown on the PBS *P.O.V.* series. See also Bensonhurst (New York) Incident (1989); Howard Beach (New York) Incident (1986); White Supremacy.

**Further Readings:** *Jasper, Texas*. Directed by Jeffrey W. Bird. Written by Jonathan Estrin. Showtime Entertainment, 2003; Texas NAACP, James Byrd, Jr. Web site, <http://www.texasnaacp.org/jasper.htm>; *Two Towns of Jasper*. Produced and directed by Marco Williams and Whitney Dow, 2003.

*John A. Wagner*





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**California.** *See* Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965; Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992; San Francisco (California) Riot of 1966

**Camp Logan Riot.** *See* Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917

**Carmichael, Stokely (1941–1998)**

Stokely Standiford Churchill Carmichael was born on June 29, 1941, in Port of Spain, Trinidad, to Adolphus and Mabel Charles Carmichael. His parents immigrated to the United States when he was three years old, leaving him in the care of his maternal grandmother, Cecilia Harris Carmichael. When Cecilia Carmichael died in 1952, he joined his parents in New York. After graduating from junior high school in 1956, Carmichael enrolled in the highly selective Bronx High School of Science. At Bronx High, he befriended several members of the Young Communist League (YCL) and began attending their study groups and rallies. His exposure to European radical writing and revolutionary theory sharpened his emerging political interests. He never officially joined the YCL, however, because of its hostility toward organized religion (he and his family were active members of the Anglican Church) and its general disinterest in the condition of people of African descent. His association with the YCL did, however, bring him into contact with radical black socialist Bayard Rustin, who introduced him to civil rights protest.

In 1960, Carmichael enrolled in Howard University in Washington, D.C. The pre-med major learned as much outside of the classroom through his affiliation with the campus-based Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), as he did in the classroom from the more progressive members of Howard's faculty, including historian Rayford Logan and poet Sterling Brown. Significantly, Carmichael's association with NAG put him on the front lines of the southern **civil rights movement**. It introduced him to the Deep South in the summer of 1961 as a freedom rider; his reward for participating in the **Freedom Rides** was forty-nine days in Mississippi's infamous Parchman Penitentiary. It steered him to Cambridge, Maryland, where he experienced his first protracted organizing campaign and the satisfaction that accompanied working



Stokely Carmichael addresses a crowd at Will Rogers Park in Watts, Los Angeles, California, 1966. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

with local people. Additionally, it linked him to the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, which led him back to Mississippi where, by his own admission, his real political education took place.

During the summers of 1962 and 1963, Carmichael worked as a SNCC field secretary in Greenwood, Mississippi, where he honed his skills as a grassroots organizer. In 1964, after graduating from Howard, he returned to Mississippi and joined SNCC full time, serving as project director for the Second Congressional District of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which

covered most of the Mississippi Delta. The MFDP's inability to unseat Mississippi's pro-segregation delegates at the 1964 Democratic National Convention convinced Carmichael that working with Democrats was pointless. From then on, he sought to organize southern blacks into independent, grassroots, political parties.

In January 1965, Carmichael left Mississippi for Selma, Alabama, where he sought to apply the organizing lessons that he had learned in the Magnolia State. After strategic and philosophical differences between SNCC field secretaries and **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** organizers led SNCC to withdraw from the Selma voting rights campaign, Carmichael led a team of SNCC workers into neighboring Lowndes County. During the next twelve months, he spearheaded SNCC's Lowndes County Project, overseeing the development of the **Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)**, a countywide, independent, third party that fielded a full slate of local black candidates in the November 1966 general election in a bid to gain control of the county courthouse. Carmichael's success in Lowndes prompted veteran SNCC organizers to elect him chairman in May 1966; he replaced John Lewis, who had fallen out of step with the organization's more political approach to change.

As chairman, Carmichael sought to spread SNCC's new political program, which centered on developing grassroots independent political parties. A desire to showcase the new program led Carmichael back to Mississippi in June 1966 to take part in James Meredith's March Against Fear. By participating in the protest, Carmichael sought to reestablish a foothold in Mississippi and to advance SNCC's new program within the national movement. The high point of the demonstration came on June 16 when Carmichael, speaking at a rally in Greenwood, introduced the nation to **Black Power**.

The whirlwind of controversy that enveloped Carmichael following his call for Black Power forced him to spend much of the remainder of his tenure as SNCC's chairman explaining the ideology to a disbelieving white public. In 1967, he and political scientist Charles V. Hamilton coauthored *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, which detailed the origin and meaning of the controversial slogan.

In May 1967, Carmichael opted not to seek reelection as chairman of SNCC, choosing instead to organize local people in Washington, D.C. His call for Black Power, however, had made him a celebrity in revolutionary circles, and very soon he was holding court with Fidel Castro in Cuba, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, and FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) freedom fighters in Algeria. It was at this time that former Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah, living in exile in Guinea, invited Carmichael to become his political secretary. Carmichael accepted the invitation, but not before returning to the United States and being drafted by the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** for Self-Defense as a field marshal; BPP leaders later elevated him to prime minister. Conflicting leadership styles and decision-making practices quickly led Carmichael to disassociate himself from the BPP. In late 1968, he and his wife Miriam Makeba, the famed South African singer, joined Nkrumah in Sekou Toure's Guinea. Once there, he changed his name to Kwame Ture—in a tribute to the two African statesmen who had embraced him as their intellectual and political heir—and began working through the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) to bring about an African-inspired, transnational, socialist revolution.

Conakry, Guinea, served as Ture's base of operations for the next thirty years. During this time, he made frequent trips back to the United States for speaking engagements. In 1995, he was diagnosed with late-stage prostate cancer. His terminal illness prompted him to pen his posthumously published autobiography *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)*. On November 15, 1998, a frail-bodied but strong-spirited Carmichael died of cancer at his home in Guinea.

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*Hasan Kwame Jeffries*

## Castration

Castration is the removal of testicles. This process was one of a myriad of brutal ways in which whites inflicted violence upon blacks from slavery to the early twentieth century. Unlike other forms of racial violence such as burning, rioting, and beatings, castration was a distinctly male phenomenon in which white men were the attackers and black men were the victims. In fact, more black men than any other racial group were castrated as a form of punishment for numerous reasons of which alleged crimes against white women were the most common.

In America, castration was first inflicted upon black men during slavery times. The first known African slaves in America arrived at Jamestown in 1619. During the Colonial period, castration was made into law to punish slaves accused of crimes such as running away, stealing, striking a white person, and rape. This law also applied to free blacks. White men, even if accused of raping a white woman, were rarely castrated.

Castration was also used as a form of punishment in the antebellum South, although severe whippings were more common. Capital punishment was extremely rare and was generally reserved for slaves who participated in uprisings. White slave owners often showed reluctance in castrating black slaves, because they depended upon black men to produce offspring. In fact, black male slaves were prized for this ability and were even referred to as studs, stallions, and bucks. Surprisingly, blacks were also rarely punished when accused of rape by white women as such women were often from the poorer classes. Such accusations were sometimes legitimate and sometimes made up to punish a black man who spurned a woman's advances or to cover up an illicit relationship with, or an actual rape committed by, a white man. Affluent whites, who dominated the social, economic, and political life in the South, looked down on any group in any class lower than their own and considered poor white women promiscuous and immoral. Nonetheless, there were incidences where castration was performed on black slaves in the South who exhibited aggressive tendencies. In this way, slaves were treated in the same manner as their slave owner's animals.

White violence against blacks intensified in the wake of the Civil War. White **vigilante organizations**, which had previously targeted whites, roamed about the South randomly attacking blacks and castrating some. Frequently, whites created rumors about black attacks to justify their cruelty. They also targeted any person who advocated black empowerment, suffrage, equality, and civil rights. Anti-black violence subsided briefly during **Reconstruction**, only to be resuscitated by racist whites looking to regain their social, economic, and political power in the South.

Between 1882 and 1930, anti-black violence, including **lynching** and rioting, was rampant. Although a number of black men were indiscriminately castrated, living through the horror and humiliation, many more were murdered following the procedure. Castration, along with other mutilations and beatings, was often performed during the agonizing hours preceding the actual lynching. Whites frequently tortured their victims for two or more hours in the presence of a frenzied crowd of men, women, and children. Some black men were made to eat parts of their own testicles. Whites frequently cut the genitals up and distributed the pieces among the crowd. Generally, each lynching was different: Some people were lynched with a rope and burned, others were dismembered. Sometimes, the body was left to dangle from a tree located near a black community as a warning for blacks to submit to **white supremacy**.

The black victims of these crimes were not the rapists that whites usually claimed them to be. The accusation of rape or other crimes was frequently based on the fallacy that blacks were prone to crime and that violent

extralegal violence was a viable response. Philip Dray explains how white southerners in the 1900s supported articles in the Atlanta *Georgian* that discussed “the restoration of such antebellum punishments as branding and castration to curb black crimes that led to lynchings” and even suggested “that rather than apply such punishments only to convicted felons, all black men should be immediately castrated, and that black women might also be ‘unsexed’ so they could not give birth to any more rapists” (Dray, 144–145). In reality, murder, not rape, was the actual cause for the majority of lynchings. Rape was simply the constructed justification to commit violence against blacks. William F. Pinar describes this phenomenon as a type of “white-male fantasy” conceived to relieve the latent desires of white males.

Scholars give ample explanations of these “latent desires.” Dr. Frances Cress Welsing asserts that, historically, white men have targeted the male sex organ because of the fear of the supposed contamination and extermination of the white race. Others emphasize the role that envy, fueled by stereotypes originating before slavery of the black man’s large penis and sexual prowess, plays. Pinar and Trudier Harris suggest that castration, with its ritualistic ogling, touching, and subsequent hoarding of the penis, is homoerotic in nature.

Still others assert that by castrating blacks, whites were destroying the ultimate symbol of male power. Pinar makes reference to Harris’ work when he states that “lynchings represented the final stage of an emasculation process that white men conducted every day by word and deed, a culmination of a psychosexual war on black men. Black men were not allowed to forget that they were commodities, bodies not citizens, objects not men” (Pinar, 58). See also Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Charles, Robert (d. 1900)**

Robert Charles was born in Copiah County, Mississippi, to sharecroppers Jasper and Mariah Charles. In 1887, Charles left for railroad work in Vicksburg, returning after engaging in a shoot-out with a white brakeman at Rolling Fork, Mississippi. Assuming the name Curtis Robinson, he left for New Orleans in 1894, then a city of 300,000 that was nearly one-third black. In May 1896, he joined the International Migration Society, making a down payment on a voyage to Liberia. By 1900, he sold **Henry McNeal Turner’s** *Voice of Missions* and advocated armed **black self-defense** from racial violence.

On July 23, 1900, three New Orleans policemen roused Charles and Lenard Pierce as they sat on a doorstep along Dryades Street, awaiting the arrival of women friends. Charles stood, leading Patrolman August T. Mora to shoot at him. A subsequent exchange of bullets between Charles and Patrolman August T. Mora wounded Mora and Charles, who then escaped and retrieved his Winchester rifle from his Fourth Street boarding room. Two officers were sent to arrest him, and Charles killed both of them. When officers discovered copies of the *Voice of Missions*, the later legend that Charles was a “bloodthirsty champion of African Supremacy” (Hair 1976) began to take shape. After fleeing, Charles stood siege at 1208 Saratoga Street.

Arrests of black men triggered white mob **vigilantism** and black protests. The *Times-Democrat* newspaper decried the behavior of the blacks, an attitude that fed assembling “Negro-hunting mobs” on the evening of July 25. Subsequent rioting led to black deaths and property destruction. Ten to twenty thousand whites (many armed) surrounded Charles’ roost on Saratoga Street. By Friday afternoon, Charles had killed seven whites and injured twenty more. When the building was set afire, Charles came out and died in a hail of bullets. His body was mutilated and buried in an anonymous grave. Rioting whites triggered an outpouring of local, state, and volunteer law enforcement to prevent additional white mob anarchy, even as the press fanned calls for revenge. In 1900, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** published an account of Charles’ life titled “Mob Rule in New Orleans,” which described the mistaken and bizarre sociopolitical context of his death and the subsequent white race riots. *See also* New Orleans (Louisiana) Riot of 1900.

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Gregory E. Carr

### **Charleston (South Carolina) Riot of 1919**

In Charleston, South Carolina, on the night of May 10, 1919, a black man allegedly pushed Roscoe Coleman, a Navy sailor, off the sidewalk. Other sailors and civilians gave chase. Both sides threw bricks, bottles, and stones until someone fired four shots into the air. Immediately after the incident, rumors circulated that a sailor had been “shot by a Negro” (“Six Men Killed,” 1). Later that night, a mob of sailors stole rifles from two local gun clubs and started shooting, targeting black people indiscriminately. They robbed and vandalized black-owned businesses. The rioting spread to other parts of the city, until about 3:00 A.M., when Mayor Tristram T. Hyde requested detachments of marines from the Navy Yard to assist in restoring order. As a result of the riot, five white men and eighteen black men were injured,

and three black men—William Brown, Isaac Doctor, and James Talbot—were killed.

The report of the subsequent Navy investigation found that sailors Ralph Stone, George W. Biggs, Roscoe Coleman, Robert Morton, and white civilian Charleston resident Alexander Lanneau started the riot, and found Jacob Cohen and George T. Holliday jointly responsible for the death of Isaac Doctor. The report explicitly stated that the property damage and the injuries to the black men were caused by mobs made up of sailors. Cohen and Holliday were each sentenced to a year on Parris Island. *See also* Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

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*Jan Voogd*

## Chattanooga (Tennessee) Riot of 1906

One of several racially charged riots during the early 1900s, the Chattanooga, Tennessee, riot of 1906 reflected growing social tension between whites and blacks in the United States. As **lynching** spread throughout southern and northern states, African Americans increasingly sought to defend themselves against white assault. The Chattanooga riot of 1906 reflected growing discontent among blacks concerning lynching. The uprising also led to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that set precedence for due process and prisoners’ rights.

In 1900, Chattanooga, Tennessee, was a bustling industrial city. The city boasted several large manufacturing companies and was a significant national transportation hub. Despite **Jim Crow** laws and other segregationist policies, blacks made modest economic gains. Social gains were slow in coming. Protesting segregation on the Chattanooga bus line, in 1905 African Americans organized a successful boycott of the segregated transit system and formed a black transportation system. Fueled by the passionate writings of activists like **Monroe Trotter**, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, and **W.E.B. Du Bois**, blacks increasingly challenged the socio-political system established by whites.

Improved conditions in the African American community threatened the established social order in America. As blacks increasingly refused to passively accept lowly social status, whites feared the loss of power and privilege regained following **Reconstruction**. Responding to the writings from the black press concerning crime reduction, white newspapers circulated rumors of an impending African American crime wave. Although few reports were actually verified, whites continued to view the black community with contempt and distrust. Blacks continued to seek economic and social gains.



Finally, the tension erupted on January 23, 1906. A white woman, Nevada Taylor, allegedly was attacked as she left work. Reportedly attacked from behind, she did not see her attacker. The sheriff, Joseph Shipp, launched an investigation. Based on an anonymous tip, Shipp arrested twenty-three-year-old African American Edward Johnson. Upon hearing the news of an arrest, a white lynch mob formed. Johnson escaped the initial uprising and the militia was called in to maintain order. Several months later, he returned to Chattanooga under court ordered protection. On March 19, while awaiting his appeal, an angry mob broke into the jail, removed, and lynched Johnson. Although the militia had orders to protect Johnson, neither sheriff nor deputies alerted them to the lynching.

Angered that Sheriff Shipp stood by without informing the militia while the mob lynched Johnson, the African American community retaliated. Blacks rioted in downtown Chattanooga, throwing objects at whites and police. Businesses were destroyed and there were injuries on both sides. The court also responded to Johnson's lynching. After the militia quelled rioting, investigators quickly gathered information on participants and witnesses to the lynching. This investigation illustrated the importance of due process in the judicial system. On May 24, 1909, in the *United States v. Shipp*, the court decided that Joseph Shipp and his deputies violated due process and were in contempt of court. The Chattanooga riot of 1906 tentatively restored African Americans' faith in the federal government and judicial system. Continued turbulence throughout the country would ultimately challenge this faith.

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*Janice E. Fowler*

**Chesnutt, Charles.** *See The Marrow of Tradition*

### **Chester and Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1918**

On July 25, 1918, a race riot began in Chester, Pennsylvania, after four black men allegedly murdered a twenty-one-year-old white man on his porch. What initiated the clash is unclear. However, like most racial conflicts of the era, the superficial cause for the Chester riots—the murder—was brought about during the localized fusion of white intolerance, black resentment, **racism**, **segregation**, migration, and economics. By the end of the riot, which lasted three days, five people—three blacks and two whites—died from their injuries, and more than sixty people were arrested. Under the auspices of similar social, economic, and housing circumstances, a few miles away and a few days later, a riot broke out in South Philadelphia when a black woman fired two shots into a crowd of whites gathered outside of her new home near Washington Avenue to protest her moving into the predominantly Italian neighborhood. When the three-day riot ceased on July 29, 1918, the results

were similar to the Chester riots of 1918: three blacks and two white police officers were dead. Specific details of the race riots in Chester and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are limited to newspaper clippings and narrative accounts; however, the root causes for the riots are well documented.

At the end of **Reconstruction** (1865–1877), blacks in the South lived under **Jim Crow** *de facto* laws that demanded segregation across the board and social subjugation and economic oppression of blacks. By 1890, intermittent trickles of blacks in the South, many of them former slaves and their progenies, began moving North in search of relief from such conditions. In the years prior to American entrance into World War I, blacks remaining in the South were encouraged to also come North, not only in letters sent from family members who had already migrated, but also by the black media. The North, it was argued, was ripe with industrial jobs and offered social freedom. Believing that migration would release them from the fetters of a slavlike existence in the South, thousands of blacks began migrating to northern states. With its steel mills, coal mines, shipyards, slaughter houses, and railroad construction jobs, Philadelphia and small cities south of the city, such as Chester, became magnets for blacks from Georgia, North and South Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware. Once in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh metropolises, however, the new migrants experienced circumstances similar to what they believed had been left in the South. In Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Chester, black workers were invited to work at less than a living wage; membership in the union and access to benefits were unavailable to them. Additionally, the migrants realized that they would remain socially and educationally segregated from whites. Moreover, many migrants lived in impoverished, overcrowded conditions, and most remained poor and landless.

Across the North, whites, xenophobic and anxious because of the war, were suspicious of outsiders. Additionally, blue collar workers feared that the cheap labor provided by newly transplanted blacks would undercut the likelihood of earning a living wage. Poverty, overcrowded housing, growing unemployment, and the willingness of blacks to work for wages lower than whites were accustomed to accept intensified the probability of clashes between whites and blacks in the 1910s. All of these factors were exacerbated by the propensity of whites to exact violent attacks against blacks, who, having knowledge of widespread lynching and beatings, were eventually encouraged to strike back. In acts of self-defense, blacks responded to white attacks, and neighborhoods in the North erupted in protest and violence throughout July and August in 1918.

The level of anti-black activities in Philadelphia and its surrounding suburbs in the 1910s through the 1940s is historically documented. For example, Coatesville, a small town located in Chester County, housed active members of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, which reached a membership of 200,000 living in Pennsylvania by 1920. Like other American towns and cities, Klan activity included voter intimidation, attempts to quell black labor movements and unionization, and **lynchings**. The 1911 murder of Zachariah Walker serves to demonstrate the volatile mixture of race, black migration, and labor economics. During an alleged robbery, Walker, a Virginian working in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, as a laborer at the local steel mill,

shot and killed Edgar Rice, a white security guard. Under police guard, Walker was taken to Coatesville's hospital after attempting suicide, from where he was dragged into the street still attached to his bed. Once kidnapped by a large **white mob**, Walker was burned alive.

The Chester and Philadelphia riots were not isolated incidents, but rather parts of a larger growing problem in American cities. In the early years after World War I ended, racial clashes across the nation were not unique events. In major cities all over the United States, not less than fifteen riots broke out between 1917 and 1923. These racially charged acts of violence were not ignored in the black or white communities; nor were they overlooked by politicians. From Harlem renaissance writer **Claude McKay**, to political activist **Marcus Garvey**, to the Ku Klux Klan, the riots, their causes, and results, became an important part of American racial discourse. *See also* Black Self-Defense; Great Migration.

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*Ellesia Ann Blaque*

### **Chicago Commission on Race Relations**

Illinois Gov. Frank O. Lowden appointed the Chicago Commission on Race Relations to study the **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919**, and make recommendations to avoid future riots. Twelve commissioners and an extensive staff studied the riot, and the context from which the riot sprung, beginning in December 1919. The commission's full report, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot*, was first published in 1922. The policy recommendations of the commission—equal access to education and public facilities, ending real estate discrimination, reforming the city's police force—did not lead to new city ordinances or state laws. However, the commission's report both directly refuted a wide variety of claims about race and **racism**, and influenced a generation of black sociologists.

Two public requests for a scientific study of the riot were issued even as Chicagoans still fought in the streets in July 1919. Both requests urged Lowden to appoint a biracial commission for the study. Several of Chicago's most prominent African American leaders agreed to serve, including **Chicago Defender** publisher Robert S. Abbott, Jr.; Provident Hospital President George Cleveland Hall; and Olivet Baptist Church Rev. Lacey K. Williams. Crucially, this group included men who had defended African Americans' right to armed self-defense, and who had insisted that whites, not blacks, initiated racial violence in Chicago to enforce racial stratification. These voices would prove critical, as the commission's white members were at best racial "moderates," such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. president Julius Rosenwald and Chicago **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** head Edward O. Brown, who tended to view both blacks and whites as responsible for the riot, and argued against special measures to defend African Americans accused of riot crimes. Indeed,

early in the commission's work, a heated discussion erupted between the white and black commissioners regarding the race of the commission's executive secretary. Ultimately, the commission chose Graham R. Taylor, a white man, for the position. But it was Assistant Executive Secretary Charles S. Johnson—then a graduate student at the University of Chicago's renowned sociology program, and a pioneering black sociologist, who provided the program for the commission's work. Johnson and the commission turned a searching eye toward the history of discrimination and violence black Chicagoans experienced as a means of defending and vindicating black Chicago from its critics and assailants.

In contrast to the predominant narratives of race riots, the commission's report identified African Americans as victims both of racism and racial violence, rather than instigators and perpetrators of the riot. African American self-defense was highlighted, while other violent acts committed by blacks were pointedly described as retaliation for white attacks. *The Negro in Chicago* related personal narratives of African American men, arrested and beaten by police for defending themselves, as illustrations of a more systematic miscarriage of justice on the part of Chicago police. Although roughly two-thirds of those shot, beaten, and stabbed during the riot were black, the report showed that African Americans made up two-thirds of those arrested, indicted, and convicted for riot crimes. Moreover, African Americans suffered the vast majority of property damage during the riot.

But *The Negro in Chicago* went the farthest beyond existing debates in its studies of Chicago's "Black Belt" and the **Great Migration**. Refusing to connect the mere presence of African Americans to the racism they were subjected to, the report exposed a wide field of responses to the migration on the part of business owners, factory supervisors, labor unions, political leaders, police, social workers, and ordinary Chicagoans. Rather than the inevitable result of a dramatic increase of Chicago's black population, the commission argued that the increased racial tensions that caused the riot were instead the product of whites'—and to some extent, African Americans'—acceptance and perpetuation of racial stereotypes originating in the crisis of **Reconstruction**. Moreover, the report argued, the consequences of the migration itself disproved the assumptions and prejudices, which led to the riot. African Americans showed themselves perfectly able to adapt to industrial, as opposed to agricultural, labor to join labor unions that did not discriminate; to take advantage of the North's far superior opportunities for public education and recreation; to share public spaces with whites who did not forcibly bar them; and to create a strong and vibrant community that provided for its own institutional and spiritual needs. Only where whites attempted to impose **segregation** or otherwise discriminate against African Americans did racial tension result, and even this, the commission argued, manifested itself primarily in white racism against blacks. Ultimately, the Commission concluded, racism was an irrational response of whites, which only impeded the city's economic progress, social stability, and political efficiency.

Subsequent analysis of the commission's report has faulted it for downplaying the significance of conflicts over unionization, and more broadly for

assigning causation to ideology rather than economic and political interests. The commission clearly failed to see the ways in which, for example, labor markets kept divided by race could keep wages for all workers low and unions weak. At the same time, the report not only dispelled a myriad of powerful myths about African Americans but also provided a powerful counter-example to the racist pseudo-science that dominated the public sphere in the World War I era. Johnson's work with the commission influenced many other black sociologists, including E. Franklin Frazier, St. Clair Drake, and Horace Cayton. *See also* Police Brutality; Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

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*Jonathan S. Coit*

### ***Chicago Defender***

The first 300 issues of Robert S. Abbott's newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, unceremoniously hit the streets in May 1905. By 1909, the little paper that started out as an unimpressive four-page handbill-sized news-sheet evolved into the popular paper of choice for black Chicagoans. By 1916, it had become the largest-selling black newspaper in the United States. Weekly circulation during this period has been estimated to be as high as 250,000, with the large majority of the copies distributed South of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Although these circulation figures are impressive in their own right, they do not account for the two informal modes of paper circulation—borrowing and communal reading. The *Defender* was often shared among family members, friends, church congregations, and even members of other communities who could not afford or procure their own copies. The paper was also communally read at local churches, barbershops, and saloons to the masses of illiterate southerners who dreamt of a better life in the North. The communal interaction was so predominant during the years of the **Great Migration**, that John Sengstacke, Abbott's nephew and chief editor of the *Defender* from 1940 until his death in 1997, estimated that for every one *Defender* purchased, five to seven others were either read or heard aloud.

With its sensationalistic and crusading editorial policy, the paper quickly gained the reputation of being the most radical and racially conscious black newspaper in the United States. The *Defender* regularly reported and editorialized about southern white-on-black crimes and called for open retaliation from its readers. It was the paper's unflinching call for northern migration out of the "Racist and Corrupt South" (December 2, 1916), however, that gained the most national attention during this period.

With the publication of such inflammatory rhetoric, it is easy to understand the panic that reverberated throughout the white community. This anxiety was especially felt by white southerners who had grown accustomed to cheap African American labor. In almost every state in the Deep South, the *Defender* generated severe white reaction. Whites attacked and

killed two *Defender* distributors in Alabama. An Arkansas judge issued an injunction restraining its circulation in two counties and the governor of Georgia asked the postmaster to exclude the paper from the mail.

These efforts, however, were in vain. The paper, until the summer of 1919, continued to make its impassioned call to the millions of southern blacks suffering from the failures of radical **Reconstruction**. This migration campaign may be best understood in three stages.

The first stage of the *Defender's* campaign began in 1915 and employed editorials, cover stories, political cartoons, poems, pictures, and investigative reports to highlight the oppressive situation in the South. While southern blacks did not need the *Defender* to make them aware of their conspicuous lack of empowerment, the paper's coverage went beyond creating awareness. According to Metz Lochard, lifelong friend of Abbott's, the *Defender* "dared to articulate in print what southern Negroes were afraid to whisper. It gave them courage to acknowledge their dissatisfaction" (Lochard, 125). In issue after issue, patrons read of the systemic **racism** throughout the South: "Boy **Lynched** by Mob for Stealing Cow That Returned Later" (January 30, 1915), "Twenty-Thousand Southerners Burn Boy at Stake" (May 19, 1916), and "Sheriff Delivers Live Prisoners to Mob" (January 29, 1916).

In juxtaposition to the oppressive South portrayed in the first stage, the *Defender's* second stage featured the North as a "land of hope," a place where all the promises of the American Dream waited to be taken. Just as systematically as it detailed the dangers of the South, the paper informed readers that Chicago offered them work, freedom, voting rights, new time-saving devices, luxury items, and a night life unimagined in Dixie.

Stage three of the *Defender's* migration campaign began in the summer of 1916, as an increasing number of articles began to overtly encourage a southern exodus away from the oppressive South of stage one and toward the promised land of stage two. By September of that same year, this encouragement had evolved into a full-blown crusade. Black southerners read of the thousands who had already said, "Farewell to the South" (January 6, 1917) or of the "2 Million Needed" (October 4, 1916) to work in America's second city. They memorized Ward's poem, "Bound for the Promised Land," sang William Crosse's inspirational words to "The Land of Hope," and laughed at Holly's political cartoons, "Desertion" and "The Awakening" (September 2, 1916 and August 19, 1916).

Beginning in the spring of 1919, however, the *Defender* began devoting less space to the migration campaign. The "Promised Land" of Chicago was undergoing a metamorphosis. This transformation was brought about by a number of related events that seemed to have an intensifying effect on one another. Most notably, World War I had ended. Thousands of white soldiers returned home to Chicago to find that the jobs, communities, and lifestyles they had left behind were appropriated by thousands of African American migrants.

This tension ultimately led to a three-day (July 27–30, 1919) race riot in Chicago—an event that forever changed the tenor of the *Defender's* migration discourse. The bold headlines of the paper's August 2, 1919 issue summarized the situation for patrons in the South waiting their turn: "Riot Sweeps Chicago,"

“Ghastly Deeds on Race Rioters Told,” “Gun Battler and Fighting in Streets Keep the City in an Uproar.” When the dust settled, 23 blacks lay dead, with at least 537 others wounded. All calls for southern migration ceased after the blood **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**. Abbott could no longer promise his readers a better life in his once beloved city of Chicago.

Although the paper continued to remain on the frontline in the battle for racial justice, the Great Migration campaign of 1915–1919 is generally acknowledged as the watershed event that defined the paper’s mission and assured its place in American history. With the death of John Sengstacke and declining circulation in the 1990s, Abbott’s heirs were forced to sell the legendary *Chicago Defender* to black-owned Real Times LLC in 2003.

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*Alan D. DeSantis*

## **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919**

The killing of a fourteen-year-old African American male, Eugene Williams, on July 27, 1919, precipitated the riot that raged for five days, left approximately 38 dead, 537 injured, and about 1,000 homeless due to property damage. On this unusually hot day, Williams and four friends decided to raft between Lake Michigan’s 25th Street beach, claimed by African Americans, and the 29th Street beach, claimed by whites. The teens drifted across the invisible line of demarcation that separated the races’ beaches when a white man began to throw rocks at them, one of which hit Williams on the forehead. By the time one of the teens summoned help from the 25th Street beach, Williams drowned. Then the four surviving teens, accompanied by black police officers, went to the 29th Street beach and identified the white man who had thrown the rock. The white officer on duty, Daniel Callahan, would not arrest the man and prevented the black police officers from arresting him. Williams’ death and the lack of police action ignited the city’s factions already fraught with racial tension. In addition to Williams’ death, multiple other causative factors are attributed to the violent outbreak, including increased African American migration from the rural South (see **Great Migration**); the conflict between stockyard owners and labor unions; gangs; the emergence of the New Negro, a name applied to the more vocal and participant post-World War I African American male; police

inefficiency and political power struggles in Chicago; and the role played by both white and black publications.

Officer Callahan's refusal to arrest the alleged perpetrator of Williams' death and obstruction of his arrest by another officer, followed by the arrest of a black man against whom a white person filed a complaint, were symptomatic of a much larger problem in the unequal treatment of blacks and whites by law enforcement. As word spread of the black youth's death and of police favoritism, more blacks came to the beach, the site of an incident earlier in the day when black couples came to the beach but were thwarted by rock-hurling whites. The races clashed once again, hitting each other with rocks, until a black man, James Crawford, fired a gun, which resulted in the injury of a police officer. Crawford was then shot and killed by a black police officer. The much-studied riot gained in velocity from this point.

Although Williams' death was the event that set the out-of-control violence into motion, the racial tension had festered for two to three years in Chicago. A major contributing condition to the release of anger was the mass migration of southern, rural blacks, beginning in 1916, to Chicago. For example, during 1917–1919, more than 50,000 African Americans moved to an area in Chicago called the Black Belt, located on the city's south side between Twelfth and Fifty-seventh Streets and Wentworth Avenue and Cottage Grove Avenue. The area, already strained for housing, became overcrowded. From 1910–1920 the enclave's population rose from 34,335 to 92,501. Most of the homes, built pre-1902, were in disrepair and did not have inside toilet facilities, yet the rents were higher than in other parts of the city, the traditionally white sections. The Black Belt was abutted by Irish and Polish neighborhoods, two groups of immigrants especially hostile to the black migrants, as all three groups competed for jobs during the recession that followed World War I. Southern blacks who had been in Chicago and had become economically stable left the Black Belt for white neighborhoods, which also increased racial tension, as evidenced by bombings of African American–owned homes in white neighborhoods, bombings of realtors' offices that sold the homes, and altercations between the races over the use of public spaces, such as parks and beaches. The Black Belt was hemmed in with little room for expansion, except to the Hyde Park and Kenwood areas to the south, also run-down areas. The Black Belt became a breeding ground for disease due to overcrowding, poor living conditions, and, hence, discontent.

The migration also brought a clash of values and lifestyles between the rural and the urban. The *Chicago Defender*, a militantly political African American newspaper edited by Robert S. Abbott, had a circulation that reached into the South, as well as other parts of the country. The Chicago Urban League was founded in 1915 as an affiliate of the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes to promote the adjustment of African Americans to city life and to promote equal job opportunities. Both the *Defender* and the League viewed part of their mission as acclimatizing new arrivals to city ways. Both disseminated rules of conduct to new arrivals, such as do not allow your children to run barefoot in the streets, bathe and change your clothes after work, do not appear on the streets in ragged



clothes, do not loiter, and do not be loud in public. The "Old Settlers," as they were called, African Americans who established themselves before the mass migration, did not welcome the newcomers with open arms either, as they feared the loss of their own status, both socially and economically. Some, in fact, accused the migrants of bringing discrimination to Chicago.

World War I increased job opportunities in Chicago's meat packing plants at a time when the labor force decreased due to the lack of immigrants from belligerent nations participating in the war, and due to decreased immigration from other European countries involved in the war. The labor shortage increased even more when the United States entered the war. Available jobs during this time period rose from 8,000 to 17,000. The packing plants looked to the South for labor and promised higher wages and more opportunity than workers could get if they stayed in the oppressive South. Although the meat packers hired the largest number of migrants, job opportunities with International Harvester and Sears, Roebuck and Co. mail order opened. When the war ended, so did the abundance of jobs. War contracts were lost, 400,000 service men returned home in search of jobs, and the country experienced a recession, which led to job competition, especially between the Irish and the African Americans.

Although the post-riot study drafted by the **Chicago Commission on Race Relations**, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot*, declares labor relations a minor cause of the riot, others, especially historians, do not agree. African Americans had been resistant to unionization, especially in the stockyards. From 1894 to the riot in 1919, black and white laborers conflicted. During the strike of 1894, when packing and slaughterhouse workers walked in sympathy with Eugene V. Debs' American Railway Union, blacks were hired to replace them. Known as scabs, this practice occurred in other industries, such as coal, and in other locations. The unions did not alleviate the tension as they tended toward exclusion. The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workers formed in 1901, but was only open to skilled labor, thereby excluding many immigrant blacks. When a massive strike occurred in 1904, strikebreakers, reportedly black, helped to keep the strike going for ten weeks. The strikebreakers were confined to the plant for their own safety. The situation became so tense that the union leaders asked **Booker T. Washington** to come to Chicago to encourage blacks not to act as strikebreakers. He refused. There were sporadic outbreaks of violence. Another strike in 1905, a teamsters strike, solidified the image of the African American as scab in the minds of unions and of union white workers. Attributed to this strike are twenty deaths and hundreds of injuries. The situation favored the employers; it was not so favorable for unions, or the unionized workers, white or black. Violent acts against blacks happened throughout the city during the teamster strike. Eleven years later during the Pullman strike in 1916, African Americans once again were used to replace striking workers. With the power scabs afforded employers, unions made an effort to organize the African American workers, and the packing industry became the focus of their efforts as it employed the greatest number. The unions, especially the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), accused the packinghouses of

bringing workers from the South as a means of thwarting unionization. The voice of the CFL was *The New Majority*, a union publication. In a city noted for more strikes than any other U.S. city except New York, the unions instituted a major membership drive that added fuel to an already nearly explosive fire.

African Americans resisted unionization, in spite of efforts by the unions, especially in June and July 1919. Immediately before the riot erupted approximately 250,000 workers were either on strike, threatened to strike, or were locked out. Labor and industry battled. It should be noted that most of the unions did not have black members. Eleven unions in Chicago excluded blacks; others restricted membership. Unions that did extend membership frequently fostered segregation. One cannot deny the effect walkouts in the stockyards had on increasing racial tension in June 1919, as whites viewed blacks as the employers' pawns against them and said that they would not work unless blacks were fired or forced to join the union.

In addition to the struggle for power between unions and industry, which affected blacks' place in Chicago society, a struggle existed between immigrants, namely the Irish, and the migrants. Organized gangs that had been in existence for years, ironically many of which were supported by the political machine, promoted segregation by the use of violence. The gangs of young thugs identified themselves as "athletic clubs." The Chicago Commission on Race Relations asserted in their report, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot in 1919* that "but for them [gangs] it is doubtful if the riot would have gone beyond the first clash" (11). The gangs, comprised mostly of young white men ages 16–22, many of Irish descent, came from the stockyard area. They sported names such as the Canaryville Bunch, the Alyards, the Dirty Dozen, and the Hamburgers. But most agree that Ragen's Colts, named after their sponsor Cook County Commissioner Frank Ragen, was the most feared. In addition to the sponsorship of athletic clubs by those who held political office, gang members frequently had relatives in law enforcement and boasted of the protection this tie afforded them. Before the riot, gangs victimized blacks with drive-by shootings and beatings. On June 21, 1919, not long before the riot erupted, two blacks were murdered by gangs. The gangs seized the moment after the Twenty-ninth Street beach confrontation on July 27 by attacking at least twenty-seven blacks; some were beaten; some were shot. Ragen's Colts took the credit. Urban warfare raged as blacks armed themselves with bricks, knives, and guns to protect themselves within the Black Belt, as they feared invasion by the gangs. The gangs, on the other hand, waited for black stockyard workers to exit from the plant the day after the riot began. As the workers exited they were attacked by gang members armed with clubs, pipes, and hammers. Those who got away from the mob by jumping on streetcars were not safe. The roving gangs, cheered on by crowds, overtook them at other locations and beat to death those they caught. As is often the case during times of mob rule, innocent people are killed, as was the case in Chicago. Both blacks and whites lost their lives just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The rumor mill ran full throttle reporting killings, some true, some not, which added more tension to both sides. From this point until August 2, the riot gained momentum. Black mobs and **white mobs**

caused senseless injuries, death, and property destruction. The Chicago riot distinguishes itself from other riots, such as the **East St. Louis riot of 1917**, because it was not confined to the heavily populated African American section of the city, as was usual in other riots. In fact, it is estimated that 41 percent of the clashes took place in predominately white neighborhoods.

The willingness of Chicago African Americans to fight back and off their turf is said to be a result in part of the World War I experience and its liberating effect. Men who fought for the United States gained a voice, a voice that was supported by African American intellectuals, such as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, founder of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and editor of its journal *The Crisis*; poets, such as **Claude McKay**; and newspaper editors, such as Robert S. Abbott. The “New Negro,” as he was called, was encouraged to believe in self and his race and was urged to demand the guarantees to citizens granted by the U.S. Constitution. The New Negro also made it quite clear that physical aggression no longer would be tolerated; it would be met with an equally aggressive defense of life and property. The new outspokenness served to increase fear of retribution in whites and, hence, the tension between the races. Whites accused blacks, docile no longer, as being puppets of the Bolsheviks, as the **Red Scare** also proliferated throughout the nation in 1919. Ironically the major publications by African Americans denounced bolshevism.

In Chicago, the New Negro had gained a political voice and, with it, power, which also increased racial tension during 1919. Chicago politics were corrupt. For a vote, politicians would grant, for example, a blind eye to illegal activities in the Black Belt. In 1915, the black vote gave William Hale Thompson, a Republican, a wide majority in the mayoral race, much to the dismay of other Chicagoans who thought him to be unqualified for the position and an antipapist, which was especially vile to the Irish-Catholic population. After his victory, Thompson appointed African Americans to political posts, another strike against him. Politics, therefore, deepened the chasm between blacks and the immigrant groups, which were overwhelmingly comprised of Democrats. Thompson supported black and tan cabarets, saloons, and places of dance—targets for the reformers. In 1918, the city council voted to shut down the cabarets because they believed them to be hotbeds of vice. They ultimately were allowed to stay open, but they were not allowed to serve alcohol, which hurt the economy of the Black Belt. Thompson lifted the ban on alcohol before the 1919 election, a move to secure the much-needed black vote. Political discord also played a role in allowing the riot to rage before Thompson declared martial law and called in troops. Gov. Frank Lowden and Mayor Thompson, at one time supportive of each other politically, had a falling out during World War I when Thompson declared neutrality in the war, which Lowden viewed as anti-American. Other rifts occurred, which ultimately led to the hesitation of each to stop the riot by using troops. Thompson delayed requesting troops; Lowden refused to dispatch the troops without the request. It was not until the third day, at which time 80 percent of Chicago’s police force was situated in or near the Black Belt, a positioning that left other parts of the city unprotected, that Thompson requested troops. But even though 3,500

arrived, they remained at the armory. The city at this point was all but shut down due to violence, yet Thompson and Lowden continued to stall. It wasn't until the employers and police officers put pressure on the mayor, and the threat of total destruction of the Black Belt after Ragen's Colts set more than thirty-seven fires, that Thompson finally acted and asked the troops to be put on the streets. The violence greatly decreased once the troops hit the streets, yet blacks still refused to return to work due to the danger. By August 6, the stockyard owners finally convinced their black workers that it was safe to return, and they did so escorted and protected by 1,500 policemen, militia, and special and regular deputies. When they returned, 10,000 white workers walked off the job and, later in the week, called for a meeting in order to call for a strike. August 8, when troops withdrew, is considered to be the conclusion of the riot.

Publications, both African American and Caucasian, played a role in the increasing racial tension that preceded the riot. As has been noted by various scholars, Robert S. Abbott's editorials in the *Defender*, Carl Sandburg's articles for the *Chicago Daily News*, and the *New Majority*, a CFL publication, each with its own agenda yet each promoting an identity for a specific group, not only helped to bring the increasing racial tension to the public's eye, but also, in some instances, fueled the fire. Abbott's paper, with a large circulation both in Chicago as well as in the South, carried articles, for example, about the stockyard gangs' ties to law enforcement. Sandburg, the reporter and poet, was commissioned in 1919 by the *Chicago Daily News* to investigate the increasing racial tensions in Chicago. Some believe his articles perpetuated the stereotype of the rural blacks moving to the city bringing with them values non-conducive to assimilation and as a group in constant battle with the Irish for place. Sandburg did identify two major factors that contributed to the riot: inadequate housing and competition for employment. The *New Majority* used its voice against the employers whose businesses they wanted to unionize by claiming the employers encouraged rural blacks to come to undermine unionization and for cheap labor. The audience was white, blue-collar workers, who ultimately blamed the situation on the black workers.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**, said, "a riot is the language of the unheard" (King 1963). In Chicago, on an unusually hot summer day, a young man's lost life demanded a voice and received it in an undesirable way—more violence. Factions, ironically with the same goals, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, took to the streets to be heard. A confluence of factors—increased African American migration from the rural South, conflicts between stockyard owners and unions, gangs and police inefficiency, the emergence of the New Negro, political corruption and warring, and publications that gave direction and voice to different factions—occurred on July 27, 1919, and set into motion a riot.

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### **Cincinnati (Ohio) Riots of 1967 and 1968**

Like many other American cities, such as **Los Angeles** and **Detroit**, Cincinnati was torn by racial violence in the mid-1960s (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). In June 1967, Cincinnati's minority neighborhoods, which had long suffered from **racism**, **police brutality**, and economic decline, experienced a devastating riot that had to be suppressed by the Ohio National Guard, and that left one dead and hundreds in custody. Less than a year later, in April 1968, the city again experienced racial violence, this time sparked by the murder of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Cincinnati had a long history of racial violence. In March 1884, serious disorders accompanied the attempt by a **white mob** to lynch William Berner, a German American, and his black accomplice, Joseph Palmer, who were accused of killing Berner's employer (see **Lynching**). White Cincinnatians, angry that Berner was convicted of manslaughter, not murder, attempted to storm the jail and seize the two men. When this failed, the mob returned the next evening and burned the courthouse to the ground, compelling the governor to call out the militia. Fifty-six people died and more than 200 were wounded before order could be restored. Palmer was eventually hanged.

Racially motivated violence exploded again in the city in 1929, when a young black man sitting in a restaurant got into a verbal altercation with two police officers. The officers followed the man out into the street, where shots were fired, killing the black man. The police claimed that he had attacked them with a knife; however, the publisher of *The Union*, Cincinnati's African American newspaper, charged that the murder was an act of naked racism.

By 1940, blacks made up 12.2 percent of the city's population. Although World War II–related jobs in the industrial sector were plentiful and blacks made some economic gains, they were, for the most part, confined to blue-collar jobs and denied membership in unions. Blacks also still had difficulty obtaining service jobs and promotions, while schools, housing, and health care was still substandard in black communities. Sporadic racial incidents flared up during the war years. In June 1941, a race riot was barely avoided after a dispute between a white grocery store owner and a black customer. In the summer of 1944, a group of about 100 white men and boys stoned a house in Mount Adams where two black families lived. A white neighbor who tried to intervene was hung in effigy. Moreover, there were numerous incidents of racial profiling and harassment of African Americans by white police officers.

By the 1960s, housing **segregation** was especially bad in Cincinnati, which, like other northern cities, struggled with a loss of population, **white flight** to the suburbs, and a declining manufacturing base. Moreover, northern segregation was just as pernicious as its southern counterpart. Cincinnati had its own **Jim Crow** stories—theaters, bowling alleys, libraries, and amusement venues remained defiantly segregated. The famous Coney Island amusement park, dance hall, and swimming pool was not integrated until 1961, after almost ten years of work by the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the Cincinnati Committee on Human Rights, and local volunteers.

As the **civil rights movement** spread into the North in the 1960s, Cincinnati found itself the target of demonstrations by blacks frustrated at the slow pace of **integration**, the lack of jobs, substandard housing and schools, and continued police harassment. On June 11, 1967, Peter Frake, a black man, began a protest against the death sentence his cousin, Postel Laskey, received after he was convicted of killing Barbara Bowman, a white woman. After incidents of vandalism, more than a dozen blacks were arrested, and the next day received the maximum sentence for that crime, which angered the black community. Within twenty-four hours, a full-scale riot erupted as blacks set fires, stoned businesses, and fought with police. A curfew was instituted and Ohio Gov. James Rhodes called out the Ohio National Guard, which received orders from the adjutant general to shoot to kill. By June 15, when the riot had been contained, one person was dead, 404 people had been arrested, and the city had suffered over \$2 million in property damage. In the aftermath, the police chief of Cincinnati stated that he was proud of the state of race relations in the city.

Ironically, Dr. Martin Luther King had visited Zion Baptist Church in Avondale on June 12. Calling it midnight in the social order of America, King had urged blacks and whites to work together to right the social wrongs so pervasive in the United States. He spoke of the racial segregation he had experienced as a boy growing up in the South and how he had never let it segregate his mind, imploring blacks in Cincinnati to follow his example.

Several days later, a white Republican state representative introduced a bill in the Ohio House to better define martial law and limit the amount of civil and criminal damages for which government entities would be liable. Civil libertarians protested against the bill, but Carl Stokes, a black Democratic representative from Cleveland, endorsed it, adding that it should be amended to clarify the governor's authority to call out the National Guard.

Like other large northern cities in which riots broke out in the 1960s, Cincinnati lacked black representation in politics, business, and other policy-making bodies, and its minority communities suffered from chronic unemployment and underemployment, inadequate housing, police harassment, a racist justice system, poor educational facilities, and inadequate federal programs designed to alleviate poverty and injustice.

In April 1968, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis (see **King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of [1968]**). On April 6, a memorial service organized by several Cincinnati-area pastors was held at a local cathedral. Although there were a few sporadic instances of vandalism, violence, and

arson, the city remained calm for the most part. On April 8, a Black Monday memorial was held at a local recreation center. Blacks were encouraged to boycott schools and jobs, thereby opting out of participation in white society, which was held responsible for King's death. More than 1,500 blacks heard a speech by an officer of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, who blamed white Americans for King's death and urged blacks to retaliate. Still, the crowd was orderly when it left the meeting and spilled out into the street. Somewhere on the street there occurred the accidental shooting of a black woman by her husband. By the time the crowd heard of the incident, it had morphed into a shooting of a black woman by a white police officer, and a full-scale riot erupted. By the time the police had restored order a few days later, two people were dead and hundreds were under arrest. Property damage was estimated at \$3 million.

After the 1968 disorders, race relations in Cincinnati remained strained. Blacks remained at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, and distrust between whites and blacks was high. Sporadic racial violence, boycotts, and incidents of police brutality continued. As recently as 2001, new race riots erupted in response to the shooting of a black teenager by a white police officer. In August 2001, the Cincinnati Museum Center presented *Unrest in Cincinnati: Voices in Our Community*, an exhibit chronicling the city's history of civil disorders. One of the most telling sections was the timeline of actions taken to improve race relations in Cincinnati. It stopped in 1972. *See also* Cincinnati (Ohio) Riot of 2001.

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Marilyn K. Howard

### **Cincinnati (Ohio) Riot of 2001**

On April 10, 2001, three days after a black teenager was slain by a white police officer, serious rioting erupted in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Coming on the heels of a series of high-profile cases involving allegations of **police brutality** and racial profiling leveled at the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) by African Americans, the shooting precipitated the worst episodes of racial violence to hit Cincinnati since the late 1960s (see **Cincinnati [Ohio] Riots of 1967 and 1968**). Although the disorders resulted in no deaths, the physical damage to downtown businesses and the long-term damage to the city's economy were enormous. The riots also aggravated racial tensions, especially between the police department and Cincinnati's minority communities.

In the early morning of April 7, 2001, Officer Steven Roach shot and killed nineteen-year-old Timothy Thomas as he fled from police down a dark alley. The pursuing officers were attempting to execute an arrest warrant that had been issued against Thomas for fourteen outstanding charges, all of which were nonviolent misdemeanors. Roach had joined a pursuit already in progress when he suddenly encountered Thomas as the fleeing youth came around a corner. Believing that Thomas was reaching for a weapon, Roach, who claimed that he was unaware of the nonviolent nature of Thomas' alleged offenses and that Thomas ignored an order to stop, fired his gun with deadly result. A later investigation concluded that Thomas had not been reaching for a gun, but had instead been trying to pull up his pants, which, according to the prevailing style, were loose and baggy. Thomas was the fifteenth young black man to die in a confrontation with Cincinnati police, or while in police custody, since 1995. During the same period, no white suspects had died in similar circumstances.

The Thomas shooting occurred less than six months after two other black men had died while in the custody of Cincinnati police officers. Roger Owensby, Jr., died on November 7, 2000, allegedly of asphyxiation from a police chokehold, and Jeffrey Irons died the next day, also while scuffling with police. The officers accused of causing Owensby's death were brought to trial in January 2001, but, despite charges that a fellow officer who gave testimony at each trial committed perjury, one officer was acquitted and the other was not retried after his case ended in a mistrial. Frustrated by this result, a group of citizens filed a federal lawsuit in March 2001 on behalf of all the families of black men who had died in police custody since 1995; these cases were combined with other pending civil suits against the CPD, including that of Bomani Tyehimba, a black businessman who claimed that in 1999, during the course of a routine traffic stop, Cincinnati police officers illegally ordered him from his car and then handcuffed and beat him at gunpoint.

In light of these earlier cases, the Thomas shooting precipitated a strong and immediate reaction from the city's African American community. On April 9, a group of about 200 black protestors, including Thomas' mother, Angela Leisure, invaded the city council chamber in the midst of a public meeting. Demanding an immediate accounting of Thomas' death and the punishment of Roach, the protestors carried signs saying "Stop Killing Us or Else" and "Wear Seat Belt or Be Executed," the latter a reference to one of the misdemeanors charged against Thomas. When told that the CPD had not completed its investigation and was not yet ready to make a report, the protestors insulted and berated council members, vandalized the interior and exterior of city hall, and then marched to police headquarters, where they lowered the American flag and then raised it again upside down. After issuing several warnings, the police finally dispersed the demonstrators around midnight by using beanbag bullets, tear gas, and pepper spray.

On the evening of the next day, April 10, serious rioting erupted in downtown Cincinnati, where crowds of young blacks set fires and looted and vandalized businesses. Although these disorders sparked riots in other Cincinnati neighborhoods, the most serious damage was reported downtown. Some gunshots were fired and a few people were injured, although none



seriously. The disorders ended in the early morning hours, and many downtown businesses resumed normal operations on the next day. However, darkness brought a renewal of the rioting and the infliction of more extensive damage on downtown businesses, many of which did not open on April 12, both because of damage sustained and because neither customers nor employees were willing to venture downtown. After a third night of disorders, Mayor Charlie Luken's declaration of a citywide curfew and the coming of a cold rain finally ended the riots. Damage estimates for the three nights of violence were put at \$3.6 million.

After Thomas's funeral on April 14, a crowd of about 2000 began an impromptu, but peaceful, march of protest toward downtown. Wary of further disorders, the police injured several marchers by firing beanbag bullets and other nonlethal projectiles into the crowd. Although the police claimed that they had strictly followed their departmental use-of-force policy in firing on the marchers, eyewitnesses declared that the officers simply opened fire indiscriminately on the protestors without giving any warning. Angered by the police reaction to the peaceful protest of April 14, groups involved in the Owensby case organized a boycott of downtown businesses, and African American entertainers scheduled to appear in Cincinnati, such as Bill Cosby, Whoopi Goldberg, and Smokey Robinson, cancelled their performances. Within a year, the boycott was estimated to have deprived the Cincinnati economy of more than \$10 million.

In September 2001, Officer Roach was tried for negligent homicide. The decision to waive a trial and have the case decided by the judge was widely criticized as an attempt by the CPD to dictate the outcome of the trial. When Roach was eventually acquitted, new disorders erupted, but they were brief and caused little damage. An internal police investigation of the Thomas shooting, issued after Roach had left the CPD to join a local suburban police force, concluded that the officer had lied in his official report, had not followed department procedures for handling a firearm, and had not given Thomas sufficient time to respond to his demands. The police chief thereafter suggested that if Roach were still with the CPD, he would be fired for these violations.

In 2002, the federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Tyehimba and others in the month before Thomas' death resulted in the signing of a collaborative agreement, whereby the city agreed to undertake a series of initiatives to improve police service to minority communities. The agreement, which had been encouraged by a critical report of the CPD issued by the U.S. Department of Justice, provided for a revision of the CPD's use-of-force policies, the creation of an independent citizen panel to hear complaints against the police, and the formation of a community focus group to recommend community-oriented policing policies. As a result of this more stringent scrutiny, CPD officers began an unofficial work slowdown to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with what they believed was the city administration's failure to support the department. Because this slowdown coincided with an increase in violent crime in the downtown area, it, along with the economic boycott, is considered one of the most serious consequences of the 2001 riots.

**Further Readings:** Various articles describing the riot and its aftermath can be found on the Web sites of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (<http://www.enquirer.com>) and *Cincinnati Post* (<http://www.cincypost.cm>) newspapers.

*John A. Wagner*

## Civil Rights Act of 1957

The Civil Rights Act of 1957 was the first civil rights legislation enacted by the federal government since **Reconstruction**. The act was the product of liberal senators who, combined with the endorsement of President Harry Truman during the presidential election campaign of 1948, pushed for a civil rights bill. The idea was to get a law that guaranteed general civil rights to African American citizens including guarantees against discrimination in housing, public transportation, restaurants, hotels, etc. The growing desire for such a bill reflected growing disenchantment in both the black community and the community at large with the segregated nature of American society. World War II fought, at least rhetorically, against the racist policies of the Nazis, but seemed to ignore the status of blacks at home. This befuddled many citizens and angered a growing number of blacks. Many of those who had fought in the war emerged only to be second-class citizens. In addition, on the strength of the GI Bill, many attained college degrees, only to still be relegated to the lower ends of society—socially, economically, and politically.

Despite these pushes, almost all southern senators and congressmen vehemently opposed such a bill that would, in essence, shatter southern segregated society. Early forms of the bill, pushed by northern members of Congress, included a voting rights bill and gave authority to the federal court system to become involved. In many ways, it was the fear of federal intervention, via the courts, that bothered southerners the most.

Despite strenuous objections, by the late 1950s, many southern senators, in an attempt to stave off major reform, were willing to allow a weak version of the proposed bills. A weak bill, they reasoned, could be manipulated and emasculated so that the much-feared change would not really take place. It would also maintain their power in the Senate. Others, such as Lyndon Johnson, the democratic senator from Texas who had aspirations on the White House, were not willing to risk their political careers, despite their personal feelings to the contrary of a strong bill. Johnson pushed the bill by arguing to each side what they wanted to hear: To liberals it was the best they could get; to southern democrats it was as weak as could be.

Two key events paved the way for the passage of the bill. First, a provision that would have allowed the U.S. Department of Justice to sue for the enforcement of school desegregation was removed. Second, an amendment was included which guaranteed that state officials who were accused of violating court orders on voting rights had the right to a jury trial. The argument was that such an amendment nullified the voting rights provision, because what southern jury would return convictions against state officials in black voting rights cases? At the last minute the amendments were

secured, much to the chagrin of people like Richard Nixon, who decried the compromise.

The bill was greeted with mixed emotions by both the black and white communities, with some black leaders debating whether they should urge President Dwight Eisenhower to veto the bill because of its weakened form and diluted message. The Civil Rights Act of 1957 was largely ineffective in its enforcement and its scope. Three years after its enactment, fewer blacks were voting in the South. If its importance is to be noted for anything, it is that it was the first piece of civil rights legislation in eighty-two years. It created the authority for establishing a civil rights office in the Department of Justice, even if at its inception the office had fewer than ten lawyers. Finally, it laid the groundwork for ensuing legislation in the 1960s. *See also* Civil Rights Act of 1964; Civil Rights Act of 1968.

**Further Readings:** Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988; Caro, Robert. *Master of the Senate*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002; Lawson, Steven F., and Charles Payne. *Debating the Civil Rights Movement: 1945–1968*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998; Morris, Aldon D. *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Free Press, 1984; Winquist, Thomas R. “Civil Rights Legislation—The Civil Rights Act of 1957.” *Michigan Law Review* 56 (1958): 619–630.

Gary Gershman

### Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed the social, economic, and political status of African Americans in the United States. The impact of the law was extensive and far reaching. It was not the first civil rights act. The **Civil Rights Act of 1957** emerged during the Eisenhower administration. President Dwight Eisenhower did not demonstrate a lot of public support for the **civil rights movement**; he believed that social change must come from within individuals and not through legislation. However, he advanced the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which provided for African Americans to exercise their right to vote. Also, it called for a new division in the U.S. Department of Justice to monitor civil rights violations.

By no means was there unanimous support for the act. Publicly, President Eisenhower announced that he did not understand parts of it. Two different points of view about the act were expressed by two respected voices in the African American community. Dr. Ralph Bunche declared that he would rather not have any law than have the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which he thought was too weak. But Bayard Rustin prophetically welcomed the Act for what it represented. He saw it as the first civil rights legislation in eighty-two years, which was only the first piece of legislation on which subsequent, related legislation would be built.

After the 1957 Civil Rights Act, President Eisenhower introduced another bill, much to the displeasure of many southern politicians in Congress. This was the Civil Rights Act of 1960. Both political parties were aware of the potential that the increased black vote would have in the political arena.

The bill introduced penalties to be levied on anyone who obstructed blacks from voting or registering to vote. It also provided for a Civil Rights Commission. Again, there were some who viewed this as being too little, too late. But it did build on the Civil Rights Act of 1957, as Rustin had predicted. Indeed this led to future landmark civil rights legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

When President **John F. Kennedy** was given the report from the Civil Rights Commission, which grew out of the Civil Rights Act of 1960, he took action. Even though President Kennedy had opposed Eisenhower's Civil Rights Act of 1957, his reason was that he did not want to be on the wrong side of the Democratic Party's movers and shakers, who were against the act, since he too anticipated running for president in the future. Heretofore, Kennedy's record on civil rights had been lukewarm. But the Civil Rights Commission report was very compelling in its documentation of the glaring disparities between life for African Americans compared to that of other Americans. Kennedy made it clear that civil rights would be on his agenda from that point on.

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson embraced the need for a stronger civil rights act. He believed that President Kennedy was moving in that direction when he was killed. So he would honor Kennedy's memory, using the national climate of sympathy and goodwill that prevailed over the country immediately after the assassination, to advance a cause in which he, too believed. It fit with President Johnson's vision of "The Great Society." Also, African Americans were becoming more militant and aggressive in their demands for more equality and opportunities in mainstream American life.

As a long-time, savvy political operative in Congress, President Johnson knew how to get legislation passed. With help from some congressional allies such as Sen. Everett Dirksen, a Republican from Illinois and Sen. Hubert Humphrey, a Democrat from Minnesota, he was successful. On July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. The ceremony took place only five hours after the House of Representatives passed it.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did the following:

- Prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin in public places such as restaurants, cafeterias, lunchrooms, soda fountains, movies, concert halls, and other similar public places;
- Mandated the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC);
- Mandated that federal funding would not be given to segregated schools; and
- Required that any company seeking federal business must have a pro-civil rights policy.

After signing the law, he immediately shook hands with **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, in a symbol of victory. **Roy Wilkins**, secretary of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, described the new law as "the Magna Carta of human rights" ("On This Day" 2006).

The 1964 Civil Rights Act served as the precursor to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which banned literacy tests and poll taxes; the **Civil Rights Act of 1968**, which outlawed discrimination in the selling and renting of housing, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which allowed lawsuits against employers if their hiring had a “disparate impact” (U.S. Congress 1991) on women and minorities. *See also* Segregation.

**Further Readings:** Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991; Kotz, Nick. *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Laws That Changed America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005; “On This Day: 1964: President Johnson Signs Civil Rights Bill.” *BBC News*, July 2, 2006. See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/2/newsid\\_3787000/3787809.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/2/newsid_3787000/3787809.stm); U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. *Civil Rights Act of 1991*. 102nd Cong., 1st sess., January 3, 1991; Whalen, Barbara, and Charles Whalen. *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act*. Cabin John, MD: Seven Locks Press, 1991.

Betty Nyangoni

### Civil Rights Act of 1968

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 is also known as the Housing Rights Act or Fair Housing Act of 1968. In the act, Congress expanded the scope and protections of Executive Order 11063, and together with the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1968 decision in *Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co.* (which held that § 1982 of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 protected racial minorities from discrimination in private as well as public housing), outlawed for the first time private as well as public discrimination in housing. It was the final part of what can be seen as a triumvirate of civil rights legislation—the first two parts being the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Similar to the previous two acts, which had been passed in the aftermath of the **John F. Kennedy** assassination and the violence in Selma, Alabama, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 came into being in the wake of the **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, assassination (see **King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of**). However, unlike the other two acts, which were the product of protest and agitation by the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** and the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** at Birmingham and Selma, this final piece of legislation resulted from the work of Clarence Mitchell, Jr., the Washington director of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**.

Originally designed as a means to protect civil rights workers, as the bill wound its way through Congress it was amended to prevent discrimination in the housing market. The key to its passage through the Senate was the support of Sen. Everett Dirksen of Illinois. Before he publicly came out in support of the bill, three cloture votes on a filibuster managed by southern senators failed to get the required two-thirds majority. However, with Dirksen in the lead, the filibuster was defeated, and the bill moved forward.

By 1968, growing violence across the United States (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**), the accompanying negative reaction to these race riots, as well as the **Black Power** movement, a slipping economy, and rising crime rates, made people less enamored with civil rights legislation. The House of Representatives reflected this growing conservatism and, unlike the act four years earlier, passage of this measure stalled in the House. Most people expected the House to emasculate the bill with various amendments, which would then be passed by both houses.

However, just as the stalled legislation in Congress had received a jump-start in 1964 from the assassination of President Kennedy, and the collective grief of the nation was used by President Lyndon Johnson to push the Civil Rights Act through a deadlocked Congress, the national shock and sorrow over the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., swung the momentum in Congress. The day after King's funeral, the House Rules Committee voted to send the housing rights bill directly to the House floor. By limiting debate and not allowing any amendments, passage was secured. The King assassination made it politically inexpedient for members of the House to tamper with the bill and they passed the strong Senate version rapidly on April 10, 1968, by a vote of 229 to 195. President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 into law the next day.

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 made unlawful all practices and transactions that would deny housing to anyone based on race, color, religion, or national origin. The act established legal mechanisms to prevent discrimination in housing. The structure included government at all levels, from federal to local, and established a system of judicial review. In short, the law provided for "aggrieved persons" to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Under the dictates of the act, HUD was required to investigate the allegation. However, strong enforcement mechanisms were not available to HUD or the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). HUD was limited to mediating disputes and DOJ could only file suits to remedy what were thought to be established patterns of discrimination.

As a result of these and other shortcomings, the law came under regular criticism. It also exempted large numbers of houses. For example, individual sales, not including a broker or other agent, were not covered. Other situations also escaped coverage under the act. Accommodations by private clubs, noncommercial housing operated by religious groups, rental housing in which the owner lived, and housing containing four or fewer units, were exempt.

The act's impact was debated the moment it was passed. Many critics argue over its effectiveness. Some note that the act has had a wide-ranging impact and resulted in breaking down neighborhood racial barriers culminating in integrated neighborhoods throughout the country. Others argue that the prevalence of single-race communities throughout the United States and the failure to truly break down racial barriers testifies to its ineffectiveness. Since its passage it has been amended and now prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex,

familial status (including children under the age of eighteen living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of eighteen), and handicap (disability).

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Gary Gersbman

### Civil Rights Movement

The civil rights movement was an African American movement that took place between 1955 and 1968 for the extension of civil rights to black Americans. The movement did not hold a single policy. It united African Americans of different views, creeds, and political stances to work toward a single goal—the acquisition of full and equal civil rights.

Although it began in 1955, activities in the 1930s and 1940s were important for the later development of the movement. During President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, union organization raised the political consciousness of black workers. The New Deal also helped raise the education and confidence levels of young black Americans. These activities were an important pre-condition for subsequent grassroots civil rights campaigns. World War II had also had an impact on the movement. The increase of industrial production created new job opportunities, and there was a shift in African American political consciousness. Most black newspapers supported the war, though not unconditionally. Furthermore, **A. Phillip Randolph** launched the March on Washington Movement in 1941, which aimed to bring 100,000 demonstrators to Washington, D.C. In June 1942, the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** was formed; in the 1950s and 1960s, CORE would become one of the five leading civil right organizations.

The cold war had a twofold impact on the movement. On the one hand, President Harry Truman had to work for equality if he wanted to claim the United States as a land of freedom. He could not attack the USSR and communism on the grounds of lack of democracy and freedom if there were American citizens who lacked liberties. In 1946, he met the National Emergency Committee against Mob Violence and authorized the establishment of a committee of civil rights to investigate the state of race relations in the United States. An important report titled *To Secure These Rights*, was issued on October 29, 1947. It offered moral, economic, and international reasons why government policy on civil rights should change. It also made over thirty-five recommendations for action, which went largely unimplemented. The civil rights movement was an issue during the 1948 presidential campaign because Truman felt that it would attract black voters and would draw them away from the Progressive Party candidate, Henry Wallace.

On the other hand, cold war politics gave way to “McCarthyism” and the prosecution of alleged communists in government. Some black organizations had established ties with the Communist Party in the 1930s. Now they were forced to abandon those connections if they wanted to survive and not have their members arrested and organizations banned. All this explains why the civil rights movement did not start earlier. It was already ripe for development but the mere possibility of being accused of anti-Americanism or of being labeled communist inhibited it for some years. Fear of being called communist also prevented civil organizations from radicalizing their message. Some leading members of the African American community had also seen that communism was not interested in racial issues but in economic and class issues, and that black workers were important as workers but not as black people. Their particular situation in the United States was not taken into account. The radical stance that some African American organizations had held during the 1930s was abandoned in favor of a more conservative approach that helped its final success. Most Americans would not have supported their claims of racial equality if African American civil rights groups had been perceived as too radical.

Cold war tensions were a positive force in another sense. International pressure forced presidents Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, **John F. Kennedy**, and Lyndon Johnson to look for solutions to the race issue. The independence of African nations was another consequence of the post-war period that worked as a major force in the movement. If the citizens of these nations held rights and freedom, African American citizens should have them as well. A large number of Africans enrolled as students in American universities and acted as a source of encouragement to African Americans. But it must be said that the domestic impact of the cold war probably delayed the start of the movement from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s.

Civil rights groups focused largely on such issues as voting rights and desegregation and forgot about issues of poverty and economic inequality. In the mid-1960s, little attention was directed to these issues, which accounts for the rise of the **Black Power** movement between 1965 and 1968.

The year 1954 was a watershed because it saw the decision in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *Brown* case had been brought before the Supreme Court in 1953 by Thurgood Marshall of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** Legal Defense Fund. In May 1954, the Court held that **segregation** was unconstitutional and that the existence of segregated schools created a feeling of inferiority in the minds of black children. The *Brown* case gave African Americans a renewed hope of achieving equality. The *Brown* case was one of several landmark civil rights cases since the 1930s. These cases, among which the *Sweatt v. Painter* case (1950) stands as a landmark, had raised the possibility of an eventual rejection of the whole principle of segregation. In the 1940s, CORE promoted **Freedom Rides** and sit-ins. In April 1947, the organization sent sixteen black and white people on a trip, called the **Journey of Reconciliation**, through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky to test a Supreme Court ruling that



declared segregation in interstate travel unconstitutional. Although four riders were arrested at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the effort achieved much publicity and established a long campaign of direct action by CORE.

In December 1955, Rosa Parks took a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus and sat in the front row of seats in the black section of the bus. When she was asked by the driver to give up her seat to a white passenger and move back, she refused and was arrested. African American organizations thought a bus boycott was the best answer to her arrest. The boycott began after an intense advertising campaign. At the end of the first day, Martin Luther King, Jr., was elected to lead the campaign. The bus boycott continued until victory was achieved in November 1956 when the Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery bus company's policy of segregation violated the U.S. Constitution. During the boycott, the demonstrators followed CORE's policy of **nonviolence**. The Montgomery bus boycott thrust **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, to the forefront of the civil rights movement and showed that nonviolent demonstrations were the most effective weapon of protest.

Student sit-ins were another form of protesting racial discrimination. CORE had used sit-ins to oppose racial segregation in restaurants and bars during the 1940s. On February 1, 1960, four African American college students staged a sit-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They were joined by other students, both black and white, and by some sympathetic adults of both races. Frequently, these demonstrations ended in violence with white segregationists beating up the demonstrators. By January 1961, at the end of President Dwight Eisenhower's second administration, 70,000 black and white youngsters had participated in sit-ins. The **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** was formed on April 16–17, 1960 to organize sit-ins throughout the South. SNCC adopted the nonviolent policy of CORE, and participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961.

The policies and attitudes of presidential administrations in the 1950s and 1960s were of great importance to the civil rights movement, even more important than the actions of the Supreme Court. A good example is the Eisenhower administration, which, in September 1957, sent over 1,000 soldiers to Little Rock High School in Arkansas to enforce the admission of nine black children. The president believed there was an urgent need to maintain public order and avoid bloodshed. Eisenhower's last years saw passage of the 1957 and 1960 civil rights acts. These were the first pieces of civil rights legislation since the **Reconstruction** era. Both acts provided federal judges with greater supervisory jurisdiction over the registration of black voters in the South. The **Civil Rights Act of 1957** empowered the U.S. Department of Justice to initiate lawsuits in voting rights cases, and it established the bipartisan Civil Rights Commission to investigate violations of the law. However, white segregationists continued to prevent blacks from voting wherever possible by making it as difficult as possible for blacks to register their vote. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 slightly strengthened the enforcement provisions of the first measure. The black community was divided with regard to both acts. Leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and **Roy Wilkins**, did not give their enthusiastic support, although Bayard

Rustin, leader of CORE, thought that the acts implied a new positive attitude on the part of the federal government. In general terms, Eisenhower preferred noninvolvement to affirmative action, which explains why he tried to maintain neutrality in the *Brown* case, or why he did not meet black civil rights leaders in 1955. Responsibility for such meetings was delegated to Vice President Richard Nixon.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy promised to end discrimination in federal housing projects. In October 1960, only a month before Kennedy's election as president, Martin Luther King, Jr., was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for participation in a sit-in protest in Atlanta. **Robert Kennedy**, the candidate's brother, tried to persuade the Georgia state judge to release King from jail. This attempt helped persuade 75 percent of African American voters to support Kennedy.

The civil rights record of the Kennedy administration was mixed. He appointed over forty African Americans to important positions in government, but he failed to appoint judges supportive of **integration** in the federal Fifth Circuit, which covered Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Kennedy frequently met civil rights leaders at the White House, although he rejected the notion of commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation by issuing a second proclamation and organized a social gathering for African Americans in the White House instead. He delegated the civil rights issue to Robert Kennedy, his brother and attorney general. However, Kennedy issued the New Frontier Program that was to extend the New Deal legislation and benefit African Americans.

In 1961, the CORE Freedom Rides marked the first test of the attorney general's resolve. Twenty-three CORE members went from Washington, D.C., to the South. When they arrived in the Alabama towns of Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, they refused to accept segregated seats in buses. This refusal resulted in horrifyingly violent attacks by local white segregationist mobs. Robert Kennedy negotiated with officials to secure the safe passage of the riders. In September, the federal Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) issued an order prohibiting segregated facilities on interstate travels.

In September 1962, the admission of **James Meredith** as the first black student at the University of Mississippi led to another crisis. The Kennedys preferred public noninvolvement and worked behind the scene. But on October 1, 1962, segregationist mobs attacked Meredith and the administration decided to send 30,000 soldiers to restore order.

Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, supported the cause of civil rights even more vigorously than his immediate predecessors. He secured passage of three major pieces of civil rights legislation. The **Civil Rights Act of 1964** contained many provisions. It gave the federal government wide-ranging powers to end segregation and discrimination in employment, schooling, and public facilities and accommodations. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 provided federal authorities with powers to oversee the registration of black voters in the South. The **Civil Rights Act of 1968** provided for more effective means to end segregation and discrimination in federal housing projects. The climate for action was favorable in those years. Southern

opposition to the 1964 act was undermined by the assassination of Kennedy, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed during a period of public support for civil rights following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (see **King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of**).

King is the main representative of the civil rights movement in popular culture. He was not the only one, nor the most radical, and was even dubbed too conservative by other civil rights leaders, but his leadership and actions made the civil rights movement expand and win the support of an unprecedented number of Americans. In December 1955, King accepted the leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott campaign, which was supported by NAACP and the Montgomery Women's Political Council. The council reflected the importance of women in southern civil rights protests.

In 1957, King organized a "Southern Negro Leaders' Conference on Transportation and Integration" in Atlanta. The Conference marked a turning point in civil rights protest. It acknowledged the importance of black churchmen and the necessity of interstate organization. Isolated localized protests were seen as largely ineffective. In February, the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** was founded; it operated in the South and was dominated by Baptist ministers. The formation of the SCLC had a major impact because it added the moral authority of the church to civil rights protests. However, most black ministers were not active participants in the civil rights struggle.

The SCLC filled a void in national organizations. CORE was at its lowest after World War II, and was northern-based, and the NAACP had to struggle for its survival in the southern states. Moreover, the NAACP held a legalistic rather than an active approach to civil rights demands. The SCLC, on the other hand, was a religious organization that could not be accused of being communist. It was based in the South, where it was most needed, and focused on local campaigns that helped to follow up the NAACP's legal victories. With the SCLC, the most important civil rights organizations were the NAACP, the **National Urban League (NUL)**, CORE, and the SNCC, which bound together the civil rights movement. It was King's achievement to keep them all working together during these years despite their different beliefs and rivalries.

Setbacks were common in the civil rights movement. In 1958–1960, the SCLC's campaign "Crusade for Citizenship" had a limited impact because of poor coordination and inadequate finances. In Georgia, during 1961–1962, the nonviolent protest failed as well. Protesters were arrested en masse and transported to jails in surrounding townships. The police chief took care that little violence was used against protesters so that the media could not report it and turn public opinion against him. When King was arrested, the chief made sure that the fine was paid so that King could be released.

In 1963, King led a major campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, that was successful. The strategy was carefully planned and the use of force by Public Safety Commissioner **T. Eugene "Bull" Connor** turned opinion toward the demonstrators. The Birmingham success provided the civil rights movement with moral force that was to be used afterwards to accomplish desegregation.

In August 1963 the March on Washington took place. It was jointly supported by all the major civil rights organizations. On August 28, King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. In 1965, a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in support of the Voting Rights Bill ended in failure and violence on March 7, which became known as **Bloody Sunday**. But on March 17, a federal judge approved the protest and President Johnson sent troops to protect the participants, some twenty of whom completed the march.

The **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964** was a major campaign launched by the SNCC. Thousands of SNCC volunteers entered the Magnolia State to work for civil rights. The project held within itself the roots of division. The SNCC disliked the hierarchical, leader-centered approach of the civil rights movement. SNCC leaders thought that the pace of reform was too slow and were prone to demonstrate it publicly.

The assassination of King in April 1968 and the emergence of more radical leaders such as **Malcolm X**, and organizations, such as the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, or movements such as the Black Arts movement, account for the dissolution of the civil rights movement. The movement achieved national and international attention thanks to television and the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. It will ever be identified with him, although it was the work of thousands of African Americans who thought that the time had come for them to change the status quo of American society. As important as King was, the activities of the previous decades and the cold war climate that led presidents to approve reforms if they wanted to reach the White House were also important. The time had come for society to realize that things had to change and that all Americans should have equal rights. It paved the road for subsequent movements and reforms in other areas as well.

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### Civil Rights Organizations and Their Responses to Race Riots

The term *civil rights organizations* refers to the many, largely middle-class, groups that fought for legal, social, political, and economic equality for blacks. Such organizations promoted **integration** and **nonviolence**. There were essentially two movements, though the latter is far more widely known. The first began in 1896 and is deemed to have ended in 1954 and was dominated by the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The second lasted from 1954 to 1968 and besides the prominent NAACP, included the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, and the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**. Although these organizations often worked concurrently in the struggle against **segregation**, their approaches varied, particularly in terms of how they responded to racial violence.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is recognized for its tireless work in dismantling segregation. It advocated and pursued change by means of litigation and lobbying. Unlike later organizations, the NAACP specifically targeted **lynching**. In fact, it was one of the leaders in the crusade against lynching, which was rampant from the 1880s to the 1930s. The NAACP investigated and kept statistics on lynchings and other crimes committed against blacks, publishing their findings in their magazine, *The Crisis*. In 1919, they published Martha Gruening and Helen Boardman's *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1918*, and promoted various anti-lynching bills that were never passed.

In response to black violence, the NAACP maintained a conservative stance, though individuals, such as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, expressed contradictory opinions. On several occasions, Du Bois openly advocated **black self-defense** and criticized blacks for not standing up to **white mobs** during the early twentieth century. The NAACP suspended **Robert F. Williams**, president of a local chapter in Monroe, North Carolina, for advocating self-defense in the 1960s. Delegates at a NAACP convention later supported the use of self-defense. However, collectively and publicly, the NAACP was leery of condoning the use of violence against violence. It routinely avoided dangerous regions such as the Deep South, because opposition and risk of violent retaliation were extremely high. They preferred their own methods of activism and disapproved of the more direct tactics (boycotts, sit-ins, marches, and other demonstrations) favored by the civil rights organizations of the mid-1950s and 1960s.

Essentially, the second **civil rights movement** directed its efforts at eradicating segregation and **Jim Crow** laws, not racial violence. The prominent spokesperson of this movement was **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, head of the SCLC (founded in 1957). The SCLC comprised various church organizations, women's clubs, and college students. Other organizations that collaborated with the SCLC were CORE (founded in 1942) and SNCC (founded in 1960). The strategy for the activists of this movement involved nonviolence and passive resistance. Although blacks continued to be the victims of violence, the leadership of these civil rights organizations did not

publicly advocate self-defense. In fact, the activists went through rigorous training on passive nonresistance as a response to violence.

In 1961, members of CORE and SNCC joined forces to exploit what they knew would be a volatile reaction from racist whites to what were referred to as the **Freedom Rides**. The objective of the Freedom Rides was to send a group of interracial activists to the South using public buses as a test of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized integration on public transportation and facilities. A similar demonstration had occurred in 1947 but the activists had planned to travel only to the upper South; the trip garnered no public attention and ended in relative obscurity. This time, the freedom riders planned to travel to the Deep South, where violence was sure to erupt. The Deep South was notorious for its wanton hostility toward blacks, and the freedom riders knew that the violent attacks against unarmed and nonresistant activists would provoke sympathy and attention, which, ultimately, would advance the struggle against segregation. The older and more conservative segment of the civil rights movement opposed this move, convinced that the Freedom Rides were too risky and too radical.

As predicted, the freedom riders were assailed with violent attacks. In Anniston, Alabama, one bus was firebombed, and the activists were savagely beaten by a **Ku Klux Klan** mob. Activists were also attacked in Montgomery, Alabama, and in the prisons where some of the riders were placed. As freedom riders were attacked and sent to prison, more activists arrived to take their place. Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy** and President **John F. Kennedy** made appeals to the activists to stop the Freedom Rides, but also intervened at critical moments on behalf of the riders. Although the riders did not complete their road journey to the Deep South (some went by plane to reach their destination), they caught the attention of the world, which was aghast at the cruel and brazen displays of violence.

Throughout the remaining years of the movement, civil rights organizations were met with violence, whether or not they invited it. But the activists did not fight back, nor did they promote self-defense. Horrific images of police officers attacking defenseless men, women, and children with clubs, water hoses, and ferocious dogs were emblazoned on television screens and newspapers. The shocking deaths of three activists (one black, and two white) during the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964** created a national crisis.

Paradoxically, violence, and more importantly, the activists' response of nonresistance, played an enormous role in galvanizing public support, forcing federal intervention, and prompting monumental legislation for civil rights and the eradication of segregation. At the same time, the younger activists (from SNCC and CORE), frustrated by the interminable brutality, eventually yielded to the pull of a militant and separatist ideology and embraced self-defense. Although they lauded the violent rebellions in the **ghettos**, the leaders of the civil rights organizations were disheartened.

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Gladys L. Knight

### ***The Clansman* (Dixon, 1905)**

Published in 1905, Thomas Dixon, Jr.'s *The Clansman* was penned as a reaction to what Dixon perceived to be Harriet Beecher Stowe's overly sentimental portrayal of African Americans in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Convinced that American society had been duped by Stowe's romantic rendering of the character of Uncle Tom, Dixon endeavored to "set the record straight" (Snow 1980) according to his own racist beliefs. Subtitled *An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, *The Clansman* offers a romantic rendering of its own. The novel opens with a fated encounter between a beautiful young northern woman and a wounded Confederate soldier slated for execution. Determined to save the soldier's life, the woman, who is the daughter of the radical leader of Congress, Austin Stoneman, appeals to President Abraham Lincoln for clemency. But as Elsie Stoneman endeavors to save the life of one southerner, her father plots the ruination of the entire South.

Dissatisfied with President Lincoln's post-war plans to first enfranchise and then exile African Americans to the tropics, Stoneman uses Lincoln's assassination as a catalyst for his own **Reconstruction** scheme. Under the apparent spell of his mulatto housekeeper, Stoneman works swiftly to try to pass an act that will reduce the conquered provinces of the South to African American rule. When the bill is vetoed by Lincoln's successor, President Andrew Johnson, Stoneman tries to have Johnson impeached. Unsuccessful in his efforts, an ailing Stoneman heads south with the intention of single-handedly destroying the former "slaveholding oligarchy" (Dixon, 192). With the aid of his mulatto henchman, Silas Lynch, Stoneman realizes his vision of African American rule, as former masters and mistresses are forced to submit to the will of those they once enslaved. When the figurative rape of the South culminates in the literal ravishing of an innocent southern belle at the hands of a former slave, the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** are summoned to avenge the girl and protect the maidenhood of the South. Threatened with the loss of his only son to the regime he empowered, Stoneman finally recognizes the error of his ways.

With its inauspicious representations of African Americans and its noble depictions of the Ku Klux Klan, *The Clansman* perpetuated racial discrimination at a formidable rate. Given the social and historical landscapes from which *The Clansman* emanated, Dixon's motives were undoubtedly political. By depicting the African American male as a sadistic brute and spoiler of white women, Dixon hoped to incense the white community. In a discussion of *The Clansman* in his autobiography, *A Man Called White* (1948), **Walter White**, executive secretary of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, examined the impact of Dixon's hate-mongering. During the **Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of**

1906, writes White, the city was a tinder box lit by anti-African American sentiment (8). According to White, this fire was fuelled by the release of **D.W. Griffith's** *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the anti-African American film based on Dixon's *The Clansman*. The fact that the Ku Klux Klan grew from a few thousand members to more than 100,000 within the same year as the film's release reveals just how big a role these works played in the Klan's revival. The myths perpetuated by Dixon's fiction and Griffith's dramatization of the same advocated the continued exploitation and oppression of African Americans. *See also* *The Birth of a Nation* (1915).

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Alex Ambrozic

### Cleaver, Eldridge (1935–1998)

A 1960s **Black Panther Party (BPP)** activist, essayist, and fugitive, Eldridge Cleaver was a symbol of black rebellion and an advocate of revolutionary violence to win power for black Americans. A self-taught writer, he is best known for the publication of his prison essays, *Soul on Ice* (1968). The book is infamous for its admission of his rape of several white women, which he defended as "insurrectionary acts." The philosophical foundation of the **Black Power** movement, the book became a best-seller, its searing social analysis resonating with the rebelliousness of the times.

Leroy Eldridge Cleaver was born on August 31, 1935, in Wabbaseka, Arkansas. His family moved repeatedly; as a teenager he was sent to reform school for petty crimes. In 1957, he was convicted of assault with intent to murder and was sentenced to fourteen years in prison. There, he began reading extensively and was particularly influenced by **Malcolm X**, Frantz Fanon, and Sigmund Freud. He wrote his series of essays and became senior editor of the radical magazine, *Ramparts*, which helped wage a legal campaign on his behalf.



Eldridge Cleaver, 1968. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



He was paroled in 1966 and married Kathleen Neal on December 27, 1967. Cleaver joined the BPP as minister of information, or press agent. Cleaver is responsible for creating the Panthers' famous icon, the photograph in which **Huey Newton** sits in a wicker chair, a rifle in one hand and an African spear in the other.

In 1968, Cleaver ran for U.S. president on the ticket of the Peace and Freedom Party (PFP), founded in 1967 in opposition to the **Vietnam War**. Although a convicted felon, Cleaver carried nearly 37,000 votes. On April 6, 1968, Cleaver and seven other BPP members were involved in a two-hour shoot-out with Oakland, California, police. Although the incident was described as an instance of **police brutality**, Cleaver later revealed in an interview that he had staged the confrontation with police in the wake of the **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, murder.

Cleaver was arrested but jumped bail in November 1968, fleeing to a series of dictatorships offering him protection. Cleaver first lived under guard in Havana, until 1969, when mutual distrust developed between Cleaver and the Cubans. He then moved to Algiers, where his son, Maceo, named for black Cuban general Antonio Maceo, was born. While in North Korea in 1970, his second child, Joju Youngi (Korean for "young heroine"), was born.

His 1978 book, *Soul on Fire*, offers details about the training camp for revolutionaries he organized in Algeria under the protection of that government, with financing from the North Vietnamese government. Cleaver's group also ran a stolen car ring out of Europe. But mutual dissatisfaction between Cleaver's criminal friends and the Algerian government led to a series of gunfights, and Cleaver, unable to control his protégées, fled for his life, hiding in France.

From Paris, Cleaver made several unsuccessful appeals for asylum. In 1973, Kathleen Neal Cleaver returned to the United States to try to arrange her husband's return as a parolee on bail and to raise a defense fund to cover legal fees. In 1974, the French government granted legal residency to the Cleavers. While in France, he underwent a mystical religious experience, deciding to return to the United States to preach the Christian gospel.

In the United States in 1975, he told reporters that he believed he would be treated fairly by the American judicial system. Renouncing his former radicalism, he became a born-again Christian, embracing conservative political causes, including anti-communism, attributing his changed politics to his experiences in communist countries during his years in exile. (On the basis of his religious and political conversions, he was freed on bail, then served only a few months' prison time and community service.)

He began a period of religious experimentation, attempting social transformation through spirituality. He ran Cleaver Crusade for Christ. He developed a plan to combine Christianity and Islam, called *Christlam*. He advocated the religious ideas of Sun Myung Moon; and he later became involved with Mormonism. As a political conservative, he unsuccessfully ran for the 1986 Republican nomination to the U.S. Senate from California.

He and his wife divorced in 1985. During this period, Cleaver became addicted to crack cocaine and endured a series of drug-related arrests. In 1994, after a cocaine-related assault, he kicked his addiction and returned to his belief in Christianity. At the time of his death, Cleaver was working as a diversity consultant for the University of La Verne, California. On May 1, 1998, Cleaver died at the age of 62 in Pomona, California. His family requested that the hospital not reveal the cause of his death. He is interred in Mountain View Cemetery, Altadena, California, and is survived by his daughter, Joju Younghi Cleaver, his son, Maceo Cleaver, and his former wife, Kathleen Neal Cleaver.

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Valerie Begley

## Cleveland (Ohio) Riot of 1966

The Cleveland, Ohio, Riot of 1966 occurred in the Hough, one of the nation's most economically depressed African American communities. The civil unrest began on Monday, July 18, and continued for several days until the National Guard and local police combined forces to bring an end to the protests, looting, burning, and violence. In the wake of the riot, four people were dead, many others were injured, and area businesses and homeowners had suffered more than \$1 million in property damage. Although some written accounts charged that the riot was started by communists and Black Nationalist instigators, many others concluded that deteriorating housing stock, overcrowded living conditions, high unemployment, and the lack of city services, among other things, added to the level of frustration for Hough's African American residents and eventually sparked the violence and fanned the flames of discontent. Hough came to symbolize everything that could go wrong when city leaders failed to address legitimate concerns about discrimination and social ills and the challenges faced by those who dared travel the long and difficult road to rebuilding a riot-torn community.

Numerous government-sponsored and scholarly studies document the problems leading up to the explosion of violence in Hough. On the eve of the



A suspect found with thirteen bottles and the makings for “Molotov cocktails” in his car was arrested during a relatively calm night in the riot-torn Hough Avenue area. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Hough riot, the community had already been identified as an area deserving of special attention based on a number of social indicators. Median family income in Hough, for example, declined from \$4,637 in 1960 to \$4,050 in 1965. The comparison income figures for all families in the city were \$5,935 in 1960 and \$6,895 in 1965. Not only did Hough residents lose ground in the income category, similar losses also occurred in the workforce. In 1965, Hough’s 15 percent unemployment rate was more than double the 7.1 percent rate for the city.

In addition to these disparities, racial segregation in the city’s housing market and schools had long been a concern for government and grass-roots leaders alike. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Cleveland remained one of the nation’s most segregated cities, with the lion’s share of the city’s African American population concentrated on the east side of the city. Even as many barriers to social integration began to fall during the decade of the 1960s, residential **segregation** and overcrowding in Hough became more entrenched. By 1960, the percent of housing reported as crowded in Hough was more than double the rate for the city.

Since the era of the Great Depression, similar concerns had also been expressed about conditions in the public schools serving African American students. When school officials tried to relieve overcrowding in Hough by busing African American students to an underutilized building in Murray

Hill in 1965, residents in the largely Italian-American community responded with what has been referred to as the Murray Hill Riot. Given these and other conditions in Hough, it is not surprising that in the 1960s civil rights advocates and others described the community as one of the nation's worst ghetto communities, in terms of the poverty, vice, crime, and inadequate social services there.

The incident cited most often as the initial spark for the rioting occurred at The Seventy-Niner, a popular white-owned bar located at the intersection of East Seventy-Ninth Street and Hough Avenue, the symbolic heart of the community. Newspaper accounts suggest that an African American woman entered the establishment to solicit donations for the children of a deceased prostitute. A verbal disagreement ensued between the white owner and the woman, who eventually left the establishment. Later that day, an African American man reportedly made a take-out purchase of a bottled alcoholic beverage and then requested a container of ice water. When his request was refused, he also exchanged angry words with the white owner. After he left the bar, a handwritten sign was posted on the establishment's door: "No water for Niggers." When a crowd of angry patrons and neighborhood residents gathered outside the bar, the owners called the police. When the armed policemen arrived, the violence erupted at this point of confrontation.

Looting and burning of area businesses, confrontations among police, firemen, and rock-throwing youths, and sniper fire characterized the first day of rioting. Although the majority of those arrested for participation in the riot were teens, many adults participated in the riot. A twenty-six-year-old African American mother of three was the first person to die in the rioting. Caught in the crossfire between police and snipers, she was shot in the head as she stood in the window of an apartment building.

On July 19, Cleveland's mayor, Ralph Locher, a white male who was accused by many local African Americans of being out of touch with the needs of Hough's African American residents, requested and received backup from Gov. James Rhodes, who ordered the National Guard to report for duty and help restore order in Hough. Between July 19 and July 31, when the last troops were withdrawn, approximately 2,000 guardsmen patrolled Hough with rifles and bayonets, guarding buildings, directing traffic, and riding escort with local police and fire units. In the wake of the rioting, four people were dead, dozens were injured, and widespread property destruction had displaced residents and business owners alike.

Although a grand jury report suggested that communists and radical militants had instigated the riot, scholars, African American community leaders, and reports from undercover policemen agreed that no conclusive evidence was found linking the riot with any organized group. There was abundant evidence, however, suggesting that the rioting could be directly linked to existing social conditions and the benign neglect of Hough at all levels of government; a fact that would be reiterated later in the **Kerner Commission Report**.

In the decades since the rioting, grassroots leaders, long-time Hough resident and Cleveland City Council representative Fannie Louis, and private investors have joined forces to lead efforts to rebuild Hough. Several new housing developments, including one at East Seventy-Ninth Street and Hough Avenue, the flashpoint for the rioting, are partially responsible for the many new housing units built in Hough since 1966. Interestingly enough, the building of many upscale houses and mansions in Hough was made possible by the availability of land due to the property destruction during the rioting and generous tax incentives in recent years.

Even with these new units, Hough is a long way from replacing the number of units. Census information obtained from the Northern Ohio Data and Information Service at Cleveland State University suggests that Hough had 22,954 housing units in 1960, but it only had 8,409 units in 2000. Hough's population in 2000 was 16,294, a far cry from the 1960 population figure of 76,738. Income levels in Hough remain low. In 2000, the median family income in Hough was \$13,630, while the comparable figure for the city of Cleveland was \$30,286. It appears, then, that this once riot-torn community has yet to address some of the issues that led to the rioting two generations ago. *See also* Black Nationalism; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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*Regennia N. Williams*

## **COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program)**

COINTELPRO is an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program, a **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** program designed to investigate, disrupt, and neutralize dissident domestic organizations. COINTELPRO formally started in 1956 to investigate foreign spies operating within the United States Communist Party. By the time COINTELPRO officially ended in 1971, its targets included the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, black civil rights organizations, Puerto Rican nationalists, Native American organizations, and the New Left/antiwar movements. Post-Watergate congressional hearings revealed that the FBI opened more than 500,000 files on more than one million Americans during the COINTELPRO era.

### ***Origins and Development***

From the standpoint of being a domestic program aimed at neutralizing individuals and organizations with views that were unpopular to the United States government, COINTELPRO-like activities effectively began with the FBI's General Intelligence Division (GID). **J. Edgar Hoover** directed the GID from its inception in 1917. In the 1920s, Hoover developed counterintelligence methods to neutralize workers' unions, communists, and anarchists during the Palmer Raids. Subsequently, the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s motivated Congress to pass the Smith Act and the McCarran Internal Security Act, which subjected subversives to formal government scrutiny. By 1956, when COINTELPRO formally began, the legislative landscape as well as public anxieties about the looming, or perceived, threat of communism gave unprecedented power and autonomy to the FBI. In addition, after over thirty years of Hoover's self-described, micromanaging control, the FBI had become somewhat of a monolith, reflecting Hoover's broad interpretation of threats to the state, and clandestine means of neutralizing those who opposed the status quo.

COINTELPRO-CPUSA was the first COINTELPRO initiative. Acting on classified memoranda that revealed the Soviet Union was funneling spies through the U.S. Communist Party, the FBI launched COINTELPRO to disrupt domestic communism. COINTELPRO-CPUSA was the first observed period in which the FBI used dirty tricks. *Operation Hoodwink*, for example, was a dirty trick that involved sending bogus communiqués to mafia families, warning them that the Communist Party's activities on the New York waterfront would marginalize their profits. The mafia retaliated with violence against the Communist Party.

COINTELPRO effectively defused the Communist Party, but continued to operate long after the party's demise. In 1960, COINTELPRO was expanded to include non-Communist Party members who sympathized with the movement. By 1961, individuals advocating Puerto Rican independence and the SWP were COINTELPRO targets. When COINTELPRO became subject to congressional hearings in the mid-1970s, operatives revealed that the FBI established over 2,218 separate COINTELPRO actions between 1956 and 1971. Among the more extensive programs were COINTELPRO-New Left, COINTELPRO-AIM (American Indian Movement), and COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist-Hate Groups.

### ***COINTELPRO Tactics***

COINTELPRO used a variety of tactics to keep watch on and hamper the activities of targeted groups. Eavesdropping involved secret surveillance of organizations and individuals with wiretaps, burglaries, and the surreptitious opening of mail. Post-Watergate congressional hearings revealed that the FBI installed more than 2,000 telephone taps and 700 bugs and opened over 57,000 pieces of mail. Bogus mail included fabricated correspondence between members of targeted groups, or between two or more targeted groups, designed to instigate tensions, occasionally leading to violence

among group members. Black propaganda publications were fabricated, circulated on behalf of targeted organizations or individuals, and designed to misrepresent their positions and discredit them to the public.

Harassment involved repeatedly arresting targeted individuals, on spurious and bogus charges. Often, the goal was not to convict, but to temporarily suppress leadership and tarnish the reputations of the organization. Infiltrators and agent provocateurs were planted within the targeted organizations to either provide information to the FBI about the organizations' operations or to provoke between-group or within-group tensions. When organizations became aware of the presence of infiltrators within the ranks, the agents would bad-jacket bona fide members by accusing them of being FBI informants.

Other tactics included the fabrication of evidence, withholding exculpatory evidence, intimidating witnesses, and other measures designed to prosecute key members of targeted organizations. The FBI has also been implicated in the deaths of key members of targeted organizations through the use of such tactics as inciting shootouts between organizations and local police departments and using infiltrators and provocateurs.

### ***COINTELPRO Operations***

COINTELPRO-SWP was initiated in 1961, largely because of philosophical similarities between the SWP and the Communist Party. However, covert surveillance activities of the SWP were documented at least twenty years before COINTELPRO was initiated, and as many as five years after COINTELPRO officially dissolved. FBI informants operating within the SWP focused on monitoring and neutralizing SWP influence on the **Vietnam War** antiwar movement, the **civil rights movement**, and groups opposing U.S. foreign policy. Efforts were also made through COINTELPRO activities to raise public skepticism of the SWP or, in the FBI's own words, to "alert the public to the fact that the SWP is not just another socialist group but follows the revolutionary principles of Marx, Lenin, and Engels" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 49–50).

The federal civil rights case *Socialist Workers Party v. Attorney General* documented that the FBI amassed 10 million pages of surveillance records on the SWP through illegal means. The FBI paid an estimated 1,600 informants \$1,680,592 and used 20,000 days of wiretaps to undercut the SWP's influence on mainstream Americans.

COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist-Hate Groups began in 1967. According to FBI files, the purpose of the operation was "to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder" (Davis, 44). The original memoranda delivered to twenty-three FBI field offices identified the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, the **Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)**, the **Deacons for Defense**

and Justice, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Nation of Islam as primary targets. Individuals listed included **Stokely Carmichael**, **H. Rap Brown**, **Elijah Muhammad**, and Maxwell Stanford.

Within a year of its inception, COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist-Hate Groups was expanded to forty-one field offices, and the scope, according to the memoranda, was to (1) prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups; (2) prevent the rise of a black messiah; (3) neutralize black nationalist groups before they became violent; (4) prevent groups from achieving respectability among the “responsible Negro community” and the white community; and (5) prevent the groups from recruiting young people (Davis, 44).

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**, in particular, was subjected to an intense and relentless campaign to marginalize his effectiveness as a civil rights leader. The FBI maintained surveillance on Dr. King’s home telephone, SCLC headquarters, and the homes and offices of Dr. King’s advisers. When all attempts to find evidence of Dr. King engaging in illegal or subversive activities failed, the FBI focused their attention on his personal life. According to the FBI’s domestic intelligence division chief, the agency sought to spur a separation between Dr. King and his wife to damage King’s credibility. An FBI official described Dr. King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech as a “demagogic speech,” and called Dr. King, “the most dangerous Negro of the future in this Nation” (U.S. Senate, “Political Abuse,” 1976). FBI files also revealed preparations being made to seek a more acceptable person “to assume the role of leadership of the Negro people when King has been completely discredited” (U.S. Senate, “Political Abuse,” 1976). Although the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** was not included in the first two memoranda, by November 1968, a letter to selected field offices ordered “imaginative and hard-hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP” (Churchill and Vander Wall, 124–125). In January 1969, the program against the BPP was expanded to become one of the most extensive COINTELPRO initiatives on record.

In one of the final COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist-Hate Groups operations, the FBI recruited local police officers to conduct a raid on the Republic of New Africa (RNA) headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi. In the ensuing gun battle, an FBI agent was wounded and a Jackson police officer was killed. Dr. Imari Obadele, RNA president, was arrested and detained in federal prison for five years.

COINTELPRO-New Left, started in October 1968 largely in response to the antiwar movement among young Americans and a rise in student demonstrations across the United States. According to FBI memoranda, the purpose of COINTELPRO-New Left was to “expose, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize” (Churchill and Vander Wall, 165–166), the activities of New Left organizations, their leadership, and supporters. Under COINTELPRO-New Left, police brutality against student demonstrations was justified. Specific efforts were initiated to increase campus administrators’ tolerance and acceptance of student injuries resulting from demonstrations, riots, and other confrontations with police officers.

According to COINTELPRO-New Left files, the FBI initiated formal tactics designed to depict the New Left movement as sexually promiscuous youth



with proclivities for substance abuse. Tactics included having members arrested on drug charges and using cartoons, photographs, and anonymous letters to mock the New Left agenda.

### ***The Nominal End of COINTELPRO***

On March 8, 1971, a group called the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI broke into a small FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, and stole hundreds of classified documents. The stolen documents detailed the widespread surveillance of thousands of individuals and organizations. The Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI photocopied the files and circulated them to legislators and the media. By April 1971, Sen. Edward Kennedy called for Hoover's resignation, which led to Hoover dismantling COINTELPRO amid enormous public scrutiny.

Carl Stern, an NBC newsperson, noticed the word "COINTELPRO" at the top of one of the documents, but did not find out the meaning until after Hoover died in 1972. Between 1973 and 1976, Stern used the Freedom of Information Act to sue the FBI, an effort that resulted in the disclosure of COINTELPRO operations.

The mid-1970s post-Watergate congressional hearings further exposed the abuses of the COINTELPRO period. The testimony led President Jimmy Carter to issue an Executive Order to tighten investigative guidelines and protect civil liberties. However, in the 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan re-ignited the cold war, he loosened post-Watergate restrictions on the FBI and pardoned former bureau officials convicted of COINTELPRO-related crimes. *See also* Black Nationalism; Police Brutality.

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## Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a pacifist civil rights organization, gave invaluable support to the **civil rights movement** via its strategies of sit-ins, jail-ins, and **Freedom Rides**. This interracial group was founded in 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, as the Committee of Racial Equality. Funded by individual memberships and mail-ins, it was co-led by James L. Farmer, Jr. (black), and George Houser (white). Farmer and Houser emerged from the radical teachings of A.J. Muse, chief executive of the Fellowship of Recollection (FOR), a Christian pacifist group that applied nonviolent direct action to solve racial conflict. Bayard Rustin, the FOR youth secretary, provided advice to these founders. Using the strategy of Indian pacifist Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, the group first applied nonviolent direct action in 1942 to Chicago's City Roller Rink that had claimed private status to exclude Negroes. In 1943, Farmer became the first national chairman. Under his leadership, sit-ins and picket lines enabled CORE to desegregate public facilities in the North during the 1940s.

In 1947, CORE turned its attention to the South, specifically to Virginia and North Carolina, to test the U.S. Supreme Court's **desegregation** ruling



CORE picketers in New York City, protesting slum housing. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

in interstate transportation. When four of sixteen field members were arrested in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, CORE received national attention. Then, in 1955 during the Montgomery bus boycott, CORE provided the philosophical commitment to nonviolent action when the South was reluctant to apply it and too afraid to integrate to fight against racial injustice. In 1960, when CORE provided the stimulus for action after four non-CORE college students took part in a sit-in at a Greensboro, North Carolina, lunch counter, the organization became nationally recognized as a civil rights organization. It organized sit-ins in various southern states and incorporated the technique called *jail in*, which means serving the jail term for sit-ins rather than paying the bail.

CORE achieved a major spotlight in the civil rights movement during James Farmer's national directorship, which began on February 1, 1961. After the Supreme Court decision in the *Boynton v. Virginia* case extended integration to terminal accommodations in interstate travel, Farmer organized the Freedom Ride of 1961. In this momentous event, Farmer and twelve others rode public transportation throughout the South, challenging segregation in interstate accommodations. **White mob** violence and arrests forced a temporary halt to the Freedom Ride, but the plan resumed when CORE formed a coalition with the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**. With a new objective—to fill Mississippi's jails—this powerful alliance rode to Jackson, Mississippi, where its members were arrested for using white facilities. Farmer's incarceration brought national attention to CORE, more monetary donations, and more volunteer freedom riders. Despite jail sentences and expensive legal fees for the freedom riders, CORE succeeded in its efforts when the Interstate Commerce Commission abolished segregation in interstate transportation on September 22, 1961.

CORE's next major civil rights effort was to secure voter registration for southern blacks, a project that took precedence over others in the southern racial protest movement. A prime participant in President **John F. Kennedy's** Voter Education Project (VEP), CORE went to South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana to educate blacks about the voting process. In South Carolina, CORE met with little resistance; however, in Mississippi and in Louisiana, its members encountered recalcitrant white registrars, uncooperative law enforcement officials, angry white citizens, and severely oppressed and frightened Negroes. Oftentimes, the number of persons that CORE trained to vote far exceeded the number who actually went to the polls. Despite the setbacks, CORE is credited with assisting thousands in the voting process.

Before the Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964, in which three of its members—James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—were murdered, CORE had begun to shift its attention back to racial discrimination in the North. To maintain CORE's credibility as a black protest organization, black militants discouraged white leadership in the Northern chapters, and black militant members in these chapters challenged CORE's ideologies and strategies. When Roy Innis replaced James Farmer as national

director in 1968, Innis denied white membership and advocated black separatism. He even favored separate schools rather than **desegregation**. In recent years, CORE has focused on capitalism and the economic advancement of African Americans.

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Rita B. Dandridge

### Connor, T. Eugene "Bull" (1897–1973)

Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor was the public safety commissioner of Birmingham, Alabama, during the period of major civil rights demonstrations in the city and was a staunch proponent of racial **segregation** in the South. Connor gained national attention through the violent means of control he used on African American activists in the 1960s and he thus emerged as a key adversary of prominent civil rights leader **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Connor had served for years in the position of commissioner of public safety until his resignation under pressure in 1953. He returned to the post in 1956 with the intention of thwarting any attempts at racial integration in Birmingham. The returning public safety commissioner used his power to ensure segregation through policies that involved fear and intimidation. When white moderates in the city were attempting to compromise with black protestors on issues such as **integration** of the water fountains and bathroom facilities, Connor quickly intervened by threatening to prosecute the store owners.

In 1961, Connor gained national fame when a group of student volunteers set out to challenge the segregationist policies of the South by using public transportation from Washington, D.C., through several southern states. Although public transportation was legally integrated, many parts of the South refused to recognize the law. The students, known as the freedom riders, were met with violent physical attacks in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Anniston, Alabama, before other buses were scheduled to arrive in Birmingham. Connor knew the group was approaching the city and gave his police force verbal permission to visit their mothers for a short fifteen-minute break under the guise of a nice gesture on Mother's Day. It was during this break that the riders entered town and, without any available police for protection, were seriously assaulted by the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and others. When a new group of riders returned to Birmingham, Connor had his officers take control of the bus and leave the students at the Tennessee state line.

Connor had dreams of becoming the mayor of Birmingham and civil rights leaders, realizing their hopes for racial integration would be dashed if

Connor was elected, staged large-scale demonstrations in the city in 1963. During a massive movement referred to as the Birmingham Campaign, led by the president of the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, Martin Luther King, Jr., the mayoral election took place in the city. In April 1963, Connor lost the election in a runoff to Albert Boutwell, a person identified by civil rights groups as being a moderate segregationist, but still a superior choice to the avowed racist public safety commissioner. Connor refused to relinquish his office, stating he was appointed as Birmingham's police commissioner until 1965. Many African Americans were arrested during the month of April, including King, who was placed in jail in solitary confinement and allowed little contact with the outside world. It was during this period that King composed his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"; this famous work mentioned Connor by name. The following month, a massive protest led by a group that consisted of young people from ages six to sixteen, erupted in the city; King dubbed this controversial move "D-Day." Connor had the young protestors arrested and jailed in unsanitary conditions. On the following day, known as "Double D-Day," another large demonstration by more youth occurred in the city. Although Connor had initially responded with nonviolent police activity, he relinquished this tactic and instead gave defiant orders for his police officers and firefighters to take charge, and police dogs and high-pressure water hoses were used on the children. Reporters were on hand to record scenes that would come to bother many Americans, including President **John F. Kennedy**. Especially troubling were photographs showing three male police officers pinning down a female protestor and another picture of a dog leaping at a young boy's throat. These visual images would bring Connor worldwide notoriety.

In late May 1963, the Supreme Court of Alabama ruled that Boutwell and his new cabinet would assume legitimate power in Birmingham. Connor was then forced to give up his post as public safety commissioner. He was guaranteed a position on the state public service commission in return for refraining from any political office, a provision to which he agreed.

When Dr. King's Birmingham Campaign ended, many of the African American demonstrators' demands were accepted by city officials. President John F. Kennedy remarked that the civil rights movement owed a debt to Bull Connor because the concessions made in Birmingham were due in part to the media coverage of Connor's brutal tactics against the civil rights protestors. The civil rights bill supported by Kennedy that promoted equality among the races, was enacted under the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson and the Birmingham Campaign is often cited as a major influence on the bill's passage. *See also* Freedom Rides.

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William Roger. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: To the Mountaintop*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

*Leonard A. Steverson*

### **Conyers, John, Jr. (1929– )**

John Conyers is a long-serving African American congressman from Michigan who has taken a leading legislative role in the fight against violence directed at African Americans and other minorities.

Conyers was born on May 16, 1929, and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He served as a member of the Michigan National Guard from 1948 to 1952. He then joined the U.S. Army and served in the Korean War. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1957 and juris doctor's degree in 1958 from Wayne State University. He worked as an assistant to U.S. Representative John Dingell from 1958 to 1961. From 1961 to 1963, he worked for the Michigan Workmen's Compensation Department. In 1964, Conyers won election as a Democrat as representative for the Fourteenth Congressional District in Michigan. The Fourteenth District then consisted of large parts of Detroit and Dearborn, as well as all of Highland Park and Hamtramck. Due to the congressional redistricting of 2000, the district also now includes Allen Park, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile Township, Riverview, Southgate, and Trenton. Nonetheless, Conyers has maintained his seat with landslide victories to become the second most senior member in the U.S. House of Representatives.

As a congressman, Conyers helped found the Congressional Black Caucus in 1969. He became the first black to chair the House Judiciary Committee and is now the ranking Democrat on the committee. He has continuously worked for social justice by sponsoring the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and its reauthorization in 2001 and the Reparations Study Bills. He also took a leading role in enacting the Alcohol Warning Label Act of 1988 and the **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Holiday Act of 1983. He is the founder and chairman of the Congressional Universal Health Care Task Force.

In May 2005, he released *What Went Wrong in Ohio*, an examination of voting irregularities in Ohio during the 2004 presidential election. Later that year, he also released *The Constitution in Crisis*, which offered evidence that the George W. Bush administration misconstrued intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Conyers ran for mayor of Detroit in 1989 and 1993 and lost both times. He is married to the former Monica Esters, who was elected as a Detroit city council member in 2004. The couple has two sons, John III and Carl Edward.

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*Aaron Peron Ogletree*

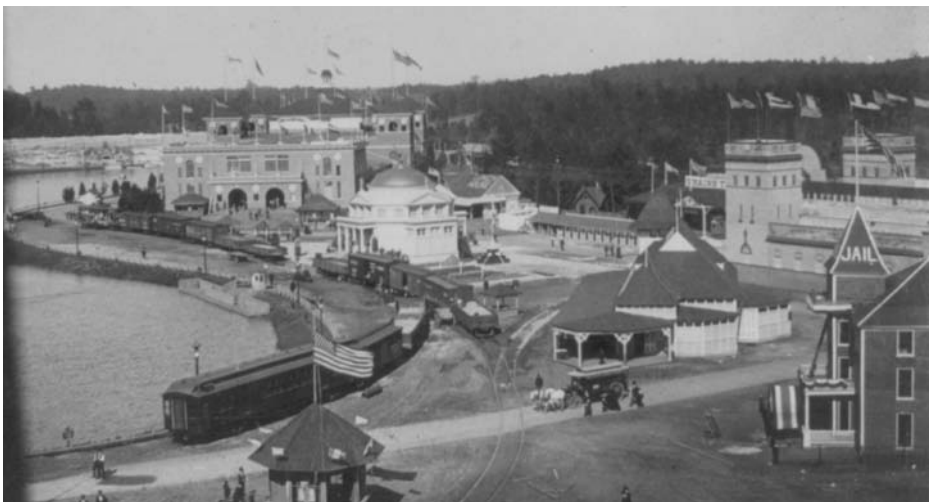
**CORE.** See Congress of Racial Equality

### The Cotton States and International Exposition (Atlanta, 1895)

Like other southern expositions of the **Progressive era**, the Cotton States and International Exposition, held in Atlanta, Georgia, from September 18 through December 31, 1895, showcased for the nation the economic, political, social, and racial aspirations of the New South. But Atlanta was the first fair, north or south, to provide a large space for black exhibitors. The chief of the Negro department, the African American educator and writer I. Garland Penn, predicted historians would celebrate the black side of the exposition. From this separate sphere, Penn and other black leaders proclaimed the birth of the new Negro movement.

Staged only two years after the massive world's fair in Chicago, the Atlanta exposition lured impressive displays from across the Americas. Atlanta proudly envisioned itself as the modern hub for transporting cotton and industrial goods between a North and South poised to forget past tensions. Now, thirty years after the Civil War, the North sent trainloads of symbols, including icons such as the Liberty Bell, to demonstrate its acceptance of the South back into the national family. In return, Atlanta built the Negro Building as a promise of new racial enlightenment.

White architects of the New South understood the so-called Negro problem as best resolved on social Darwinist terms. Only through white guidance, they imagined, would blacks become civilized full citizens, gradually earning a place at the political and social table by working their way up the economic ladder. It was in this spirit of paternalistic, history-denying civic boosterism that the nation cheered the exposition's opening day speech delivered by Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute's **Booker T. Washington**.



View of Cotton States Exposition, looking northeast from the Phoenix Wheel, circa 1895. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Seven African Americans in the Hampton Institute exhibit area, circa 1895. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

For black leaders, the exposition launched the New Negro, a phrase used repeatedly throughout 1895 to describe a willingness to forego political agitation and instead push for material advancement framed within a spirit of Christian racial uplift. The process began in 1894 when a southern delegation went to Washington, D.C., seeking federal funding for the exposition. After white delegates spoke at length, the three black representatives, including Booker T. Washington, pled for the chance to exhibit black progress. These appeals led to Atlanta receiving an appropriation of \$200,000. Within a year, black contractors and laborers built the massive Negro Building, soon to be filled with displays showing black advancements in education, manufacturing, and agriculture, as well as both African and African American art. Yet, in keeping with the ethos of the New Negro, nowhere in the building, save W.C. Hill's life-size sculpture of a black man in broken chains, could one find reference to slavery or racial injustice.

On the opening day of the exposition, the segregated audience heard Washington deliver the speech that lifted him to national prominence. Washington's speech represented the central philosophy of the New Negro by proposing that economic development, Christian character, and demonstrations of intelligence through displays of Victorian "civilized" taste, rather than legislation, would earn social equality for blacks. Whites were pleased to hear Washington announce that the races could remain "as separate as the fingers" in all things social. The speech typifies Washington's



accommodationist belief that change would occur, in part, through success on white aesthetic signs of progress (see **Accommodationism**). For this reason, Washington encouraged the audience to see the books and paintings in the Negro Building. He also proclaimed, “there is as much dignity in tilling a field as writing a poem” (Washington, 220), and in the short term it was more important “to earn a dollar in factory” than “to spend a dollar in an opera house” (Washington, 220). White audiences missed the artful Washington making the point that poetry and opera, tropes of white intelligence, were indeed attainable for blacks. “Cast down your buckets” (Washington, 220) became the famous phrase used to assure white business leaders, who were witnessing increasing strikes and waves of European immigrants, that black workers were neither confrontational nor unfamiliar. Only at the close of the speech did Washington offer a veiled threat by reminding whites of the many costs incurred by failing to offer assistance.

The historical moment in which Washington delivered his speech may be described as an eerie calm at the eye of the storm. On the eve of the exposition, years of economic depression eased. Americans waited to see who would fill the power vacuum in the black community after the recent death of Frederick Douglass, whose sculpted image looked down from atop the Negro Building. Violent race riots in New Orleans had stopped only weeks before the exposition opened. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision loomed on the horizon. On the day of Washington’s speech, Spain sent troops into Cuba, the prologue to the Spanish-American War. The active resistance of **W.E.B. Du Bois** and the Negro Academy remained unrealized. In this moment of forgiveness and relative peace, black leaders believed white leadership’s promises.

Washington’s speech continues to be a lightning rod for discussions concerning race and the South during the post-**Reconstruction** period. In its time, it seemed to strike all the right notes. Even Du Bois praised it. Most Americans saw Washington attempting, in his idealistic “dignity of labor” theme, to raise the floor of opportunity for all poor workers.

Soon detractors saw Washington’s speech as a Faustian deal. Renamed the “Atlanta Compromise” speech, critics attacked Washington’s willingness to deal away the very basis of racial justice by forgiving a history of enslavement, terror, and violence. In the words of historian Louis Harlan, “Washington stood on its head the whole theory of abolition and Reconstruction” (219).

Seen in context, Washington and other black leaders at the Cotton States and International Exposition introduced the nation to the New Negro movement and its plan for social change. During the exposition, the greatest gathering of black leaders and organizations to date met in Atlanta to define goals. These meetings included national church gatherings, the formation of the National Medical Association, a national convention of black journalists, a black women’s congress, and a three-day congress on Africa. Those attending heard from prominent black men and women such as **T. Thomas Fortune**, Kelly Miller, and Fannie Barrier Williams. The center of much of this activity was the Negro Building. It hosted everyone from an organization of ex-slaves to Harvard University’s President Charles W. Eliot and U.S. President Grover Cleveland. The New Negro, with Washington at its center, believed direct struggle to be futile and instead crafted subtle forms of

indirect resistance. Tactics included political networking, covert funding of political issues, influencing the press, and using new media and celebrity. The hopes of this initial New Negro movement faded and were reborn with an active resistance philosophy in 1920s Harlem.

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*Michael Bieze*

**Counter Intelligence Program.** See COINTELPRO

### *The Crisis*

*The Crisis*, founded by **W.E.B. Du Bois** in 1910, is the official magazine of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Particularly during its early years, *The Crisis* was one of the most significant, popular, and bold newspapers of its time. In addition to an array of race-related topics, *The Crisis* regularly reported on the atrocities committed against blacks, garnering public attention and sympathy. Contrast this with the vast majority of white publications that vilified blacks, perpetuated antagonistic and racist attitudes, and, in some cases, spurred violence against them. For this reason, *The Crisis* played a pivotal role in combating **racial stereotypes** and disinformation, and in exposing lawlessness.

*The Crisis* meticulously chronicled the numerous incidences of violence against blacks and other minorities. It also provided a way for blacks to freely vent their opinions, for to do so in public risked death. One reader wrote in, disgruntled that a black person can be lynched for eating in a white-only restaurant but is powerless to do anything when a white person enters a black-only establishment (Du Bois, 8). *The Crisis* also reported on the **lynching** of two Italians in Florida. It explained how the Italian government was powerless to fight back, since the Italians were naturalized citizens. *The Crisis* noted that “the inalienable right of every free American citizen to be lynched without tiresome investigation and penalties is one which the families of the lately deceased doubtless deeply appreciate” (Du Bois, 11).

*The Crisis* played a significant role in keeping violence against blacks in front of the public. In the December 1910 issue, *The Crisis* reviewed the number of lynchings that had occurred from 1885 to 1910. In 1885, whites lynched 78 black men. The greatest number of lynchings (155) occurred in 1893. In 1910, there were fifty reported lynchings. In the December 1914 issue, *The Crisis* gave brief descriptions of nine lynchings. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a black man was lynched for arguing with whites. In Percy, Illinois, an Italian man was lynched for asking for a cigarette. In Aberdeen, Mississippi, an eighteen-year-old was lynched for allegedly assaulting a white woman.

Another black man was convicted of murdering a white woman. A mob apprehended him while he was in custody and lynched him. These examples typified what happened to blacks when they violated **racial etiquette**.

In the May 1959 issue, John A. Morsell wrote an article entitled "States' Rights and States' Wrongs." In this article, Morsell reviewed the history of lynching. He explained how the incidences of lynchings significantly dropped in the 1920s. He pointed to two major reasons why—publicity and enforcement. Much of the violence against blacks that occurred between slavery times and the mid-twentieth century continued unabated and even escalated because the government did not uphold its own laws or keep civil order. Historically, intervention by state or federal government often precipitated the petering out of episodes of violence. For example, military rule in the southern states during **Reconstruction** effectively restrained white mobs and vigilante groups.

Long-standing racist stereotypes were behind many of the acts of violence against blacks. Beginning with slavery, many whites believed and taught that blacks were inferior, incapable of learning, immoral, and prone to criminal activity. Ideas such as these were what enabled and justified hostility toward blacks. *The Crisis* challenged these stereotypes by publishing articles about the many accomplishments made by ordinary, as well as eminent men and women. Every publication included advertisements by successful black-owned businesses, pictures and articles of African chiefs, and uplifting essays on racial pride. The newspaper also publicized employment and educational opportunities.

*The Crisis* closely followed the progress of the **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s and the NAACP's involvement, and the new wave of violence that emerged within black urban **ghettos**. In the August 1964 issue, *The Crisis* addressed the race riots that occurred in Harlem, New York. Blacks rioted after a police officer shot a fifteen-year-old girl. The editor of the newspaper went "on record as strongly opposing looting, vandalism, or any type of criminal activities and urged the cooperation and support of local leaders toward the elimination of this type of activity which damages both the community and the civil rights movement" (Wilkins, 469). *The Crisis* also reported that Rev. Richard A. Hildebrand, president of the New York branch of the NAACP, had spoken out against both the **police brutality** that provoked the riot and the violent backlash incited by blacks. Rev. Hildebrand believed that the "senseless slaying" of the young girl "merely triggered long smouldering and justified resentments stemming from gross neglect of the needs of the people imprisoned in the ghettos" (Wilkins, 470). The April 1968 issue also covered the assassination of **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and the ensuing riots.

*The Crisis* was instrumental in helping to effectuate positive change within the black community and within the country at large. In documenting racial aggression, *The Crisis* played a key role in the struggle against violence. Through its promotion of racial pride and self-empowerment, it further helped blacks to transcend the crippling effects of **racism**, discrimination, and violence. See also Press Coverage of Racial Violence; Press Instigation of Racial Violence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*



# D

## Dallas (Texas) Disturbance of 1973

The Dallas Disturbance was an expression of community anger over the murder of a 12-year-old Mexican-American boy by a Dallas police officer. On the night of July 24, Officer Darrell Cain and his partner witnessed several boys vandalizing a soda machine. Although the suspects fled, Cain thought he recognized two of the boys as David and Santos Rodriguez. The officers drove to the Rodriguez home, woke the brothers, arrested them, then placed them in their squad car. In an attempt to elicit a confession, Cain began a game of Russian roulette with Santos. Using his .357-caliber revolver, he demanded that Santos confess. Santos refused, so Cain pulled the trigger. The first time nothing happened, but on the second pull of the trigger the gun discharged, killing Santos instantly.

The police department suspended Cain and charged him with murder, but he posted bond and was released. On July 26, Dallas residents learned that fingerprints taken from the soda machine did not match the Rodriguez brothers. This prompted community leaders to plan a march to decry police violence. On July 28, the protest commenced with nearly 2,000 Mexican-Americans and blacks marching through downtown Dallas. When one woman told the crowd the police had killed her son (a claim that was later proven false), the marchers turned on the police who were present. The crowd beat the officers and dispersed them, burned two police motorcycles, and looted more than forty stores along Main Street. After forty-five minutes of rioting, police reinforcements restored order.

Despite the large number of rioters, and the use of police officers to end the riot, only a handful of people were injured. In November, Darrell Cain was found guilty of murder and sentenced to five years in jail. This incident stands as the most violent racial uprising in Dallas history. *See also* Police Brutality.

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*Brian D. Behnken*

## Dayton (Ohio) Riot of 1966

The murder of Lester Mitchell, a thirty-nine-year-old African American who was sweeping the sidewalk in front of his home in the early morning hours of September 1, 1966, precipitated the first race riot in the history of Dayton, Ohio.

The riot lasted for twenty-four hours. Mitchell, a resident of the west side of Dayton, an area in which 96 percent of Dayton's people of color lived, was the victim of a drive-by shooting. The shotgun blasts that killed him came from a pickup truck that carried three white men. As word spread, the already existing racial tensions erupted into violence. Looting, property damage, and injury resulted. Police officers, 225 strong, armed with guns and bayonets, blockaded West Dayton, although they were ordered not to engage the rioters. Some of the rioters could not be contained and spilled into the downtown area causing more property damage. Mayor Dave Hill imposed a curfew for everyone under fifteen years of age, closed liquor stores and bars, and requested National Guard support, which Gov. James Rhodes honored by deploying 1,000 soldiers to Dayton.

The riot received national attention because President Lyndon B. Johnson was scheduled to speak the following weekend in Dayton at a Labor Day ceremony. The riot resulted in 1 death, 30 injuries, and 130 arrests. After the riot, residents of the ghetto cited, in addition to Mitchell's murder, frustration with poor housing, high unemployment, and a lack of communication with city leaders as causes.

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*Claudia Matherly Stolz*

## Deacons for Defense and Justice

The Deacons for Defense and Justice were an armed African American group formed in Louisiana in 1964 to protect civil rights workers from the violence of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**.

The Deacons for Defense and Justice began in Jonesboro, Louisiana, in 1964 as a response to the growing crisis of white terrorism arising from the lack of local enforcement of the **Civil Rights Act of 1957**, **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, and the Constitution. As part of the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**, the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** sent volunteers to Jonesboro. White members of the community felt that CORE volunteers would stir up trouble and threaten the system of white supremacy that was entrenched in the community. A mill worker and Korean War veteran, Ernest "Chilly Willy" Thomas, gathered a small group of men to act as armed security outside CORE's Freedom House. A high school teacher, Fred Kilpatrick, convinced the police to let him set up a volunteer black police force.

Upset by CORE's protest over the segregated pool and library in Jonesboro (see **Segregation**), the Ku Klux Klan, aided by police, drove a fifty-car caravan through the black community. After this incident, Kilpatrick and Thomas adopted a formal structure for community defense and created the Deacons for Defense and Justice. After this, the number of protesters grew, and by December 1964 Jonesboro desegregated the library. In retaliation, the Klan burned crosses. In response, the Deacons issued a leaflet, left in white homes by black domestic workers, stating that anyone burning crosses in the black community would be killed.

By 1966, the Deacons had branches in twenty-one communities in the South. They were unsuccessful in creating branches in the North and the West. Even though they were armed, the Deacons for Defense and Justice were not a militant group that advocated violence like the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**. The Deacons were seen more as the security arm of the **non-violence** movement. They were made up of a lot of Black war veterans and their purpose was to protect civil rights leaders and activists from violence and to act as a deterrent to the Klan. By 1968, they had faded out of existence. *See also* Freedom Rides; Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964.

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*Catherine Anyaso*

### **Democratic National Convention of 1968, Violence at**

The riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention were organized and led by antiwar protestors, a contemporary movement composed mostly of white middle-class college students (see **Antiwar Protests**). Although important civil rights figures such as **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, had indicated their opposition to the **Vietnam War**, many civil rights leaders were more concerned with issues at home rather than across the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, the violence that accompanied the 1968 Democratic National Convention signaled that violent protest, as well as violent repression of protest, had become part of the national landscape. In addition, the court cases resulting from the Democratic National Convention disorders indicated that state and national political leaders would continue to use the judicial system to attempt to punish protest leaders.

The strong candidacy of Sen. Eugene McCarthy for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1968, as well as the remaining support for the ideas espoused by the recently assassinated **Robert F. Kennedy**, both of whom urged withdrawal from the Vietnam War, suggested the potential for conflict with more traditional politicians at the August 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. Nevertheless, although antiwar protest organizers promised demonstrations and indicated that they would use the city parks for their demonstrations and as places to sleep, few observers anticipated the extraordinary demonstrations and accompanying police riot





Policeman sprays mace at a crowd of anti-war demonstrators during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, 1968. AP Images.

outside the convention hall. Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley, Sr. requested more than 5,000 national guardsmen, in addition to the thousands of Chicago police officers, because of the promises of demonstrations. The mix of demonstrators, guardsmen, and police resulted in levels of violence that no other national political convention experienced in the twentieth century. Civil rights leaders such as **Jesse Jackson** had warned Mayor Daley that race issues were both divisive and incendiary, but it was the antiwar movement, dominated by white middle-class youth, that disrupted the cyclical portrayal of democracy in action at national political conventions.

Protest organizers anticipated as many as 100,000 participants; media estimates suggested no more than 15,000 actually came to Chicago. The city refused to allow the protestors to sleep in city parks, and used tear gas on them when they attempted to do so. The city also refused any permits for demonstrations outside the convention hall. Although the number of protestors was far less than predicted, the protests echoed one well-known chant, "The whole world is watching," which illustrated the resolute power of the Democratic Party machinery that controlled the primaries and elections in many parts of the nation. As the protest increased, the National Guard and police often responded by attacking groups of young men and women who were not protesting but walking through the streets of Chicago. Although often provoked during actual protests, the National Guard and police showed little or no restraint in responding to the sight of possible protestors. Inside

the convention hall, Mayor Daley refused to acknowledge statements by convention delegates that the streets were filled with such violence, and he pushed the proceedings of the convention to the nomination of front-runner Hubert H. Humphrey, as the Democratic Party nominee.

In September 1969, eight of the organizers were brought to trial for conspiracy to incite a riot. The eight defendants challenged the legal system in multiple ways, such as attempting to bring a birthday cake for one defendant into the courtroom, while the traditionalist judge imposed unprecedented legal and physical restraints, including ordering that one defendant, **Black Panther Party (BPP)** member Bobby Seale, be bound and gagged during parts of the trial because of his verbal protests. Eventually, the judge declared a mistrial for Bobby Seale but sentenced him to four years in jail for contempt of court. After Seale's mistrial, the group that had been known as the Chicago Eight became the Chicago Seven. In February 1970, the jury ruled that the seven had not conspired to incite a riot, but five of them had individually incited a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. After two weeks in jail the seven were released on bond.

The demonstrations, police and political response, and trial had more of an impact on the primary and convention process than on any other aspect of the protests and 1968 convention. Both the Democrats and the Republicans focused on opening the primaries and the convention to broader representation; some commentators have suggested that even the campaign finance laws were in part responses to the events during and after the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Although the calls by protestors for complete transparency and political participation have not been met, their protests evidenced some changes in the U.S. political processes. *See also* Antiwar Protests.

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*Philo Hutcheson*

## Desegregation

Desegregation is the legal process of ending racial **segregation** in public facilities and institutions. As a legal process, desegregation predates the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregation in public schools and other areas. Local efforts to desegregate public facilities have been recorded as early as the eighteenth century. For example, in 1787, black parents petitioned the Massachusetts state legislature to allow their children to enroll in local public schools. These Bostonians made their case on the grounds that their young were being denied access to the very school that they, like their fellow white citizens, shared the tax burden of supporting. The request, although denied, was an augur of future struggles to desegregate public facilities in the United States and to extend the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the law to all American citizens.

In 1865, Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau. A primary mission



Troops in front of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

of the Freedmen's Bureau was to help newly freed slaves to become self-sufficient in all areas of American life. The establishment of the Freedman's Bureau was followed by the ratification of the **Fourteenth Amendment** in 1868. This amendment guarantees American citizenship and equal protection of the law to all persons born or naturalized in the United States; it is also the legal cornerstone of all desegregation policies, including those established to abolish segregation in public school systems, the armed forces, the workplace, and even in penitentiaries.

The desegregation of previously segregated public facilities presupposes some degree of their **integration**. Integration includes goals such as eradicating barriers to associations, creating equal opportunity for all, and forging an American culture that draws on diverse traditions. However, as a remedy primarily designed to abolish legal, or *de jure*, discrimination, desegregation policy cannot guarantee the conditions to facilitate the comparatively ambitious social goal of integration. Thus, many attempts to integrate public facilities have been met with resistance and the history of racial desegregation in the United States is one marked by violence. Violent responses to racial desegregation have been most observable in schools and the workplace; in contrast, measures to desegregate the armed forces and the penal system have been met with more favorable results.

### ***Racial Desegregation in the Armed Forces***

One of the first federal acts to facilitate the desegregation of an American public institution occurred in 1862 when Congress passed a law permitting

black men to enlist in the Union Army during the Civil War. Black leaders, such as Martin Delaney and Frederick Douglass, actively recruited black men for the military, and nearly 180,000 free black men and escaped slaves volunteered for service. However, these volunteers encountered resistance from white servicemen, who were more concerned about maintaining the Union than freeing slaves, and ambivalence from Congress, who left it up to the president to determine the duties of black volunteers. President Lincoln decided that black servicemen were to be used only as laborers and not as soldiers. Thus, although black volunteers desegregated the armed forces in the technical sense, they were confined to drudgery, a form of *de facto* segregation, and were routinely subjected to violence by their white Union comrades.

The U.S. armed forces remained largely segregated in this manner through the end of World War II. Opposition to the desegregation of the military came largely from representatives of many of the southern states. For instance, in May 1948, Sen. Richard B. Russell a democrat from Georgia, attached an amendment to the selective services bill then being debated in Congress. This proposed attachment, which would have allowed new enlistees in the military the choice of serving in segregated units, was defeated both in committee in 1948, and once again in 1950, when the now Selective Services Law came up for reauthorization.

In July 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which authorized the desegregation of the armed forces. An executive order grants the president authority to bypass Congress to establish federal policy. By exercising his executive prerogative in issuing Executive Order 9981, President Truman avoided congressional opposition to his plan to desegregate the armed forces. The executive order, though, had a limited immediate impact on changing the composition of the U.S. military. However, during the Korean War, the American-led United Nations forces were met with staggering losses among U.S. white units and ground commanders were compelled to accept black replacements. Black soldiers ably executed their responsibilities and, following the war, the Army High Command made the formal decision to desegregate the military in 1951, exactly three years to the day after Truman had issued Executive Order 9981. According to military historian Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., for the most part, the desegregation of the armed forces resulted in “no increase in racial incidents, no breakdown of discipline, no uprising against integration by white soldiers or surrounding white communities, no backlash from segregationists in Congress, or major public denunciations of the new policy” (MacGregor 1981).

Since the 1950s, the military has assumed leadership in desegregation and integration efforts in the United States. In 2003, for instance, twenty-nine former high-ranking officers and civilian leaders of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, including military-academy superintendents, former secretaries of defense, and current and former members of the U.S. Senate, signed a Military Amicus Brief that urged affirmative action in higher education. The brief, filed during the landmark *Grutter v. Bollinger* case in which the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action at the University of

Michigan, argued that higher education was the source of entry-level military officers. According to former Under Secretary of the U.S. Army Joe Reeder, Signer and Co-Counsel of the Military Amicus Brief, “to lead our country’s racially diverse enlisted men and women, our nation’s fighting force requires a diverse officer corps: affirmative action policies have helped our military build a top-quality officer corps that reflects America’s diversity” (Greenberg Traurig 2003).

### ***Desegregation and School Violence***

In 1954, the Supreme Court rendered the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* to abolish segregation in public schools. *Brown* was sweeping in its mandate to reshape the racial landscape of American education and went beyond Executive Order 9981 to serve as a basis for the desegregation of other public facilities in the United States as well. The Supreme Court, though, did not provide clear guidelines to end *de jure* public school segregation, as captured in the imprecision of its order to proceed in the dismantling of segregated schools “with all deliberate speed” (Anti-Defamation League 2004). Thus, little dismantling of *de jure* segregation in public schools occurred during the decade after *Brown*.

Once black students finally began to desegregate previously all-white schools, they were often met with resistance. For example, in 1957, Gov. Orval Faubus mobilized troops from the Arkansas National Guard to prevent nine black students, known as the Little Rock Nine, from attending the previously all-white Little Rock Central High School. At one point, President Dwight Eisenhower told the governor to protect the students and to allow them to enter the school. However, Faubus defied the order and withdrew the National Guard. This left the Little Rock Nine to fend for itself against the mob, which encircled the school and prevented the group from entering. After trying for several days to persuade the Arkansas governor to abide by federal orders, President Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and deployed the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock to enforce *Brown*. A paratrooper was assigned to walk with each student to and from school and to remain with each student at school. However, white mobs were still able to physically assault the students and, in one incident, stabbed one and sprayed acid in her eyes. Despite attending school under such hostile conditions, eight of the Little Rock Nine eventually completed the term and one graduated at the end of the year.

Similarly, in September 1962, an attempt by **James Meredith**, a twenty-eight-year-old Air Force veteran, to desegregate the University of Mississippi was met with days of violence and rioting by white mobs. Escorted by federal officials, Meredith eventually enrolled and, transferring credit hours from a previous school, graduated within the year without further incident. Perhaps one of the more enduring symbols of the racial violence associated with early efforts to desegregate public schools is that of Ruby Bridges, the six-year-old who desegregated an all-white New Orleans elementary school in 1960. The young Bridges’ resolve inspired the 1966 painting by Norman Rockwell titled *The Problem We All Live With*. The painting depicts the

little girl, elegantly attired in a white dress with a matching hair ribbon and shoes, and accompanied by federal marshals, as she fearlessly made her way to class past a tomato splattered racial epithet sprawled on the side of the school building.

Despite the often-violent resistance to school desegregation, the constitutional impact of *Brown* has been enormous. For instance, the Supreme Court's ruling resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of desegregation suits filling lower court dockets. It also formed the legal basis for the civil rights acts of the early 1960s that resulted in the systematic dismantling of segregation in public school districts and other public facilities across the country from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s. However, *Brown's* implications for northern schools were even less clear than they were for those in the South and presented a different set of challenges to implementing desegregation policy. The early efforts to desegregate schools in the South occurred under conditions where white lawmakers coded segregation in policy (*de jure*); segregation in the North, however, was not written into law but rather existed as fact (*de facto*).

For example, in many cities in the Midwest, on the Pacific coast, and along the eastern seaboard, housing patterns revealed segregated neighborhoods. Because children were assigned to neighborhood schools, the schools were segregated as a matter of fact, as opposed to a matter of law. However, plaintiffs in desegregation suits in these areas provided courts persuasive evidence that many white homeowners used public agencies, real estate agents, and civic leaders to maintain *de facto* segregation in their schools. Eventually, in 1973, in *Keyes v. School District of Denver*, the Court expanded *Brown* to also include the dismantling of *de facto* segregation in public schools, and by the early 1970s courts began to render rulings that enforced *Brown* throughout the North. Some court-ordered mandates unified entire metropolitan school districts and placed previously separate entities under the control of a centralized authority. More often than not, though, courts employed formulae to promote the inter-district busing of black students to white schools and of white students to selective schools in predominately black neighborhoods. In their attempt to desegregate northern schools, black students typically were met with resistance and, at times, with violence not unlike that of their predecessors in the South.

For example, black students who attempted to desegregate schools in South Boston in the fall of 1974 were greeted by angry, violent mobs that threw rocks through the windows of the buses that carried them into the community; on one such occasion, nine young children were injured when shards of glass rained upon them. Efforts to desegregate northern schools were eventually met with limited success. The net gains of the 1970s and 1980s, however, were reversed as a result of local efforts to thwart integration and of significant Supreme Court rulings such as *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) that removed federal courts' powers to impose inter-district remedies between cities and surrounding schools to desegregate city schools. As a consequence, public schools became increasingly re-segregated during the 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century. Jonathan Kozol, a prominent critic of educational inequality, observed that schools were more

segregated in 2006 than they were any time since 1968. Along these lines, urban and fringe-city school districts were being populated by increasingly multicultural populations of students of color from working-class, poor, and immigrant families and more affluent suburban schools were being populated by homogeneous bodies of white students from middle-class families.

During this period, violence erupted in a number of urban schools as a result of interracial tensions between students from black, Latino, Asian American, and immigrant groups. For example, since 2000, conflicts were frequently reported between white and Asian American students in the San Francisco Bay area, between black and Latino students in Albuquerque, and between black and Bosnian students in St. Louis. In those truly desegregated school districts that remained, students were often reseggregated via racially informed tracking systems. Racial tracking minimizes contact between students of different groups and may have accounted for fewer reports of race-based violence in these schools. In addition, racial disparities in the ways these schools meted out discipline may have also contributed to reduced rates of violence reported in desegregated schools. Although, in general, poor students were more likely to be disciplined than wealthy students, researchers have found that black students from the wealthiest families were suspended at almost the same rate as white students from the poorest families. Interestingly, a 2005 Yale University study found that, nationally, prekindergarten students are expelled three times as often as students in K–12 settings and, predictably, that black prekindergarten students were twice as likely to be expelled as their white and Latino preschool peers. Such disparities reduced the opportunity for students of different races to interact with one another and, thus, undermined both the spirit of integration and the goal of equal education intended by the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision.

### ***Desegregation and Violence in the Workplace***

Although *Brown* did not achieve its primary goal to guarantee equal educational opportunity for all black children, it reasserted the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and provided the impetus to cripple segregation in the broader society. For instance, the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** included Title VII, which established the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and gave it the mandate to stamp out workplace discrimination. However, like the campaign to desegregate schools, the drive to eliminate segregation in the workplace encountered resistance at every turn.

Riots engulfed American urban communities throughout the 1960s in partial response to the debilitating conditions in ghettos and the limited opportunities their residents had to change their lots (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). The 1965 Watts riot is perhaps most closely associated with the racial unrest that marked the period (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**). However, it was only the first burst in a wave of riots to spread across the United States over the next few years, including those that engulfed Chicago, Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Newark,

Detroit, and numerous smaller cities and communities. Various well-publicized studies were produced in the wake of these uprisings to offer explanations for Negro discontent, especially in light of the gains of the **civil rights movement**. The most notable of these studies was the 1968 **Kerner Commission Report** that President Lyndon B. Johnson commissioned in 1967. This report issued the now famous warning that the “nation is moving toward two societies” (Kerner Commission 1968), one white, one black. Altogether, the various reports pointed to a lack of job opportunities as being at the root of much of the racial unrest in American cities.

As previously suggested, desegregation presupposes some degree of integration, a social goal that cannot be achieved through legal means. In the workplace, white employees view the extension of job opportunities to minorities as a challenge to their own privilege and financial well-being. A 2001 Harvard University study of attitudes among residents in Boston and three other cities that sought to explain the coexistence of declining openly racist attitudes with persistent pro-segregationist attitudes, continued racial conflict, and opposition to affirmative action programs sheds light on the potential for desegregation policy to create hostile environments in workplaces. Among other findings, the author concluded that whiteness is experienced as a privilege, which leads members of the white working class to express a defensive sense of entitlement to jobs as well as to schools and neighborhoods.

Another significant study compiled hate crime statistics provided by law enforcement agencies and supplemented by hate incident reports from individuals, community groups, and media reports to examine racial incidents of violence in workplaces following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. The study, “Backlash: When America Turned on Its Own,” identified 243 race-based attacks against Asian Americans in the three-month period after the attacks. In contrast, racially motivated attacks against Asian Americans for a typical twelve-month period previously numbered around 400, according to the report. Victims described in the report included a Sikh American from Mesa, Arizona, who was shot and killed by a gunman who yelled, “I stand for America all the way.” The study reports that South Asian Americans, including Indian and Pakistani Americans, in general, suffered the brunt of the violence. However, of the group, Sikh American men have been singled out as targets because, according to the report, they are often mistakenly perceived to be Arab because many of them wear turbans and long beards. The vast majority of the incidents during the three-month period occurred in the first weeks after the attacks with 27 percent occurring in schools and 29 percent taking place in the workplace.

In the twenty-first century, racial inequality and, thus, the potential for violence persist in the American workplace. Some of the inequality is attributable to deindustrialization, that is, the shift in the American economy from manufacture to service, which has resulted in the loss of jobs, especially in the public sector, that have historically employed the black working and middle class as well as other minorities and immigrant groups. In addition, technological advances have also compromised the work



opportunities for these groups as automation and cyber technologies have proven themselves more profitable for employers than human beings. Grass-roots conservatism, changing city demographics attributable to immigration, impoverished public policy, and diminished access to quality education also contribute to workplace inequalities. In addition, an uncertain U.S. economy contributes to social tensions and fosters potentially volatile conditions in the workplace as working class Americans of all backgrounds compete for a diminishing pool of jobs.

### ***Desegregation and Inmate Violence***

As indicated above, economic changes in the United States from the late 1980s into the first decade of the 2000s has contributed to a reduced urban human workforce that largely impacts African Americans and other minority groups. The black unemployment rate in some cities, for instance, reached as high as 37 percent. Within the same period, the United States also experienced a dramatic increase in the number of incarcerated Americans. For instance, more Americans were incarcerated during a fifteen-year time spanning the mid-1980s through the 1990s than during the entire fifty-year period before it. The swell in the prison population precipitated a prison-building boom and concurred with public policy investments in criminal justice that surpassed their investments in other areas of social spending, including education, food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

At the end of 2004, the U.S. prison population stood at 2,135,901 and 1 out of every 138 Americans was incarcerated either in jail or prison. Black male inmates made up 41 percent of the U.S. prison population and Latino male inmates made up 19 percent. Eighty percent of the inmate population had been either charged with, or convicted of, nonviolent offenses; 15 percent were mentally ill, and the vast majority hailed from working-class and poor communities. The features particular, but not unique, to prison life (including overcrowding, the presence of gangs, diminished physical mobility, and reduced access to recreation and education), combined with the demographic make-up of the inmate population to create social tensions and to foster conditions for violence in U.S. penitentiaries.

Along these lines, prison officials reported an increase in race-based gang violence in penitentiaries across the United States since the 1990s. In 1996, for instance, Hudson County Correctional Facility imposed a partial lockdown after an inmate was stabbed and three others were injured in a melee between members of the Latin Kings, a Latino gang, and the Five Percenters, a black gang. The outbreak followed a fight the previous week when another inmate was stabbed and four others were hurt. In 2002 in California, prisons reported that the vast majority of their nearly 7,000 incidents of assault and battery and seven deaths were race-based. In 2006, also in California, tensions erupted during several days of fighting between Latino and black inmates in the 21,000-inmate Los Angeles County jail system, leaving 2 prisoners dead and around 100 injured. Racial violence also occurred at centers throughout the California juvenile system as well. According to

reports, violent incidents increased from 2,094 in 2003 to 2,352 in 2004, and to approximately 2,700 in 2005.

Some prisons have resorted to segregating inmates as a strategy to reduce race-based violence. For instance, until 2005, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) practiced blanket racial segregation in its reception centers where it housed inmates when they first arrived. These inmates were routinely kept with members of their own race at least for the first sixty days of their incarceration. The rationale for this unwritten policy was rooted in the view of prison officials that, given the prominence of inmates from race-based gangs, such measures were necessary to reduce the violence evident in the aforementioned accounts.

However, courts had long declared such measures unconstitutional. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for instance, not unlike other groups, inmates all over the country began filing complaints to assert their civil rights. In 1972, a black inmate named William Robert Eugene Battle filed a federal lawsuit, *Battle v. Anderson*, in the U.S. District Court in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Included among other violations, Battle's suit alleged racial segregation and discrimination in inmate housing, job assignments, and employment practices in the Oklahoma prison system, specifically at Oklahoma State Penitentiary. The federal court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and ordered, among other things, the reconfiguration of the racial composition of all housing units to approximate that of the inmate population as a whole.

Similarly, in 1995, California inmate Garrison Johnson began filing a series of complaints alleging that the CDC reception area violated his constitutional rights. Serving a sentence for murder, robbery, and assault since 1987, Johnson had been transferred between multiple CDC facilities. The CDC segregation policy, as indicated previously, was predicated on the assumption that prison violence was the result of the presence of different race-based gangs and thus grouped inmates according to racial groups to prevent the eruption of interracial violence. Thus, Johnson was segregated with other black inmates each time he changed facilities. However, Johnson was not a gang member and felt that he would be safer housed among members of other races where he did not face the pressure to join a gang or the violence he encountered when he refused to do so. Therefore, the CDC policy, he argued, violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because it used race as a factor in determining housing assignments for the first sixty days of incarceration and, in doing so, placed him in harm's way. In January 2005, the Supreme Court agreed with the inmate and ruled in *Johnson v. California* that the CDC had to abandon its policy of assigning inmates to racially segregated cells upon arrival in new prisons, unless it could prove it has no race-neutral way to prevent interracial violence.

Only days before the Supreme Court's ruling, Sen. Gloria Romero, a democrat from Los Angeles, introduced Senate Bill 814 to abolish prison segregation in the CDC. A California Senate majority leader, Senator Romero pointed to a study of Texas prisons that indicated that only 5 percent of all incidents of violence involved racial motivations and, of those, only 1.2 percent were attributable to interracial violence. She further

noted that the CDC had been unable to identify a single incident of inter-racial violence between cellmates, thus undermining its claim that segregation was necessary to stem the wave of prison riots. Senator Romero's bill was still pending as of early 2006. If SB 814 passes and Senator Romero's assumptions hold, the CDC may ironically join the United States armed forces as a model of desegregation in American society. *See also* Boston (Massachusetts) Riots of 1975 and 1976.

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*Garrett A. Duncan*

## **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943**

The Detroit Riot of 1943 was by many accounts the most severe manifestation of urban unrest in America since the **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919** and the **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921**. At the conclusion of three days of rioting, there were 34 confirmed deaths, 760 injured, and an estimated \$2 million of property damage. The 1943 Detroit riot was not an isolated episode. Rather, it was part of a larger cycle of civil disorder that took place in several American cities, such as Harlem, New York; Los Angeles, California; and **Beaumont, Texas**, during the summer of 1943 where war-time mobilization efforts had brought new waves of black and Hispanic migrants in contact and competition with previous generations of white migrants and European immigrants. In Detroit, much of the conflict occurred between working-class white immigrants from Europe and black migrants from the rural South. Marked by interpersonal violence among members of these groups who vied for space, jobs, and political power, the 1943 Detroit riot can be seen as a prime example of a communal riot.

### ***The Precipitating Incident***

The proximate cause of the 1943 Detroit riot, like the **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919**, involved contested access to recreational space. The initial precipitating incident occurred when a scuffle ensued among black and white youths who were playing cards at Belle Isle, a sprawling public park

located on the east side of Detroit in the middle of the Detroit River. On July 20, 1943, throngs of people headed to Belle Isle seeking relief from the oppressive summer heat. Among the crowds was a small group of black teenagers and young adults who, a few days earlier, had been forcibly ejected from a privately owned amusement park by a group of white teenagers and white army recruits. As a result of the incident at the amusement park, this group decided to walk nearly three miles to the public beach at Belle Isle where they entered into a game of dice with some white youths. Accusations of cheating soon developed and fighting broke out among the black and white youths. Other youths from both races began to join the fray and skirmishes erupted elsewhere on the island. Toward the end of the day, as crowds filed out of the park, fighting broke out on the causeway connecting Belle Isle to the mainland. A group of white naval soldiers on temporary leave joined the conflagration. While black and white youths fought on the bridge and throughout the island, white mobs gathered on the mainland side, waiting to attack returning blacks. Later that evening, around midnight, a black man who claimed to be a police officer jumped on stage at a black-owned nightclub and announced that a black lady and her baby had been thrown off the Belle Isle bridge and drowned in the Detroit River.

Meanwhile, at another nightclub, patronized by whites, a similar rumor circulated that a white woman and her baby had been thrown off the bridge. Another unsubstantiated story described how a group of blacks had slit a white sailor's throat and murdered his girlfriend. By dawn of the next day, mobs of white and black people had mobilized on their respective sides of Woodward Avenue, the dividing line between white and black communities, determined to exact revenge upon one another. **White mobs**, numbering in the hundreds, stopped streetcars, pulled black passengers off, and beat them. Black civilians who had strayed across the boundaries of their neighborhoods into white space were severely punished. In the black neighborhoods to the east of Woodward Avenue, black mobs retaliated by throwing rocks and bricks at passing vehicles driven by white motorists, and breaking into white-owned stores. Police soon found themselves overwhelmed and unable to contain the spreading violence.

### *Underlying Structural Conditions*

Hostility between whites and blacks in Detroit had been building since World War I when black migrants first began to move northward in large numbers to take advantage of jobs in Detroit's booming defense and automotive industries. The black population increased from only 5,000 in 1910 to 40,000 in 1920. After World War I, black migration to Detroit continued. The black population of Detroit tripled between 1920 and 1930 from 40,000 to 120,000. During the 1930s, as a result of the Depression, the rate of increase slowed. The black population increased by approximately 34,000 people during that decade. But during the wartime years, from 1940 to 1950, the black population of Detroit nearly doubled, from 153,773 to

304,677, a gain of 98.1 percent. Black migrants were largely confined to a narrow strip of land just east of the central business district known as Paradise Valley or alternatively as *Black Bottom* for its tar-like soil. As more and more rural black migrants arrived, the population density of Black Bottom increased dramatically, and a shortage of housing ensued.

Middle-class blacks who sought to move beyond the confines of Black Bottom often faced violence at the hands of white residents who were unwilling to tolerate the presence of black people in their midst. In 1925, when **Ossian H. Sweet**, a black physician, purchased a home in a neighborhood inhabited by whites, his family became the target of harassment and violence at the hands of local whites who sought to drive them out. In defense of his property Dr. Sweet shot a member of a white mob who had threatened to firebomb his house. Dr. Sweet was tried for murder, but acquitted on the basis of self-defense. His was just one of many cases where blacks who sought to move out of the Black Belt were harassed and intimidated by whites. But, by the 1940s, as a result of a renewed wave of black migration, some neighborhoods in Detroit were undergoing a rapid transition from white to black. In 1942, white residents reacted violently to the movement of blacks into the newly constructed Sojourner Truth Homes, a plan that threatened to bring low-income blacks into a predominantly white working class community. Fearing that their neighborhoods would be overrun by black migrants, whites in Detroit used restrictive covenants and built physical barriers to keep blacks out. As Thomas Sugrue, a noted urban scholar put it, "For those white Detroiters unwilling or unable to flee, black movement into their neighborhoods was the moral equivalent of war" (Sugrue, 246). When such efforts failed, violence served as a means of last resort to preserve racial boundaries.

Whites also attempted to resist integration of their workplaces. Black migrants, despite being assigned to the dirtiest and lowest-paying jobs in the factories, were often viewed with suspicion as potential strikebreakers or scabs, who, given their willingness to work for less pay, would take the jobs of unionized white workers. White workers in the automobile and defense plants fought vigorously to exclude black workers from the more skilled, higher-paying positions. Yet, as a result of Executive Order 8802 signed in 1941 by President Franklin Roosevelt, the defense industries were gradually being integrated at all levels. This did not fare well with many white workers who staged sit-down strikes and work slowdowns to protest the presence of blacks on the shop floor. Racial animosity pervaded the workplace and carried over to the neighborhoods where white workers lived. Feeling threatened at home and in the workplace, whites resorted to backlash violence against the growing black population.

### ***Initial Police Response***

At the time, the Detroit police found themselves vastly undermanned and unprepared to deal with widespread racial unrest in their city. They focused their efforts on restoring the informal geographic boundaries between white and black residents in the city, patrolling on the fringes of white and black

neighborhoods where much of the violence was taking place. They escorted black civilians who were being attacked by white mobs and instructed them to run back to their own neighborhoods where, presumably, they would be safe from the violence. Rarely did they arrest white perpetrators of violence. In some cases, police officers stood idly by as white mobs assaulted black individuals. In other cases, police employed violence against suspected black looters. Police officers were given explicit orders regarding the use of deadly force. They were instructed to fire only if they themselves had been fired upon. Yet, sixteen of the thirty-four riot victims, all of whom were black, were shot by the police, indicating that this order had been disregarded by some officers. In one notable case, the police, pursuing a black sniper who had shot a police officer, raked a black-occupied rooming house with rifle and machine gun fire, expending close to 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

### ***The Call for Federal Troops***

With police massed on Woodward Avenue attempting to separate white and black mobs, violence spread elsewhere to the east and west. On the second day, it became clear that the Detroit police could not control the situation. Despite the fact that there was a formal protocol in place for the use of federal troops, which stated that army troops could be mobilized on an emergency basis without presidential approval, neither the mayor of Detroit nor the governor of Michigan seemed aware of the proper procedure for calling out the National Guard and Army. Neither wanted to declare martial law for fear of alienating their constituents. Nor were Army generals able to clearly explain the procedure for requesting federal troops. As a result, the mayor, the governor, and Army officials continued to debate semantics and points of protocol, delaying the entry of Army troops into Detroit. Eventually the governor declared a state of emergency that “imposed a curfew, banned the sale of alcohol, and prohibited public gatherings” (Shogan and Craig, 77). Soon thereafter he met with Army representatives who had “found a way to bring federal troops into the city without declaring martial law” (Shogan and Craig, 77). Within a half-hour, federal military police who had been stationed on the outskirts of the city awaiting further instructions entered the city. Once engaged, with bayonets drawn, the federal troops quickly dispersed the mobs gathered along Woodward Avenue and rounded up bands of roving whites operating in the black neighborhood of Paradise Valley. Within less than four hours, order had been restored. A presidential proclamation finally came in the waning hours of July 22, retroactively authorizing the use of federal troops in Detroit. The proclamation remained in place for the next six months in case racial violence was to flare up again.

### ***Aftermath***

Within a few weeks of the riot, it seemed that a sense of normalcy had returned to the city. Yet racial tensions continued to lurk under the

surface and political officials continued to fear the possibility of future violence. The governor commissioned a study that mostly blamed the city's black population for the riot, suggesting that militant black leaders had incited violence by advocating for racial equality. The U.S. Attorney General submitted his own report to President Roosevelt, which stated that the rapid growth of the black population in several American cities was overwhelming the cities' infrastructure capacities and suggested that some means of limiting black migration be considered. Civil rights leaders, led by **Thurgood Marshall** of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** Legal Defense Fund issued their own report decrying the manner with which the police handled the riot and warned against future outbreaks if racial inequalities in employment, housing, and education were not addressed. Detroit Mayor Edward Jeffries appointed a group of eleven civic leaders and city officials to serve on the Mayor's Interracial Committee and find ways to ameliorate sources of potential conflict among blacks and whites in the city. Yet the establishment of this committee was largely symbolic. Lacking resources, and having been designated as temporary, it served mostly in a weak advisory capacity. It would be replaced a decade later by the Detroit Commission on Human Relations, a permanent commission that also lacked adequate resources to redress the structural inequalities in Detroit that lay at the heart of the urban unrest. Over the next two decades (1950–1970), **white flight**, combined with deindustrialization and disinvestment, further chipped away at Detroit's fragile social base. During the 1950s, whites left Detroit en masse for the emerging suburbs. As a result, Detroit moved further toward becoming a majority black city. By 1960, black people accounted for approximately 29 percent of the city's population. By the summer of 1967, indicative of the extent of white out-migration, blacks represented over 40 percent of Detroit's population. By 1970, blacks had attained a residential majority in Detroit. Yet the political and economic status of black people in Detroit had changed little since the 1940s. African Americans in Detroit still lacked adequate political representation and economic opportunities. This would prove to be a recipe for disaster. In the summer of 1967, Detroit would erupt again in a racial rebellion that would impact the entire city for decades to come. *See also* Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967; White Flight.

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*Max Herman*

## **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967**

The Detroit Riot of 1967 was not a race riot in the traditional sense of the term. Unlike the race riots that had taken place earlier in the twentieth century in cities like **East St. Louis** (1917), **Chicago** (1919), **Tulsa** (1921), Harlem (1943), and **Detroit** (1943), the 1967 Detroit riot did not pit black and white civilians against one another in direct interpersonal combat. Rather, the 1967 riot was primarily a struggle between working-class African Americans (and some working-class whites) against the police, National Guard, and forces of the U.S. Army. At its conclusion, after five days of rioting, 43 people were dead, 1,189 were injured, and over 7,000 were arrested, making the 1967 Detroit riot the deadliest episode of urban unrest during the 1960s.

### ***The Precipitating Incident***

The precipitating incident for the 1967 Detroit riot was a police raid on an after-hours drinking establishment, locally referred to as a blind pig. Whereas legal bars closed around midnight, blind pigs stayed open all night. Often located in people's homes or, in the case of larger blind pigs, above business establishments, these informal bars catered to the entertainment needs of working-class Detroiters, providing them with a place to go after the 4:00 P.M. to midnight shift at local factories. In the early morning hours of July 23, 1967, Detroit police raided one such establishment located at 9125 Twelfth Street, above the Economy Printing Shop. Such police raids were common at the time and usually resulted in a few symbolic arrests and a small fine for the proprietors. But this police raid on the blind pig at Twelfth and Clairmount would prove different. When police arrived, they expected a small crowd, but instead found the place packed with over eighty people celebrating the return of two soldiers from the **Vietnam War**. Unlike previous raids, where police arrested the owners and a few patrons, typically for possession of illegal drugs or firearms, the police attempted to arrest everyone on the premises. They called for backup, but it took nearly a half-hour before the first transport van arrived and was loaded. During the interim, a crowd gathered outside the blind pig and began protesting the police presence.

As the police wagons departed, protestors began to hurl rocks and bricks at them. An empty bottle broke the rear window of a police transport van. Shortly after the police vans departed, a group of ten to twelve men broke a plate glass window and began looting Jack's Esquire, a clothing store located on the corner of Twelfth and Clairmount. During this time, according to several eyewitnesses, there were no police in sight. After breaking into the clothing store, looters continued to break into other stores in succession along Twelfth Street. Despite attempts by the police to cordon off the area, within the next twenty-four hours, rioting began to spread throughout the city, from its epicenter on the city's northwest side, to the eastside and downtown.

### ***Underlying Structural Conditions***

The underlying structural conditions that helped give rise to the 1967 Detroit riot had been in existence for at least a decade prior to the eruption



of hostilities. During the 1950s and early 1960s, a federally sponsored urban renewal program gutted the primarily black enclave on the eastside known as *Black Bottom*. Black Bottom, whose origins dated back to the nineteenth century, was a thriving black commercial and residential district, but was demolished to make way for the construction of a new interstate highway that would shuttle people quickly in and out of the downtown. In addition to its thriving mainstream businesses, Black Bottom was also a magnet for vice: unauthorized alcohol sales or production, gambling, and prostitution. Prior to the demolition of Black Bottom, a middle-class black neighborhood had emerged on the west side of the city, around Twelfth Street, in a formerly Jewish neighborhood. With the destruction of Black Bottom, a new working-class and poor element moved, bringing with it some of the same vices that had existed in Black Bottom. As a result of the demographic shift, tensions flared among the newcomers and those residents and merchants who were more established in the Twelfth Street area.

Detroit, as a city, was also undergoing demographic change. White residents were moving to the surrounding suburbs at an increasingly rapid pace. By 1967, Detroit's black population had increased from 30 to 40 percent of the city's population. By the end of the decade, Detroit would be a majority black city. Yet despite their increasing numbers, African Americans were underrepresented in city government. Although a new liberal mayor was elected with the support of black voters, nonetheless there were few black political officials, either elected or appointed, at the time. Blacks were particularly underrepresented on the city's police force where they accounted for less than 5 percent of all police officers. Although the number of black teachers in Detroit's schools was closer to the proportion of blacks who were Detroit residents, Detroit schools were segregated along racial lines and black teachers complained of discrimination in promotion and disciplinary actions. At the same time as blacks students came to represent a larger portion of pupils, funding for public schooling was decreasing, and the schools were in the midst of a long decline. Taken together, this demographic change, coupled with political exclusion and lack of educational resources, all added fuel to the fire that would erupt in July 1967.

These structural inequalities, combined with the expectations engendered by the **civil rights** and **anti-Vietnam War movements**, helped give rise to militancy within Detroit's black community. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, led a massive march for civil rights along Woodward Boulevard in 1963, just prior to the more famous March on Washington that year. In the years between July 1963 and July 1967, more radical civil rights spokesmen like **Malcolm X**, **Stokely Carmichael**, and **H. Rap Brown**, visited Detroit regularly, engaging in fiery rhetoric that called for **Black Power** and black self-determination. Local militants like Rev. Albert Cleage, and the Henry brothers (Milton and Richard), sought to channel the frustrations of Detroit's inner-city black communities toward effecting political change. Their language stoked the embers of resentment emanating from the streets.

A great deal of resentment among people of Detroit was due to the constant presence of the police in the black community. The vice crimes unit known as *The Big Four* quickly established a reputation for brutality,

routinely beating black youths, suspected drug dealers, and prostitutes, as they attempted so-called clean-up of the streets. In the five years preceding the riot, the police had been implicated in the shooting of several unarmed black civilians. In one high-profile case that took place in 1964, police officers brutally beat a prostitute whom they had detained after breaking up a dispute she had with a customer. In another case from 1965, a fifteen-year-old was beaten severely after officers arrested him for "disturbing the peace" (Fine, 117). For many residents in the black communities of Detroit, such occurrences were all too common. This may explain how a routine police raid on a blind pig led to a melee between police and black citizens.

### *Initial Police Response*

The initial police raid that sparked unrest in Detroit occurred at 3:45 A.M. on Sunday, July 23. Because it was a Sunday, the number of police on duty was less than it would have been on a weekday or Saturday night. By 5:10 A.M., a plainclothes police officer and a lieutenant sergeant who had just arrived on the scene reported the throwing of objects and breaking of windows. At 5:20 A.M. Police Commissioner Ray Girardin was notified of the disturbance and immediately called Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh. By 5:30 A.M., Girardin ordered eight scout cars with seventeen men from outside the Tenth Precinct to report for duty in the Tenth Precinct (which included the Twelfth Street area). By 6:42 A.M., Girardin had mobilized 369 officers including 43 officers of the elite Tactical Mobile Unit. At 7:50 A.M., police officers attempted a sweep of Twelfth Street but were unsuccessful due to a growing crowd of over 3,000 people. By 8:00 A.M., the total number of Detroit police officers mobilized for riot duty had increased to 1,004, with 364 committed to the riot area, which at that point was localized along Twelfth Street. Police then attempted to seal off the Twelfth Street-Clairmount area. Between 9:30 and 10:30 A.M., community leaders including U.S. Representative **John Conyers** sought to calm the crowd but were rebuffed. Conyers stood on top of a police car, and used a bullhorn to address the crowd, but was shouted down. By 10:30 A.M. police reported widespread looting and several fires. When firefighters responded, they were hit with rocks and bottles. At this point, police officers shifted their efforts from cordoning off Twelfth Street to protecting firefighters. Looting then spread to surrounding thoroughfares such as Linwood and Dexter Boulevards. At 2:00 P.M., Mayor Cavanaugh held a meeting with political officials and community leaders at police headquarters. Shortly thereafter, Cavanaugh requested that the Michigan State Police be sent immediately to Detroit. By 3:00 P.M., 300 Michigan State Police had arrived at a local armory. Until this point, there were no reports of police using their weapons and no confirmed deaths due to riot activity.

### *The Riot Intensifies*

By Sunday afternoon, the riots had spread beyond the Twelfth Street neighborhood to nearby neighborhoods on the west side of Detroit.

Widespread looting of stores was followed by incidents of arson. Winds, clocked at 20–25 miles per hour fanned the flames, spreading fires from the point of origin to adjacent businesses and residences. In one ironic incident, a fire set by an arsonist spread from rooftop to rooftop, eventually consuming the arsonist's own home. "Fire Chief Charles J. Quinlan estimated that at least two-thirds of the buildings were destroyed by spreading fires rather than fires set at the scene. Of the 683 structures involved, approximately one-third were residential, and in few, if any, of these was a fire set originally" (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 92).

Sunday afternoon was also marked by the first known riot fatalities. Around 2:30 P.M., Krikor "George" Messerlian, a white merchant who owned a shoe repair shop, was beaten by a group of black youths while he attempted to defend his store with a ceremonial sword. His death was followed by that of Sharon George, a twenty-three-year-old white woman who was hit by a bullet while riding in her husband's car. Later that evening, Walter Grzanka, a second-generation Polish immigrant was shot while looting a grocery store, by the store's owner. Although the first three fatalities of the 1967 Detroit riot were whites, by the end of the riot, thirty-three of the forty-three deaths attributed to the riots were blacks. Many of those deaths were attributed to the police and the National Guard, which arrived in Detroit during the early hours of Monday, July 24. By Monday morning, rioting had spread throughout the city, with looting and fires reported on both the west side and the east side. Despite the presence of 800 state police and 1,200 national guardsmen, the riot was still not under control. At 2:15 A.M. Mayor Cavanaugh alerted federal authorities to the seriousness of the situation and shortly thereafter a conference call took place between the Mayor, Gov. Hugh Romney, and U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. At this time, there was considerable debate among these men over whether federal troops should be sent to Detroit. Clark implied that to send federal troops, the governor would have to declare that a civil insurrection was in progress. The governor was reluctant to do so because of his fears that insurance companies would refuse to compensate people for losses due to civil insurrection. In the interim, President Lyndon Johnson sent his envoy, Cyrus Vance, to tour the area and report to him on whether federal troops were needed. Vance toured the city Monday afternoon, between 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. during a lull in the violence. Because he did not personally witness any looting or sniper fire, Vance related his opinion to the president that federal troops were not necessary. But during the evening, violence flared once more. Eventually, at 11:20 P.M., President Johnson agreed to send Army paratroopers to Detroit. During the evening, a number of incidents were reported which involved National Guard troops firing machine guns at buildings in pursuit of alleged snipers. Overnight, nine people lost their lives.

### ***Federal Troops Arrive, Reports of Sniper Fire Increase***

At 4:00 A.M., the first paratroopers of the 101st Airborne arrived in Detroit; among them were seasoned Vietnam veterans. These military

troops, under Lieutenant General Throckmorton sought to engage the community in restoring order, help pick up garbage, and locate missing persons. Meanwhile, the National Guard and police continued to pursue suspected snipers, sometimes with disastrous consequences. In one particular case, the National Guard sent tanks to an apartment building where a sniper had been reported. Noticing a flash of light coming from the building, National Guard troops opened fire with .50-caliber machine guns. Inside the building, four-year-old Tanya Blanding was struck in the chest and subsequently died. Eyewitnesses and the police later established that the flash observed by the guardsmen was not that of a sniper's rifle but came from a match used by Tanya's uncle to light his cigarette.

Emboldened by the presence of the National Guard and Army troops, Detroit police rounded up suspected looters in large-scale street sweeps. By Monday evening, around 4,000 had been arrested, 1,000 of those arrested on Monday alone. The jails rapidly filled up, so prisoners were taken to a temporary holding cell in the parking garage of police headquarters where they were held incommunicado for the next twelve to twenty-four hours before being transferred to another temporary facility at the bathhouse on Belle Isle, an island park located in the Detroit River. Some former detainees refer to this facility as *Bellecatraz*. Prisoners were then put on buses where they waited to be arraigned by local judges. Many of these cases were dismissed due to lack of evidence.

During the daytime on Tuesday, July 26, over 500 reports of sniper fire were recorded. It is unclear how many of these incidents were due to actual sniper fire and how many could be attributed to crossfire between police and National Guard units. In response to these reports of sniper fire, police and National Guard troops initiated house-to-house searches. Another estimated 3,000 people were arrested over the next two days. In perhaps the most high-profile incident to take place during the riot, police officers, responding to reports of sniper fire, raided the Algiers Motel located on Woodward Avenue and Virginia Park, and shot three unarmed black teenagers who were enjoying the company of two white prostitutes. The police officers were later indicted for murder by a federal grand jury in 1968 but were acquitted by an all-white federal jury in 1970. Two of the three officers were reinstated to the police force in 1971. This case is the topic of *The Algiers Motel Incident*, a book by journalist John Hersey.

### ***Aftermath***

By Thursday, July 27, looting and sniping had ceased, and federal paratroopers were withdrawn from the city of Detroit. At the conclusion of five days of rioting, forty-three people had been killed; thirty-three (79 percent) of the victims were black. According to the city assessor's office, over \$22 million of property had been destroyed. This is a low estimate, as property damage estimates ranged from \$22 to \$500 million (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 107). After the riot, white flight from Detroit accelerated, establishing Detroit as a majority black city. Demographic change was accompanied by a shift in political power. In 1973, Coleman

Young was elected mayor of Detroit, a position he held for nearly twenty years. As the first black mayor of Detroit, Young sought to restore pride in the city, especially among its black residents, but the post-riot climate under Mayor Young was characterized by polarization between whites and blacks, suburbanites and city dwellers. These divisions persist in the present day. Within the past three decades, Detroit has seen its population drop to under one million residents, from a peak of just over two million people in 1950. The city, while engaged in bold efforts for economic redevelopment, continues to suffer from persistent fiscal crises triggered by the erosion of its municipal tax base. The downtown is currently experiencing a renaissance fueled by the restoration of the Fox Theatre, the construction of sports stadiums, and the relocation of General Motors' world headquarters to the Detroit riverfront. Yet much of the city remains in limbo, its houses abandoned and factories shuttered due to de-industrialization and global competition. The extent to which these problems of uneven development are a product of the riot is debatable (see Sugrue 1998). Nonetheless, Detroit continues to struggle with the stigma of the riots that took place in the summer of 1967.

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*Max Herman*

### **Diallo, Amadou (1975–1999)**

Amadou Diallo was a twenty-three-year-old African immigrant to the United States whose controversial death at the hands of four New York City police officers on February 4, 1999, prompted outrage throughout the country. News that Diallo was unarmed and was believed to have done nothing to threaten the officers led to charges of **police brutality** and demands for an end to racial profiling.

Diallo was born in 1975 in Liberia. He was the first of four children to Saikou and Kodiacou Diallo. His father is a businessman. The family moved around a lot because of his father's business. Diallo arrived in the United States in 1996 with the hope of one day attending an American university and studying computer science. Diallo worked as a street vendor selling clothes and took General Education Development (GED) classes. In the early morning hours of February 4, 1999, he was standing in the vestibule of his Bronx apartment building when he was approached by four white officers. The officers say they were in his neighborhood searching for a serial rapist who had raped forty women in the minority communities in the Bronx. The officers say they thought Diallo was reaching for a gun and they



Protesters and New York police square off along Fifth Avenue in New York. Thousands of protesters turned out to decry the acquittal of four New York officers for the shooting death of Amadou Diallo. AP Images/Tina Fineberg.

fired forty-one shots, nineteen of which hit Diallo, killing him instantly. He was found to be unarmed and was reaching for his wallet.

The white officers went to trial in Albany, where they were acquitted by a predominantly white jury. Rev. **Al Sharpton**, president of the National Action Network, and other black leaders, including former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, staged daily demonstrations. A demonstration took place outside the Bronx courthouse where a grand jury investigated the conduct of the police. Other acts of civil disobedience included a demonstration at City Hall, protests at a Wall Street firm, and a sit-in that blocked the entrance to New York City's central police headquarters. Diallo's death sparked several weeks of unrest and civil disobedience over the treatment of minorities by the police. *See also* Racial Stereotypes.

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*Catherine Anyaso*

## Disenfranchisement

Disenfranchisement is the systematic denial of the right to vote to any identifiable group of American citizens. For about a quarter of a century after the Civil War, African Americans, fighting fraud and violence, managed to vote. In some states, the Republican Party remained active and teamed

with anti-redeemer Democrats to make headway against the old South hierarchy. However, this progress was stemmed and began to reverse by the end of the century. In some cases, the revoking of the right to vote culminated in bloody violence, as in the **Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898**.

Between 1890 and 1906, every southern state established legal structures to eradicate black voting. Because the **Fifteenth Amendment** forbids restricting the right to vote on the basis of race or previous servitude, disenfranchisement was instituted by a color-blind legal system, a **Jim Crow** society, and violence.

To effect disenfranchisement legally, poll taxes, property tests, literacy tests, and, in some states, grandfather clauses were instituted. All the laws were applied in a manner that made it impossible for African Americans to exercise their right to vote. Disenfranchisement was reinforced by the Jim Crow system and the doctrine of separate but equal, which was sanctified by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

Finally, where the legal structure did not do its job, violence did. In the South, merely trying to vote could mean death. **Lynching** was an extralegal mechanism by which white citizens reinforced to blacks their place in society and the consequences of trying to step outside that place, especially by voting.

The federal government reinforced these state mechanisms by looking the other way. In 1891, the Senate defeated an attempt to protect black voting rights and regularly stalled anti-lynching legislation. The Supreme Court acknowledged and accepted disenfranchisement of black voters. The constitutional protections that should have shielded blacks from southern violence became useless. Mob rule, reinforced by violent riots, often set the tone.

As late as 1940, only 3 percent of adult black southerners were registered to vote. It was not until the mid-1960s, amid nationally televised violence, that official legal disenfranchisement came to an end in the South. In August 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

The impetus for this act was in large part the tragedy at Selma, Alabama, dubbed **Bloody Sunday (1965)**. The country watched in horror as a **white mob** viciously attacked black marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Selma followed on the heels of the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**, which saw violent attempts to suppress black efforts to vote and the translation of that violent reaction into political emasculation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The Bloody Sunday march can only be described as an officially sanctioned race riot, where the sheriff and state troopers savagely beat about 600 peaceful demonstrators as they attempted to cross the bridge and make their way to Montgomery to register to vote. This was followed by a call for another march by **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Before the second march could even start, James Reeb, a Unitarian minister, was murdered by a group of whites. The Monday after Reeb's death, President Johnson gave a televised speech to a joint session of Congress to announce that he would submit the legislation that became the Voting Rights Act five months later. The act pledged that the rights enshrined in the Constitution would be effectively

guaranteed by the power of the federal government, theoretically ending black disenfranchisement.

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Gary Gershman

### ***Do the Right Thing* (1989)**

*Do the Right Thing* is Spike Lee's 1989 hit film. It was inspired by the December 20, 1986, racial incident that took place in the Italian-American Howard Beach neighborhood of Queens, New York. Three black men walked into a pizzeria in Bensonhurst after their car broke down on the highway. They asked to use the phone and after being refused they sat down to eat. A group of Italian-Americans chased them out of the neighborhood with bats. One of the men got away, while the other two were beaten. Getting away from them, Michael Griffith wandered in a daze onto the highway, was struck by a car, and was killed. When the white men involved in the incident were acquitted, black citizens in New York were thrown into an uproar and protest marches led by Rev. **Al Sharpton** were organized.

Following the trial, Lee wanted to make a movie that analyzed how **racism** affects not only the recipients but also those who engage in racist



Spike Lee (as Mookie), Danny Aiello (as Sal), Richard Edson (as Vito) and John Turturro (as Pino) in *Do The Right Thing*. Courtesy of Photofest.



behavior. He also placed the action of his film on the hottest day of the year to illustrate how heat affects an already tense racial climate. He borrowed fixtures from the **Howard Beach incident** like the bats and the pizzeria. The movie covers a twenty-four-hour period on the hottest day of the year in a predominantly black neighborhood in Brooklyn. In this neighborhood, different racial groups coexist in a racially tense atmosphere. The main conflict of the film is between a black resident, Buggin' Out, and Sal, the Italian-American owner of the pizzeria he frequents. Buggin' Out wants to know why Sal has only Italian-American people on his restaurant's wall of fame when he has a predominantly black clientele. The climax of the film comes after Buggin' Out is unsuccessful at organizing a boycott of Sal's pizzeria and storms the pizzeria with his friend Radio Raheem, who was slighted by Sal earlier in the day for playing his radio too loud. A fight breaks out between Sal, his sons, Radio Raheem, and Buggin' Out when Sal destroys Radio Raheem's pride and joy, his radio. Police arrive on the scene and kill Radio Raheem in an act of **police brutality** that sends the community into an uproar. As the main character, Mookie, throws a garbage can into the window of the pizzeria, members of the community begin rioting and looting and the pizzeria burns to the ground.

American media criticized this film for its representation of violence, which they saw as a call to action for American black youths. During the time the movie came out there was a firestorm raging in New York over the police department's use of excessive force and racial profiling in black communities. The media thought the movie would incite blacks to violence around the country since tensions were already running high, protests having already occurred over the Howard Beach and **Bensonhurst incidents** in the late 1980s. In both cases, the whites involved were acquitted. *Do the Right Thing* brought to the country's attention to the racial tension that was occurring in urban areas across the United States. It also called attention to the racist practices of the police in black communities. There has been no evidence of violence or riots occurring in association with this film.

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*Catherine Anyaso*

## Double V Campaign

Begun in February 1942 in the pages of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the Double V Campaign—victory against oppression at home and abroad—popularized the idea that African Americans should fight and help win foreign wars against fascism and totalitarianism as part of an inextricably linked domestic struggle against racial inequality. The campaign was undertaken in the immediate wake of a January 10, 1942, National Urban League-sponsored meeting of African American leadership in New York that left some ambiguity about the nature of wholesale African American support for the World War II effort.

The black press had attempted to convince the government to treat African Americans as full citizens, but there was little change in policy and an increasing fatigue among African Americans.

Black leaders, such as **A. Philip Randolph**, argued that blacks must have sufficient belief in the potential success of the cause of true equality in the United States to contribute optimal effort toward victory abroad. The black press urged the enlistment of black military recruits (including officers) and pushed for a desegregated military and war industry, among other specific demands.

By 1940, the *Pittsburgh Courier* (founded in 1910) had the largest circulation (over 125,000) among the four major African American weekly newspapers (the New York *Amsterdam Star-News*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, and the *Pittsburgh Courier*). By the end of the decade, that number would near 300,000. The *Courier* was a crucial element in organizing the African American community; in 1931, it launched a drive to collect one million signatures to demand that the Federal Radio Commission ban the offensive radio program *Amos 'n Andy*. (It claimed to have garnered 740,000).

At the time it launched the Double V Campaign, the *Courier* had twelve weekly editions that went to various parts of the United States. The reach of the *Courier* met the ambiguity toward the war in the black public when the paper printed a letter to the editor from James G. Thompson, a twenty-six-year-old black cafeteria worker in a Kansas aircraft manufacturing plant. Thompson asked whether he should be called upon to sacrifice his life “to live half American” (Thompson 1942). He asked if the demand of full citizenship rights was too much in exchange for such a sacrifice.

Thompson then wrote, “The V for victory sign is being displayed prominently in all so-called democratic countries which are fighting for victory... Let we colored Americans adopt the double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies from within” (Thompson 1942).

On February 7, 1942, the *Courier* printed the double V symbol in the upper left-hand corner of its front page, with no explanation of what it was or what it was for. This was perhaps because *Courier* Editor-in-Chief Percival L. Prattis was painfully aware of the sensitive nature of relations between the federal government and the black press, which it was constantly surveilling for hints of unpatriotic opinion.

On February 14, Edgar T. Rouzeau of the *Courier's* New York bureau published the first editorial on the Double V Campaign. The front page article stated that blacks had a stake in the outcome of World War II that, unlike whites, “has far more meaning to the progress of civilization, and proportionately is far more difficult of attainment” (Rouzeau 2000). The editorial contends that blacks, “exploited, delimited, segregated, and humiliated as we were” (Rouzeau 2000), did not have any say in the ideological conflicts that started the war. However, blacks chose to fight on behalf of “white democracy” as opposed to a totalitarian German state, in order “to establish precedent for a worldwide principle of free association among men of all races, creeds, and colors” (Rouzeau 2000).

The two wars that had to be fought and won, according to the editorial, were “the convulsive war abroad” and “the bloodless war” at home (Rouzeau 2000). The latter was to be fought in the press, in schools, in political associations, and with intelligence and awareness of the nature and rules of democracy. The final urge was for blacks to fully sacrifice, or in the alternative to return to “our old slave masters,” having been proven not “worthy of democracy” (Rouzeau 2000).

The *Courier* was inundated with hundreds of letters and telegrams of support and congratulations; soon other major black newspapers joined the *Courier*’s coverage of the rapidly spreading improvisations on the double V theme in the black community. The *Amsterdam Star-News* and *People’s Daily Voice* in New York, the *Chicago Defender* and the *Washington Afro-American* began displaying the symbol, triggering an exponential increase in black newspaper subscriberships.

The Double V Campaign triggered governmental pressure on African American editors to police their papers for criticisms of the government. Federal agents visited the aforementioned papers, accusing the Double V Campaign and select editorials of hurting the morale of black People. The editors, however, did not back down. The *Courier*, for example, did not ban differing voices in the community: during 1942 and 1943, articles by George Schuyler, paper President Ira F. Lewis, J.A. Rogers, and Horace Cayton, among others, drew the surveillance attention of the FBI’s Survey of Racial Conditions domestic espionage unit for being anticolonialist and for comparing Axis members’ fascism with American racism, among other things. Ironically, the Double V Campaign was received lukewarmly by more radical elements, including the radical white left, for not going far enough.

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Gregory E. Carr

### Du Bois, W.E.B. (1868–1963)

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was an African American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, writer, editor, and critic. Du Bois was a prominent intellectual and the most significant figure in the fight for racial equality in America during the first half of the twentieth century. Through books, articles, and speeches, he tirelessly advanced the cause of the oppressed, not only for African Americans but also for all colored people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He is also considered the father of

Pan-Africanism—a belief in the solidarity among Africans and diasporic blacks, as well as an anti-colonial movement to unify all blacks in their struggle for civil and political liberty.

Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, a small town in western Massachusetts, on February 23, 1868. The child of Alfred and Mary Du Bois, he was valedictorian of his graduating class at—and the first black to graduate from—Great Barrington High School. Unable to attend Harvard University because of his financial strains, he attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, graduating as valedictorian with a B.A. in 1888. Living in the Deep South was an eye-opening experience for him. He witnessed the oppression of fellow blacks—in the forms of social segregation, the **Jim Crow** cars, lynch law, and poverty—for the first time.

Scholarships allowed Du Bois to further his education at Harvard, where he earned a B.A. in philosophy (1890) and an M.A. in history (1891); his professors included such esteemed scholars as William James, George Santayana, and Josiah Royce. He then pursued a doctoral degree in history at Harvard, where he became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. (1895). In 1892–1894, while stilling working on his doctorate, he was awarded a Slater Fund fellowship, which led him to study history and economics at the University of Berlin, Germany; he traveled throughout Europe during his stay there. Upon returning to the United States, Du Bois became a professor of Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University, a private African American institution in Ohio (1894–1896).

His doctoral thesis, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870*, was published in 1896 as the first volume of the Harvard Historical Sketches series. It was the first sociological and historical study of the white enslavement of Africans in America. In the same year, Du Bois married Nina Gomer, a Wilberforce student with whom he would have two children: Burghardt, who died at age three, and Yolanda, who was briefly married to the black poet Countee Cullen.

After working as assistant instructor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896–1897, Du Bois joined the faculty at Atlanta University in Georgia in 1897, where he served as professor of economics and history until 1910. During these years, he organized the university's conference series Studies of the Negro Problem, and edited the conference's annual *Publications*. His sociological study of African Americans, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, came out in 1899. Developing out of his research at the University of Pennsylvania, it was the pioneering case study of an urban black community in the United States.



W.E.B. Du Bois. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Du Bois was a leader of the first “Pan-African Conference” held in London in 1900. Designed to foster a feeling of unity among all blacks and discuss issues affecting their interests, this transatlantic meeting drew delegates from the United States, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Caribbean Islands, and West Africa. The Address to the Nations of the World by the Races Congress in London, 1900, was signed by four leaders of the conference: Alexander Walters, president; Henry B. Brown, vice-president; H. Sylvester Williams, general secretary; and W.E.B. Du Bois, chairman of the committee on the address.

*The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, Du Bois’s most celebrated book, was published in 1903. Defining the problem of the twentieth century as “the problem of the color line,” he theorized in this work the double status—the status of conflicting identities—of African Americans: “One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” The book also included Du Bois’s open challenge to the American educator **Booker T. Washington** on how to advance American blacks. While Washington advocated racial accommodation, hard work, and education in improving the standing of blacks, Du Bois called for an unabated protest against racial injustice. Racial problems in America would be resolved only through “ceaseless agitation and insistent demand for equality” and through the “use of force of every sort: moral persuasion, propaganda, and where possible even physical resistance.” He also emphasized the role of college-educated blacks in the civil rights struggle.

In July 1905, Du Bois, **William Monroe Trotter**, and twenty-seven men founded the **Niagara movement**, an organization for young black intellectuals committed to ending racial prejudice, particularly in such areas as suffrage, freedom of speech and criticism, economic opportunity, education, courts, health, and employment. Their activities included lobbying against Jim Crow and sending protest letters to President Theodore Roosevelt following the **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**. The Niagara movement lasted until 1910, when the disagreement on whether whites should be admitted to the organization disrupted the unity of the members. Du Bois believed that they should; on February 12, 1909, he helped create the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, a new civil rights organization. It advocated nonviolence and legal actions as the means to achieve equal civil rights for all Americans in the matters of housing, employment, voting, schools, the courts, transportation, and recreation. The founding members included sixty black and white citizens; interestingly, Du Bois was the only black person on the organization’s original board. The year 1909 also saw the publication of Du Bois’s *John Brown: A Biography*, in which he defended the militant abolitionist martyr who led an attack on the armory at Harpers Ferry in 1859. In response to the accusation that he was a fanatic and traitor, Du Bois contended that Brown was “the man who of all Americans has perhaps come nearest to touching the real souls of black folk” (DuBois 1909).

In 1910, Du Bois left his faculty position at Atlanta University to serve as the NAACP’s director of publicity and research full time; he also served as

the editor of the monthly NAACP magazine, *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*, for twenty-five years (1910–1934). The magazine covered many Pan-African issues, recommending books on Africa, introducing conferences on African studies, and condemning the apartheid in South Africa. As editor of *The Crisis*, Du Bois also identified and promoted talented black writers and artists. He advocated cultural nationalism for fellow blacks, encouraging the development of African American writing that is both uniquely black and universally appealing. The 1926 Negro in Art symposium, for example, urged black artists to be more politically conscious.

In the early 1910s, Du Bois published three books: *The Quest of the Silver Fleece: A Novel* (1911), *The Star of Ethiopia* (1913), and *The Negro* (1915). Partly based on the ancient Greek story of the Golden Fleece, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* was Du Bois's first work of fiction set in Tooms County, Alabama. It traced the romantic relationship between Yankee-educated Bles Alwyn and Zora, the child of the swamp. As an economic novel, it has been compared to Frank Norris's *The Pit* and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. *The Star of Ethiopia* was a theatrical production designed to promote African American history and civil rights. *The Negro*, in which the author considered race a social construct, was the earliest comprehensive historical examination of the Africans and diasporic black peoples.

In 1919, Du Bois organized the first Pan-African Congress (PAC), held in Paris, France, to coincide with the Paris Peace Conference; it was part of the black transatlantic movement to represent the political and economic interests of blacks in Africa, the Caribbean Islands, and the Americas. (Du Bois was also the main organizer of the PAC in 1921, 1923, 1927, and 1945.) In 1920, he published *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*, which encompassed such genres as biographical essays, sketches, fiction, and lyrical poems. It addressed sociopolitical and economic issues relating to Africans from an anticolonial perspective. The author stressed the brotherhood of all men on the globe: they were different in appearances only; they were alike in their deep souls and in their potential for unlimited development. In the chapter "The Souls of White Folk," Du Bois explored what it meant to be white. According to the author, the idea of personal whiteness was a modern phenomenon that had not existed in ancient times; in their misguided racial arrogance, whites caused miserable pain for peoples of color—the Africans, Indians, Japanese, mongrel Mexicans, and mulatto South Americans. He drew a parallel between the white European oppression of Africans and the white American oppression of racial minorities. Although ancient societies such as the Roman Empire did have slaves, slavery as practiced in the United States was more severe in its violation of fundamental human rights. As a Pan-Africanist, Du Bois emphasized the need to free Africa from European colonialism and to restore self-rule on the continent.

Du Bois's next book, *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America* (1924), was based on the author's study of the many contributions blacks made toward the construction and progress of the United States. He started his book with a chapter on how black explorers were instrumental in the discovery of America. The succeeding chapters focused on other areas of contributions—black labor in making America a rich

nation, black soldiers fighting in many wars (for the freedom of others, not for their own freedom), black civil rights struggles in democratizing the nation, black women in elevating the status of all women, black folk music in establishing itself as the sole American folk music, Negro art and literature in dealing with the American story of slavery, and the spirit of blacks in inspiring humility and forgiveness.

Growing increasingly militant, Du Bois quit the NAACP in 1934 because he was dissatisfied with the organization's conservative approach to the problems of racial segregation. He resumed his teaching at Atlanta University, where he chaired the sociology department from 1934 to 1944; he also edited the university's quarterly *Phylon* from 1940 to 1944. During this period, Du Bois published *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (1935), an African American—and Marxist—analysis of the Reconstruction era; *Black Folk, Then and Now: An Essay in the History and Sociology of the Negro Race* (1939), a sociological study of the cultural and economic exploitations of African Negroes by slave traders; and *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940), in which the author explored the concept of race as the central issue of American democracy and of the world in the coming years.

In May 1942, Du Bois was investigated by the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** for his left-wing and socialist activities. Two years later, he returned from Atlanta University to head the NAACP department of special research, a position he held until 1948. At the founding conference of the United Nations (1945), Du Bois represented the NAACP in San Francisco, California, as associate consultant to the American delegation. The year 1945 also saw the publication of *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace*, in which Du Bois voiced his strong opposition to imperialism and advocated the independence of small nations. Two years later, he published *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History*, in which he documented the way Africans contributed to the world and the way they had been enslaved by the colonial powers.

Irrevocably disillusioned with the conservative social positions of the NAACP and with the slow progress of race relations in America, Du Bois left the organization for the last time in 1948, embracing instead communism, which he considered the best ideology for Negroes. He chaired the Peace Information Center—a dissident organization in New York City—at the outbreak of the Korean War. In 1951, under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, Du Bois was indicted by a federal grand jury for being an unregistered agent for a foreign power, but he was later acquitted for lack of evidence. Du Bois also praised Joseph Stalin as a great man who is surpassed by few people in the twentieth century, signed the Stockholm Peace Pledge (which condemned the use of nuclear weapons), visited Communist China during its Great Leap Forward era and was honored by Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, and received the 1959 International Lenin Peace Prize in the Soviet Union for “strengthening world peace” (“Philosopher” 1963).

Du Bois's later writings included *In Battle for Peace: The Story of My 83rd Birthday* (1952). Here the author reminisced about his arraignment

and trial involving the Peace Information Center. *The Black Flame: A Trilogy* consisted of three novels—*The Ordeal of Mansart* (1957), *Mansart Builds a School* (1959), and *Worlds of Color* (1961). Written from an African American perspective, these works embodied Du Bois's increasingly radical ideology.

In the fall of 1961, at the age of ninety-three, he officially joined the Communist Party. Later that year, he moved to Ghana as a special guest of President Kwame Nkrumah to serve as director of the *Encyclopedia Africana*, an ambitious government-sponsored project. In 1963, the United States government refused to reissue a new passport alleging his communist activities; he and his wife, Shirley Graham (whom he married in 1951, a year after the death of his first wife) renounced their American citizenship and became naturalized citizens of Ghana. Du Bois's health declined beginning in 1962; on August 27, 1963, he died in Accra, Ghana, at age 95—a day before **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, delivered his monumental "I Have a Dream" civil rights speech in Washington, D.C. Du Bois was given a state funeral at Christianborg Castle in Accra and was buried outside the Castle; the *Encyclopedia Africana* remained unfinished at his death.

In his lifetime, Du Bois regularly contributed columns to such periodicals as the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His experimental creative works—such as the short story "The Coming of John" and the poem "The Song of the Smoke"—were included in the magazines he edited: the *Moon Illustrated Weekly* (1905) and the *Horizon* (1907–1910).

Du Bois received many honors and awards. In addition to the International Lenin Peace Prize, he received the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP, was made Knight Commander of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption, and by President Calvin Coolidge was conferred the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary. Du Bois was the first African American to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters and served as a lifetime member and fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Among the institutions of higher learning awarding him an honorary degree were Atlantic University, Charles University, Fisk University, Harvard University, Morgan State College, the University of Berlin, and Wilberforce University.

*The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its Final Century* was brought out posthumously in 1968, and *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois* was published in three volumes in 1976. On January 31, 1992, the United States honored Du Bois by releasing a twenty-nine-cent stamp—the fifteenth in the Postal Service's annual Black Heritage Series. In 1994, the twenty-eight-story main library at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst was named as W.E.B. Du Bois Library; it offers services and resources in humanities and social sciences.

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*John J. Han*

**Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill.** See Dyer, Leonidas C. (1871–1952)

### **Dyer, Leonidas C. (1871–1952)**

Leonidas C. Dyer was born on a farm in Warren City, Missouri in 1871. Little is known about his early life, especially those forces that might account for the vociferous opposition to racial intolerance he displayed during his career in the U.S. Congress. Dyer attended Central Wesleyan College and Washington University, and was admitted to the practice of law in 1893. Dyer also served in the Spanish American War.

Dyer was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1911 from a heavily black district in St. Louis. From this we can assume that he was acquainted firsthand with the promises and perils of **The Great Migration**, that mass movement of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North during the **Jim Crow** era. **Disenfranchisement**, Jim Crowism, unemployment, **lynchings**, and mob violence made life unbearable for African Americans in the South. Black migrants settled in the great industrial cities of the North, among them St. Louis. Many found jobs in the factories that had been emptied of white men sent to serve in World War I. By the end of the war, about 500,000 blacks had moved to the North.

The racial conflagrations so common in the South also migrated northward. In East St. Louis, public facilities, housing, and schools were segregated, creating a seething cauldron of racial tension. In April 1917, 470 black men were hired to replace whites striking against the Aluminum Ore Company. The strike was crushed and the men, members of the American Federation of Labor, blamed the blacks who had been used as strikebreakers. At a meeting in May, the union demanded that the town be rid of blacks. A riot ensued and **white mobs** attacked blacks and destroyed buildings.

An uneasy truce was broken on July 1 when a carload of white men drove through East St. Louis firing guns. Two white plainclothes policemen followed; they were shot and killed by no-doubt frightened and angry black residents. A full-scale riot erupted and whites, joined by law enforcement officials, killed thirty-five blacks, many of them mutilated and their bodies

thrown into the Mississippi River. Black homes and businesses were also destroyed.

Dyer was appalled not only by the violence in East St. Louis, but by the increase in lynchings and the spread of mob violence. Decrying what he described as open contempt of the courts and the rule of law, he called for an end to mob violence and introduced an anti-lynching bill on April 1, 1918.

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill made participation in a lynch mob a federal crime. It also contained sections that would punish local, county, and state officials who failed to prevent lynchings. Finally, the bill allowed counties in which lynchings took place to be sued for damages. African American women were the first to document and protest the crime of lynching in the late nineteenth century. They, along with the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, were instrumental in the bill's creation and its passage in the House. Black women mobilized citizens, lobbied government officials, donated and raised funds, and in 1922 formed the Anti-Lynching Crusaders, a group whose purpose it was to educate Americans about the crime of lynching and work for its eradication.

Supporters of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill based that support in part on the equal protection clause of the **Fourteenth Amendment**. Opponents of the bill claimed its provisions violated the doctrine of states' rights as guaranteed in the Tenth Amendment. Moreover, they claimed that the protection of white women from sexual advances by black men made lynching a necessary evil. The threat of lynching was the only thing standing between the virtue of white women and sexually deprived black men.

Liberal Republicans took the lead in getting the bill through the House of Representatives. It passed on January 26, 1922; only seventeen Republicans opposed it, and eight northern or border state Democrats were convinced to support it. The bill moved on to the Republican-controlled Senate, where it was supported by Senate Majority Leader Henry Cabot Lodge. Unfortunately, Lodge's colleague and nemesis, William Board, an Idaho Republican, opposed the bill and helped lead the opposition. Southern senators filibustered, and the bill went down to defeat. Dyer tried twice more during the decade to win passage of an anti-lynching law, but was unsuccessful. No federal anti-lynching law was ever enacted.

The bill had a positive impact, however. It brought the crime of lynching to the forefront of the political debate in the United States. Southern officials who had argued that lynching was a necessary tool in the fight to maintain the social order in the South were forced to ensure that violence against African Americans in the region was moderated. In 1918, there were sixty recorded lynchings of black men; by 1922, that number dropped to fifty-seven. By the time the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill was introduced in 1934, the number of recorded lynchings had dropped to fifteen.

Dyer was defeated in the Franklin D. Roosevelt landslide of 1932 and returned to the practice of law in St. Louis. Campaigns to return to the House in 1934 and 1936 were unsuccessful. He died in December 1952. *See also* East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.; White, Walter.

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*Marilyn K. Howard*

# E

## **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917**

Economic and political factors led the white population of East St. Louis, Illinois, to feel embittered toward the growing black population during 1916 and 1917. The rapid influx of blacks from the South and labor strife specifically resulted in growing tensions. Labor leaders incited a small riot in May 1917, resulting in several injuries but no deaths. Tensions continued to rise afterward and reached a boiling point when blacks retaliated against whites by shooting at their homes and accidentally killed two police officers. One of worst race riots in the twentieth century ensued with indiscriminate violence against the black population of the city resulting in the deaths of at least forty-eight people.

On the shores of the Mississippi River across from St. Louis, Missouri, East St. Louis, Illinois, was largely an industrial community in the early twentieth century. Its location as a major rail hub made the city an ideal place for manufacturing and employment. Prior to World War I, a substantial black population of several thousand lived in the city of approximately 70,000. White citizens paid little attention to them because blacks accepted their subordinate status, living and working in completely segregated conditions.

During World War I, many blacks from the South moved north for better economic conditions, to improve their lives, and to provide for their families. East St. Louis saw a dramatic rise in the population of blacks in 1916 and 1917. By 1917, nearly 10,000 blacks lived in the city. Many came at the behest of industrial leaders who wanted strikebreakers and cheap labor. Blacks poured into the city and found work by taking jobs away from the established white population. Not all blacks passing through East St. Louis settled in the city. East St. Louis was a major railroad hub from the South, and many blacks continued on to Chicago, Detroit, or other northern cities. However, many blacks who remained in East St. Louis often had no place to live upon their arrival and found only shacks in which to live. Those who found housing often paid exorbitant rent in low-quality housing. Whites believed that violence and crime increased as the black population

increased. The city also had an established black middle class, and when some began to move into white neighborhoods, whites left the area, immediately selling their homes at reduced prices. As new black residents challenged the white-imposed **segregation** and oppression, whites began to view blacks as more and more of a problem.

The political culture of East St. Louis was ripe with corruption. Politicians in both parties supported gambling rings, prostitution houses, and illegal saloons owned by both blacks and whites. Judges, lawyers, and policemen took payoffs to look the other way. The political corruption that existed in the city contributed to a culture of lawlessness as an accepted fact in East St. Louis. Corruption became a racial issue during the 1916 election. Democratic leaders charged that Republicans had been bringing thousands of blacks from the South to vote Republican in the upcoming elections to ensure Republican control of St. Clair County. Democrats made similar colonization charges in other northern states like Indiana and Ohio. However, the main reason blacks moved north was to improve economic conditions and not to become political pawns in either party. Illinois went Republican in the 1916 presidential election, but in East St. Louis, whites believed the colonization theory, voted Democratic, and increased their antagonism against blacks.

Although migration and colonization were simmering issues, the problem of labor caused the most enmity toward blacks. Two strikes in 1916 and 1917 created unrest among both white and black East St. Louis populations, and local newspapers predicted that a race riot could occur. During the summer of 1916, meat packers tried to form a union, but several meat-packing companies fired approximately thirty-five of the organizers. The remaining 4,000 workers went on strike and practically shut down the plants. The companies firmly stated that its workers could not unionize, and most of the workers returned under the promise that the companies would reinstate the organizers. The companies failed to hire any of them back. Although the companies brought in a few blacks as strikebreakers, practically none were able to work, and the companies constantly threatened to use cheaper black labor if necessary. Union organizers frequently exaggerated the number of black workers and strikebreakers, and eventually the East St. Louis white population accepted the misleading statistics as fact.

After a successful strike in 1916, workers for East St. Louis's Aluminum Ore Company organized the Aluminum Ore Employees Protective Association. By the end of 1916, the company began to phase out association workers and increased the number of black workers. In early 1917, the company employed nearly 2,000 workers, including approximately 500 blacks. The association went on strike in response to phasing out association jobs but feared that the company would continue to hire more blacks. Instead, the company hired a professional strikebreaker, who obtained weapons, built a small army, and demolished the association. Workers blamed their failure squarely on the black population, claiming that their presence in the city gave companies the power to crush organized labor.

On May 10, 1917, a group of members from the Central Trades and Labor Union met with East St. Louis Mayor Fred Mollman about their concerns regarding black workers. Mollman told them that he and the city council would address the problem and set a date for a public meeting with labor delegates. The Illinois National Guard went to East St. Louis to prevent racial violence. Even though there were several minor disturbances in which whites injured several blacks, the guard generally performed its duty.

At the public meeting on May 28, sixty union delegates complained about the excessive number of blacks moving into the city. Many others—fired Aluminum Ore strikers and women union members—also came to the meeting to lend their support. The meeting became heated when many attendees made loud, fiery comments. One audience member stated that East St. Louis should remain a white man's city, and another proclaimed that there was no law against mob violence. Shortly after the meeting, rumors circulated that blacks were attacking whites, and a mob formed to retaliate. On the streets, the mob attacked blacks who just happened to be in the way. Most people had no weapons, but three blacks and three whites were shot. By the early morning hours, the mob had quieted down. There were a number of injuries, but no one was killed.

After the riot of May 28, the East St. Louis police did nothing to prevent further incidents. The unions condoned the riot and placed blame on employers who had allegedly brought large numbers of blacks into the city. Illinois Gov. Frank Lowden withdrew the Illinois National Guard from the city only two weeks after the riot. Small mobs of whites beat blacks practically on a daily basis. Newspaper reports generally ignored the beatings as news, but they constantly carried front-page stories about robberies and shootings committed by blacks. Delegates of the black population appealed to Mayor Mollman for protection. Mollman promised action but privately feared losing support of the larger white population. Some city officials feared a larger race riot when armed blacks defended themselves. Rumors had been circulating that blacks had planned a major counterattack on July 4.

On July 1, 1917, more reports of whites beating blacks surfaced in the black neighborhoods. Several blacks wanted to retaliate, but others advised a more cautious route for everyone to return to their homes. Late in the evening, whites in a Ford car fired shots at homes owned by blacks. When the car appeared a second time, a group of armed blacks fired back. The police received a report of blacks shooting at cars and dispatched an unmarked Ford police car to investigate. The squad car had at least seven passengers—a driver and two detectives in the front seat wearing civilian clothes, perhaps three uniformed officers in the back seat, and a reporter who stood on the running board.

Thinking it was the car from which whites shot at black homes, blacks fired at the squad car. According to the reporter, when the car reached the black neighborhood, 200 armed blacks immediately fired upon the car, killing one detective instantly and mortally wounding the other. The next morning, the car, with all of its bullet holes, was parked at the police station. The bullet-ridden car was all the proof that white residents needed to verify the rumors they had heard about black retaliation.

Labor leaders held a short meeting in the morning, and organizers told the crowd to return in the afternoon with guns. After the meeting, the group marched down one of the main thoroughfares and began to shoot at black passersby. By late morning, white East St. Louis residents joined with the laborers to form a mob and began to beat and club random blacks indiscriminately. Rioters forcibly removed and beat unsuspecting blacks who were riding on the street cars. Smaller mobs formed and began to spread out around the downtown area of East St. Louis, attacking more blacks whom they encountered.

Many different people participated in the riot. Although the large majority of the rioters were white men, women and children also joined the mobs. Spectators lined the streets to watch, and after a beating or a shooting, bystanders would then participate by kicking wounded or dead victims. Some bystanders cheered when others killed or beat victims. White prostitutes also attacked black women by kicking and beating them, much to the enjoyment of male bystanders. Rioters appeared to have no remorse for any of their actions either during or after the riot. Observers noted the calm callousness with which rioters shot and killed innocent blacks.

Several **lynchings** also took place during the riot. A group of rioters tried to lynch a man with a clothesline, but the line was not strong enough to hold the weight of his body. The group eventually found a stronger rope and lynched him. Another group attempted to lynch another man but rather than hanging him, dragged him around the city instead. Many of the rioters believed that victims deserved to suffer before dying. In some instances, medical personnel and sympathetic bystanders were unable to help victims as rioters threatened violence against them. One of the more heinous actions occurred when a group of rioters forcibly took a child from its mother, shot the child, and threw it into a burning building. Rioters either left bodies in the streets, burned them, or threw them into nearby Cahokia Creek.

There were numerous reports of atrocities. A mob boarded a streetcar and ordered all of the whites to leave so that the mob could kill a black family on the streetcar. After the rioters murdered the father and the son and severely beat the mother, several bystanders pleaded with the mob to spare the woman's life. The bystanders eventually saved the woman, but during the ambulance ride to the hospital, the woman found her dead husband and son lying beneath her. In another incident, a black man tried to escape from a mob of thirty men, but the mob eventually overtook him, kicking and beating him into senselessness. A rioter then calmly shot the man in the face five times.

Mobs also attacked homes where blacks lived, torching them to force out the occupants. Black residents could either stay inside their houses to be burned or try to escape outside where rioters would wait to shoot those who dared to leave. One stable hand refused to leave the barn in which he worked. He phoned his employer that he was afraid to leave the barn for fear of being shot. Rioters eventually burned the barn, killing the stable hand. Many blacks escaped their burning homes by exiting the back of their houses into the alleys. Well into the evening, the mobs had destroyed many

homes. Some black families protected their homes with the help of national guardsmen, but most were not so fortunate.

While the Illinois National Guard slowly arrived in East St. Louis to restore order, many guardsmen failed to protect victims, and some guardsmen actually participated in the riot, shooting at blacks or ignoring pleas for assistance. In one instance, rioters began to heckle a guardsman who had a gun, but was not shooting it. Inspired by the crowd, the guardsman began to fire at blacks. Not all guardsmen supported and participated in the riot; a minority actually prevented lynchings and were able to arrest rioters. Unfortunately, large crowds easily overwhelmed the small number of guardsmen who were thinly dispersed throughout the city. East St. Louis police officers provided little protection. Many were poorly paid and corrupt, supplementing their income by taking bribes and accepting gratuities. Many officers refused to protect blacks against the wishes of the white population, and some participated in the violence. For example, several officers and guardsmen noticed a young black girl leaving an outhouse to return to the house in which she worked. They fired at her, severing her arm below the shoulder.

Some blacks were able to mobilize and offer resistance, but this generally occurred in the fringe neighborhoods. In the riot area, approximately 100 blocks at and around downtown, blacks were generally helpless against the onslaught. Many blacks fled the city by crossing the free bridge to St. Louis. Rioters often heckled them as they left, telling them not to return upon penalty of death. The randomness of attacks and indiscriminate killings made it difficult for blacks to mobilize and retaliate. Many blacks did not have weapons because, prior to the riot, guardsmen confiscated guns in an effort to minimize their ability to retaliate.

By the time the riot was over well into the evening of July 2, the death toll was large. Official reports later noted that thirty-nine blacks and nine whites were dead. The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and the *Chicago Defender*, the nation's leading black newspaper, claimed that between 100 and 200 blacks lost their lives. Local white East St. Louis residents claimed that at least 400 were dead. Hospitals reported treating as many as 100 victims on that day, but many black victims probably refused treatment out of fear of being abused again. One newspaper suggested that 750 blacks received serious injuries. In terms of property, a deputy state fire marshal reported that 244 buildings had been destroyed totaling \$373,605 worth of damages, but a congressional committee declared that 312 buildings had been destroyed at a loss of \$394,000.

After the riot, whites generally showed little or no remorse for what had happened. Most felt the local black population deserved the treatment it had received, and many whites returned to downtown the next day to find souvenirs and to tour the morgue to see the victims' bodies. National exposure was substantially different. Northern newspapers largely condemned East St. Louis and the state that had given the country Abraham Lincoln. Southern newspapers noted the hypocrisy of northerners, who claimed the north provided equal opportunity for whites and blacks.



Shortly after the riots, the state's attorney failed to indict anyone because of his inability to locate witnesses and his belief that the riots constituted an appropriate response to the growing black population. Governor Lowden dispatched his assistant attorney general to East St. Louis. More than a month later, a grand jury indicted 134 people, nearly one-third of whom were black. Many of the white defendants pleaded guilty to lesser charges, paying minimal fines or serving from a few days to a month in the local jail. The St. Clair County Circuit Court heard six major trials, four of them against whites and two against blacks. Only nine whites served time in the state penitentiary, and the court sentenced twelve blacks to the penitentiary. The harshest sentences were fourteen-year terms for two white defendants. In one case against a black defendant, the jury found one man guilty of inciting a riot that led to the death of the two police detectives, but the Illinois Supreme Court overturned the conviction.

Soon after the riot, East St. Louis business and community leaders requested a federal investigation to prevent future riots. President Woodrow Wilson failed to get involved. Because of President Wilson's lack of interest, Congress became involved in investigating the riot when a representative from St. Louis claimed that the riot disrupted interstate commerce. During the hearings, many residents of East St. Louis testified to the corrupt politics and labor disputes of the recent years. The congressional committee concluded that labor problems, mass migration of blacks from the South, and political corruption were the major factors that led to the race riot on July 2, 1917. The committee also indicted the morals of the East St. Louis community with one congressman noting his surprise about the existence of such corrupt conditions. Although the committee failed to press federal charges against anyone for their participation in the riot, most newspapers commended the work of the committee.

School enrollment records and census data show that there was a large decrease in the black population of East St. Louis after the July 2, 1917 riot. Population figures approximate that more than 10,000 blacks lived in the city in 1917, and the black population fell to 6,800 a year later. The black population slowly grew again in the years following, and the 1920 census showed a population of 7,400. Tensions between whites and blacks continued long after the race riot; schools remained segregated until the mid-twentieth century, and civic leaders often vetoed plans for the integration of clubs for fear of another race riot. The economic advantages of the city disintegrated during the Great Depression, and by the 1950s and 1960s, the white population abandoned the city. By 1970, East St. Louis was 97 percent black, becoming one of the largest nearly all-black cities in the country. *See also* Dyer, Leonidas C.

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*John A. Lupton*

### **Economic Opportunity Act of 1964**

In August 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, a piece of legislation that initiated the War on Poverty—the name given to the federal government’s monumental effort to eradicate poverty in the United States. The act was the brainchild of Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr., who became the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Some scholars believe that the Johnson Administration assumed that poverty was, for the most part, not structural but instead a question of wasted human capital. As a result, the act was purportedly intended to encourage poor persons to organize themselves and to seek help from the federal government to raise their status. However, because high-ranking positions in the OEO were occupied primarily by whites and funding for the agency was insufficient, Rev. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, considered Johnson’s benevolence to be a shrewd political move intended to stifle dissent and discontent. King believed that Johnson had no intention of attacking the underlying causes of poverty. Nevertheless, the act was meant to meet not only short-term economic needs, but also to seek remedies for long-range problems and thus result in permanent progress for the poor.

Under the direction of Shriver, the OEO established several programs that attempted to remedy the problem of the chronic unemployment of African Americans. The Concentrated Employment Program, the Manpower Development and Training Act, and the Work Incentive Program for Welfare Clients were supposed to be stopgap measures intended to provide job training and preparation for placement for the unemployable. Furthermore, OEO directed such programs as the Job Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)—a sort of domestic peace corps—which were intended to enable African American youth to learn and acquire technical skills. Of the many programs, Head Start, an initiative that sought to train disadvantaged preschoolers, and Upward Bound, which strove to prepare the poor for higher education, were intended to bring about an end to poverty in the United States.

Perhaps the most controversial program created under the Economic Opportunity Act was the Community Action Program. This program, which was supposed to bring about the maximum participation of the poor in grassroots politics, provided significant administrative training and experience for African Americans. It also enabled persons to network and interact with influential politicians who served as important connections. Yet, as a whole, the program did not have much long-range impact. The board meetings were often volatile. The politicians and middle-class professionals—not the poor people—took control of the significant policy issues. As a result of several outbursts between the poor and local political leaders, opposition by Democratic mayors and their city councils encouraged Congress to drastically cut the Community Action Program’s federal and state funding,

thereby eviscerating any political or economic power the poor could or would have.

Any assessment of the impact of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964—both long-range and short-term—must be framed on two levels. First, it succeeded in enabling many persons who had long histories of unemployment to become members of the workforce. Second, it simultaneously nurtured rising expectations that were clearly unfounded. By giving the OEO a paltry budget—under \$1 billion—Congress was providing the disadvantaged with a mere fraction of the funds necessary to fulfill its grandiose goals. In short, the act created an ambience in which African Americans rightly expected some viable remedy to their socioeconomic status. The frustration that resulted from the disparity of the exalted goals of the Johnson Administration's rhetoric and the continuing realities of unemployment, poverty, and desperation that attended everyday life in African American **ghettos** in major urban areas turned those same residential areas of the disadvantaged into hotbeds of race riots and ghetto revolts. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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Vernon J. Williams, Jr.

### Elaine (Arkansas) Riot of 1919

During the night of September 30, 1919, a bloody race war, rooted in struggles over labor, erupted in eastern Arkansas, resulting in the deaths of five whites and over 200 blacks before federal troops restored order. Local whites, who had terrorized blacks for decades, claimed that blacks had been plotting an uprising against plantation owners that had been prematurely uncovered. This precipitated one of the bloodiest racial repressions in the United States in the twentieth century.

The changes brought to the country by World War I affected even sharecroppers in the delta country of Arkansas. Blacks, who outnumbered whites in Phillips County, dared to exercise their American right to protest the traditional pattern of economic exploitation by white landlords. This decision produced a violent reaction among the whites, which culminated in a concerted effort to kill or drive from the area all blacks suspected of involvement in the protest.

In 1910, Phillips County, Arkansas, where **Jim Crow** reigned supreme, had a population of 34,000—three-fourths of it black. In one township, there resided only one white man; in another, none. On the east, the Mississippi River bordered the county, separating it from the state of Mississippi; on the south, Desha County bordered the county; on the west, the counties of Arkansas and Monroe formed the border; and Lee County bordered Phillips County on the north. In this area, rich delta lands abounded. People

referred to this section as the *Black Belt* because of the high concentration of black people who mainly worked as sharecroppers on the many plantations of the region. Out of this manipulative situation came the so-called Elaine Riot.

The Gerard B. Lambert Company of St. Louis, Missouri, owned the Lambrook Plantation cotton lands around the small town of Elaine. Into this area came a "short, thin, very black man wearing a frock coat" (*New York World*, November 19, 1919) in the spring and summer of 1919. Robert L. Hill, twenty-six-years old, hailed from Winchester, Arkansas, where he lived with his wife on a small tenant farm. Hill saw that black tenants needed protection from unscrupulous white landlords and decided to do something about the situation.

Black people continually had trouble getting fair settlements for the cotton they raised on land owned or managed by whites. Ideally, both owner and tenant farmer shared the profits from the yearly sale, but the owner/manager began selling the crop whenever or however he saw fit. At the time of settlement, in most cases, blacks received neither itemized statements nor any cottonseed-money accountings. Only the total amount owed appeared in the records, followed by a settlement, which kept most (if not all) blacks indebted to the landlord. Intimidation and threats of bodily harm kept black people from protesting against this extremely disadvantageous system, yet alleged abuses of padding and peonage became common as most blacks remained helpless in defending themselves. Many black tenant farmers in Phillips County did not receive settlements before July 1919 for cotton sold in October 1918.

Individual protests against landlords not giving itemized statements and equitable settlements failed and further persecutions followed. In answer to these circumstances, black tenant farmers formed a legitimate alliance in Phillips County to end the vicious system of economic exploitation, better described as quasi-slavery. These people conceived the Organization of the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America.

Robert Hill founded the union and, as a display of his authority, often used the title *United States and Foreign Detective* in union meetings and in signing its stationary. V.E. Powell, a medical doctor, also a founder and examiner of the union, had printed after his signature on the application forms, *Employed in the U.S. Service*. At the top of many circular mastheads read, *Orders of Washington, D.C.: The Great Torch of Liberty*. Contrary to popular belief at the time, there existed no indication of any other motive in the minds of the leaders of the union other than securing relief from persistent exploitation and the acquisition of resources that the rising price of cotton could bring the farmers if more equitable settlements were made to them.

The union needed lodges and members to be successful. Hill therefore issued a proclamation with the caption *The Negro Business League*, which read as follows:

Join the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America. O, you laborers of the earth hear the word! The time is at hand that all men, all

nations and tongues must receive a just reward! The union wants you to know why it is that the laborers can not control their just earnings which they work for. Some of the leading business merchants and authorities are saying [*sic*] we are pleading the right cause and are due consideration. There are many of our families suffering because our men are forced to act as children. We also plead that we be recognized as taxpaying citizens. Remember the Holy Word when the Almighty took John up on the mountain and commanded him to look, and asked John what he saw, and John said: "I see all nations and tongues coming up before God." Now, we are a nation and a tongue. Why should we be cut off from fair pay? Hear us. O God, hear us! We only ask every Negro man for \$1.50 for joining fees; women, 50 cents. Write Box 31, Winchester, Ark., and we will come down and set up a body among you. Get 15 men and 12 women. We will set up together. (*New York World*, November 19, 1919)

As a result of response to this proclamation, blacks established union lodges from April through August at Elaine, Hoop Spur, Old Town, Ratio, Mellwood, Countiss, and Ferguson. The union's objective remained "to advance the interests of black people, morally and intellectually, and to make them better citizens and better farmers" (Rogers, 144–145). These proved dangerous goals in post-World War I United States. The union, first organized in 1919 by Hill at Winchester, Arkansas, had its articles of incorporation prepared by Williamson and Williamson, white attorneys of Monticello, and filed in legal form. Its constitution contained provisions for passwords, door words, grips, and signs, all to be changed every three months to ensure secrecy. Violators of union secrecy faced either fines or expulsion. An expelled member could only be reinstated after a ninety-nine-year period. Also, members in good standing could not associate with the ostracized person.

Union stabilization brought on various incidents that produced a mounting racial antagonism. For example, the black sawmill workers of Elaine refused to allow their wives and daughters to pick cotton or to work for the whites at any price. Other blacks refused to pick cotton unless paid their own price, and reports circulated that many refused to work for white farmers at any wages. Edward Ware, secretary of a lodge, refused to sell his cotton for offers varying from twenty-four cents to thirty-three cents a pound when a fairer market price of forty-six cents existed. Friction developed between Ware and his merchants; finally Ware sought the services of a Helena, Arkansas, lawyer. This protest by legal means against the existing economic exploitation further strained interracial relations between union members and the white community. An atmosphere of apprehension developed rapidly, and trouble seemed inevitable.

The union found its strength in numbers and organization. Each member pledged himself to protect the others since the blacks expressed disgust at being expected and forced to act as children. In local meetings members made denunciations of and inflammatory speeches against the white planters. At one time, Union members began to arm themselves for defensive action, thus rumors started to circulate around Elaine to the effect that the blacks were plotting an uprising and planning to slaughter a large number of whites if a peaceful division of the land could not be obtained.

The firm of Bratton, Bratton, and Casey, attorneys of Little Rock, set up a branch office in Helena. At Hill's suggestion, the youngest (Ocier S.) Bratton entered into contracts with the black people to enforce a settlement for them and to sue for all past moneys due them. Each of sixty-eight blacks agreed to pay the firm twenty-five dollars in cash and a percentage of the money collected from the landowners. These persons and others met secretly to discuss their plight and to collect the lawyers' fees. Some reportedly wanted to go before the grand jury to charge their landlords with peonage.

Hill attended a meeting of the union at Hoop Spur on Friday night, September 26. The large, enthusiastic gathering heard Hill speak very strongly against the whites and reiterate that the black race's salvation lay in organization. Hill also insisted that all meetings be well guarded and that "no whites should be allowed to molest" (*New York World*, November 19, 1919) the members or the meetings.

The union held another meeting at a Hoop Spur church just north of Elaine on the night of September 30, but Hill did not appear. Four of the black men present were John Martin, Alfred Banks, William Wardlow, and Frank Moore. The church, filled to capacity, had two rings of guards holding rifles and shotguns, posted outside it. The guards, seeing the headlights of an approaching automobile, withdrew to the brush to let it pass. The automobile stopped at a small stream near the church and the guards silently drew near. A white man stood near the car and said, "Going coon hunting, boys?" (*New York World*, November 19, 1919). The guards made no reply and withdrew. Someone fired a shot. Shots then became numerous and the meeting ended abruptly with blacks leaping through windows of the church and hurriedly moving through other exits to all parts of the hinterland.

The men in the car turned out to be Special Agent W.A. Adkins of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, Sheriff's Deputy Charles Pratt, and a black "trusty." Several hours later, a small posse of whites arrived at the scene because earlier a message from law officers in Elaine stated that a notorious bootlegger known only as Clem had "gone on a rampage," and threatened to kill his wife (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*, October 2, 1919). Meanwhile, Sheriff Kitchen had sent a posse composed of Adkins, Pratt, and the black trusty to arrest Clem and other disorderly citizens. The posse claimed that their car broke down, and that the union guards fired upon the posse first. Adkins died instantly and Pratt received a bullet through his knee. The black trusty escaped unhurt and reported the shooting by telephone to the citizens of Helena. He told of a vicious attack and stated that there was still fighting going on. Pratt, in the meantime, crawled to the railroad, flagged a freight train, and upon arriving at the station, telephoned an account of the shooting to Sheriff Kitchen in Helena. In a later report, the blacks claimed that Adkins and Pratt fired upon them with the intention of breaking up their meeting.

A white man named Monroe stopped at the scene an hour later, about 1:30 A.M., October 1, to view the abandoned automobile and the dead man. Shot at and wounded twice, he still managed to crank his Ford and get to

Elaine, two miles away, and telephone the sheriff. Fighting continued and a group of black farmers from a plantation west of Elaine took up arms. Calls went throughout the delta citing a revolt by blacks that resulted in mobs of from 600 to 1,000 whites coming from neighboring counties the next day. Men of Elaine and others assembled in the streets before daylight and set off a local panic during which whites armed themselves and either tortured or massacred numerous blacks. At least fifteen black people were killed. The sheriff issued guns, and meetings among leading men of both racial groups prepared methods of keeping the peace. The governor, Charles H. Brough, advised of conditions, ordered a posse to Hoop Spur. The first men to arrive upon the scene came from the American Legion camp composed of newly returned war veterans.

By early Thursday morning, October 2, word had already circulated among the black people around Elaine that "whites were going to try to kill black people." Many crossed the railroad tracks to hide in the canebrakes. Others scattered all over the area, some escaping into Pulaski County. News of Adkins' death precipitated a state of serious racial antagonism as white men from all parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee poured into the area to disarm, arrest, or kill the black folk. Confiscated arms were then given to whites who had descended upon the small town of Helena. Blacks not immediately arrested were "hunted down like animals" (White, 234).

Early accounts said 1,000 to 1,500 blacks had assembled and attacked the white residents using high-powered rifles. Meanwhile, a Helena telephone operator, between screams, told an official in Elaine that fighting raged in the streets. Other messages frantically called for additional law enforcements, guns, and ammunition, and asked the sheriff to request the governor to send troops from Camp Pike and Little Rock. At one interval of the fighting Chief Deputy J.R. Dalsell, in charge of the posse at Elaine, telephoned that he must have help, his force was greatly outnumbered, and that firing had become general. Special trains rushed to and from Elaine and Helena carrying wounded men, women, and children.

When a posse of white men arrived at Elaine from Helena, they began to search and ransack black homes while arresting men and women indiscriminately. Exchanges of gunfire occurred, and men fell dead on both sides. As the situation got worse, Sheriff Kitchen requested Governor Brough to send troops from Camp Pike. The governor granted the request and accompanied these troops, under the command of Col. I.C. Jenks, Third Division. He immediately on arrival ordered a battalion, under the command of Maj. N.E. Callen, to deploy and start a search of the canebrakes to the west of Elaine. Another detachment went to Mellwood, and others went to several small settlements nearby. Colonel Jenks dispatched another company of soldiers to Helena late on the afternoon of October 2, on a special train of the Missouri Pacific Railroad to stop any trouble that might start there. Five-hundred-eighty soldiers, armed with twelve machine guns and other weapons, rode to Elaine, then under martial law, and anxiously joined their white comrades in the fighting against the blacks. One machine gun was placed atop the Elaine Mercantile Building to help disperse **white mobs** and restore order.

Troops, deputies, and armed whites swept the canebrakes and woods to round up all black people; they tortured and arrested them, and placed them in a stockade as the troops and posses combed the area around Elaine for a radius of fifty miles. In some spots, shooting so frequently erupted that even Governor Brough had to dodge bullets while following troops into the canebrakes where soldiers and irate citizens indiscriminately killed and wounded black people. Colonel Jenks reported that one of his soldiers had been shot and killed, and another had been wounded. The estimated death toll for blacks ranged from as few as 20 to as many as 856. At least 103 burial claims were made to a local insurance provider.

Later accounts stated that some blacks had been driven from Elaine, but that fighting still progressed one mile to the north, where the outlaws rallied and supposedly received reinforcements. After several encounters, the shooting finally died down late in the evening of October 2, and straggling posses began to dribble into Helena. They brought with them all kinds of stories, but through them all ran the strong suspicion that the rioting/uprising appeared to have been caused by propaganda furnished by white men. Whether these white men could be connected with the gang of bootleggers that operated in the canebrakes near Elaine and Lambrook Plantation remained a puzzle. Most whites felt rather certain, however, that an organization of blacks antagonistic to them existed in the southern part of the country.

The troops arrested more blacks and herded them into the stockade. They refused the captives communication with relatives, friends, or attorneys. Although some black people could prove their innocence, they were not released until a white person vouched for them. In many instances, this support did not take place until the black person agreed to work for the white patron for a period of time for wages scaled by the employer.

O.S. Bratton, a lawyer for the union, met with a group of blacks at Ratio to plan court strategy for forcing back settlements on cotton sales. A posse broke up this conference and arrested Bratton and approximately seventy blacks. Bratton and fifteen blacks arrived in Helena under heavy guard. Presumably, Bratton led the blacks who had opposed the officers and citizens. The jail at Elaine remained very heavily guarded, but emotions escalated. Jailed for thirty-one days without a hearing on a charge of barratry, or fomenting legal action, Bratton finally secured his freedom by posting bond. He narrowly escaped lynching for his involvement with the union and had to be secretly escorted out of the area. According to Bratton's father, U.S. Bratton, his son had nothing to do either with the murder or inciting the riot, since his family never advocated social equality and always advised blacks to obey the law.

On Thursday afternoon, October 3, the posses found Elihu Johnson, a black, and his three brothers hiding south of Elaine, all heavily armed. Johnson, a Helena dentist, appeared to be well-to-do. The deputies disarmed the four and put them in the back seat of an automobile, and the deputies sat up front. They then started for Helena. At a gasoline stop, two of the white men got out. One of the Johnson brothers reportedly leaned forward, seized



Orley R. Lilly's revolver, and killed him. The other white men killed the four Johnson brothers on the spot.

Later that evening, somebody shot James A. Tappan, a white, in an ambush, and a soldier, Corporal Earls, died of gunshot wounds. Soon after these deaths the posses and soldiers had most of the armed blacks penned down in the canebrakes. Of the 700 members of the union in Phillips County, more than 400 hid in the canebrakes. Before being flushed out more than twenty blacks had been killed. The Helena jail and courthouse overflowed with prisoners. Surrounded by angry, vindictive whites, three big army trucks supposedly carried the captured rifles and shotguns. In West Helena, Henry Sloan, a black, found himself in jail on a charge of making incendiary speeches in the black section of that city. Yet, whites of West Helena remarked, "the Negroes of that city have conducted themselves most commendably during the disturbances of the past three days" (*Memphis Commercial Appeal*, October 4, 1919). Meanwhile, someone reportedly saw Hill near his farm. This appeared to be the last time anyone saw Hill in Arkansas, and he remained the only prominent member of the union unaccounted for. He had withdrawn \$12,000 from the local bank.

Governor Brough, on the night of October 3, appointed a committee of seven prominent citizens with full authority to conduct a complete investigation. E.M. Allen, a founder of Elaine and a member of the committee, noted that the real underlying causes of this "insurrection" stand out as "avarice and greed" (Butts and James, 99; Seligmann, 541). An abstract of Allen's report showed that the trouble with the blacks in Phillips County happened not to be a racial riot, but a "deliberately planned insurrection" (Butts and James, 99; Seligmann, 541) of the blacks against the whites directed by an organization known as the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America. Its founder, Robert L. Hill, of Winchester, Arkansas, saw in it "an opportunity of making easy money" (Butts and James, 99; Seligmann, 541). Allen's report further stated that Hill told the blacks that he had become an agent of the U.S. government in defense of the blacks against the whites, that it appeared necessary for all members of the union to arm themselves, and that all lodge meetings must maintain an outer guard. Additionally, Hill presumably told the blacks that the government planned to construct at Winchester three warehouses where "arms, ammunition, and trained soldiers would be ready for instant use" (Butts and James, 99; Seligmann, 541).

Allen's report found that Hill had many schemes for obtaining money from the lodge members. Hill sold certificates, those for registration costing fifty cents and those for admission to the lodge in Winchester costing five dollars. Shares for a building to be constructed at Winchester went on sale at ten dollars each, and all members purchasing five or more shares would have their names engraved therein. Hill made some members "private and foreign detectives" and sold them nickel-plated stars and handcuffs for fifty dollars each. He procured government maps of land in the Elaine area, which he said could be purchased for \$200, the purchase price to be raised and paid to Hill in cash. Certain blacks, after receiving descriptions of the land, supposedly designated which parts of the various farms, then under

cultivation, they wished to obtain after “the whites had been driven off (Butts and James, 100). Allen’s committee also found that black soldiers at Elaine sold their discharge papers for sums of \$50 to \$100 on a belief that these discharges entitled the holder to forty acres of government land. Furthermore, according to Allen’s report, Hill so planned his campaign that “any black, possessing from fifty cents to fifty dollars was given the opportunity to invest in something connected with the union” (Butts and James, 100). In short, the committee found that Robert Hill was an outside agitator who had duped local blacks into planning an insurrection. The black farmers involved in the initial shootout had met to work out the details of the alleged insurrection to include the slaughter of white planters and the confiscation of white property. The net effect turned out to be the saving of countless white citizens at the expense of many black lives. Additionally, the committee commended the white citizenry of Phillips County for exercising restraint, even though many black people had been tortured and killed. The committee report demonstrated that whites needed to believe that their brutal actions had been justified and that local blacks could not have been capable of such scheming on their own.

In its summation, the report of the committee of seven said in effect that the shooting at Hoop Spur nipped a “mature plan of insurrection” (Rogers, 148–149) by members of the union against the white population of Phillips County. Taking place on October 6, 1919, the alleged uprising had marked twenty-one white men for death. Many persons, however, failed to believe the official report of the committee because local white leaders comprised the committee, including two plantation owners. The report’s summation alleged that the union’s literature demanded “social equality and resistance to injustice” (Rogers, 148–149), that the blacks were heavily armed with a large quantity of guns and ammunition, that they fought back and killed five white men, and that many blacks confessed to having been a part of a “well-laid plan to kill twenty-one white planters” (Rogers, 148–149). To the contrary, after the accused received proper legal counsel, the principal confessions changed noticeably, and most denied charges of being parties to an insurrection. In the final analysis, the issuance of the committee’s report “served only to aggravate an already bad situation” (Rogers, 148–149) because Arkansas’ elected officials, white power brokers, and black elites sought to minimize the negative impact of the massacres on their own social and economic standing, thereby revealing the investment that each group had in the social structure of the caste-system South.

At the end of the week, those blacks not in jail went back to the old routine of picking cotton or spending seed money, but living in perpetual fear. Meanwhile, the best lawyers in Phillips County, according to the *New York World* (November 19, 1919), received appointments from Judge M.M. Jackson to defend those blacks accused of murder, known as the Elaine Twelve. Col. George W. Murphy (white) of Little Rock, former attorney general of Arkansas, and Scipio Africanus Jones, a black former slave who became a prominent lawyer in the same city, represented the accused men, while sixty-seven other blacks received prison sentences. No local whites were ever charged. **Walter White**, a courageous and youthful **National**

**Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** administrator, ventured into Arkansas and passed for white to investigate the incident. His findings encouraged the NAACP to enter the case. Moorfield Story, a distinguished Boston attorney, directed the eventual appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Meanwhile, friction developed between the national NAACP office and the local black attorneys in Arkansas that foreshadowed tensions to emerge later in cases involving the national body, thereby highlighting class and regional divisions in the black leadership of the era in the face of the overt dilemma that **segregation** presented to them.

According to Arkansas law, each party to a conspiracy is guilty of all crimes emanating from the conspiracy; therefore, all the accused blacks could have been indicted for first-degree murder, but the local court earnestly tried to administer a fairer justice. Assuredly, the lawyers prepared the cases with great care before court convened. Nevertheless, the all-white jury delayed not in finding verdicts, some after only two to ten minutes of deliberation. No witnesses for the defense testified. The defense did not ask for a change of venue, and the trials started one month after the incident while demonstrable ill feelings remained intense. Amid the daily publication of inflammatory newspaper articles and based on statements obtained under duress from black detainees, the grand jury indicted eleven black men for murder in the deaths of three white men (in all, five whites died, including one soldier). The first six defendants appeared. The judge and jury jointly accused them, tried them, and found all guilty as charged in exactly seven minutes. The jury sentenced the six men to electrocution on December 27, 1919, for first-degree murder. Of the fifty blacks found guilty of second-degree murder, ten received twenty-one-year terms in the state penitentiary. Eleven blacks got one-year terms for night riding, which was a felony in Arkansas. The judge bound thirty persons over to the next grand jury and released them on bond. The whole process took only eight days.

Twelve black men remained condemned, namely, Edward Ware, Albert Giles, Joseph Fox, John Martin, Alf Banks, Jr., William Wordlow, Frank Moore, Edward Hicks, J.E. Knox, Edward Coleman, Paul Hall, and Frank Hicks. Their petition for a writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of the State of Arkansas was denied on October 11, 1920, and they were slated for execution. At this point, the NAACP intervened on behalf of the condemned men and, after a very difficult five-year struggle, finally won their freedom. The indictment said that these men were responsible for the death of one Clinton Lee (a white), but reports suggest that whites killed Lee.

According to the depositions for *Moore v. Dempsey* (261 U.S. 86, argued January 9, 1923, and decided February 19, 1923), shortly after the arrest of the petitioners a mob marched to the jail for the purpose of **lynching** them but was prevented by the presence of U.S. troops and the promise of some of the Committee of Seven and other leading officials that if the mob would refrain, they would execute those found guilty in the form of law. Black witnesses, after having been whipped and tortured, were called in to testify against the accused. On November 3, 1919, the petitioners were brought into court. The court and neighborhood were

thronged with a hostile crowd threatening the most dangerous consequences to anyone interfering with their desired result. The subsequent trial lasted three-quarters of an hour and in less than five minutes the jury brought in a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree with no chance for the petitioners to be acquitted.

An appeal to the State Supreme Court was granted and sixty days allowed for preparing a bill of exceptions. On March 22, 1920, this appeal was argued orally and by briefs. On March 29, 1920, the court announced its opinion, reviewed the proceedings, and affirmed the prior judgment (*Hicks v. State*, 143 Ark. 158, 220 S.W. 308). A petition for rehearing was presented April 19, 1920, and overruled on April 26, 1920. A petition or certiorari filed was then filed in the Supreme Court on May 24, 1920, with the record of proceedings in the state courts attached. The petition was presented October 5, 1920, and denied October 11, 1920.

On April 29, 1921, the governor of Arkansas directed execution of the defendants on June 10, 1921. On June 8, 1921, the chancery court of Pulaski County granted the defendants a writ of habeas corpus. The state Supreme Court then (June 20, 1920) held that the chancery court lacked jurisdiction and prohibited further proceedings. On August 23, 1921, a justice of the state Supreme Court denied a writ of error. Learning of this action, the governor then set September 23, 1921, as the date for execution by electrocution. However, on September 21, 1921, a habeas corpus proceeding began in the Supreme Court with U.S. Bratton of Detroit, Michigan; Scipio A. Jones of Little Rock, Arkansas; and Moorfield Storey of Boston, Massachusetts, representing the appellants and Elbert Godwin of Melbourne, Arkansas, representing the state of Arkansas. The appeal was received from an order of the District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas dismissing a writ of habeas corpus upon demurrer because of probable cause for allowing the appeal from two cases consolidated into one concerning five black men convicted of murder in the first degree and sentenced to death by the court of the state of Arkansas.

The appeal noted that the proceedings in the state court, although a trial in form, were only in form; thus, the appellants were hurried to conviction under the pressure of a mob without any regard for their rights and without, according to them, due process of law. The petition held further that the whole proceeding was "a mask" because counsel, jury, and judge had been "swept to a fatal end by an irresistible wave of public passion," and that the state courts failed to correct the wrong, that "neither perfection in the machinery for correction nor the possibility that the trial court and counsel saw no other way of avoiding an immediate outbreak of the mob" (*Moore et al. v. Dempsey*, 261 U.S. 86 [1923]). Therefore, the Supreme Court did not find sufficient cause "to allow a judge of the United States to escape the duty of examining the facts for himself when if true as alleged they make the trial absolutely void" (*Moore et al. v. Dempsey*), even though, in dissent, it was noted that the Supreme Court of Arkansas had twice reversed the conviction of other blacks charged with committing murder during the September 1919 disorders. The first opinion came down on the very day upon which the judgment against the petitioners was

affirmed, and held the verdict so defective that no judgment could be entered upon it. The second directed a reversal because the trial court had refused to hear evidence on the motion to set aside the regular panel of the petit jury (*Banks v. State*, 143 Ark. 154, 219 S.W. 1015; *Ware v. State*, 146 Ark. 321, 225 S.W. 626).

Meanwhile, appeals to the governor earnestly urged him not to interfere with the pending execution of the petitioners. In addition, a meeting of the Helena Rotary Club attended by members representing seventy-five of the leading industrial and commercial enterprises of Helena, passed a resolution approving and supporting the action of the American Legion Post, which had earlier appealed to the governor not to interfere with the proceedings. Then, the Lions Club of Helena held a meeting attended by members representing sixty leading industrial and commercial enterprises and passed a resolution to the same effect. Yet, by May 1920, the probability remained very high that the petitioners would be lynched. Appeal for a new trial was denied. On June 8, 1921, two days before the date fixed for their execution, a petition for habeas corpus was presented to the chancery court which issued a writ and an injunction; but the Supreme Court of the State of Arkansas held that the chancery court had no jurisdiction under state law whatever might be the law of the United States. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas received the matter on September 21, 1921. The appeal was denied. Yet, the U.S. Supreme Court, in its wisdom via *Moore v. Dempsey*, ultimately ruled that the petition of the appellants should be heard and thereby reversed the decision of the Arkansas district court. This precedent-setting case established the principle that a mob-dominated trial in a state court was invalid and thus constituted an opening wedge for supervision by federal courts of state criminal trials. *Moore v. Dempsey* became “a milestone in the modern interpretation of the Due Process Clause of the **Fourteenth Amendment**” by “vacating a dismissal and remanding for a hearing on its merits” (Martin, 292). Such an “egregious miscarriage of justice” convinced the Supreme Court to expand and finally abandon the limitation of habeas corpus to jurisdictional questions and instead “to consider nearly all constitutional claims, and to make habeas review *de novo*” (U.S. Ninth Circuit of Appeals, *Henry v. Lungren*, No. 90-56215 [1998]). Furthermore, Moore had a good claim of cause for default due to “ineffective assistance of counsel” (*Murray v. Carrier*, 477 U.S. 478, 492 [1986]). Thus, *Moore* won protection of the right of all citizens to a fair hearing in a courtroom and to not have black voices suppressed. In the end, all of the Elaine Twelve were finally freed five years after their conviction because the state of Arkansas declined to revisit the matter. *See also* Fourteenth Amendment; Sharecropping.

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Lee E. Williams, II

### Election Riots of the 1880s and 1890s

The Election Riots of the 1880s and 1890s resulted from the attempts by conservative whites to wipe out all residual opposition to their political takeover during the period known as Redemption. These riots constituted the second wave of violence inflicted upon blacks since **Reconstruction**. Also during this period, **lynching** emerged as one of the most commonly used tactics among whites to maintain their social, economic, and political power over blacks.

Redemption is the name given to the white conservative takeover of the Republican southern state government that had been established during Reconstruction. Prior to Redemption, Democrats in one last attempt to salvage their political power engaged in riots in **Memphis, Tennessee (1866)**, and **New Orleans, Louisiana (1866)**. But those riots had disastrous repercussions, as the federal government sent in federal troops to maintain law and order in the South. Redemption, however, was more successful, as conservative white Democrats seized back control of their states one by one. For blacks and their white supporters, this was a terrifying period. Blacks and whites were mercilessly threatened, beaten, shot, and murdered. Whites devised new and elaborate tactics with masks and nightly visits to frighten their opposition. They unlawfully purchased and stole votes through trickery. The first wave of riots occurred throughout the southern states but were most severe in New Orleans, Louisiana (1866; 1868; 1874); Memphis, Tennessee (1866); Meridian, Mississippi (1870); Vicksburg, Mississippi (1874); and Yazoo City, Mississippi (1975). By 1877, all southern states belonged once again to the wealthy landowners and merchants of the Democratic Party.

Although southern Democrats dared not reinstate the institution of slavery, they created a system that was analogous to it. They passed **Jim Crow**

laws that mandated segregated facilities, such as schools, hospitals, asylums, cemeteries, and public transportation. Throughout the South, signs marked White Only or Black Only were visible on fountains, in parks, and at restaurants. **Segregation** legitimated **racism** as well as the social, political, and economic existence of blacks. It also gave license to the maltreatment of blacks in social situations and encounters. Blacks, particularly in the rural South, were forced to work within the **sharecropping** system. Sharecropping prevented blacks from owning land and enslaved them to an interminable cycle of debt to the white landowner and merchant. Crucial measures such as the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the **Fourteenth Amendment**, and black male suffrage, which was sanctioned during Reconstruction, were ignored and blatantly violated at every turn.

In the 1880s and the 1890s, opposition to white Democratic political power still loomed in some parts of the South. Election violence was not new to Americans. Riotous behavior was a common means of political protest during the colonial era. In the early 1800s, election melees occurred between whites and ethnic groups such as the Irish and Germans in cities like New York (1834); St. Louis, Missouri (1854); Louisville, Kentucky (1855); and Baltimore, Maryland (1856; 1857; 1858).

Election violence in the American South was equally common. Lynching and riots were widely employed to establish and maintain political control. The “heaviest period of lynching” occurred between 1889 and 1919 (Gilje, 103). Although whites were also victims, lynching mostly claimed black lives. Lynching did not only involve hanging but included death by shooting or burning. Black victims were frequently tortured prior to the lynching. **Castration**, mutilation, and whippings were common. Lynching was carried out for a number of reasons, including real or imagined crimes such as assault, rape, and murder, and offenses such as challenging **white supremacy**. Other reasons included white racism and resentment over black success.

In 1882, Choctaw whites of Alabama lynched Jack Turner, who was a major political impediment to the Democrats. He had run “the Republican political machine that had marshaled black voters in election” (Gilje, 104). White Democrats targeted black Republicans in Yazoo City, Mississippi. In 1898, several hundred whites in Lake City, South Carolina, participated in the house burning and shooting death of Frazier Baker. Baker had been appointed as the postmaster as a result of his support to the Republicans. When his wife, holding a baby, and three children ran out of the burning house, the mob shot at them. They wounded the mother and children and killed the baby.

In 1886, Democrats in Washington County, Texas, attempted to “seize ballot boxes in a Republican precinct.” Armed black men confronted the white men. One black man shot and killed a white man. The authorities arrested eight blacks. In an act typical to the increasingly popular **vigilantism**, a masked **white mob** abducted three of the blacks from the jail and lynched them. White Republicans pressed authorities to investigate, but not only did the sheriff refuse to look into the lynching, the U.S. attorney failed twice to secure convictions (“White Supremacy,” 318).

A riot also broke out in Phoenix, South Carolina, in 1898. When a white Republican candidate for Congress called “for black men to fill out an affidavit if they were not permitted to vote,” violence quickly ensued (Hine et al., 318). Democrats and Republicans engaged in a shoot-out. Although no one was killed at the shoot-out, angry whites invaded the nearby rural community of Greenwood County, where they ordered those men they did not kill to bow down and salute them.

The **Wilmington, North Carolina**, riot of the same year decimated the prosperous black community of Brooklyn. The origins of the riot can be traced back to white Democrats who were conspiring to remove the remaining black Republicans who held political offices and seats on the city council in Wilmington. Whites found their cause when Alex Manly, the editor of a local black newspaper, published an anti-lynching article that claimed that white men were as guilty of assaulting black women as the black men they accused of assaults against white women. This affront gave whites an opportunity to subdue their political adversaries, as well as to damage the well-to-do black community of Brooklyn. White mobs destroyed Manly’s press and attacked blacks. Although “black officials resigned in a vain attempt to prevent further violence,” at least 11 blacks were murdered and 1,500 Brooklyn blacks left their homes, which were then seized by whites at low cost. Only one black politician remained—George H. White, a congressman who represented Wilmington and North Carolina’s second district. White “served out the remainder of his term and then moved north” (Hine et al., 318).

The violence did not cease with the election riots of the 1880s and 1890s. As white **vigilante organizations** and mobs terrorized blacks, particularly in the rural South, blacks fled, some migrating to Africa, some (known as the **Exodusters**) going westward. Others moved to urban centers in the South and the North, where they unfortunately met with more racial violence. Major race riots broke out in **New Orleans, Louisiana (1900)**; **New York City (1900)**; **Springfield, Ohio (1904)**; **Atlanta, Georgia (1906)**; **Brownsville, Texas (1906)**; and **Springfield, Illinois (1908)**.

Unlike the politically oriented riots of the 1880s and 1890s, the early-twentieth-century disturbances were brought on by other issues. In the New Orleans riot, a white mob hunted down **Robert Charles** after he shot and killed two police officers who had beaten him. Charles then killed two more officers. Afterward, a mob beat and murdered several blacks and destroyed a school. Charles killed another two officers as well as three other whites and wounded twenty more before being shot down by the mob. Competition for housing was the cause of the New York City riot. After Richard Dixon, a black man, was lynched for killing a police officer, a white mob ravaged a nearby black section of town. The Atlanta riot was instigated by three Atlanta newspapers: the *Constitution*, the *Journal*, and the *Georgian*, which ran articles accusing black men of assaulting white women. The riot in Brownsville, Texas, was controversial. Evidence at the scene of a shoot-out pointed to black troops who had been harassed by locals. Without a hearing or trial, 167 soldiers were dismissed from the



Army, barred from all military and government positions, and denied pensions or benefits (Hine et al., 344). In the Springfield riot, whites rioted after George Richardson was accused of raping a white woman. It was later found that the accusation was false.

Out of this mayhem, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** was forged. The NAACP was instrumental in attacking white violence against blacks and their communities. However, any black response to white crime was a precarious undertaking. When **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** voiced her outrage over lynching, her press was destroyed, her life was threatened, and she was forced to flee from Memphis, Tennessee, to Chicago (also the scene of numerous riots and attacks against blacks). NAACP participants were not immune to white hostility. Nevertheless, the NAACP, along with multiple anti-lynching societies and associations, waged a formidable battle through the press and with speeches and requests (although futile) to the federal government for protection. But their **press coverage** of white violence effectively kindled national sympathy and strengthened the growing opposition to violence within the South.

**Black self-defense** was a common reaction to the riots and lynching. However, the results were usually disastrous for blacks. In 1914, a seventeen-year-old was lynched because her brother murdered a white man who had raped her. A woman and her unborn child were violently killed when she vowed to bring to justice the men who had killed her husband. Numerous black men lost their lives as they tried to defend their homes and families from ravenous whites.

Federal, state, and local authorities did little to put a stop to the violence that engulfed the nation. After Redemption, the North lost interest in the problems of the South; it was preoccupied with other issues and felt that the conflict that had split the nation was over. Many Republican politicians were either murdered or bullied out of the South (see **Randolph, Benjamin**). The definitive end of federal intervention occurred as a result of the Compromise of 1877, which was made to settle the contentious election of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. The most crucial result of this compromise was the promise to end Reconstruction as well as federal involvement in the affairs of the South. Thus, it was no surprise that the federal government was not responsive during the riots of the elections of the 1880s and 1890s.

Help from within the South had been generally nonexistent since Reconstruction. The authorities and prominent leaders who had the power to challenge the white mobs and vigilante organizations that were at fault were immobilized by threats to their lives and families. whites were not exempt from the violence.

The culture of the South between the 1880s and 1890s was steeped in violence. Violence against blacks was encouraged in newspapers, children's stories and songs, and in the prevailing attitude that blacks were inferior, inhuman, and prone to crime. Although the incidences of lynching dwindled after the 1930s, the riots continued, with whites inciting riots throughout World War II. White mobs attacked the activists of the **civil**

**rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s. In the mid-1960s, the pattern shifted but the old problems remained; racism and **police brutality** were the main reasons young blacks rioted within their own communities.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## Equal Rights League

The Equal Rights League, also known as the National Equal Rights League (NERL), was an organization founded in 1908 by **William Monroe Trotter** to eliminate racial discrimination and **segregation**. It also engaged in the struggle against racial violence and advanced radical attitudes toward **black self-defense**. The Equal Rights League is often overshadowed by the more prominent **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Nonetheless, it made critical contributions for blacks during a very troubled period in American history by laying the groundwork for the imminent **civil rights movement** and was also, ironically, a harbinger for black militancy.

While many immigrant groups, white women, and the poor working class benefited from the reforms of the **Progressive era** of the nineteenth century, black life steadily worsened. Discriminatory **Jim Crow** laws (legalized segregation) stifled black progress, and rampant violence was at its peak. Leading the way for the black cause were the blacks themselves. **Booker T. Washington**, a prominent proponent of **accommodationism**, was at the forefront. **W.E.B. Du Bois** and William Monroe Trotter emerged as opponents to Washington's philosophy. They boldly called for **integration** and equal rights for blacks and spoke daringly against anti-black violence. In 1901, Trotter carried his arguments over into the *Boston Guardian*, a radical black newspaper. In 1905, Trotter and Du Bois organized the **Niagara movement**, which later became the NAACP.

Trotter was averse to the fact that the NAACP was run by whites, and he thought they were too moderate. The black-led NERL, with its philosophy of direct action, was Trotter's answer to what he saw as the question of what was needed to ensure black progress. Although NERL was predominantly black, there was at least one white leader and a few white members throughout the organization's existence. However, NERL never did achieve the success of the NAACP, as it did not have the monetary backing that came from affluent whites. Neither did it attain as much influence or acquire a large nationwide membership, since Trotter's radical views often isolated him from other blacks and the very people he sought for assistance.

In 1913, Trotter and other delegates from NERL met with President Woodrow Wilson to discuss discrimination in the government. Trotter customarily sent letters to, and met with, U.S. presidents, as did the leaders of the NAACP. This was a popular approach among conservative activists, whose objective was to collaborate with U.S. officials who had the power to affect legislation. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and others would do the same in the 1960s. In 1914, the NERL delegates met again with Wilson. This meeting was disastrous for Trotter. He angered Wilson when he asserted the president's obligation to eliminate discrimination in the government.

In 1915, Trotter and various NERL members were among the more than 1,000 people who protested the showing of **D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation***. This was a racist propaganda film that depicted blacks atrociously and glorified the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, a horrific organization that terrified and murdered blacks. There was a march, and everyone joined in the singing of *Nearer, My God, to Thee*. (Several decades later, King would also lead several marches. The song of protest was *We Shall Overcome*.) The group marched to the State House in Boston, Massachusetts. Gov. David Walsh agreed to enforce a 1910 censorship law and to prosecute the management of the Tremont Theatre and requested that Trotter relay his message to the crowd. However, the movie, with various scenes censored, was still allowed in the theater. In 1920, Trotter was among the black leaders who spoke to Mayor Andrew Peters at City Hall in opposition of the return of the Griffith film to Boston. This time, the film was banned.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I. On the home front, newspapers reported rumors of black agitation and possible rebellion. NERL acknowledged how blacks were "bitter over discrimination" but stated that, "we have no thought of taking up arms against our country. Ours has been to save the government from rebellion," and promised to "fight harder in war if they could expect better treatment in peace" (Fox, 215). In 1919, President Wilson banned Trotter and other NERL delegates from taking a trip to France for the purpose of including racial equality in the peace treaty at Versailles. Under the guise of a ship's cook, Trotter traveled to France anyway. He sent letters pleading with the principal negotiators to consider NERL's petition to end the "caste distinctions, proscriptions, and mob murder" against blacks (Fox, 228). Trotter took advantage of every opportunity to expose the daily atrocities blacks experienced in the United States. The French were astonished, sympathetic, and receptive, but NERL's petition was not admitted into the peace treaty. Although the United States fought for peace abroad, it did nothing to stop the war against blacks at home and ignored the protests of its people.

Back in United States, Trotter was stunned and yet "grimly delighted" to hear that blacks were fighting back during the riots of the **Red Summer of 1919** (Fox, 232). He had warned in previous years that if the United States did not eradicate discrimination and put a stop to the senseless violence and **lynching**, blacks would eventually take matters into their own hands. Whites accused Trotter of inciting black violence. His views further ostracized him from his conservative black counterparts and made collaborative activism with NAACP troublesome.

Trotter and NERL's work did not stop there. Although they helped win pardons for black soldiers involved in the rioting in Houston, Texas, they failed to bring about the passing of the Dyer bill to illegalize lynching and the Madden bill to eliminate segregation on interstate railroad cars. The presidents of this era were not receptive to black issues, and NERL's radicalism was distasteful to many. Nevertheless, NERL made valiant and substantial efforts to challenge the pandemic violence and discrimination against blacks in the United States. *See also* Dyer, Leonidas C.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Evers, Medgar, Assassination of (1963)**

On June 12, 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers was shot and killed by white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith. The first well-known civil rights leader to be assassinated, Evers became the first martyr to the cause. Born in Decatur, Mississippi, on July 2, 1925, Medgar Evers grew up amid the violence and racial discrimination that permeated the South during the **Jim Crow** era. As a young boy, Evers was frequently harassed by gangs of whites who took pleasure in hurling insults and objects at African Americans. When Evers was just eleven or twelve years old, he witnessed the **lynching** of a family friend, William Tingle, who was beaten, dragged, and then hung from a tree for talking back to a white woman. Incensed by the absence of justice for Tingle and scores of others who were tortured and murdered at the hands of whites, Evers chose to fight back. He enlisted in the Army at the age of seventeen, and fought overseas during World War II. The liberal treatment Evers received from white Europeans strengthened his conviction to fight for racial equality back home. Fighting for freedom the world over also instilled in Evers an even greater appreciation for the democratic system of government. Upon his return to American soil in 1946, Evers decided to exercise his own democratic rights and registered to vote in the next election. Together with his brother, Charles, and three friends, Evers made his way to the county courthouse on election day only to be driven away by an angry **white mob**. Although he did not vote that day, Evers would not be dissuaded in his efforts.

Following his graduation from Alcorn A&M College in Mississippi in 1952, Evers began selling life insurance for Magnolia Mutual, one of the few African American-owned businesses in Mississippi at the time. It was at Magnolia Mutual that he met Aaron Henry, a long-time member of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Although the NAACP had made serious inroads in the fight for civil rights throughout the United States, the organization had been unsuccessful to date in effecting change in the state of Mississippi. Medgar Evers hoped to change that. In 1954, Evers left his job at the insurance company and accepted a position as field secretary of the NAACP in Jackson, Mississippi. Evers spent the next eight and a half years fighting for the enfranchisement of African Americans in the South. In addition to recruiting new

members to the organization, Evers was also responsible for investigating and publicizing racial atrocities for the NAACP. Organizing demonstrations, boycotts, and sit-ins throughout Mississippi, Evers quickly became one of the most outspoken and recognizable civil rights activists in the state. In the fall of 1957, Evers was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that Mississippi would be completely racially integrated within five years. Evers' prediction did not, however, sit well with segregationists. It was not long before he began to receive threatening phone calls, which quickly escalated into physical violence. In 1958, Evers was assaulted while trying to integrate a bus in Meridian, Mississippi. Two years later, he was harassed by a white mob when he tried to free a fellow NAACP member from prison. The following year, Evers was the victim of **police brutality** while attending the trial of some fellow civil rights demonstrators. Then, in the spring of 1963, Evers' home was firebombed following a civil rights demonstration in Jackson.

Despite the constant threat of violence, Evers continued to wage war on Mississippi's segregationists. On May 20, 1963, just three weeks prior to his assassination, Evers appeared on a local television station criticizing the segregationist sentiments of Jackson's mayor, Allan Thompson. Never before in the state of Mississippi had an African American been afforded this kind of public forum to express his views on **segregation**. Unfortunately for Evers, his public denunciation of the segregationist stance would cost him his life. Just after midnight on June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was gunned down in front of his house after returning home late from a civil rights rally. The assassin, Byron de la Beckwith, shot Evers in the back with a high-powered rifle. Evers' wife, Myrlie, and their three children, who had stayed up late to watch President **John F. Kennedy's** civil rights address to the nation, ran outside to find Evers lying face down in the driveway. Scattered about the dying man were a handful of sweatshirts inscribed with the words "Jim Crow Must Go."

Three days later, thousands of mourners, including **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and the head of the NAACP, **Roy Wilkins**, gathered to pay their respects to the fallen civil rights leader. Following the funeral and silent march, several hundred African American youths began demonstrating in the streets. Filled with rage over the senseless slaying of Evers, the youths demanded that his killer be brought to justice. As the crowd moved toward the white business district, a battalion of armed riot police were dispatched to the area. The angry youths began pelting the police with bricks, rocks, and glass bottles, yelling, "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!" Then, just as the police were about to be unleashed on the crowd, the unthinkable happened. A U.S. Department of Justice official named John Doar stepped between the demonstrators and the riot police. A momentary hush fell over the crowd as they listened to the interloper plead with them to disperse. Unmoved by Doar's pleas, the mob advanced toward the unarmed man. In a final, desperate move, Doar appealed to the crowd's reverence for their fallen leader, stating, "Medgar Evers wouldn't want it this way" (Vollers 1995). Doar's words had the desired effect, and the crowd dispersed. One week later, Beckwith was arrested and charged with Evers' murder. It would

take another thirty years, however, for justice to be served. On February 7, 1964, an all-white jury was unable to reach a verdict in the case against Beckwith, and a mistrial was declared. Fearing a repeat of the violence that occurred on the day of Evers' funeral, the mayor of Jackson dispatched 300 police officers to the Jackson State College campus. Five students were injured when police fired upon a group of nonviolent demonstrators. Beckwith was freed from jail a few months later when a second mistrial was declared. Twenty-five years later, the grand jury in Jackson reopened the case, and Beckwith stood trial for a third time. On February 5, 1994, a multiracial jury found Byron de la Beckwith guilty of the murder of Medgar Evers, and sentenced him to life in prison. *See also* Civil Rights Movement; Disenfranchisement.

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Carol Goodman

## Exodusters

Exodusters was the name given to blacks, numbering between 20,000 and 40,000, who migrated from the South (primarily Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas) to Kansas in 1879. This migration was not a new phenomenon. During slavery, countless blacks had fled to the North in search of freedom. Eager to explore their new liberties after emancipation in 1863, blacks moved to the North, to the western frontier, and to Africa. Multiple migrations occurred after southern white Democrats seized political power, triggering the end of **Reconstruction** and the resurgence of discriminatory and repressive laws. Unlike the previous migrations, the exodus of 1879 was the largest of its kind: it was principally propelled by acts of violence against blacks.

In letters, personal accounts, and interviews, many Exodusters pointed to numerous incidences of the brutality that occurred in the wake of Redemption when explaining why they fled to Kansas. Redemption was the process by which southern white Democrats regained political control over the southern states. It included various forms of political legerdemain. For example, whites paid black politicians to sway blacks to vote for the Democratic Party and rigged ballots. The most prevalent—and trenchant—method of driving out white and black politicians from office was brute force. **White mobs** and **vigilante organizations**, such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and the **White League**, assassinated a number of Republican politicians. Nightriding, also known as bulldozing, was a common occurrence. Nightriders were whites disguised in white robes and masks. Often on horseback, they frequently visited and terrorized blacks during the night. Nightriders harassed blacks several weeks prior to election day. Blacks were

often shot, beaten, burned to death, or lynched for promoting suffrage or attempting to take part in the elections. Also, armed whites stood on guard and set up loaded cannons at the election offices throughout the South.

By 1877, white Democrats had routed the Republicans, and the federal government withdrew the military troops (that had previously protected blacks from the violence that occurred during the early part of Reconstruction) and all other succor, such as the Freedmen's Bureau. Consequently, southern whites established oppressive laws, such as **Jim Crow**. They disregarded the rights guaranteed to blacks under the civil rights acts, the **Fourteenth Amendment**, and the **Fifteenth Amendment**. In this environment, blacks were subjected to ruthless and incessant violence. Alarmed by these hostile conditions, black delegates began to meet to discuss options for possible places of refuge. Blacks formed migration societies, and several individuals wrote letters to the president. Organizations, such as "the Committee," later known as the Colonization Council, gathered reports that described the horrific circumstances that precipitated their desire to flee the South. They wrote of unwarranted beatings, murders, and rapes. They gave accounts of black men who had been mutilated, whipped, and killed for defending their wives and daughters, or for committing offenses as minor as wearing fancy clothes, talking back to whites, and any number of violations of **racial etiquette**. White mobs and vigilante organizations often countered these groups with more violence. Many of the leaders and members of these groups were threatened, harassed, and murdered.

The Kansas exodus of 1879 was not like other movements, such as **Black Nationalism** and the back-to-Africa migrations, in that it was not spearheaded by any illustrious leader. Instead, the Exodusters were made up of families who took flight to Kansas on their own. Although many blacks were initially lured by the prospects of moving to Kansas because of reputed promises (later proven false), such as free transportation and free land, the enduring motivation was faith. Kansas was a symbol of Canaan, the biblical promised land of the enslaved Israelites (Irvin, 195–196). The other appeal of Kansas was that it had been a free state since its inception. Men had fought to keep slavery out of their borders and won. To blacks, this was an encouraging fact. However, their immediate and paramount objective was to find asylum away from the violence in the South.

The journey to Kansas was treacherous. Since the federal government refused to provide monetary assistance, blacks were hard-pressed to raise money for the trip. The greatest resistance came from angry whites who depended on blacks for labor. As a result, whites tried incessantly to thwart blacks. They imprisoned indebted blacks. Blacks forced to work under the **sharecropping** system were, inevitably, in debt to the landowner or merchant. They were easy prey to the plot to keep them in the South. Whites also confiscated the money and the property that belonged to blacks. Another method to deter blacks from leaving was to threaten, beat, and, in some cases, kill. When steamboats refused to carry blacks to Kansas, thereby stranding hundreds upon hundreds of men, women, and children on the landings, the exodus suffered. Thus abandoned, whole families nearly starved to death. Meanwhile, whites confronted the poor and desolate travelers, tempting them

with offers of employment. Despite these obstacles, the families remained determined, and they waited it out until the steamboats resumed their service after being threatened with a lawsuit for violating the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Although Kansas was not the utopia blacks had hoped it would be, it was far better than the alternative. The federal government was able to provide a modest amount of monetary relief to many of the Exodusters. Some blacks, including men and women, eventually owned businesses and purchased farms, while a considerable number worked for whites. Notwithstanding the extensive privation of most blacks, their economic situations far exceeded those of their counterparts in the South. Also, blacks did not receive a warm reception from the local whites. In fact, whites in Kansas subjected blacks to a mild form of Jim Crow. Nevertheless, whites treated blacks far better in Kansas than in the South. Blacks found in Kansas a genuine refuge away from the violence and racial turmoil of the South and elsewhere in the United States. *See also* Lynching; Racism.

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*Gladys L. Knight*





# F

**Fair Housing Act of 1968.** *See* Civil Rights Act of 1968

**Farrakhan, Louis Haleem Abdul (1933– )**

Born Louis Eugene Walcott in New York City on May 11, 1933, Louis Farrakhan has become one of the most powerful voices speaking on behalf of Black Muslims and other marginalized members of American society. As an immigrant from the West Indies, his mother moved him and his brother, Alvan, to Roxbury (Boston, Massachusetts) when he was four years old. He spent his childhood and early adult years there.

Growing up in Boston with his mother and brother, he was reared in a home with discipline, moral training, and reading materials. He was a good student, excelling in academics and athletics. In school he was on the honor roll and a track star. His extracurricular activities included violin lessons. He became an accomplished violinist. This earned him an appearance on the popular national television show, *Ted Mack's Amateur Hour*. However, his musical interests and talents led him in another direction.

At the age of sixteen, he launched what seemed to be a promising career as a calypso performer and recording artist. He was known in nightclubs as *Calypso Gene* and *The Charmer*. There was one person who did not appreciate what she viewed as the somewhat racy lyrics of the calypso music he sang. It was his mother. But that did not end his growing career.

Because of his athletic skills, he earned a college scholarship and headed south. He enrolled in Winston-Salem Teachers College, now known as Winston-Salem State University. It is an historically black institution of higher education located in the piedmont city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He continued to play his calypso music around campus and ran track. His life on campus was short-lived; in 1953, he dropped out of college. Returning to Boston, within a year's time he married.

In February 1955, Walcott attended the Calypso Follies at the Blue Angel Night Club in Chicago. While there he went to a lecture given by **Elijah Muhammed**, the leader of the **Nation of Islam**. Then and there he decided to join the Nation of Islam. Like his fellow Bostonian, **Malcolm X**,



Louis Farrakhan addresses the Million Man March on Capitol Hill, 1995. AP Images/Doug Mills.

he dropped his given surname of Walcott, referred to as his slave name, and added X at the end of his first name, becoming Louis X.

Malcolm X was the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam. He was charismatic and attracted large, mostly black crowds when he spoke, generally in urban areas. Louis X appeared to have the same potential. Even though these two black men had a lot in common, there came a time when the two began to have divergent views on important issues. The final break between the two came when Malcolm X publicly denounced Elijah Muhammed for grave sexual conduct with several of his young secretaries. Louis X attacked Malcolm X for committing the ultimate act of betrayal to the leader of the Nation of Islam: going public. Malcolm X was forced out of the Nation of Islam and the role of spokesperson for the Black Muslims passed on to Louis X. This was a very visible and therefore powerful position, and it propelled

Louis X into national prominence. During this transition, Louis X changed his name to Louis Haleem Abdul Farrakhan.

In February 1965, Malcolm X was killed as he spoke to some of his followers at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. Although Malcolm X was no longer with the Nation of Islam, he still had a loyal following. When he was killed, there was wide speculation about who was really responsible, and one theory blamed Farrakhan. Thirty years later, in 1995, Qubilah Shabazz, a daughter of Malcolm X, was charged with trying to hire a hit man to kill Minister Farrakhan. Later, the charges were dropped. It was in the same year that Minister Farrakhan issued a statement about the Malcolm X murder. He denied being involved in the killing and offered regrets if his words of thirty years earlier had served to ignite the violence resulting in the demise of Malcolm X. He then hastened to place the real blame on the U.S. government. Even though arrests were made for the killing of Malcolm X, the murder remains shrouded in mystery for some.

Minister Farrakhan is known as an eloquent, spellbinding and fiery orator, with the ability to mesmerize his audience. His message resonates, not only with Black Muslims, but with some others—Muslims and blacks, primarily. His rhetoric has been described as anti-white and pro-African American, depending on one's viewpoint. He has been labeled by many in the press

as delivering inflammatory statements against American whites and Jews. Yet, he has traveled extensively throughout the Muslim world and has been welcomed as a brother by Muslims of all colors.

Millions recognize him as a leader. This realization was made clear when he served as the chief organizer of the Million Man March held in Washington, D.C. on October 16, 1995. More than a million people, mostly black men, gathered on the National Mall for a day of "atonement." They represented a cross-section of social, economic, political, and religious members of the community. He asked those in attendance to commit or recommit themselves to their families and their communities. Several speakers from various walks of life participated in the event. The keynote speech was delivered by Minister Farrakhan. In the numerous speeches that he makes throughout the United States, he preaches for a drug-free society, moral fidelity, and economic growth and sharing among the black community. He also talks about the need to fight prostate cancer and HIV-AIDS.

The Nation of Islam has expanded under the Minister Farrakhan's leadership. Headquartered in Chicago, he oversees business and real estate holdings in that city; mosques and study groups in 120 cities in America, Europe, and the Caribbean; and missions in Ghana and South Africa. Also, there is a national newspaper, *Final Call*; thousands of acres of farmland in Georgia; and countless schools, restaurants, bakeries, bookstores, clothing stores, and other businesses. Farrakhan's picture has appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine twice.

The Nation of Islam, under his leadership, has been awarded several federal multimillion-dollar contracts to provide building security in various parts of the country. The Nation of Islam's security force is regarded as disciplined and reliable. It has volunteered and been hired to provide security in numerous instances, mostly in and around black communities. Under Minister Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam has aggressively recruited members in jails and prisons, exhorting the incarcerated to abandon a life of crime when they are released. *See also* Nation of Islam.

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*Betty Nyangoni*

## **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is a federal police force and principal investigative unit for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The FBI was officially established in 1908 as the Bureau of Investigation (BoI). Originally, the BoI's only role was to gather evidence to support federal prosecutions. From the late 1910s to present, Congress has gradually

expanded the scope and jurisdiction of the FBI. The FBI's **COINTELPRO** (Counter Intelligence Program) activities, which undercut civil liberties and played a controversial role in the Palmer Raids in 1919 and Watergate scandal in the 1970s, led many to question whether the FBI functioned primarily as a political unit, rather than a law enforcement agency. Today, the FBI has jurisdiction over more than 200 investigative matters, including drug trafficking, espionage, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion, bank robbery, civil rights violations, and any crime against the state.

### ***FBI Origins***

The origins of the FBI have been debated. Some trace FBI origins back to the Pinkerton Detective Agency, a private, governmentally contracted firm that monitored labor unions in nineteenth century. However, the DOJ officially established the BoI in 1908, as an investigative arm. The FBI became more powerful after Woodrow Wilson signed the Espionage Act of 1917 and Sedition Act of 1918 in the pretext to World War I.

The espionage and sedition acts restricted first amendment rights and allowed the government to arrest any individual who made statements perceived to be harmful to U.S. military stature. As a result, many European immigrants who were sensitive to their native countries were detained or deported, and their publications were subject to censure.

Divisions and units within the FBI emerged to deal with their widened scope of activities pursuant to the espionage and sedition acts. In 1919, the FBI established an antiradical division, which became the General Intelligence Division (GID) in 1920. The GID was in charge of investigating anarchy and communism, and later extended to socialism. U.S. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer appointed **J. Edgar Hoover** to direct the GID. The GID was responsible for the first Red Scare and Palmer Raids, campaigns to raise the public's perception of the threat posed by anarchy and communism that led to the arrests of approximately 10,000 people involved in left-wing organizations.

In many ways, J. Edgar Hoover shaped the present-day culture of the FBI as director of the GID. He developed a sophisticated filing system of over 50,000 "agitators," enlisted the support of local police departments and private firms, and implanted infiltrators within suspect organizations to gather intelligence. Although the FBI was publicly assailed for their conduct during the Palmer Raids, Hoover was appointed director in 1924. He remained director until he died in 1972.

### ***History and Development***

Early in J. Edgar Hoover's leadership, the FBI investigated many noncriminal social activists, such as Albert Einstein and Jamaican-born **Marcus Garvey**. In the 1920s, Hoover regarded Garvey as "the most prominent Negro agitator in the world" (Churchill and Vander Wall, 4). The FBI fruitlessly investigated Garvey for nearly five years, until they were able to convict him for mail fraud. After the federal government imprisoned and deported Garvey in

1927, Hoover vowed that he would never allow another “Negro Moses” to emerge (Churchill and Vander Wall, 4).

The FBI’s Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory opened in 1932. In the early 1930s, often referred to as the lawless years, the FBI battled notorious criminals, such as Al Capone and John Dillinger, who came out of the prohibition era. The FBI also stunted the influence of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** in politics.

During World War II, the United States fought along with France and the Soviet Union to defeat Nazi Germany with multiracial military personnel. However, shortly after the war ended, the communist Soviet Union appeared to be on the verge of world dominance. In 1950, Senator McCarthy announced that the U.S. Department of State was replete with communist spies. A new campaign was launched to raise public awareness of the looming threat of communism, and the second Red Scare gave way to new legislation that expanded the FBI’s role. That year, Congress passed the Internal Security Act of 1950, also known as the McCarran Act, which required all U.S. “subversives” to be fingerprinted and authorized concentration camps for “emergency situations.” Red Squads, which worked closely with the FBI, were established in most metropolitan areas, essentially to bring local police departments into the fold of the FBI.

By the mid-1950s, widespread fears of communism and loosely scripted legislation that expanded the FBI’s power allowed the FBI to exercise more radical surveillance measures. In 1956, the FBI initiated COINTELPRO-CPUSA, specifically aimed at the U.S. Communist Party. By 1971, when COINTELPRO activities were officially banned, the FBI had counterintelligence operations for virtually every left-leaning organization in the United States.

Throughout the Red Scare and McCarthy era, the FBI functioned largely as an autonomous and clandestine organization. However, after Hoover died in 1972, the post-Watergate congressional hearings on the FBI revealed that the bureau committed thousands of illegal acts, which greatly undercut civil liberties and endangered the lives and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens. Measures to reform the FBI continued into the 1990s, when audits revealed that the FBI’s crime labs were frequently misused, resulting in many cases being reopened and overturned.

### ***Recent Developments***

In the 1980s, the FBI became heavily involved in enforcing drug policy and prosecuting international criminals. President Ronald Reagan shaped the FBI’s new scope when he declared a war on drugs and re-ignited the cold war by declaring the Soviet Union to be the “Evil Empire” (Reagan 1982). The war on drugs has been criticized for disproportionately affecting young black men, and resulting in the nonviolent inmate population eclipsing the violent inmate population.

In the 2000s, counterterrorism became the FBI’s top priority. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Congress enacted the USA Patriot Act into law. The Patriot Act gave the FBI the power to acquire bank

records, and Internet and phone logs, without probable cause, to investigate terrorism. One of the more controversial aspects of the act authorizes the use of so-called sneak and peek search warrants in connection with any federal crime. A sneak and peek warrant authorizes FBI agents to enter private residences without obtaining permission or informing occupants that any search had been conducted.

FBI intelligence failures revealed during the 9/11 Commission hearings resulted in some public scrutiny of the FBI. The George W. Bush administration responded by creating a cabinet-level National Security Service to oversee the entire intelligence community. Critics of the post-9/11 developments within the FBI fear most changes expand the bureau's ability to violate civil liberties.

Notwithstanding its self-styled mission to maintain law and order, the FBI remains a very powerful and elusive organization that continues to shape the political landscape of the United States. Historically, the FBI has amassed power from a series of legislative acts, resulting from an emotional reaction to a national catastrophe. The legislative bills are usually vague and loosely interpreted by the FBI, which liberally applies them to a permissive society. In the process, social activists have become socialists, black leaders have become communists, antiwar protesters have become enemies of the state, and secular Muslims have become terrorists; and it is not completely clear whether this process is by accident or by design. *See also* COINTELPRO.

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Ivory Toldson

## Federal Records on Race Riots

Federal records contain an amazing amount of documented materials related to African history and culture. With the establishment of the Continental Congress in 1774 to prosecute the Revolutionary War and govern the thirteen colonies, the governmental documentation of African Americans began and this process continues today. These records are deposited in the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)—the nation's recordkeeper. Although the headquarters of the National Archives and Record Administration is located in Washington, D.C., the institution is a national endeavor, operating in thirty-three locations (presidential libraries, research centers, and records centers) around the nation. It is a public trust that safeguards the records on which people in a democratic republic depend for documenting their individual

rights, for ensuring the accountability and credibility of their national institutions, and for researching, analyzing, and writing about their national experience. A nation's memory is embedded in its documentary history and among the voluminous array of federal records is documentation of the problems encountered by African Americans and their resistance to racial oppression. Documentation of race riots is a part of these records.

Violent confrontations between African Americans and whites are rooted deep in colonial and American history. Often these confrontations took on the form and character of the destruction of lives and property, physical challenges against local authorities, and racial assault of whites on African Americans. African Americans usually assumed a defensive and protective posture in these clashes and on some occasions were the aggressors. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these events were typically determined and defined as *slave revolts*. In the post-bellum period, racial clashes were often and numerous as southern whites attempted to overthrow reconstructed government and force the newly freed African Americans into positions tantamount to quasi-slavery. By the beginning of the twentieth century, severe measures were taken by whites to further suppress African American progress, which could rightfully be defined as race riots. African American communities across the nation, in particular the South, were attacked causing property damage and lost lives. Although these were deemed civil disturbances by local and state authorities, the federal government intervened on some occasions and, in most cases, observed such events and occurrences. Federal agencies, in particular the Department of Justice, often investigated, held commissions, issued reports, and attempted to determine the cause of such occurrences. This kind of documentation emerged in government records, and clearly provides insights into how the federal government thought, responded, reacted, and measured racial conditions in America. Information on race riots appears in several record groups maintained by NARA. This entry will identify and discuss federal records that documented race riots that occurred in the twentieth century, primarily between the years 1917 to 1970. Most of the records covered are located in the College Park, Maryland, facility; some of these records are located in presidential libraries and regional archives. To locate these facilities and search their holdings, one should use the NARA Web site ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)).

The U.S. Department of Justice, established in 1870, extended the legal and administrative duties of the U.S. Attorney General's office. It had the responsibility of conducting suits in the Supreme Court, giving opinions on questions of law at the request of the president or department heads, and making recommendations to the president on appointments and pardons. The duties of the department included providing means for the enforcement of federal laws, representing the government in any court, supervising federal penal institutions, detecting violations of federal laws, and administering immigration and naturalization laws and registration of aliens. The department often led in the investigation and recommendations of questions of racial disturbances such as riots. Among these records is the Abraham Glasser file. Glasser was an attorney in the Land Division that studied



the use of military force by the federal government in civil matters. The files roughly cover the years 1919 to 1938, and consist of investigations and reports of strikes, labor troubles, military affairs, subversive and seditious activities, and race riots. The file reports on most of the race riots that occurred in these years—Little Rock, Helena, and **Elaine**, Arkansas; Lexington, Kentucky; Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, and **Wilmington**, North Carolina; **Omaha**, Nebraska; **Charleston**, South Carolina; Bogalusa, Mississippi; **Chicago** and **East St. Louis**, Illinois, **Washington, D.C.**; and other places. Each riot is contained in its own file and consists of a detailed investigation of the event, what the government believed to be the causes, the ultimate consequences, and the prospect for prosecution for individuals violating federal laws. The file would be fundamental to get an overview of the racial climate in these years.

The Glasser file's value is its examination of the use military force in strikes, race riots, and related civil internal disturbances. Among the records of the Office of Provost Marshal General 1941–1975 (Record Group 389) are reports, correspondence, and investigations of race riots and strikes for the years 1942 to 1945. Racial disturbances during World War II were quite common, and the government typically used the military and federalized the National Guard to monitor and maintain civil order where problems developed. These records can be found among documents of the Internal Security Division, 1937–1950, Office of the Provost Marshal General, U.S. Army.

The **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** (Record Group 65) has been the foremost law enforcement agency in American society. It has gathered information on and investigated not only criminal activities in the United States, such as organized crime, bank robbery, kidnapping, murder, and white-collar crimes, but has intimately involved itself in intelligence matters ranging from counterintelligence activities and domestic security concerns to terrorists, narcotics, and civil unrest. Its records touch on all aspects of American life and society, particularly during the contested decade of the 1960s when many in the government and bureau perceived race riots as a threat to the government and the stability of American democratic society. **J. Edgar Hoover**, director of the FBI in the 1960s and 1970s became extensively involved in domestic social, political, and economic matters of the nation and black communities. The bureau monitored and disrupted the **civil rights movement**, **Vietnam War** protest groups, black civil activist organizations, and informed the government of potential urban unrest across the nation. The bureau created an enormous amount of information in the course of its investigations. These records constitute an extremely valuable resource for researchers pursuing information on American society in the twentieth century.

There are two distinct classifications that contain a massive amount of information on race riots: Class 157—Civil Unrest and Class 176—Anti-Riot Laws. The civil unrest classification was established in 1959 when the FBI began to investigate civil disorders and demonstrations. The FBI had the responsibility of investigating criminal violations relating to civil disturbances and for assisting the Secret Service by providing, upon request, information concerning actual or potential civil disorders that might require the

use of the military and information relating to planned demonstrations that required the federal government to provide health and safety measures. Initially, the classification focused on the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and was referred to as Racial Matters/Bombing Matters. By the 1960s and the emergence of violent urban disorders, the bureau shifted and included these events into its sphere of investigations. It began to investigate the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** and other radical black and white groups that were believed to be behind the urban unrest. Over fifty-nine field offices made reports and over 300,000 cases were opened. They cover 1957 to the present. The second classification, Anti-Riot Laws came about in 1968 when the bureau responded to the anti-riot provisions of the **Civil Rights Act of 1968**. It began to investigate violations of these provisions. The act declared illegal any individual(s) who crossed national or state boundaries to participate in any civil disorder and for anyone or any group to teach or demonstrate the use of firearms, explosives, or incendiary devices to incite civil disorder. The U.S. attorney general also could intervene over state and local authorities if it determined the public interest could be best served by the federal government. The files in this class are a rich documentation of the political and social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s and an excellent chronicle of the urban unrest that occurred during this period. All fifty-nine field offices of the FBI created documentation and some 7,180 cases were opened. They cover 1968 to the present. (A note to researchers: these records will require a Freedom of Information Act request with the FBI.)

In the records of the Department of Labor (Record Group 174), the investigations and reports of Dr. George Haynes, Director of Negro Economics, 1918–1921, reveal extensive details of labor issues and race riots. Dr. Haynes, a professor at Fisk University, concerned himself with the dire straits of labor issues, the economic welfare of blacks, black women and work, and the treatment of returning World War I soldiers. His memoranda offered comments on managing the post-war condition and economy for all, and how the government handled these concerns would be pivotal for racial tranquility. Among his field reports are assessments and conclusions of Negro migration to northern locations around industrial belt cities. Many northern government officials and citizens believed large-scale migration and concentration of blacks in narrowly defined living space contributed to intense racial confrontations that led to race riots such as the **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917** and the **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919**. In the 1913–1921 general subject files among the records of William B. Wilson, Office of the Secretary, there is an extensive report by the Labor Committee of the Illinois State Council of Defense, that reports the East St. Louis race riot occurred because of the large number of blacks in the city. Dr. Haynes offered different insights into the cause of both riots. He believed economic and labor conditions contributed to race riots. The demand for labor and the economic boom in both Chicago and East St. Louis attracted blacks to these cities, but the consequences that resulted exacerbated the racial climate. Dr. Haynes investigated other cities (Flint, Michigan; Sumter, South Carolina; Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama; St. Louis, Missouri; Jacksonville, Florida; and New York City) relative to

conditions for race riots and concluded that different factors were present that minimized such conditions.

Congressional records (Record Group 46 Senate; Record Group 233 House) contain enormous documentation on racial violence and disturbances as the Congress sought to determine cause and solutions. The House Select Committee to Investigate Conditions Interfering with Interstate Commerce between the States of Illinois and Missouri (1917–1918) reported on the 1917 East St. Louis race riot. By 1917, East St. Louis, Illinois had emerged as a heavily industrialized city directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri. During the summer of 1917, a race riot occurred stemming from labor unrest and characterized by indiscriminate attacks on blacks. According to federal record, nine whites and roughly thirty-nine blacks were killed, hundreds were injured, and more than 300 buildings and 44 railroad freight cars were destroyed in the riot. The governor called in the Illinois National Guard to assist the East St. Louis Police Department. Reports surfaced with firsthand accounts that some law enforcement officials participated in, rather than suppressed, the riot. The reports filed by the House Select Committee contain extensive, detailed information about the riot, including interviews and newspapers. There are unpublished hearings, exhibits, photographs, transcripts of the June 1917 hearings held by the Labor Committee of the Illinois State Council of Defense to investigate the cause of the migration of southern blacks to East St. Louis, labor bulletins, a grand jury report, and a petition from the citizens of East St. Louis demanding improvement in law enforcement. In addition to the reports of the riot, there are financial and other administrative records of the committee. Although there are other records in the collection at the National Archives that reference this particular riot, the House Select Committee records are the most detailed and informative. They can be found in House Document 1231, 65th Congress, 2nd session, Serial 7444.

During the 66th Congress, the Senate Judiciary Committee carried out an investigation of **lynching** and race riots during 1919 (66A-F12). The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia created an intense environment in the United States as radicalism in political ideologies emerged in the post-World War I period. Racial violence surfaced when returning black soldiers expected better treatment as American citizens, and several left-wing black organizations emerged. Senate Resolution 189 authorized the committee to examine the cause of the rising racial violence occurring across the nation. The reports consist of correspondence and a number of publications of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, black press, and various civil rights and civil liberty organizations. As opposition to the Vietnam War intensified and the civil rights movement proceeded, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI) investigated a number of urban disturbances, riots, and civil disorders that emanated from the war and the **Black Power** movement from 1961 through 1968. As part of these investigations, between 1963 and 1968, the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations (88th–90th Congresses) produced records that included information on civil disturbances and urban problems of the 1960s. These records are part of the holdings of the Center for Legislative Archives in the National Archives.

The assassination of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, on April 4, 1968, precipitated numerous racial confrontations and urban disturbances across the nation. President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11412 on June 10, 1968, which established the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1968–1969. These records contain transcripts and correspondence of the commission and meetings. There are reports on youth, individual, and group violence; urban violence; public statements; and final reports of investigations. In the records of Task Force VII (Special Investigations), there are extensive investigative reports for 1968–1969 on civil disturbances. These reports cover civil disturbances in Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Miami, Florida; Washington, D.C.; and Richmond, Virginia. Sound recordings and photographs accompany these records. In addition to this commission, President Johnson issued Executive Order 11365, July 29, 1967, creating the Commission on Civil Disorders; the famous **Kerner Commission** that investigated numerous racial disturbances. The commission investigated and recommended measures for averting and controlling civil disorders that occurred throughout the nation from 1963 to 1967. The final report was made March 1, 1968. The investigations and report contain rich details of the events of this period. There are correspondence and reading files of commission officials. There are minutes of meetings and correspondence in response to commission final reports. Press releases, congressional resolutions, and issuances to commission members also comprise the records. There are video and sound recordings and numerous photos of racial incidents. Most intriguing of these records are the related hearings and conferences pertaining to racial violence, in particular civil disorder in Newark, New Jersey; studies (1963–1968) prepared by commission staff, consultants, government agencies, and private organizations; and studies (1967) on U.S. Army and National Guard methods for controlling civil disorder. The Private Enterprise Task Force (1967–1968) was created to examine civil disorder and the free enterprise system. The records consist mainly of statements of government agencies, business leaders, and scholars on the role of free enterprise in alleviating causes of civil disorder. Although the published reports of this commission are a part of Record Group 287, Publications of the U.S. Government, these records are a part of Record Group 220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, and can be found at the College Park facility and the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas.

World War II generated enormous federal activity prompting the government to create numerous agencies and offices to administer the various and many facets of war production, activities, and administration. The Office of Government Reports was created in 1939 as an administrative unit in the Executive Office of the President to succeed the Executive Council, 1933–1934, and the National Emergency Council, 1934–1939. One of its newly created functions was to provide a clearinghouse for government information and report on the conditions of the nation during the war. In 1942, other information offices were consolidated to form the Office of War Information. The reports generated by the Office of Government Reports covered considerable activities of blacks, and focused on race riots.

The **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943** received considerable attention. The Survey Division of the Office prepared background reports on the housing crisis in Detroit, 1940–1943. One report examined how the migration of southern blacks to Detroit was creating a widespread housing shortage. It proposed additional housing for both whites and blacks. The federally funded Sojourner Truth Housing, designated for blacks, emerged as a hotly contested issue in Detroit. Whites opposed the designation and on February 28, 1942, a day-long riot between blacks and whites occurred when sixty-five black families moved into the newly built housing complex. By the end of the day, order had been restored and the families eventually moved in. As the Department of Justice moved in to investigate the incident through a grand jury process, racial tensions and friction persisted throughout the year. On June 20, 1943, the explosive racial situation in Detroit erupted into a three-day riot. Wide scale rioting between whites and blacks numbered in the thousands resulted in death, injury, and property damage. According to interviews, newspaper accounts, and government investigation, friction around living space, housing, lack of recreational facilities and areas, and large influxes of southern blacks and whites precipitated the riot. There are files in the Survey Division that explore some of the major causes behind the riot. They discuss many aspects of the racial condition in and around Detroit; all centering on the issues of housing and hostile racial attitudes of southern whites. These records are a part of the Office of Government Reports, Record Group 44, Records of the U.S. Information Services, OWI, Records of the Survey Division.

The volatile racial conditions in the nation during World War II prompted the Office of Civilian Defense (Record Group 171) to survey and study racial conditions. In particular, the office wanted to examine those conditions that led directly to race riots and other civil disturbances in the nation's urban areas. The Office of Civilian Defense was established in the Office of Emergency Management by an executive order on May 20, 1941, to coordinate federal, state, and local defense relationships regarding the protection of civilians during air raids and other emergencies, and to facilitate civilian participation in war programs. Nine regional offices and the Washington, D.C., headquarters coordinated the work of state and local defense organizations. An executive order terminated the office in 1945. The office work encompassed race relations, racial conditions, race riots, and civil disturbances. Among the records of the Public Counsel Division are newspaper clippings that provide information about the black communities' response to the work of the office and reports on various race riots and other local community problems. The newspaper articles underscore the polarizing effects of race riots and racial strains that continued to exist in the nation since the turn of the century. They examined race relations in cities such as Washington, D.C., and Indianapolis, Indiana, and the social and economic factors that contributed to tensions and clashes between whites and blacks. Employment of blacks appeared as a major factor due to the difficulties of efforts of blacks to work in the national defense program. Many of the skilled and better-paying jobs were denied to them, and although President Franklin Roosevelt had issued Executive

Order 8802 (June 1941) prohibiting discrimination in the national defense program, employment remained a major issue of concern for blacks, interracial councils, and Negro organizations. One *New York Times* article covered the **National Urban League's** thirty-third annual meeting and the efforts there to seek remedies to the civil disturbances occurring around the nation. It proposed a race riot clinic to study and report on the causes of race riots in the country. The clinic would have the responsibility of identifying realistic causes and offering remedies and solutions for improving conditions. The National Urban League proposed that the federal government become more active in improving racial conditions in the country.

This entry provides a selective description of federal records in the National Archives that pertain to race riots. The records demonstrate the interest and concern that the federal government displayed toward civil unrest in American society. The files contained reports, memoranda, investigations, studies, and administrative documentation of how individual agencies dealt with the subject and how it related to the mission of the particular agency. Although this entry does not provide a comprehensive review of such files, it does provide some of the more detailed documentation of urban disturbances occurring in the periods 1917–1920, 1940–1945, and 1960–1970.

**Further Reading:** For further information on federal records that pertain to African American history held by NARA, go to their Web site at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

*Walter B. Hill, Jr.*

## **Fifteenth Amendment (1870)**

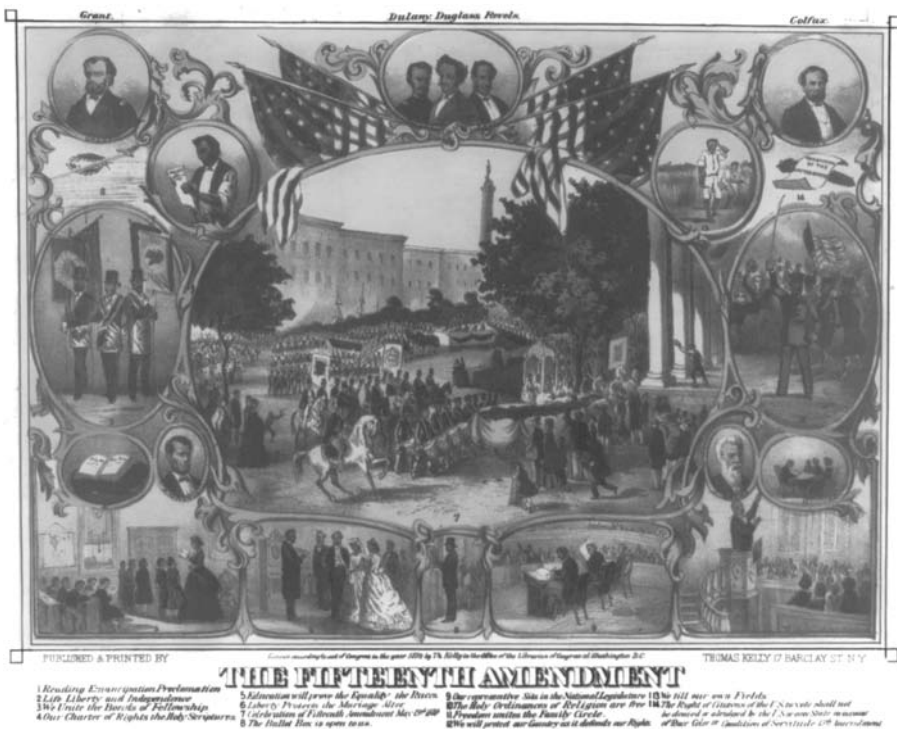
Ratified in 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was the last of the three amendments passed in the wake of the Civil War. It was an attempt to further guarantee the rights of freed slaves by securing their right to vote.

Following the Civil War, blacks languished as second-class citizens and, in many areas, could not vote. Repeated instances of violence and intimidation directed against them showed that additional government action was required. Because voting was determined at the state level, the only way to change the qualifications nationally was through a constitutional amendment. It also became apparent that the guarantees of the Thirteenth Amendment (outlawing slavery) and the **Fourteenth Amendment** (guaranteeing the rights of citizenship) were not enough.

In the wake of Ulysses S. Grant's election as president in 1868, Republicans in Congress pushed through the Fifteenth Amendment. Three different versions circulated and, determined to pass the amendment, in the end Congress passed the most moderate version, which prohibited states from denying citizens the right to vote because of race, color, or previous status as a slave. Although many felt it was too weak or had too many loopholes, the amendment was submitted to the states in February 1869. A year later, it was ratified by the states and became part of the Constitution on March 30, 1870.

It quickly became evident that the Fifteenth Amendment alone was not enough. To combat the repeated attacks directed against blacks attempting to vote or participate in political activities, Republicans in Congress passed three acts in 1870–1871 known as the Enforcement Acts. These measures defined in great detail a wide variety of crimes directed against potential voters, and provided the machinery for the federal government and Department of Justice officials to punish such crimes. These attempts to stave off violent actions by the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and other southern groups succeeded in the short term. Black voting and office holding prospered for a brief time after ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Even after the end of **Reconstruction** in 1877, blacks were able to vote and hold office for almost a generation. But the gains were temporary and, as time passed, white Democrats regained control over local politics.

The suppression of black political participation was enabled by the fact that the Fifteenth Amendment did not outlaw a variety of suffrage restrictions not based on race. The result was that states passed a myriad of legislative acts, including restrictive residence laws, registration requirements, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses, which all served to compromise the amendment's effectiveness. In addition, intimidation, violence, and



Parade surrounded by portraits and vignettes of African American life, illustrating rights granted by the Fifteenth Amendment, circa 1870. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

terrorism were also used to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

Violence in the aftermath of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment was often vicious and brutal. In 1875 and 1876, violence racked the state of Mississippi when white citizens attempted to control the black vote by use of force. By late 1875, many blacks had voted and even gained office. In the town of Clinton, the attempt to install a Reconstruction government caused a riot and approximately fifty people were killed, mostly African American, and all Republican. Riots also racked Yazoo and Coahoma Counties, when whites attacked Republican Party campaign rallies and killed black schoolteachers, church leaders, and party organizers. As a result, the apparent gains of the Fifteenth Amendment were nullified, and the black (i.e., Republican) vote practically vanished. President Grant refused to send in federal troops and the lack of response from the U.S. government helped ring in the beginning of the end of Reconstruction.

In 1876, violence ripped through South Carolina. Riots in Hamburg were directly connected to the nomination of a Democratic candidate, and many blacks were killed. In nearby Ellenton, where the riots were precipitated by the accusation of two blacks of robbing and beating a white woman and her son, the violence developed along party lines and was tied to voting and the electoral process. Fighting between blacks and whites lasted three days.

In November 1898, violence moved up the coast to **Wilmington, North Carolina**. During a campaign to prevent black citizens from exercising their right to vote, a **white mob** attacked the black community in Wilmington, killing over thirty people and burning down the offices of a black newspaper. Many historians see this North Carolina riot as a watershed event in the history of the state and region; they portray the riot erasing any gains made by African Americans during Reconstruction and securing **white supremacy** in the South for generations to come.

In 1906, racial hostility over voting rights culminated during the political campaign for governor of Georgia (see **Atlanta [Georgia] Riot of 1906**). In attempts to deny blacks the right to vote, white mobs attacked black areas. Among the many victims, was a disabled man who was chased down and beaten to death. The mob rampaged for several days before the militia restored order. Officially, twenty-five blacks and one white died. Unofficially, over 100 may have died. Using the violence as an excuse, legislation to exclude black citizens from the electoral rolls followed soon after, nullifying the Fifteenth Amendment. The constitutional voting guarantee became dormant over the next half-century and not until the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the ensuing Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 did African Americans renew the fight for the right to vote that was supposedly guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

A series of events in 1964 and 1965 finally secured the right to vote for blacks. The **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**, the voter registration project in Mississippi, the attempt to bring the vote to Alabama, and the ensuing march on Selma exemplified the violence and riots that had



accompanied attempts to get the right to vote. In both cases, the violence helped reinforce the need for legislation to help enforce rights guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment. The deaths of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney in Mississippi, and the violence that racked Selma, Alabama, all reiterated the urgent need for action in the area of voting rights. The result was the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was passed to secure an increase in African American votes. The act empowered the Department of Justice to closely monitor voting qualifications, in essence protecting those rights guaranteed under the Fifteenth Amendment.

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Gary Gershman

### ***The Fire Next Time* (Baldwin, 1963)**

*The Fire Next Time* consists of two 1962 essays by James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation” published in the *Progressive* and “Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind,” published in the *New Yorker*. The two essays were released together as a book in 1963. The title, drawn from the second essay’s final resonant phrase, is both a vague threat and a call to arms in the service of peace, which has become shorthand for the specter of violence promised by persistent racial injustice: “If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!” (347).

In the brief first essay, “My Dungeon Shook,” Baldwin sets out for his nephew the challenges facing him as a black man in late-twentieth-century America. The second essay, “Down at the Cross,” integrates Baldwin’s observations about race and religion from several directions—Baldwin’s childhood church experiences and his adult encounter with **Elijah Muhammad** and the **Nation of Islam**—with a meditation on how black and white Americans might move peacefully, with a full and candid knowledge of violent history, into the future together.

Across the two essays, Baldwin focuses on the rightful grudge but ultimate responsibility African Americans bear toward white people who have been responsible for, or at best ignorant of, black oppression. “It is the innocence which constitutes the crime,” Baldwin writes (292). “This innocent country” he explains to his nephew, “set you down in a ghetto in which, in fact, it intended that you should perish” (293). The tension between reprisal and reconciliation is at the heart of Baldwin’s formulation

on how to integrate the desire for revolution with the responsibility of participating as citizens in building the United States: “Do I really *want* to be integrated into a burning house?” (340).

Narrating his meeting with Elijah Muhammad, Baldwin expresses skepticism of Muhammad’s gratitude that black men are increasingly feared, and resists the idea that black and white must be opposed in America, that, in Muhammad’s words, “The white man’s heaven . . . is the black man’s hell” (312). Rather, Baldwin articulates a vision of two communities stuck together, that must overcome past wounds and strive for something larger: “Relatively conscious whites and . . . blacks . . . must like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of others . . . end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world” (346–347). Baldwin’s closing plea for unified struggle recalls his quotation from St. Paul at the start of “Down by the Cross,” that it is “better to marry than to burn,” and transfigures Paul’s affirmation of God-fearing monogamy into an interracial embrace of spiritual reconciliation (297).

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Alex Feerst

**Florida.** See Miami (Florida) Riot of 1980; Miami (Florida) Riot of 1982; Pensacola (Florida) Riot of 1976; Rosewood (Florida) Riot of 1923

### Forman, James (1928–2005)

Born in Chicago, Illinois, on October 4, 1928, James Forman believed himself to be the oldest of the two children of Octavia and James “Pop” Rufus. However, at the age of fourteen, he discovered that his biological father was Jackson Forman, a Chicago cab driver. Forman spent most of his first six years on his grandmother’s farm in Marshall County, Mississippi, where he received a harsh education in the rules of **segregation**. He was once threatened with **lynching** for not saying “yes, ma’am” to a local white storekeeper, and was told that black boys could not eat ice cream at the parlor counter or drink Coca-Colas from the deposit bottles.

Returning to Chicago, Forman attended a predominantly African American Catholic school until a spiritual crisis in the sixth grade sent him to public school. Forman grew up reading the *Chicago Defender* and the work of prominent African Americans, such as Richard Wright and **W.E.B. Du Bois**. His academic career took a brief detour when he enrolled in, and was expelled from, a vocational high school and joined a gang of juvenile delinquents. Re-enrolling in Englewood High School’s general studies program, he earned the *Chicago Tribune*’s student honors award in 1947, graduating with honors and enrolling in Wilson Junior College.

Seeking to avoid the draft, Foreman joined the U.S. Air Force, serving from 1947 to 1951. He then enrolled for a semester at the University of Southern California before a false arrest and abuse by the Los Angeles Police Department sent him into a long physical and mental convalescence and led to his return home to complete his bachelor's degree at Roosevelt University in 1957. While pursuing a master's degree in African Studies at Boston University, Forman secured press credentials as a reporter for the *Chicago Defender* and went to Little Rock, Arkansas, to cover the 1957 school **desegregation** struggle.

In 1960, Forman joined the Emergency Relief Committee, an initiative sponsored by the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** to assist Fayette and Haywood County, Tennessee, farmers displaced from their land by white landlords and the local **White Citizens' Council** for attempting to register to vote. In the summer of 1961, Forman and several others from the committee participated in CORE's **Freedom Rides** and joined the direct-action wing of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, with Forman intending to write and engage in direct-action protest. He was later asked by SNCC members to consider assuming the position of SNCC executive director, a position that primarily involved organizing and providing direct logistical support to the famously decentralized multistate network of SNCC field workers.

Forman eventually agreed and, in 1964, he blended his administrative talents with a more mature and seasoned approach to the essential direct-action training, protest, voter registration, logistical support (food, clothing, shelter) and other fieldwork of SNCC. Forman assumed responsibility for preparing the biracial group of students who participated in the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**. His attitude toward the work reflected that of his SNCC colleagues. They were highly suspicious of what they termed the "messiah complex" that looked to top-down leadership; they echoed the call for group-centered, grassroots work made by their advisor, Ella Jo Baker.

SNCC debates over tactics, direction, and strategies in the wake of the 1964 successes and the subsequent passage of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 led the organization and Forman into an alliance with the rapidly emerging **Black Panther Party (BPP)** for Self-Defense, even as Forman advocated that SNCC remain open to white members. Faced with the BPP's lack of effective administrative structure, internal conflicts, and other issues, Forman left both the BPP and SNCC in 1969 to pursue the agenda of economic development for black communities. Forman, who had also traveled to southern, eastern, and central Africa in 1964 and 1967 to promote the internationalization of the SNCC and BPP agendas, had accelerated his advocacy of an internationalist framework for analyzing the conditions of blacks in the United States.

On April 26, 1969, a National Black Economic Development Conference (NBEDC) called in Detroit, Michigan, by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization adopted the **Black Manifesto**, a call for white churches and synagogues to pay \$500 million in reparations for the enslavement of Africans and the effects of ongoing systematic **racism** and

oppression. The document, prepared by Forman and the League of Black Revolutionary Workers, stated that the money was to be used to fund a southern land bank for the use of poor people, four major publishing and printing enterprises for black people, four TV networks, a communications training center, a black labor strike and defense fund, and a black university.

On May 4, 1969, Forman interrupted the morning service at New York City's Riverside Church to read the Black Manifesto from the pulpit. Of the approximately \$500,000 eventually collected from the demand, 40 percent came from Riverside alone, which was selected because of its ties to the family of John D. Rockefeller, who had built the church. Some white religious institutions responded by increasing contributions to new or existing programs they had initiated. The **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** investigated the NBEDC, and only a fraction of the funds collected went to the organization, most of the money going to various reform projects, which had ironically been criticized by the Black Manifesto. The NBEDC formed Detroit's Black Star Publications from its part of the proceeds; Black Star published Forman's *The Political Thought of James Forman* in 1970.

Forman remained active politically throughout the remaining three decades of his life, accepting the leadership of the Unemployment and Poverty Action Committee in Washington, D.C., in 1974. His work with this organization included, among other things, voter registration and political education, lobbying for D.C. statehood, and working against the appointment of Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court. In later years, Forman participated in symbolic commemorations of his earlier struggles, such as the fortieth anniversary of the Freedom Rides in 2004.

In 1969, Forman published his first book, titled *Sammy Younge, Jr.: The First Black College Student to Die in the Black Liberation Movement*. Younge was a Tuskegee Institute student and friend of Forman's who was murdered in 1966 for his participation in the **civil rights movement**. Three years later, Forman published his memoir, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, which has undergone several editions (1985, 1997). He earned his M.A. in Africana Studies at Cornell University (1980), and a Ph.D. from the Union of Experimental Colleges and Universities (1982). The research he conducted for these degrees was partially published in his 1984 book *Self-Liberation: An Examination of the Question and Its Application to the African American People*. In 1994, Forman also published *The High Tide of Black Resistance (and Other Political and Literary Writings)*, a mixture of essays, speeches, oral history, and short fiction that revealed dimensions of the civil rights movement in which he had participated. Forman died of colon cancer in January 2005. He was married to, and divorced from, Constancia Romily, with whom he had two sons. James Jr. worked as a public defender and educator, helping to found the Maya Angelou Charter School (named for his godmother) in Washington, D.C. Chaka is a member of the Screen Actors' Guild.

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Gregory E. Carr

### Fortune, T. Thomas (1856–1928)

Timothy Thomas Fortune was born into slavery in Marianna, Florida, on October 3, 1856. Shortly after the Civil War, Fortune began to attend school at the Freedmen's Bureau in Marianna, where he became an exceptional student. Fortune lived a rather privileged life in comparison to other former slaves because his family purchased some land and became farmers. For a short time, he worked at the *Marianna Courier* where he learned the printer's trade and became actively interested in journalism. His father became involved in politics during the **Reconstruction** period; however, Fortune's family was forced to move from Marianna to Jacksonville because his father had received death threats in regard to his political beliefs and actions. Fortune stayed in Tallahassee, where he was serving as a page in the state senate after his family's move. Upon returning to Jacksonville, Fortune attended school at the Stanton Institute. In 1874, he traveled to Washington, D.C., and attended Howard University.

During his collegiate years, Fortune worked for several African American newspapers such as the *People's Advocate*. After graduation, Fortune and his wife, Carrie, returned to Florida where he worked for the *Jacksonville Daily Union*, but their stay there was short as the opportunity arose to work at the *Weekly Witness* in New York City. While working for the *Witness*, Fortune became the managing editor for the *Rumor*, a weekly tabloid run by George Parker, an African American who shared the same beliefs and interests as Fortune. Fortune insisted the paper's name be changed to the *New York Globe*, which subsequently became the *Freeman* and the *New York Age*, and survived until 1960, making it one of the longest-running African American newspapers.

Fortune's professional career was not limited to journalism; he became actively involved in politics as well. In 1890, Fortune cofounded the Afro-American League, which was a precursor of the **Niagara movement** and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Fortune also became acquainted with African American activist **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, who had been born after the Civil War, taught school in rural Mississippi, and worked at the *Memphis Free Speech*. It was during her time at the *Free Speech* that Wells-Barnett began to speak out against **lynching**. After learning of threats against her life in Memphis, Wells-Barnett went to work for Fortune at the *Age* where they combined their efforts in an anti-lynching campaign. It was in 1892 that they printed a seven-column article stating the names and dates of victims who had been lynched because of their supposed involvement in various crimes. Wells-Barnett became involved in speaking engagements leading the charge against lynching. In 1895, Fortune spoke at the National Federation of Afro-American Women, a group in which Wells-Barnett had played an integral part.

Fortune continued his political interests in 1896 when the reviving of the Afro-American League occurred in response to deteriorating conditions for African Americans in the South. In 1898, Fortune and other prominent African American leaders met in Rochester, New York, for a conference regarding race relations. During this conference, Fortune's fellow activist and friend Ida B. Wells-Barnett was named secretary of the newly renamed National Afro-American Council, whose purpose was to incorporate religious, political, and benevolent organizations for the good of all races.

Throughout his career, Fortune continued to use his newspaper, the *Age*, to speak out against lynchings in both the North and South. His 1884 *Black and White: Land, Labor, and Politics in the South* was a reply to the poor treatment of southern freedmen. His other book, *The Negro in Politics*, published in 1885, was a result of Fortune's belief that the Republican Party was exploiting African American voters. His career as a journalist and writer allowed him the opportunity to speak out against racial injustices and, along with other prominent African Americans such as **Booker T. Washington** and **Marcus Garvey**, to create opportunities for the financial, social, and civil furtherance of African Americans. Fortune was editor of Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* and the *Colored American Review*. He died in 1928, but not before his career, politics, and activism gave voice to the cause and place of his race.

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Mary J. Sloat

## Fourteenth Amendment (1868)

Although the Fourteenth Amendment pertains to all U.S. citizens, it was originally created to grant former slaves in the South protection against violence and discriminatory laws and to safeguard their voting rights. Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866, but it was not ratified by all ten southern states until 1868 as one of the requirements of readmission to the Union during **Reconstruction**. Nevertheless, whites consistently violated the Fourteenth Amendment (often without repercussions) while blacks remained the target of a long and turbulent period of violence, riots, and social, economic, and political oppression. Significant intervention to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment did not occur until after the achievements of multiple individuals and grassroots organizations during the 1950s and 1960s.

The Fourteenth Amendment comprises five sections. The first section grants state as well as federal citizenship to all individuals born or naturalized in the United States. It outlaws the states from constructing laws denying any individual their rights and freedoms. The states are also obligated to protect the rights and freedoms of every individual and forbidden to victimize any person in any way without a formal process of law. The second

section punishes any state obstructing suffrage by reducing the number of its political representatives. The third section thwarts rebels by withholding any federal or state position from any individual not conforming to the Constitution. The fourth section indicates that the United States will not pay for any debts incurred during acts of rebellion and will not compensate slave owners for any slaves that were lost or emancipated. The last section gives Congress powers to enforce this amendment.

Notwithstanding Congress' progressive maneuver, vicious attacks against blacks continued unabated even after the South had consented to the terms of the Fourteenth Amendment. In an effort to regain political power, white conservatives, or Democrats, engaged in bribery and hostile acts against blacks to prevent them from voting and to maintain **white supremacy**.

Some whites made efforts to protect blacks and their supporters. These efforts were ephemeral. Governors in Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas declared martial law. They ordered droves of armed men to subdue the violence that engulfed the South. As a result of the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871, hundreds of members of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** were arrested. Nevertheless, many of them served short sentences, paid mild fines, or eluded prosecution altogether. Also problematic was the fact that the federal government had limited finances and resources to handle the overwhelming number of aggressors. Nevertheless, white Democrats regained political power in the South by 1877, using the very methods the Fourteenth Amendment ruled against. They disenfranchised blacks and assaulted them and their property with no regard to due process. Shortly thereafter, the federal government withdrew the Union troops, and northern interest in helping to protect blacks waned.

Unfettered by external interference and restraints, the Democrats established **Jim Crow** laws and permitted—and in some cases instigated—the onslaught of violence and oppression that permeated the South. Jim Crow laws limited the freedoms and rights of blacks, defying the decrees of the Fourteenth Amendment. The laws designated Colored Only and White Only sections of towns, drinking fountains, restaurants, schools, and seating on public transportation. These laws were backed by a series of Supreme Court decisions made between 1875 and 1900 that further limited the rights the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed blacks. For example, the Supreme Court sanctioned separate but equal accommodations on railroads in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case (1896). The court believed the Fourteenth Amendment concerned racial equality before the law and not social matters.

However, blacks did not receive equal protection in the court system, either. **Police brutality** was common and unchecked. Juries remained all-white. Judges and juries almost always sided with whites, whether innocent or guilty. Blacks, when convicted, received harsher sentences. Whites were rarely charged in crimes against blacks. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, **white mobs** regularly lynched blacks they accused of crimes, and destroyed black communities without due process of law. In response, some blacks fled the South, or turned to leaders who extolled **Black Nationalism**. Others supported racially mixed (though predominately black) organizations such as the **National Association for the**

**Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and, later, the **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Fourteenth Amendment was a powerful instrument used to combat injustices in the courts and to defeat discriminatory laws during the 1950s and 1960s. One of the most celebrated cases to end segregated schools was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). The National Guard protected black students from white mobs. Many protested, marched, participated in sit-ins, and boycotted for the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. They were often met with mob violence and police brutality. Members of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** and the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** traveled to Mississippi during the **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964** (see **Freedom Rides**) to galvanize black suffrage. These protests resulted in legislation, such as the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which authorized action against **segregation** in public accommodations, public facilities, and employment, and was pivotal to the enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment. Nearly 100 years later, blacks finally reaped the benefits of the Fourteenth Amendment. They voted with greater ease and enjoyed more freedoms and opportunities. Nevertheless, violence against blacks, **racism**, and discrimination were not completely eradicated as evident in impoverished black **ghettos** where frustrations gave way to **racial consciousness**, militancy, and riots. *See also* Black Power; Black Self-Defense; Nonviolence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## Freedom Rides

The Freedom Rides were a form of nonviolent protest conducted on buses by an interracial group of civil rights activists in the early 1960s. Freedom Rides, which occurred during the broadly defined **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s, constituted a challenge to legalized racial **segregation**. Southern whites reacted violently to the rides, while the riders refrained from fighting back. Ironically, the violence that was committed by whites against the peaceful protesters generated nationwide attention and sympathy for the riders, eventually prompting a major win in the struggle for civil rights.

The precursor to the Freedom Rides was the **Journey of Reconciliation**, which took place in 1947 when the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) joined forces to test a Supreme Court decision that declared segregation on interstate buses to be unconstitutional. Activists limited their rides to the upper South, which posed a lesser threat than the Deep South. Their trip was cut short when they were arrested in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

More than a decade later, following the unprecedented **desegregation** at lunch counters across the nation as a result of staged sit-ins, CORE organized the Freedom Rides. In 1960, the Supreme Court had forbidden





“Freedom Riders” gather outside a burning bus in Anniston, Alabama, 1961. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

segregation on interstate transport in *Boynton v. Virginia*. This ruling had expanded the 1947 decision by including bus terminals, waiting rooms, restaurants, rest rooms, and other interstate travel facilities. The freedom riders planned to test the ruling in the Deep South. They hoped for an explosive reaction from white southerners, which would help them gain significant support and success. Although no deaths occurred during the Freedom Rides, many victims sustained permanent injuries.

The first Freedom Ride took place on May 4, 1961. Seven blacks and six whites mounted two buses in Washington, D.C. Among the first freedom riders were James Farmer, a CORE leader; John Lewis, a member of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**; and James Peck, who had also participated in the 1947 ride. The objective was to arrive in New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 17, the anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954, which had declared separate but equal facilities in the schools to be unconstitutional.

The first major violence occurred in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where riders who attempted to use the restrooms and lunch counters were beaten and arrested. None of the white assailants was arrested. On May 14, one of the buses encountered 200 members of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** in Anniston, Alabama. The mob stoned the bus and slashed the tires. The bus escaped, only to be firebombed a few miles down the road. The mob then attacked the riders as they ran off the bus. Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth and several local blacks rescued the freedom riders and transported them to Birmingham, Alabama.

A **white mob** attacked the other bus when it arrived in Birmingham. The police were absent that day, as Public Safety Commissioner **T. Eugene “Bull” Connor**, had auspiciously given the cops the day off for Mother’s Day. Although the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** was aware of the threats against the freedom riders, they also withheld their protection. Overwhelmed by the violence suffered en route to Birmingham, James Farmer called a halt to the first Freedom Ride. Although they had failed to reach New Orleans by bus, the freedom riders did gain significant media exposure.

Determined to keep the Freedom Rides going, SNCC sponsored a second trip on May 17, 1961. Before setting off from Nashville, Tennessee, for Birmingham, Alabama, they requested protection from the Department of Justice, but to no avail. In Birmingham, the riders were arrested. Unable to procure a bus driver to resume the trip to New Orleans, Attorney General **Robert Kennedy** intervened and contacted the Greyhound Bus Company. In addition, John Seigenthaler, a Kennedy aide, accompanied the riders to help ensure safe travel. Nevertheless, more than 1,000 whites attacked the riders in Montgomery, Alabama. A white rider, James Zwerg, and Seigenthaler were seriously injured and sent to the hospital. The police ordered them all to discontinue the Freedom Ride. Finally, President **John F. Kennedy** sent several hundred federal marshals to aid the riders.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**, also responded to the situation. Leaving a speaking tour in Chicago, Illinois, he flew to Montgomery, where he conducted a rally at Rev. Ralph Abernathy’s church. As a white mob seethed outside, he spoke out against the violence imposed upon the riders and the lack of federal and state protection. The mob fought with the federal marshals. King called Attorney General Kennedy, who impelled Gov. John Patterson to send in the state police and the National Guard. The National Guard subdued the mob with tear gas, and the freedom riders and other supporters inside the church evaded a deadly attack.

Robert Kennedy repeatedly urged the freedom riders to bring the perilous rides to a stop. Even so, more than 300 riders attempted to finish the journey to New Orleans. Through the violence inflicted upon them, the freedom riders captured the interest of the world, thereby prodding the Kennedy administration to act. On December 1, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission banned racial segregation in interstate transport and facilities. *See also* Jim Crow; Nonviolence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**

From June to August 1964, the state of Mississippi witnessed an influx of volunteers, mostly white, affluent college students from around the nation, who were recruited by the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**

(SNCC) to help African Americans register to vote, to establish freedom schools, and to support grassroots leadership. This movement became known as the Freedom Summer.

The efforts by SNCC and the volunteers produced important gains for civil rights, and their efforts also produced a reaction of violence by racist whites, which was later depicted in the film *Mississippi Burning* (1988). Three young men disappeared within twenty-four hours of their arrival in Philadelphia, Mississippi, on June 21, 1964. The men were James Earl Chaney, age twenty-one, a native of Meridian and active in the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** since 1963; Andrew Goodman, age twenty, an anthropology student from New York; and Michael Schwerner, age twenty-four, a married social worker from New York, who had previously been active in the **civil rights movement** in Mississippi and was thus particularly hated by the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. The bodies of the three men were not found for forty-four days. The disappearance and murders of these three volunteers, which were later depicted in William Bradford Huie's *Three Lives for Mississippi* (1964), became a rallying point for Freedom Summer participants, whether locals or out-of-state people. All the civil rights workers lived in mortal danger. Freedom Summer resulted in 6 deaths, 80 beatings, 1,000 arrests, 37 burnings of African American churches, and the burning or bombing of 31 homes.

The voter registration process for African Americans in Mississippi was the worst in the nation. To register, an African American was required to interpret two sections of the U.S. Constitution to the satisfaction of the registrar, a local white, and pay a poll tax. Intimidation also played a role in keeping people away from registering. Nightriders, usually members of the Ku Klux Klan, practiced drive-by shootings, arson of homes and churches, beatings, and **lynchings**. In Greenwood, the county seat of Le Flore, only 9 percent of the eligible black population was registered to vote, yet blacks comprised 64 percent of the total population. This issue, the denial of an American citizen's right to vote, united different groups. SNCC, created in April 1960, conducted sit-ins in an effort to end **segregation** of public facilities and helped people register to vote. Bob Parris Moses, a graduate of Hamilton College, who also studied philosophy at Harvard and received a teaching certificate, barely escaped injury in 1963 when thirteen bullets were pumped into his car. Moses, who became SNCC's field secretary in 1960, helped CORE organize the **Freedom Rides**, which brought civil rights workers to the South to challenge **Jim Crow** laws. He then became the project director for SNCC's Freedom Summer in Mississippi. By 1964, he was co-director of the Council of Federation Organization (COFO), comprised of various organizations committed to improving the lot of people of color in Mississippi. This organization directed logistics for Freedom Summer and distributed funds for voter registration. COFO comprised the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, CORE, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and SNCC.

In the spring of 1964, SNCC held a major campaign to register voters. They hoped to attract national attention, including the attention of and

protection by the U.S. Department of Justice. Sixty-two of the sixty-seven SNCC members were arrested and jailed, forty-five of whom were sentenced to hard labor. Two years earlier Bob Moses had conceived of a way to gain national attention and to pressure the Department of Justice to intervene—get whites to participate—and his plan was implemented. In 1964, SNCC recruited volunteers from universities across America, and many northern, idealistic college students responded to the invitation. More than 50 percent of the students who signed on for training at the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio, were students at elite universities. COFO moved its staff headquarters to Jackson, Mississippi, and opened forty-four sites in Mississippi in preparation for Freedom Summer. SNCC's headquarters moved from Atlanta to Greenwood, Mississippi. COFO promoted grassroots support, refused to glorify its leaders, desired a loosely structured hierarchy, and, of course, its major goal was to end racial oppression. Not all COFO members favored the inclusion of northern, white, rich students because they believed they would undermine the project, but Moses and Allard Lowenstein, a white law professor at the University of North Carolina and an activist, believed the students would bring national attention to the area. National attention was garnered when 700–1,000 volunteers entered Mississippi after they completed a screening process and trained at the Western College for Women. There were two training sessions in June; both instructed the volunteers on the goals of the project and provided intensive training on nonviolent self-defense.

Like all the volunteers, Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner, were to be housed, fed, and protected by local participants in Mississippi. After arriving in Oxford, they drove into rural Neshoba County to investigate a church burning. When they did not return by 4:00 P.M. on June 21, which was the designated check-in time for all workers, the alarm was sounded. The COFO offices at Meridian and Jackson were notified, a search was activated, and jails were called. Since there were no **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** offices in Mississippi, the Atlanta office was notified of the disappearances, as were the *New York Times* and the families of the three volunteers. Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price admitted to arresting the three for speeding, but they stated they had released them. Not until later was it discovered that the officers had turned them over to the Ku Klux Klan. On June 22, 1964, reporters came to the small community and were threatened by a mob. COFO requested assistance from President Lyndon B. Johnson. The burned-out car was found and the media circus began, which, in fact, did bring the plight of African Americans and those trying to help to national attention. Still, federal help to find the missing men was slow in coming. Attorney General **Robert Kennedy** ordered a full investigation, and FBI agents from New Orleans were dispatched to Mississippi. Agent Joseph Sullivan was appointed the major case inspector. President Johnson ordered U.S. sailors into Mississippi to assist with the search. White racists used the disappearance of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner as a threat to other workers. Communities, such as Hollandale, Mississippi, passed an ordinance forbidding any white volunteer to live with Negroes. Only local citizens could appeal the ordinance.

The disappearance of the three young men did not stop the second wave of volunteers from entering the state as soon as they finished their training in Oxford, Ohio.

Eleven days after the murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner, President Johnson signed into law the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which prohibited **segregation** in public places, created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and established the right of the federal government to withhold funds from segregated public schools and to deny federal contracts to any business that practiced segregation. The legislation increased the violence in the South. Bob Moses held firm that the Freedom Summer workers would not test the new law. He reiterated the goals of the project: grassroots leadership development, voter registration, freedom schools, community centers, food and clothing drives. It must be remembered that in addition to having the lowest African American voter registration in the country, Mississippi also had one of the highest percentages of poverty. The average number of years of school for an African American child was 4.3; the median annual family income was \$595. Freedom schools were an effort to combat these statistics. Workers were not quite prepared for the response. In Hattiesburg alone, 600 people, ages eight to eighty-two, signed up for the freedom schools. During the summer, over 3,000 children participated. The schools' goals were reading, writing, arithmetic, instilling pride, and the need for activism necessary for the creation of present and future leaders. One of the most notable occurrences took place near the end of the summer when freedom school teacher Sandra Adickes of the Priest Creek Freedom School in Hattiesburg took six students, on their urging, to the public library. When they applied for library cards, the librarian called authorities, and the mayor sent the police chief to close the library. The teacher and her students then went to an S.H. Kress Co. lunchroom, where the children's orders were taken, but not the teacher's. They all left; Adickes was arrested a short time later for vagrancy. This case eventually made it all the way to the Supreme Court.

Sniper fire at voter registration rallies, beatings, burnings, and bombings continued during the long, hot summer. Arrests skyrocketed. For example, at a registration rally in Greenwood, 112 people were arrested, including activist **Stokely Carmichael**. Violence and the lack of punishment for the perpetrators became all too familiar. While the search for the missing civil rights workers continued, searchers found other bodies, or partial bodies, of African American males. In one instance, Klansmen were arrested; they confessed to the murders of two black men, yet state officials refused to prosecute. **J. Edgar Hoover**, director of the FBI, finally opened an FBI office in Mississippi, under pressure from President Johnson, who himself was under great pressure from the public to do something about the situation in the state. In July, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, visited Greenwood; the state refused a police escort even though threats had been made against his life. Tensions increased as allegations of communist backing for the Freedom Summer project were made, as were rumors that the disappearance of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner was a hoax to get national attention.

Neither was true. King's visit precipitated more violence. Two churches were burned; two African American activists, brothers, were trapped in a movie theater with a mob waiting for them outside, but the police did not act. SNCC sent cars and volunteers to rescue them. Later in the summer, one of the brothers, Silas McGhee, was murdered.

On August 2, 1964, a search warrant was executed after FBI investigator Sullivan received information that the bodies of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were buried in an earthen dam on the Olen Burrage farm, located only five miles from Philadelphia, Mississippi. The bodies, with bullet wounds and broken bones, were unearthed, which resulted in a mass meeting in Greenwood at which workers wanted to arm themselves for self-defense. Since the bodies were found in Neshoba County, the FBI had to share jurisdiction with the very men, Rainey and Price, who were under suspicion for involvement in the murders. The Imperial Wizard of the KKK, Sam Bowers, had ordered Schwerner's death; Chaney and Goodman had been in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong person. Although nineteen members of the White Knights of the KKK were indicted three years later, they were not charged with murder but with conspiracy to injure, oppress, threaten, and intimidate. Not until 2005, over forty years after the murders, was Edgar Ray Killen arrested and charged with three counts of murder. In June 2005, the jury convicted Killen of three counts of manslaughter.

In August 1964, Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier went to Greenwood; they were pursued by the Klan from the airport. Belafonte brought \$60,000 in cash to help the project extend beyond summer. They spent the night barricaded inside the freedom house. Also in August, a three-day summit was held at Tougaloo College. The group decided to extend or replace 200 volunteers after summer's end. The summit precipitated a riot that resulted in 250 arrests and 52 beatings. Efforts were also being made to send the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, with the goal of unseating the regular party, which was segregationist. Over 80,000 Mississippians voted in the MFDP elections. Led by Fannie Lou Hamer, the MFDP attended the convention. Although MFDP did not unseat the regular party, they did have a partial victory, being allotted two at-large delegate seats and winning a promise that delegates who promoted discrimination would no longer be seated.

As the summer drew to a close, a new attitude surfaced. SNCC veered from nonviolence to armed self-defense and a more militaristic approach. After the discovery of the bodies, the continuing intimidation by violence, the summit at Tougaloo College, and the Democratic National Convention, the split in SNCC's direction became obvious. Bob Moses wanted to continue to focus on freedom schools and voter registration; **James Forman** leaned in the direction of promoting **Black Power**. Moses resigned as the leader of COFO; he never resumed his leadership in Mississippi after the convention. By 1965, SNCC decided to no longer include whites in their activities.

Freedom Summer brought progress. Freedom schools, libraries, community centers, and food and clothing drives all continued to operate after the summer. The nation entered Mississippi via radio, television, and the newspaper; hence, as Bob Moses had hoped, pressure was put on the government to tend to the injustices and to stop the violence. The Civil Rights Act of 1965, which can be viewed as a direct result of the efforts of those involved in Freedom Summer, outlawed literacy tests for voter registration and poll taxes, and stipulated that only authorized federal examiners could register voters; and the MFDP made inroads into the Democratic Party.

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*Claudia Matherly Stolz*

## Frontier Justice

Frontier justice was a term used to describe the maintenance of law and order in the old West. This brand of justice was instantaneous and violent. Ordinary citizens meted out justice, either in the form of a spontaneously organized mob or as an elaborately structured vigilante organization. Common methods of punishment included banishment, whipping, and hanging (**lynching**). Frontier justice was prevalent in social situations where law enforcement was absent or weak, and criminal activity was high.

Frontier justice had numerous flaws. Judgment was executed according to personal biases rather than uniform law. Rulings were generally pronounced without judge, jury, trial, attorneys, or witnesses. Another failing of frontier justice was that it was often abused by individuals and mobs who sought to terrorize or control any person or group perceived as undesirable or a threat. Cattlemen terrorized sheepherders who competed with them for land and water. Mobs sometimes massacred entire Native American tribes. Other mobs targeted immigrant groups migrating to the West in increasing numbers during the Gold Rush of the 1840s.

**Vigilantism** and mob violence were not isolated to the West. During the 1800s, blacks seeking vengeance killed several whites in slave uprisings in the South. They were eventually caught and executed. In response to the riots in Cincinnati, Ohio; Providence, Rhode Island; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and New York City during the 1800s, blacks formed **vigilante organizations**. In response to **police brutality** in black ghettos, the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** formed in 1966. From the **Reconstruction** period through the era of the **civil rights movement**, white vigilante

organizations and **white mobs** assaulted blacks to restore **white supremacy** and enforce racist laws and practices. *See also* Black Self-Defense; New York City Draft Riot of 1863; Racism; *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1918*.

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*Gladys L. Knight*





# G

## Garvey, Marcus (1887–1940)

Marcus Garvey was a publisher, journalist, businessman, and one of the most famous proponents of **Black Nationalism**. Garvey was also founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and a champion of the back-to-Africa movement, which encouraged African Americans and other people of African ancestry to return to their ancestral homelands.

Marcus Garvey was born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, on August 17, 1887. During his formative years he was not aware of **racism**. In adolescence, however, he experienced his first act of racism when called *nigger*. It was then that he realized he had been surrounded by racism all his life. That early experience stimulated the desire to process the effect of racism and inequality by whites on blacks. From 1910–1912, this process led to writing, publishing, entering politics, and traveling throughout Central America and other continents to see if blacks there experienced the same injustices as blacks in Jamaica. Garvey concluded that with the exception of England, blacks experienced racism and inequality in other countries. Therefore, he elected to attend Birbeck College in England and was inspired to ignite the Pan-Africa movement to unify black people.

Garvey's experiences in England convinced him it was time to do something about the condition of poor blacks. In 1914, he established UNIA. The objectives of UNIA were: improving black life in Jamaica and in the world, promoting the spirit of race pride and love, reclaiming the fallen race, and promoting the spirit of conscientious Christian worship among the native tribes of Africa. Another goal of UNIA was to establish universities, colleges, and secondary schools for further education of children and conducting a worldwide commercial and industrial relationship (Stein 1986).

Garvey's next project was the Black Star Shipping Company, developed in 1919 to further the back-to-Africa concept. The concept was to create a strong central African power base structure that would protect blacks around the world from Imperialism. Garvey believed the Black Star Shipping Company would not only improve blacks as a commercial and industrious

people, it would also re-create the drive needed to overcome poverty. The company was to bring business industry to black communities along with conducting international trade between America and Africa. The ships were to be manned by an all-black crew. The success of the Black Star Shipping Company transformed Marcus Garvey into a hero to black communities, a threat to white communities, and—finally—a national politician. With the Black Star Shipping Company, blacks were inspired to move from economic dependence to independence.

The impetus for Garvey's ideals was the three stages he believed had affected the blacks' contact with the white man. The stages were 1) being shackled in Africa and kept in bondage for 250 years; 2) emancipation, enjoyment of which for the previous fifty years was equated to partial freedom and limited ability to earn a wage; and, finally, 3) after the first two stages, to try fifty years of African American self-direction. The third stage was the rationale for the Black Star Shipping Company; the call for manhood within the race; and for economic, industrial, and political involvement. A major concern of Garvey's was blacks' inability to follow orders within the organization, and a lack of discipline or a check-and-balance system, which in the end limited progress (Jacques-Garvey, 1923). Marcus Garvey died in London, England, in 1940.

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## Gentrification

Gentrification refers to the process of revitalization of depressed areas, particularly when whites buy up prime real estate in low-income and predominately non-white neighborhoods, thereby displacing the original residents who cannot afford the area's new and improved homes.

Beginning as early as the 1960s, whites have been moving out of the suburbs and into the inner cities across the nation. They are lured by the location, affordability, and nostalgic architecture of the real estate. After they fix up the homes, their presence attracts upscale condominiums and businesses. City officials desiring to relieve inner-city turmoil and to strengthen the economy also contribute to gentrification by pouring money into further improvements. Gentrification effectively purges the crime, violence, riots, and poverty of the inner cities, but at the expense of dislocating ethnic groups.

Gentrification was preceded by efforts to directly assist the residents of the impoverished communities. These efforts emerged as a counterattack to the epidemic violence and riots in black **ghettos** during the 1960s. President Lyndon B. Johnson attempted to eliminate racial inequality and poverty

and deter violence by creating numerous social programs for the disadvantaged. Local city officials financed public renewal projects and helped revive local businesses and empower black leadership. The onset of the **Vietnam War** and opposition to social programs halted these endeavors.

It is true that gentrification brings new health and vitality to cities. Remodeled homes, high-end condos, shops, restaurants, theaters, and manicured lawns replace the tattered and grimy ghettos. However, the original residents do not receive these benefits. Thus, the improvements only exacerbate the economic, social, and physical gulf between the races and classes, and augment racial tensions. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; White Flight.

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**Georgia.** *See* Atlanta Civic League; Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906; Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1967; Augusta (Georgia) Riot of 1970

## Ghettos

Ghettos have been around since the thirteenth century, although a more familiar point of historical reference for them is the often-walled quarters in cities that confined Jews in Venice, Italy, during the early seventeenth century. Ghettos have more recently come to be historically identified with the Nazi concentration camps of Jews in Eastern Europe, such as the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland. Nowadays, ghettos more generally refer to slum areas in cities where stigmatized minority groups, especially blacks, reside.

Ghettos became a prominent feature of American cities in response to the race question during the antebellum American westward expansion and the need for white citizens to assert their dominance over non-white, especially black, populations. In the North, white citizens, who constituted the majority population, employed economic, legal, and extralegal means to regulate the movement of black, Latino, and Chinese populations, as well as to restrict the areas where they could reside. *De facto* policies of **segregation** developed in the antebellum North resurfaced in the *de jure* policies of **Jim Crow** in the post-**Reconstruction** South and, eventually, in northern and midwestern cities throughout America to segregate black and other minority groups.

Poverty and reduced public services characterize ghettos; their residents typically experience poor living conditions, chronic health problems, and regular incidents of violence. Residents also enjoy less social mobility, legal access, and economic freedom than members of the larger society. These conditions make ghettos particularly volatile places that are susceptible to uprisings, especially during economically uncertain and politically tumultuous times, and have been at the root of the scores of race riots that have erupted in major cities throughout the United States over the past 175 years. These include riots in **Cincinnati**, Ohio (2001), **New York City** (1863), **Chicago**, Illinois (1919), **Tulsa**, Oklahoma (1921), **Detroit**,

Michigan (1943, 1967), **Los Angeles**, California (1965, 1992), and **Newark**, New Jersey (1967).

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### **Government Responses to U.S. Race Riots**

There have been hundreds of racial riots in the United States—from **white mobs lynching** black men in the 1800s, to crowds of black protesters boycotting white businesses in the 1960s (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**), to various ethnic groups gathering in the streets of major cities after several criminal trials in the 1990s. Such civil unrest has led to varying governmental responses.

In reviewing responses to racial grievances in this country, it is clear that the government—whether on the state, local, or federal level—has usually responded in one of three ways: (1) by attempting to reduce grievances that may have caused the riots, (2) by bringing in military troops to arrest or force protesters off the streets, or (3) by taking no action at all to make improvements.

Indeed, some would argue that the government's failure to adequately respond to public dissatisfaction may play a key role in the eruption of violence in the first place. In an analysis of the underlying conditions of seventy-six American race riots between 1913 and 1963, Stanley Lieberson and Arnold Silverman commented on "the community's failure to see the riot in terms of institutional malfunctioning or a racial difficulty which is not met—and perhaps cannot be—by existing social institutions" (Lieberson and Silverman 1965).

Although white Americans were directly involved in or often initiated racial riots in the 1800s and early 1900s, years later during the civil rights era, riots garnered national concern and were often referred to as an urban problem, or, less euphemistically, as the Negro problem. During the 1960s, and in subsequent years, focus has been on riots in black neighborhoods in **Newark**, Harlem (see **New York City Riot of 1964**), **Detroit**, **Los Angeles**, Memphis, Selma, and several other cities in the United States. Even today, race riots are still viewed as urban violence.

The government's response to riots has often caused much controversy. One of the most significant examples of how the government responded to race riots in the past included a move by President Lyndon Johnson, who appointed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders after racial violence had occurred in numerous cities in the mid-1960s. Johnson directed the commission, chaired by Illinois Gov. **Otto Kerner** and thus known as the Kerner Commission, to analyze the specific triggers for riots and the deeper causes of the worsening racial climate of the time. He also asked the group to propose potential remedies to prevent recurrences.

After an intense investigation, the commission issued its report in February 1968.

The **Kerner Commission Report** laid out in great detail the specific white attitudes and behavior it blamed for the riots. The report recommended a national system of income supplementation based on need to provide a minimum standard of decent living for all citizens. Additionally, it recommended that the federal government provide at least 90 percent of all welfare costs, make available six million new and existing housing units to low-income families within five years, and provide funds for year-round compensatory education programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

However, despite the recommendations of the commission, the government continued to emphasize the use of force to contain civil disorders. After a riot occurred in Memphis, Tennessee, on March 28, 1968, in support of a strike by city garbage collectors, President Johnson called for an end to rioting in the United States in a national speech. He warned that violence would divide people and he urged Americans to strive for social stability. In addition, Johnson urged law enforcement to deal firmly with rioters and to control violence.

The Kerner Commission Report recommendations continued to be ignored even after Johnson left office. Richard M. Nixon took over the presidency in 1969 through a conservative white backlash that ensured that the Kerner Commission's advice would not be fully implemented.

Two years before Nixon officially became president, one of the most famous riots in U.S. history took place. Once again, it demonstrated the government's standard response to civil unrest. The famous Twelfth Street riot in Detroit began on the morning of Sunday, July 23, 1967 (see **Detroit [Michigan] Riot of 1967**). Vice squad officers conducted a raid at an illegal after-hours drinking establishment. The confrontation with the patrons at the business erupted into one of the most deadly and destructive riots in modern U.S. history, lasting five days. In the end, the state and federal governments sent in National Guard and U.S. Army troops which resulted in 43 dead, 467 injured, over 7,500 arrests and more than 2,000 buildings burned to the ground. News media from around the world wrote about the riot. *Time* magazine highlighted the tragedy on its August 4, 1967, cover. Like most of the media coverage, the photo depicted looters as black and guards, firemen, and authorities as white. The federal and state governments were criticized in the media for their use of military troops.

The extent of the 1967 Detroit riot was surpassed in scale only by the **Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992**, known also as the L.A. riots or the Rodney King uprising. The riot was sparked on April 29, 1992, when a mostly white jury acquitted four officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King. Thousands of people in Los Angeles, mostly young black and Latino males, joined in what has often been characterized as a race riot, involving mass law-breaking, including looting, arson, and murder. In all, fifty to sixty people were killed during the riots.

Weeks after the riots, the community called for a retrial of the officers. The acquittals survived appeals in the state courts, but federal charges of civil rights violations were brought against the officers. Near the first

anniversary of the acquittal, the city tensely awaited the decision of the federal jury. Seven days of deliberations had raised speculative fear of an incendiary outcome in the event of a not-guilty verdict. Precautionary measures were taken by the government. The decision was read in a Saturday morning court session on April 17, 1993. Two officers were found guilty and another two were acquitted. Police were fully mobilized with officers on twelve-hour shifts, convoy patrols, scout helicopters, street barricades, tactical command centers, and support from the National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps. However, no violence broke out. Later, the group known as Rebuild LA attempted to spur development of damaged areas, but the organization fell short of its monetary goals by more than half and failed to attract key corporate investment in poor areas.

Another incident that demonstrated the government's harsh use of military force when approaching minority community groups occurred on May 13, 1985. The Philadelphia police failed in an attempt to serve arrest warrants on four members of the Philadelphia communal group MOVE. Police became engaged in a gun battle at MOVE's residence where they fired about 10,000 rounds of ammunition. With the approval of the mayor, the police eventually dropped a bomb on MOVE's rooftop structure, alternately described as a gun turret, which was used as a defensive fortification. The structure was unoccupied at the time, although the house itself was occupied. This bomb did not significantly damage the rooftop structure, but did start a fire that destroyed the entire block and killed eleven people. Ironically, the city's firefighting equipment was not used in the incident and the authorities allowed the fire to burn. Sixty-two houses burned to the ground. Six adults and five children in the MOVE house were killed.

Police initially claimed they had been fired upon first with automatic weapons, but only a small number of weapons, which were not automatic, were found in the burned-out home. In the aftermath of the catastrophe, the city launched a special investigation which found, among other things, that "Dropping a bomb on an occupied row house was unconscionable" ("Philadelphia" 1996). No police officer was suspended, fired, or fined for the incident, although Philadelphia has paid over \$32 million to the victims, and has been ordered to pay \$29 million to residents whose homes were destroyed by the fire. The city of Philadelphia has appealed several of the court decisions.

While the government's response to some civil disturbances has come swiftly, at times the government has waited decades, or even hundreds of years, to address riots. In November 2005, nearly 1,000 people gathered before the Reparations Coordinating Committee and the Congressional Black Caucus in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to discuss compensation for one of the worst events in American history—the **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921** (see **Tulsa Race Riot Commission**).

During the rioting from May 31 to June 1, 1921, newspaper reports confirm rampaging whites killed thirty-seven blacks. In the attack, in which some estimate up to 300 people died, whites burned down 35 blocks of the all-black affluent area of Tulsa, known as the **Greenwood Community**.

Its homes, churches, schools, and black-owned and -operated newspapers, theater, and hotel, were all destroyed. Recently, black lawyers, politicians, historians, and community leaders joined together to help the ninety-seven surviving victims of the tragic event regain some of what they lost more than eighty-five years ago. Supporters are hoping to introduce federal legislation similar to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 passed by Congress, which allowed Japanese-Americans reparations for mistreatment during World War II.

It has taken more than 100 years for the government to recognize the atrocities of the **Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898**, which left this port city in racial ruins. The violence was part of a statewide effort to put white supremacist Democrats in office and stem the political advances of black citizens, according to a draft report released by the state-appointed 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission. The incident is the only known violent overthrow of a government in U.S. history. Afterward, white supremacists in state office passed the laws that would disenfranchise black people for generations—until the **civil rights movement** and Voting Rights Act of the 1960s. Now, with history fully told in a report document, members of the riot commission will turn toward action, perhaps asserting that there must be some atonement. The 480-page report, divided into eight chapters with appendices and maps, is the first to examine the riot's economic impact on Wilmington's black community and the shift in the city's demographics after a number of black residents were forced out of town. According to the report, 11,324 blacks and 8,731 whites lived in Wilmington in 1890. In 1900, there were 10,407 blacks in the city and 10,556 whites. Wilmington's black entrepreneurs and skilled workers suffered economic setbacks after the riots, but they slowly rebounded. The violence left many blacks dead or injured. The report documents the deaths of twenty-two blacks. There are no white fatalities documented in the report, according to commission members.

Recently, commission members have called for the state to apologize for its inaction during the riot. Some members believe the report will improve race relations and encourage more unity in Wilmington. Commission members also say that Congress may be able to take a lesson from the report for use in analyzing other race riots that occurred in the United States.

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## The Great Migration

After the broken promises of **Reconstruction**, African Americans looked to the North as a place where their dreams could be fulfilled. From towns and farms they poured into northern cities in search of the American Dream. The apex of this Diaspora lasted from 1915–1920, and is referred to as the Great Migration.

In a matter of ten years, 1910–1920, one million blacks migrated out of the South and into northern, industrialized cities. Most notably, Detroit witnessed an astounding 611 percent increase in their black population. The cities of Cleveland, Ohio (307 percent increase), Chicago, Illinois (148 percent increase), New York (66 percent increase), Indianapolis, Indiana (59 percent increase), and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (47 percent increase) also experienced significant growth resulting from this mass exodus out of the South. In raw numbers, however, Chicago experienced the greatest growth, as over 65,000 new southern black migrants moved to the city; New York expanded by 61,000, and Detroit grew by 36,000 (Henri, 69).

### *Early Black Migrations*

Although the Great Migration stands as the most significant black exodus out of the South, it was not the first. From 1862–1900, for instance, groups of disgruntled and downtrodden blacks started moving into the northern and western regions of America. This initial exodus began as a result of the Civil War (1861–1865), the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), and the dismal failure of Reconstruction (1865–1877). As the outlook of a better future quickly faded, thousands of blacks headed toward states such as Kansas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York.

From 1890–1910, a second, smaller migration had begun. This time, however, southern blacks remained south of the Mason-Dixon Line, moving into southern industrial towns and cities, west to Texas and Oklahoma where wages were rumored to be higher, and to the burgeoning iron and coal mines of Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia.

Although both of these early migrations were relatively small in scope and significance, white southerners, who had grown accustomed to cheap labor, incredulously viewed these black efforts toward social, political, and economic betterment. Interestingly, many black leaders were also unsupportive. In 1879, Frederick Douglass, the nation's foremost black leader, urged southern blacks to remain home and work through their problems. Two decades later, **Booker T. Washington** similarly exhorted southern blacks to "Cast down their buckets where they are" (Washington 1901). Even Robert S. Abbott, staunch supporter of the Great Migration and owner and editor of the *Chicago Defender*, was telling southern blacks as late as 1915 "to stick to the farm" (January 16 and 23, 1915).

By 1915, however, many southern blacks had enough of the farm and of the South. With their continued oppression at home and the growing need for industrial labor in the North, African Americans, in unprecedented numbers, set out in search of the northern Promised Land.

### *Factors Contributing to the Great Migration*

The most obvious factors that contributed to the migration were the racist and economic conditions of the South. Although Reconstruction idealistically should have ameliorated the devastation left in the wake of the Civil War, its impact on blacks was barely detectable. With the Compromise of 1877 that repealed most of the post-war recovery programs, southern whites soon regained their old political and economic power, leaving many blacks penniless and homeless.

Perhaps the most immediate obstacle that many blacks faced during this period was the physical destruction caused by the Civil War. Throughout the South, entire towns and cities were looted and burned to the ground, and with them, the farms, factories, stores, warehouses, machine shops, and mills that once employed their inhabitants.

For the few blacks who owned farm land, other troubles awaited. From 1913 to 1915, black and white farmers suffered from a severe agricultural depression. On the heels of this disaster, farmers faced the devastation of the boll weevil on their cotton crops. Hit hard by both, many black farmers were forced to give up their land and become tenant farmers or **sharecroppers** for white landowners. Blacks found themselves, once again, financially dependent on southern whites, and, in many cases, more impoverished than before.

Along with such economic obstacles, many southern blacks were also confronted with an equally corrupt criminal justice and peonage system. Once arrested, African Americans were rented out to white landowners in need of cheap labor. When white landowners needed more labor, compensated local law enforcement simply found more bogus reasons to arrest more blacks. As many historians have observed, there was little difference between the post-war peonage system and pre-war slavery. Blacks were still being sold and whites were still profiting from their sweat and labor.

There were also **Jim Crow** laws passed throughout the South and designed to impede black advancement. These laws were specifically structured to restrict the rights of blacks and to relegate them to a subordinate status in virtually all aspects of life. In the realms of education, legal justice, religion, democracy, and the inalienable right to pursue happiness, southern blacks had no rights that whites were obligated to respect.

Serving to augment this post-war legal system, violence and **lynching** increased throughout the South as membership in the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** rose to over five million. White-on-black violent crimes reached an all-time national high, with the southern states of Alabama (248 fatalities), Mississippi (323 fatalities), and Georgia (374 fatalities) leading the list of vigilante lynching (Ginsberg 1969). It should come as no surprise that blacks in these three states also comprised a disproportionate share of southern migrants.

In contrast to the racially oppressive life in the South, the industrial North during the second decade of the twentieth century promised downtrodden blacks a far brighter social, legal, and financial future. In 1914, World War I erupted in Europe. By 1915, the United States began preparing

for combat through a substantial military buildup. With the new and growing need for factory workers, an exigency intensified by the decline of foreign immigration because of the war in Europe, blacks had their first real opportunity to enter industry in sizable numbers.

In April 1917, Congress, acting on President Woodrow Wilson's call, declared war against Germany. While hundreds of thousands of white American men prepared for combat, black Americans were told that they did not have the right to fight in the armed services. Consequently, white men left northern cities and went to Europe to fight. At the same time, black Americans were recruited to northern cities to help fill the manufacturing voids left vacant by their white counterparts.

As important as these push-and-pull forces were to the Great Migration, they would not have been enough in and of themselves to create a mass exodus if there were not persuasive voices both detailing the striking contrasts between the two regions and overtly encouraging migration. There were, for instance, labor agents from every major industrial city sent to the South in search of hardworking manual laborers. These agents would often pay for a migrant's passage North, procure their living quarters, and promise countless opportunities for financial and social betterment.

Confirming such promises, many neighbors and family members who had previously left the South wrote home to extol the many wonders of the North. Entire southern communities would hear the letters from contented migrants about the opportunities that awaited blacks in the North, the ease of obtaining employment, unprecedented social justice, and the magic of big-city life.

These first-person narratives and testimonies, as effective as they were in stimulating migration, reached a relatively small and localized populace. It was the black press, however, that had the power to spread the word about the advantages of the North to millions of black southerners every week. And no newspaper was more dedicated to the migration cause than the *Chicago Defender*. Along with being the most popular black newspaper in the United States, it also published more stories more often on the oppressive South, the promises of the North, and the immediate need for migration. Unflinching, it refused to succumb to calls from both blacks and whites for moderation.

### ***Life in the Land of Hope***

Although life in the North may not have been everything that it was promised to be, it was still a significantly better place to live for most blacks than Dixie. According to 1919 U.S. Department of Labor findings, for example, blacks in Chicago were being paid four to six times more than blacks in the South for comparable work. Many migrants also found themselves joyfully overwhelmed by the social nightlife of the big city. For the first time, many of these newly arriving rural migrants encountered a vibrant black community with black-owned nightclubs, movie theaters, restaurants, dance halls, saloons, and retail shops selling a myriad of imaginable, and many unimaginable, luxury items.

Life in the North, unfortunately, was not solely comprised of high wages, materialistic consumption, and exciting nightlife. Although the North generally provided a better standard of living than the South, it was still scarred with inequalities. Many blacks left the South believing that the stench of **racism** would be left behind. It would not be long, however, before they realized that bigotry knows no boundaries. Many northern whites who grew accustomed to their racially homogenized life, fiercely resisted black migrants using public beaches, swimming pools, playgrounds, libraries, restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters in the white sections of northern cities.

The workplace was also marked with racial inequalities. Although it is true that blacks received higher wages than they had in the South, it is also true that blacks made less than their northern white counterparts. In fact, blacks, many of whom were from families that had been part of the American experience for generations, made less than newly arriving, non-English-speaking immigrants from Germany, Poland, Italy, and Russia. This general attitude of white workers was illustrated by the policies of most industrial labor unions that refused membership and its subsequent benefits to all blacks.

As a result of poor wages and northern racism, blacks were forced to locate in what are now commonly referred to as the **ghettos** of the Northeast and Midwest (e.g., Harlem; the Southside of Chicago; Gary, Indiana; East St. Louis, Illinois; and a myriad of other segregated enclaves in the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Camden, New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; and Boston, Massachusetts). At first, this de facto segregation helped migrants obtain a sense of community, security, and culture. It was not long, however, before the problems of overcrowding, poor conditions, crime, disease, and high rent began to outweigh the positive aspects of these black communities. Consequently, blacks were forced to spread into outlying areas designed for Whites Only. With the threat of decreasing property values and the fear of race mixing, whites passed restrictive covenants that legally segregated the races and stopped black expansion.

When legal means of housing segregation failed, northern racists reverted to the use of violence, bombing being the technique of choice. Unfortunately, bombings motivated by housing disputes were not the only violence blacks encountered in the North. As more African Americans migrated into northern cities, homicides and assaults, although not as prevalent as in the South, became a growing reality. Along with the threat of isolated violence, blacks in most cities also had to tolerate the northern equivalent of the Ku Klux Klan—the athletic clubs. The members of these **white supremacy** clubs were mainly comprised of white teenage boys, whose primary athletic outlet was bullying and assaulting newly arriving migrants. Clubs such as Ragen's Colts, the Hamburgers, Our Flag, and the Sparklers made it their mission to affirm white power in a rapidly changing and diverse North.

This ever-growing violence culminated in the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**, when a series of race riots spread throughout the United States. Fueled by returning soldiers anxious to reaffirm the pre-war/pre-migration caste system, blacks were painfully reminded that although the Civil War

had been won by the North, the struggle for equality and justice was far from over. See also Exodusters.

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Alan D. DeSantis

### **Greensburg (Indiana) Riot of 1906**

The Greensburg, Indiana, riot of April 1906 was a precursor to the more deadly and destructive race riots that would occur in northern industrial cities during the period from 1907 to 1919 as whites reacted to the influx of blacks from the South and to the increased economic, social, and civic competition that they represented.

Indiana was one of the five states carved out of the Northwest Territory, where the 1787 Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery. The institution was also outlawed in Indiana by the 1816 state constitution. However, because the state bordered on slave-holding Kentucky to the south, Indiana was attractive to escaping slaves. Thus, anti-black feeling in the state was extremely strong and African Americans in Indiana faced deep-seated hatred and discrimination. They could not serve in the militia, vote, enter public schools, or testify in court. Like neighboring Ohio, Indiana required blacks to post a \$500 bond to secure their good behavior. Those who could not post the bond could be sold to the highest bidder for a period of six months. Yet blacks continued to move into the state, often settling near Quaker communities that were more tolerant of blacks and active in the abolitionist movement, until 1851 when the Indiana legislature encouraged blacks to emigrate and began fining whites who hired blacks. During the Civil War, conditions for free blacks in Indiana worsened, and many of them left the state for Canada.

Blacks who stayed in the state developed their own communities, building schools, businesses, and churches; however, strict **segregation** remained in force into the early twentieth century. By 1900, only 57,000 blacks lived in Indiana, where they comprised just 2.28 percent of the state's population. Black residents were periodically run out of towns in

which they had been long settled, and were prohibited from stopping in many towns for even a short period of time. Blacks who dared to flout the rules were often visited by the men in the community, who used intimidation to encourage them to leave. One such community was Greensburg.

Located about forty-five miles southeast of Indianapolis, Greensburg in 1906 was a small, prosperous town with a rural flavor, the quaint values of an earlier age, and a population of less than 8,000. A small number of blacks had lived in the city for years. They were known as the better kind of blacks, who were hardworking, self-respected, and good citizens. They maintained their own separate society, lived in nice homes, and supported a church and a full calendar of social activities. Some of them worked in the local mill. The first black graduate of the local school became an instructor at Hampton Institute. In spite of this, blacks generally were not welcome in Greensburg; indeed, in 1902, blacks living in the city had been forced to flee for their lives.

As the city modernized, a railroad was built to serve it. The efforts required hundreds of workers, so unskilled black laborers from the South were imported. After the railroad and depot were completed, a number of them remained in Greensburg. They lived in substandard, segregated housing and found it difficult to find steady work. Moreover, the mayor of the city owed his office to businessmen who were in the tavern and liquor trades; he recognized it was to his advantage to ignore the enforcement of various vice and liquor laws. Thus, a saloon was allowed to exist in the black section of Greensburg and it attracted the idle, the unemployed, and a fair amount of trouble and criminal activity, including a murder in 1905, the year before the riot. Citizens in the city protested, but to no avail. Thus, an atmosphere of lawlessness, introduced by white citizens, was not only permitted, but encouraged in the black portion of Greensburg.

In early April 1906, a black laborer named Green, who had been brought up from the South to work on the railroad and who was known to be mentally impaired, allegedly raped a well-liked and highly respected white widow for whom he had been performing odd jobs. After the rape, he was quickly apprehended, tried, and convicted. Several weeks later, whites in the town were still seething over the incident. On April 30, a crowd of white men and boys tried to take Green from the jail, but were held off by law enforcement officials. They then went on a rampage in the black section of Greensburg, shooting and torching homes, destroying businesses, and beating blacks at random. Many blacks were driven out of town, never to return. The riot was quickly contained and although no one was killed, there were thousands of dollars in damages and a number of injuries. No one was ever arrested or tried for participating in the riots. *See also* The Great Migration; Jim Crow; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

*Marilyn K. Howard*

### **Greenwood Community (Tulsa, Oklahoma)**

Situated in the northeastern part of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Greenwood community developed into a thriving black business and residential district during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As Tulsa grew during the oil boom of the early 1900s, Greenwood prospered as well. Prevented from patronizing stores in the white section of town, black Tulsans developed their own enterprises in Greenwood instead. Its main street, Greenwood Avenue, became known popularly as the black Wall Street. In June 1921, fueled by resentment of black gains and aspirations, a **white mob** of Tulsans leveled thirty-five blocks of the black community in a race riot precipitated by false allegations of an attack on a white woman in downtown Tulsa by a black man. Although some of the area recovered after the destruction, Greenwood never regained the prominence it enjoyed during its heyday.

Greenwood began attracting black residents when a group of African Americans purchased land there around 1905. As the area lured more people, black Tulsans soon enjoyed their own newspaper, a barber, two doctors, and three grocers. By 1910, blacks comprised 10 percent of Tulsa's inhabitants, and in the next few years, the city had a black police officer and several new black-owned businesses along Greenwood Avenue. At the time of the riot, Tulsa's black population had expanded to 11,000, with around 8,000 living in Greenwood itself. Greenwood's vibrant streets at this time also held two schools, thirteen churches, three fraternal organizations, a hospital, two newspapers, two theaters, and a public library. On Greenwood's side streets, Tulsans could find other types of successful businesses—prostitution houses and speakeasies, where jazz blared and alcohol flowed freely.

On the morning of May 30, 1921, Dick Rowland, a black shoeshine, stepped into an elevator in downtown Tulsa operated by a young white woman named Sarah Page. While the police attempted to piece together the story of what happened next, Tulsans took the matters into their own hands. An angry white crowd—fed by newspapers that typically used words such as *Little Africa* and *Niggertown* to depict Greenwood, and manned by a flourishing local chapter of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**—began to congregate in front of the courthouse, where authorities had detained Rowland. When a group of men from Greenwood converged on the building to protect the young man, a scuffle ensued, a shot was fired, and chaos ensued. The white mob charged into the center of Greenwood, looting, burning, and attacking residents with abandon. Several hours later, the once bustling community lay in ruins. Death estimates ranged from 27 to more than 250. Property loss amounted to millions of dollars.

An initial investigation blamed the residents of Greenwood for inciting the crowd at the courthouse and for stressing equal rights. Like many of

their counterparts, a number of black Tulsans had served in the military during World War I. Upon their return home, they asserted a new sense of purpose and a demand for equality. White Tulsans, like whites across the country, felt threatened by these measures. But no white Tulsans ever served prison time for the murders, destruction, and looting that took place in Greenwood. Not until some seventy-five years later would an official reckoning of the annihilation take place, when the Oklahoma state legislature established the 1921 **Tulsa Race Riot Commission** in 1997 to clarify what transpired and rectify some of the injustices that prevailed. *See also* Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921.

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*Ann V. Collins*

### Griffith, D.W. (1875–1948)

David Wark Griffith was the director of the controversial film *The Birth of a Nation*, a racist view of the **Reconstruction** period that is believed to have sparked a revival of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** in the 1920s.

Griffith was born in LaGrange, Kentucky, in 1875. His father was a Confederate Civil War veteran and Kentucky legislator, who died when Griffith was ten years old, leaving the family in difficult financial circumstances. Eventually, Griffith dropped out of school to earn money to help support his family. He originally wanted to be a great playwright but turned to writing and acting in the film industry to pay the bills. In 1908, he began his film career with the Biograph Company as an actor and scenario writer. He is credited with introducing film techniques like the fade in, fade out, long shot, full shot, close-up, moving camera shot, and flashback. He also started United Artists in 1919 with Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Charles Chaplin.

In 1915, he created Hollywood's first feature-length film, *The Birth of a Nation*, which ran for over three hours on twelve reels. Because of its overt **racism**, *The Birth of a Nation* is also seen by many as the most controversial film in the history of cinema. It is also Hollywood's longest-running film and played in movie theaters well into the mid-twentieth century. The film arrived in theaters during a time of racial unrest in the South, where **Jim Crow** laws created an environment conducive to **lynchings** of African Americans and their unequal protection under the law.



D.W. Griffith. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



The movie is also credited with promoting the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, which used the film to recruit members and promote their ideology of **white supremacy**. The Klan especially used the film in cities of the North and West where there was an increase of African Americans who had fled the terror of Jim Crow but who were met with resentment from whites when they began taking jobs in industry that were vacant due to a shortage of cheap Eastern European labor during World War I.

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, formed in 1910, publicly condemned the movie, which Griffith defended with the argument that it was not his intention to make a racist film. Many found it hard to buy his argument since the movie was based on Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*, which espoused racist propaganda and called for the day the Klan would rise again and solve the race problem. Griffith also incorporated scenes from an earlier Dixon novel called *The Leopard Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865–1900*. Griffith also used ideology about Reconstruction that he interpreted from Woodrow Wilson's *The History of the American People*. Others in the black community condemned the movie. Entrepreneurs like Oscar Micheaux began to open small, black-owned movie companies to make movies that answered *The Birth of a Nation* and to address the racist imagery of African Americans in Hollywood films. Black intellectuals such as **W.E.B. Du Bois** and **Booker T. Washington** involved themselves in making the film *The Birth of the Race*, a response to Griffith's movie. They felt it was important for more African Americans to get into media production to combat racist imagery of African Americans in film.

On Thanksgiving night, 1915, in Atlanta Georgia, approximately 25,000 Klansmen marched down Peachtree Avenue to celebrate the film's opening. The film, the first shown in the White House, was endorsed by President Woodrow Wilson. During the period from 1915 to 1919, there were at least twenty-two race riots. The summer of 1919 is called **Red Summer** because of all the people who were killed in race riots at that time. Militant black activity was hampered mainly due to the fact that blacks were not permitted in most movie theaters.

*The Birth of a Nation* was Griffith's most famous film. His subsequent films never made as much of a splash as this one did. The film set the framework for the image of blacks in films for many years to come and aided in maintaining the racist stereotypes that still exist in the United States today. Although demonstrations and protests were unsuccessful in getting the film completely banned, it was banned in eight states. In 1999, the National Board of the Director's Guild of America voted to rename the D.W. Griffith Award it had given since 1953 because they believed his film helped **racial stereotypes** flourish in the United States. After a sixteen-year absence from filmmaking, Griffith died in 1948 of a brain aneurysm. See also *The Birth of a Nation*.

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*Catherine Anyaso*

### Griggs, Sutton (1872–1933)

Sutton Elbert Griggs was one of the most prolific and militant writers of his generation. He wrote both fiction and nonfiction that described the plight of African Americans during the post-**Reconstruction** era. Jane Campbell, in her book *Mythic Black Fiction*, states that Griggs' fiction emerges out of a sense of "post-Reconstruction despair" (Campbell, 42) and he strives to give voice to a black heroism in the face of devastating odds.

Griggs was born on June 19, 1872, in Chatfield, Texas. He was the oldest child of Alan Ralph and Emma Hodge Griggs. Alan Griggs was a Baptist minister and editor of the *Western Star*, a local African American newspaper. Sutton attended high school in Dallas, Texas; graduated from Bishop College in Marshall, Texas; and studied theology at the Richmond Theological Seminary (now the Virginia Union University) in Richmond, Virginia. Ordained in 1893, Griggs served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Berkeley, Virginia, and was later minister of the First Baptist Church in East Nashville, Tennessee; corresponding secretary of the National Baptist Convention; and pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Griggs founded Orion Publishing Company (1901) and the Public Welfare League (1914) to assist African American businesses and other enterprises.

Griggs wrote an autobiography titled *The Story of My Struggles* (1914) and numerous religious and political pamphlets and tracts. But his five novels—*Imperium in Imperio* (1899), *Overshadowed* (1901), *Unfettered* (1902), *The Hindered Hand* (1905), and *Pointing the Way* (1908)—stirred the most controversy. These novels depicted the dilemma African Americans faced during the post-Reconstruction era of **disenfranchisement**, when southern states enacted **black codes** and **Jim Crow** laws designed to enforce **segregation** and deprive, or disenfranchise, African Americans of the political, social, and economic gains they had won during Reconstruction (1866–1877). When laws and codes failed to fully restrict the constitutional rights of African Americans, white supremacist groups like the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** terrorized black people with **lynching** and other forms of mob violence. The **Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898** is but one example of violence by **white mobs**.

Although the repression of African Americans was a major theme in Griggs' writings, he also felt compelled to challenge the **racial stereotypes** of black people perpetrated in the writings of white southern writers like Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon, Jr. Page favored the plantation motif, which characterized the antebellum South as one the most beautiful civilizations the nation had ever known. He painted portraits of benevolent slave masters and contented, doting slaves. Similarly, in his books *Leopard's Spots* (1902) and *The Clansman* (1905), Dixon portrayed African Americans as degenerate, inferior, and bestial. *The Clansman*, a romantic history of the Ku Klux Klan, was made into a movie by **D.W. Griffith** called *The*

*Birth of a Nation* (1915). Griggs used his literature to counteract these negative stereotypes and to paint a more positive, realistic portrait of black people. He also used his novels and nonfiction to explore themes and solutions that would lead to a better way of life for black people in the United States. For example, *Imperium in Imperio (Nation within a Nation)* tells the story of African American militants who create a separate nation within the United States with a functioning government and a disciplined army whose sole purpose is to end the injustices black people have suffered in the United States. The leaders of this separate nation also intend to publicize to the world crimes committed against their race. Although Griggs would later reevaluate the militant stance he took at the beginning of his career, he continued to devote his life to the struggle for civil rights for African Americans. See also Black Nationalism; Du Bois, W.E.B.; White Supremacy.

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*John G. Hall*

# H

## Harlem (New York) Riot of 1935

Often considered the end of the Harlem Renaissance because it shattered the image of Harlem as a neighborhood of nightclubs and cabarets open and welcoming to white patrons, the riot of March 1935 revealed the anger and frustration that **racism, police brutality**, and economic hardship had bred among Harlem residents. Unlike most previous twentieth-century race riots, the violence in Harlem in 1935 was not characterized by **white mobs** attacking black victims, but by black rioters destroying white property.

During the Depression, there were two main causes of discontent in Harlem, a New York City neighborhood that, since the turn of the century, had been increasingly populated by African Americans. One cause was tension between the residents and the police, who were frequently accused of brutality in their interactions with blacks. For instance, in March 1934, at a Harlem rally held in support of the black men accused in the **Scottsboro Case**, eyewitnesses claimed that police officers drew their weapons on the crowd and beat several demonstrators, including a young girl. The anger and distrust born of such incidents grew among Harlemites when the police commissioner, ignoring a finding of excessive force made by his own chief inspector, exonerated the officers under investigation.

A more powerful cause of discontent, especially in view of the high unemployment of the time, was the refusal of local white merchants, who made their living largely off the Harlem community, to employ African Americans as clerical and sales staff. Since 1933, various citizen groups in Harlem had organized boycotts against the merchants but, by 1935, these actions had achieved only limited success, with only a few jobs being offered to African Americans and then only to lighter-skinned individuals. Not surprisingly, it was an incident involving the police and occurring in one of the white-owned stores on West 125th Street that ignited the riot.

On March 19, 1935, rumors spread that the police had beaten and killed a sixteen-year-old boy, Lino Rivera, who had been accused of stealing a knife from a Kress Store. Although Rivera was not beaten, he later testified that store employees had threatened to take him to the basement



Pedestrians pass by the Lenox Lounge in the Harlem neighborhood of New York, 2000. Billie Holiday was known to frequent this famous nightclub. AP Images/Suzanne Plunkett.

and do so. To avoid causing any further agitation among the store's customers, the police hustled Rivera out the back door and released him. The boy's sudden disappearance led to excited speculation that he had indeed been taken to the basement to be beaten. The unfortunate and entirely coincidental appearance in the area of an ambulance and a hearse only fueled this notion, which, given the state of community and police relations, was quickly and completely believed.

By late afternoon, a large and angry crowd had gathered outside the store, forcing its closure. Violent confrontations erupted between blacks and whites and between the police and the rioters. Over 600 windows were smashed and many stores were looted and vandalized. Although they did not cause the rioting, communist groups, which had been active in the community attempting to create solidarity between black and white workers, attempted to seize control of the crowd to focus its anger on the white merchants and the city's political leaders. The Young Communist League and other leftist groups encouraged the rumor of Rivera's death and called for the arrest of the Kress Store managers. The league also distributed leaflets calling for blacks and whites to unite against their capitalist bosses. This communist involvement in the disorders led to later claims by the police and the city administration that the riot had been caused by leftist agitators.

With over 500 police officers on the streets, the rioting eventually subsided, only to break out again on the evening of March 20. After a second night of violence, the disorders ended. In his initial comments on the rioting, made before it had ceased, New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia blamed the violence on criminals and other riffraff. However, the thirteen-member

commission later appointed by the mayor to investigate the causes of the riot rejected both the riffraff and communist agitator theories and, in an unprecedented set of conclusions, placed blame for the disorders on economic depression, racial discrimination, and indifference or racism within the city administration. Because the report was so critical of the city government, Mayor La Guardia delayed its official release and it was first made public by the *Amsterdam News*, which printed a leaked copy in July 1936.

The commission's unusual composition—it had a black majority that included Howard University sociologist E. Franklin Frazier as director of research—may have accounted for its unorthodox conclusions—most previous riot commissions accepted criminal activity or political agitation as the chief cause of disorder. Although the mayor became somewhat more responsive to the needs of Harlem, appointing more blacks to city office and speaking more frequently before black audiences, his administration did little to improve economic conditions in the neighborhood. Because economics had been such a large factor in the violence, some commentators, such as writer **Claude McKay**, refused to even call the 1935 disorders a riot, preferring instead to see the episode as an economic revolt. *See also* Locke, Alain LeRoy.

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*John A. Wagner*

**Harlem (New York) Riot of 1943.** *See* New York City Riot of 1943

**Harlem (New York) Riot of 1964.** *See* New York City Riot of 1964

### **Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU)**

Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU), founded in 1962 by members of the Harlem community and led by Kenneth B. Clark (1914–2005), was a program dedicated to alleviating the distressed conditions of black youth in Harlem, New York. HARYOU was a heroic effort and was well supported by the federal and state government. Nevertheless, it did not achieve the success that Clark and others had hoped. In fact, conditions in Harlem went from bad to worse following a riot there in 1964 (see **New York City Riot of 1964**).

Clark, best known for his compelling and extensive studies on the effects of **racism** on black youth, was an ambitious HARYOU leader. He himself knew intimately the obstacles facing blacks. As a youth, he lived in New York City, near Harlem, where he and his mother were once forced out of a white-only restaurant. His guidance counselor tried to persuade

Clark to attend a vocational high school rather than an academic one. This reflected an attitude that has existed in the United States since **Reconstruction**, that blacks should be navigated toward servile and unchallenging positions in life.

During his undergraduate years at Howard, a historically black university, Clark protested racial **segregation** inside the U.S. Capitol. He was later denied admission to Cornell because of his color, but went on to Columbia University to receive a Ph.D. in psychology. He then got a job as a research assistant working for **Gunnar Myrdal's** book, *An American Dilemma* (1944). He worked closely with his wife, Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, on pioneering research that used dolls to analyze the damage done to blacks' self-image due to racism and segregation. These studies, and Clark's direct involvement, were pivotal to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* to outlaw segregation in public schools.

In 1961, the concept of a social program to help Harlem youth was first reported in the *New York Times*. The New York City Youth Board and the Community Mental Health Board planned to work together with the Jewish Board of Guardians to establish programs to assist three communities in New York City. Members from the community, particularly the Harlem Neighborhoods Association (HANA) jumped at the chance to participate. HANA members put together a grant proposal and generated the ideas and objectives for HARYOU. The President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency contributed \$230,000, to be used to cover the costs for the eighteen-month planning period. The City of New York granted the group \$100,000. Individuals on all levels genuinely supported and encouraged programs to assuage the mounting problems in Harlem.

The issues that beset Harlem youth were not that different from those in **ghettos** across the nation: poverty, broken families, crime, drugs, unemployment, and poor housing conditions. Racism and racial segregation also took their toll. **Police brutality** and racist white gangs, which caused many young blacks to form their own gangs, were rampant. Racial profiling and racism in the judicial system put a disproportionate number of blacks in jails. Immured by the squalor of their racially segregated physical environment and by social and economic oppression, blacks were overwhelmed with feelings of hopelessness and frustration.

The HARYOU planning committee produced a comprehensive plan of action. It detailed their objectives, the issues concerning black youth to be addressed, the structure of the organization, the programs to be implemented, and the analysis to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. The plan formed a template for many similar programs used across the nation.

The HARYOU programs were categorized as follows: community action, community services, arts and culture, and business enterprises. The group planned to train and employ Harlem youth to be leaders in each of these areas. Participants in the community action programs were responsible for organizing activities alongside such organizations as the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, Community Council on Housing, **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**

(SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and local neighborhood boards.

Participants in the community service programs were employed as assistants with organizations such as the Junior Academy, the Senior Academy, the After-School Center, and the Neighborhood Board (Health Services). Participants in the arts and culture program performed at venues within HARYOU, the Harlem community, and beyond. Participants in the business enterprises programs worked to establish coffee shops, cultural centers, and a film and sound laboratory. They also helped to develop renovation projects within the community. In 1963, the HARYOU committee implemented its plan of action and published its findings in *Youth in the Ghetto* (1964).

In 1964, Harlem erupted in an urban rebellion after a white police officer fatally shot a fifteen-year-old black youth. Demonstrators, largely black youths, attacked their own community. Although HARYOU continued to promote its programs, it never did recover, nor did it achieve the results the organizers had intended. Shortly after, black youths instigated race riots in the urban ghettos in the North across the nation. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### Harlins, Latasha (1976–1991)

The violent shooting death of fifteen-year-old Latasha Harlins exacerbated racial tensions in Los Angeles, California, and has often been cited as a mitigating factor in the civil unrest that fueled the riots that occurred in Los Angeles between April 29 and May 2, 1992. The **Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992** have been characterized as the worst race riots in U.S. history. The frustration of L.A. residents seemed to be connected to the videotaped beating of Rodney King during an arrest made by L.A. police officers. Although the Rodney King beating was a travesty, many L.A. residents recognized that the pent-up rage that exploded after the acquittal of the police officers who beat King was deeply rooted in another tragic incident that occurred the same month as the King beating and was also on videotape.

On March 6, 1991, fifteen-year-old Latasha Harlins walked into the Empire Liquor Market located at 9172 South Figueroa Street in Compton, California. She entered the store, walked over to the refrigerated cases, and pulled out a bottle of orange juice costing \$1.79. According to other children who witnessed the events and later testified in court, Harlins placed the orange juice in her open backpack and walked to the counter with \$2 in her hand



prepared to pay for the juice. Soon Ja Du, the forty-nine-year-old Korean woman who owned the store, immediately began to accuse the girl of attempting to steal the orange juice when she approached the counter. The African American girl and the Korean-American woman argued over the orange juice. The videotape showed Soon Ja Du grabbing and pulling Latasha Harlins' backpack. Harlins hit Du in the face a few times as the fight escalated. Soon Ja Du threw Harlins' backpack behind the counter and tossed a stool at the girl. Du grabbed a .38-caliber gun that she had behind the counter. During the melee, the orange juice bottle had dropped to the floor near Harlins. Harlins turned to pick up the orange juice from the floor and placed it on the counter and Du swatted the bottle off of the counter and pointed the gun at Harlins. Harlins turned around and started to walk out of the store. Soon Ja Du pointed the gun at Harlins and the gun went off with a bullet hitting Latasha Harlins in the back of the head.

The videotaped shooting was shown repeatedly on local news channels in Los Angeles for days after the shooting. In November 1991, a jury convicted Soon Ja Du of voluntary manslaughter. Judge Joyce Karlin presided over the case and ultimately sentenced Du to 400 hours of community service, a \$500 fine, reimbursement of funeral costs to the Harlins family and five years' probation.

The incident and the court ruling instigated further hostility between African American residents and Korean-American merchants who owned stores in predominately African American communities throughout South Central Los Angeles. During the L.A. riots, there were over 2,300 documented injuries, 55 deaths, and \$1 billion in damage. Many of the Korean-owned businesses were targeted due to deep-seated resentment against their existence in the areas. The memory of Latasha Harlins still haunts many residents of Los Angeles who believe that justice and peace were thwarted by her death. *See also* Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992.

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*Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

**HARYOU.** *See* Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited

**Hawkins, Yusef (1973–1989)**

Yusef Hawkins was an African American student whose 1989 murder by Italian-American youths in Bensonhurst, New York, created severe racial tensions between the African American and Italian-American communities.

During the evening of August 23, 1989, Yusef Hawkins traveled from the mostly African American Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn to the predominantly Italian-American working-class community of Bensonhurst. The

sixteen-year-old Hawkins went there with three friends to look at a used Pontiac car for sale. While in Bensonhurst, a group of about thirty local young men accosted Hawkins and his friends because they believed that Hawkins had been invited to a party hosted by a girlfriend of one of the youths. Armed with bats, the young men chased Hawkins and his friends. While running after them, one of the youths fired four shots at Hawkins and his friends. Two of the bullets struck Hawkins and he later died.

The incident sparked outrage and an increase of racial tension between African Americans and Italian-Americans. Demonstrations also soon followed and one of the largest rallies was held on August 31, 1989. Proclaimed as the Day of Outrage, approximately 8,000 people gathered on Flatbush Avenue in Bensonhurst to protest the death of Hawkins. Their massive cry of “No justice, no peace,” called for equality and freedom from oppression. Two weeks later, on September 19, African American activist **Jesse Jackson** led a group of high school students in Bensonhurst to protest the racially motivated killing. The shooter, Joseph Fama, received a sentence of thirty-two years; several other defendants received lesser sentences in 1991. Outraged by what he considered lenient sentencing, the **Rev. Al Sharpton** organized a protest in Bensonhurst that same year. He was met by angry demonstrators and one, Michael Riccardi, stabbed him in the stomach. Sharpton also became the spokesperson for Diane Hawkins and Moses Stewart, the parents of Yusef Hawkins. *See also* Bensonhurst (New York) Incident of 1989.

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*Dorsía Smith Silva*

### **Holiday, Billie (1915–1959)**

Billie Holiday is considered one of the greatest jazz vocalists of all time, and a major influence on many later performers, such as Janis Joplin and Nina Simone. Holiday’s major contribution to the fight against racially motivated violence was her brave decision to publicly perform Abel Meeropol’s powerful anti-lynching song, *Strange Fruit*.

Billie Holiday was born Eleanora Fagan on April 7, 1915, in Baltimore, Maryland. Her father, Clarence Holiday, was a jazz guitarist and her mother, Sadie Fagan, was just thirteen years old when Holiday was born. Due to her mother’s age, she was raised by a host of relatives. To escape the hardship and poverty of her early years, she listened to the music of Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith. Their music inspired her dreams of one day becoming a singer. In 1933, jazz enthusiast John Hammond discovered her, and it was then that she took the name Billie Holiday by combining the first name of an admired film star, Billie Dove, with her father’s last name.

**Racism** was a serious problem for artists of that time and this was no exception for Billie Holiday. “Colored performers” had to enter through back doors in Harlem establishments and sleep on buses. In spite of those conditions, Billie Holiday performed as if singing to the stars in heaven while masking her inner pains and addictions. In later years, Holiday’s



Billie Holliday. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

battles with alcohol and drugs—she served eight months in prison for heroin possession in 1947—changed the tone and limited the range of her voice, though her phrasing and emotional power remained exceptional.

Holiday first performed *Strange Fruit* at the club Café Society in Harlem in 1939. She later wrote that upon finishing the song she was greeted by stunned silence, until one patron’s nervous applause elicited a thunderous clapping from the rest of the audience. The song’s impact was so great and its popularity so immediate that the club owner insisted that Holiday close all her shows with it. As she was about to begin *Strange Fruit*, the waiters would stop serving, the house lights would dim, and a single spotlight would illuminate Holiday, who would close her eyes, as if in prayer, before launching into the song. Although many other performers have since recorded *Strange Fruit*, that song is most closely identified with Holiday.

Holiday was given the nickname “Lady Day” by musician Lester Young and was renowned for wearing a white gardenia bobby-pinned over an ear during performances. She launched a highly successful European tour in 1954 and appeared on British television in 1959, when she again sang *Strange Fruit*. Holiday’s story was told in a successful 1972 film starring Diana Ross, *Lady Sings the Blues*. Billie Holiday died on July 17, 1959.

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*Denise D. McAdory*

### Hoover, J. Edgar (1895–1972)

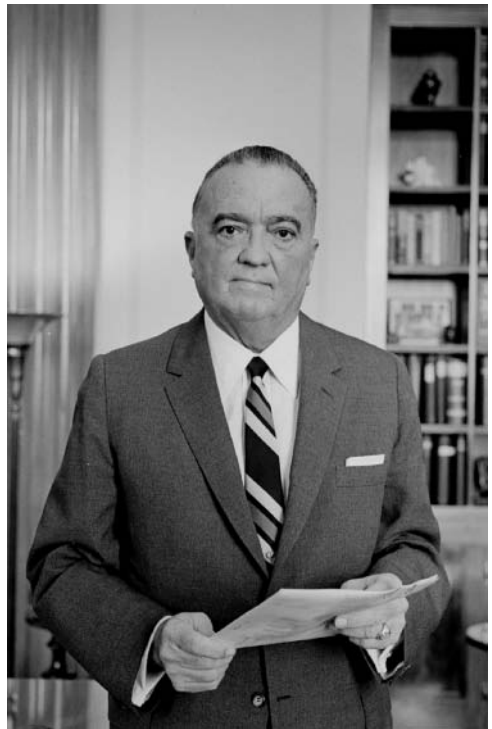
John Edgar Hoover was the director of the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** from 1924 to 1972. He had the longest tenure of any FBI director, serving eight U.S. presidents from Calvin Coolidge to Richard Nixon. Over his tenure, he attained unprecedented power and used far-reaching tactics to influence U.S. policy, politics, and culture. Hoover has a long-standing controversial history and has been accused or suspected of being a racist, of having Mafia ties, and of being a closet homosexual, although he publicly assailed alternative lifestyles. Many historians and critics suggest that Hoover was responsible for severely crippling black empowerment organizations and socialist reform, antiwar, and labor movements.

Hoover was born January 1, 1895, in Washington, D.C. He was the youngest of three children born to Dickerson Naylor Hoover and Annie Marie Scheitlin Hoover. From birth until his mother died when he was forty-three years old, Hoover lived in his birth home, located three blocks behind the nation's Capitol. In 1916, Hoover completed a bachelor of law degree from George Washington University, where he pledged Kappa Alpha fraternity and worked as an assistant at the Library of Congress. After graduation, Hoover's uncle helped him get a draft-exempt position with the U.S. Department of Justice, making \$900 a year. Within a year, he was promoted to an attorney position that doubled his salary.

Hoover's professional life advanced in 1919 after Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's house was firebombed by a suspected subversive. At the time, communism was spreading throughout Eastern Europe and U.S. labor unions were organizing a series of strikes. Palmer launched a campaign against radicals, and tapped Hoover to head his project under the newly established General Intelligence Division (GID). Within months, Hoover used skills he acquired through library work to compile dossiers on approximately 150,000 people. By mid-1921, the number reached an estimated 450,000. Two benign American communist political parties were Hoover's main targets. By the end of 1919, the Palmer Raids officially commenced and, under Hoover's leadership, deportation orders were given to thousands of so-called radicals. When most of the deportation orders were cancelled by Assistant Secretary of Labor Louis F. Post, Hoover responded by opening a file on Secretary Post. The Palmer Raids came to an embarrassing end when Hoover's prediction of a May 1, 1920, communist revolution failed to materialize.

Attorney General Palmer lost his position after Warren G. Harding became president in 1920. However, during the Palmer Raids, Hoover effectively postured himself as a nonpartisan, who worked with extraordinary detail and was fanatical about protecting the establishment. In 1921, he became the assistant chief of the FBI. In 1924, he became the FBI director under the Coolidge administration.

In the 1930s, prohibition, the Great Depression, and the gangster era brought new challenges and opportunities for Hoover. Gangsters such as John Dillinger, "Machine Gun" Kelly and "Pretty Boy" Floyd became protagonists in the media, as the public became more disenchanted with the government and law enforcement. Many of the gangsters bolstered an antiestablishment, Robin Hood position, and captured the imagination of the public. Hoover quickly positioned himself publicly to be the gangsters'



J. Edgar Hoover. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

antagonist and the foremost defender of the establishment. Hoover adored the media attention afforded by the government's war on crime. He began to recruit special agents who were more physically fit and set more rigorous training standards. However, one of his special agents, Melvin Purvis, became a victim of his own success. Purvis orchestrated the seizure and murders of John Dillinger and Pretty Boy Floyd. In the fallout, Purvis dominated media headlines, while Hoover became vehemently resentful of Purvis for hogging the spotlight. Purvis was later forced to resign and was discredited to all other potential employers. He eventually committed suicide.

In the interim, the Lindbergh kidnapping case of 1933 gave Hoover an opportunity to make public headlines. Although the FBI was not directly responsible for apprehending Lindbergh's kidnappers, Hoover went to New York for the photo opportunity when Bruno Hauptmann was arrested by New York Police. Hauptmann's capture, along with other high-profile arrests, such as Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, paid personal dividends to Hoover. In 1935, the "G-man" movies were produced in Hollywood, which portrayed Hoover as a master crime fighter.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became president in 1933, Hoover approached the new president about his concern over subversive activity in the United States. Hoover was personally interested in reviving the GID, which he shaped during the Palmer Raids. Roosevelt allowed Hoover to expand the GID. In exchange, Hoover monitored the activities of Roosevelt's political opponents, such as Huey Long. During Roosevelt's administration, Hoover's FBI grew in size and scope. In addition, Hoover learned how to use his powers to become a political tool for any sitting president. When Harry Truman succeeded Roosevelt, he sought to distance himself from Hoover, while limiting FBI appropriations. Hoover responded by raising suspicions of communists working in Truman's administration.

At the time, Hoover developed a working relationship with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). With Hoover's help, the HUAC had recently spearheaded an initiative to expose communists in the entertainment industry. The FBI drafted an anonymous list of Hollywood communists, which contained many black activist entertainers such as Paul Robeson and Harry Belafonte. When Truman was elected in his own right in 1948, Hoover worked with HUAC member Richard Nixon to indict Soviet spy suspects working within Truman's administration. In 1952, Richard Nixon became vice president under Dwight Eisenhower. Both Eisenhower and Nixon admired Hoover and expanded his power and influence in government.

A relationship between Sen. Joseph McCarthy and Hoover also emerged. Hoover helped spawn the McCarthy era when he provided Senator McCarthy with a list of mostly invalidated communists working for the government. McCarthy used the list to make an inflamed six-hour speech on the dangers of communism and effectively sparked a communist witch hunt throughout the nation. By 1956, the McCarthy–Hoover relationship grew sour after McCarthy's alcoholism and questionable sexual practices became public. Hoover helped the Eisenhower administration neutralize McCarthy, while increasing his own efforts to fight communism with a new initiative called **COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program)**.

By the time **John F. Kennedy** took office in 1960, COINTELPRO had expanded well beyond investigating communism. **Robert Kennedy**, who became attorney general and Hoover's boss, was interested in pursuing the Mafia. However, Hoover had not been actively involved with organized crime since the prohibition era. Rumors suggested that Hoover either had a special relationship with the Mafia or was being blackmailed. The Kennedys' relationship with African Americans was another source of conflict for Hoover. Through his crusade against **Marcus Garvey** and **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, Hoover clearly acknowledged his bigotry. Although King had a close relationship with Robert Kennedy, Hoover was vehemently dedicated to discrediting King. In the years to follow, John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., were assassinated. Hoover's FBI remained at the center of controversy surrounding their murder cases. In 1979, years after Hoover's death, the House Select Committee determined that the FBI's investigations into conspiracies leading up to the Kennedy murders were deficient.

Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were the last two presidents Hoover served. For different reasons, Hoover had a close relationship with both presidents, and enjoyed unprecedented autonomy. During this period, opposition to the **Vietnam War** and the **Black Power** movement sparked an upsurge in antiestablishment ideas, and civil unrest threatened the status quo. Hoover expanded the scope of COINTELPRO beyond its original purpose and expanded the tactics beyond the boundaries of the law.

In 1971, a series of events occurred that brought public embarrassment to Hoover. First, COINTELPRO was exposed by the Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI. Next, the media began to assail Hoover and the FBI for the agency's spending and biased hiring practices. One of Hoover's top aids, William Sullivan, openly criticized Hoover's policies, leading to a highly publicized rift within the FBI. Finally, an internal memo surfaced that partially exposed the Watergate conspiracy.

Hoover died on May 2, 1972, before Watergate was completely exposed. His longtime friend and confidant, Clyde Tolson, was the first to be notified. Tolson managed the disposal of thousands of files, of which more than 17,000 pages survived. The secret files were primarily composed of morally and sexually derogatory information that Hoover used to blackmail civic leaders and political opponents. Tolson inherited Hoover's estate. For more than forty years, the two lifelong bachelors regularly vacationed and dined together, and accompanied one another to social events.

Hoover was posthumously criticized during the post-Watergate congressional hearings. However, elite celebrations of his legacy overshadowed the millions of individuals who denounced him. In 1972, the FBI Building in Washington, D.C., was named in Hoover's honor, although organizations have routinely petitioned to rename the building because of Hoover's contentious legacy. *See also* COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program); Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

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Ivory Toldson

### **Hose, Sam (c. 1877–1899), Lynching of**

Sam Hose was lynched on April 23, 1899, for allegedly killing his employer and sexually assaulting his employer's wife.

Sam Hose (born Samuel Wilkes) was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1877 or 1878. After the death of his father, he moved with his mother, brother, and sister to Marshall, Georgia. Sam supported the family when his mother became ill. After she recovered and his sister married and moved away, Sam left Marshall and became employed by Alfred Cranford in Palmetto, Georgia.

Cranford and his wife, Mattie, were in their twenties with two young children. Both were from prominent local families and were highly respected in their community. Hose worked for the Cranfords for nearly a year before he killed Alfred Cranford on April 12, 1899. A manhunt ensued, and Hose managed to hide out for eleven days before his capture.

During the time that Hose eluded the authorities, several local and regional papers described the events of April 12, portraying Hose as a cold-blooded and lecherous animal. They predicted and encouraged a torturous hanging and burning as his fate. The *Atlanta Constitution* strongly advised authorities not to hinder attempts to catch and lynch Hose, noting that it was a matter of "civic necessity" (Dray 2002). Finally, several rewards were offered for Hose's capture and return: the *Atlanta Constitution* offered a \$500 reward, which was reportedly matched by the governor, Allen D. Candler; Coweta County reportedly offered a \$250 reward, to be matched by the city of Palmetto; and Jacob Haas, a wealthy Atlantan and prominent bank president, reportedly offered a \$100 reward for Hose's capture.

Sam Hose had, in fact, returned to the rural farm where his mother lived, approximately seventy-five miles southeast of the Cranford property. One of the other workers on the farm went to its owners, the Jones brothers, and reported that Hose had returned and was hiding out. The farm's owners assumed Hose's caution was due to an outstanding assault charge (it was reported that Hose left the Jones farm in part due to an accusation that he had assaulted an older African American woman). When the Jones brothers learned that Hose was attempting to disguise his features by darkening his skin (Hose was a mulatto, referred to in newspaper descriptions as *ginger-skinned*), they grew suspicious and checked the newspapers. After reading the charges against Hose and the reward offer, the Jones brothers paid to lure Hose out of hiding. They captured him and set out on a train to the authorities in Atlanta.

It was Sunday, April 23, 1899. On the train, someone recognized Sam Hose as the man wanted in the Cranford case. Word spread quickly. The train was stopped and Hose was moved to another train heading to Newnan, accompanied by the Joneses, deputies, rail officials, and 150 armed

escorts. Hose was taken to the jail, where the Jones brothers argued their right to the reward while a lynch mob took custody of Sam Hose. Several prominent citizens argued against Hose's fate at the hands of the mob, including former Governor William Gates Atkinson and Judge Alvan D. Freeman. Atkinson had a strong anti-lynching stance, and had supported the passage of Georgia's anti-lynching law in 1893. But the penalty for **lynching** was only four years in prison, and the law was rarely enforced. Atkinson and Freeman's efforts were to no avail.

Hose was brought first to the home of Mattie Cranford's parents in Palmetto. Mrs. Cranford, who was alternately reported as comatose from her ordeal and demanding revenge on her attacker, was unable to meet the crowd outside. Instead, her mother and sister identified Hose as the worker at the Cranford residence. They requested that he not be hung on their property, however, so the mob continued on toward Newnan.

In the meantime, word continued to spread about Hose's capture. A special train was chartered from Atlanta, full of spectators for the lynching. Additional would-be spectators left church to witness the lynching, forcing the railroad company to set up a second special train to Newnan. Car caravans of people also converged on the area, full of people waiting to witness Hose's death. The lynch mob, upon hearing that two trains were on their way from Atlanta, feared that the authorities were sending troops to secure Sam Hose for trial. They decided to conduct the lynching in Palmetto rather than risk the trip to Newnan.

A crowd of more than 2,000 spectators gathered in Old Troutman Field along Palmetto Road to witness the lynching of Hose. The newspaper articles and editorials during the search had portrayed Hose as a cold-blooded murderer and rapist. According to their accounts, on April 12, while the Cranford family was seated for a meal, Alfred Cranford reportedly called out to Hose, who was working outside. Relatives of the Cranfords said Hose was a sloppy worker who had muttered threats against the family, forcing Alfred Cranford to get a gun from his father to keep in defense. Despite this precaution, Hose was said to have entered the house unexpectedly and killed Alfred Cranford with a blow to the head with his axe. He then forced Mattie and her two young children through the house as he stole small items. Finally, he returned to Alfred Cranford's body and, knocking the two children aside, raped Maggie before running off into the woods.

On the day of his lynching, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that Hose's actions had "dethroned the reason of the people of western Georgia" (Dray 2002). His alleged crimes inspired a particularly brutal display. First, he was tied to a tree and chains were wrapped around his body as a pyre was built around his feet. Then the spectators began to mutilate him over a half-hour period that included cutting off his ears, each of his fingers, his genitals, and skinning his face. They poured oil over his head and lit the pyre, causing him to thrash around, bursting blood vessels in his neck and actually breaking his bonds. Spectators pushed him back and down into the fire with spare pieces of wood until he died.

Before the ashes had cooled, people took pieces of bone and remaining flesh as souvenirs. Hose's heart and liver were reportedly sliced into pieces



and distributed. As more would-be spectators arrived who had missed the actual lynching, they combed through the ashes looking for any remains. Additional souvenirs were created by chopping down the tree to which Hose had been chained, and then breaking apart the chain itself to give out the links as mementos.

Reports of Hose's last moments vary. The newspaper accounts were as detailed about the lynching as they had been on their reports of his alleged crimes (although they alternated between calling him Sam Hose and Sam Holt). Most accounts say he was stoic, only uttering a phrase to God as he was doused in oil and set on fire. Other accounts say Hose admitted to his actions and then implicated a local African American preacher, Elijah Strickland, in the death of Alfred Cranford. Whether or not this report was true, Elijah Strickland was charged with paying Hose to kill Cranford. He was also mutilated and hung later that same afternoon.

In addition to the inflammatory nature of the newspaper coverage preceding the lynching, the ire displayed toward Sam Hose may have been fueled by lingering feelings from a series of arson fires. A few days prior to Alfred Cranford's death, nine African American men were gathered together on suspicion of burning down a few buildings in Palmetto. The men were kept in a warehouse to await trial, but were fired upon before their involvement in the fires could be determined. All nine were shot, five died, and all of their families were run out of the area, creating an atmosphere of tension and establishing an acceptable pattern of vigilante justice.

Following the Hose lynching, two separate investigations were launched into the circumstances surrounding Alfred Cranford's death. One was commissioned by Reverdy C. Ransom, an African American activist who hired a private investigator. The second was coordinated by **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, an African American journalist and anti-lynching activist who gathered a group of individuals together in Chicago to raise funds to finance their own private investigator. Both investigations detailed a different story than that reported by the papers.

By their accounts, Sam Hose approached his employer to ask for an advance in pay to visit his mother, who was ill. Some sources said he was even owed pay that he had yet to collect. Cranford denied the request and, still enraged, brought the topic up again the following day. He confronted Hose with a gun. Hose, who was chopping wood at the time, threw his axe at Cranford in self-defense and ran into the woods. Louis P. LeVin, the detective hired by Wells-Barnett, interviewed both whites and blacks associated with the events and found no evidence that Hose entered the house, stole any items, assaulted the children, or, most importantly, raped Mrs. Cranford. Although both Ransom and Wells-Barnett shared their findings with the press, the results of their investigations were given little or no publicity.

The local, regional, national, and even international attention the lynching garnered at the time was unprecedented. Even African American soldiers fighting in the Spanish American War were privy to the events taking place at home. Filipino activists, newly freed from Spanish rule, began to question their status under American leadership. In attempts to undermine American military authority and solidarity, they circulated flyers detailing the Hose

lynching, asking African American soldiers to join them in their efforts to be free of a country that would send them to war and yet treat them in such a horrific manner at home.

The Sam Hose lynching ushered in an era of the spectacle lynching that was to last for another forty years. It had other effects, both positive and negative, across the arena of African American civil rights. For example, on June 4, 1899, the National Afro American Council, a civil rights organization founded in the fall of 1898, organized a day of fasting in protest to lynchings and massacres in the United States.

**W.E.B. Du Bois**, an African American scholar and leader living in Atlanta, read newspaper accounts of the Hose case and the proposed punishment following Hose's capture. He wrote a letter denouncing the lynching as well as a letter of introduction to Joel Chandler Harris, an editor at the *Atlanta Constitution* (and author of the *Uncle Remus* series of stories). On his way to deliver the letters to Harris and speak with him regarding the stories in his paper, Du Bois heard the news of Hose's lynching. He then discovered that a grocery store further down the street on which he was walking was displaying Hose's knuckles in the window. Du Bois returned home deeply disturbed and questioning his academic approach to racial relations in the United States. He wrote: "One could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved" (Du Bois 1975).

Because of the Hose lynching, African American church leaders began denouncing in earnest the brutal treatment of African Americans at the hands of whites, and anti-lynching activists were protesting in print and in person both in the United States and abroad. African American leaders such as **Booker T. Washington**, who had always advocated a gradual, accommodating approach to African Americans' relationships with whites, were finding themselves out of favor with an increasingly mobilized community.

The Sam Hose lynching also had a profound effect on **Robert Charles** of New Orleans. Charles, an emigrationist and increasingly staunch advocate for the return of African Americans to Africa, had grown thoroughly disillusioned at the state of American race relations. In July 1900, following an encounter with the police while waiting for a female acquaintance, Charles shot and killed five people and wounded more than twenty over a four-day period. His actions set off a race riot throughout the city.

In June 2005, the United States Senate approved a resolution apologizing for the federal government's inaction in establishing anti-lynching legislation. Although only 80 of the Senate's 100 members signed to co-sponsor Resolution 39, its passage required lawmakers to apologize to victims, survivors, and their descendants. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Vigilantism.

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*Michelle Mellon*

**Housing Rights Act of 1968.** *See* Civil Rights Act of 1968

**Houston Riot.** *See* Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917

### **Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917**

The Houston Mutiny of 1917 (also referred to as the Houston Riot or Camp Logan Riot) was a violent rebellion of black troops against racist conditions in Houston. The black soldiers, part of the Army's 24th Infantry, mutinied on the night of August 23, 1917, after suffering verbal and physical abuses from members of the Houston Police Department (HPD). One of several pre-World War I riots, the Houston Mutiny was the bloodiest race riot in Houston's history and resulted in the deaths of sixteen whites and four black soldiers. It was also one of the only American riots where more whites were killed than blacks. The riot led to one of the largest court-martials in military history, with eighteen soldiers condemned to death by hanging.

The origins of the 24th Infantry, and of the use of black troops by the U.S. military, began in the Civil War. After the war, Congress established several new regiments of black troops, and in 1869 two of these regiments were joined to create the 24th Infantry. Like all colored units, white officers commanded the 24th because the Army, and many white Americans, believed that African Americans lacked the necessary courage and intelligence required to command troops and fight. The 24th saw only limited action for most of its early history. The Army ordered the soldiers to the southwest after the Civil War, but in the mid-1890s the 24th traveled to Tampa, Florida, for transportation to Cuba for service in the Spanish American War. The soldiers performed well during the battle for Santiago and participated in the battle of San Juan Heights. After American forces secured Cuba, the Army sent the 24th to the Philippines. The soldiers arrived to reinforce American troops battling against rebels commanded by Emilio Aguinaldo. The 24th participated in several skirmishes with rebel forces, but most of the soldiers performed garrison duties and saw only limited action. When U.S. forces captured Aguinaldo in 1901, the 24th returned to the American Southwest. In 1916, the U.S. War Department ordered the 24th to New Mexico to secure the border and protect American property

after Pancho Villa began raiding the area. At about the same time, the United States began making plans for the American entrance into the Great War.

The 24th, which in 1917 consisted of three battalions each with four companies, was split up and each battalion went to a different base. The Army ordered the 3rd Battalion, which consisted of Companies I, K, L, and M, to Houston. The 3rd Battalion was dispatched to perform guard duty at Camp Logan, a training facility and staging area for white soldiers en route to Europe. On July 28, the 3rd Battalion set up camp near present-day Memorial Park, approximately three miles from downtown Houston.

In 1917, Houston was a city of 130,000 at the brink of a period of impressive economic growth. Houstonians had built an impressive port that gave the surrounding community access to national and international shipping. Houston soon became a commercial nexus, with the lumber, cattle, petrochemical, and cotton industries of Texas flowing into the port and, from there, to the world market. In the early 1910s, the Houston City Council began a reform program that improved city services, streamlined the local government, and attracted bigger businesses to the city. In 1917, in an incredibly close election, Joseph Pastoriza was elected mayor, and he continued these reforms by overhauling the Houston Police Department. At this time, HPD consisted of approximately 160 police officers and was headed by an ineffectual chief of police. Mayor Pastoriza replaced this chief of police, Ben Davison, with Superintendent of Parks Clarence Brock. Brock brought little experience to the police force, and even less discipline. His own inexperience, and Mayor Pastoriza's short time in office, led to disorganization in the city government.

One of the major factors that led to the mutiny concerned how HPD officers treated black Houstonians in general, and the black soldiers in particular. Houstonians generally did not respect the police department. Officers frequently beat perpetrators who were in custody, took bribes from criminals, and ignored the crimes committed by gangsters who outgunned the police. A lack of skilled recruits kept HPD from employing well-trained officers. These poorly trained officers frequently abused their authority, especially when dealing with the city's black residents. Police officers treated black Houstonians with the utmost disdain, made frequent use of the word *nigger*, and beat jailed suspects. Police Chief Brock found these problems hard to correct, so he concentrated instead on aesthetic issues by insisting his officers dress neatly and bathe regularly. These problems were exacerbated when Mayor Pastoriza died unexpectedly only four months into his term. The local government fell into disarray. When the Negro troops began to return police violence with their own violence, this disorganization ensured that city officials were incapable of handling the situation.

Houston remained calm after the 3rd Battalion arrived. Many Houstonians had been participating in the country's preparation for war, and a number of the city's young men had already marched to other training camps. The arrival of the black troops, which local papers had publicized for several weeks, caused little initial reaction. Indeed, many businesses hoped to benefit economically from the presence of the troops. The soldiers would spend money in local shops, the construction of a tent camp near Camp Logan

would require the military to pay for building materials, the soldiers would need to be fed, and the labor needed for all of these things would come from local people. For black Houstonians, the presence of the troops meant something altogether different. At a time when there were few African American role models, local blacks viewed the soldiers as heroes. Dressed smartly in an Army uniform, with sidearm and rifle, marching in formation, the soldiers inspired pride in the black community. But the 3rd Battalion suffered from its own internal disorder. The reassignment of several high-ranking officers, and their replacement with lower-ranking, less experienced officers, frustrated the soldiers of 3rd Battalion. Like the Houston government, the 3rd Battalion was also disorganized.

The problems in the officer corps began before the soldiers left New Mexico. Needing experienced officers to help train American troops for war in Europe, the War Department ordered twenty-five of the 24th Infantry's most trusted officers to other bases. The commanding officers of 3rd Battalion, a lieutenant colonel and sergeant major, left a month before the soldiers departed for Houston. Each of 3rd Battalion's companies lost their first sergeant, a man who held an important leadership position within each company. The Army replaced all of these individuals with either less experienced or less capable officers. For example, Lt. Col. William Newman took charge of 3rd Battalion shortly before the soldiers left for Houston. Newman did not have sufficient time to earn the men's trust and respect. Another officer, Capt. Jesse Ladd, served as an adjunct to Newman, but he had only six years' experience and he had already received word of his transfer to another infantry. Ladd was simply killing time with the 3rd Battalion before he received final orders. When Ladd left, the War Department replaced him with Capt. Haig Shekerjian. Shekerjian also had six years' experience and had served with the 24th for two years, but he was new to 3rd Battalion. Each company also received a new commander. Of these individuals, Capt. Kneeland Snow of Company I was the most important because he would eventually succeed Newman as battalion commander. All of the new company commanders had unimpressive records.

The base that 3rd Battalion established in Houston was basically a tent camp. The soldiers' main duty involved guarding Camp Logan. While the soldiers' time at the tent camp was hardly problematic, their service at Camp Logan required them to leave the camp. When they did, they often experienced the city's **racism**. At the same time, when the soldiers ventured into town, they were exposed to white racism. Despite the façade of calm in the city, many Houstonians had a hard time accepting the presence of the black troops, especially after what had happened during the **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**. In that year, the 25th Infantry, a sister unit of the 24th, was assigned to guard duty at Fort Brown. Local whites constantly harassed these troops, and blamed them for a shooting spree that killed one man. Although the townspeople insisted that the troops were responsible for the disturbance, there was no evidence that proved the troops had anything to do with the shooting. This event, known as the Brownsville Affray, prompted such anger from white Americans that President Theodore Roosevelt discharged the entire 25th Infantry of black soldiers

without honor. Additionally, in 1916 soldiers of the 24th Infantry's 1st Battalion were assigned to Del Rio, Texas, where they faced harassment similar to what the Brownsville soldiers experienced. This harassment came to a head in April when a group of black soldiers were refused service at a local brothel. The unarmed men proceeded to pelt the whorehouse with stones. The Texas Rangers responded to this incident and, in a brief melee, killed one of the soldiers. Only the black troops were punished for this incident.

A final racial clash in 1917—the **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot**—exacerbated tensions in Houston. This riot did not involve black soldiers, but rather local whites and white soldiers from the Illinois National Guard. An angry **white mob** invaded black neighborhoods in East St. Louis and killed forty African Americans and burned homes and businesses indiscriminately. To make matters worse, Americans later learned that the police and members of the Illinois National Guard sent in to quell the disturbance actually became participants in the riot. In an example of the poor planning that went along with the 1917 military buildup, members of the Illinois National Guard were stationed at Camp Logan after the East St. Louis riot.

Houstonians were not prepared to treat the members of 3rd Battalion as equals. The soldiers came to resent the city's **Jim Crow** customs and the treatment they received from local whites. On the night of July 28, the day 3rd Battalion arrived in Houston, overcrowding on streetcars prompted the men to simply rip the "Colored" signs out of the streetcars. These violations of southern custom infuriated local whites, particularly the white streetcar conductors. Instances of soldiers reacting with violence to white racism on streetcars continued throughout 3rd Battalion's stay. Lieutenant Colonel Newman took special care to work with Police Chief Brock to ease tensions between the black soldiers and white police officers. This was an important step in smoothing community relations, but one that ultimately failed. HPD officers frequently referred to the black soldiers as niggers, and when members of 3rd Battalion reacted angrily to racial affronts, the police responded with violence. For example, on the night of August 18, HPD officers John Richardson and J.W. Spaulding beat and arrested Pvt. Richard Brown and Pvt. Gerald Mems. The two officers beat the men when they took offense at being called niggers. Later that same night, Pvt. Richard Griggs found the colored seating area of a streetcar full, so he sat in the white section. The conductor summoned a police officer, who called Griggs a nigger and then beat him about the head. Newman continually appealed to Brock to order his men to refrain from calling the soldiers niggers. However, Brock had earned little respect in the department and his commands meant nothing to the officers. The negotiations between Brock and Newman ended when the military transferred Newman to Iowa. The Army promoted Capt. Kneeland Snow to major, and he replaced Newman. Snow proved unwilling to maintain a relationship with Brock.

The disorganization within the city government and in the 3rd Battalion, the incidents of police harassment, and the racism of local whites led directly to the Houston Mutiny. There were several sparks that ignited the riot. The first involved Lee Sparks and Rufus Daniels, two HPD officers assigned to the department's mounted patrol. These men were well known in the black

community as cruel, racist cops, and most black Houstonians steered clear of Daniels and Sparks. On the morning of August 23, the officers rode their horses through the San Felipe district and spotted two black youths shooting craps. The youths fled and Daniels and Sparks gave chase and shot at the youths. One of the young men escaped by fleeing through the home of Sara Travers. Sparks entered Travers' home and began to search her property. While waiting in her front yard for Sparks to finish his search, a neighbor asked Travers what was happening. When she explained that the officers had been shooting at crap-shooters, Sparks became enraged. He slapped Travers and placed her under arrest. Sparks and Daniels then took her to a callbox so that they could summon a paddy wagon.

At this time, one of the black soldiers intervened on Mrs. Travers' behalf. Pvt. Alonzo Edwards was angered by the officers' actions, but he kept his cool and told the officers he would pay any fine that Travers had incurred. Angered by what he viewed as a challenge to his authority, Sparks withdrew his revolver and beat Edwards unmercifully. Both Travers and Edwards were taken to jail. At this point, Cpl. Charles Baltimore, a black policeman, intervened on Edwards' behalf. He approached Sparks and Daniels in order to ascertain what had happened to Private Edwards. Officer Sparks vaguely told Baltimore that Edwards was in trouble for his dealings with some women. When Sparks demanded to know why Baltimore was interested, the corporal explained that it was his duty to learn what had transpired. Dismayed at what he perceived to be another challenge to his authority, Sparks pistol-whipped Baltimore. Baltimore fled and Sparks shot at him three times. Baltimore took cover in an unoccupied house, but Sparks apprehended him, beat him several more times with his pistol, and then placed Baltimore under arrest.

The soldiers of 3rd Battalion learned of these events almost immediately. Tensions grew when the soldiers heard an erroneous report that the police had killed Baltimore. Captain Shekerjian learned that Baltimore had only been injured, but he left the camp to meet with Police Chief Brock without relaying this information to the men. While Shekerjian met with Brock, the members of 3rd Battalion performing guard duty at Camp Logan learned of Baltimore's alleged death. Like their counterparts at the tent camp, these men were incensed. While Shekerjian secured Baltimore's freedom, the men began to plan an attack on the city. Captain Shekerjian hoped that Baltimore's appearance at the tent camp would calm the men and he ordered Baltimore to tell the soldiers that the incident with Sparks meant nothing. After Shekerjian presented Baltimore to the troops, he assumed everything was settled. But when Shekerjian left, Baltimore and several other soldiers began planning their revenge.

Despite receiving several rumors that the men planned to rebel, 3rd Battalion's officers did nothing. At the same time, various city officials heard rumors that the soldiers planned a violent retaliation. The disorganization in the local government following the death of Mayor Pastoriza ensured that officials ignored these rumors. The officials in Houston's government and the Army officers were so lax in their duties that they did nothing to confirm or deny the rumors they had heard. As night fell, the soldiers began gathering ammunition and guns from supply tents. When one of the black

soldiers erroneously reported that he had spotted a white lynch mob near the camp, the men panicked, grabbed weapons and ammunition excitedly, and commenced firing at random. The shooting continued for nearly fifteen minutes. Amazingly, only one soldier was shot.

After the shooting, Captain Shekerjian and Major Snow tried to calm the men. But they were too late. Sgt. Vida Henry, one of the few black soldiers entrusted with a leadership position and the rank to match it, ordered the men to form lines and prepare to march on the city. Henry and some of the other mutineers browbeat reluctant men into line, and told those who refused to participate that they would be killed. Major Snow ordered the men to disperse, but they refused. This column of men, most of whom were members of Company I, then prepared to move out. Most of the other company's soldiers chose to remain behind. At approximately 9:00 P.M., around 150 soldiers began marching toward downtown.

While these soldiers marched out of camp, another mutiny took place at Camp Logan. The members of 3rd Battalion who guarded the camp were outraged that Baltimore had supposedly died and they had heard the shooting at the nearby tent camp. These men assumed that local whites had attacked the camp. Fifteen soldiers left Camp Logan and headed toward 3rd Battalion's camp. This detachment encountered an automobile as they proceeded. The soldiers commanded the car to halt, and then opened fire. The driver of the car, E.M. Jones, was killed instantly and the passenger was badly wounded. Unsure of how to proceed and shocked by their actions, the fifteen soldiers broke up into two groups. One returned to the guard post at Camp Logan, while the other proceeded to the tent camp.

Finally, a third group of soldiers affiliated with neither Henry's column nor the Camp Logan mutineers left the 3rd Battalion camp and indiscriminately terrorized local whites who lived near the camp. About thirty men opened fire on an ambulance that entered the area on unrelated business. The ambulance came to stop and the three occupants fled unhurt. Two other white Houstonians who heard this shooting tried to flee the area. One was shot and died at the scene, and the other hid in a ditch all night. A man riding through the area on horseback was also shot and his horse was killed. These rioters returned to camp after this violence.

Meanwhile, Henry's column of soldiers approached downtown. They specifically headed to the San Felipe district hoping to encounter Lee Sparks or Rufus Daniels. Their first real taste of revenge, however, was meted out against a group of teenagers. The black soldiers proceeded under cover of darkness, but when William Drucks, Mary Winkler, and Fred Winkler turned on the porch light of their parents' home, they illuminated several soldiers. The soldiers dropped to their knees and opened fire. Fred Winkler was killed, and Drucks was shot in the arm. The soldiers then resumed their march. As they neared the outskirts of downtown, they encountered three police officers. The soldiers fired on these men. The officers escaped in their patrol car, but all three had been shot, although none mortally. The soldiers finally made it to San Felipe district at about 10:00 P.M.

By this time, news of the mutiny had spread around the city. Captain L.A. Tuggle of the Illinois National Guard responded by mobilizing a large force



of guardsmen into a riot control squad. Police Chief Brock, who had been at home asleep, arrived at police headquarters and authorized the formation of a civilian posse. Around 1,000 local whites volunteered to serve on the posse and then broke into downtown hardware stores to acquire guns and ammunition. In a fortunate turn of events, this posse and the riot control squad cordoned off downtown Houston instead of attacking the black soldiers. Perhaps Tuggle decided not to repeat mistakes the Illinois National Guard had made in East St. Louis. Meanwhile, Sergeant Henry's men had reached the callbox where Private Edwards had been beaten. Brock had stationed two mounted policemen at this location, but they fled when the soldiers approached. The soldiers fired on the fleeing men and wounded one in the arm and leg. At the same time, a car with five white men approached. The car stopped and four police officers emerged, including Rufus Daniels. The mutineers aimed their weapons at these officers, and in anger Daniels charged the soldiers. They cut Daniels down and he died instantly. The other officers hid, but one panicked and fired two shots from their concealed location. The soldiers fired a volley at these men, and one was wounded in the leg.

After this round of gunfire, a few dissenters emerged within the group of mutineers. These dissenters began to voice their anger after the soldiers suffered their first casualty. An unidentified soldier accidentally shot Pvt. Bryant Wilson after the mutineers spotted Rufus Daniels. This friendly-fire death was the only loss the mutineers suffered that night. Another encounter with an automobile convinced more soldiers that the march should end. This car unknowingly approached the soldiers. They surrounded the vehicle and ordered the occupants, three civilians and two police officers, out of the car. When John Richardson, one of the officers who had previously abused the black soldiers, moved too slowly to satisfy the mutineers, Lance Cpl. Henry Peacock broke his rifle over the man's head. The other white men ran and the soldiers opened fire. Two were superficially wounded, but Ira Raney, another HPD officer, was cut down and died at the scene. The fleeing white men flagged a police car they spotted nearby. This car, carrying two officers and three white enlisted men, accidentally drove back toward the mutineers. The soldiers fired on this car and killed three men. When the mutineers discovered that one of the dead men was an Army officer, many expressed their wishes to return to camp. Sergeant Henry, who had been wounded in one of the previous encounters, lost control of the men. While Henry attended to his wounds, the men broke into open disagreement about whether they should continue the march or return to camp. The mutineers then marched to an open field where this debate resumed. The men eventually decided to return to camp. Henry refused to condone this decision, and the men left him in the field. At about 2:00 A.M., as the soldiers began to march back to 3rd Battalion's tent camp, Sergeant Henry committed suicide. When the soldiers returned to camp, they attempted to blend in with the men who had not participated in the rioting. The mutiny had ended.

The riot lasted only a few hours, but left fifteen whites dead and twelve seriously wounded (including one who died a few days later). Four black

soldiers died as a result of the riot. Besides Henry's suicide and the friendly-fire death of Private Watson, two others died of their injuries a few days later. The death rate could have been much worse. The disorganization within Houston's government actually aided the mutineers. Instead of suppressing the riot in a violent counterattack, Houston's leaders were dumbfounded into inaction. By the time the police force swore in the posse and the Illinois National Guard riot control squad swung into action, the principal violence had already occurred. And, instead of attacking the soldiers, the political and military leaders cordoned off downtown and prevented whites from engaging the mutineers. The disorganization within the 3rd Battalion mutineers also contributed to the small loss of life. Had there not been disagreement between those who wanted to return to camp and those who wanted to fight, the death toll might have been much higher. Still, the Houston Mutiny was the worst episode of racial violence in the city's history, and it spawned one of the largest courts-martial trials in American military history.

After local authorities restored order, the military began a lengthy investigation to try to determine exactly what had happened. Their first task focused on establishing who actually participated in the riot. The disorganization at 3rd Battalion's camp hindered this process. As the mutineers left the camp, Captain Shekerjian and the other commanders attempted to get an accurate head count of those troops who remained behind. But many of the soldiers had hidden when the fictitious lynch mob appeared and the firing began. Some appeared on one roll, but not on others. And some men left the camp only to return a short time later. The best number the military could come up with was 151. These men were arrested for their participation in the mutiny and ferried out of Houston.

The courts martial began on November 1, 1917. The first court martial tried sixty-three men in San Antonio, Texas. The highest-ranking man in this group was Sgt. William Nesbit, and the case became known as the Nesbit case. The mutineers engaged in a conspiracy of silence and refused to speak to investigators. However, at the trial, several mutiny participants testified against the others in return for lighter sentences. The Army charged the men with disobeying the orders of the commanding officer, Major Snow. They were also charged with mutiny, assault on civilians, and murder. The court proceedings lasted the entire month of November. In the Nesbit case, fifty-four of the sixty-three were found guilty of all charges, four were found guilty of the lesser charge of disobeying a commanding officer, and five were acquitted. The court sentenced thirteen to death by hanging, while the rest were sentenced to life in prison at hard labor. The four found guilty of disobeying a commanding officer received two-year prison sentences.

Ordinarily, after a court martial a mandatory review of the case occurred, and the military announced the verdicts and sentences only after the review. This process did not occur in the Nesbit case. Instead, while the review proceeded, the Army executed the thirteen soldiers and buried them outside of San Antonio. When the officer in charge of the review announced the verdict and informed the public that the sentences had already been imposed, African Americans reacted viscerally. While white anger was satiated, blacks deplored the capricious way the sentences were

carried out. There was no chance for appeal, no opportunity for private parties to review the case. The black press greatly publicized what many viewed as an injustice. The Army made sure not to repeat this process in the next court martial.

The next trial began in December, again in San Antonio. In this case, the Army court-martialed fifteen mutineers for quitting their posts, threatening the lives of civilians, and for the murder of E.M. Jones. This trial dealt with the men who abandoned their guard post at Camp Logan. The highest-ranking soldier in this case was Cpl. John Washington, so the trial became known as the Washington case. Much like the Nesbit case, the Washington case relied on evidence provided by several Camp Logan guards who testified in return for shorter sentences. The crux of the case revolved around who had actually fired at E.M. Jones's automobile. The prosecution alleged that five of the fifteen men had fired at the car, and the court found these five guilty and sentenced them to death. The other men on trial were found guilty of the lesser charges. Three were sentenced to ten years at hard labor, and the other seven received seven-year sentences. Unlike the Nesbit case, the Army's review occurred before any sentences were carried out. On January 2, 1918, the court announced its findings. The military delayed the punishments and gave the secretary of war and the president an opportunity to review the case. After a flurry of letters and petitions flooded the White House, President Woodrow Wilson met with **James Weldon Johnson** and other black leaders to hear pleas for clemency.

While these events transpired, the third court martial began on February 18, 1918. This time, the Army charged forty men with mutiny and riot for their actions against white Houstonians near the tent camp. The highest-ranking mutineer tried in this case was Cpl. Robert Tillman, so the case became known as the Tillman case. The Tillman case closely paralleled the other two trials. In late March, the jury found twenty-three men guilty of all charges, nine were convicted of disobeying orders and rioting, and five were found guilty of disobeying orders. Two soldiers were acquitted, and one was excused during the trial. Of those found guilty of all charges, eleven received the death penalty while the others received life in prison. Those guilty of lesser charges received varying length prison terms. This case, like the Washington case, went to the secretary of war and president for review. By this time, public interest in the trials had waned. However, African Americans did not forget these cases, and James Weldon Johnson and members of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** again met with President Wilson, who commuted the death sentences of ten soldiers from the Washington and Tillman Cases. This meant that he approved the execution of six mutineers, and these men were executed on September 16, 1918, outside of San Antonio. As for the men sentenced to jail terms, most were released early after appeals from the NAACP throughout the 1920s. The last prisoner was paroled in 1938.

The Houston Mutiny stands as one of the worst race riots in American history. It was also one of the worst mutinies in American military history. Unlike any other American riot, the Houston disturbance resulted in the

deaths of more white people than blacks. Although sixteen white people died, four blacks died as a result of injuries sustained in the mutiny. The riot also spawned one of the largest court-martials in American history and resulted in the execution of nineteen soldiers. The people of Houston did not soon forget this event. Decades later, when college students began sit-ins to desegregate Houston's lunch counters in 1960, Houston's leaders remembered the violence of August 23, 1917. They chose to desegregate downtown facilities rather than face another riot. The city's leaders did not do quite enough because another riot occurred in 1967. The **Texas Southern University Riot**, however, was far less bloody than the Houston mutiny. Only one person, a white police officer, died. *See also* **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**.

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*Brian D. Behnken*

### **Howard Beach (New York) Incident (1986)**

On December 20, 1986, three African American men, twenty-three-year-old Michael Griffith, twenty-year-old Timothy Grimes, and thirty-six-year-old Cedric Sandiford, were beaten and chased by a gang of local white teenagers. Griffith was killed while attempting to run across the Belt Parkway to escape from his attackers. The incident drew national attention and sparked a wave of demonstrations in one of New York City's least integrated neighborhoods.

According to court testimony, Griffith, Grimes, and Sandiford were traveling through Queens when their car broke down in the almost all white Howard Beach community. Hungry and tired, they walked in to New Park Pizza to use the telephone but were refused. They later sat down to eat pizza when two police officers responded to the call that "three suspicious black males" were on the premises (Hynes and Drury, 18). When the officers realized the call was unwarranted, they left the scene. John Lester, Scott Kern, and Jason Ladone, all seventeen, approached the men yelling various epithets. Some accounts state that the teenagers yelled, "There's niggers at the pizza parlor. Let's get them!" while others said, "There's niggers on the boulevard, let's go fuckin' kill them!" (Hynes and Drury, 19). Nonetheless, as Griffith, Grimes, and Sandiford left the pizza parlor to walk up the street, a gang of white men with baseball bats and tree branches was waiting for them. Grimes managed to escape relatively unharmed while Griffith and Sandiford were severely beaten. Sandiford was knocked unconscious and lay bleeding at the scene. Griffith dove through a hole in an adjacent fence. In an attempt to escape, he ran onto the parkway, was struck

and instantly killed by an automobile. The driver of the vehicle left the scene of the crime.

Almost overnight, crowds of black leaders and protesters, including **Rev. Al Sharpton**, descended on Howard Beach holding signs that compared the small homogenous community to apartheid South Africa. Demonstrators were met by angry residents who screamed, "Nigger, go home!" Black leaders then called for boycotts of the white-owned Howard Beach businesses. Over the course of the next few months, Howard Beach came to exemplify the tumultuous history of race relations in the United States.

The incident also captured media, national, and international attention drawing comparisons to the segregated South and motivating journalists to comment on contemporary race relations. For example, one editorial in the *Queens Tribune* stated, "We cannot accept a climate that has not changed a lick since the days of **"Bull" Connor** in Selma, Alabama. We cannot accept the narrow we—they mentality that gave rise to Hitler and Joseph McCarthy" (Albergotti et al., 1).

The trial for Michael Griffith's murder began almost a year after his death. The defendants were three seventeen-year-olds—Scott Kern, Jon Lester, and Jason Ladone—and sixteen-year-old Michael Pirone. They were each charged with manslaughter, first-degree assault, and second-degree murder. C. Vernon Mason and Alton Maddox, the lawyers representing the Griffith family, believed that there was a conspiracy between the police and the mob. For instance, the driver of the car that killed Michael Griffith, Dominick Blum, was a court reporter and the son of a police officer. Although Blum claimed he thought he hit a tire or an animal, the lawyers argued that he was questioned little and was not even held accountable for leaving the scene of an accident. Likewise, there were accounts that mob boss John Gotti and friends, who grew up in Howard Beach, influenced potential witnesses and provided financial support for the defense team. A father of one neighborhood child was reputed to say that he would not let his son testify because he didn't want "to come home from work one day and find a slab of cement where my house used to be" (Hynes and Drury, 87).

Attorneys representing the teens countered Mason and Maddox's conspiracy theory by portraying Griffiths, Sandiford, and Grimes as criminals. In an interview in the *Washington Post*, Ladone's attorney, Ronald Rubinstein, stated, "We now have evidence of the fangs of the true villains" (Albergotti et al., 1). Rubinstein revealed that Grimes had once been charged with assault and criminal possession of a gun, had been investigated for burglary as well as trespassing, and for stabbing his then girlfriend. Grimes also admitted to pulling out a knife when he was confronted by the gang of teens. Sandiford was a former convict who had several gun charges, and the coroner's report showed that Griffith had cocaine in his system at the time of his death.

The dramatic and emotional trial culminated with the conviction of Ladone, Kern, and Lester. The three teens were convicted of second-degree manslaughter and first-degree assault. They were acquitted of the second-degree murder charge. Michael Pirone, however, was acquitted of all charges. Reactions to the convictions were just as mixed as reactions to the

incident. The *Queens Tribune* reported that Howard Beach residents were angry about the convictions because they felt the punishment was far too severe for what was just a simple dispute that ended in an accidental death (Albergotti et al., 1). Many of those who supported the victims, who saw this as a racially motivated crime, were pleased with the outcome of the trial.

State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Demakos sentenced Lester to ten to thirty years in prison. At the sentencing he remarked that Lester “showed no remorse, no sense of guilt, no shame, no fear” (Albergotti et al., 1). Ladone received a five- to fifteen-year sentence, and Kern received six to eighteen years. Lester was released from prison on May 29, 2001, and returned to his native country, England. Ladone was released in April 2001 and Kern was released in the spring of 2002.

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**Hunters Point Riot.** See San Francisco (California) Riot of 1966



### “If We Must Die” (McKay, 1919)

Written during the midst of the **Red Scare** and the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**, **Claude McKay**'s sonnet, “If We Must Die,” is often considered the initiating work of the post-World War I African American literary flowering known as the Harlem Renaissance.

According to McKay in his autobiography, *A Long Way from Home* (1937), the poem “exploded out of me” (McKay, 31) during the racially tense summer of 1919, when the poet and his fellow black waiters working on the Pennsylvania Railroad dining cars “stuck together, some of us armed, going from the railroad station to our quarters,” where “we stayed . . . all through the dreary ominous nights, for we never knew what was going to happen” (McKay, 31). When McKay read the sonnet to his coworkers, they all became agitated. One, a supporter of **Marcus Garvey**, suggested that McKay read the poem publicly at the headquarters of Garvey's back-to-Africa movement. Although he declined to do this, McKay did take the sonnet to Max Eastman, who published it in a July 1919 issue of the *Liberator*, a leftist newspaper to which McKay was a regular contributor.

Although the poem makes no racial identification of either the speaker or the “kinsmen” he addresses or the “common foe” they face, in the context of the racial violence of 1919, the sonnet is a clear and uncompromising call to black men to stand up to white **racism** and fight for their lives and their rights, to meet the enemy's “thousand blows” with “one deathblow.” The anger, pride, and power of the poem made it immediately popular with dozens of African American publications, such as the black nationalist monthly the *Crusader*, reprinting it throughout the 1920s. The poem established McKay as a major new poet in African American literary circles and even earned him an international reputation, especially after Winston Churchill quoted it to rally his people against the Nazis during the Battle of Britain in 1940. *See also* Black Nationalism; McKay, Claude (1890–1948).

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*John A. Wagner*

**Illinois.** See Chicago Commission on Race Relations; *Chicago Defender*; Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919; East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917; Springfield (Illinois) Riot of 1908; Virden, Pana, and Carterville (Illinois) Mine Riots (1898–1899)

### ***Imperium in Imperio* (Griggs, 1899)**

*Imperium in Imperio* (1899) is **Sutton Griggs'** first novel and perhaps his most important and influential work of fiction because it introduces the reader to many of the major themes that Griggs explores in his writing. *Imperium in Imperio* is also considered one of the first militant black nationalist novels in African American literature.

Griggs wrote during the post-**Reconstruction** or **disenfranchisement** era when African Americans faced increasing violence and racial discrimination. As a result, he was concerned with the impact of **lynching**, mob violence, and repression of black people, and he attempts in his novels to provide solutions to these violent circumstances. In *Imperium in Imperio* (*Nation within a Nation*), he presents the story of an organization of black revolutionaries who are determined to unite all African Americans under a single cause—the elimination of racial injustice—or to create a separate black nation within the United States with its own government and disciplined military. They also intend to publicize to the world the crimes committed against black people.

Sutton Griggs (1872–1933) was a visionary writer whose sense of black pride and determination, especially as demonstrated in *Imperium in Imperio*, anticipated much of the Black Nationalism movement of **Marcus Garvey** during the 1920s, the black separatist movement propagated by the **Nation of Islam** and Black Muslims during the 1940s and 1950s, and the **Black Power** and Black Arts movements of the 1960s. His concept of the New Negro, which he presents in *Imperium in Imperio*, became a rallying call for the young writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance, as well as the title of an anthology of literature, music, and art edited by **Alain Locke**, which is still considered to be a definitive text of the Harlem Renaissance. See also Black Nationalism.

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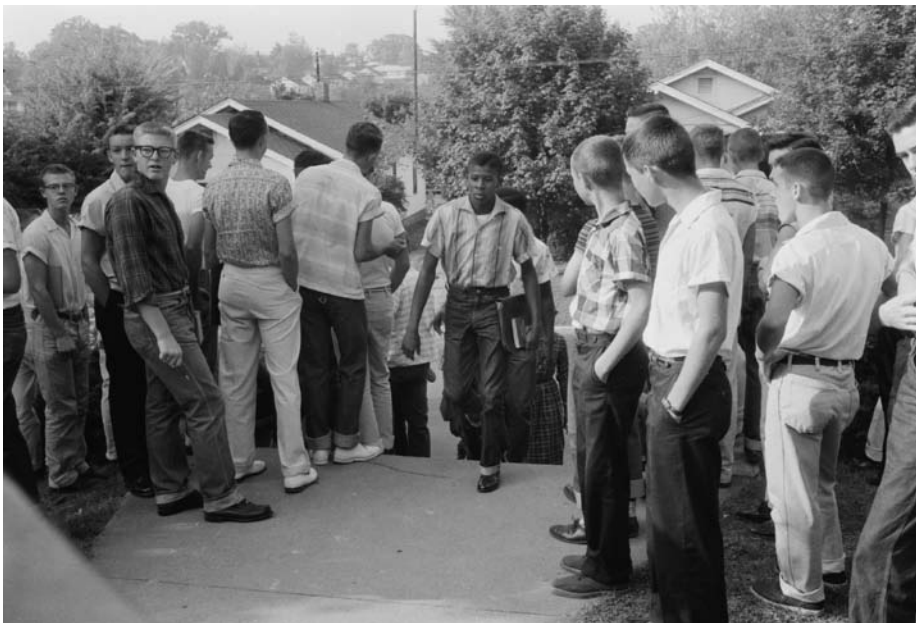
*John G. Hall*

**Indiana.** See Greensburg (Indiana) Riot of 1906

## Integration

The term *integration*, when used in a racial sense, describes a process of leveling barriers within the broader society or culture to jobs, housing, education, and free social interaction between members of different racial or ethnic groups or classes. It is therefore the opposite of **segregation**, the policy of maintaining separation between races in employment, schools, residential patterns, and general social engagement. Although this distinction is not universally accepted, integration is often seen as mainly a social process while **desegregation** is defined in largely legal terms. Both before and during the **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s, efforts to achieve integration, particularly in housing and schools, often led to racial violence.

Many riots in the United States were part of citizens' responses to changes in the racial make up of cities, workplaces, housing patterns, and public facilities. The influx of black migrants to urban centers in the early twentieth century (see **The Great Migration**) is cited as one of the major causes of the rash of race riots that occurred during the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**. The attempt to bring blacks into the industrial labor force, often a move to break the collective bargaining powers of white workers, was the precipitating event in both the **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917** and a narrowly averted race riot at Ford's River Rouge Plant in Detroit, Michigan, in 1941. Housing has presented another challenge to peaceful black and white coexistence. In Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Project in 1942 and in Chicago's Trumbull Park Homes in 1953 and 1954,



An African American boy walking through a crowd of white boys to get to school, 1956. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

riots erupted when blacks attempted to move into public housing. Public spaces have also presented a challenge in the country's slow and as yet incomplete march toward integration, as blacks and whites meet one another outside the context of home and work. The **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919** started when a white man killed a young boy on the beach during a skirmish that erupted as blacks attempted to break the unwritten rules about segregated beaches. The attempt to desegregate schools, perhaps the most well-known chapter in American civil rights history, also brought race riots. Most notably, two years of violence marked the advent of busing in Boston in the 1970s (see **Boston [Massachusetts] Riots of 1975 and 1976**).

In 1919, twenty-five race riots occurred in the United States. The influx of black migrants was a source of anxiety for city residents across the country. In Chicago, for example, the black population had grown from 44,000 in 1910 to 110,000 in 1920, as blacks left rural farm labor in search of jobs in industry (Rudwick 1963). Often violence followed any direct competition for jobs, or attempts by blacks to share housing and recreational facilities.

The early part of the twentieth century was a period of widespread labor unrest. Some estimate that as many as 3,000 labor disputes broke out around the nation in 1919 (Hallgren 1933). In the East St. Louis Riot of 1917, white workers attacked blacks as part of a plan to stop black migrants from taking "their" jobs. Tensions reached a boiling point when management at the Aluminum Ore Company adopted a policy of hiring blacks in response to a successful strike the year before. The union attempted a strike in the spring of 1917, but the company won out. Even though most of the strikebreakers were white, union members blamed blacks for breaking the strike. The racialization of labor competition makes more sense within the larger context—the workers were residents of East St. Louis, a city that imagined itself in the middle of a black invasion because its African American population had grown to comprise 18 percent of its total population (Rudwick 1963). The riot marks one of several events characterized by the failure of labor to overcome race prejudice and fully include blacks in labor organizing. The incident at Ford's River Rouge Plant is a rare instance of black-labor compromise. The Ford Motor Company began using blacks as strikebreakers and thugs during a 1941 white labor strike. Convinced that these actions would cause a race riot, local black leaders, convened by Louis Martin, came forward to condemn Ford's race-baiting tactics and announced their support of the UAW-CIO. Union leaders met with **Walter White** of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. As a result of this meeting, many black workers were persuaded to leave the plant, giving the union the power to bargain with management. The result was a contract that applied to all workers, regardless of race or national origin (Poinsett 1998).

Although the River Rouge strike brought gains in black job security in Detroit, housing was another story. Blacks were excluded from all public housing, with the exception of the Brewster Housing Project. As a result, blacks paid relatively high rents—two and three times what similarly situated whites paid—to live in shacks without heat or hot water. In 1941, the

Detroit Housing Commission approved the Sojourner Truth Housing Project for blacks. To the dismay of local leaders, the project was located in a white neighborhood, and whites mounted the inevitable protest. In 1942, the Federal Housing Commission backed down and declared that the Sojourner Truth housing would be for whites, but reversed this decision when no suitable location could be found for a black housing project. On February 28, a crowd of 1,200 whites met their would-be black neighbors, and violence ensued. Although no one was killed, officials postponed the move-in indefinitely. Finally, at the end of April, as police and state troopers kept the peace, African Americans were able to occupy their homes (Baulch and Zacharias 2000).

In 1953 and 1954, riots erupted during attempts to integrate Deering Park in Chicago. Since 1937, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) had an unwritten rule upholding white-only housing projects. However, in the 1950s, the housing authority accidentally integrated the projects by accepting the application for residence of fair-skinned Betty Howard and her husband Donald. Betty Howard's complexion was not the only thing that allowed her to bypass the authority's passive segregation tactics; to further complicate matters, she lived in a neighborhood with an unclear racial makeup, and the stark residential segregation that allowed the authority to deny black applicants by using their postal zone as a guide was of no service. When the couple moved in, crowds gathered and for weeks hurled insults and bricks at their apartment. The Howards required a police escort to leave the building. CHA Executive Secretary Elizabeth Wood proclaimed a policy of nonsegregation and threatened to evict tenants who participated in anti-black protests. The violence continued as CHA succeeded in moving fifteen more black families into the projects by April 1954, often during the day when many Deering Park residents were at work. Although officials did not back down from the new policy of integration, white residents determined to make the neighborhood uninhabitable for blacks. The projects were the scene of sporadic outbursts of violence throughout the 1950s and the violence succeeded in stopping all but token integration of the project (Hirsch 1995).

The Chicago Riot of 1919, although aggravated by issues such as black "infiltration," job competition, and housing, began when a skirmish broke out as blacks, attempting to violate the unwritten rule regarding segregation at the Twenty-Ninth Street Beach, were chased away. The black beachgoers returned with reinforcements, throwing rocks at the whites on the beach. The whites retreated only to return with their own reinforcements. During the fray, a white beachgoer stoned a black teenager, Eugene Williams, causing him to drown. A white police officer refused to arrest the murderer. The officer only made matters worse because as black witnesses protested his actions, he arrested a black man on the complaint of a white man. The events brought a long anticipated five-day race war to Chicago. Police and **white mobs** murdered twenty-five black men; the white death toll reached sixteen (Tuttle 1970).

In 1974, Judge W. Arthur Garrity ordered the Boston School Committee to desegregate the city's schools. When the committee refused, arguing to uphold the conventional white neighborhood school policy, Garrity put

the schools under federal receivership, and enacted a plan to desegregate the city's schools by busing students around the city. The plan impacted the poorest white neighborhoods in the city, including Southie, and left schools in suburban Boston largely untouched. Seventy-nine of the eighty schools received students without incident at the beginning of the school year, but rioting began as black students attempted to enter South Boston High. The protesters, who had gathered at the school carrying signs bearing racial slurs, began to hurl bottles and watermelon, among other things, at buses carrying black children. Violence marred the city's landscape, particularly around schools and in the affected neighborhoods, for the next two years, as protesters threw bricks at children on buses and white and black high school students fought one another around the city (Tager 2001). *See also* Boston (Massachusetts) Riots of 1975 and 1976; Desegregation.

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*Shatema A. Threadcraft*

## International Responses to Race Riots

Historically, other countries have responded with overwhelming sympathy toward the mass violence directed at blacks in the United States. In fact, this was one of the reasons many blacks, such as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, Paul Robeson, Josephine Baker, and a host of others decided to expatriate. Other blacks, upon visiting Europe, marveled that they could move about freely without fear of harm and without the oppressive weight of **racism** and **segregation**. Although the United States has not always yielded to the pressures of international sentiment, overall, other countries were crucial allies in ending racial violence.

The English in particular were vocal critics of American slavery since its inception in the 1700s. Although the English also participated in slavery, they were appalled by the violence of the American institution and the fierce punishment meted out against black slaves who challenged the system or broke its laws. History is filled with narratives of slaves who were savagely whipped and even castrated for various offenses. These cruel punishments were backed by law.

**Ida B. Wells-Barnett** was encouraged by the fact that England preceded the United States in the abolition of slavery in 1833 and accepted an invitation to travel abroad in 1893 to speak out against **lynching**. She is noted

for having pioneered the anti-lynching crusades in the United States. She was prompted into activism after a close friend was lynched because of the success of his People's Grocery Store. Wells-Barnett wrote many a scalding article exposing white crimes against blacks and lambasting whites for justifying their murderous rampage against black men by frequently false accusations of sexual crimes. Wells-Barnett also authored *Southern Horrors* (1892), published in Britain as *U.S. Horrors*. In the United States, her life was threatened and her protests were drowned out by the clamoring presses, which supported and actively incited anti-black violence. Many Americans accepted the notion that blacks were criminals and that whites were justified in enforcing law and order without a fair trial.

Wells-Barnett was warmly received in England and Scotland. She impressed them personally, and her accounts, which seemed to have no effect in the United States, generated a tremendous emotional response. Phillip Dray describes how "her audiences gasped, and occasionally fainted or left the room, as they heard for the first time the graphic details of American mobs" (Dray, 87). Wells-Barnett was hopeful that the attentive and encouraging foreign press and her audience would help put a stop to anti-black violence. However, her visit was cut short after she lost the support of an influential reformer, Catherine Impey. She refused to side with Impey who disapproved of the fact that a Scottish woman working with them was believed to be romantically involved with an Indian. Although Wells-Barnett garnered much support from England and Scotland, the lynching continued unabated through the early twentieth century.

Other black activists went global with their protests in the twentieth century. Among them were **William Monroe Trotter**, leader of the **Equal Rights League**, and various members of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Paramount to black leaders was the elimination of segregation, as well as violence. Even poor black sharecroppers in the South wrote desperate letters to the president, begging for relief from the rampant attacks against their property, their family, and themselves. Between 1914 and 1918, the United States was combating injustice and fighting for peace on foreign soil during the World War I. Trotter thought it only fitting that he present to the individuals in Versailles, France, who were working toward the creation of a peace treaty, a petition on behalf of the oppressed and victimized blacks in the United States. Despite the fact that President Woodrow Wilson denied passports to him and to other members of his organization, Trotter took a job as a cook and traveled to France, where his chilling narratives of anti-black violence and segregation were well received by the press. Although Presidents Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge did not heed Trotter's pleas for assistance and his petition was not added to the peace treaty, he made a "great impression on the French" (Fox, 230).

In the 1930s, communists played a significant role in internationalizing the struggle against racial violence, particularly in two high-profile cases: Scottsboro and Willie McGee. In 1931, nine boys were accused of raping a white woman. Although there was no evidence of their guilt, eight of the boys were sentenced to death. However, the International Labor Defense, a communist

organization, sent Ada Wright, mother of two of the Scottsboro boys, on a speaking tour to foreign countries. She galvanized unprecedented support from nearly half a million people who participated in almost 200 meetings and demonstrations and caught the attention of numerous presses. Eventually, all the boys were pardoned.

Communists were major players in the Willie McGee case of the late 1940s and early 1950s. They formed the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) and were involved in the fight to acquit Willie McGee, who had been accused of rape by a white woman after he had ended an affair with her. During “the campaign to save Willie McGee, U.S. embassies abroad, particularly in France, had been inundated with letters and telegrams pleading that southern justice be averted and McGee’s life spared” (Fox, 407). However, America’s rising fear of communism made the CRC’s involvement in the case the scapegoat for the subsequent execution of McGee.

It was this same communist scare that prompted President **John F. Kennedy** to take notice of black activism in the 1950s and 1960s. The **white mob** violence against black demonstrators had finally garnered national as well as international sympathy. Eager to show the United States in a positive light to win over countries abroad and the war against communism, Kennedy was compelled to take action to support civil rights legislation. *See also* Civil Rights Movement.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

# J

## **Jackson, Jesse (1941–)**

Jesse Jackson was born October 8, 1941, in Greenville, South Carolina. Throughout his career Jackson has worn many hats; he has worked as a student, human and economic rights activist, civil rights leader, minister, and politician. Jackson's oratorical flair is responsible, in no small part, for his success. His speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, a speech in which Jackson urged Americans to "keep hope alive" (Jackson 1988), is considered one of the greatest in convention history and one of the great speeches of the twentieth century. Many believe that Jackson reached the pinnacle of his political career with a surprise second place finish in the 1988 Democratic primary, an amazing feat for a black candidate, only the second black presidential candidate in U.S. history, who had never held political office.

Already a leader in campus politics and the student social justice movement, Jackson began his rise to national and international prominence after meeting **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, during the latter's Selma campaign. During his graduate work at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Jackson, who had been president of both his high school senior class and student body president at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, organized sit-ins throughout Chicago. He was also southeastern field director for the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. Upon meeting the young leader in 1965, King was so impressed with Jackson's work that King's organization, the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, tapped Jackson to work with its Operation Breadbasket in 1966. Within a year, Jackson became national director of the organization (Henderson 2001).

When Jackson met King, the modern **civil rights movement** was in the midst of a change. In 1965, King announced the movement's second phase, which sought to address the economic problems facing blacks in Northern cities; the Chicago branch of Operation Breadbasket represented part of King's efforts on this front. Operation Breadbasket began in Atlanta in 1962 and by 1966 had expanded to several southern cities. The organization's goal was to put "bread, money, and income into the baskets of black and





Jesse Jackson, 1983. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

poor people” using a strategy of boycotts, selective buying, and picketing to encourage companies to hire black workers and buy from black businesses. By 1968, the Chicago group had organized over forty boycotts and secured jobs for 8,000 black Chicago residents. Under Jackson’s leadership, the group created a free breakfast program and organized the national poor people’s campaign in Washington, D.C. Operation Breadbasket also became involved in political projects by endorsing candidates for elected office and speaking out against cuts in welfare (Aguiar 1999).

Jackson had long clashed with King’s successor at the SCLC, Rev. Ralph David Abernathy. Many people in the organization were upset by his actions after King’s assassination, particularly when Jackson appeared in front of television cameras announcing that he had been by King’s side at his death, but his ease in appropriating the mantle of King was also a sore spot. In 1971, Jackson split with the SCLC to form his own organization, People United to Save Humanity, which continued the economic work of Operation Breadbasket (Henderson 2001).

In 1984, Jackson ran for president of the United States on a platform that emphasized voting rights, social programs, and affirmative action. Jackson pledged to build a “rainbow coalition” among those ignored by the Reaganomics program, the name given to the economic policies of President Ronald Reagan. Jackson received 3.5 million votes and secured the support of more delegates than anyone predicted. His showing forced the Democratic Party to consider him a serious contender. His 1988 presidential campaign is also considered a success, even though Jackson again failed to win the nomination. He won five southern states and was even the Democratic frontrunner after he won the Michigan caucus. Jackson was successful even in defeat. His campaigns brought black voters, many of whom Jackson had helped to register to vote, to the polls in large numbers. His showing forced Democrats to consider him as a vice presidential candidate and compelled them to address many of the issues that were a part of his platform.

Jackson is also something of a self-made diplomat. He has successfully negotiated the release of hostages in Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, and Yugoslavia. He secured freedom for 2,000 political prisoners in Sierra Leone and also negotiated a cease-fire between the state and rebel forces in that country. His interventions in the Middle East, however, are not always welcome. Jackson’s willingness to participate in talks with the Palestine Liberation Army (PLO) has been widely criticized. In fact, a photo of Jackson and Yasser Arafat, coupled with his association with alleged anti-Semite, Minister **Louis Farrakhan** of the **Nation of Islam**, and the fact that he once referred to

New York as *Hymietown*, all contributed to strained relations between Jackson and members of the American Jewish community.

Jackson has always sought to secure a place for blacks in the American economic system, but his work in the 1990s seemed to veer away from his consistent support for lower class blacks. He became convinced that high-level economic power was also a crucial part of the campaign for black politics, a change that he attributed to then New York City Comptroller, H. Carl McCall. Jackson asked him to join him in a boycott against Texaco. McCall answered, “Jesse, when you own a million shares you don’t have to picket” (Henderson 2001). McCall’s logic inspired Jackson to found the Wall Street Project, which sought to increase black influence among shareholder meetings throughout the country (Henderson, 2001). In recent years, Jackson has been a constant presence at a variety of protests throughout the country, continuing his tireless commitment to civic activism. *See also* King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of.

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*Sbatema A. Threadcraft*

### Jackson, Jimmie Lee (1938–1965)

On February 18, 1965, Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot in the stomach by Alabama state trooper, James B. Fowler. It happened in Marion, Alabama, as Jackson tried to participate in a peaceful civil rights demonstration. His subsequent death from the gunshot wounds contributed to the decision for the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** to hold the famous civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery on March 7, 1965. This demonstration was a pivotal event in the history of the **civil rights movement**. The images from that march have become symbolic in the struggle for black voting rights during that era. Because of the fatal assault on Jimmie Lee Jackson that preceded the Selma-to-Montgomery march, many citizens of Marion, Alabama, proclaim their city the cradle of the civil rights movement.

Jackson was born in Marion, Alabama, in December 1938. At the time of his death, he was twenty-six years old. Even at that age, he was the youngest deacon in his Baptist church. He was a **Vietnam War** veteran and was well respected in his community. In him there was clear potential for leadership not only in his community but in the civil rights movement. Yet he was not allowed to vote. He had attempted to vote at least five times. All efforts were unsuccessful.

In the 1960s, central Alabama, like a number of other places throughout the country, especially in the Deep South, was experiencing volatile racial conflicts. Through the civil rights movement, blacks and their supporters were pushing for change. One critical issue was for blacks to vote unencumbered

without unfair barriers such as poll taxes and literacy tests. In central Alabama there were formidable obstacles to overcome. There was Jim Clark, the sheriff who was an arch segregationist, who was determined to maintain the status quo. There was John Hare, the circuit court judge, who summarily issued court orders targeting civil rights workers by prohibiting marches, meetings or even small gatherings. Then there were the citizens, many of whom resisted any changes in the way of life they had come to know.

In his position as sheriff, Jim Clark had several notorious encounters with nonviolent, civil rights protesters. On one occasion, he punched Rev. C.T. Vivian, one of **Martin Luther King, Jr.**'s associates from the SCLC, as he gave a speech on the courthouse steps. Clark even had Vivian arrested for having the audacity to make a speech there.

In the midst of this environment, civil rights marches, protests, and sit-ins were growing. Students and other young people tried to desegregate a restaurant in Marion. They were arrested. They came in waves of different groups. All were arrested. A few days later, James Orange, a field secretary for the SCLC was arrested too. His charge was contributing to the delinquency of a minor, alleging his responsibility for the students' actions in their **desegregation** effort. On February 18, 2006, local blacks and their supporters assembled at Zion United Methodist Church in Marion. They were planning to develop strategies to eliminate discriminatory practices, including the refusal to allow them to vote. Almost spontaneously, they decided to walk a few yards to the jail where Orange and some other civil rights protesters were being held. About 500 people left the church with plans to sing freedom songs outside the jail in a peaceful display of solidarity. But before they reached the jail, they came face to face with a wall of city police officers, sheriff's deputies, and Alabama state troopers. The street lights went out. In addition to the large number of law enforcement officials, there suddenly appeared white men who looked as if they were regular citizens. Altogether they began to physically attack the people from the church—movement activists, journalists, civil rights supporters, and bystanders. During this attack, several of the people fled, taking refuge in a nearby business called Mack's Café. State troopers followed. When they entered the café, they wreaked havoc by knocking over tables where customers were eating. They bludgeoned patrons and protesters alike. During this rampage, state troopers beat eighty-two-year-old Cager Lee down to the floor. Cager Lee was Jimmie Lee Jackson's grandfather. Viola Jackson, Jimmie Lee Jackson's mother, went to help her father. When Jimmie Lee Jackson went to assist his mother, a state trooper (Fowler) shot him in the stomach. Jimmie Lee Jackson was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma. Ten others were hospitalized. Many others were jailed.

On February 26, 1965, Jimmie Lee Jackson died of the gunshot wound he suffered as a result of the shooting. State Trooper Fowler gave an affidavit of a slightly different version of what happened that night. No action was taken against him. But by all reputable accounts, an innocent person, Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed as a result of the events that occurred when he set out to participate in a peaceful march to show solidarity with a jailed civil rights worker.

When Jackson was shot, Martin Luther King, Jr., sent a prescient telegram to Nicolas Katzenbach, who was the U.S. attorney general. It read, “This situation can only encourage chaos and savagery in the minds of law enforcement unless dealt with immediately” (Fleming 2005). Jimmie Lee Jackson became a martyr for the civil rights movement, generally, and black voting rights, specifically. He epitomized **nonviolence**, the guiding philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement. He was murdered though he did not possess a gun or other weapon of destruction. His only crime was the desire to exercise his constitutional right to vote.

Every year there is a memorial held in Marion commemorating Jimmie Lee Jackson and his contribution to a movement that changed the nation. In the town near the spot where he was murdered, there is a marker that reads, “[He] gave his life in the struggle for the right to vote.” See also *Bloody Sunday*.

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*Betty Nyangoni*

### Jackson State University Incident (1970)

During the spring of 1970, college campuses were abuzz with protest activities—some stemming from President Richard Nixon’s decision to bomb Cambodia and others responding to continuing abuses of civil rights. Although much attention has been devoted to the protests taking place on historically white campuses, black colleges also had their share of student unrest during the 1960s. In fact, according to most scholars, a pivotal moment in the **civil rights movement** was the Woolworth sit-in conducted by four students from North Carolina A&T University (Harrison 1972).

Just ten days after the much-publicized Kent State shootings, a massacre took place in Jackson, Mississippi. On May 14, 1970, a small group of Jackson State University students was protesting the local practices, continuing presence of racial discrimination, and in particular, the toxic racial environment in the community in which they lived. According to witnesses, a riot began at approximately 9:30 P.M. when rumors that black Fayette, Mississippi, mayor Charles Evers and his wife had been slain. Upon hearing this news, the small group became more vocal, causing some local white residents near the campus to call the police. When local white students started throwing rocks at the protesters, Jackson State students responded by setting fires and overturning a dump truck left by some city employees on the campus grounds. In an effort to contain the fires, the police entered the campus. Eventually the police called for backup, which came in the form of seventy-five city police and state patrolmen. These men were armed with submachine guns, shotguns, and revolvers. At this point, the student crowd had grown to about eighty-five people. Allegedly, the students were taunting the officers and throwing bricks

when a bottle shattered, causing a loud popping noise. Many contrary reports exist regarding the details that ensued after this point (O'Neil 1972).

At approximately 12:05 A.M., police fired a volley of shots at and into a women's residence hall. The assault lasted approximately thirty seconds and left two unarmed black men dead. One victim was Phillip Lafayette Gibbs, a twenty-one-year-old Jackson State student and father of an eighteen-month-old son. He had been sitting near the women's residence hall. Medical examiners later found two bullets in his head, one near his eye, and yet another under his arm. The other victim was James Earl Green, a senior at a local high school who had been walking home from his job at a neighborhood grocery store. He had stopped to watch the riot.

According to official accounts, twelve Jackson State students were wounded by the gunfire or resulting shattered glass (Redd Wilson, Jr., Fonzie Coleman, Leroy Kenter, Gloria Mayhorn, Patricia Ann Sanders, Vernon Steve Weakley, Willie Woodard, Andrea Reese, Climmie Johnson, Tuwaine Davis, Stella Spinks, and Lonzie Thompson). These individuals received treatment at University Hospital nearby; however, ambulances were only called after the Jackson police had a chance to rid the lawn in front of the women's residence hall of shell casings. **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** agents concluded that the police had fired over 460 rounds of ammunition at the building, shattering every window on the street-facing side of the building and leaving the residence hall riddled with bullet holes. These pockmarks continue to be visible today (Rhodes 1979).

In spite of glaring evidence of police misconduct, members of a local grand jury in the Jackson area refused to indict any of the police officers involved in the Jackson State shootings. Moreover, in 1974, a U.S. court of appeals court ruled that the police officers had acted inappropriately but they would not hold the officers liable for the deaths of Gibbs and Green. In 1982, the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court; however, the justices voted 7–2 not to hear the case. Once the appeal was lost, there was no further action on behalf of the Jackson State students.

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*Marybeth Gasman*

### **Jersey City (New Jersey) Riot of 1964**

From August 2–4, 1964, Jersey City, New Jersey, was the site of one of the first race riots to occur after the passage of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. The *New York Times* reported that the race riot in Jersey City was instigated by the arrest of a black woman on a disorderly conduct charge. Initial estimates attributed the disorders of the first night to some 800 African Americans who were looting, throwing rocks and stones at cars, and attempting to pull people out of the cars. Civil rights leaders from the Jersey City Chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of**

**Colored People (NAACP) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**

attempted to meet with then Mayor Thomas J. Whelan on August 3 to discuss the demands of the black residents of Jersey City. The first meeting with the mayor lasted only twenty-six minutes, and newspaper reports included frustrated quotes from local NAACP president Raymond A. Brown and the local head of CORE, James Bell. Raymond Brown stated that nothing of value happened at the meeting and James Bell believed that the mayor's solution would be to unleash police with nightstick.

Black leaders had a difficult time trying to address the issues of the 280,000 blacks who lived in Jersey City at that time. Black youths interviewed in the paper demanded that the mayor address the main concerns that had led to the rioting. According to one youth, this meant that city officials should agree to hire more black policemen and clean up the city to make it livable. The city had limited the recreational facilities for black youth by closing parks due to what the city claimed was a lack of the necessary funding to keep the parks maintained.

Mayor Whelan was heavily criticized in the media by African American leaders for refusing to negotiate with them about trying to address the poor living standards and social conditions of low-income blacks. The mayor was accused of failing even to provide an open forum to discuss the best ways to proceed. On the second night of the riots, the mayor was interviewed by local reporters, who interrogated him regarding his refusal to discuss the issues with leaders from the African American community. Whelan argued that black leaders had brought in hooligan youth to negotiate with them. He also stated that the expectations for immediate resolutions were unrealistic given the financial state of the city at the time of the riots.

On the third night, 400 policemen were dispatched to deal with rioters. A group of black clergymen also went through neighborhoods in cars with bullhorns and sound equipment usually used by the NAACP for voter registration. The ministers encouraged blacks to stop rioting and announced that one of their demands had been met and that the city had agreed to reopen the two local parks that had been previously closed. The final result of the riots, as reported in national newspapers, was that at least forty-six people were injured, fifty-two people were arrested, and seventy-one stores or businesses were damaged. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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## Jim Crow

The term *Jim Crow* originated from a song that Thomas “Daddy” Rice, a minstrel performer, overheard being sung by a black man. It is believed that the Jim Crow reference in the song alluded to a slave owner. Rice later popularized the term in the 1830s and 1840s in a blackface skit he called “Jump Jim Crow.” For blacks, this skit was degrading. In 1841, the term Jim Crow was used by a railroad in Massachusetts to identify the rail cars restricted to blacks. Segregated rail cars had appeared as early as the 1830s. In the 1890s, the name Jim Crow was given to the various laws that mandated racial **segregation** in public facilities, such as schools, parks, rest-rooms, places of entertainment, businesses, and railway stations. These laws varied from state to state but were most prominent in the South. Violence was often used by whites to enforce Jim Crow laws and to punish the blacks who challenged them. The Jim Crow era, which spanned more than seventy years, was marked by violence.

Early attempts to protest racial segregation were not only unsuccessful but perilous. In the 1830s, free blacks were restricted from renting cabins on steamboats and were required to stay on deck even during storms. All blacks, regardless of their social or economic status, were excluded from white society in the South. Affluent blacks who lived in white neighborhoods in the North were rare. Blacks who paid for first-class train tickets



Pallbearers with casket walking in front of sign reading “Here lies Jim Crow” during the NAACP Detroit branch “Parade for Victory,” 1944. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

were frequently forced to take second-class coaches, which were generally filthy, overcrowded, and inferior.

Mortified by this situation, blacks engaged in various forms of resistance on both individual and collective levels. Frederick Douglass regularly refused to give up his first-class seat, thereby forcing whites to physically remove him. On one occasion, Douglass and several white men struggled so much that his seat was torn from its foundation. In 1854, a white streetcar conductor in New York physically assaulted a black teacher who resisted the discriminatory laws. In 1889, black Baptists purchased first-class train tickets from Georgia to Indiana; in Indianapolis, Indiana, they were met by a **white mob** and beaten. In her youth, **Mary Church Terrell** managed to keep her first-class seat during her travel only by threatening the conductor that her father would sue the railroad for forcing her to ride in a Jim Crow car. Resistance from black politicians—and even the railroads (although for purely economic reasons)—was ineffective. In 1892, blacks tested the 1891 law that established segregated trains in Louisiana. In a gallant effort to protest segregation, Homer A. Plessy mounted a train but was arrested when he attempted to sit in the white-only section. His case went to the Supreme Court. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of segregation. Justice Henry Brown justified the court's decision by stating that separate did not mean unequal. Opposition to a juggernaut of similar events proved futile, leading ultimately to the Jim Crow laws.

With federal backing from the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling and other similar Supreme Court decisions, Jim Crow laws took effect across America. But contrary to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, separate remained far from equal. Whites enjoyed better facilities, such as schools, textbooks, and hospitals. Even blacks with achievements equivalent to their white counterparts endured limited privileges, opportunities, and freedoms. Jim Crow laws effectively reinforced a miasma of volatile racial tension and hatred that let loose a deluge of violence against blacks. Prominent during the Jim Crow era was the **lynching** of black males of various ages and race riots. White mobs regularly assailed blacks for myriad reasons. Whites often accused black males of violating the rules of **racial etiquette**, especially when they pertained to white women. Thousands of black males were murdered for this reason alone. The lynching of **Emmett Till** was one of the most publicized cases. Till was lynched for speaking to a white woman on a dare. Incidents such as this were reminiscent of **frontier justice**, where law was enforced without due process. Oftentimes, white mobs did not cease with



Cartoon of “Jim Crow.” Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



one lynching but spread their hostility into nearby black communities, attacking blacks who had nothing to do with the original incident. More often than not, the blacks had done nothing to provoke such atrocities against them. Lawlessness was rampant throughout the Jim Crow era.

Shortly after the inception of the Jim Crow laws in the 1890s, the United States experienced a wave of violence in its towns and cities that continued intermittently until the nascent civil rights protests of the 1950s and 1960s. Major race riots occurred in Phoenix, South Carolina (1898); Lake City, North Carolina (1898); **Wilmington**, North Carolina (1898); **New Orleans**, Louisiana (1900); **New York City** (1900); **Springfield**, Ohio (1904); **Atlanta**, Georgia (1906); **Chattanooga**, Tennessee (1906); **Greensburg**, Indiana (1906); **Brownsville**, Texas (1906); **Springfield**, Illinois (1908); and **Palestine, Texas** (1910). These riots were generally instigated by whites to maintain their supremacy and to enact revenge. For example, whites rioted in Phoenix, South Carolina, in response to blacks who took action to protest their **disenfranchisement**. A white mob attacked blacks after a black newspaper spoke out against white men who sexually violated black women. In Atlanta, Georgia, whites cruelly attacked blacks and their businesses over rumors of assaults against white women (see **Rape, as Provocation for Lynching**).

Between 1917 and 1921, another wave of race riots hit the towns and cities to which blacks migrated for safety, better opportunities, and the promise of economic advancement. Riots occurred in **East St. Louis**, Illinois (1917); **Houston**, Texas (1917); **Chester and Philadelphia**, Pennsylvania (1918); **Chicago**, Illinois (1919); **Elaine**, Arkansas (1919); **Washington, D.C.** (1919); **Omaha**, Nebraska (1919); **Charleston**, South Carolina (1919); **Knoxville**, Tennessee (1919); and **Tulsa**, Oklahoma (1921). Over twenty riots occurred in 1919 alone. The riots in this period are known as the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**. Racial tensions were particularly high as a result of a high influx of blacks into the cities during World War I. Competition for employment and housing, compounded by white **racism**, was the main catalyst for the violence of the Red Summer riots. White gangs played a significant role in these riots, as well as in the indiscriminate harassment of blacks in the cities. Jim Crow laws directly affected the 1919 outbreak in Chicago, which was triggered when a black youth unintentionally drifted into the section of a beach designated for whites. Whites pelted rocks at him and drowned him. The ensuing violence resulted in 38 deaths, 537 injuries, and nearly 1,000 individuals bereft of their homes.

Blacks who migrated to states, such as Arkansas and Oklahoma after **Reconstruction** to escape the mass violence and subjugation experienced in the South were met with unexpected adversity. Blacks in Elaine, Arkansas, were forced to work as sharecroppers. Most sharecroppers received meager prices for their cotton, while white merchants and landowners hoarded much of the profit. In an effort to attain higher cotton prices, blacks formed a union. Trouble erupted when a deputy was shot and killed while trying to foil a union meeting. Whites murdered several blacks without repercussions, but twelve black men were sentenced to death, and

sixty-seven black men were given prison terms. The riot in Tulsa in 1921 broke out at a courthouse jail when blacks attempted to protect a black man accused of raping a white woman from a white mob. He was later found innocent. Whites customarily kidnapped blacks in or en route to jail and lynched them. Both whites and blacks suffered casualties. Whites then chased blacks into Greenwood, Oklahoma, which was one of several prosperous black towns. Whites decimated Greenwood. **Rosewood**, Florida, another black town, was destroyed in 1923 when a white woman falsely claimed that a black man beat her.

Rioting broke out again in World War II during the next wave of black migration. Riots occurred in **Detroit**, Michigan (1943); New York City (1943); **Mobile**, Alabama (1943); Columbia, Tennessee (1943); **Beaumont**, Texas (1943); and Cicero, Illinois (1951). Racial tensions and competition over employment and housing were at the root of most of these incidents. The Detroit riot was caused by racial tensions between black and white youths. Each group carried out aggressions on innocent bystanders. The full-blown riot occurred when whites attacked a local black neighborhood. Whites at the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company went on a violent rampage when twelve blacks were hired as a result of federal regulations. Whites rioted in Beaumont when a black man was accused of raping a white woman.

Disturbances also occurred in other areas, particularly near or on military bases. Numerous racial conflicts broke out between southern whites and black soldiers from the North who were not used to **Jim Crow** laws and etiquette. In many cases, blacks outright refused to play the docile role whites expected of them. Black soldiers instigated several intense confrontations, such as in Fayetteville, North Carolina (1941), for being forced to ride a Jim Crow bus; in El Paso, Texas (1943), following a rumor that a white man had raped a black woman; and at Camp Claibourne, Louisiana (1944), where a white mob murdered four blacks.

Black soldiers were not the only ones to defy Jim Crow laws. Black resistance to Jim Crow has a long history, although it is replete with violent backlash. **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, a journalist who protested lynching in her writings in the early twentieth century, was threatened on more than one occasion. Other outspoken newspaper editors, church leaders, and prominent figures, such as **Henry McNeal Turner**, **Booker T. Washington**, and **W.E.B. Du Bois**, remarkably survived the onslaught of terror inflicted upon blacks during their lifetimes. In 1909, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** rose out of the violence of the riot in Springfield, Illinois. The NAACP was an organization composed of blacks and whites who waged battles in court against the discriminatory Jim Crow laws, disenfranchisement, and lynching. Their most significant and far-reaching win was the defeat of racial segregation in public schools in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

The 1950s and 1960s ushered in a massive new nonviolent movement to protest segregation. This movement, known as the **Civil Rights Movement**, involved individuals, organizations such as the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** and the **Congress of Racial Equality**

(CORE), and student groups, such as the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**. Participants in this movement engaged in bus boycotts, sit-ins, demonstrations, and marches. White mobs often challenged these peaceful demonstrations with violence. White mobs savagely attacked participants of the **Freedom Rides**. Police officers beat, gassed, and turned their dogs on protestors of all ages. Many men and women, including **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, were murdered for their valiant struggle against discrimination.

Nevertheless, the civil rights movement was more effective than any other previous form of resistance. After considerable labor, the boycotts and court cases won by the NAACP resulted in the elimination of racial segregation on Montgomery buses. Further protests contributed to the enactment of the **Civil Rights Act of 1957**. Intensifying demonstrations, along with the exposure (thanks to television) of the violence inflicted upon peaceful activists, achieved a compelling victory when U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, thereby eradicating all Jim Crow laws across the nation. What the act could not do was remedy the effects of prolonged racism and discrimination on the inhabitants of the Jim Crow-created **ghettos**, or prevent the imminent black rebellions. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Nonviolence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

**Johnson, Jack.** *See* Johnson-Jeffries Fight of 1910, Riots Following

### **Johnson, James Weldon (1871–1938)**

James Weldon Johnson was an African American songwriter, poet, novelist, lawyer, diplomat, civil rights leader, compiler of black writing, and educator. Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on June 17, 1871, the eldest son of James and Helen Louise Dillet Johnson. After graduating from the Stanton School in Jacksonville, he attended Atlanta University in Georgia, earning a bachelor's degree in 1894. Then, he worked as principal of the Stanton School while studying law with attorney Thomas A. Ledwith. Johnson became the first African American admitted to the Florida bar after **Reconstruction**, practicing in Florida from 1897 to 1901.

In his early writing career, Johnson composed songs in collaboration with his brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954), a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music. One of the most notable pieces they co-produced was *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, for which James wrote the lyrics and John wrote the music. Composed in commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday at the Stanton School, it was inspired by Exodus 2:23:

“They cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.” Johnson referred to the song—and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** later adopted it—as the Negro National Hymn. The Johnson brothers also co-composed the music for another popular song, *Under the Bamboo Tree*, for which performer and writer Bob Cole provided the lyrics.

Johnson studied English literature at Columbia University in New York City from 1901 to 1904. As a Republican, Johnson actively supported Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, which led him to a diplomatic career; during Roosevelt’s presidency, he served as U.S. consul at Puerto Cabello, Venezuela (1906), and at Corinto, Nicaragua (1909–1912). During his consulship, he worked on his sociological—and only—novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Anonymously published in 1912, it received little critical attention until it was republished five years later under the author’s own name. A first-person narrative, the novel focused on a light-skinned African American male who passes for a white after enduring various forms of racial oppression, hence “an Ex-Colored Man” in the title. The novel exposed the ambiguities of racial identity, which caused pain and suffering for all blacks in the United States in the early twentieth century.

As a prominent leader of the Harlem Renaissance, Johnson also contributed to the movement with his poems and anthologies of verses that protest racial inequality in America. His early poems were included in *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1917); the title poem, “Fifty Years, 1863–1913,” commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, urging black men to stand firm and vigilant to protect their civil rights. Johnson served as editor of *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922, enlarged 1931), one of the early anthologies of African American poems; it included works by dozens of black poets, including Paul Laurence Dunbar, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, **Claude McKay**, Jessie Fauset, and the compiler himself. In the preface of the book, titled “The Negro’s Creative Genius,” Johnson contended that Negroes in America had demonstrated their innate powers to create poems that have universal appeal and impact.

After co-editing (with his brother) two collections of black spirituals, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* (1925) and *The Second Book of American Negro Spirituals* (1926), Johnson published *God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927), his most celebrated book of poems. It consisted of seven Christian sermons in black dialect and celebrated old-time Negro preachers. Among the widely known poems from this volume are “The Creation,” “Let My People Go,” and “Go Down, Death: A Funeral



James Weldon Johnson, circa 1910. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Sermon.” Johnson’s last major verse collection, *Saint Peter Relates an Incident of the Resurrection Day: Selected Poems*, came out in 1935. The title poem was inspired by an incident related to World War I: the black mothers whose sons had died in the war—unlike the white mothers—were transported to France on a “second-class vessel” to visit their sons’ graves.

Johnson’s works of nonfiction included *Black Manbattan* (1930), a historical study of New York blacks highlighting the contributions they made to American music and theater, and *Along This Way* (1933), the first autobiography by an ethnic minority author to be reviewed in the *New York Times*. *Negro Americans, What Now?* (1934), a collection of his lectures at Fisk University, advocated racial **integration** and equal civil rights for all Americans.

As a civil rights activist, Johnson helped to found the NAACP, serving it as field secretary and then as executive secretary from 1916 to 1930. He tirelessly protested **lynching** and other forms of violence against blacks. In 1925, while serving as executive secretary of the NAACP, Johnson received the Spingarn Medal, which the NAACP awards annually to an outstanding African American. From 1930 until his death, he served as professor of creative literature and writing at Fisk University. On June 26, 1938, Johnson died in a car accident while vacationing in Wiscasset, Maine. *See also* National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

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*John J. Han*

### Johnson-Jeffries Fight of 1910, Riots Following

When the African American fighter Jack Johnson, the then heavyweight champion, defeated retired white champion James Jeffries in a much publicized fight in Reno, Nevada, on July 4, 1910, the result caused the outbreak of racial violence in numerous American cities, including Baltimore, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh.

#### *The Rise of the Colored Champion from Galveston*

As a youngster growing up in Galveston, Texas, during the post-**Reconstruction** era, Jack Johnson believed he was destined to be a great man. His parents, Henry and Tiny Johnson, were former slaves who managed to build their own home and see to it that Johnson and his four siblings learned to read and write. Unlike other southern cities, Galveston was not distinctly racially divided, and Johnson never experienced the harsh apartheid of **Jim Crow** that beleaguered other southern blacks living below

the Mason-Dixon line. Racial lines were drawn in schools but neighborhoods were an ethnic mix as economic status was the dominant factor determining where people resided. Thus, as he played with white boys on Galveston's docks, Johnson matured with a mindset that he was inferior to no one and that no limits could be placed on his aspirations (Ward, 6, 8).

The young Johnson began to seriously pursue his boxing career in 1896. At eighteen, he was sparring with veteran fighters and traveling to cities looking for his own bouts. He was earning between \$5 to \$15 a night, more than manual laborers made in a week; however, his first big break would come six years later in Los Angeles when he faced Jack Jeffries, the younger brother of heavyweight champion Jim Jeffries. Although this was not a title fight, the media accentuated the racial implications calling the younger Jeffries a Greek god and referring to Johnson as a coon. Yet the contest was not the battle many expected, as Johnson won easily in five rounds and confidently whispered to the elder Jeffries: "I can lick you too" (Ward, 46–48). The champion ignored Johnson as he had all other worthy black challengers who deserved a shot at the title. Prior to Johnson, five blacks had held crowns in lighter divisions, but the opportunity to contend for the heavyweight title had been denied them because legendary pugilists John L. Sullivan, Jim Corbett, and Bob Fitzsimmons drew the color line in the ring (Jaher, 146). Jeffries continued boxing's black code and vowed that the title would never go to a black fighter while he was champion.

Johnson went on to become the Negro heavyweight champion with a victory over Denver Ed Martin in 1903. By the end of that year, the *Police Gazette*, a prominent sporting publication, began to urge Jeffries to give Johnson an opportunity. Jeffries stubbornly refused, but the media continued to follow Johnson's rising star as he defeated the best black heavyweights, along with white contenders. By 1905, one of the top white fighters, Marvin Hart, agreed to a contest against Johnson. Hart won on a controversial call when he hit Johnson with a right hook that caused the Negro champion to stumble at the sound of the bell ending the twentieth round. Johnson, who had prevented Hart from landing a solid punch throughout the fight, declared he had been robbed. Hart scornfully dismissed Johnson's allegations, saying, "That coon has enough yellow in him to paint city hall. Johnson is a fancy boxer, but when he gets stung he is strictly a 'tin canner and staller.' I'll never fight another nigger" (Ward, 71).

Soon after Johnson's defeat by Hart, Jeffries retired at age twenty-nine, declaring that he had defeated all "logical challengers" (Ward, 72). The former champion agreed that his title would go to the winner of the match



Jack Johnson (left) in the boxing ring with Steve Dudos, 1945. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

between Hart and former light heavyweight champion Jack Root. Hart won the championship but lost it the following year to Canadian light heavyweight Tommy Burns. Burns claimed he would not draw the color line and that he would defend his title against any “black, Mexican, Indian, or any nationality,” but the first opportunities would be granted to white fighters (Ward, 78–79). This meant that Johnson, who was not a huge draw after his loss to Hart, would continue to be denied a chance to compete for the heavyweight title. Angered by this racial lockout, Johnson refused to be disregarded and he chased Burns around the world until an Australian promoter named Hugh D. McIntosh put up \$30,000 to stage the fight in 1908. Johnson only got \$5,000 out of the deal, but he finally had his chance at the title that had eluded him. The fight took place the day after Christmas in Sydney, and Burns was no match for the Negro champion. Both fighters taunted each other in the ring, but Johnson’s verbal gibes, in addition to the physical punishment he laid on Burns, were extremely crude. “Poor, poor Tommy,” Johnson said as he mocked Burns after the Canadian landed a punch. “Who taught you to hit? Your mother? You a woman?” (Roberts, 63). Very familiar with the **racial stereotypes** implying physical weakness of black boxers, Johnson urged Burns to hit him in the stomach. When Burns tried, Johnson derided him saying, “Is that all the better you can do, Tommy? Come on, Tommy, you can hit harder than that, can’t you?” (Roberts, 63). Johnson’s defensive skills proved to be too much for Burns. The fight was stopped in the fourteenth round by McIntosh after Burns, bloody and bruised, quickly hit the canvas after two quick rights by Johnson.

With this decisive victory, Johnson upset the racial mores of the sporting world, and for the first time in boxing history, a black man held the heavyweight title. Johnson’s triumph disturbed whites, but as historian Frederic C. Jaher points out, Burns was not an American, and the territorial imperatives of patriotism and race were absent since the fight took place in Australia. Naturally, whites were rooting for Burns, but he did not represent American nationalism (Jaher, 148–149). Nevertheless, novelist Jack London, who covered the fight for the *New York Herald*, urged Jeffries to come out of retirement and restore the heavyweight championship to white America. London placed the onus of race squarely on Jeffries’ shoulders (Roberts, 68).

As heavyweight champion, Johnson was now a volatile symbol who greatly disturbed the white American male psyche. White men honored past boxing icons Sullivan, Corbett, and Fitzsimmons with messianic reverence. Each punch, uppercut, and knockout from these men during their heavyweight reigns had come to represent the strength and virility of white manhood. Johnson’s victory over Burns challenged the doctrine of **white supremacy**, and thus the era of the Great White Hope was born (Jaher, 145–146).

During the nation’s frantic search for this white savior, the media used the Sambo stereotype, the docile, buffoon, clownlike image, to characterize Johnson. He was featured in Sambo cartoons with an “ape-like head, large eyes, and red lips, nappy hair, and big feet” (Wiggins, 253). Historian Joseph Boskin contends that whites, unable to restore the authoritative

master–slave relationship, were determined to degrade blacks using exaggerated comic means. The dense Sambo was an effigy whites were comfortable with, but Johnson’s demeanor did not personify this witless, lethargic stereotype (see Racial Stereotypes). He was mainly perceived as an insolent “uppity nigger” who had stepped out of his prescribed place in the American caste system.

Attempts to groom a White Hope for Johnson’s defeat proved futile. Johnson defeated five white Hopes in 1909, including middleweight champion Stanley Ketchel. Jeffries came out of retirement to accept the call to defend the honor of his race a few months before Johnson and Ketchel fought on October 16, 1909. The much-awaited Johnson–Jeffries bout was nine months away and would eventually be scheduled for July 4, 1910, in San Francisco. Johnson agreed to prolong his fight with Ketchel to guarantee a nice film profit and ensure a large promotion as he prepared to meet Jeffries; however, Ketchel reneged on the arrangement in the twelfth round and hit Johnson with a powerful right hand. Shocked, Johnson punched the undersized challenger in the mouth, leaving him unconscious for several minutes. After this debacle, newspapers across the country showed Johnson standing over Ketchel’s limp body. The stage was now set for the fight of the century as whites demanded Johnson’s defeat at the hands of Jeffries (Ward, 162–163).

Johnson was now viewed as the “bad nigger” who needed to be ruffed up in the ring with Caucasian wrath, but some whites, especially southerners, feared that race relations would be drastically altered if Johnson won. One southern official remarked that black men would become so boastful with a Johnson victory that they would push white women off the sidewalks and cause unpardonable trouble in small towns (Roberts, 97).

However, southern white men were not just concerned about white women being pushed aside on the streets. Their innermost fear was miscegenation. Johnson began to openly travel with a white woman named Hattie McClay after his victory over Burns and he later married a white woman named Etta Duryea. As his entourage grew, more white women were attracted to him, mostly prostitutes, and southerners were terrified that young black men would emulate Johnson’s sexual lifestyle (Roberts, 97).

In spite of the racial concerns from the South, the media continued to promote the contest as a race war. The *New York Daily Tribune* claimed that either the “son of a slave mammy of the Old South, Heavyweight Champion Johnson, or the son of a preacher, the undefeated Jeffries, will be declared the most perfect fighting machine in the history of the prize ring” (Banks, 136). White intellectuals and boxers picked Jeffries mainly on race alone. Burns predicted that because Jeffries was deemed physically and mentally superior to Johnson, the Negro champion had no chance (Banks, 136). Intellectuals overlooked Jeffries’ deteriorated boxing skills and believed his education and breeding would be enough to dethrone Johnson. Although Johnson held the title, he was still thought to have no endurance or heart to fight a white man. His defensive skills, which caused his opponents to assist in beating themselves, were still dismissed as a lack of aggressiveness (Roberts, 102).



As the racial tension continued to heighten, there were also rumors spreading across the nation that the fight was fixed. Media reports claimed that Johnson knew that whites would never allow him to wrest the title from Jeffries, and even if he somehow managed to whip the former champion, the risk would be too great for his own life. Thus, Johnson had no choice but to “lay down for the money” (Ward, 189). Ministers urged California’s Gov. J.N. Gillette to stop the fight and even pleaded for President Taft to intercede. Gillette eventually decided to bar the fight just three months before it was scheduled to take place in San Francisco. Morality, as Geoffrey C. Ward asserts in *Unforgivable Blackness*, was not the reason; rather, Gillette wanted San Francisco to be considered for the 1915 Panama Exposition, which would bring in millions. The House Foreign Affairs Committee would not recommend a state that was home to a “prize-fighting city” (Ward, 191).

With Gillette pulling California out, fight promoter Tex Rickard settled on Reno, Nevada. Reno’s mayor assured him that a stadium could be built under the tight two-week deadline and Gov. Denver S. Dickerson guaranteed Rickard that no protest would influence him to cancel the fight (Roberts, 95). Scheduling the Johnson–Jeffries bout only added to Nevada’s amoral reputation, but there would be no further obstacles hindering the July 4 racial showdown. Although Jeffries was heavily favored, he was not that confident within his camp. He was disturbed by the media coverage, especially by the *New York Times* report from John L. Sullivan’s ghost writer that the fight “looked like a frame-up” (Roberts, 101). Johnson, on the other hand, appeared extremely confident, which baffled reporters who thought he would be terrified of the White Hope chosen to overthrow him. When Sullivan asked Johnson if he was in shape, the Negro champion replied, “Cap’n John, if I felt any better, I would be afraid of myself” (Ward, 197).

The black press highlighted the racial burden that Johnson carried, although Johnson never considered himself a trailblazer fighting against prejudice. Nevertheless, the *Chicago Defender* insisted that the welfare of the race rested in Johnson’s fists and that whites across the nation would mourn because Jeffries would not be able to deliver the “pugilistic scepter” to them (Ward, 201).

An estimated 18,000 to 20,000 traveled to Reno, mostly fans of Jeffries, to watch what they hoped would be the brutal pummeling of Johnson. They were sorely disappointed. Jeffries’ size did not intimidate Johnson and the ex-champion proved to be too slow and too old. Johnson taunted Jeffries just as he did Burns in Sydney. “Come on now, Mr. Jeff,” Johnson said at the beginning of the third round. “Let me see what you got. Do something, man. This is for the championship” (Ward, 208). Jeffries, however, could do nothing and endured a long, hot, and fierce beating. When the fight was stopped after Jeffries teetered along the ropes early in the fifteenth round, the former champion sadly confessed in his corner, “I couldn’t come back, boys” (Ward, 211).

The surprising Independence Day outcome evoked feelings of trepidation as well as anguish among whites. Unlike the Burns fight, where

whites nonchalantly dismissed Johnson's loss as unofficial because Burns was "appointed" the title after his win over Hart, Johnson's win over Jeffries officially gave him the crown. More important, the Johnson–Jeffries title bout took place in America, which had nationalistic significance. Jeffries was a former American champion whose pugilist image upheld the white male emblem of masculinity, a factor that escalated the patriotic essence denoted in white America's racist outlook on the heavy-weight title (Banks, 125, 149).

Now that a black man had indisputably triumphed over the most favored White Hope, the *New York Times* was quick to rescind its position on racial physical supremacy and claimed that brute force did not determine the prominence of a particular race (Jaher, 150–151).

After Johnson's victory in Reno, racial tensions rose around the country. Blacks were mercilessly beaten as whites vented their frustration. Violence broke out in New York; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; New Orleans; and Chattanooga. Lower-class whites were often the instigators of the attacks as blacks celebrated Johnson's win.

### ***Riots on the Evening of July 4, 1910***

It is estimated that disturbances occurred in eleven cities, mostly in the East and West, after the announcement of Johnson's defeat of Jeffries. The *Chicago Tribune* gave the following account ("Eleven Killed in Many Race Riots," 1) of the dead and injured on its front page the day after the fight:

#### **Race Clash after Prize Fight**

	Dead	Injured
Uvaldia, Ga	3	5
Mounds, Ill	2	0
Little Rock	2	1
Shreveport	2	1
Houston, Tex	1	3
Keystone, W. Va	1	0
New Orleans	0	2
Wilmington, Del	0	12
New York	0	5
Baltimore	0	3
Cincinnati	0	3
St. Joseph	0	1
Roanoke	0	6
Pueblo	0	27
Los Angeles	0	8
Chattanooga	0	2

The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that New York had more riots than the entire country as clashes broke out in seven sections of the city. One black man was dragged from a streetcar and brutally beaten before being rescued. Four blacks and eight whites were arrested in this incident. The most serious violence took place in what was called the black and tan belt, as a gang of disgruntled whites set fire to a Negro tenement on the middle west side. The police were on the scene quickly enough to put out the fire before anyone was hurt ("Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson," 1). Another major outbreak in New York occurred on West Thirty-Seventh Street. The *New York Times* reported that every policeman in the precinct was on "fight duty" but it was impossible to prevent all the race confrontations. A gang of white men and boys had formed to attack any black man coming their way. Many of them carried clubs and beat their victims with lead pipes and other deadly objects. Cries of "Let's lynch the first nigger we see!" started a riot near 135th street as a middle-aged black man was pulled from a car and beaten. Police reserves hurried to the area and arrested the leaders of the riot ("Eight Killed in Fight Riots," 4).

In Washington, D.C., more than 250 arrests were made in the First and Sixth Precincts, and two hospitals were filled to capacity with blacks and whites who had been injured in street conflicts. The *Washington Post* stated that "Negroes were chased, captured, and beaten in many instances without apparent provocation. In a few cases, Negroes were attacked and maltreated because they had dared to hurrah for Johnson" ("Race Clashes in Many Cities," 1). Other jubilant blacks cheering Johnson's victory also met violent ends. In Atlanta, a black man was attacked instantly on a crowded downtown street by several white men after boasting about Johnson's triumph. Charles Williams, a black man shouting the outcome of the fight on a streetcar in Houston, had his throat slashed by an angry white passenger, and young onlookers in New Orleans attacked a black man announcing the Reno results on Camp Street ("Eight Killed in Fight Riots," 4).

The riots in the South included the cities of Uvaldia, Georgia; Clarksburg, West Virginia; Norfolk, Virginia; and Chattanooga, Tennessee. In Uvaldia, three blacks were killed and many others were wounded at a construction camp in a clash resulting from boasting that Johnson would kill Jeffries once the fighters entered the ring. Whites armed themselves to clean out the camp and shots were exchanged, causing the blacks to flee into the woods. The fighting was so fierce that concerned citizens asked the governor to send troops to stop the unrest ("Eight Killed in Fight Riots," 4). State troops were also requested in Clarksburg when a posse of 1,000 white men gathered to stop blacks from celebrating the Reno outcome. The mob was preparing to lynch a man, leading him through the streets with a rope around his neck before the police stepped in ("Race Clashes in Many Cities," 1).

Marines from the Navy Yard were called to aid police in stopping the riots in Norfolk. Enlisted whites from battleships had formed bands to attack blacks in the city. Many were injured but no deaths were reported. Soldiers from Mississippi organized to attack black prisoners in a Chattanooga jail after a black man shoved a newspaper with the fight results

under a Mississippi militiaman's nose. Stopped from entering the jail by police, the soldiers then raided a Negro settlement and the police were called again to subdue the outbreak ("Race Outbreaks at Chattanooga," 2).

In the West and Midwest, scores of uprisings occurred. Jeffries' home city of Los Angeles reported that eight men, three white and five black, were treated at a hospital as a result of violence started by blacks who had won some cash betting on Johnson. In the Ohio cities of Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati, riots broke out in downtown sections. Blacks celebrating the fight in Columbus organized a parade through the streets and whites quickly formed mobs to break up the festivities. In Dayton, blacks assaulted a party of white men that resulted in police reserves being called out, and a mob of hundreds of whites in Cincinnati chased a black man on Vine Street, the city's leading thoroughfare ("Eleven Killed in Many Race Riots," 4; "Race Clashes in Many Cities," 11). Pueblo, Colorado, had the highest number of injuries as a crowd of 2,000 gathered at Bessemer City Park, located near the city's steel works suburb. Every police officer in Pueblo was sent to stop the outbreak ("Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson," 2; "Race Clashes in Many Cities," 11).

The violent rioting by whites throughout the country exemplified their greatest fear: racial order being uprooted. With his undisputed victory over Jeffries, Johnson was now viewed as an independent Negro who no longer needed the white man's permission for anything, and Johnson was just that. The champion did exactly as he pleased. He lived lavishly, flaunting his money and his white women and was not the least apologetic for it. Many whites hoped the race clashes would prevent blacks from aspiring to rise above their second-class citizenship, but the old, docile mentality of blacks, particularly those in the South, was beginning to wane. A folk song written after the fight expressed this newfound pride by exclaiming that no matter what the white man said, "The world champion's still a nigger" (Roberts, 110).

The Negro now had a hero and a champion whose accomplishments showed him that when given a fair chance, a black man could be the white man's equal. Leading black educators like William Pickens, president of Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, maintained that Johnson's victory was very significant for the self-esteem of the race. "It was a good deal better for Johnson to win and a few Negroes be killed in body for it, than for Johnson to have lost and Negroes to have been killed in spirit by the preachments of inferiority from the combined white press," Pickens commented after the fight. "Many . . . editors had already composed and pigeonholed their editorials of mockery and spite—and we shall not conceal . . . our satisfaction at having these homilies and editorials all knocked into the wastebasket by the big fists of Jack Johnson" (Ward, 217).

Johnson's fists indeed chipped away at the doctrine of white physical supremacy, and the race riots symbolized the altered status of white men. The uprisings primarily reflected the power struggle in the United States that would change, albeit it slowly, as a result of Jeffries' loss. White men knew their social position was threatened with a black heavyweight champion. However, what disturbed them most was that Johnson played by their

rules and won, and as he broke through the heavyweight division's color line, many blacks would follow Johnson's lead and no longer accept their subordinate position in American society.

### *A Despised Champion on the Ropes*

As the racial violence subsided, whites, frustrated that they could not stop Johnson's exploits in the ring, decided to punish him outside it. In 1912, Johnson was brought under federal indictment for violating the Mann Act—a federal law declaring transporting of women across state borders for the intent of prostitution and debauchery illegal. While the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** was investigating him, Johnson married his second white wife, a young prostitute named Lucille Cameron, just weeks after his first wife, Etta Duryea, committed suicide. Since Johnson's marriages were regarded as sexually taboo, the government altered the true intent of the Mann Act (to convict white slavers) to castigate Johnson for his marriage to Cameron. Although Cameron and many of the other white women in Johnson's entourage were prostitutes, they were still considered ladies when it came to being involved with a black man. The government's chief witness against the champion was Belle Schreiber, a white prostitute Johnson had kept as a mistress. By 1913, their affair was over, but Schreiber gave the government substantial testimony about their relationship that led to Johnson's conviction by an all-white jury. He and Cameron fled the country and Johnson was in exile for seven years (Roberts, 173–184, 214). He defended his championship abroad against lesser white opponents, but as he aged, he began to lose his defensive fighting form. He finally lost his title in 1915 to Jess Willard, a white boxer from Kansas, in Havana, Cuba. The media hailed Willard as the restorer of white superiority as he knocked out Johnson in the twenty-sixth round.

Johnson returned to the United States in 1920, served his prison term, and was released a year later. White Americans' obsession with him ceased after he returned home mainly because of the country's involvement in World War I. Cameron divorced him in 1924 and Johnson's marriage to his third white wife, Irene Marie Pineau, did not yield the public outrage of his previous unions (Jaher, 156–157).

Although Johnson's private life was no longer on extensive public display, it was very difficult for the ex-champion to make a living. Johnson was legally barred from the ring as boxing boards and licensing commissions were in place in the 1920s. Well past his prime, Johnson was no longer a serious contender for the title, but boxing authorities were determined to keep him completely locked out of the sport. Desperately in need of money, Johnson boxed in exhibitions against children in the 1930s. He became a hustler in the boxing world, refereeing, managing, and even involving himself in fixed fights. He tried to become a mentor to Joe Louis, but the younger black fighter was determined to keep his distance from the former Negro champion. Louis' managers diligently worked to make him a submissive public figure so that white Americans could be assured he was not the "bad nigger" Johnson had been (Roberts, 221, 224). Louis'

demeanor was always humble. He did not gloat when knocking out white opponents, and he did not violate America's sexual taboos by marrying a white woman. This meek disposition eventually made Louis the nation's first beloved black athlete.

Considered an outcast in Louis' camp, Johnson found himself further isolated from the black community. He involved himself in politics, endorsing Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he toured the lecture circuit promoting evangelical religion (Roberts, 224; Jaher, 156–157). Nevertheless, Johnson was never truly pardoned by whites for his intrepid lifestyle. When his life ended as the result of a car crash in 1946, there were few kind words, if any, expressed in obituaries (Roberts, 227). Although Johnson was remembered as one of America's most dominant prizefighters, the image that most whites retained was a pompous Negro who refused to be their subordinate. Johnson had all the characteristics that were admired in white boxers, and generally in most white men: courage, virility, strength, and wit. Yet, it was these same attributes that made him a threat to the American racial order.

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### **Journey of Reconciliation (1947)**

The Journey of Reconciliation was a 1947 direct-action civil rights campaign sponsored by the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** to force **desegregation** on U.S. interstate buses. The April 9–23, 1947, campaign, is significant for establishing CORE as a forthcoming major force committed to transforming U.S. racial policies, publicizing nonviolent passive resistance as a philosophical foundation for addressing racial injustice, and offering the most obvious difference between CORE and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the most recognized and effective civil rights organization at the time, which limited itself to legal change and remedies.

A June 3, 1946, U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Morgan v. Commonwealth* (328 U.S. 373), ruled that racial **segregation** of interstate passengers on motor carriers was unconstitutional, based on an interpretation of segregated facilities as an undue burden on interstate commerce, as carriers in

certain states had to re-seat travelers to adhere to specific local **Jim Crow** traditions. A later court of appeals ruling (*Matthews v. Southern Ry. Systems*, 81 U.S. App. D.C. 263) extended the Morgan decision to include interstate train, as well as bus travel. To see if bus companies were adhering to the new ruling, CORE executive committee members and the racial-industrial committee of CORE's parent group, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), planned a two-week pilgrimage of sixteen black and white male organization members and supporters through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, visiting fifteen separate cities.

Even though the NAACP's national president, **Walter White**, and legal department head, **Thurgood Marshall**, publicly denounced the direct-action strategy (seeing disobedience as having no possible positive result) the services of the organization's southern attorneys were volunteered, and several of the stops included NAACP youth groups and audiences.

The black riders were Dennis Banks, a Chicago musician; Andrew Johnson, a Cincinnati student; Conrad Lynn, a New York attorney; Wallace Nelson, a freelance lecturer; Bayard Rustin, of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and American Friends Service Committee; Eugene Stanley, a North Carolina A&T College (Greensboro) professor; William Worthy, of the New York Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee; and Nathan Wright, a Cincinnati social worker. The white riders were Louis Adams and Ernest Bromley, both North Carolina Methodist ministers; Joseph Felmet, of the Southern Workers' Defense League; George Houser, executive secretary of FOR and CORE; Homer Jack, executive secretary of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination; James Peck, editor of the Workers Defense League *News Bulletin*; Worth Randle, a Cincinnati biologist; and Igal Rodenko, a New York horticulturist.

The Journey of Reconciliation group, taking turns sitting in all-white and sometimes all-black sections on both Greyhound and Trailway bus lines, tested company policies twenty-six times. Twelve of the men were arrested in six incidents. Facing verbal abuse and threats of violence from drivers, passengers, and lookers-on who resented whites sitting in seats designated for blacks as much as the reverse, some FOR members were physically assaulted. The group's commitment to **nonviolence** never wavered, and some fourteen years later saw their actions repeated by the 1961 CORE-sponsored **Freedom Rides**.

Bayard Rustin, the veteran community organizer and master strategist, known for his involvement in the threatened 1941 March on Washington, served thirty days on a segregated North Carolina chain gang. Igal Rodenko and Joseph Felmet were originally given sixty days for the same "offense," but their lawyers reasoned that whites should not be punished more severely for trying to ride with black passengers. Other participants chose to pay fines rather than go to jail. Notably, Eugene Stanley was dismissed from his college teaching position.

Direct action lasting into the early 1960s set the stage for the continuous public demonstrations challenging public access demands associated with the modern **civil rights movement**. In the documentary, *You Don't Have to Ride Jim Crow!* (1995), CORE's nonviolent, passive resistance tactics,

emulating those of Indian leader Mahatma Ghandi, are explained as essential to the 1947 undertaking. Surviving members of the Journey of Reconciliation gathered for a reunion on the forty-seventh anniversary of the famous campaign to make the documentary. George Houser, in a 1972 interview, explained “conditions were not quite ready for the full-blown movement when we were undertaking our initial actions. But, I think we helped lay the foundations” (*You Don't Have to Ride Jim Crow!* 1995). Wally Nelson's equally committed, pacifist wife, Juanita Nelson, recalled her disagreement with the decision to exclude women of any color from the demonstration. As one of many women dedicated to the principles of CORE, she felt a disservice was done to women, who were also willing to take stances for racial equality, but whom the group felt had to be protected from potential violence. In addition, their exclusion reflected a fear that biracial confrontation was enough of a challenge without introducing the old antagonisms of interracial couples and assumptions of intimacy between men and women of different races. Most of the participants spent many years advocating peaceful tactics for change. James Peck, who was brutally assaulted in the 1961 Freedom Rides, was the only one to take part in both campaigns. Today, FOR sponsors Peace-Builders delegations to many foreign countries, most recently Israel and Palestine, and continues to both educate the public and influence U.S. foreign policy.

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*Millicent Ellison Brown*





# K

## Kennedy, John F. (1917–1963)

John F. Kennedy, a Democrat, was president of the United States from January 1961 to November 1963. During his presidency, Kennedy contended with grave issues, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the **Vietnam War**, and the cold war with the Soviet Union. On the home front, the nonviolent demonstrations of the **civil rights movement** and subsequent white retaliatory violence were generating an increasing amount of turmoil. The violence that was carried out by **white mobs** and police officers was covered on TV and in newspapers. This eventually caught the world's attention and forced Kennedy to take an aggressive stance in support of the movement.

Early in Kennedy's political career, his public support of blacks appeared questionable. He voted along with his party against the **Civil Rights Act of 1957**, but during the presidential election of 1960, he valorously advocated civil rights. Some have argued that the former move was calculated to help obtain his party's nomination for the presidency, while the latter was a strategy to win black votes. Whether or not this was a ploy, Kennedy did in fact personally support **integration** and civil rights for blacks. He demonstrated that he was earnest when, while campaigning in 1960, he saw to it that **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, was released from an Alabama jail, where he was being held on trumped-up charges. Kennedy stirred hope in the hearts of many blacks, who saw in him a hero and a defender of their rights and causes.

After his narrow win over Richard Nixon, Kennedy's overt support of integration and civil rights disappeared. Despite the appearance of neglect, he charged his administration, particularly his brother, **Robert Kennedy**, whom he made attorney general, to foster civil rights and to work with the organizations within the civil rights movement. Speculation as to why Kennedy did this centered on his preoccupation with major crises with communist countries such as East Germany, Cuba, South Vietnam, and the Soviet Union.

It is argued that, by downplaying his role in the movement, Kennedy was trying to maintain his support with Congress and the American people. The United States, as a whole, was not interested in challenging discrimination or bettering conditions for blacks. Particularly in the South, whites were



NAACP delegation visits the president at the White House on behalf of civil rights legislation, 1961. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

extremely hostile toward blacks and were strongly in favor of maintaining the status quo of social, economic, and political oppression. White mobs and organizations such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** regularly enforced their racist sentiments with brute violence, as they had been doing so since the **Reconstruction** era.

Nevertheless, Kennedy did effect some progress for blacks, although not without receiving his share of criticism. His achievements included the appointment of blacks to federal government positions, the enforcement of extant civil rights legislation through the use of the law courts, the integration of the Washington Redskins football team, and the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Kennedy believed that the realization of integration and the elimination of discrimination required patience, careful and quiet negotiations within the court system, and incremental steps to accommodate white opposition. He believed that it was the responsibility of the states, not the federal government, to manage their own affairs and denounced the tactics used by the civil rights activists because he believed they were too radical and harmful to the reputation of the United States. On the other hand, as a direct result of their protests and passive resistance to white violence, activists generated a crisis that demanded the attention of the world and the president. Kennedy had no choice but to be drawn into the movement. Ultimately, he became one of its most formidable forces.

Although Kennedy wanted the activists to cease the **Freedom Rides** of 1961 so that the laws that disallowed **segregation** on public transportation and facilities could be tested, he permitted Attorney General Robert Kennedy to rescue the riders who had been abused and threatened by the Ku Klux Klan. He federalized the National Guard of Mississippi and Alabama in 1962 and 1963, respectively, to protect blacks who were integrating into previously white-only universities. In response to Kennedy's treatment of violence against blacks in Birmingham in 1963, King described how "a thoroughly aroused president told the nation that the federal government would not allow extremists to sabotage a fair and just pact. He ordered three thousand federal troops into position near Birmingham and made preparations to federalize the Alabama National Guard" (King, 107). That evening Kennedy gave a televised civil rights address, in which he proposed the forthcoming **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.

Tragically, Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated Kennedy on November 22, 1963, during an open-car motorcade in Dallas, Texas, prematurely ending the life of a man who, as King described him, was "undergoing a transformation from a hesitant leader with unsure goals to a strong figure with deeply appealing objectives" (King, 144). *See also* Nonviolence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Kennedy, Robert F. (1925–1968)**

Robert Kennedy was a noted supporter of the **civil rights movement** throughout a political career that included serving as attorney general, congressman, and candidate for president. But his career was abruptly ended when, on June 6, 1968, he was assassinated during his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Robert Francis Kennedy, also known as RFK or simply Bobby, was born on November 20, 1925, the seventh of twelve children, into an illustrious family in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1960, RFK joined **John F. Kennedy's** presidential campaign. Among the issues on their platform was the promise to attack **segregation**. While on the campaign trail, the Kennedy brothers intervened to release **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, from an Alabama jail in response to an urgent plea from King's wife, Coretta, who felt his life was in danger. This was a bold act since the civil rights movement was not enthusiastically welcomed by Americans, in general, or the South, in particular. This happened again in 1963 when King was in a Birmingham jail.

John F. Kennedy won the 1960 presidential election and appointed RFK to be U.S. attorney general. Rather than take on segregation himself (and thus lose ground with the southern Democrats), President Kennedy assigned this task to other members of his administration, most notably his brother. At first, the civil rights movement was not a pressing concern for



Robert Kennedy, 1963. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

either Robert or John. Although Robert was sympathetic to the victims of poverty and injustice, he was occupied with international concerns such as the Bay of Pigs and the cold war with Russia. The raging violence against black protesters and its impact on the world altered his position and forced his involvement.

Kennedy was genuinely interested in integration and justice for all Americans. However, he did not agree with the tactics the civil rights activists used. To Kennedy, the protests, although nonviolent, inevitably provoked violent counterattacks—such as house, car, and church bombings; beatings; and killings—by whites. Kennedy also believed the civil rights activists were too impatient and uncontrollable. He urged protesters on several occasions to relent from their activities.

In 1961, the **Freedom Rides** tested the segregation laws on public transportation. When **press coverage of racial violence** exposed the reckless attacks against the protesters, RFK intervened. After the bombing of one of the buses, he called Alabama Governor John Patterson to no avail, and then he contacted the Greyhound Company, which, not without considerable prodding, agreed to transport the activists. A Kennedy aide was enlisted to accompany the freedom riders. Nevertheless, **white mobs** assaulted the riders and the aide. RFK was unaware that **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** agents stood by (only to take notes) and did nothing. Later, when King organized a rally for the riders at the First Baptist Church, Kennedy was impelled to “patch together a makeshift army” (Thomas, 130). With 1,500 people and the remaining freedom riders inside, 3,000 whites besieged the church. King called Robert Kennedy. As they talked, the

marshals arrived. Kennedy considered calling in federal troops, but “Governor Patterson finally sent in the Alabama National Guard.” The next morning, the freedom riders were escorted to jail in Jackson, Mississippi, only to be replaced by more riders (Thomas, 131).

In 1962, RFK provided protection for **James Meredith**, who was the first black man to integrate the University of Mississippi. At first, Kennedy attempted a series of long and complicated negotiations for Meredith’s safe enrollment. He was averse to using head-on military force, as he had “vivid recollection of President Dwight Eisenhower’s 1957 use of paratroopers, in combat gear with fixed bayonets, to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas” (Thomas, 127). Nevertheless, Kennedy eventually agreed to the use of U.S. marshals, federal prison guards, and border patrolmen. A riot ensued between them and militant whites (Thomas, 200–203), and Kennedy had no choice but to call in 23,000 federal troops to put an end to the chaos.

Violence spread across the nation in ensuing years. On November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy. In 1964, the administration of President Lyndon Johnson convinced activists to help garner suffrage in the Deep South. They felt that working toward voting rights (rather than protesting for civil rights) was a safer alternative. However, activists were met with more white violence. In the aftermath of the **Mississippi Freedom Summer**, many blacks replaced their nonviolent stance with militancy (see **Nonviolence**). In the same year, the first of numerous riots exploded in urban black ghettos. Unhappy with President Johnson’s approach of facing violence with force, Kennedy came up with an ineffectual plan to help boost the economic growth of the ghettos.

In 1968, RFK began his campaign for the presidency. On April 4, Kennedy was prepared to speak at the ghetto in Indianapolis, Indiana, when he was told that King had been assassinated. Ignoring a warning not to go into the ghetto, he gave a moving impromptu speech, imploring all Americans, black and white, to abandon hatred, violence, and lawlessness. Indianapolis was one of the only cities to refrain from rioting in response to King’s murder. Kennedy warmed the hearts of many, including some militant blacks. He openly supported programs to improve black ghettos. On June 6, 1968, Palestinian Sirhan B. Sirhan assassinated RFK because of his support for Israel. Both blacks and whites deeply mourned this terrible loss.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Kerner Commission Report (1968)**

On July 28, 1967, after four summers of urban racial violence, U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson established a National Advisory Commission to investigate these civil disorders. In 1968, the commission issued a report named after its chairman, Illinois governor and later federal judge **Otto Kerner**. The 426-page *Kerner Commission Report* became a national best-seller, with over two million copies in print, largely because it was published a few weeks before the assassination of **Dr. Martin Luther King**,

**Jr.**, which sparked another wave of race riots around the country. In the national public culture, the *Kerner Commission Report* would be the new civil rights text on the American race problem, replacing the more politically placid *An American Dilemma* by **Gunnar Myrdal**, which would influence the moral tone of the *Brown* decision of 1954 but would be too tame for the 1960s, when the United States was engulfed in spasms of urban violence. The Kerner Advisory Commission was composed of a who's who in American politics and civic life.

President Johnson charged the commission with investigating what happened, why it happened, and what could be done to prevent it from happening again. For many years and for several generations, the *Kerner Commission Report* would be criticized left, right, and center for its silences, political biases, methodological flaws, and prophetic errors. Nevertheless, the report was an extraordinary feat for its day and it has had an enduring impact on American public culture both directly and indirectly. Particularly powerful in its effect on American public culture was the Kerner Report's startling conclusion that white **racism** was the cause of the "urban civil disorders" and that the country was becoming "two societies, one black, one white" (Kerner Commission 1968). Over the years and generations, these findings would be criticized as being overly simplistic and exposing racism as attitudinal symptoms rather than as structurally rooted causes. However, considering the social background of the commissioners and the historical and political context of the times, this conclusion by members of a national black and white civic and political establishment about the source of the waves of urban violence was, to say the least, remarkable. Although President Johnson and others would privately question the findings of the report, it was the first public statement by a body charged by an American president to find that white racism was a systemic problem in the United States. That admission shook white America down to its foundational social roots with sustained aftershock waves in American public culture and life. Despite its ideological and political restraints and its uneven methodological rigor, the *Kerner Commission Report* dispelled a number of myths embraced by President Johnson, **Federal of Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director J. Edgar Hoover**, and other members of the American civic and political establishment. The main myth dismantled was that rather than being the handiwork of black extremists and radical white outsiders, the civil disorders were the sociological and psychological consequences of white discrimination in employment, housing, education, health, police relations, social services, media, and many other areas of inner-city life. For most post-World War II whites, particularly in the urban North and West, where they had lived insular, segregated lives for generations with no significant daily contact with black people, this finding was viewed as shocking and unbelievable. But, no matter the dominant population perspective, the possibility that white racism had something to do with black inequalities would remain, over time, an issue of public debate involving different right, left, and center political persuasions.

Equally remarkable were the surprisingly progressive and empowering policy recommendations of the *Kerner Commission Report*, many of which

have never been fully entertained publicly even for minute discussion. The recommendation about the development of police–community relations expertise has probably had the greatest influence in shaping public policy. On the other hand, the recommendations to increase public investment in the education, employment, and social service sectors of predominantly black inner-city communities were initially ignored and then increasingly ridiculed in a national political culture that has moved progressively from left to right since the 1960s. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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### **Kerner, Otto (1908–1976)**

Following the devastating **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967**, President Lyndon B. Johnson selected Otto Kerner to serve as the chairperson of the



Otto Kerner, 1964. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (known as the Kerner Commission). Kerner, who had been elected governor of Illinois in 1961 and had attained the rank of major general in the nation's armed services, had also played an instrumental role in integrating his state's National Guard. Furthermore, despite the Chicago riot of 1964, race relations in Chicago and in Illinois during Kerner's governorship were relatively stable, especially when compared to those in major urban areas in other states.

Although moderates like Kerner dominated the commission, it was often divided. Nevertheless, the commissioners concurred that the main causes of the disorders were unemployment, inferior educational institutions, poor health facilities, dire poverty among urban blacks, and institutional **racism**. According to the commission, racism produced black **ghettos**, left them intact, and then rationalized their existence. The commission predicted that if the contemporaneous trends continued unabated, the United States would become "two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal" (Kerner Commission 1968). This prognostication, the commission members argued, could be avoided by implementing large-scale programs, initiatives, and experiments intended to have an immediate impact on the main sources of African American discontent. However, the net short-term effects of the **Kerner Commission Report** were practically nil, for President Johnson, believing that conspirators were the source of the urban disorders, shelved the commission's findings. *See also* "Long Hot Summer Riots," 1965–1967.

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Vernon J. Williams, Jr.

### King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929–1968)

Martin Luther King, Jr., was an African American Baptist minister, a **civil rights movement** leader of the 1950s and 1960s, and a winner of the 1964 Nobel Prize for Peace. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia, into a family with a long tradition of Baptist preaching from both his parents' sides. This family environment exposed him to Christian ideas and black oratory since his childhood. In 1948, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia; in 1951 he received another Bachelor of Arts in Divinity from Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania; and in 1955 he obtained a Ph.D. in Theology from Boston University. The same year, he became the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which was prompted by the arrest of Rosa Parks, a black woman who challenged southern **Jim Crow** laws by refusing to give her bus seat to a white man. From 1957, King headed the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, a predominantly Baptist organization that used the Gandhian strategies of **nonviolence** to achieve civil rights for African Americans. In 1965, in one of the dramatic events of the civil rights movement, King led a nonviolent protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, for voting rights. In his many speeches, King used the techniques of

rhythmic and dramatic oratory, including call and response, and he consistently invoked biblical figures and ideas, African American history and literature, and world and American political and intellectual history to strengthen his arguments. For example, he drew quotations and concepts from the philosophies of Socrates, St. Augustine, T.S. Eliot, Martin Buber, and Gandhi. In the face of race violence, instead of advocating violence and the separation of the races like some of his contemporaries, he consistently advocated racial harmony and reaffirmed his belief in the sound values contained in the Declaration of Independence. In his many writings and speeches, he envisioned an America united in the Christian values of love and brotherhood and in the principles that had founded the republic. “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” “I Have a Dream,” and “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” are three of his works that exemplify these ideas.

King wrote “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” on April 16, 1963, as a reply to an open letter from eight white Alabama clergymen who had called on his nonviolent resistance movement to let local and federal courts deal with the issues of **integration** to avoid inciting civil unrest. He argued that he was prompted by Christian values in his fight for social justice and that American democracy and morality were at stake. King’s disappointment with his fellow clergymen and southern Christians questioned their moral stand in the face of **racism**, **segregation**, and discrimination. The refusal of the city leadership to abolish segregation in its facilities and the triumph of violence against the black population had led King and his organization to boycott the goods and services of the city. He argued that his presence in Birmingham was justified by the fact that there was injustice there, and as the prophets of the Old Testament and the followers of Jesus Christ over centuries traveled to places outside their homelands, he had to go wherever there was injustice. King noted that the only reaction had been **police brutality**, blatant partiality in courts, and destruction of African American houses and churches, even though King and his followers had adopted the philosophy of nonviolence, which forbids the use of violence even in the face of violent attack. He further responded to the clergymen’s idea that time would solve the problems by arguing that groups in power rarely gave up their privileges. About the accusation that he was breaking laws, his reply was that unjust laws were no laws at all and he questioned the white moderates’ obsession with civil order rather than justice and Christian values. In addition, he reminded his fellow clergymen that his struggle was rooted in Christian love, brotherhood, and nonviolent protest and that it was for freedom, an American ideal. He argued that action must be taken to awaken America to the injustice inflicted upon the black population even after the ratification of the Thirteenth, **Fourteenth**, and **Fifteenth**



Martin Luther King, Jr., while delivering a speech at Girard College in Philadelphia, 1965. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

**Amendments** a century before. King concluded his letter with yet another reminder of the sacred values of Christianity and the Founding Fathers' ideals that created the nation, thus showing the moral bankruptcy that the oppression of African Americans has wrought upon the Republic.

King delivered his most famous speech, "I Have a Dream," on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. With the expression "five score years ago" (107), the speech fittingly opens with a reference to the opening of the Gettysburg Address, signaling the momentous significance of his own speech and at the same time invoking Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In appealing to Lincoln's famous phrase "four score and seven years ago," King's play on words juxtaposes his reverence to American values and ideals but at the same time indicts America's failure to live up to them. He reminds America that "100 years later" (107) the promise of the proclamation has not become a reality for African Americans, who are still victims of violence, segregation, discrimination, and **disenfranchisement**. He dramatizes America's betrayal of its black population through the metaphor of a check, the "promissory note" (107) to all American citizens guaranteeing the enjoyment of rights contained in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, but America has refused to honor its "sacred obligation" (107) to its black citizens.

The first part of King's speech is a true Jeremiad, lamenting the state of a nation that has betrayed its own covenant of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" for all its citizens. The use of biblical imagery permeates his speech to indicate the epic and moral nature of the civil rights movement. For example, invoking Psalm 23, he speaks of the "valley of the shadow of death" adapted as "the dark and desolate valley of segregation" (107) in the speech. Likewise, "now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood" (107) is a reference to Jesus' parable of the wise man and the foolish man. Built upon the sand, the foolish man's house does not withstand the storm while the wise man's house, built upon the rock, remains unscathed. Both Psalm 23 (in which the psalmist also praises God for leading him through the dark valley) and the parable express indignation at the dark valley of racism and segregation and at the same time, in the tradition of the Jeremiad, demands drastic social change to forestall ruin. More biblical references are used to chastise America for its failure to deliver justice to African Americans. In the manner of prophets of the Old Testament, he threatens the continuation of revolt and lack of tranquility in America until African American freedom is achieved. He stresses, however, that his struggle is rooted not in "bitterness and hatred" and violence but in Christian love and nonviolence even in the face of police brutality and generalized social injustice.

King's catalogue of African American nightmares is further expressed in a series of appeals to the founding documents of the American republic (the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution) and to the many betrayed promises of the last century. Freedom has not become a reality for African Americans in spite of the Emancipation Proclamation; a few civil rights acts during **Reconstruction**; the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments; and, more recently, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*

trial. In 1963, African Americans were still dealing with separate schools, churches, neighborhoods, public facilities for whites and blacks, as well as the denial of the right to vote and the generalized impunity of white-on-black crimes.

The “I Have a Dream” part issues a message of hope for an America where the “self-evident” truth of equality will be a reality; where brotherhood, justice, and Christian love will triumph; where “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” will also be a reality for African Americans; and where people “will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” He reiterates his belief in the founding values of the American republic (“a land of liberty”), where one day freedom will triumph and all God’s children, black and white, and all religious creeds will one day be able to be rejoined in freedom regained.

King’s last two allusions invoke two songs about two different kinds of freedom: *My Country 'Tis of Thee* and *Free at Last*. The first is a hymn to freedom in America and the second is the expression of centuries-long aspirations for African Americans. The truth of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* has been repeatedly mocked by the lack of freedom and justice for a part of the country’s citizens. King suggests that only when civil rights have been extended to all American citizens can the song have its full meaning. Only then can all citizens, black and white, sing it with conviction and loyalty. *Free at Last*, on the other hand, is as much about freedom, but as a Negro spiritual, it is specific to African Americans. This old Negro spiritual song carries the hope for freedom that African Americans have expressed for a long time. King is suggesting that this clamor for freedom needs to become reality.

The power of King’s celebrated speech depends, among other things, on the use of repetition and clusters of images and metaphors throughout the speech as well as in the delivery of the speech itself with its rhythmic building up to a climax, with interjections of call-and-response with the audience.

Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his last speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 3, 1968. He was there to support the city’s sanitation workers. He first surveyed some of the great figures, moments, and civilizations in the history of humanity, culminating in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s statement that we have “nothing to fear but fear itself” (110) and concluding that the world was, in the 1960s, crying for freedom, particularly when it came to African Americans who had continued to suffer from neglect and poverty. Invoking the struggle and triumph against segregation and disenfranchisement in the past and the success of the nonviolent movement, King asked his audience to work together to defeat the modern pharaoh’s attempt to keep African Americans enslaved, arguing that their collective power in the United States could be used to change hiring practices in the public and private sectors. King ended his speech with an apocalyptic tone, comparing himself to Moses and asserting that his struggle for civil rights had taken him to the mountaintop and he had seen the glory of God and the Promised Land, a reference to an America where African Americans will fully enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship. In a prophetic manner, he stated that, even though

he was aware of threats on his life, he did not fear for his life. He was assassinated the next day.

King's choice to use nonviolence in his fight for African American rights at a time of great turbulence in the nation and when violence was advocated by other groups is a testimony to his attachment to Christian values of love, hope, inclusion, and brotherhood as well as to the ideals that founded the American Republic. His crusade for social justice and for a truly free and democratic America was, and continues to be, an inspiration to the nation and the world. *See also* King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; Malcolm X; Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

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*Aimable Twagilimana*

### **King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of (1968)**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of the American **civil rights movement**, was assassinated on April 4, 1968, at 6:01 P.M. on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. King was in Memphis because he had been preparing to lead a local march in support of the predominantly black non-union sanitation workers there, who had gone on strike as a response to a January 31, 1968, incident in which twenty-two black sanitation workers had been sent home without pay during bad weather while all the white workers remained on the job. Because the City of Memphis would not negotiate with the 1,300 striking workers, King and other civil rights leaders had been asked to visit Memphis to offer support.

On Monday, March 18, 1968, King spoke to over 15,000 people at Mason Temple, calling for a general work stoppage in Memphis. Promoting nonviolence, he agreed to return to lead a march in support of the striking sanitation workers. Ten days later, he returned to Memphis to do so. As King led the crowd on March 28, a few protestors began inciting violence, smashing the windows of a storefront and looting. The violence spread, and police moved in to disperse the crowd. Some of the marchers threw stones at the police, and the police responded with tear gas and nightsticks. According to a *New York Times* report, a black teenager was killed, 62 persons were injured and 200 were arrested (Rugaber 1968). Distressed by the violence that had erupted in his own march and his inability to control the activists,



The ruins of a store in Washington, D.C., that was destroyed during the riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

yet determined not to let violence prevail, King consented to lead a second Memphis march and scheduled it for April 5. He returned to Memphis on April 3, a little later than planned because there had been a bomb threat on his flight before the plane took off. That evening he delivered his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to a few thousand who had braved the bad weather to hear him. After the speech, King went back to the Lorraine Motel to rest.

On the evening of the next day, April 4, King and his friends were preparing to have dinner with Memphis minister Rev. Billy Kyles. After getting dressed, King emerged from his room, and he and Kyles stepped out from the motel room onto the balcony, a walkway that connected the motel’s second-floor rooms. Kyles began descending the stairs, while Rev. Ralph Abernathy remained in the motel room. A shot rang out. Some of the men who were waiting below—James Bevel, Chauncey Eskridge, **Jesse Jackson**, Hosea Williams, Andrew Young, and the driver of their car, Solomon Jones, Jr.—initially thought a car had backfired, but others concluded that the sound was a rifle shot. King fell to the concrete floor of the balcony with a large, gaping wound covering his right jaw.

Kyles went into the motel room to call an ambulance, while Marrell McCoullough, an undercover Memphis police officer, tried to stop the flow of blood with a towel. Within fifteen minutes of the shot, King, unresponsive and barely alive, was rushed to St. Joseph’s Hospital, one and a half miles away, with an oxygen mask over his face. He had been hit by a .30.06-caliber rifle bullet that had entered his right jaw, then traveled through his neck, severing his spinal cord, stopping in his shoulder



A soldier stands guard in a Washington, D.C., street with the ruins of buildings that were destroyed during the riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

blade. The physicians attempted emergency surgery, but their efforts to revive him failed. King, thirty-nine years of age, was pronounced dead at 7:05 P.M.

Shortly after King was pronounced dead on the evening of April 4, 1968, his body was taken from St. Joseph's Hospital to John Gaston Hospital, where an autopsy was performed by Dr. Jerry T. Francisco, the medical examiner of Shelby County, Tennessee. His body then lay in state at the R.S. Lewis & Sons Funeral Home in Memphis. The next day, April 5, King's body was flown to Atlanta on a plane chartered by Sen. **Robert F. Kennedy**. The body was accompanied by King's widow (Coretta Scott King), Abernathy, and other **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** staff members.

The news of King's assassination evoked expressions of dismay, shock, anger, and grief throughout the nation. It also precipitated one of the worst cases of racial riots and violence in the United States. Having received word of King's death, all three television networks interrupted programming with the news. The immediacy of this coverage prompted riots in over sixty American cities including Chicago, Denver, and Baltimore. These riots continued for more than five days, affecting at least 125 cities in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Racial disturbances swept the nation from April 4–11, 1968, in the wake of King's assassination. King's murder also provoked demonstrations and disorders among students at various high schools and colleges across the country.

Looting and vandalism erupted in Washington, D.C., late on April 4 after **Stokely Carmichael**, ex-chairman of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, led about fifty youths down Fourteenth Street to urge stores to close as a sign of respect for King. The group swelled to more than 400 persons about a mile north of the White House. The District of Columbia government reported on May 1, 1968, that the April rioting had resulted in 9 deaths, 1,202 injuries, and 6,306 arrests.

In Chicago, federal troops and national guardsmen were called to the city to quell the disorders, in which more than 500 persons sustained injuries and approximately 3,000 persons were arrested. At least 162 buildings were reported entirely destroyed by fire, and total property damaged was estimated at \$9 million.

In Baltimore, the National Guard and federal troops were called to curb the violence. More than 700 persons were reported injured April 6–9, more than 5,000 arrests were made, and more than 1,000 fires were reported. Gov. Spiro T. Agnew declared a state of emergency and crisis on April 6, calling in 6,000 national guardsmen and the state police to aid the city's 1,100-man police force.

Some scholars have concluded that the riots following King's assassination represented a shift from an emphasis on local issues to a national focus, as the disruptions were so widespread. Regardless, events within the civil rights movement went forward. On April 5, Abernathy was named to succeed King as president of the SCLC, and the first activity was to carry out the march in support of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis that King had planned to lead. The march King had planned was held April 8 with Coretta Scott King taking her husband's place in the front ranks, ahead of an estimated 42,000 silent marchers, including thousands of whites. The march ended with a rally in front of Memphis City Hall, where Mrs. King urged the crowd to carry on because that was what her husband would have wanted. The strike eventually was settled on April 16, exactly sixty-five days after it had started.

Four days after King's death, President Lyndon Johnson declared a national day of mourning for the lost civil rights leader. The various institutions and activities that closed or were halted as a result included many public school systems, public libraries and museums, many businesses, the stock exchange, and seaports from Maine to Texas as longshoremen and seamen stopped work. The United Nations flag was flown at half-mast; the opening of the baseball season, scheduled for April 8, was postponed; the Stanley Cup hockey playoffs and the playoffs in the American Basketball Association and National Basketball Association were postponed; Hollywood's Oscar awards presentation ceremony was postponed, and the presidential nomination campaign was temporarily suspended.

TV and radio networks and stations canceled entertainment programs and commercial announcements to carry live coverage of King's funeral service on April 9 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church. To honor Mrs. King's request, the service included a tape-recording of her husband's last sermon, preached at the Ebenezer church on February 4, 1968. After the service, King's casket was placed on a faded green sharecropper's wagon and drawn



by two Georgia mules for four miles to the Morehouse College Campus. Rev. Ralph Abernathy conducted the graveside service, and King was buried in a white marble crypt bearing the epitaph: "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last." A crowd of 300,000, including national leaders, attended his funeral and burial.

The search for King's assassin was immediate. Aided by fingerprints found on an abandoned rifle left near the rooming house in Memphis and various other clues, local law enforcement agents and the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** initiated a manhunt for King's assassin. On April 19, the FBI announced that Eric Starvo Galt was an alias of James Earl Ray, 40, of Illinois, who had escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary on April 23, 1967, after serving seven months of a twenty-year sentence for armed robbery and auto theft. The FBI released photos of Ray and placed him on its 10 Most Wanted List on April 20, 1968.

Two months after King's assassination, James Earl Ray, a career criminal and open racist, was arrested by Scotland Yard detectives and captured on Saturday, June 10, at London's Heathrow Airport. He had attempted to board a plane for Brussels using a false Canadian passport in the name of Ramon George Sneyd. Ray was extradited by a London court on July 2, 1968, and returned to Tennessee on July 19. At his arraignment on July 22, he was charged with murder and carrying a dangerous weapon. He entered a plea of not guilty.

The facts of the assassination were presented. Allegedly, Ray, who had rented a room at a flophouse across the street from where King was staying, rested his rifle with a sniper scope on the window sill of the bathroom, and fired a single shot at King. No witness saw Ray shoot, although one man, Charles Stephens, claimed that he saw a man leaving the bathroom around the time of the act. A bag containing a rifle was found in front of a store near the rooming house. The rifle bore two of James Earl Ray's fingerprints. Records showed that Ray had purchased a pair of binoculars and the rifle six days before the shooting.

On March 10, 1969, Ray confessed to the assassination, pleading guilty in Memphis to King's murder, although three days later he recanted this confession. As a result, a trial was waived and Ray was subsequently sentenced to a 99-year prison term in the state penitentiary. Judge W. Preston Battle ordered Ray sent to the Tennessee State Penitentiary in Nashville after brief court proceedings during which Ray indicated that he disagreed with the prosecution's theory that there had been no conspiracy. The case was settled in Shelby County Courthouse, during a short hearing at which prosecutor Phil M. Canale presented evidence against Ray to a twelve-man jury. The ninety-nine-year sentence allowed parole after completion of half the sentence. If Ray had pleaded not guilty and had been convicted of first-degree murder, he could have received either a life sentence (and have been eligible for parole in thirteen years), or he could have been sentenced to death.

Within three days of his arrival, Ray had written to the court requesting that his guilty plea be set aside and that he be given a trial. Despite many appeals, none of Ray's many attorneys ever produced evidence to convince a court of law to open the case. On the advice of his attorney, Percy

Foreman, Ray pled guilty to avoid a trial conviction and thus the possibility of receiving the death penalty; some argue that it would have been highly unlikely that he would have been executed even if he had been sentenced to death, since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1972 decision in the case of *Furman v. Georgia* invalidated all state death penalty laws then in force.

Without much delay, Ray fired Foreman as his attorney, calling him "Percy Fourflusher." Ray proceeded to claim he had been framed by a shady character with the alias "Raoul" whom he had met in Montreal, Canada, while engaging in smuggling operations. Ray argued that Raoul was involved in the assassination, as was his brother Johnny. Ray went on to assert that although he didn't "personally shoot Dr. King," he may have been "partially responsible without knowing it" ("James Earl Ray" 2005), hinting at a conspiracy.

A federal investigation in 1977–1978 by the Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives, 95th Congress, was conducted. Hearings were conducted on August 14, 15, and 16, 1978. In January 1979, this committee published its final report, *Investigation of the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, finding no complicity on the part of any government agency, including the CIA and FBI. Ray, the report concluded, was a lone gunman.

Shortly after Ray testified to the House Committee that he did not shoot King, Ray and six other convicts on June 10, 1977, escaped from Brush Mountain State Penitentiary. They were recaptured on June 13 and returned to prison. More years were then added to Ray's sentence for this attempted escape.

In spite of the 1979 government report, conspiracy theories continued to emerge. Ray, in fact, spent the remainder of his life attempting (unsuccessfully) to withdraw his guilty plea and secure a trial he never had. No Raoul ever materialized, until conspiracy investigators rounded up, in 1994, a retired auto worker from upstate New York, whom Ray said he recognized from a photo. The man was easily cleared of any involvement.

William F. Pepper, Ray's last attorney, promoted the conspiracy notion, claiming that Ray had been set up by the U.S. government. In his 1995 book *Orders to Kill: The Truth Behind the Murder of Martin Luther King*, Pepper alleged that the CIA, the Memphis police, the FBI, and Army intelligence were involved in the assassination plot. The key elements of Pepper's story were disproved, although Coretta Scott King (King's wife and a civil rights leader herself) and several of the King children announced their belief in Ray's innocence and the existence of a government plot. In 1997, Martin Luther King's son, Dexter, met with Ray in prison and publicly supported Ray's efforts to obtain a trial. Ray died in prison on April 23, 1998.

In 1998, however, attention was paid to Ray's case, particularly by Judge Joe Brown's court in Memphis. King's family publicly stated their belief that Ray did not kill King. Coretta Scott King asked President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno to form a truth commission patterned after the one in South Africa to encourage those with evidence to come forward without fear of prosecution. In August 1998, Reno reopened a limited investigation into the assassination.

In 1998, Donald Wilson, a retired FBI employee, said he found scraps of paper in Ray's car after the 1968 shooting that had the name *Raul* written

on them. Wilson allegedly took this evidence home and stored it in his refrigerator for the next thirty years. The FBI claimed that Wilson was not part of the search team and that his evidence was fabricated.

In December 1999, a Memphis jury awarded Coretta Scott King and her family a symbolic \$100 in a wrongful death civil trial against Lloyd Jowers and other unknown co-conspirators. Jowers claimed to have received \$100,000 to arrange King's assassination. The jury of six whites and six blacks found Jowers guilty and indicated their belief that governmental agencies were parties to the assassination plot. Few journalists, scholars, or law enforcement officials familiar with the case have given credence to the court's findings, and King biographers David Garrow and Gerald Posner disagreed with Pepper's claims that the government killed King.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is a significant moment in the history of the civil rights movement and American race riots, as well as in the history of the United States. In death, as in life, Dr. King influenced millions of Americans, and this legacy continues even as the controversy surrounding the circumstances and details of his assassination remain unsettling and unsettled for some.

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Carol E. Dietrich

**King, Rodney.** See Los Angeles (CA) Riot of 1992

**KKK.** See Ku Klux Klan

### **Knights of Labor**

Originally the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, the Knights of Labor was founded in secrecy by nine tailors in Philadelphia in 1869. The founder, Uriah Stephens, who originally planned to enter the ministry, took his personal goals for the United States and translated them into a platform for organizing labor. These ideas included the notion that prior labor organizations failed because of exclusive membership. Thus, Stephens and the Knights of Labor opened up their membership to include all workers, skilled and unskilled, and—eventually—African Americans and women.

New leadership emerged in the late 1870s, when Terence V. Powderly was elected grand master workman. Under Powderly's leadership, the secrecy

dissipated, and this, coupled with falling wages in the early 1880s, triggered an increase in union membership. In addition, a successful strike against Jay Gould's Southwest Railroad in 1884 helped increase membership. By 1886, there were 15,000 local assemblies and somewhere between 700,000 and 1 million workers. This huge growth was highlighted by the merging of skilled and unskilled workers, and incorporating women, immigrants, and African Americans, groups that had previously been excluded from labor movements. Prior to the Knights of Labor (and after) it was not uncommon for company owners to try to break organized labor by creating racial and ethnic strife within the workforce. The Knights of Labor sought to eliminate that paralyzing tactic and the violence that ensued.

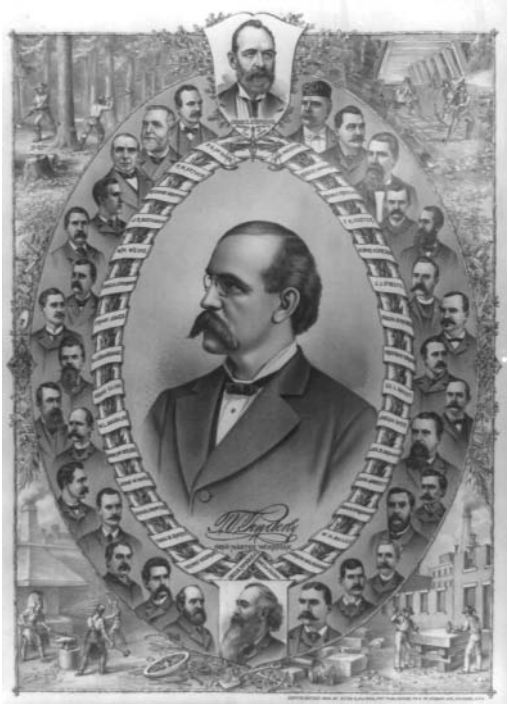
Most African Americans joined all-black assemblies, but some locals had mixed memberships, even in the South. Knight membership included 60,000 African Americans. In some places like Virginia, black workers made up at least half of the local membership.

African Americans used the Knights of Labor to challenge racial discrimination not only in the workplace, but in society in general. The national convention in Richmond, Virginia, in 1886, resulted in an attack on the **Jim Crow** structure of Richmond society resulting in the integrating, even if only temporary, of Richmond's Academy of Music; this resulted in the largest racially integrated event in Richmond's history.

Powderly, while supporting African American pushes for equality, still attempted to placate southern whites. He did not strive to shatter southern racial conventions, and was willing to compromise black workers when it inhibited his ability to organize southern whites. In the end, African American membership was often curtailed or limited in his attempt to attract more whites. And, despite its apparent openness, the union failed at crucial times to support black workers. In a strike among Louisiana sugarmen in 1887, 9,000 black workers went on strike. They refused to accept a higher wage without recognition of the Knights of Labor. In the end, shocked at the violence perpetrated by white society and government on the black workers, the Knights of Labor did not come to their aid and withdrew support, undermining the strike.

By 1890, it was apparent that most whites refused to join with blacks in pursuing solutions to economic problems, and they began to distance themselves from their black counterparts. By 1894, the Knights of Labor had abandoned African Americans and advocated returning them to Africa.

There was never total harmony among the groups that comprised the Knights of Labor, but for a time the alliance was sufficiently stable to spark



Leaders of the Knights of Labor, circa 1886.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



A Knight of Labor holding a crying baby, circa 1890. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

widespread fear among industrialists. In the end, the failure of some strikes, like the Missouri Pacific Strike of 1886 and the public's connecting the Knights of Labor to the violence of the Haymarket Square Riot, undercut their prestige and increased internal disputes among the skilled and unskilled workers, which shattered the all-inclusive nature of the union. The factional disputes, unsuccessful strikes, and the emergence of the American Federation of Labor led to a rapid drop in membership, so that by 1900, the Knights of Labor were practically nonexistent. *See also* Labor Violence.

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Gary Gershman

### Knoxville (Tennessee) Riot of 1919

On August 30, 1919, an intruder shot and killed Bertie Lindsey, a twenty-seven-year-old white woman, in her Knoxville, Tennessee home. Her twenty-one-year-old cousin, Ora Smyth, lay motionless in her bed. After the intruder grabbed a purse and ran away, Smyth fled next door to the house of a city policeman. A few hours later, Maurice Mays, a black man whom many people believed was the son of the Democratic white mayor of Knoxville, stood behind bars, charged with the slaying. By morning, roving bands of white men moved toward downtown, visibly upset with the news of the crime. Just before sundown, shooting began, as the mob stormed the county jail in search of Mays. Knoxville joined the numerous other American cities that experienced a riot during the **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**.

Ostensibly, Knoxville was an unlikely candidate for racial violence. The city remained largely Republican more than fifty years after the Civil War's end. Only 12,000 blacks made up its 80,000 inhabitants. Many Knoxville blacks exercised their right to vote, held public office, sat on juries, and served on the police force. Also, the existence of Knoxville College, one of the first black schools established after the Civil War; the *East Tennessee News*, the area's biggest black newspaper; and a local chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

(NAACP), showed the growing role of African Americans in the community. However, severe animosities existed between the two races. For example, in June 1913, a gang of whites almost lynched a black man suspected of murdering a white policeman. Economic hardships and job competition aggravated the problem. Although World War I provided jobs, Knoxville's inability to accommodate new residents strained racial harmony. The post-war recession inflamed these hostilities as the city's industries closed. Some whites formed a local chapter of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**.

The situation remained tense in August 1919. The homicide of a white woman allegedly by a black man served as the catalyst that destroyed any remaining civility between the races. Only minutes after Ora Smyth sought help from her neighbors, several policemen rushed to the scene of the crime, where some thirty or forty people had already congregated. One of the patrolmen, Andy White, immediately thought of Maurice Mays. More than once, others heard White castigate Mays for interacting with white women. Often at the center of controversy, the striking, eloquent, and married thirty-one-year-old Mays attracted numerous women, both black and white. He owned a cafe and dance hall in Knoxville's red-light district frequented by both races. Mays also delivered the black vote to his father, John E. McMillan, who became mayor in 1915 and faced reelection soon. In fact, Mays handed out blank poll tax receipts for McMillan on August 29.

White and two other policemen were ordered to arrest Mays. They arrived at his house at 3:30 A.M., discovered him sleeping, and searched the premises for evidence. In his dresser they found a revolver, which the three lawmen claimed had recently been discharged. Both Mays' foster father and the black driver of the patrol wagon, denied this claim, however. Moreover, although muddy tracks led away from the crime scene, Mays' clothes, shoes, and carpet were clean and dry. Nevertheless, White arrested Mays and took him to the crime scene for Ora Smyth to identify, which she promptly did after barely glancing at him. By 8:00 A.M., a sizable crowd congregated at the city jail, forcing the police chief to transfer Mays to the county jail. In the early afternoon, the Knoxville *Sentinel* circulated lurid front-page articles describing the crime and arrest. Rumors flowed. Again, the authorities decided that Mays would be safer elsewhere. They dressed him as a woman to conceal his identity and sent him to Chattanooga.

Concomitantly, large crowds gathered at various points around Knoxville. By 6:00 P.M., a mob of over 500 surrounded the county jail demanding Mays. In vain, officials allowed four different groups to tour the facility to see that Mays was not there. At Market Square, 5,000 whites worked themselves into a fury and marched toward the jail. By 8:00 P.M., a barrage of rocks and bullets battered the building, and the angry crowd soon broke down the doors. For the next few hours, hundreds—if not thousands—of people combed the jail looking for Mays. Although they could not find him, they discovered an impounded moonshine still and some liquor. Imbibing freely, the crowd ransacked the building, taking weapons and ammunition. The mob freed all the white prisoners, including convicted murderers, but neither liberated nor injured the African Americans.

Called in after the jailhouse assault, the Fourth Tennessee Infantry—scattered on weekend passes—slowly made its way to Knoxville. The first members arrived at the jail around 10:00 P.M. The sixteen soldiers and their officer suffered brutal beatings, along with the loss of their uniforms and firearms at the hands of the **white mob**. The adjutant general, accompanied by three companies, soon arrived and assured the crowd that Mays had been moved, but to no avail.

While the city's whites assaulted the jail, rumors of impending attacks circulated among Knoxville's blacks. Those who did not flee the city gathered weapons to prepare for an invasion. Well-armed men congregated at the corner of Vine and Central, the hub of the black district, waiting for the mob of whites to appear. Shortly after 11:30 P.M., the brawl between Knoxville's white and black citizens began. While several clusters of rioters from the jail headed for Chattanooga in search of Mays, the rest shifted their attention to shots coming from the black district. Members of the National Guard, strengthened but still badly outnumbered, received orders to march double-time to the scene of the new fight. The authorities could do very little, however, as the area became a battleground for the next few hours.

The reinforced National Guard finally sealed off the black district around 3:15 A.M., effectively preventing any whites from entering it or any blacks from leaving. The following day, accounts of lawlessness, mostly unfounded, continued to plague the authorities. As a result, some 200 white civilians became special deputies and patrolmen, and they dispersed throughout the city to maintain order. For the next two days, periodic bursts of violence erupted around Knoxville. But by midnight, August 31, most of the hostility had begun to diminish.

In the days after the riot, guardsmen searched blacks on the street. Things slowly began to return to normal, though, and most of the Guard left by September 2, the day after the black district reopened. Although newspapers recorded only two deaths, one black man and one white, and fourteen wounded, the exact number of casualties remains unknown. Observers placed the number killed between twenty-five and several hundred. Authorities arrested fifty-five white men and women for their role in the riot, but many went free.

Under tight security, Maurice Mays returned to Knoxville on September 25, and his trial began a few days later. The all-white jury found him guilty of murder after only eighteen minutes of deliberation. Two weeks later, the judge imposed the death penalty. However, the sentence was overturned on appeal because of judicial error. In a second trial, Mays received the same sentence. On March 15, 1922, as he continued to proclaim his innocence, Mays died in the state's electric chair. *See also* Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

**Further Readings:** Egerton, John. "A Case of Prejudice: Maurice Mays and the Knoxville Race Riot of 1919." *Southern Exposure* 11 (1983): 56–65; Lakin, Matthew. "A Dark Night': The Knoxville Race Riot of 1919." *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 72 (2000): 1–29.

## Ku Klux Klan (KKK)

The Ku Klux Klan, also called the KKK or the Klan, is a collection of clandestine societies that terrorize African Americans, Jews, and other minorities. Although claiming to be law-abiding and moralistic, the Klan's history abounds with criminal activities, including kidnappings, sexual assaults, and homicides. The Klan's life cycle has been characterized by short periods of widespread popularity followed by swift decline, then dormancy. Rapid social change precedes the periods of popularity, while the collapses stem from the corruption and ineffectiveness of Klan leaders.

### 1865 to 1872

The Ku Klux Klan was founded as a social club by six Confederate Army veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee, between December 1865 and the summer of 1866. The founders were young men, well educated, and bored. They took the Greek word *kuklos*, from which the English words *circle* and *cycle* are derived, added *klan* for alliterative purposes, and named themselves the Ku Klux Klan. After developing an elaborate initiation rite, the fledgling Klan celebrated with midnight rides through Pulaski. The men and their horses wore hoods and robes. In the beginning, the Klan had no political agenda and existed only to have fun and play pranks on the public; soon the pranks were replaced by paramilitary action against the Republican **Reconstruction** governments and their leaders, both black and white, who assumed power in the South after the Civil War.

The Klan's transformation from a raucous, collegiate-like fraternity to a white supremacist **vigilante organization** was aided by a serendipitous discovery: their nightly rides frightened blacks. Within a few months, the menacing rides were the main activity of the hooded order: bands of white-sheeted ghouls threatened to punish blacks who tried to exercise the rights held by free men. Soon, the threats were converted into violence: floggings, rapes, and **lynchings**.

The South lost the Civil War and a way of life. The Deep South was in ruins. Its factories were destroyed, its railroads torn apart, its cities devastated by fire. Many white southerners were hungry and homeless. During slavery, the South operated a racial caste system where every black person, slave or free, was considered inferior to every white person. Blacks were not allowed to vote. In much of the South, even free blacks were not allowed to read, write, argue with whites, and own property, especially money and guns. During Reconstruction (1867–1876), the federal government, led by Radical Republicans, attempted to force southern whites to



Robert M. Shelton, Imperial Wizard, 1969.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.





Two children wearing Ku Klux Klan robes and hoods stand on either side of Dr. Samuel Green, Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon, at an initiation ceremony in Atlanta, Georgia, 1948. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

extend civil rights to blacks, including the right to own land, establish schools, marry anyone of their choosing—and for black men, the rights to vote and hold political office. Most southern whites were unwilling to treat blacks as first-class citizens—or even human beings.

In 1867, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act, which gave blacks the right to vote and divided the South into five districts, each under a military governor who had near-dictatorial powers. Approximately 20,000 federal troops were sent to the South to enforce the act. During slavery, blacks were human chattel; during Reconstruction, blacks voted and held elected office. Southern whites feared they would replace blacks on the bottom of the social hierarchy.

The KKK offered an opportunity for southern whites to assail the new social order. What the South lost during the Civil War (the racial hierarchy) would be regained through the political terrorism of the Klan and similar groups—for example, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, and the Order of the White Rose. Blacks were the primary targets of Klan terrorism, but the Klan also harassed, beat, and sometimes killed northern teachers, judges, politicians, entrepreneurs, Reconstruction soldiers, and various carpetbaggers—a derisive term for northerners who supposedly came South for personal profit, carrying their possessions in carpetbags.

Waging a battle against Reconstruction policies, the Klan quickly spread through Tennessee to Alabama and Mississippi, and to Georgia, North

Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and parts of Arkansas. Many of the chapters (klaverns) were undisciplined and only loosely aligned with the mother Klan in Pulaski. In theory, klaverns were governed by rules of conduct, but in practice each was an autonomous body; thus, bands of whites, all claiming to be Klansmen, were free to administer justice in any way they deemed fit. To rectify this situation, a secret Klan Continental Congress was convened in April 1867 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The delegates, drawn from southern and border states, created a constitution, a sophisticated organizational structure, and a political platform. The delegates pledged to protect the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers, oppose the radical Reconstruction and its proponents, support the **segregation** of blacks and whites, return whites to political dominance, and enforce the laws of God. With much discussion of unity of purpose, concert of action, and proper limits of behavior, the delegates laid the foundation for a century of organized terrorism.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was selected as the first imperial wizard (also called grand wizard). Forrest had served the Confederacy as a general, earning the description, “a foul fiend in human shape” (Jarninen 2002), from Union soldiers. Before the Civil War, Forrest had been a wealthy slave owner, but the war left him penniless. He detested blacks and he loathed the Radical Republicans who were, in his view, trying to impose Negro rule in the South. Forrest militarized the Klan and gave it direction. His selection as imperial wizard gave the Klan greater credibility among southerners, especially Confederate veterans. Forrest, aided by ten genii (assistants) ruled the Invisible Empire, which consisted of all southern states. A grand dragon and his eight helpers (hydras) controlled each state (realm). A grand titan and six furies ruled a group of counties (dominion). A county was a province ruled by a grand giant and four night hawks; local chapters (dens) were governed by grand cyclops with night hawks as aides. Individual Klansmen were labeled ghouls.

The KKK that emerged with Imperial Wizard Forrest as its leader emphasized instrumental aggression—that is, behaviors intended to injure others that also produce real benefits to the offender. Klansmen dragged black people from homes, churches, and schools and whipped them publicly. The Klan’s *Dead Books* contained the names of blacks and whites who opposed **white supremacy**. The Klan beat and killed blacks who bought land, argued with whites, tried to vote, or gave civil rights speeches.

By 1867, the Ku Klux Klan movement had spread throughout the small towns of the South. The Reconstruction-era Klan would remain a southern rural phenomenon. By 1868, the Klan was a powerful paramilitary force fighting radical Reconstruction and social equality for blacks. In areas where congressional Reconstruction acts had established Republican governments, the Klan thrived. In 1868, Klan membership exceeded 500,000. Most white southerners sympathized with the Klan’s objectives. Some saw the Klan as a necessary evil to stop “nigger rule.” There were white southerners who disagreed with the Klan’s objectives or methods; however, most were afraid to publicly criticize the Klan.

The year 1869 was a pivotal year for the Ku Klux Klan. The widespread beatings, lynchings, and mutilations of blacks and of white Radical

Republicans earned the Klan notoriety and nationwide criticism. Klansmen attacked one another in efforts to gain power within the organization. Imperial Wizard Forrest, fearing anarchy within the Invisible Empire, ordered the dissolution of the Ku Klux Klan and the destruction of its records. Many Klan dens obeyed their national leader, but some chapters refused to disband. In a few states, such as North Carolina and Arkansas, Republicans organized military units to fight the Klan. In most states, however, federal intervention was required.

The Klan did not die easily. On March 6, 1871, forty Klansmen, led by Maj. James William Avery, a former Confederate officer, terrorized York County, South Carolina. James Rainey, an officer in the all-black militia and a supporter of the county's Republican Party, was their first victim. The Klansmen brutally beat Rainey, then hung him from a tree. They ran through town beating and whipping blacks. Similar acts of white terror were repeated in other southern towns.

Between 1871–1872, U.S. Congress passed laws intended to abolish the Klan. Several Klan leaders were convicted of serious crimes. The Ku Klux Klan temporarily ended around 1872. Its first incarnation was short—five or six years; however, the organization had achieved its goal: to end civil rights for blacks. The racial caste system was reinstated. The Klan was not needed.

### **1915 to 1930**

The Ku Klux Klan's rebirth was facilitated by Thomas Dixon, Jr.'s book, *The Clansman* (1905), which romanticized the Klan as a Christian crusade led by dignified white gentlemen, and D.W. Griffith's cinematic adaptation, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). This movie glorified the KKK as saviors of white civilization—white-robed knights who protected white women from black criminals, and used violence only after great provocation and with the noblest motives. President Woodrow Wilson, a former history professor, claimed that *The Birth of a Nation* was historically accurate, like “history writ with lightning” (Pacchioli 2005). He forced his cabinet to watch the movie.

**William Joseph Simmons**, an itinerant Methodist preacher, also believed *The Birth of a Nation* to be an accurate portrayal of Reconstruction-era racial politics. He watched the movie a dozen times and felt divinely inspired to resurrect the Ku Klux Klan. After Simmons was dismissed from the Methodist Church for being “mentally inefficient and morally delinquent” (Fuller, 26), he became a fraternalist. Simmons' experience with selling memberships in fraternal organizations, such as the Woodmen of the World, helped him recognize the financial possibilities of resurrecting the KKK. Copying liberally from the rituals of the Reconstruction-era Klan, he produced the *Kloran*, a fifty-four-page holy book. Simmons copyrighted the *Kloran*, and thereby established himself as the lawful owner of the Klan. He called the Klan his “child” and his “first born” (Simmons, 66).

Simmons' KKK was named the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and incorporated in Georgia in 1915. Membership was open to white,

Protestant, native-born males. Simmons, to ensure his permanent control, endowed his position with almost dictatorial authority. He was responsible for the hiring and firing of national officers, the issuing and revoking of klavern charters, and the formulating of rituals and dogma. He divided his kingdom into eight domains, each consisting of a group of states. These domains were each governed by a grand goblin who, in reality, had little power. Simmons ruled with absolute power, but few observers cared—in 1919 the KKK had only 3,000 members and was just another whites-only fraternal organization.

The Klan remained a relatively insignificant organization until 1920 when enterprising publicists, Edward Young Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler, joined. Simmons signed a contract with Clarke and Tyler giving them 80 percent of the profits from the dues of new members. Sensing its financial as well as patriotic potential, Clarke and Tyler helped the KKK evolve into a multi-xenophobic organization in which Southern and Eastern European Catholics, Jews, and African Americans were seen as threats to the American character. The American public was fertile ground for a “100 percent American” movement.

By 1922, more than 200 klaverns were chartered and membership soared from 100,000 to almost a million. Each week, thousands of new members were added. Two hundred zealous kleagles (recruiters), motivated by fear, patriotism, and paid commissions, enrolled any white, Protestant, native-born American. Kleagles approached Protestant ministers and offered them free memberships and positions of authority in the Klan, often as Kludds (chaplains). Hundreds of ministers accepted, and they transformed segments of the Protestant Church into an arm of the Invisible Empire. Most of the lecturers on the Klan circuit were ministers; some left their clergy positions for the wider Klan calling.

The early 1920s was a period of immense social turmoil. Economic dislocation and political and social unrest followed World War I. From the 1880s to the 1920s the United States received millions of European immigrants, including many Catholics. The Klan, tailoring its recruitment to exploit the angst felt by Americans, expanded beyond the South, especially into the urban areas of the North and Midwest. They discovered that white Americans—even ones who were only a few generations American—were hostile toward foreigners. Many Protestants repudiated Catholicism, believing it a corruption of Christianity; Catholics were seen as unpatriotic, their allegiance promised to the pope. Growing numbers of Americans tied the “Bolshevik menace” to domestic labor unrest and mob violence. They feared that, given the right circumstances, the communists would take over America.

The Reconstruction-era Klan reviled blacks and anyone who helped them. The Klan of the 1920s loathed blacks and their supporters, but they also despised immigrants, Catholics, Jews, Asians, unionists, bootleggers, drunkards, violators of the Sabbath, movie makers, adulterers, intellectuals, and others they deemed deviants.

By 1922, the Klan dominated politics in Atlanta, Dallas, Memphis, Knoxville, Tulsa, Mobile, Detroit, and Indianapolis. The Klan made a significant attempt to undermine the democratic process in Chicago, Illinois; San

Francisco and Los Angeles, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Denver, Colorado; Portland, Oregon; and Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus, Ohio. Klan membership rose to four million members by 1924. In August 1925, 40,000 Klan members wearing uniforms marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., during the Democratic National Convention. At the convention, a resolution denouncing the Ku Klux Klan precipitated a bitter controversy and was defeated. This was not surprising—in many sections of the country, the Klan dominated the Democratic Party.

Schoolteachers, politicians, ministers, carpenters, bankers, Americans from all walks of life joined the Klan. Although many of the members were poor or working class, the KKK drew members and leaders from all strata of white society. The original Klan had been a rural, southern experience; but the new Klan was mainly an urban phenomenon. The Ku Klux Klan remained a secret society, but the organization was not isolated or marginalized.

During its heyday, the Klan dominated the state governments in Ohio and Indiana. Indiana Grand Dragon David S. Stephenson, a fiery orator, made Indiana the bastion of Klan activity in America. Stephenson, who claimed to be the law in Indiana, was instrumental in the election of all winning local candidates in the 1924 Indianapolis political campaign. In 1925, he was convicted of the rape and murder of his secretary. His highly publicized trial embarrassed the Klan and convinced many Americans that the Klan was not a noble, law-abiding organization. Stephenson, to get a lighter prison sentence, implicated other Indiana political officials in criminal activities.

Many Klan members were content to march in parades, vote for Klan-endorsed political candidates, and attend cross-burning rallies. However, Klan violence was common, and it was directed toward an increasing number of Americans. The Klan might, for example, tar and feather a white woman for looking at a black man, or flog a black dentist who was associating with a white woman, or punish a white justice of the peace for being lenient on blacks, or kill a black man for organizing a civil rights meeting, or riot in a black community to demonstrate white power.

Criminals in the Klan were rarely prosecuted. In many communities local officials, including sheriffs, abetted them. In 1921, there was a congressional investigation of crimes committed by the Klan and, for a short while, the KKK committed fewer heinous crimes; however, by the mid-1920s Klansmen increasingly committed violent acts.

Hiram Wesley Evans—the exalted cyclops of the Dallas Klavern, replaced Imperial Wizard Simmons, who was discovered to be an alcoholic and corrupt administrator, in 1924. Simmons, unwilling to concede his authority, filed lawsuits against the Klan. The infighting resulted in organizational disarray and the loss of members. Simmons and his assistant Clarke founded new Klan-like organizations. Evans banished them from the Klan. Public sentiment turned against Klan violence, especially the violence committed by high-ranking Klan officials like Stephenson, the grand dragon of Indiana. Many cities passed anti-Klan laws. Remarkably, membership plummeted to no more than 30,000 by 1930. Sporadic Klan violence continued into the 1940s, but the Klan's heyday had ended.

### ***1954 to Early 1970s***

After World War II (1939–1945), Dr. Samuel Green of Atlanta, Georgia, tried to revive the Ku Klux Klan, but failed as the organization splintered. The impetus for a resurgence of the Klan arrived May 17, 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregated schools unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The *Brown* decision angered southern whites, but emboldened blacks in the fledgling **civil rights movement**. Racial violence occurred when black students arrived to integrate white schools. In some cases, state government officials orchestrated the resistance to *Brown*, thereby inviting federal intervention. Race relations between blacks and whites retrogressed from a veneer of peaceful coexistence to vicious antagonism and conflict. The climate of mounting racial tension and hysteria was conducive to a resurgence of the Klan. As the civil rights movement grew in the 1960s, the Klan responded violently to the **Freedom Rides**, sit-ins, and mass demonstrations.

Unlike its predecessors, the new Klan was not a monolithic organization, rather it consisted of at least twenty splinter groups each claiming to be the heir apparent to the Klans of Forrest and Simmons. Many states passed laws banning the Klan; therefore, the latest Klan was a guerilla movement, lacking the mainstream respectability of the 1920s Klan. In 1961, many of the splinter organizations merged and formed the United Klans of America. Robert Shelton, a friend of Alabama Governors John Patterson and George Wallace, was selected imperial wizard. Under his guidance, the United Klans of America exceeded the violence of earlier Klans. Shelton sanctioned the bombing of at least sixty churches, including the infamous bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church that killed four young girls. He held parades, rallies, and banquets to honor the assailants and raise money for their legal expenses.

Between 1954 and 1967, Klansmen were suspected of over 200 separate bombings and dozens of homicides. On June 21, 1964, members of the Ku Klux Klan killed three civil rights workers (Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney) who were investigating the burning of a church in Longdale, Mississippi. The Klan referred to its system of escalating violence as *projects*. Code one was harassment, usually a cross was burned on the target's property. Code two was a physical assault. Code three was a firebombing. Code four was an assassination. Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney were victims of a code four.

The civil rights movement drew attention to the plight of blacks who lived under **Jim Crow** segregation. Whites, especially northerners, were confronted with media images of black protesters beaten by police officers, attacked by police dogs, and arrested for trying to vote, eat at white lunch counters, and attend white schools. Segregation laws and customs were challenged, and in some instances, changed. Ironically, Klan violence helped mobilize public support for passage of landmark civil rights legislation. Klan membership increased to over 50,000 by 1967. This number was small relative to the membership numbers of the previous Klans; however, an estimated six million white Americans sympathized with the goals of the KKK,

and many donated money to the Klan. Mayors, sheriffs, judges, ministers, education officials, business leaders, and politicians were members or supporters. The goals of the civil rights-era Klans were similar to earlier Klans, especially Simmons' Klan; these objectives were summarized in a 1960s Klan handout:

To maintain white supremacy by any means necessary; to protect the purity of white women from raping blacks; to rid the nation of aliens, especially demonic Jews and communist atheists; to fight integration and other communist plots against 100 percent Americans; to defend the principles of the Constitution against agitators within and without; and to make sure that America remains a God-fearing and God-directed nation. ("White Americans Listen")

The many Klan groups all opposed blacks, racial integration, Jews, communists, liberals, and, increasingly, the federal government, which the Klan believed was forcing race mixing ("mongrelization") on white Americans. The Klan appealed mainly to the lower classes; typically, the white middle class and upper class opposed racial integration by joining or donating money to citizens' councils. The Klan's membership was diluted by the emergence of rival white supremacy organizations such as the American Nazi Party and the National States Rights Party.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Klan's popularity began to diminish. This decline was prompted by several federal investigations of Klan crimes, including kidnappings and murders. Some Klan leaders were imprisoned, others left the Invisible Empire rather than risk imprisonment. Many white Americans viewed the Klan as an embarrassing relic of the nation's racial past. By 1974, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation** (FBI) estimated active Klan membership at 1,500.

### *Mid-1970s to the Present*

Like its immediate predecessor, the fourth incarnation of the Klan was not a monolithic organization; instead, there were numerous distinct organizations. One of the most prominent Klans was the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan headed by David Duke. In 1967, at the age of seventeen, he joined the Klan. Three years later, as a student at Louisiana State University, Duke formed the White Youth Alliance, a neo-Nazi organization. He was well known on campus for wearing a Nazi uniform and holding parties on the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday. He graduated from Louisiana State University in 1974, and founded and became the self-appointed imperial wizard of the Louisiana-based Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. His readings convinced him that the Klan should be modernized into a nationalist political force. He concluded that wearing swastikas on his armband—as he had done in college—would be counterproductive. He changed the title of grand wizard to national director, and appeared in public wearing a three-piece suit, not the traditional Klan uniform. In his public presentations he rarely used racist slurs or made violent threats against blacks and other Klan enemies. Duke appealed to white Americans' dislike for affirmative action policies, busing, and illegal immigration. He presented himself as a political

conservative, concerned about protecting the political, economic, and social rights of white Americans. The articulate, boyishly attractive Duke became a celebrity, regularly appearing on network television and behind college podiums. His urbane **racism** was more acceptable to middle-class white Americans than the Klan's traditional chants of "Niggers must die."

In 1980, Duke left the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan after a rival Klan leader, Bill Wilkinson, photographed and tape-recorded him trying to sell his membership lists. To save face, Duke created the National Association for the Advancement of White People. In 1989, running as a Republican, Duke won a Louisiana State Legislature seat. His election shocked the nation. The national leadership of the Republican Party expressed disappointment. While in office, Duke continued to sell neo-Nazi materials. In 1990, Duke ran for the U.S. Senate; although he lost, he received 43.5 percent of the vote. The next year he received almost 700,000 votes in the Louisiana gubernatorial race.

In 2003, Duke began serving a fifteen-month sentence for tax evasion and mail fraud. Duke pleaded guilty to bilking his white supremacy followers out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. He raised money to aid "white civil rights," but used the money to remodel his home, gamble, and pay off gambling debts. Duke also admitted to evading taxes in 1998. For three decades, Duke's reputation had survived charges of womanizing, adultery, selling secret membership lists, embezzlement, and bilking followers. During his incarceration, some followers claimed that Duke was imprisoned in the "American Gulag" (Strom 2004) because of his political beliefs.

Not all Klansmen followed Duke's strategy of genteel racism. Wilkinson, imperial wizard of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the KKK, was militaristic and prone to violence. His Klan was one of the largest Klan organizations in the 1970s and 1980s. Wilkinson attracted national attention by attending President Carter's home church dressed in Klan regalia; he maintained his notoriety by advocating the killing of black agitators. He was later discredited in Klan circles with the ultimate stigma: he was accused of being an FBI informer. When Wilkinson stepped down in 1983, his Klan fragmented and became defunct.

In 1979, over 100 Klansmen, armed with bats, ax handles, and guns, beat civil rights marchers in Decatur, Alabama. In the mid-1980s, a Klan paramilitary training center in North Carolina was discovered using military personnel and stolen government weapons to train its recruits. There were fewer than 10,000 Klansmen nationwide, but they were capable of horrific crimes.

On March 20, 1981, Michael Donald, a black man, was beaten, had his throat cut, and was hung from a tree in Mobile, Alabama. His assailants were two members of the United Klans of America who were angry that an interracial jury had failed to convict another black man of killing a white police officer in Birmingham. The Klansmen randomly selected Donald and lynched him to intimidate other blacks. On the same evening, other Klan members burned a cross on the Mobile County courthouse lawn. The two murdering Klansmen were caught and convicted. The mother of the slain man sued and won a historic \$7 million verdict against the United Klans of America, effectively ending this hooded order—the same Klan that had



beaten freedom riders in 1961 (see **Freedom Rides**) and bombed Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in 1963.

By the mid-1980s, the majority of white supremacists belonged to organizations other than the Klan. Of the dozens of Klan groups that emerged in the 1980s and 1990, most were small, albeit actively preparing for the racial holy war (RAHOWA). They learned to use grenades and explosives, and they learned hand-to-hand combat. Some of the Klans publicly disavowed violence; privately, however, all advocated violence. They created youth camps to socialize their children into the Klan life. Paramilitary camps sprung up, especially in the Northwest, the fantasized location for the new white America. Women took a more active role in Klan rallies, parades, meetings, and paramilitary camps. Klan recruiters traveled to Europe to spread *Klandom*. Some of the new Klans lifted their bans on Catholics, moving toward a united white front. They opposed the so-called enemies of white America—African Americans, Jews, Mexicans, and other racial minorities, non-white immigrants, non-Christians, unionists, federal government officials, welfare recipients, drug users, gun control advocates, and AIDS carriers; and, they opposed what they deemed the enemies of the white family—homosexuals, feminists, interracial couples, and physicians who aborted white babies.

In the late 1990s, the Klan organizations receiving the most media attention were the Imperial Klans of America, led by Ron Edwards, with approximately twenty dens in fifteen states; the American Knights of the KKK, led by Jeff Berry, the tough-talking leader sentenced in 2001 to seven years in prison for conspiracy to commit criminal confinement; and the Knights of the White Kamelia, led by James Roesch who tried to start a Klan organization in Jasper, Texas, after the murder of **James Byrd, Jr.**, a black hitchhiker.

Three white men, with ties to the Klan, beat Byrd, cut his throat, chained his ankles to the back of a truck and dragged him to his death. His head, neck, and right arm were found about a mile from his mangled torso. The men left his body near a predominantly black church. This act, which occurred on June 7, 1998, shocked many Americans who believed that Klan-inspired terrorism had ended. But Byrd's death was not an anomaly. In April 1997, Klan members were arrested for plotting to blow up a natural gas refinery near Fort Worth, Texas. The next year, three men with ties to the Klan were arrested for planning to poison water supplies, rob banks, plant bombs, and assassinate Klan enemies.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Klan had fragmented into an estimated 100 Klaverns, some at least nominally independent, others attached to national organizations such as the Imperial Klans of America, the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and the Knights of the White Kamelia. Most were based in the South, but an increasing number, like the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (California), Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Pennsylvania), and the Federation of Klans (Chicago) were based in the West, North, and Midwest. Klan membership was small, in part because of the proliferation of competing racist organizations (for example, the National Alliance, the Identity Church, the Aryan Nations, and various skinhead groups). In 2003, total dues-paid Klan membership was less than 13,000.

The Klan movement in the United States and abroad received a major boost with the advent of the Internet. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, in 2003 there were more than 500 racist and neo-Nazi groups in the United States, many with Web sites. Don Black, a former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, established *Stormfront*, the first racist site on the World Wide Web, in 1995. *Stormfront* offers visitors (more than nine million by 2004) articles on the inferiority of blacks, the maliciousness of Jews, the evils of homosexuality, and the brutality of federal law enforcers. Visitors can purchase books, videos, musical tapes, and jewelry—all promoting white supremacy ideas. There are racist cartoons, and a “Kids’ Section.” Internet hate sites allow the Klan and other racist groups opportunities to reach middle-class professionals and college students who would never attend a Klan rally.

The Ku Klux Klan is no longer the preeminent white supremacist organization in the United States. Today’s Klan is a nebulous and fractious collection, fighting for members and relevance. Some Klans—traditionalists—publicly embrace the vulgar racial rhetoric and violence of past Klans. Other Klans claim to be white advocacy organizations, similar in mission and strategies to the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Still other Klans focus on their desire to make America a white Christian nation, by any means necessary. The Klans of the early twenty-first century have many faces; however, they remain committed to combating the people and groups that they believe to be enemies of white America.

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*David Pilgrim*



# L

## **Labor Violence**

Since almost the beginning of the American labor movement in the 1790s, violence has been a key component. Workers needed to maintain solidarity to be successful. Thus, to try to break striking workers, strike-breakers, or scabs, were often used; violence was the result. As early as 1800, sailors in New York engaged in bloody battles with gangs of workers on the waterfront. In the nineteenth century, attempts to break strikes were sometimes made by pitting different ethnic groups against each other, such as Chinese and Irish on the railroads. As American industry expanded, so did confrontation between labor and management. Following the Civil War, the end of slavery mixed a more complex racial component into the escalating violence of the late nineteenth century.

Numerous incidents reinforced the often violent quality of the American labor movement, and deaths were common. The Southwest Railroad Strike of 1885–1886, the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886, the Homestead strike in Pittsburgh in 1892, and the Pullman Railroad Strike in 1894 all pitted workers against employers with bloody results. During the Coeur D'Alene strike in Idaho in 1892, workers attempted to use dynamite to expel guards and scabs. Like the situation in Homestead, the governor declared martial law and federal troops arrived to crush the strike.

Blacks were frequently excluded from attempts to organize and unionize. The result was violence that often had both class and racial dimensions, and it is not clear if white workers or black workers perceived their self-interest as one of race or of class. Unions were typically racially restricted, so they appeared to function to advance labor concerns as much as preserve and defend white privilege. When strikers did manage to come together, rioting and violence took on class dimensions, as in the Alabama Coal Strike of 1894. However, when the labor force was racially segregated, the violence usually took on a racial element. In 1887, Louisiana sugarmen went on strike. However, the strike disintegrated into organized violence by whites, and the resulting Thibodaux Massacre left over thirty blacks dead and thousands more homeless. The violence in Louisiana in 1887

highlighted the bitter race and class struggles that divided blacks and whites in the South.

The early 1900s exemplified the complex nature of labor violence. A strike in Chicago in the summer of 1905 pitted black strikebreakers against white workers. The result was twenty dead blacks lynched by **white mobs**. The labor violence that surrounded garment workers in New York underscored how labor conflict was as much about immigrants versus whites as it was about racial minorities versus whites. But the use of African Americans, who were desperate for work, to break strikes helped shatter worker solidarity, and race became a product and backdrop of labor violence. By World War I, racial tensions were acute.

The **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917** was one of the worst race riots of the twentieth century. At least forty-nine people were killed and hundreds were injured. The first sporadic violence in the city was sparked when a union meeting with the mayor to protest the importation of southern black workers was swept by rumors that blacks had murdered a white man. The militia restored temporary control. Months later, shots were fired into black homes from a car speeding through a black neighborhood. When an unmarked police car subsequently drove through the neighborhood, it was fired upon and two police officers were killed. This incident unleashed a second wave of violence as whites attacked African Americans, forcing a black exodus from the city. The ultimate source of the riot was, however, the enmity precipitated by the black scabs hired by a local packinghouse to permanently replace 2,500 striking white workers.

Two years later, the **Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919** saw 38 killed, 537 injured, and thousands left homeless. Once again, a racial incident, the fatal stoning of a black youth, ignited the violence. As in East St. Louis, tensions in Chicago were at a boiling point because of the heavy influx of black workers and were exacerbated by the long-standing racial discord stemming from job competition. The seeds for the riot of 1919 had been sown in the previous three decades as strikes at packinghouses were repeatedly broken by the use of African American scabs.

The last great wave of labor violence occurred in the 1930s, which saw strikes accompanied by violence in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; on the docks of San Francisco, California; at the southern textile mills in 1934; and, in 1937, in Chicago and Flint, Michigan. The same year also witnessed the Little Steel Strike, which erupted at the Republic Steel Company, the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, and various other steel firms, which were collectively known as *Little Steel*. As in previous decades, labor violence in the later twentieth century was often linked to class division as much as to racial heritage. Thus, it is often difficult to decide which produced the violence. In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, Cesar Chavez's devotion to **nonviolence** helped quell some of the disorder that sprang from the protests of migrant farm workers. But Chavez and **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, both understood the intersection of race and class and attempted to move the nonviolent approach past the **civil rights movement**.

King's Poor People's Campaign fused the needs of the working class with civil rights. The Memphis, Tennessee, Sanitation Workers Strike in 1968 exhibited the growing intersection of labor and race. Despite King's insistence on nonviolence, the protests became increasingly disorderly. Memphis, which marked the tragic death of King in April 1968, highlighted the notion that when race and class were mixed, the community polarized and riots and labor violence were the result.

Although race always had the opportunity to permeate labor violence, the class dimension of labor confrontation often takes precedence in modern labor actions. An example is the dock strike that occurred in South Carolina in 2000. The local police cooperated with longshoremen when they set up their picket lines to protest. However, the state attorney general drew a hard line, calling out an army of 600 state troopers and highway patrol officers to escort non-union workers to the docks. When riots followed, both blacks and whites were indicted and the outcry was along class, not racial lines. In that case, an alliance between labor and the African American community had been established. The local government had solid roots in the black community and was able to bring black and white workers together. *See also* Lynching.

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*Gary Gershman*

**LCFO.** *See* Lowndes County Freedom Organization

**Little, Malcolm.** *See* Malcolm X

**Locke, Alain LeRoy (1886–1954)**

Alain LeRoy Locke was an African American educator, writer, and philosopher, and is best remembered as a leader and one of the chief interpreters of the Harlem Renaissance. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 13, 1886, Locke graduated from Harvard University in 1907 with a degree in philosophy. He was the first black Rhodes Scholar, studying at Oxford from 1907 to 1910, and the University of Berlin from 1910 to 1911. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Harvard in 1918. For almost forty years, until retirement in 1953 as head of the department of philosophy, Locke taught at Howard University in Washington, D.C. During that time,

he became a distinguished member in 1930 of the African American Greek Organization Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., the second member inducted into their Distinguished Service Chapter.

Locke stimulated and guided artistic activities and urged black painters, sculptors, and musicians to look to African sources for identity and to discover materials and techniques for their work. His many written works include *Four Negro Poets* (1927), *Frederick Douglass, A Biography of Anti-Slavery* (1935), *Negro Art—Past and Present* (1936), *The Negro and His Music* (1936), and his most notable work *The New Negro* (1925), an anthology of notable African American works.

The corpus of his work is seized upon for explaining and conceptually organizing the rising Harlem Renaissance movement that was indicative, for the first time (and across racial lines), of African American cultural aesthetic absorption by the mainstream white-dominated culture. In 1924, *Opportunity* magazine hosted a dinner at the Civic Club in New York City and made Locke master of ceremonies. This event is often considered the formal launching of the New Negro movement, which was named after Locke's cultural and literary endeavors.

Locke's engagement with race riots was most notable in regard to the **Harlem (New York) Riot of 1935**, which was caused by a rumor that a young African American boy stole a knife from a Kress Store on 125th Street in New York City. Further, it was rumored that the boy had been beaten and was either gravely injured or dead, though in reality he had fled. The rumors, coupled with charges of brutality and employment discrimination by Kress, triggered the rioting. At least 600 store windows were shattered and looting was rampant. The riot resulted in the deaths of three blacks and caused over two million dollars in property damage. Police arrested seventy-five people, mostly black, and nearly sixty citizens were seriously injured. Resultantly, Locke wrote a short essay titled "Harlem: Dark Weather-Vane," which appeared in the August 1936 edition of *Survey Graphic* and expressed his view of the riot as

variously diagnosed as a Depression spasm, a ghetto mutiny, a radical plot, and dress rehearsal of proletarian revolution. Whichever it was, like a revealing flash of lightning, it etched on the public mind another Harlem than the bright surface Harlem of the night clubs, cabaret tours, and arty magazines, a Harlem that the social worker knew all along but had not been able to dramatize—a Harlem, too, that the radical press and street-corner orator had been pointing out but in all too incredible exaggerations and none too convincing shouts. (457)

Locke was careful to debunk the fallacious story, but also provided keen insight into the multifarious causes of the riot related to the impoverished and terrorized social environment of Harlem in the Depression era.

Accordingly, Locke is often considered a humanist who was intensely concerned with social life and cultural aesthetics. Locke termed his philosophy *cultural pluralism* and emphasized the necessity of determining values to guide human conduct and interrelationships. His philosophy was said to have been greatly influenced by his membership in the Bahá'í

faith. Locke entered into the faith in 1918 and enjoyed a close relationship with Shoghi Effendi, the guardian of the Bahá'í faith and great-grandson of its founder, Bahá'u'lláh. Chief among Locke's values was respect for the uniqueness of individual personality, which he believed could develop fully and remain unique only within a democratic ethos. Locke died on June 9, 1954. *See also* Harlem (New York) Riot of 1935; Harlem Renaissance.

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*Matthew W. Hughey*

### Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967

The Long Hot Summer is the name given to the riots that occurred in the urban **ghettos** of the North between 1965 and 1967. Of the several hundred disturbances that occurred during each summer, the **Watts or Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965**, **Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967**, and **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967** were the most intense. These riots signaled an unprecedented shift in the pattern of racial violence that had occurred previously in the United States. They also challenged the way Americans perceived and depicted black violence.

Prior to the 1960s, most race riots or incidents of racial violence were instigated by whites. The inciting event was often triggered by a perceived need to enforce economic, social, or political control, or by an alleged accusation of a crime or offense, no matter how minor. Once the **white mobs** or vigilante groups apprehended and executed the accused, they often went on long and violent rampages through the nearest black community. Murders were commonplace, and blacks were nearly always the victims. Local authorities rarely arrested the whites, who murdered numerous innocent blacks and obliterated their property and communities. This pattern persisted from **Reconstruction** to the end of World War II.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the focus of white violence shifted from the black communities to the nonviolent protests and demonstrations of the **civil rights movement**. Media scrutiny, intervention by local, state, and federal government institutions, and effective law enforcement deterred future attacks. The incidence of white rioting decreased dramatically. Meanwhile, activists continued to make strides toward ending racial **segregation** and, eventually, defeating **Jim Crow** laws altogether. Wealthier blacks



moved out of the formerly black urban neighborhoods, leaving the destitute in their wake. The residents of the ghettos faced critical problems such as high crime and unemployment, broken families, poorly maintained housing, and feelings of powerlessness.

Local activists, city officials, and even the federal government made attempts to quell—if not permanently remedy—the tensions in the nation’s ghettos. The **Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU)** program was one of the first of its kind. The leaders of this program were Kenneth B. Clark, an esteemed black psychologist who made significant contributions toward **desegregation**, and members of the Harlem community. President Lyndon B. Johnson also launched a gallant attack on poverty with his Great Society programs. These programs were unpopular to politicians and most white Americans. Politicians, “fearing that the federal government was subsidizing their opponents and undercutting their power, were especially threatened by programs that empowered the previously disfranchised and dispossessed” (Hine et al., 539). Others resented the idea that blacks were not pulling themselves out of poverty but rather depending on others to save them.

Under his Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Johnson initiated programs such as Head Start, for the young children of impoverished families, and Upward Bound, to help direct underrepresented youth toward college. His New Careers program aimed to fill local positions, such as community coordinators, teaching assistants, and day care workers, from within the poor black communities themselves. These programs, reminiscent of the promises of Reconstruction, filled blacks with hope and gave them a reprieve from the despair of their circumstances. However, strong opposition, coupled with growing American entanglement in the **Vietnam War**, halted Johnson’s plans. Ultimately, the riots in the ghettos were unaffected by Johnson’s programs or by others like them.

In 1965, a new wave of race riots emerged out of the frustrations percolating within the ghettos, triggered by repeated incidents of **police brutality** and harassment. *The African American Odyssey* (2000) details other contributing factors as follows:

As jobs moved increasingly to suburbs to which inner-city residents could neither travel nor relocate, inner-city neighborhoods sank deeper into poverty. School dropout rates reached epidemic proportions, crime and drug use increased, and fragile family structures weakened. It was these conditions that led militants like the Panthers to liken their neighborhoods to exploited colonies kept in poverty by repressive [and exclusive] white political and economic institutions. (Hine et al., 536–537)

Disturbances occurred primarily within black neighborhoods and were instigated by blacks who targeted their own property. Unlike the white riots of prior years, blacks did not aim to murder. In some cases, they attacked white bystanders, but they did not kill. Most deaths occurred as authorities attempted to restore order. Blacks looted and set fire to their own homes and businesses. In contrast to white riots, blacks were often arrested, charged, and convicted.

The first major riot occurred in Watts in the summer of 1965. Watts, a predominately black neighborhood in Los Angeles, California, was troubled by the ills of high unemployment and crime, drug addiction, and inadequate public facilities. They also were subjected to frequent police harassment and brutality. On August 11, 1965, a white police officer arrested a black man he had stopped on suspicion of drunk driving. A black crowd was present. After reinforcements arrived, blacks threw rocks, bottles, and other objects at the officers. A riot followed. Gov. Pat Brown neglected to call in the National Guard until the sixth day. By then, the rioters had destroyed their own community. In the aftermath, more than 900 individuals were injured, 34 were killed, and 4,000 were arrested.

The next major uprising occurred in the sweltering heat of July 1967 (a year that saw fifty-nine riots) in Newark, New Jersey. Newark was “a majority black city, but one that operated on an inadequate tax base and under white political control” (Hine et al., 537). Black men in Newark had the highest unemployment rate in the nation (Hine et al., 537). There was a prevailing feeling of animosity toward racist police officers and a judicial system that did not provide justice for blacks in the community, as well as a distrust of white-dominated institutions. Blacks living in the urban ghettos were beginning to embrace racially empowering ideologies, such as black pride, **Black Power**, and **Black Nationalism**.

In early July, a white police officer beat up a black cab driver. Outraged, blacks firebombed the police station where the driver was being detained. Police officers responded by clubbing the protestors. In retribution, blacks rioted for four days. The police and the National Guard killed twenty-five innocent bystanders. Two of the victims were children. One white police officer and one firefighter were also killed. The property damage was enormous.

The third major riot occurred in Detroit, Michigan, eleven days after the disturbance in Newark. Blacks in Detroit were also grappling with the effects of alienation, **racism**, and systematic social and economic oppression. Black Nationalism, Black Power, and the **Nation of Islam** movements were popular among blacks in Detroit. These ideologies infused blacks with a sense of purpose and value otherwise denied them in the society at large.

On July 23, more than eighty blacks gathered in an after-hours drinking establishment to celebrate the return of two Vietnam War veterans. White police officers raided the party and roughly handled blacks as they attempted to clear the club. Five days of rioting ensued. When the National Guard, 200 Michigan police officers, and 600 Detroit police officers failed to restore order, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent out 4,700 troops of the Army’s elite 82nd and 101st airborne units.

Responses to this tumultuous period in of inner-city history varied. Some blacks, such as **Malcolm X** of the Nation of Islam, sympathized with the rioters. The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** condemned the riots but acknowledged that genuine troubles had produced the desperate response. Both the Nation of Islam and the NAACP established programs to help the troubled communities.

Deeply concerned, President Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which was headed by **Otto Kerner** and thus known as the Kerner Commission. The objectives of the commission were to study the ghettos and determine the causes of the summer riots and develop solutions to help eliminate the harrowing conditions of poverty, discrimination, poor housing, inadequate health care, and other ills. In 1968, the commission published a report that showed racism as the primary cause of the riots (see **Kerner Commission Report [1968]**). The report recommended federal aid to develop better housing, to improve and integrate schools, and to fund new jobs. Unfortunately, the divisive Vietnam War was by this time attracting both the nation's attention and its resources.

In "Riots, Revolts, and Relevant Response," Charles V. Hamilton describes how whites were shocked and oblivious as to why blacks attacked their own communities, especially during a period when they assumed all blacks had achieved significant progress. He explained that too much emphasis was placed on the lawlessness of the acts and the defamation of blacks, thus causing many whites to seek greater restrictions and enforcement over blacks to maintain law and order. Hamilton opposed this solution, since extant tensions between blacks and law enforcement had caused the turmoil in the first place and more stringent action from the same source would only aggravate the situation. He also condemned those who wrongly characterized the blacks who participated in the rebellions as criminals and "hoodlums," while those who opposed the "unlawful acts" were "'right thinking'" (Barbour, 173). According to Hamilton, these perceptions were amiss and did not consider the underlying reasons for the rebellions.

Hamilton argued that the disturbances of the Long Hot Summer were revolts, not riots, and that blacks were exerting their power through violent protest against the brutalities and injustices they suffered at the hands of the police. The triggering event (for example, the officer who beat up the cab driver in Newark) was symbolic of the cumulative offenses blacks experienced. The violent reactions were not so different from how whites responded to perceived offenses during America's early years. **Frontier justice** was frequently enforced in the West. Whites often banded together to maintain law and order in the absence of formal enforcement. **Vigilante organizations** were instrumental in ensuring the safety and protection of their own lives, families, property, and livelihood. Hamilton explained that the police officers and the court systems had repeatedly wronged and abused blacks. Thus, the rebellions were not only protests but an execution of their own form of justice and a demonstration of their power. For over 100 years, belligerent southern whites evaded punishment for, and criticism of, their violent activities, while blacks were imprisoned and even killed when they attempted to impose justice. Formally organized black vigilante groups were rarely successful.

The slave uprisings of the 1700s were similar to the ghetto rebellions of the 1960s in that they involved violent protest. The major difference was that the slaves often purposefully murdered whites, whereas blacks in the ghetto disturbances did not. Numerous accounts exist of slaves protesting

their condition through violence. In New York City (1712), twenty-seven Africans, seeking retribution for the abuses they suffered, set fire to a building, then killed nine whites and injured six. Six of the Africans killed themselves when whites apprehended them. Whites executed the other twenty-one. Stringent law enforcement to control slave uprisings eventually thwarted future attempts.

In considering solutions to the rebellions in the ghettos, some—particularly those who characterized participants as criminals—proposed harsher law enforcement and control. Others proposed augmenting the increase of preventative programs within the ghettos. Although Hamilton agreed that programs were a viable solution, he recommended that blacks be allowed to control, lead, and hold significant positions within them. He believed white-controlled programs were problematic because blacks distrusted whites. The rebellions were evidence of that fact. Moreover, having blacks run the programs would be a significant step in empowering a people who had so long been dominated.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### Longview (Texas) Riot of 1919

In Longview, Texas, on the night of July 10, 1919, a **white mob** in pursuit of Samuel L. Jones gunned its way through the black part of town, shooting people and burning black homes and businesses, leaving four dead. Black residents defended their homes with organized resistance.

In 1919, there were just over 5,000 people living in the industrial town of Longview, county seat of Gregg County, around 2,000 of whom were black. Longview was the home of the Kelly Iron Works and other manufacturers, and was considered a vibrant center of commerce. According to a Dallas newspaper at the time, Longview was "like a white pearl in the middle of a fine farming territory," and because its white and black citizens were able to work together in peace, both peoples had prospered ("The Great Battle" 1919). The article went on to say that the black population had good churches, schools, halls, and homes, as well as several stores and shops. The Dallas newspaper told only the optimistic side of the story, for all was not well in Longview.

The black community of Longview was cohesive, and a branch of the Negro Business League was active locally, with cooperative stores that offered competition with white merchants. Leaders in the community had been promoting the idea that black farmers should bypass the white cotton brokers in Longview and deal directly with buyers in Galveston. The national black news magazine, the *Chicago Defender*, was readily

available, sold at the Quick Grocery, Benton's Market, McWilliams' Restaurant, and Leroy's Fountain, as well as sold on the street by newsboys.

Certain white citizens of Longview perceived the economic and cultural vitality of Longview's black community as a threat. By comparison, many whites in Longview were not enjoying a similar degree of prosperity. With racial tension at a high level, an article in the July 10 issue of the *Chicago Defender* began to circulate among local whites. The article described the death in mid-June of a young black man, Lemuel Walters, in Longview. It reported that a prominent white woman had declared that she loved Walters, and had she been in the North, would obtain a divorce and marry him. A white mob then went after Walters while he was jailed in police custody. The sheriff welcomed the mob into the jail and waved greetings to the mob as they seized the prisoner. Walters was taken to the outskirts of the town and shot, his nude body thrown to the side of the road. The *Chicago Defender* article also asserted that there had been an orchestrated cover-up of the incident by police and other local officials.

Angry that word of the lynching had gotten out, locals believed that Samuel L. Jones, a black activist who taught in the Longview school system and was a local correspondent for the *Chicago Defender*, was the source of the article. Despite his denial, two brothers of the woman attacked him. Jones escaped and sought medical treatment at the office of Dr. Calvin P. Davis. The article and the attack on Jones ratcheted up the tenor of the debate. Word got to Dr. Davis that Jones would be lynched if he did not leave town, and that Dr. Davis should leave too. Davis consulted with a group of black men who agreed to stand with Davis and Jones. They gathered at Jones' house to protect him. Around midnight the mob showed up, and four of its members came up onto the back porch, calling for Jones to come out. When there was no response, and they indicated they would force their way in, Davis fired the first shot. More than 100 shots were fired, and the mob retreated with its wounded.

At daybreak, the mob was reinforced with 1,000 white men armed with rifles, pistols, and ammunition stolen from the hardware store. The mob went to Jones' house, and finding it empty, set it on fire; they went across the street, shot the husband and wife who lived in that house and set it on fire; they then went to Davis' office and to his house, setting them on fire. The mob burned down Quick Hall, owned by Charlie Medlock, which had a store on the lower floor and dance hall above it. Jones left town and Davis escaped as well, disguised as a soldier. Marion Bush, Davis' sixty-year-old father-in-law, was chased from his home and pursued until he was shot. The mob left his body in a cornfield three miles south of town.

During the commotion, local officials had requested assistance from the Texas Rangers and Texas National Guard. After Bush's death, Mayor G.A. Bodenheim requested more aid from the governor, who sent additional guardsmen to Longview and placed the entire county under martial law. The rangers arrested seventeen white men on charges of attempted murder; each was released on \$1,000 bond. Nine white men were arrested and charged with arson. Twenty-one black men were arrested and taken to

Austin in protective custody. While Captain W.M. Hanson of the Texas Rangers asserted that any white man arrested in connection with the destruction of black homes would be charged with arson, none of the whites or blacks arrested was ever tried. The names of some of those arrested were Ernest White, Byron Oden, Elbert Keller, John Ethridge, Colton Moore, E.S. Wheeler, Brickbat Robertson, Will Rosson, Fred Nelson, Walter Beall, Lewis Bair, Lowell Smith, L.A. Mackey, Ed Nelson, M.F. Flanagan, Clifford Parr, Robie Vick. *See also* Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

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*Jan Voogd*

## Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965

Also known as the Watts Riot or Watts Rebellion, the Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965 was one of the major racially motivated urban insurrections of the 1960s. The riot lasted five days, 144 hours, from Wednesday, August 11 to Sunday, August 15, 1965. When it was over and the final curfew was lifted, 34 people were dead, thousands were injured, and nearly 4,000 were arrested. Besides the human devastation, millions of dollars of property were damaged and hundreds of buildings were burned to the ground.

The L.A. riot was not the first urban rebellion to occur during the 1960s. A year before the violent disturbance in California there were riots in Harlem, New York (July 18, 1964), which lasted two days; **Rochester**, New York (July 24, 1965); and **Jersey City** (August 2, 1964) and Paterson, New Jersey (August 11, 1964). There were also riots in **Philadelphia**, Pennsylvania; **Chicago**, Illinois; St. Augustine, Florida; and Elizabeth, New Jersey. The 1960s was a turbulent decade marked by an insurgent **civil rights movement** that fought a battle against **segregation** and other forms of racial discrimination on many fronts, and a burgeoning antiwar movement that protested American involvement in the **Vietnam War**.

Beginning in the early 1920s, Los Angeles was a deeply racially divided city. As the economy expanded, Mexicans and African Americans migrated to Los Angeles in hopes of earning a better standard of living, but they were never able to obtain the highest-paying jobs. The Stock Market Crash (October 28, 1929) did not improve their circumstances. In fact, because of the economic crisis that ensued, thousands of Mexicans were deported back to Mexico. On December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent (40,000 of them from Los Angeles) were sent to internment camps.



Los Angeles police hustle a rioter into a car during the 1965 riot. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

World War II launched a period of immediate but temporary growth and prosperity. Because of the war industry, the population of Los Angeles County reached an astounding 4.7 million. And the African American community grew from approximately 75,000 in 1940 to almost 250,000 by 1950, and nearly 500,000 five years before the Los Angeles Riot of 1965. But even during this economic boom, racial tensions did not decrease. On June 3, there was a week-long clash called the Zoot Suit Riot of 1943 between white off-duty sailors and Mexican-American youths. During the course of the riot, American sailors beat and harassed Mexicans and Mexican-Americans while the local authorities were reluctant to intervene. Although the African American population continued to increase, African Americans were restricted to living only in certain sections of the city. One of those areas was Watts.

Watts, originally called Mud Town, was an independent, working-class suburb of Los Angeles that was made up mostly of African Americans. It was named after C.H. Watts, a wealthy real estate broker from Pasadena. Watts was annexed by Los Angeles County in 1926, and it was, along with a few other areas of South Los Angeles, where working-class African Americans could rent, and in some cases, own property. Consequently, by the 1940s, the area that we now know as Watts became a predominantly African American community. At the time, an adjacent neighborhood like Florence, California, was completely off limits to blacks. An African American caught walking through Florence or driving an automobile was subject to verbal and physical harassment. In an effort to deal with the influx of African Americans, primarily from the South, the state of California constructed a series of housing projects including Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs, and Imperial Courts. Initially, these public housing units were integrated, but by the early 1960s they were almost entirely African American. Los Angeles became one of the most segregated cities in the United States, and once the boom from the war industry was over, the majority of lucrative employment went to European-Americans while non-Europeans, particularly African- and Mexican-Americans became increasingly impoverished.

Around 7:00 P.M. on August 11, 1965, a white motorcycle officer, Lee Minikus, was on duty at 122nd Street. Responding to a tip, Officer Minikus pulled over a car driven by a young African American man on the corner of 116th Plaza and Avalon. The officer claimed the driver was going

approximately 50 miles per hour in a 30-mile-per-hour zone. The driver of the car was twenty-one-year-old Marquette Frye. His brother, Ronald, was riding in the passenger seat. Ronald was one year older than his brother and had just been discharged from the Air Force. They were driving their mother's car on their way home after visiting friends. They had two blocks to go when they were pulled over by Officer Minikus. Since Frye admitted to drinking vodka and orange juice, Minikus asked him to step out of the car and proceeded to administer a sobriety test. In the meantime, Ronald ran the two blocks to his mother's house and let her know that Marquette was about to be arrested and her car was going to be impounded. By the time forty-nine-year-old Rena Frye and her son Ronald arrived back on the scene, a crowd of 200 to 300 people had gathered, and Minikus had called for backup.

Initially, Mrs. Frye lashed out at her son for getting caught driving while intoxicated. Angered over his mother's public reprimands, Marquette directed his frustration toward the arresting officer. More and more people began to gather around the scene. Sensing danger, Minikus called for more backup. An altercation broke out between the Frye brothers, their mother, and the police officers. Marquette Frye was hit over the head by Officer Minikus' nightstick and received a gash over his eye. At this point, the police officer threw Frye face-down across the front seat of one of the patrol cars and handcuffed him. Ronald, in an attempt to prevent his brother's arrest, held onto Marquette's legs while Mrs. Frye jumped on the police officer's back. The other officers called to the scene by Officer Minikus now became involved in the struggle. Eventually, around 7:25 P.M., the officers arrested Mrs. Frye and her two sons. As the officers were leaving the scene, someone from the crowd spit at them. By the time the last patrol car drove away, the crowd, which had attracted more people, was on the brink of pandemonium. They began throwing rocks and bottles and anything else within reach at the retreating patrol cars.

After the arrest, the crowd that had gathered to watch the altercation did not disperse. Instead, they separated into small groups and wandered up and down the streets in the vicinity where Officer Minikus had initially stopped Marquette Frye. Around 8:00 P.M. there were reports of scattered outbreaks of violence. White motorists driving through the surrounding area were pulled from their cars and beaten. Others had rocks, bottles, and broken pieces of asphalt thrown at their vehicles. Black pedestrians, who had not witnessed the incident but had heard rumors that white police officers had beaten and brutalized an African American woman, began to attack patrol cars that drove through the community. By 11:00 P.M., three and a half hours after the initial incident, the disturbance had engulfed eight blocks. In response, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) dispatched 100 officers to contain the unrest within the eight-block radius. The fact that the majority of the officers were white only served to infuriate the people of the neighborhood even more, and the disturbance escalated. The crowd went from throwing bricks and bottles and smashing windows to overturning automobiles and setting them on fire. Over fifty cars were burned or severely damaged, including two fire trucks.



At midnight, the police thought the civil disobedience had been brought under control, but by 1:00 A.M. the crowd had grown to over 1,500, which included men, women, and children, and there were intermittent reports of violence and vandalism until dawn. By then, thirty-four residents had been arrested and thirty-five people, including nineteen officers, were injured. At 4:00 A.M. on August 12, there were reports of a few random acts of violence but, for the most part, the crowd had dispersed. The news media descended on Watts, but other than the wreckage and wild speculation about what caused the insurrection, there was not much to report.

At 2:00 P.M. the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission sponsored a meeting of community leaders in Athens Park in a desperate attempt to derail any further possibility of violence by giving residents an opportunity to discuss their troubles and then return to their homes. Because the media had already taken an interest, this was a well-publicized gathering. One of the most repeated headlines was the statement made by a sixteen-year-old African American who declared that the fire next time would cross the borders separating black and white neighborhoods. A proposal was made to withdraw white officers from the areas where the disturbance had occurred and replace them with plainclothes African American officers in unmarked cars. The proposal was rejected by Deputy Chief of Police Roger Murdock because the suggestion to use only African American officers in predominantly black communities ran counter to Police Department Policy. By 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, an estimated 2,000 people had gathered at Athens Park and the rioting began again.

As the disturbance spun out of control, Police Chief William Parker contacted Lt. Gen. Roderick Hill, the adjutant general of the California National Guard in Sacramento, alerting him that the National Guard might be needed to quell the violence. But the reactions of the LAPD did more to inflame the rioters. Chants of "Burn, baby, burn!" and "Get Whitey!" became the mantra that accompanied Thursday night's violence. And instead of rocks, bricks, and broken pieces of pavement, Molotov cocktails became the weapons of choice. The crude gasoline bombs were tossed at passing cars and used to incinerate buildings. When police and firefighters arrived to extinguish the flames, they were attacked. Under deteriorating conditions, the Emergency Control Center at Police Headquarters was opened at 7:30 P.M. Thursday night. After midnight, numerous angry, rebellious residents gathered in front of Police Headquarters. They were faced down by 500 police officers, deputy sheriffs, and highway patrolmen who used a variety of tactics to disperse the crowd. By 4:00 A.M., the authorities felt that they had at least temporarily restored order.

At 9:00 A.M. on Friday, August 13, Police Chief Parker and Mayor Sam Yorty requested the intervention of the National Guard, asking for 1,000 troops. From early Friday morning to late Friday night, rioters jammed the streets, burning and looting stores and businesses. Anything that could be employed as a weapon was used, mostly to target white people. Along with other sections of the city, 103rd Street was systematically burned. The LAPD and the Sheriff's Department were no longer able to control the spreading violence.

By 5:00 P.M. Friday evening, 2,000 national guardsmen were on their way to Los Angeles. Two hours later, nearly 1,500 troops were on their way to strategic areas where the worst violence was taking place, but the troops were not actually deployed until 10:00 P.M. Evidently, more troops were needed because by midnight another 1,000 guardsmen were deployed. By midnight Saturday, nearly 14,000 troops were on the streets of Los Angeles.

Even with the arrival of the California National Guard, Friday night, August 13, 1965, was the worst night of violence. According to the McCone Commission Report (December 1965), the first death occurred between 6:00 and 7:00 P.M. when an unnamed African American bystander, trapped on the street between police and rioters, was shot and killed during an exchange of gunfire.

Also on Friday night, the burning and looting moved beyond Watts and spread over a wide area of Southeast Los Angeles. Despite the combined forces of the National Guard, the LAPD, and the Sheriff's Department, the riot had taken on a life of its own. Reports of major incidents of looting, burning, and shooting came at regular intervals. By 1:00 A.M. on Saturday, August 14, 100 engine companies were fighting fires in various areas of the city, but snipers hindered their progress. One fireman was crushed to death under a fallen wall, and a deputy sheriff was killed by friendly fire when another deputy's weapon was accidentally discharged.

When old strategies failed to produce the desired result, the authorities changed tactics. Police made sweeps on foot, moving along the streets in an effort to restore order; they marched shoulder-to-shoulder with the National Guard and members of the Sheriff's Department. However, in spite of these tactics, the disturbance continued throughout Friday night into Saturday morning. At this stage in the disturbance, Lt. Gov. Anderson appeared on television to impose a curfew. While the curfew was in effect, it was against the law for any unauthorized persons to be on the streets in the curfew area after 8:00 P.M.

On Saturday night, after the curfew was imposed, the streets of Watts, with the exception of a few sporadic outbreaks of violence, were quiet, even subdued. On Sunday, it was the same. The curfew was lifted on Tuesday, August 16, and for all intents and purposes the L.A. riot was over. According to the McCone Commission Report, the riot caused 34 deaths and 1,032 injuries. Among the injured were 773 civilians, 136 firemen, 90 police officers, 10 national guardsmen, and 23 individuals from other unspecified government agencies. The L.A. Coroner ruled that twenty-six deaths were justifiable homicides, five were homicides, and one was accidental. In the case of the justifiable homicides, the coroner determined that sixteen were caused by the LAPD and seven by the National Guard. Property damage was estimated at \$40 million. More than 600 buildings were burned or looted, 200 of these destroyed completely by fire. A total of 3,438 individuals were arrested.

On August 24, California Gov. Edmund G. Brown appointed a blue ribbon commission headed by John A. McCone, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to investigate the riot. The commission's report was issued on December 2, 1965. The report warned that the Los Angeles Riot of 1965 was a curtain-raiser for future violence unless stronger efforts were

made to deal with social problems. Some of the recommendations included a literacy program, a large-scale job training and placement program, improved means of processing complaints against the police, and increased mass transit.

During the four decades since the 1965 riot, much has changed and much has stayed the same in Watts. The changes include a new health center, post office, shopping center, savings and loan, and clothing store. However, unemployment hovers around 20 percent, almost three times the national average. More than one-third of the families in Watts live below the poverty line, and the community has the highest infant mortality rate, the lowest rate of immunization, the highest incidence of communicable disease, and the fewest doctors per capita in the country.

Beginning in August 2005, residents and representatives from organizations throughout the community came together to plan the Watts Renaissance, a year-long initiative that seeks to plan solutions to poverty. The people of Watts also host the Watts Summer Festival, which they claim is the oldest African American cultural festival in the United States. Growing out of the ruin and devastation of the 1965 riot, the festival was conceived during the summer of 1966 and incorporated in 1968 with the sole intent of redirecting the energies of the community into tangible, positive solutions and alternatives by developing pride, cultural awareness, and political conscious. It is also a memorial and tribute to the thirty-four residents who lost their lives in 1965. The Watts Summer Festival has drawn worldwide attention and support, and many African American artists have participated in it, including James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Isaac Hayes, Harmonica Fats, Richard Pryor, Nancy Wilson, Gil Scott-Heron, Barry White, the Watts Prophets, Charles Wright and the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, and the Staple Singers.

The Watts Summer Festival has also received special proclamations and resolutions from the city, county, state, and federal officials. A few of its renowned grand marshals include Muhammad Ali, Coretta Scott King, Myrlie Evers, Dr. Betty Shabazz, Richard Pryor, and the Honorable Maxine Waters. *See also* Black Panther Party (BPP); Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992; Malcolm X; Nation of Islam.

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*John G. Hall*

## **Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992**

The Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992, also known as the 1992 L.A. race riots, the Rodney King riots, the Rodney King uprising, or the L.A.

rebellion, were sparked on April 29, 1992, when a mostly white jury in suburban Simi Valley found four Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officers (Sgt. Stacey Koon, Officer Theodore Briseno, Officer Timothy Wind, and Officer Laurence Powell) not guilty on various charges related to **police brutality**. All four officers were accused in the videotaped beating of African American motorist Rodney Glen King. Thousands of people in Los Angeles, mainly young African American and Latino men, joined in the riot, involving mass law-breaking, including looting, arson, and murder. In all, there were 50 to 60 deaths, over 10,000 arrests (that were 88 percent male and 80 percent between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four), more than 2,300 injuries, more than 1,000 buildings lost to fires, and an estimated \$1 billion in damages. The riot secured a position in public memory as one of “the worst riots of the century” (Coffey, 49).

### *Underlying Causes*

In addition to the immediate acquittal verdict of the officers in the Rodney King trial that triggered the unrest, there were many other precipitating factors: the 1980s recession enabled high unemployment levels and cultural factors related to hopelessness and alienation among residents of South Central Los Angeles; the establishment of the Christopher Commission that found racial profiling and excessive use of force as a norm in the LAPD, which then led to the truce of the two largest L.A. street gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, wherein both groups worked together to make political demands of the police and the L.A. political establishment; specific anger over the light sentence given to a Korean shop owner for the shooting of **Latasha Harlins**, a young African American woman; the escalating racial tensions between the quadrilateral network of whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians in the South Central Los Angeles region; and the Rodney King beating and moving of the trial venue from Los Angeles to Simi Valley.

The recession of 1980s Reaganomics hit the lower-class areas of Los Angeles hard, especially the demographic of young black men. The area of South Central Los Angeles declined from traditional, highly unionized, high-wage manufacturing jobs and was full of openly negative attitudes toward black workers. The black male joblessness rate in some residential areas of South Central hovered around 50 percent. The rampant unemployment rates in South Central also coincided with 182,000 children under eighteen years of age, 46 percent of those living with only one parent, and 10 percent with no parent. Additionally, the national housing budget was cut by more than 50 percent in the 1980s, health care became increasingly unaffordable, and the infant mortality rate in South Central Los Angeles had a poorer rating than many developing nations in Africa and Asia.

In addition, scholars point to the cultural effects of highways that were built through black neighborhoods, effectively demolishing previous cultural landmarks and separating and dividing communities' residents. Others point to the justified anger created from being told to endure and to trust in racist institutions (see **racism**). Many sociologists report the preconditions of the L.A. riot as a cultural lag—the effect of one section of society

lagging behind another section. The result of cultural lag was referenced in the **Kerner Commission Report** in 1968, which found that there were two hostile and unequal Americas: one black and one white. It went on to describe that racially segregated black communities' inhabitants are compelled to contend with the condition of alienation and normlessness whereby certain norms, tacts, taboos, and even epistemologies of certain groups are deemed inappropriate or lacking in relation to mainstream thinking. Both culturally and structurally—demographically, South Central Los Angeles was ripe for civil disobedience and disturbance. It contained a critical mass of young males who had no regular occupations, who felt alienated without pragmatic recourse, and who had the time and physical capacity to engage in a riot and escape, evade, or outmaneuver police repression.

On April 1, 1991, amidst charges against the LAPD of racism and incompetence, L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley announced that a commission headed by Warren Christopher, a former diplomat, would evaluate the performance of the LAPD. The commission released a report that found between January 1986 and December 1990, there were 8,274 total allegations from complaints by citizens made against LAPD officers and 24.7 percent of them were allegations of use of excessive force. Most of those complaints came from neighborhoods with concentrations of ethnic minorities, but investigations rarely took place because the decision to investigate was made by police officers themselves. As a result of many of the commission's findings, the two largest L.A. street gangs, the Crips and the Bloods, began meeting to formulate how to end police brutality. On April 26, 1992, just days before the King verdict was released, sixty Crips and Bloods representing gangs from Pomona to Inglewood signed a peace treaty at the Imperial Courts projects. They later made several demands and offered proposals to the city of Los Angeles to increase educational programs and welfare benefits, and they requested that local drug lords take their monies and invest them in business and property in Los Angeles. This treaty was said by many to later organize portions of the riot into a rebellion, actually structuring and systematizing what was perceived as riot and chaos.

Acrimony between Koreans and African Americans reached a critical mass in a surveillance video that documented the March 16, 1991, incident in which a Korean woman, Soon Ja Du, fatally shot Latasha Harlins, a fifteen-year-old African American girl. The incident occurred approximately three weeks after the Rodney King beating (see **Harlins, Latasha [1976–1991]**). The African American community was outraged after Du was sentenced on November 15, 1991, to just five years probation, community service, and fines as a result of a conviction of voluntary manslaughter.

The patterns of ethnic succession in differing parts of Los Angeles reveal a territorial competition and tension between the four racial groups of whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Commentators on the eruption of violence emphasize tensions rising from the changing demographics of South Central as building factors to the riots. Los Angeles received a sizable black population during and after World War II. That black population quintupled to about 993,000 by 1990. Yet, during the early 1990s, that

growth slowed due to out-migration of blacks to Inglewood, Hawthorne, Downey, Paramount, and Long Beach. As blacks moved out, Hispanics moved in. The northeastern part of South Central Los Angeles was a Hispanic enclave and the western area beside downtown (the Pico-Union district) became dominated by Salvadorian immigrants.

Additionally, the racial makeup of historically black neighborhoods changed as various aforementioned areas became Hispanic, and Koreans bought formerly black-owned liquor stores and small grocery stores. The Asian population of Los Angeles County more than doubled during the 1980s and, in the historically black areas affected by the riots, the Hispanic population increased 119 percent over the same decade (Pollard, 7). Economic competition between races in the labor force and in small enterprises provoked more racial animosity; in particular, the 1980s saw downtown Los Angeles' businesses fire most of their black-dominated janitorial staffs and replace them with Latino immigrants earning half the wages paid to their unionized black predecessors. The fracture between Korean-owned businesses and the black residents they served was especially pronounced, as the black community frequently complained of poor treatment by store owners and inflated prices.

On March 3, 1991, at 12:47 A.M., a California Highway Patrol (CHP) dispatch advised that their officers were in pursuit of a white 1988 Hyundai Excel that was refusing to stop. Minutes later, twenty-five-year-old African American motorist Rodney King and two other African Americans (Freddie Helms and Bryant Allen) were stopped in the residential area of Lake View Terrace district by members of the CHP, LAPD, and the Los Angeles Unified School District Police (Koon 1992). King, who had a record of drunk driving, was said to have been driving at speeds up to 115 miles per hour. When the police officers ordered him out of the car, he refused. Once he finally exited the car, King threw off four officers who were trying to wrestle him down and it was then that Koon shot King with a 50,000-volt taser. Such high voltage was considered to be enough to put a person down, and it was because of the failure of the taser that King was believed to be under the influence of PCP (phenylcyclohexylpiperidine), a pain-numbing drug (official test results were negative for PCP, although King's blood alcohol content was said to be twice the legal limit). King rose from the first taser charge and was hit with a second taser which brought him to the ground. King again rose and charged toward Officer Laurence Powell, at which point Powell struck him with his police baton. The other three police officers (Koon, Briseno, and Wind) then kicked King and struck him fifty-six times with nightsticks. In addition to those officers, twenty-four other law enforcement officers watched the beating. Some of them assisted in holding King down by placing their feet on his back while he was beaten.

The incident was captured on a videotape by a white plumbing company manager, George Holliday. The video, an eighty-one-second surveillance of the event, was delivered to local television station KTLA the next day (March 4) and broadcast that evening locally to the greater Los Angeles viewing area. On March 5, the tape was obtained by CNN and played nationwide. The broadcast captured much of the U.S. public attention. It

soon became an international media sensation and a touchpoint for minority activists in Los Angeles and the United States. It also caught the attention of the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, which opened a civil rights inquiry into the King beating. LAPD Chief Daryl Gates wrote (Gates 1992) as follows:

I stared at the screen in disbelief. I played the one-minute-fifty-second [sic] tape again. Then again and again, until I had viewed it twenty-five times. And still I could not believe what I was looking at. To see my officers engaged in what appeared to be excessive use of force, possibly criminally excessive, to see them beat a man with their batons fifty-six times, to see a sergeant on the scene who did nothing to seize control was something I never dreamed I would witness.

On March 7, LAPD Chief Gates announced that Koon, Briseno, Wind, and Powell would be prosecuted. The following day, March 8, District Attorney Ira Reiner announced that he would seek grand jury indictments against the officers. Also that day, it was announced that fifteen law enforcement officers present at the scene of the King arrest had been suspended. Several days later, a *Los Angeles Times* poll reported that of those polled who had seen the Holliday videotape, 92 percent thought excessive force had been used against King.

On March 14, a grand jury returned indictments against Koon, Powell, Wind, and Briseno and two days later Judge Bernard Kamins set June 17, 1991, as the opening date for the trial. He denied a motion from the defense for a change of venue out of Los Angeles County, but the defense appealed the denial of their motion to the California Court of Appeals, which unanimously granted the change of venue motion. Judge Kamins was also removed due to an alleged improper *ex parte* message to prosecutors, and the case was reassigned to Judge Stanley Weisberg.

Supposedly, due to the enormous amount of media coverage and saturation of the story in Los Angeles, the trial was moved to a newly constructed East Ventura County courthouse in predominantly white and conservative Simi Valley in Ventura County, a place where “residents worship the police . . . and one that is politically, racially, and culturally as different from downtown Los Angeles as Manhattan is from the moon” (Pinkney, 44). On February 3, 1992, the trial began with a jury of ten whites, one Hispanic, and one Filipino-American. Among the jury members, the average age was fifty-one; five were registered in the Republican Party and five in the Democratic Party. Three were members of the (conservative) National Rifle Association and three were relatives of police officers. Before the trial, of the 264 potential jurors, the six who were black were excluded from service by peremptory challenges (i.e., no reason had to be given for their exclusion). Contrary to popular belief, no Simi Valley residents served on the jury, which had been empanelled in Los Angeles County; however, the jury was drawn from the nearby San Fernando Valley. The four officers faced charges of official misconduct, excessive force, filing false police reports, and the felony charges of assault with a deadly weapon.

Of note during the trial was how the eighty-one-second Holliday video was

Broken into scores of individual still pictures, each of which was then subject to endless reinterpretation. Then, since no single picture taken by itself could constitute excessive force, taken together, the videotape as a whole said something different—not incredibly clear evidence of racist police brutality, but instead ambiguous slices of time in a tense moment that Rodney King had created for the police. (Crenshaw and Peller, 59)

On April 29, 1992 at 3:15 P.M., the jury acquitted Koon, Wind, and Briseno of all charges. The charge of excessive force under the color of authority against Officer Laurence Powell was found inconclusive, resulting in a mistrial on that one count. Various explanations for the verdict were given: from the aforementioned frame-by-frame analysis of the video, to jury lawlessness, the change of venue, or the failure of the defense to properly humanize King to counter the defense's strategy of constantly objectifying him.

### ***The Riot***

The riot, beginning in the evening after the verdict, peaked in intensity over the next two days, but would ultimately continue for several days. Continuous television coverage, especially by helicopter news crews, showed buildings being burned, stores openly looted, so-called innocent bystanders beaten, and rioters shooting at police. Hispanics, blacks, and some whites united against the police; the composition of the riot reflected the composition of the area. Of the first 5,000 arrests "52 percent were poor Latinos, 10 percent whites, and only 38 percent blacks" (Davis 1992). A curfew and deployment of California National Guard troops began to control the situation; eventually federal troops were sent to the city to quell disorder. Many fires broke out at unguarded businesses, as bricks, followed by Molotov cocktails, were thrown through windows. Cars were torched to block intersections, and some vehicles were stolen via carjacking. Allegedly, rescue personnel were fired upon with rifles and handguns. By darkness the first evening, fire officials refused to send firemen into the area for fear of their lives. Smaller, concomitant civil unrest occurred in other U.S. cities due to the King verdict, especially in Las Vegas, Atlanta, and San Francisco, but also including Oakland, New York, Seattle, Chicago, Phoenix, Madison, and even the Canadian city of Toronto.

Wednesday, April 29, at 3:43 P.M., just twenty-eight minutes after the verdict was televised, LAPD received a report that a young man had thrown a brick at a passing truck at the corner of West Sixty Seventh Street and Eleventh Avenue in Hyde Park. Others began to join in the attacks of passing motorists, drawing a crowd that began to move toward shops and markets a few blocks away where looting began. A second disturbance was reported at 4:17 P.M. at Normandie and Florence, where passing vehicles were being pelted with stones, and where whites and light-skinned people were being dragged from their cars, beaten, and robbed.



Concurrently, there were two political protests at Los Angeles County courthouse and at the Parker Center, the headquarters of the LAPD. By 6:00 P.M., several hundred demonstrators carrying signs gathered at Parker Center and demanded that LAPD Chief Daryl Gates resign. However, Gates was not there to address the crowd and later drew sharp rebuke for attending a fundraiser that evening against Proposition F, a proposal for police reform that would put the police under more civic control. Long-established LAPD tactics and procedures held that the opening hours of a riot were critical, and that a full-force response was required. The LAPD did not respond quickly and decisively in the opening hours and suffered persistent criticism as a result. Many of the protestors at the Parker Center were white and carried signs identifying themselves with the Progressive Labor Party or the Revolutionary Communist Party. When the crowd began to break windows of the Parker Center, the police forced them back and they then turned down First Street, smashing automobiles and storefronts. By 10:00 P.M. that evening, rioting was occurring all over the city from the Santa Monica Freeway to Pico Boulevard. CHP was closing exit ramps on the Harbor Freeway, trying to keep people out of the area on the surface streets. L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley declared a local state of emergency and Gov. Pete Wilson ordered the National Guard to activate 2,000 reserve troops.

At 6:30 P.M., Reginald Denny, a white, male driver of an eighteen-wheel truck that was hauling twenty-seven tons of sand, drove into the intersection of Florence and Normandie. He was unaware of the verdict and stopped at a traffic light, was dragged from his vehicle and severely beaten as news helicopters hovered above recording every blow, including a cinder block dropped on the head of the prostrate Denny. The police never appeared, having been ordered to withdraw for their own safety, although several assailants were later arrested and one was sent to prison. Denny was rescued by black neighbors who, seeing the assault live on television, rushed to the scene, put him in the cab of his truck and drove him to Freeman Memorial Hospital where he would later recover after brain surgery. Due to the live coverage, Denny remains the best-known victim of the riots. However, Fidel Lopez, a contractor and Guatemalan immigrant, was beaten on videotape near his home near the same intersection, and Choi Sai-Choi, an immigrant from Hong Kong, was dragged from his car, beaten, and robbed on videotape.

By the second day (Thursday, April 30) the violence appeared widespread and unchecked. Open gun battles were televised as Korean shopkeepers took to using firearms to protect their businesses from crowds of looters. Fire crews began reappearing with police escort. CHP reinforcements were airlifted into various parts of the city. Mayor Tom Bradley declared a state of emergency and announced a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Then President George H.W. Bush spoke out against the rioting, stating that anarchy would not be tolerated and that he had ordered the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the possibility of filing federal civil rights charges against the LAPD officers. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that several of the King jurors had fled their homes and that Rodney King had been placed under psychiatric care. Carloads of rioters mobilized, traveling from South Central into Koreatown (between Pico and Santa Monica Boulevards). At night, Korean vigilantes

organized to protect their businesses by erecting barricades and mounting armed guards. This had limited success, as by late into that evening, some mini-malls in those areas were burned and/or looted.

Additionally, the *Los Angeles Times* reported a breakout of violence in Watts where a crowd of approximately 200 blacks and Latinos smashed through the gates of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee headquarters, an anti-poverty organization set up after the Watts riots (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**). Sixteen cars that were used by the committee to shuttle residents to and from shopping centers and medical appointments were burned or vandalized, and a commercial center with a laundromat, toy store, youth enterprise project, furniture and appliance shop, and food stamp office (*Los Angeles Times* Staff, 81) was also vandalized.

Early the next morning, Friday, May 1, at 1:00 A.M., California Gov. Pete Wilson requested federal assistance, but it would not be ready until the following day. State guard units (now doubled from 2,000 to 4,000 troops) continued to move into the city. Additionally, a varied contingent of 1,700 federal law-enforcement officers from different agencies began to arrive to protect federal facilities and assist local police. The most notable event of that day was punctuated by live footage of a shaken Rodney King asking, "People, I just want to say...can we all get along? Can we get along? ... We'll get our justice. They've won the battle, but they haven't won the war... We all can get along. We've just got to, just got to. We're all stuck here for awhile. Let's try to work it out ..." (Baker, 45). In the evening, as darkness fell, the main riot area was further hit by a large power outage. President George H.W. Bush denounced lawlessness and outlined the federal assistance he was making available to local authorities.

From Saturday, May 2 through Monday, May 4, 4,000 soldiers from the U.S. Army and Marines were deployed from Fort Ord to suppress the crowds and restore order. Calm began to reappear as the federal presence spread. With most of the violence under control, Korean people conducted a march demanding that Koreatown be rebuilt. Whether in response to the riots, or simply the verdict, on May 2, the Department of Justice announced that it would begin a federal investigation of the Rodney King beating.

Overall quiet set in on May 3, and Mayor Bradley assured the public that the crisis was "pretty much under control" (Mydans, 11). However, in an isolated incident, a motorist was shot in an evening encounter with national guardsmen.

Although Mayor Bradley lifted the curfew on May 4, signaling the official end of the rioting, sporadic violence and crime continued for a few days afterward. Schools, banks, and businesses reopened. Federal troops, reluctant to leave residents unprotected, would not stand down until May 9; the state guard remained until May 14; and some soldiers remained as late as May 27.

### ***Aftermath***

After the riots, pressure mounted for a retrial of the officers. The acquittals survived appeals in the state courts, but federal charges of civil rights

violations were brought against the officers. Near the first anniversary of the acquittal, the city tensely awaited the decision of the federal jury; seven days of deliberations raised speculative fear of an incendiary outcome in the event of a not-guilty verdict. Mindful of accusations of sensationalist reporting following the first jury decision, media outlets opted for more sober coverage, which included calmer on-the-street interviews. Police were fully mobilized with officers on twelve-hour shifts, convoy patrols, scout helicopters, street barricades, tactical command centers, and support from the National Guard and Marines.

The federal jury's decision was read at an atypical time of 7:00 A.M. at a Saturday court session on April 17, 1993. The retrial convicted Sgt. Stacey Koon and Officer Laurence Powell for violating Rodney King's civil rights. The jury acquitted Timothy Wind and Theodore Briseno. Federal District Court Judge John Davis sentenced Sergeant Koon and Officer Powell to thirty months in prison, at the Federal Prison Camp at Dublin, California, often used to house so-called white-collar criminals.

Some scholars consider the events of Los Angeles from April 29 to May 4, 1992 more than a riot, regarding it as a rebellion or a revolutionary activity. "These events constituted a 'rebellion,' the explosion of a powder keg of economic, social, and political injustices that had oppressed their communities for years" (Hunt, 2). At times it is referred to as an uprising as an attempt to find a neutral middle ground between rebellion and riot. Some feel that the events, and not the name, should be the focus, "the 'riot,' 'insurrection,' 'rebellion,' 'anarchic criminal chaos'—call it what you will" (Baker, 45). Still, most think the nominal framing of the event has an explicit connection with the meaning-making of the incident.

The techniques utilized to convince the Simi Valley jury of the reasonableness of the use of force on Rodney King are linked to the struggle, in a quite different legal arena, over whether to permit race-conscious, affirmative-action programs; both those arenas are, in turn, related to the conflict over whether to see the events in South Central Los Angeles as an "insurrection," as Representative Maxine Waters characterized it, or as a "riot" of the "mob," the official version presented in dominant media and by the president of the United States (Crenshaw and Peller, 56–57).

Additionally, Los Angeles was a hybrid social revolt with three major dimensions. It was a revolutionary democratic protest characteristic of African American history when demands for equal rights had been thwarted by the major institutions. It was also a major post-modern bread riot—an uprising of not just poor people, but particularly of those strata of poor in Southern California who had been most savagely affected by the recession. Third, it was an interethnic conflict (Davis, 12).

All in all, various scholars read the events of 1992 in different ways. Some have argued that the riots drew attention to the continuing importance of race. Others stated that not-guilty verdicts were a reality check for the African American community in regard to their continued status as second-class citizens, and still others contend the events are often discussed by politicians in reductionist, overly simplified terms with the purpose of winning over the white vote. Despite the difference in how the events are

named, interpreted, or represented, most scholars agree that the riots were a wake-up call for continued critique and problem solving in the troubled intersection of race, crime, and justice in the United States.

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### **Louima, Abner (c. 1964– )**

Abner Louima is a Haitian immigrant who was brutalized by officers of the New York Police Department (NYPD) outside a Brooklyn nightclub in August 1997.

During the early hours of Saturday, August 9, 1997, officers of the New York Seventieth Precinct in Brooklyn were called to disperse a crowd outside the Club Rendez-Vous, a nightclub in Flatbush that was a known social gathering place for New York's Haitian community. According to the NYPD injury report filed that morning, "a perp identified as Louima Abner [*sic*] . . . struck Police Officer Justin Volpe . . . in the head with his fist, causing minor injury to his head"; another reference was made to "a second apprehended perpetrator, identified as Patrick Antoine" (Police Department City of New York 1997). Both perpetrators were arrested on charges of assault, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, and obstructing justice, and were then

transported to the precinct station by officers who responded to the disturbance that morning.

Nearly three hours after he was arrested, Louima, a Haitian immigrant, would be moved from the precinct to a hospital for the treatment of a torn bladder and intestine that required several surgeries to repair. At the hospital, officers reportedly told nurses and doctors that Louima had sustained his injuries as a result of a night of rough sex at a gay club. When members of Louima's family inquired of him at the precinct, officers reportedly told them that he had gotten into a fight and was provided a police escort to the hospital. However, Louima told one of the nurses, another Haitian immigrant who was treating him, an altogether different story of what had happened to him, one that implicated police officers in a heinous act of brutality. Another nurse, also a Haitian immigrant, contacted the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) to report the allegation. However, it wasn't until Louima's family called a day later and pressed the case that the IAB acted on Louima's complaint and launched an investigation into the allegation of police misconduct at the Seventieth Precinct. The public disclosure of the incident would prompt protests and demonstrations across the city and outrage around the world.

According to official documents, including reports from investigations conducted by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, the NYPD, and a twelve-count grand jury indictment handed up in February 1998 against the officers who responded to the disturbance outside Club Rendez-Vous, officers mistakenly identified Louima as the man who hit Volpe; it was later determined that a cousin of Louima had actually assaulted the officer. However, records indicate that Louima was taken into custody and, once inside the precinct, marched handcuffed from the front desk through the precinct to the bathroom with his pants and underwear down and his genitals exposed. While in the bathroom an officer (documents reveal that it was Volpe) caused Louima's injuries by ramming a three-foot-long mop handle into his rectum and sticking the feces-stained pole in his face and mouth.

Two hours after Louima sustained his injuries, an ambulance arrived at the precinct; however, it would be more than an hour and a half before he would be transported to the hospital. Louima would testify that before being transported to the hospital, Volpe "rip[ped] the vest I was wearing and threw it into the garbage can and [said], 'Wait.' He put one part of it on one side of my body to make me look good, and he took a picture of me" ("The Nature" 1999). Louima also testified that the officer "told me if I ever talk to anyone about what happened to me, he kill me and everybody in my family. He know where they live and he's not joking" ("The Nature" 1999).

On February 27, 1998, a federal grand jury charged four of the officers who responded to the August 1997 disturbance at Club Rendez-Vous with civil rights and conspiracy charges for violating Louima's civil rights. A fifth, the patrol supervisor who issued the injury report the night of Louima's arrest, was charged with attempting to cover up the alleged assault. In early 1999, Volpe, facing overwhelming evidence of his guilt, confessed to assaulting Louima and avoided a jury verdict. The federal judge sentenced Volpe to thirty years in prison. Another officer was convicted of violating

Louima's civil rights and three others, who were all charged with beating him, were acquitted of the most serious charges. The criminal proceedings came to a close as yet another storm was brewing. The NYPD was once again the flashpoint of public outrage, this time over the fusillade of forty-one shots fired by its officers at an unarmed twenty-two-year-old **Amadou Diallo**. The Bronx man from Guinea, who had no criminal record, was struck and killed with nineteen bullets during the barrage.

In 1998, Louima retained the services of the famed attorney Johnnie Cochran and sued both New York City and the NYPD for \$155 million, claiming officers conspired to create a "blue wall of silence and lies to obstruct justice" ("Abner Louima" 2001). In July 2001, Louima won an \$8.75 million settlement, of which the city of New York paid \$7.125 million and the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association paid \$1.625 million. Notably, over the course of the probe into Louima's allegation of abuse, it had been reported that Volpe had previously engaged in assaultive behavior. Aware of this, Louima included demands in his initial lawsuit for an NYPD policy that may have protected him if it had been in place earlier. The final settlement, however, did not impose any reforms on the police department. Prior to the 2001 agreement, though, the NYPD instituted policy to change the way it handled allegations of police misconduct.

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*Garrett A. Duncan*

**Louisiana.** See New Orleans (Louisiana) Riots of 1866; New Orleans (Louisiana) Riot of 1900

### **Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)**

On March 1, 1965, thirty-nine black residents of Lowndes County, Alabama, gathered at the county courthouse and attempted to register to vote. Predictably, the county's racist voting registrars turned them away. At the time, not a single black resident of the county was registered to vote. Indeed, in this poverty-plagued rural hamlet located in the heart of the Alabama Black Belt, the exclusion of African Americans from the political process was absolute. To coordinate future voter registration tries, twenty-eight local people met secretly on March 19 and formed the Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights (LCCMHR). Days later, LCCMHR members partnered with a cadre of **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** field secretaries headed by veteran Mississippi organizer **Stokely Carmichael**. Carmichael had used the Selma to Montgomery March, which passed through Lowndes for the better part of three days

beginning on March 22, to make known SNCC's interest in helping the county's black residents organize.

Throughout the summer of 1965, Carmichael and his team of organizers assisted a group of dedicated local activists, led by LCCMHR chairman John Hulett, a thirty-seven-year-old black landowner, in coordinating a grassroots voter registration campaign. By the end of July, they had succeeded in getting more than 1,000 African Americans, or over 20 percent of the county's eligible black voters, to file voter registration applications. White intransigence, however, remained high, prompting the county's registrars to reject almost every application received. Fortunately, on August 14, federal registrars sent by the U.S. Department of Justice in compliance with the Voting Rights Act arrived, enabling more than 40 percent of the county's eligible black voters to register by October 1965.

The re-enfranchisement of African Americans prompted activists working in Lowndes to discuss the most effective use of black votes. Carmichael, who had not forgiven the Democratic Party for refusing to support the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's (MFDP) attempt to replace Mississippi's pro-segregation delegates at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, suggested to Lowndes residents that they make use of an obscure Alabama law to form their own countywide political party. In December 1965, after attending a series of workshops at SNCC's Atlanta headquarters designed to teach local activists about the mechanics of county government and Alabama election law, John Hulett announced plans to form the politically independent Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO). He explained that the LCFO would field a full slate of black candidates for local office in the November 1966 general election. For a ballot symbol, Lowndes activists chose a snarling black panther because, as they put it, cats chase roosters, and a rooster was the symbol of Alabama Democrats. Incidentally, in October 1966, two community college students in Oakland, California, **Huey P. Newton** and Bobby Seale, adopted the LCFO ballot symbol as their own, naming their newly formed civil rights group the **Black Panther Party** for Self-Defense.

In May 1966, nearly 1,000 LCFO supporters nominated seven working-class men and women as candidates for sheriff, tax collector, tax assessor, coroner, and school board. Significantly, the success of the nomination convention catapulted Stokely Carmichael to the chairmanship of SNCC. It also convinced SNCC members to make the formation of grassroots political parties the basis of their new organizing program, which Carmichael introduced to the nation as **Black Power** during **James Meredith's** March Against Fear in June 1966.

Despite six months of intense organizing, the LCFO's candidates lost in November. Voter fraud and intimidation contributed significantly to their defeat. White landowners, for instance, used the threat of eviction to compel hundreds of black sharecroppers to vote for white candidates. Nevertheless, the LCFO polled 40 percent of the total vote, a remarkable feat for an upstart third party.

In 1970, the LCFO, which had been renamed the Lowndes County Freedom Party (LCFP) after its strong showing in the 1966 general election, merged with the LCFO-inspired National Democratic Party of Alabama

(NDPA), an independent, statewide party supported mainly by Black Belt African Americans and left-leaning whites. That same year, Lowndes County's black residents elected three of their own to county government, including John Hulett to the sheriff's office. Black residents successfully placed an increasing number of independent candidates in the county courthouse throughout the early and mid-1970s, and black Democrats starting in the late 1970s. By 1980, African Americans occupied a majority of the offices in the county courthouse, a tribute to the experiment in independent politics launched fifteen years earlier. *See also* Black Panther Party (BPP); Carmichael, Stokely (1941–1998).

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*Hasan Kwame Jeffries*

## Lynching

One of the most shameful chapters in the great epic that is American history is the lynching of African Americans. Although used against every race, ethnicity, and both genders, by the late nineteenth century it had become a code word for the random and wanton murdering of blacks, especially black men. As such, generations of blacks grew up knowing that their lives could be snuffed out for the most trivial of reasons or no reason at all.

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the first national organization to catalog and study lynching, defined it as the illegal killing of a person by three or more people claiming to be serving the cause of justice or upholding tradition. The venerable *Chicago Tribune* began tracking lynchings in the late nineteenth century. It reported that there were 4,951 lynchings in the United States from the years 1882 through 1930; they had been reported in every state of the union except Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. Of the victims, 3,513 were black and 1,438 were white; 92 were women and 76 of those women were black. Eight-two percent of the recorded lynchings occurred in the eleven states of the former Confederacy. Yet mob violence in America was not new to the post-**Reconstruction** era.

The use of mob violence in America can be traced back to colonial times. The mob acted as finders of fact and assessors of guilt. Mob violence was especially popular during the Revolutionary period; because of the excesses of British authority, many colonists had lost respect for regular law and order. After the Revolution, this kind of mob violence gradually fell out of favor in more settled regions of the country.

Within the dynamics of the mob, there is a sense of anonymity that permits members of the mob to lose themselves within it. Because of this, there is often confusion about what exactly has taken place; it is easy for members of the mob to draw erroneous conclusions. Moreover, while there is often a supposed leader within the mob, the leader, too, often loses perspective of





Two African American men, lynched in Marion, Indiana, 1930. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

the situation and is easily swept up in activities in which that particular person might not participate under normal circumstances.

Lynching as a means of punishment was also very common during the antebellum years. Thieves, gamblers, and others who were considered deviants in the West and South were often hanged for their crimes. Deviant behavior was not the only reason lynchings flourished during this time period; the system of justice in the southern and western portions of the United States was often pitifully slow; therefore, mob violence was often employed.

Those people who were lynched during the antebellum years, however, were much more likely to be whites or free blacks. Slaves were seldom killed; they represented a considerable monetary investment to their masters. It was probably abolitionists who were the first group to see lynching as extralegal violence that was directly connected with the **racism** that caused slavery and the intimidation and coercion that was so much a part of the institution. Abolition-

ists also pointed out that the southern code of honor and the protection and preservation of white feminine virtue combined to make southern men quick to respond to real or perceived violations of either.

Ironically, the increasing effectiveness of the abolitionist movement and Nat Turner's rebellion were important elements in the revival of lynch law in settled areas. Southern whites lived in terror that slave insurrections, some of which were encouraged by abolitionists, could occur at any time. These fears presaged the institution of more severe penalties for slaves who disobeyed their masters' orders or attempted to escape, and the whites, free blacks, or mulattos who helped them.

Extensive use of mob violence as an extralegal instrument of justice again flourished during the later portion of the nineteenth century as frontier America was being settled. In areas where tools of justice such as the constable, courts, and jails had yet to be established, it was natural that extralegal methods to ensure that justice would be realized would be employed. This extralegal violence was often directed at Indians, and widespread prejudice against Native Americans ensured that public reaction was such that whites were seldom punished for this activity. Organized, semipermanent bodies of citizens often came together to suppress crime and enforce community standards and the law. As the West developed, legal means of social control did also, and mob violence was less likely to be employed. Lynchings in this area of the country gradually tapered off during the last third of the nineteenth century.



Large crowd watching the lynching of Jesse Washington. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

However, just the opposite happened during this period in the South. The number of lynchings of blacks by whites actually increased during this period, and the manner in which they were carried out became more barbarous as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Race prejudice was clearly a factor in the number of blacks lynched in the United States. The institution of slavery was based on the idea that blacks were inferior to whites in every way; blacks could not have been enslaved if this were not true. The South's loss of the Civil War was particularly galling to white southerners, and their views on the inferiority of blacks were heightened because of that loss.

Reconstruction was the first time the federal government moved to protect the rights of African Americans; in the decade after the Civil War, a flurry of federal legislation was passed. In 1865, the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands helped slaves resettle, find jobs, and gain an education, and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which outlawed slavery, was passed. A strengthened Freedmen's Bureau Bill and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 granted blacks citizenship and entitled them to the protection of the federal government. The **Fourteenth Amendment** to the Constitution, passed in 1868, strengthened the Civil Rights Act of 1866. Especially galling to white southerners was the passage of the First Reconstruction Act in March 1867. Passed over President Andrew Johnson's veto, it divided the South into five military districts, each under the command of a general. These military personnel protected the lives and property of blacks until new civilian governments could be passed. Two laws were passed in 1870. The **Fifteenth Amendment** prohibited discrimination in voting based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude; the Enforcement Act of that year prohibited the wearing of masks or disguises, and protected the civil rights of citizens. The **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** or

Enforcement Act of 1871—southerners called it the Force Act—made it a federal crime to interfere with an individual's right to vote, serve on a jury, hold public office, or enjoy the equal protection of the law.

Clearly, for a short time after the Civil War, the federal government, under the leadership of Radical Republicans, worked actively to promote and ensure black rights. But the giants of Radical Republicanism who had done so much to extend and protect African Americans' rights were passing from the scene. By 1870, Thaddeus Stevens had died, Benjamin Wade had been defeated in his bid for reelection, and Charles Sumner had been stripped of much of his congressional power. The Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited racial discrimination in public accommodations, transportation, places of amusement, and public schools, was the last piece of legislation designed to help African Americans until well into the twentieth century.

In the midterm elections of 1874, the Democrats won control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 1861. The Democratic Party, with its solid southern base, moved quickly to solidify the results of the midterm election. Competition for jobs between poor whites and black men gave the Democratic party an opportunity to appeal to the economic fears of poor whites. The party also used psychological and economic intimidation against those blacks who tried to vote. Its best weapon, though, was a resurgent Ku Klux Klan. The Klan often operated with the tacit approval and assistance of officials in the Democratic Party.

It was the presidential election of 1876, though, that rang the death knell for Reconstruction and resurrected the crime of lynching. Republicans nominated Ohio Gov. Rutherford B. Hayes; the Democrats ran Samuel Tilden, famed prosecutor of the corrupt Boss Tweed ring in New York City. Tilden won a majority of the popular votes, but the electoral vote was close because both candidates claimed victory in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Congress established an electoral commission of fifteen members, five each from the House, Senate, and U.S. Supreme Court. Voting 8–7 along party lines, the commission awarded the disputed electoral votes to Hayes. Democrats threatened a filibuster, and an informal agreement, the so-called Compromise of 1877, was reached. Hayes's supporters agreed to withdraw troops from the south and not to block the formation of all-white governments; southern Democrats agreed to deal fairly with black Americans.

Although Republicans kept their part of the agreement, Democrats did not. Upon the withdrawal of northern troops from Louisiana and South Carolina, their Republican governments collapsed, and white Democrats took over. By the close of the nineteenth century, virtually all of the Reconstruction-era laws designed to give equal opportunity to blacks and wipe out racial discrimination were repudiated by states' rights supporters and conservative judges. By 1880, black southerners had been stripped of their legal and civil rights and abandoned by the U.S. government. Emboldened by this lack of government oversight, the governments of the eleven states of the Confederacy set about returning to lives that were as close to pre-Civil War conditions as possible, and lynching quickly became the preferred way of dealing with blacks who dared resist.

Mob violence differed in various regions of the country. In the South, those who participated in lynchings and mob violence were likely to be a cross section of their communities: public officials, members of the Ku Klux Klan, the poor, and the working class. Moreover, in the South it was not uncommon for entire black communities to be destroyed during mob violence, especially if members of the communities fought back. In the northern and midwestern portions of the country, whites who participated in lynchings and mob violence were less likely to be from the middle and upper classes, nor did law enforcement and officials of the criminal justice system participate as often and on the same scale as in the South. Although Klan membership in some northern and midwestern states was high, there does not appear to be a strong link between that membership and participation in lynching and mob violence.

Whites used many excuses for the lynching of blacks. Among the most common was the need to protect white women from sexually depraved black men. However, if this were true, a few lynchings would have been enough to make the point. Other excuses included real or perceived transgressions against the social order, the inability of the criminal justice system to function properly, and a callousness toward black life that allowed killing blacks as a sport. Irrefutable empirical evidence, however, shows that lynching was aimed primarily at blacks who possessed the characteristics of the New Negro: they failed to pay sufficient deference to whites, excelled economically and socially, and dared to assert their rights under the laws and the Constitution. Each year, the number of lynchings and the extreme cruelty with which they were carried out increased. It was not enough merely to kill the victims; they were often tortured before death and their bodies mutilated afterward. Victims were beaten, set afire, had their extremities cut off; one pregnant woman was lynched hanging by her feet, burned afterward, and had the baby she was carrying cut from her womb, after which its head was crushed by the mob. There can only be one explanation for this kind of behavior: race hatred.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, lynchings were so common as to have their various elements ritualized. The accusation of wrongdoing, the rush to judgment by whites, the gathering of the crowd, the hunting down of the victim, and the discussion of how the victim would be killed all had a purpose. Eventually, killing would not be enough; a spectacle to which the public would be invited was needed, even a special vocabulary was developed: *Negro barbeque* and *necktie party* were among the most common phrases used to describe lynchings.

By the close of the nineteenth century, lynching had morphed from merely a way to punish criminals and those who transgressed the social order, to the savage and depraved way that whites used to maintain their racial caste system.

White southerners gave myriad reasons for why they lynched blacks with such impunity: they were upholding the southern code of honor, protecting the chastity of white women, enforcing communal values. Even Progressive reformers such as Jane Addams did not decry lynching so much as express contempt for the lawlessness it represented. Many whites simply accepted

lynching as an occasional happening and the price southern society paid for the social engineering of Reconstruction and black depravity; they only spoke critically of it when it was carried out in an exceptionally brutal manner.

Lynching began to be seriously studied in the early twentieth century, partly in response to the tremendous increase in its numbers from 1880 through 1900. These early researchers were psychologists who were especially concerned with the concept of social pathology; that is, society, made up as it is of individuals, was sick and acted out its illnesses by engaging in deviant behavior. Those explanations faltered, however, since in many lynchings, the leaders of the community and law enforcement played active roles; society's leaders are not generally looked upon as deviant or depraved.

Psychologists also theorized that individual psychopathologies could explain lynching. By the 1890s, the frenzy with which the mob carried out lynchings—its use of lynchings as entertainment spectacles—the mutilation of the victims, and the focus on black sexuality as the primary explanation of lynching, were all a means of allowing the mob to vent its frustration, anger, and resentment over a rapidly changing economic and social system. Because poor whites could not challenge the white elites of southern society, their frustration could only be relieved by targeting the one group of people that was considered beneath contempt.

African American leaders vociferously disagreed with various white theorists about why lynching occurred and vehemently protested against lynching. It was they who conducted the first empirical studies of the crime, challenging the myths whites had spun. One of the most famous black critics of lynchings was **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**.

Born a slave in Holy Springs, Mississippi, in 1862, Wells-Barnett grew up during Reconstruction. As a child, she witnessed her father casting his first vote. Orphaned at sixteen and left with the responsibility of raising her siblings, Wells-Barnett had to give up her dream of finishing Rust College and took a teaching job. She later moved to Memphis, Tennessee, and politicized by the appalling conditions of the **Jim Crow** society she found there, began speaking out on the horrors of racism. She sued a Memphis railway company after they tried to force her to ride in a car designated for blacks. Although she won \$500, her judgment was later reversed on appeal. In 1892, one of her closest friends, Thomas Moss, was lynched in Memphis because he operated a grocery store that was more successful than that of his white competition. Galled by this act, she began speaking out against racism and especially the crime of lynching, traveling alone throughout the South investigating lynchings—often in disguise because a bounty had been issued for her.

Wells-Barnett's careful empirical studies exploded the sexual myth that whites had used to justify lynching. She pointed out that fewer than one-third of the black men who were lynched were accused, much less found guilty, of raping white women. She became an early and ardent supporter of federal anti-lynching legislation. Uncompromising in her support for an end to lynching, Wells-Barnett's implacability drew her into a number of public disagreements with some of the leading figures of her day, including

**Booker T. Washington**; Frances Willard, the founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union; and the great Progressive social worker, Jane Addams, all of whom worked to end various social ills of the day, but who were not supportive enough in the campaign to end lynching. But as critical as Wells-Barnett was of white individuals and organizations that equivocated in their support for anti-lynching remedies, she joined the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching and worked tirelessly to ensure that the crime was punished and eventually eradicated.

Other than Wells-Barnett, no other African American studied the crime of lynching more thoroughly than **Walter White**. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1893, White, who had white skin, blue eyes, and blond hair, could easily have passed for white. At the age of thirteen, however, he had an experience that burned his racial identity forever in his mind and ensured that the eradication of lynching and racism would be his life's work.

White's father—who was as light as his son—was a letter carrier, a good job for a black man in a southern city in 1906. He also owned a large house in the black section of Atlanta; it was virtually the only house that was kept up, and for this he drew the ire of whites who were jealous of him. During the bitter political campaign of 1906, Thomas E. Watson, a candidate for governor of Georgia, broke from his long-standing support of agrarian radicalism and interracial cooperation and joined in the race baiting so popular among candidates in the South. The campaign, along with a newspaper circulation war between the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta News*, ensured that only the most negative and inflammatory information would be printed about the black population in Atlanta. This included many untrue stories about black men raping white women, and soon the town was a seething cauldron of racial tension that culminated in a full-scale race riot. A number of innocent blacks were killed, and White's father was targeted by his white neighbors who resented his industry and all it had earned for him.

Like Wells-Barnett, White relied on empirical studies and his own eyewitness accounts; his color and features enabled him to talk freely with participants of mob violence, law enforcement officials, and neighborhood residents. His book *Rope and Faggot*, published in 1929, was an effort to isolate and examine what he said were the ingredients of lynching: economic forces, race prejudice, religion, sex, politics, yellow journalism, and theories of racial superiority and inferiority based on pseudoscience. White concluded that whites in America had taught their children that lynching was an acceptable way to correct all social ills, especially if they involved black Americans.

According to White, there were several factors that created and perpetuated the psychology of the lyncher. First, government officials were derelict in their duty to uphold the laws faithfully and fairly. Second, humans love excitement, and will often do in a crowd what they would never do alone. Third, whites were unwilling to admit that they did not know or understand blacks. In fact, they had merely decided that there were only three types of blacks: the happy-go-lucky uncle or auntie, the habitual criminal or brute, and the humble, shuffling black of the antebellum years. Because of these prejudices, whites were unable to accept blacks in any other role.

Like Wells-Barnett, White concluded that it was the white man's inability to accept black economic and social advancement that caused most lynchings; it was black progress, not black crime, that frightened whites. This fear, and the pathological need to defend **white supremacy**, drove many whites to membership in the Ku Klux Klan.

White also looked at the connection between religion and lynching; he asserted that lynching could only happen in a *Christian* nation. It was the Christian church, after all, that had acquiesced in the evil of the slave trade. Furthermore, the Christian church helped slave owners use color as a justification for slavery and all the barbarities that went with it. Finally, White blamed religious leaders, particularly evangelical Protestants and holiness denominations for unleashing the torrid emotions of their congregations in their vocal condemnation of sex, especially sexual relations between white women and black men. White thought that southerners were obsessed with sex, and that obsession promoted widespread anti-black feeling.

By the beginning of the 1920s, the number of lynchings began to drop sharply. White credited the drop with a nationwide campaign to combat lynchings led by the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and the introduction of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, which was introduced in Congress by **Leonidas C. Dyer**, a Republican congressman from Missouri. The bill sought to make lynching a federal crime and to give the government the authority to investigate, fine, and punish those who took part in lynchings and members of the law enforcement community who did nothing to stop them. Although the bill passed the House in 1922, it was killed by a Senate filibuster that same year. It again passed the House in 1937 and 1940; it failed in the Senate in each of those years due to real or threatened filibusters by southern Democrats and conservative northern Republicans.

While the Dyer bill was never passed, it can still be credited with the sharp drop in the lynchings of black men during this period. The increased scrutiny connected with lynchings and the bad publicity they drew clearly alarmed southern elites. They wanted no repeat of Reconstruction when the federal government was such an omnipotent presence in the region. Moreover, black migration north and the return of black soldiers from World War I were interfering with the South's efforts to attract the black manual laborers it so desperately needed. It, therefore, made concerted efforts to decrease the practice of lynching. There were eighty-three blacks lynched in 1919; by the time the Dyer bill was introduced in 1922, that number had dropped to sixty-one. By 1927, the number of lynchings had dropped to twenty-one.

As executive secretary of the NAACP, White ensured that it was the premier American organization in the forefront of defining the crime of lynching, recording its numbers, and eradicating its existence. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by a group of black and white intellectuals who were alarmed at the increasing segregation of American society and the subservient way in which the leading black spokesman of the day, Booker T. Washington, chose to fight it. By 1918, the NAACP was the leader in seeking federal intervention by its support of the Dyer bill and campaigned tirelessly for its passage.

Unlike other organizations or individuals that equivocated on lynching and sometimes excused the practitioners of it, the NAACP took a very straightforward position. Eschewing common legend that lynchings occurred because of defective justice systems, community rabble-rousers, and lecherous black men who would strip defenseless white maidens of their sexual purity, it described lynching as a means that whites used to maintain economic and psychological hegemony over blacks. For whites, what was at stake was their theory of color caste: they were extremely concerned with racial purity and the prevention of amalgamation and were determined to do anything to ensure that race mixing did not happen. To the NAACP, lynching was a crime with its roots in race hatred and an elaborate myth of white superiority and black inferiority. Whites needed no particular reason to lynch blacks.

In campaigning against lynching, the NAACP was assisted by faculty at Tuskegee Institute who developed a classification of the causes of lynching into seven types: (1) homicide, (2) felonious assault, (3) rape, (4) attempted rape, (5) robbery and theft, (6) insult to white persons, and (7) all other causes. The Tuskegee scholars had difficulty classifying each lynching, in part because of the inability to obtain accurate information. However, some generalities can be made. Murder was the most frequently cited reason for lynching, followed by rape. In fact, the data showed that of the 1,399 lynchings from 1889 through 1930 recorded by the Tuskegee faculty, only 214 were tied to homicide and 622 to rape.



Three lynched African American men (two hanging from a post or tree, one laying on the ground) surrounded by a crowd of witnesses, 1920. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Like Wells-Barnett and White, the NAACP found that the reasons why African Americans were lynched ranged from the trivial to the serious and were as numerous as the people found in a lynch mob. Some of the more common reasons included incest, rape, murder, being disrespectful of white people (especially women), drunkenness, failing to pay debts, possessing a bad character, gambling, and theft. In many cases, the Tuskegee scholars found no offense had been committed or alleged; the lynching victim was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The study of lynching in the latter part of the twentieth century has, for the most part, been carried out by psychologists and sociologists. These social scientists tended to look at issues such as individual and social pathology much as did those in the nineteenth century. It was not until Jacquelyn Dowd Hall published *Revolt Against Chivalry* in 1979 that the study of lynching wriggled free from the grip of psychologists and sociologists. Like Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Walter White, Hall connected the violence of lynching with the southern need to preserve the hierarchical relationship between blacks and whites. Hall also discussed the culture of violence in the American South, the economic and social dislocation wrought by modernism in the region, and the sexual tension between whites and blacks. Her research opened the door for a profusion of articles and books on the subject.

Indeed, the scholarship on lynching has never been more dynamic. Scores of historians, sociologists, and psychologists are breaking new ground in the study of lynching. Their theories range from economic distress to tension over race and sex, to individual psychopathologies. Little-known issues connected with lynching, such as the lynching of black mobs by black people, and lynchings in northern states, are also being studied; the latter promises to be fertile ground as it has rarely been studied. In October 2002, scholars from all over the United States and several other countries gathered at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, for the first ever International Conference on Lynching and Racial Violence. Scholars and students from a number of disciplines presented a wealth of new research on lynching, its history, and its impact on American arts and letters, politics, and the criminal justice system. Held in conjunction with the conference was the first southern exhibition of lynching artifacts, including postcards and photos, collected and owned by James Allen.

Lynching has all but disappeared. There are undoubtedly a number of reasons for this: modernization, industrialization, the **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s and the sweeping changes it brought to American society. Interracial dating and marriage, once illegal in the South and barely tolerated in the rest of the country, are much more common, and the pathological fear whites had of sexual activity between white women and black men has diminished. Yet the African American community still bears its scars. A majority of African Americans continue to believe that America operates a dual criminal justice system—often referred to as *legal lynching*—one for whites and another for blacks, and that it is impossible for blacks to be treated fairly or receive any semblance of justice. The explosion in the number of black men and women in prison and continued **police brutality** in large urban areas serve as proof of this belief.

Lynchings still occur in the United States, albeit rarely, and whites and blacks still react to them in starkly different ways. The 1998 dragging death in Jasper, Texas, of **James Byrd, Jr.**, by three white men shocked much of white America with its callousness and depravity. Many blacks, however, immediately made the historical connection to the lynching of black men in the South: the three white men overpowering the lone black one; the dark, lonely road; the fact that Byrd was tortured before his death and mutilated afterward did not seem to surprise most of black America. It must be pointed out that just as lynching was ritualized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so is the nation's reaction to it in the twenty-first century. There is the often vociferous condemnation of the violence by a large portion of the white community; the soul-searching questions about how and why human beings are so cruel to one another and why in 2005 race is still a flashpoint in America. These days, most law enforcement officials seek to help, not hinder, the investigations of lynching, and the justice system generally comes forth with the appropriate punishment.

Recently there has been increased awareness of, and attention to, so-called legal lynching, or the application of the death penalty in the United States. African American males are still more likely to be tried, convicted, and executed than white men for the same crimes. The state of Illinois issued a moratorium on the death penalty in 2000 after thirteen death row inmates were exonerated. Several states are studying similar action. Although the occasional lynching still occurs, it is clear that lynching as the main way of maintaining the racial caste system is, for the most part, no longer accepted or tolerated in the United States. *See also* Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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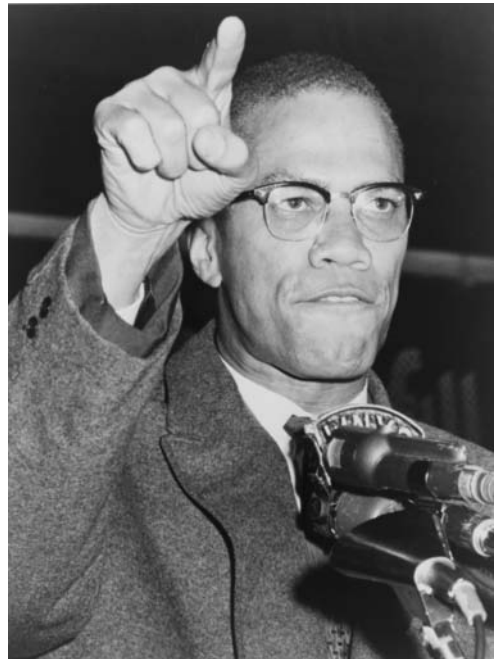


# M

## Malcolm X (1925–1965)

Malcolm X was an American black militant leader, Pan-Africanist, Muslim minister, public speaker, and autobiographer also known as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. Along with **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, he is considered the most important figure in the fight for civil rights in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. King and Malcolm X constitute the two divergent approaches to ending racial discrimination and prejudice: while King advocated civil disobedience and nonviolence, Malcolm X pursued black freedom by using “any means necessary” (Malcolm X 1970). Identifying himself as “a Black Nationalist Freedom Fighter,” Malcolm X preached a strong self-defense against white oppression, paving the way for the **Black Power** movement of the late 1960s. He urged his fellow African Americans to live in a black community, to become politically conscious and mature, and to be economically self-supportive.

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska. He was the seventh child of Earl Little, a part-time Baptist minister from Georgia, and Louise Norton Little, who was born in Grenada and was light-complexioned enough to pass for a white woman. A follower of **Marcus Garvey**, who advocated **Black Nationalism** and led a back-to-Africa movement for blacks, Malcolm X’s father was actively involved in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Even before the birth of Malcolm X, Earl Little’s civil rights activism triggered death threats from white supremacists in Omaha. The Little family relocated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when Malcolm



Malcolm X, 1963. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

was one year old, and then moved to Lansing, Michigan. In 1929, after two white men burned their house to the ground, they built a new home on the outskirts of East Lansing.

In January 1931, Malcolm X enrolled in kindergarten at Pleasant Grove Elementary School. Eight months later, when he was six, the elder Little's body was found on the trolley tracks in Lansing. Rumor had it that Malcolm's father was attacked by the Black Legionnaires and then was placed across some tracks so that a streetcar could run over him; his body was found severed almost in half. For the next several years, the shock of Earl's death and the responsibility of raising eight young children alone took a steady toll on Malcolm X's mother. In 1939, she was declared mentally inept and was committed to the state mental hospital at Kalamazoo, where she remained for the next twenty-six years; her children were scattered to different foster homes.

In seventh grade, Malcolm X was expelled from school for playing a prank on a teacher and was sent to the Michigan State Detention Home in Mason. He continued his education at Mason Junior High School, where he was one of the top students and was elected class president. A life-changing incident took place for Malcolm X in eighth grade. In a private conversation with his English teacher, Mr. Ostrowski, he was advised that becoming a lawyer was an unreachable goal for a black man: "[Y]ou've got to be realistic about being a nigger. . . . You need to think about something you *can* be. You're good with your hands—making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. Why don't you plan on carpentry?" (Malcolm X and Haley, 36). The statement had a chilling effect on Malcolm X, who began to lose interest in academic pursuit and decided not to go to high school.

In 1941, at age sixteen, Malcolm moved to Boston to live with his half-sister, Ella, and held various jobs, working as a shoe shiner, dishwasher, and soda jerker. He also became involved in underworld activities in Boston. After briefly living in Lansing, Michigan, he moved back to the east coast, this time to New York City. There he worked at various jobs while committing petty crimes such as dealing drugs and arranging prostitution. In early 1946, Malcolm was indicted for armed robbery in Boston and was sentenced to ten years in prison. He ended up spending six and a half years in state prisons—first in Charlestown State Prison; the Reformatory at Concord; and then in the Norfolk Prison Colony.

While serving his sentence, Malcolm X read extensively by using the prison libraries. It was a time for self-education for him: he learned the basics of English grammar and strengthened his vocabulary. Through his brother Reginald, he also encountered the **Nation of Islam**, an African American spiritual and political organization whose doctrine blended Islamic elements with race-based theology. Also called the Black Muslim movement, it was then headed by **Elijah Muhammad** (1897–1975). According to Muhammad's teachings, the white man was inherently inferior to the black man, the Christian white man was the devil, Africa was the origin of world civilization, and the black man needed to regain his dignity and self-empowerment through complete separation from white society. By 1948, Malcolm had converted to the Nation of Islam, becoming a devoted

follower of Elijah Muhammad. In 1952, Malcolm officially changed his surname from “Little” (which he considered a slave name) to “X” (which symbolized the loss of his tribal roots).

Malcolm X was paroled on August 7, 1952. On his release, he worked as a furniture salesman and autoworker in Michigan. Then, he moved to Chicago and came under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad, whom he considered his mentor and father figure. After studying for the ministry, he was appointed as the assistant minister at Nation of Islam Temple No. 1 in Detroit and then the first minister of Boston Temple No. 11. Thereafter, he became acting minister of Philadelphia Temple No. 12, minister of New York Temple No. 7, and official minister of Philadelphia Temple No. 12. On January 14, 1958, Malcolm X married Betty Shabazz in Lansing, Michigan. Six children were born to the couple—Attallah, Qubilah, Ilyasah, Gamilah, Mallak, and Malikah—the last two (twins) after the death of Malcolm X.

A dynamic, charismatic speaker and articulate writer, Malcolm X soon became the best-known spokesperson for the Nation of Islam. Traveling all over the country, he exposed the crime of the Christian white man historically perpetrated on the black man. The problem of the American black man would be solved only by depending on arms and black separatism. Malcolm X’s anti-integrationist message was delivered through newspaper columns, radio, and television. Mike Wallace’s documentary *The Hate That Hate Produced* featured Malcolm X and other Nation of Islam leaders on national television for a week in late 1959. Malcolm X also participated in many debates, including those at universities such as Harvard, Howard, and Columbia. In 1963, the *New York Times* identified Malcolm X as the most sought-after public speaker in the nation. He was instrumental in increasing the number of Nation of Islam members, from 500 in 1952 (when Malcolm X was paroled) to 30,000 in 1963.

In 1963, tensions rose between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X over the revelation that the former had had extramarital affairs with several Nation of Islam women and was father to eight illegitimate children. The incident shocked Malcolm X, who was leading a puritanical lifestyle as required by his faith and had regarded his mentor with profound reverence. Malcolm X confronted Muhammad about his adultery but was only asked to cover it up. He felt betrayed by his blind faith in his mentor and regretted having led so many people to the Nation of Islam, which he now considered an organization lacking in moral authority. Shortly after this incident, Malcolm X was criticized for his statement regarding the assassination of President **John F. Kennedy**, “[Kennedy] never foresaw that the chickens would come home to roost so soon” (Malcolm X 1963). Elijah Muhammad forced him to be silent for ninety days as a minister of the Nation of Islam. In March 1964, when the relationship between the two Nation of Islam leaders deteriorated irrevocably, Malcolm X publicly broke with his mentor and started his own religious organization, the Muslim Mosque, Incorporated.

The following month, Malcolm X went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy Muslim city in Saudi Arabia. It was a life-changing experience for him. There he encountered Muslims from different racial and ethnic

backgrounds—“White, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair—all together, brothers!” (Malcolm X and Haley, 323). He returned to the United States after visiting several other African and Arab nations. He recanted his Black Muslim belief in the evilness of all whites, instead preaching the message of true brotherhood and unity that could exist across racial lines. On June 28, 1964, Malcolm X founded the Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU), championing orthodox Islamic faith, socialism, anticolonialism, and racial unity.

In mid-February 1965, Malcolm X’s home in East Elmhurst, New York, was firebombed. He and his family survived the bombing without physical injury. A week later, on February 21, Malcolm X was assassinated while speaking at an OAAU meeting in Manhattan’s Audubon Ballroom; three gunmen shot him fifteen times at close range. Malcolm X was pronounced dead on arrival at New York’s Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. He was thirty-nine when he died.

Malcolm X’s funeral was held on February 27, 1965, at the Faith Temple Church of God in Christ (currently, Child’s Memorial Temple Church of God in Christ) in Harlem, New York. More than 1,500 people attended. Ossie Davis, the African American actor and activist, delivered the eulogy for Malcolm X, who was later buried at the Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York. His assassins—Talmadge Hayer, Norman 3X Butler, and Thomas 15X Johnson—were convicted of first-degree murder in March 1966. They were members of the Nation of Islam and devoted followers of Elijah Muhammad, but their exact motive for the killing still remains unknown.

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964), dictated to Alex Haley during a period of two years, was published in November 1965. A chronicle of the author’s turbulent life journey, it has been compared to St. Augustine’s spiritual autobiography, *Confessions*, as well as to *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Malcolm X’s life, ideas, and times have been subject of many documentaries, books, dissertations, articles, and movies. Anthony Davis’ opera *X*, which premiered in 1986, covered his life stories, and in 1992, Spike Lee released the widely successful movie *Malcolm X*. In 1999, the U.S. Postal Service honored Malcolm X by featuring him in its twenty-second Black Heritage stamp. *See also* Farrakhan, Louis Haleem Abdul; Nation of Islam.

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**March Against Fear.** See Meredith, James

***The Marrow of Tradition* (Chesnutt, 1901)**

Charles Chesnutt's 1901 novel, *The Marrow of Tradition*, based on the **Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898**, represents everyday manifestations of **racism** of the era, explores southern white anxiety about the ascendance of African Americans to political power, and portrays the 1898 riot as a ploy engineered by politicians and journalists to disenfranchise black voters. Set in the town of Wellington, the narrative illustrates the social and political backdrop of the riot through the intertwined histories of the Carteret and Miller families, and a large cast of supporting characters. Maj. Philip Carteret, editor of Wellington's *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, is an avowed white supremacist determined to end "Negro domination" of the south, in league with Capt. George McBane (based on labor leader and Redshirt Mike Dowling), a former prison labor contractor, and General Belmont (based on politician and journalist Alfred Moore Waddell), known collectively as the *Big Three*. McBane, Belmont, and Carteret foment latent white racism into a riot, which serves as a pretext to drive out Wellington's black and white Republicans and Populists (who had run together as "Fusionists"), and install white Democrats in local government.

Wellington's racial climate emerges through the experiences of the novel's various African American characters. There are servants still awaiting the material benefits of emancipation, such as Sandy Campbell, who mimics the old-fashioned manners of his employer, Jerry Letlow who scrounges for tips but is scorned for his craven loyalty to Major Carteret, and Aunt Jane Letlow who raises Carteret's son and dies in the street at the hands of a **white mob**. Dr. William Miller, an African American doctor educated in the northeast and Europe, runs a black hospital in Wellington. As a black professional, Dr. Miller is continually faced with the disparity between his social status as a gentleman and the indignities imposed by racist legal and social institutions, such as being forced to switch, mid-conversation with a colleague, to a segregated railroad car during a trip back to North Carolina from Philadelphia, and having an invitation to assist in an operation on Major Carteret's son rescinded. In sharp contrast to Dr. Miller's accommodationist stance and aspirations to bourgeois respectability is the radical attitude of Josh Green whose father was killed by McBane. During the riot, Green installs a group of black resisters in Miller's hospital for a last stand and takes vengeance on McBane before being killed himself.

Instances of racial ambiguity, doubling, and crossing abound in the novel. The Carteret and Miller families are joined across the color line by



Mrs. Carteret and Mrs. Miller, who are half-sisters. The unjust divestiture of Mrs. Miller from her inheritance (Mrs. Carteret's aunt hides their shared father's will and proof of his second marriage) represents one case of the broad **disenfranchisement** of southern black citizens of their property rights. In another case, profligate white scion Tom Delamere dresses up as his black servant Sandy, in whose guise Tom wins a cakewalk contest and later commits murder, for which Sandy is almost lynched, hinting at the barely submerged violence that surfaces in the riot.

Of *The Marrow of Tradition*, William Dean Howells wrote, "The book is, in fact, bitter, bitter" (Howells 1996). But the astringent view of white anxiety, voter disenfranchisement, and **post-Reconstruction** race relations represented in the novel suggest hope that publicizing the political machinations behind the riot will lead to reform. As Chesnutt wrote in the *Cleveland World*, "The book is not a study in pessimism, for it is the writer's belief that the forces of progress will in the end prevail, and that in time a remedy may be found for every social ill" (1901). See also Lynching.

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Alex Feerst

### Marshall, Thurgood (1908–1993)

Thurgood Marshall was born to Norma and William Marshall in 1908, during the age of **Jim Crow**. Marshall is perhaps best known for being the first black Supreme Court Justice and attorney in the 1954 high court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483), which desegregated education. Marshall's most direct and lasting contributions to the advancement of the race came in the years before the **civil rights movement**. Marshall, as an activist and lawyer at the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** from 1932 to 1961, laid the groundwork for the movement.

Marshall's NAACP tenure was a pivotal time for the organization, when overturning racial **segregation** and investigating race riots, which were breaking out across the country, were two of its principal charges. Within hours of the race riots beginning, Marshall arrived to begin helping the black community. He saw his job at the NAACP as publicizing the inequalities between blacks and whites and the role that police forces played in the violent uprisings. Marshall represented the NAACP at three well-known riots: **Detroit** (1943), **Harlem** (1943), and Columbia, Tennessee (1946).

The exact reason for the Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943 is unclear. There are both black and white accounts as to why the violence began. Marshall

found himself, along with NAACP executive secretary **Walter White**, responding to the official riot report that was submitted to the governor of Michigan by, among others, Detroit Police Commissioner John H. Witherspoon. The committee found that it was solely actions of the black community that incited the riot. Marshall's rebuttal indicated that social inequalities in the long-term and other violence and rumors in the short-term were the reason for the escalation of violence. Marshall was critical of the police's role, or lack thereof, in the ending of the riot. In a 1943 issue of *The Crisis*, Marshall wrote the following:



Thurgood Marshall in front of the Supreme Court, 1958. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The trouble reached riot proportions because the police once again enforced the law with an unequal hand. They used “persuasion” rather than firm action with white rioters, while against Negroes they used the ultimate in force: nightsticks, revolvers, riot guns, submachine guns, and deer guns. (Marshall, 232)

Marshall did advocate for the use of “persuasion” as long as it was more evenly applied. For instance, he praised the actions of the New York City Police Department when he arrived at the Harlem race riots. In an interview, Marshall recalled Mayor LaGuardia’s plan as follows:

All of the white policemen in Harlem, in the area where the riots are going on, just stand perfectly still, and don’t use a weapon, don’t use a gun. You just stand there until you are replaced. And the guys looting and everything, they just stand there. And then these guys go out, and these other guys, the colored fellow, taps the white fellow on the shoulder, he gets in the car, and in less than a hour there are all black cops there. So where’s the “race riot”? The race riot’s gone. (Smith and Ellis 2004)

Marshall and his team then went in with loudspeakers and persuaded the people to remain calm and cool down.

Although Marshall praised police work in New York City, he believed that the police in Columbia, Tennessee, planned to lynch him while he worked on his investigation into the race riot in that town. In 1946, at the conclusion of World War II, relations between black veterans and whites were tense. As a result, in Columbia, Tennessee, a riot led by white civilians and law enforcement officers destroyed the black commercial district. More than 100 black men were arrested, resulting in 27 being charged with rioting and attempted murder.

Thurgood Marshall was the lead defense attorney. Fearing for their lives, while in Columbia, Marshall and the other lawyers stayed in Nashville,

nearly seventy-five miles away. Despite the circumstances, Marshall, along with Howard University law professor Leon Ransom, received acquittals for all but one of the defendants by an all-white jury.

In his early career, Marshall's work on behalf of the black community during these race riots was a precursor of a life committed to advancing the race. As the NAACP's lead attorney, Marshall appealed, advocated, and convinced the U.S. Supreme Court to reform constitutional law in order to treat all Americans, regardless of race, equally. Later, as a Supreme Court Justice, Marshall continued to further people's rights through rulings such as extending double jeopardy to state prosecutions in *United States ex rel George Hetenyi v. Wilkins* (1965), giving women the right to choose and the right to privacy in *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and extending defendants' rights through *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1964) and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1965). Toward the end of Marshall's time on the bench he became known as the Great Dissenter within a conservative court, continuing to advocate for black Americans and for the poor through his dissenting opinions.

**Further Readings:** Ball, Howard. *A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001; Grimshaw, A.D. "Actions of Police and the Military in American Race Riot." *Phylon* 24, no. 3 (1963); Langlois, J.L. "The Belle Island Bridge Incident: Legend Dialectic and Semi-otic System in the 1943 Detroit Race Riots." *The Journal of American Folklore* 96, no. 380 (1983); Marshall, Thurgood. "The Gestapo in Detroit." *The Crisis* 50, no. 8 (August 1943); Smith, Stephen, and Kate Ellis. "Thurgood Marshall Before the Court." American RadioWorks, May 2004. See <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/marshall/>.

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**Massachusetts.** See Boston (Massachusetts) Riot of 1967; Boston (Massachusetts) Riots of 1975 and 1976; New Bedford (Massachusetts) Riot of 1970; Springfield (Massachusetts) Riot of 1965

### **McKay, Claude (1890–1948)**

Claude McKay was an African-Caribbean immigrant to the United States and a towering figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Through his poems, novels, and nonfiction, he portrayed life in Jamaica and in the United States and advocated radical social change for African Americans. He was born Festus Claudius McKay in Sunny Ville, Clarendon Parish, Jamaica, on September 15, 1890, the eighth child of peasants. McKay's early encounter with British folklorist Walter Jekyll led him to write poems in Jamaican dialect; they were eventually collected in two volumes: *Songs of Jamaica* (1911) and *Constab Ballads* (1912).

In 1912, when he was twenty-three, McKay moved to the United States. After studying agriculture at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (1912) and then at Kansas State College in Manhattan, Kansas (1912–1914), he relocated to New York City. His social conservatism gave way to Marxism as he experienced racial discrimination against colored people. He became a regular

contributor to *The Liberator*, a leftist newspaper, for which he was later to serve as associate editor.

*If We Must Die* (1919) was McKay's first volume of poetry on black experiences. The title poem urged fellow black men to stand up for their right to exist and to be willing to die for the cause of racial dignity.

If we must die,  
 O let us nobly die,  
 So that our precious blood may not be shed  
 In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
 Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

McKay's militant tone continued in the two succeeding volumes of poetry: *Spring in New Hampshire* (1920) and *Harlem Shadows* (1922), his most celebrated collection of poetry.

In 1922, he left the United States and traveled in such countries as the Soviet Union (where he attended the Third Congress of Communist International), France, Germany, Spain, and Morocco. His picaresque novel *Home to Harlem* (1928) was published during his stay in France; it traced the wanderings of a black soldier who deserts the U.S. Army in France and returns to Harlem after World War I. The succeeding novel, *Banjo* (1929)—also known as *Banjo: A Story without a Plot*—was set on the Marseilles waterfront in France and focused on expatriate black Americans in Europe. *Banjo* was followed by a collection of short stories, *Gingertown* (1932), and the novel *Banana Bottom* (1933).

After he came back to the United States in 1934, McKay worked mostly on works of nonfiction. His autobiography, *A Long Way from Home*, was published in 1937. *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (1940), McKay's sociological study of African American life in New York City, marked his rejection of communism as an ideology for blacks. He became an American citizen in 1940 and embraced Roman Catholicism in 1944. McKay died in Chicago, Illinois, on May 22, 1948. His *Selected Poems* and autobiography, *My Green Hills of Jamaica*, were published posthumously in 1953 and 1979, respectively.

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Claude McKay. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

## Memphis (Tennessee) Riot of 1866

The Memphis (Tennessee) Riot of 1866, occurring during the first three days of May, was the first of two major episodes of white-on-black violence that occurred in the post-Civil War South. The second major riot was the **New Orleans (Louisiana) Riot of 1866**, which occurred on July 30. The Memphis riot was triggered as a result of whites wanting to remove blacks from their neighborhood.

A series of tense confrontations between Irish police officers and the black Union soldiers who patrolled Memphis after the Civil War preceded the riot. For six months, the police officers regularly harassed the black soldiers. Sometimes they arrested blacks for minor offenses and then beat them. Fights between the soldiers and the officers were not uncommon. It came to no one's surprise when on May 1, a group of thirty to sixty soldiers came to the rescue of a fellow soldier in the act of being arrested. A shoot-out ensued. Two whites were killed, one dying from a self-inflicted wound,

and the other accidentally shot by another white officer. The affair was presumed to be over when the black soldiers were ordered back to their fort.

That evening, a mob of white police officers and local civilians executed a long-planned rampage through the nearby black section of a Memphis neighborhood. The mob stole furniture, money, clothes, and guns and set property on fire, including the recently erected Freedmen's Bureau schools and hospitals. They raped five black women and murdered a total of forty-six blacks. Numbered among the dead were some children, including a sixteen-year-old named Rachael Hatcher, who had been shot and then burned. Federal troops ended the riot on the third day. When a congressional committee arrived to investigate, it outrageously concluded that the riot had been brought on by competition for unskilled jobs between the Irish and the newly arrived blacks.

In "Community, Class, and Race in the Memphis Riot of 1866," Altina L. Waller suggests a different motive for the violence that was inflicted on the black residents of



A nineteenth-century wood engraving of scenes from the Memphis Riot of 1866. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Memphis—a motive that she derives from her analysis of the report of the congressional investigating committee. Contrary to the congressional committee's final explanation, the majority of the rioters did not represent white lower-class, unskilled workers. Although between 50 to 60 percent of the sixty-eight rioters appeared to be Irish, 34 percent were police officers, 28 percent were small-business owners, 17 percent were clerks and artisans, from 13 to 19 percent were grocery–saloon keepers, 4.5 percent were city officials, and only 9 percent represented the labor class and the unemployed (Waller, 234, 235). These numbers provided evidence to Waller that the rioters were overwhelmingly from the professional and highly skilled middle class, not an unskilled group of whites. Further evidence ultimately pointed to the fact that the riot was largely a result of the desire to purge the Memphis neighborhood of lower-class blacks, especially those who had arrived after the Union occupation of Tennessee during the war in 1861.

Waller noted that two groups of blacks had swarmed Tennessee in 1861—the black soldiers who were enlisted to patrol the state, and those who wanted to escape the remaining southern states that were still controlled by the Confederates. Tennessee represented a safe haven from years of bondage and oppression. Exuberant blacks migrated quickly to locations where they believed their dreams of freedom, opportunity, and newfound privileges could be realized. Many set up homes and prepared for their new lives in a Memphis neighborhood that had been largely white and middle class. Whites resented what they considered an invasion of the inviolacy of their community. The existing black residents were tolerated because their numbers were not threatening: they were classified as “good” blacks. During the riot, a black woman known as Aunt Cynthia was spared because she was thought of as one of the “good old people” of the neighborhood (Waller, 238).

Other factors that played a role in the riot were attitudes of the Memphis elite and city officials, **press instigation**, and the historical tradition of community violence. Waller asserts that the elite were the masterminds behind the riot. Since slavery, the elite held a strong position within the southern states. They represented the pinnacle of society and enjoyed social, political, and economic control over all blacks, as well as over lower- and middle-class whites. Memphis society was no different. Many of the black victims felt that the rioters were merely pawns. Although the rioters were not prosecuted, they served as scapegoats for the elite.

City officials and the press fanned the flames of antagonism toward blacks and helped promote the impending riot. Both “newspapers and city officials repeatedly suggested that in one way or another blacks should be driven from the city” (Waller, 241). Matthew Galloway, the editor of the *Memphis Avalanche*, repeatedly “published inflammatory articles” and “was reported to have personally led the mob on some occasions” (Waller, 241). Both American and ethnic traditions and patterns of community violence played a part in the actual riot. American **vigilantism** was displayed in the willingness of the white residents to unite for the purpose of protecting their community from assumed villains.

Ostracism was a common form of punishment used by early community-spawned **vigilante organizations**. Waller points out that the overwhelming violence against property, rather than against individuals, suggests that rioters intended to intimidate rather than to exterminate their victims. Waller also states that the celebratory and military-style behavior of the rioters reflected the ethnic rituals of violent protest and the Civil War experience (Waller, 239, 242).

In the wake of the riot, radicals in Congress established Republican rule over the southern states. This resulted in ephemeral civil rights gains for blacks. However, it appears that Memphis blacks did not receive **reparations** at all. Many fled their neighborhoods. The advent of a reformed police force helped to squelch community violence. Ironically, the neighborhood did eventually become dominated by the black lower class. *See also* Police Brutality.

**Further Reading:** Waller, Altina L. "Community, Class, and Race in the Memphis Riot of 1866." *Journal of Social History* 18 (2001): 233–246.

*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Meredith, James (1933–)**

Born June 25, 1933, in Kosciuska, Mississippi, James Meredith catapulted into national notoriety on October 1, 1962, when he became the first African American to register at the University of Mississippi, an event that precipitated a riot that lasted throughout the night. The end result of the riot included 2 dead and 375 wounded. In 1966, Meredith was wounded by a sniper while conducting his "March against Fear," a walk of more than 200 miles to protest **racism** and encourage voting by African Americans.

Part Choctaw and part African American, Meredith had served in the Air Force from 1951 to 1960, when he entered Jackson State College for two years; in 1962, he won a court battle that allowed him to register at the University of Mississippi, which set into motion a struggle among the administration of the university, Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett, and the federal government, as represented by Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy** and his brother, President **John F. Kennedy**. Governor Barnett, an avid segregationist, blocked Meredith's entrance into the campus building to register (see **Segregation**). Robert Kennedy put pressure on Barnett to comply with the federal mandate, but Barnett would only agree to do so if Kennedy would send troops to Oxford to demonstrate to the people of Mississippi that he had no choice; in other words, such a move meant that the self-proclaimed racist governor of a state that supported racism could save face. Federal marshals were sent to campus, and state troopers were also in place, but they were not a match for the rock-hurling, spitting, angry mob, especially once it was reinforced by gun-toting rioters. The rioting became more serious when the state troopers deserted the site. President Kennedy nationalized the Mississippi National Guard and also sent in regular army

troops; in all, 3,000 converged on the campus to quell the riot. One-hundred-sixty federal marshals sustained injuries during the violent outbreak. In 1966, Meredith's book about the experience, *Three Years in Mississippi*, was published.

After graduating from the University of Mississippi in August 1963, Meredith enrolled as a student at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. By 1966, he was back in the South where he set out alone on June 5 to walk 220 miles from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, on a March Against Fear to protest racism and to encourage people to vote. The next day, June 6, he fell victim to a sniper. In Hernando, Mississippi, only thirty miles into his planned journey, he received three gunshot wounds, one to his head, one to his shoulder, and one to his leg. Police arrested a forty-one-year-old white man, Aubrey James Norvell, for the shooting. Reporters and **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** agents following Meredith's march witnessed the shooting. After confessing, Norvell was convicted of the shooting and was sentenced to five years in prison. The next day, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, of the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, and **Stokely Carmichael** and Floyd McKissick of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, took up the march for Meredith, who was able to rejoin them on June 25, the day before the march ended in Jackson. The March Against Fear was Meredith's last major activist involvement with the **civil rights movement**.



James Meredith walking to class accompanied by U.S. marshals. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Meredith later became a law student at Columbia University, from which he earned his law degree in 1968. He was a stockbroker and a real estate investor. Meredith ran unsuccessfully for the House of Representatives in 1972, served as domestic advisor on Sen. Jesse Helms' staff, wrote and self-published *Mississippi: A Volume of Eleven Books* (1995), and, in 1997, donated his papers to the J.D. Williams Library at the University of Mississippi. Meredith has stated on numerous occasions that his acts—being the first African American student to register at the University of Mississippi and the March Against Fear—were a means of demanding his rights as an individual, not of demanding rights for all African Americans.

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*Claudia Matherly Stolz*

### **Miami (Florida) Riot of 1980**

The Miami (Florida) Riot of 1980 was a major three-day disturbance. Violence broke out on May 17, 1980, and quickly permeated the predominantly black communities of Liberty City, Overtown, and Coconut Grove. Of the many riots that took place in Miami in the 1970s and 1980s, this was the largest and most destructive, resulting in 17 deaths, 400 injuries, 1,100 arrests, and over \$100 million in property damage. The disturbance was especially significant not only because of its magnitude but because of the fact that it occurred in the South, more than a decade after the epidemic of black rioting that hit the **ghettos** of the North during the 1960s. However, the Miami riot of 1980 was no different from other race riots, regardless of the period and location, in that its causes were attributed to the cumulative effects of black oppression, repeated incidences of **police brutality** against blacks, the unresponsiveness of the formal justice system, and the shifting attitudes of blacks who saw aggression as an acceptable reaction to injustice.

Black oppression has its genesis in slavery times. Many blacks and whites were hopeful that the emancipation of slaves in 1863 would end the former troubles and bring about a new day of equality and freedom. In 1865, **Reconstruction** was established to help blacks make the transition from bondage to freedom. During this period, the Republican Party was largely dominated by northern whites, although it also included some white southerners who supported the abolition of slavery in the South along with the attendant black civil rights, freedom, and privileges. As a result, black politicians were elected to office in the South, and crucial legislation (such as the Thirteenth and **Fourteenth Amendments**, the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the Reconstruction acts) was enacted. The objective was to secure as many rights and freedoms as possible for blacks. For the first time ever, former slaves were allowed to marry, go to school, congregate freely, and move about from place to place. Many blacks moved westward and to cities in the South and the North in search of work and

better opportunities. Unfortunately, these gains could not withstand the overwhelming white democratic opposition. Through violence, intimidation, and trickery, white Democrats seized political control of the South. Florida was one of the last southern states to remain under Republican domination. But in 1877, Florida's fate was sealed when the Republicans agreed to withdraw from the South in exchange for the presidential election of Rutherford B. Hayes, thereby leaving blacks under the control of the white Democrats (see **Black Nadir; Lynching**).

As a result of the black migration during the aftermath of emancipation, Miami's black population grew significantly. Many blacks settled into what would later become the predominantly black communities of Liberty City, Overtown, and Coconut Grove with the hope of starting a new and better life. However, following the transfer of power from the Republicans to the Democrats, black life in Florida turned for the worse. In 1896, whites in Miami established **Jim Crow** laws that reestablished white superiority and domination and black inferiority and submission. They denied blacks suffrage and the right to hold political office and directed all social and economic power to whites. Anti-black policies and actions were supported by the majority of white-dominated businesses and institutions in Miami. Anti-black violence, particularly **lynching**, was rampant. **White mobs** and **racist organizations** were at their peak. They targeted blacks for real, imagined, and exaggerated claims of offenses or for no reason at all. In 1935, a white mob apprehended and lynched Rubin Stacy, a homeless tenant farmer, as he was being escorted by officers to a Dade County jail in Florida after a white woman filed a complaint against him. It was later revealed that he had merely asked the woman for food.

In the 1950s, blacks, with the help of some whites, launched campaigns against **segregation**, racial discrimination, and **disenfranchisement** throughout the South. The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** won critical court cases against Jim Crow ordinances and was instrumental in desegregating schools. A host of individuals working within various organizations such as the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** participated in boycotts, sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations. As a result of the relentless pressures of these organizations on the federal government, President **John F. Kennedy** proposed the monumental **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which President Lyndon B. Johnson signed after Kennedy's assassination.

Blacks throughout the South benefited from the achievements made as a result of the **civil rights movement**. However, progress was much harder to come by for black Miamians who had to compete for resources with a new wave of Cuban immigrants (Harris, 61). Organizations such as CORE, SCLC, and the NAACP actively supported blacks in Miami. C. Gaylord Roll, editor of the *Liberty News*, "endeavored to defend the black community against anti-black polices and to advance the interests of impoverished and powerless blacks" (Harris, 61). He also established the All People's Democratic Club "to pressure appointed and elected officials to be accountable

to the interests and perspectives of Miami area blacks” (Harris, 61). Although the prominent means of protest for black Miamians in the 1960s and 1970s was **nonviolence**, northern blacks rioted within their own communities to demonstrate their frustration with police brutality, **racism**, and the harsh realities of poverty, unemployment, crime, and general neglect in the nation’s ghettos.

Despite the nonviolent protests, conditions for black Miamians in 1980 had not drastically improved since the days following Reconstruction and were similar to those that had triggered the rebellions in the north of the 1960s. The major issues that plagued blacks stemmed from the historical problem of racism, compounded by systematic discrimination and oppression, and included poverty, unemployment, lack of education, inferior schools and housing, disenfranchisement, and police brutality. Blacks were repeatedly rated below whites and Hispanics in nearly every aspect of life. In 1980, the annual family income in the United States was \$16,616 for whites, \$14,491 for Hispanics, and \$11,356 for blacks (Harris, 63). In Coconut Grove and Overtown, the black unemployment rate was 20 percent, whereas for whites it was 4.3 percent and for Hispanics were 5.7 percent (Harris, 63). Many of the schools remained segregated due to white opposition or neglect, and as a result, black schools lagged far behind white schools, which had the money, resources, and quality of education to give their students a distinct advantage and a more promising future. Blacks not only received an inferior education but were less likely to obtain a high school diploma and even more unlikely to acquire an advanced degree.

Exacerbating the circumstances faced by blacks were the poor conditions of, and serious shortages in, housing within black communities. Following the riot of 1980, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights collected information on the status of blacks. Darryl B. Harris asserts that the commission gave a “graphic and accurate review of housing conditions in Miami,” in which it reported that: “the buildings are deteriorating. Many are squalid. Overcrowding, severe rodent infestation, and dilapidation characterize much of Overtown, Model Cities, and other black enclaves in Dade County. For most people, these conditions engender apathy, hopelessness, frustration, and anger” (Harris, 65). As a result of housing shortages, many blacks were displaced to other areas “without the relocation and support services that had been promised as part of the federal government’s urban renewal policy” (Harris, 65).

Black Miamians also experienced problems reminiscent of what took place under Democratic rule in the 1890s. In 1980, large black areas of Dade County were sectioned off into unincorporated districts. Black citizens within these districts were denied voting power. Thus, blacks were kept from electing officials who could advocate positive change for them and challenge traditional white domination. Although anti-black violence was not as rampant as it was in the period following Reconstruction, blacks were subjected to a new form of attack at the hands of white police officers who, in essence, had replaced the nineteenth-century white mob. Police brutality was a common occurrence in the ghettos of the 1960s, as well as

in Miami prior to the 1980 riot. Officers repeatedly harassed blacks. In particular, excessive beatings and killings of black men were common. What made matters worse was the fact that the political–legal system did not “deliver just rulings when black people were the complainants” (Harris, 72–73).

Harris points to four specific incidents in 1979 in which white officers eluded punishment for crimes against blacks. Harris believes that these incidents, along with the accumulating effects of racism and oppression, triggered the explosive riot of 1980. The incidents included the molestation of an eleven-year-old black girl, the beating and raiding of the house of an innocent black man, and the wrongful shooting death of a twenty-two-year-old black man. It was the Arthur McDuffie incident that precipitated the riot.

On December 17, 1979, several white police officers chased down Arthur McDuffie, a black insurance executive, for “allegedly violating a traffic ordinance while riding his motorcycle” (Harris, 77). At the end of the chase, the officers severely beat McDuffie, who died as a result of his injuries. Officers attempted to blame McDuffie’s death on a supposed fall from his motorcycle, but evidence and subsequent confessions at the trial proved that the beating was the cause. The trial of the white officers lasted seven weeks. On May 17, it took the all-white jury only three hours to declare all the officers not guilty. On the same day, blacks rallied at the Metropolitan Justice Building. The actual violence began when two white brothers were attacked by blacks while driving through Liberty City. The driver of the vehicle lost control of the car and injured a young black girl. In retaliation, blacks beat, shot, stabbed, and ran over the white victims. Only one of the brothers survived. A total of eight whites died on the first day of the riot. Over the next two days, blacks targeted large, white-owned businesses, which, as Harris asserts “points to the high level of black animus toward whites and local business people” (Harris, 88). Harris argues that the riot had been an act of protest and not a random, senseless display of violence and lawlessness. Local, state, and federal forces restored order on the third day.

White Miamians and local, state, and federal agencies responded just as they had in the wake of the black riots of the 1960s. The media and white leadership of the city saw the participants in the riots as criminals and did not address what had caused so desperate and horrific a response. The alternative perspective, which was substantiated by a survey of blacks taken after the riot, was that in the absence of justice, blacks took matters in their own hands. Results from that survey were dismal: “88 percent said that it was almost impossible for a black person to get a fair trial in Dade County; 92 percent said that black defendants did not get justice from all white juries,” and over 70 percent “believed that the police used unnecessary force in making arrests in black neighborhoods” and “frisked or searched blacks without good reason” (Harris, 73). Survey results also revealed a significant number of black Miamians in favor of militancy: “Forty-one percent of blacks expressed the view that blacks would gain more from the use of violence” (Harris, 93–94).

Local, state, and federal intervention was immediate but ineffectual. Scores of city, state, and federal agencies constructed programs to aid youth and

black businesses and to rebuild the city. However, many of these programs were short-lived and did not directly benefit blacks themselves or prevent the imminent Miami riot of 1982. *See also* Miami (Florida) Riot of 1982.

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### **Miami (Florida) Riot of 1982**

The Miami (Florida) Riot of 1982 was a black-incited disturbance that arose after Luis Alvarez, a Hispanic police officer, shot and killed a young black man named Nevell Johnson. Two years earlier, Miami had experienced its largest black-incited riot, which had erupted in response to the acquittal of white police officers who beat to death Arthur McDuffie, a thirty-three-year-old black man (see **Miami [Florida] Riot of 1980**). The 1982 riot was much smaller. Nevertheless, the fact that the riot occurred illustrates the failure of the state, local, and federal governments to address the issues that caused black rioting two years earlier.

Black rioting was not a new concept, having emerged in many American cities during the 1960s (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). Many whites did not understand what provoked black youths to loot, vandalize, and set fire to buildings within their own community. Journalists and television reporters who covered the riots imprinted images of blacks ravaging stores, homes, and buildings and sometimes beating and killing unfortunate and innocent white victims. The rioters were labeled as criminals, and conservative whites demanded law and order, while liberals, both black and white, advocated social reform and community programs. Blacks, who subscribed to militancy and radical **Black Power**, encouraged the riots, referring to them as revolutions and revolts. Other blacks, such as those associated with the **civil rights movement**, disapproved of the riots but sympathized with the young rioters who had been too long the victims of **police brutality** and systematic oppression and neglect. Scholars such as Darryl Harris have presented arguments to illustrate that black riots were often a form of protest that had roots in the black slave rebellions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Miami blacks did not participate in the riots of the 1960s. In fact, the riots of that period were largely restricted to northern black communities, where the civil rights protests and demonstrations were less active. The civil rights movement generally took place in the South and was led by middle-class blacks. The movement effectively squashed the discriminatory **Jim Crow** ordinances forced on blacks, but nothing was done to remedy the alarming state of black life, particularly in the North, which was characterized by dire economic, educational, and social disadvantages. In comparison to whites and other minority groups, blacks, overall, were the hardest hit.

Although many blacks in the South benefited from the civil rights movement, Miami blacks did not. Miami blacks competed with Cuban immigrants

for resources and opportunities. As a result, their lives were more similar to those of northern blacks than to blacks who lived elsewhere in the South. Blacks who lived in the sections of Miami known as Overtown, Liberty City, and Coconut Grove faced poverty, poor housing, and inferior schools just like blacks who lived in the **ghettos** of the North. Their predicament was an accumulation of the effects of slavery, **racism**, discrimination, oppression, and, as Harris (1999) states, white domination.

Anti-black violence was another problem historically confronting blacks in Miami and across the nation. Following the emancipation of black slaves in 1863, **white mobs** and **racist organizations** regularly assaulted and murdered blacks, often with little or no repercussions in Florida and across the nation. Through the mid-twentieth century, blacks, especially in the North and in Miami, were subjected to police misconduct, harassment, beatings, and killings. Generally, the justice system ignored the complaints or let the offending police officers go with little or no punishment.

Having repeatedly been denied justice, black Miamians turned from non-violent demonstration to violent protest. Thirteen small riots, which occurred during the 1970s, preceded the larger and more infamous 1980 Miami riot. Local, state, and federal government responded immediately by pouring aid into the community. Numerous social programs were established. A commission was established to investigate the disturbance in Miami. It found that “the black community experienced isolation and subjugation in the full range of affairs—political, economic, education, housing, and criminal justice” and made a number of recommendations that were not fully implemented (Harris, 113–114). President Jimmy Carter’s plan to help rebuild the sections of the city that had been badly damaged was unsuccessful. The U.S. Department of Labor provided financial assistance to support minority-owned businesses and to set up summer jobs and Job Corps programs for young adults. Several local black and white businesses “endeavored to improve blacks’ socioeconomic status in Miami” (Harris, 36). Overall, these programs and others like them failed, mostly because the assistance did not directly benefit blacks but was instead filtered mostly to whites and to other minority groups. Also, these programs were essentially quick fixes. Harris addresses another issue that intensified tensions in Miami—the 1981 election of Republican President Ronald Reagan, who did not support social change for the poor, the defenseless, and the marginalized.

In December 1982, Officer Luis Alvarez entered an arcade “as part of a training exercise of a rookie officer assigned to him” and after approaching Nevell Johnson, a young black man playing a video game, Alvarez shot and killed him (Harris, 93). Alvarez claimed that “he thought that Johnson was reaching for a gun in his waistband” (Harris, 93). Blacks insisted that this was another case of black injustice, and they rioted. The riot was less extensive than that of 1980; only “several hundreds took part in the 1982 uprising, causing just one death and eight injuries and resulting in twenty-nine arrests” (Harris, 85). Howard Gary, the black city manager of Miami, was responsible for the quick restoration of order through the use of a crisis response team and measures such as the closing down of all bars, liquor stores, and gasoline stations and the setting up of guards throughout the

town (Harris, 96). Because this disturbance was less publicized and considerably smaller than the riot of 1980, there were fewer programs established in its wake. Seven years later, another riot erupted in Miami. This was also a small riot, and once again brought about little, if any, change. *See also* Nonviolence; Police Brutality.

**Further Reading:** Harris, Darryl B. *The Logic of Black Urban Rebellions: Challenging the Dynamics of White Domination in Miami*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999.

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**Michigan.** *See* Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943; Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967

**Mississippi.** *See* Biloxi Beach (Mississippi) Riot of 1960; Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964

**Missouri.** *See* Sainte Genevieve (Missouri) Riot of 1930; Southwest Missouri Riots (1894–1906)

### **Mitchell, Arthur Wergs (1883–1968)**

Arthur Wergs Mitchell was a U.S. congressman for the First Congressional District of Illinois from 1935 to 1943. A staunch supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, Mitchell was the first black to be elected to Congress as a Democrat and was thus instrumental in generating African American support for his party. Although his generally moderate position on civil rights issues sometimes put him at odds with other African American leaders, Mitchell played an important role in challenging racial discrimination in the civil service and in public transportation.

Mitchell was born the son of former slaves in Chambers County, Alabama, on December 22, 1883. He left home in 1898 to attend **Booker T. Washington's** Tuskegee Institute, paying his way by assisting Washington as an office boy and farmhand. Devoted to Washington, Mitchell adopted his mentor's free-enterprise philosophy and moderate political views, both of which later shaped his congressional career. After teaching for some years in rural Alabama, Mitchell founded the Armstrong Agricultural College in West Butler, Alabama, in 1908. After serving in the army during World War I, Mitchell moved north to Washington, D.C. (see **Great Migration**), where he established a successful real estate business and studied law, being admitted to the bar in 1927.

His political career began in 1928 when he campaigned for Oscar De Priest, a Republican running for Illinois' First Congressional District. After De Priest became the first African American elected to Congress since 1898, Mitchell moved to Chicago, where he found his own political ambitions thwarted by De Priest's control of the local Republican Party. Joining the Democrats in 1932, Mitchell was nominated to run against De Priest in 1934. Although a majority of the district's African American voters supported his opponent, Mitchell's strong support for the New Deal allowed him to carry the largely Democratic white wards and unseat De Priest. In Congress, he sought to cultivate good relations with southern Democrats,

hoping thereby to moderate their racial prejudices. However, this policy made little impression on the most conservative white southerners. In 1936, when Mitchell seconded Roosevelt's renomination, thus becoming the first African American to speak from the floor of a Democratic Convention, Sen. Ed Smith of South Carolina walked out, declaring that Mitchell's speech "humiliated the South" (Weiss, 186). Mitchell's moderation also antagonized African American leaders such as **Walter White** of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, who criticized the congressman for his association with Hatton Sumners of Texas, a leading opponent of the Gavagan Anti-Lynching Bill of 1937. Sumners persuaded Mitchell to introduce a weaker rival measure that was eventually defeated, forcing Mitchell to eventually endorse the Gavagan bill (see **Lynching**).

Despite the opposition of white and other black leaders, increasing numbers of African Americans voted for Mitchell, who was reelected three times. Besides working to expose racial discrimination in the federal civil service and nominating black cadets to Annapolis and West Point, Mitchell also spoke out strongly against the growing anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. In April 1937, while traveling by train from Chicago to Hot Springs, Arkansas, Mitchell, who had purchased a first-class ticket, was ordered to the black section in the second-class coach after the train crossed the Arkansas line. Mitchell complied to prevent violence, but later filed suit against the railway. Although his claim was dismissed by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), Mitchell took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which, in *Mitchell v. United States* (1941), unanimously declared that the congressman had been denied his "fundamental right of equality of treatment." The *Mitchell* decision led to the immediate **integration** of first-class railway carriages and also to the eventual end of **segregation** in second-class coaches.

Declining to run for reelection in 1942, Mitchell retired to a farm in Petersburg, Virginia, where, as the **civil rights movement** developed in the 1950s and 1960s, he continued to advocate moderate courses. Mitchell died on May 9, 1968, only weeks after the assassination of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.** See also Dyer, Leonidas C.

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## Mobile (Alabama) Riot of 1943

During World War II, Mobile, Alabama, became one of the ten most congested war production areas in the United States. The city had serious problems. Reports document inadequate housing and health care, food shortages, traffic congestion, overcrowded schools, lack of recreational facilities and the highest rate of increase in the cost of living in the nation.



Because of wartime production activities, Mobile's population increased by 61 percent. Although more than 50 percent of the local laborers were black, little effort was made to use them in the shipyards and other war industries, except as manual laborers. Ship repair and construction became Mobile's claim to fame through the activities of the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company (ADDSCO) and Chickasaw Ship Construction Company. At its peak, ADDSCO employed roughly 40,000 people (7,000 blacks) on seven-day-a-week schedules working three shifts, twenty-four hours a day, while Chickasaw and other shipbuilding contractors hired fewer than 10,000 workers combined. ADDSCO contracted with the U.S. Navy in 1941 to repair its craft and with the U.S. Maritime Commission to build and outfit twenty Liberty ships and T-2 tankers. Nonetheless, by 1943, its peak year of operation, ADDSCO constructed some 40 Liberty ships and 102 tankers, and repaired or converted an additional 2,800 vessels. This kind of activity in the previously rather sleepy seaport town of Mobile led to assorted social problems exacerbated by the South's **segregation** dogma.

In Mobile, black and white industrial workers often came into conflict over better-paying skilled positions. When Mobile longshoremen, virtually all of whom were black, went on strike in 1935, they suffered a reign of terror at the hands of city policemen. For more than four years, the longshoremen remained embroiled in internal and interunion quarrels that kept the waterfront in turmoil.

Despite white opposition, blacks obtained low-level defense plant jobs. In 1940, **A. Philip Randolph**, then president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, threatened to expose American racial hypocrisy by staging a march on Washington in support of black access to defense plant jobs. To avert this public relations disaster, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, prohibiting racial discrimination in defense industries, and created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to handle complaints of discrimination. The very existence of the FEPC angered white supremacists but, in practice, the FEPC had little impact on defense plant hiring. Blacks got jobs because employers were in desperate need of workers. In January 1941, the Maritime Commission planned to add four new shipways at the ADDSCO Pinto Island facility. Will Alexander of the FEPC visited the Mobile shipyards in December 1941, but failed to effect any change. Early in 1942, John Beecher began an FEPC investigation of defense industry training in the South, with special emphasis on Alabama and Georgia, and essentially found that none existed for black workers. Then, FEPC hearings in Birmingham, Alabama, in June 1942 subsequently revealed a prevalent discriminatory pattern in the southern shipbuilding industry, especially at ADDSCO.

The public transportation system, in the interim, provided the context for one of the most notorious acts of racial violence in wartime Mobile. On August 15, 1942, a white bus driver, twenty-nine-year-old Grover Chandler, shot and killed a black soldier, Pvt. Henry Williams as the soldier was getting off the bus. The murder of Williams almost led to a Mobile bus boycott. However, nine months later, a National Urban League report on Mobile identified racial tension in public transportation as a continuing sore spot.

The Mobile chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** then took up the cause of black workers who agitated for equal employment opportunities in the local shipbuilding industry. In 1942, local NAACP activist John LeFlore charged that ADDSCO and other wartime employers hired white women because they were unwilling to put trained black men in skilled occupations. Black men and women were largely excluded from the drive to train and employ skilled workers. Black women outnumbered white counterparts in the workforce by a margin of two to one, but not a single black woman achieved skilled or semi-skilled status in any of Mobile's war industries.

Amid efforts by the federal government via President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Orders 8802 and 8803 to desegregate federally funded war production units through the establishment of the FEPC, a directive was issued on November 19, 1942, to ADDSCO to cease discriminatory hiring practices against black workers. In a May 3, 1943 letter to the company, Dr. Burton Morley, area director of the War Manpower Commission, unenthusiastically approved segregated ways of including black workers. Implementation of the FEPC directive led to the May 25, 1943, riot at ADDSCO that stopped construction for an entire week.

At the heart of the matter lay efforts by the federal government to get ADDSCO management to upgrade black workers qualified to be welders. After lengthy negotiations among the Maritime Commission, the Navy, FEPC personnel, and ADDSCO management, on May 24, 1943, the company suddenly complied with a six-month-old directive from FEPC and upgraded twelve blacks to welding jobs by means of what became known as the ADDSCO Settlement. This created four segregated shipways at the Pinto Island facility to permit black welders to be upgraded in ship hull construction work. This group began work during the May 25, 1943, mid-night shift and worked successfully with no problems encountered. The company undoubtedly expected trouble and probably welcomed it. The Alabama militia had been alerted and occupied Mobile before the riot started, but federal troops moved into the shipyard. However, when day broke and white workers found the black welders on the shipways, vicious rumors circulated. With little resistance from their supervisors and the acquiescence or active participation of the company's uniformed guards, whites gathered in small groups and worked themselves into a frenzy of anger at their black coworkers. Charles Hansen, a local union representative, implied that white women had initiated the melee when they started to threaten and sometimes strike black women with sticks and stones. Hansen recalled that violence then spread rapidly, even on the facility's repair side, and consisted almost exclusively of whites attacking blacks. At least two blacks were thrown into the Mobile River as hundreds more fled the yard. Mobile *Register* publisher R.B. Chandler acknowledged that the blacks were entirely free from blame as the whites directed their anger at black workers in general and the demand of their removal from the yard became the mob's rallying cry. Whites assaulted blacks with bricks, pieces of iron and steel, and such tools as hammers, wrenches, and crowbars as the swelling mob built to approximately 4,000 persons

with pipes, clubs, and any weapon that could kill. Fortunately, no one was killed, but FEPC investigators reported that fifty would be a conservative estimate of the persons injured. White women joined their male comrades in smashing bricks and iron bars against the cringing bodies of black workers while company police took no action to stop the melees. The most seriously injured was a white man who attempted to rescue a black being beaten by two company guards. Local police, called to the scene, could not stop the affray. Finally, military units had to be summoned. When the violence ended, ADDSCO demanded the replacement of federal troops with militiamen, a move successfully opposed by the FEPC, which insisted that federal troops remain to protect lives as well as property.

After the riot, about 1,000 black workers approached the War Manpower Commission and asked for permission to transfer to other jobs in Mobile or to leave the city altogether. Meanwhile, white men rode around the city throwing rocks into black homes. Nevertheless, John LeFlore (NAACP), Clarence Mitchell (FEPC), and Franklin O. Nichols (Urban League) convinced black workers to return to work.

Although another disturbance occurred Wednesday morning, May 26, 1943, 200 blacks, including four welders, returned to work on Wednesday night, after the violence had subsided. Some whites left the yard because there were no black helpers or laborers to do the heavy work for them; many others left to boycott until the company promised never to employ any blacks in any capacity. On May 27, 1943, with the issuance of Executive Order 9346, the FEPC became an independent agency directly under presidential authority with broader and more clearly defined powers.

On Friday, May 28, 1943, representatives of the company, the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA), and federal agencies met for six hours to determine the creation of four separate shipways where blacks would engage in all of the crafts associated with bare-hull construction under the supervision of white foremen. Blacks who sought promotion to skilled jobs would have to transfer to the segregated ways. The FEPC chairman, Francis J. Haas, and the union's Local 18, accepted the proposal. Black workers welcomed the segregated ways mainly because of the dramatically higher wages. Nonetheless, the ADDSCO settlement produced a storm of controversy inside the FEPC and among the general public because the agreement appeared to give federal sanction to segregation. However, Haas claimed that no precedent had been established since he approved the settlement only to end the crisis.

In the late spring of 1944, persistent antagonism between black and white workers again raised fears of violence. Almost exactly one year after the riot, on May 25, 1944, racial tension in Mobile flared again when black troops at Brookley Field opened fire on white military policemen who entered their segregated housing area to investigate a robbery complaint. A few days later, rumors flew in the ADDSCO shipyard that white workers intended to attack black employees on the occasion of the launching of the black-built *Tule Canyon* on May 31, 1944, an episode that illustrated the seriousness of continuing racial tensions at the shipyard.

Near the end of 1943, blacks worked in segregated ways in four shipyards—ADDSCO, the Charleston Navy Yard, Brunswick Shipbuilding Company of Georgia, and Higgins of New Orleans. Although the practice of *de jure* segregation proved obnoxious, these black workers received greater economic opportunities and suffered far less discrimination.

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### **Moore v. Dempsey (1923)**

An important legal victory for the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Moore v. Dempsey* (261 U.S. 86 [1923]) declared that criminal convictions secured in trials dominated by the threat of mob violence deprived the defendants of their rights to due process as guaranteed by the **Fourteenth Amendment**. Rising out of the trials of African Americans arrested during the **Elaine (Arkansas) Riot of 1919**, *Moore v. Dempsey* was the first Supreme Court case of the twentieth century that concerned the quality of justice provided to blacks in the American South.

During the course of the disorders that convulsed Phillips County, Arkansas, in 1919, bands of armed whites and federal troops dispatched by the governor killed over 200 blacks and detained some 700 others. In the aftermath of the riots, an all-white grand jury set about determining which of the detainees would be tried and which released. Those blacks who agreed, often after beatings or electric shock torture, to testify against others, or to work under whatever terms their white landlords imposed (see

**Sharecropping**), were set free, while any prisoner suspected of being a ringleader or otherwise troublesome was indicted. On November 2, 1919, authorities in Phillips County put twelve black defendants on trial for the murder of five white men. After a series of perfunctory trials, during which the defense attorneys, who did not meet their clients until the proceedings began, called no witnesses, offered no evidence, and put no defendant on the stand, all twelve were convicted and condemned to death. No trial lasted over an hour, and jury deliberation averaged less than ten minutes. Additionally, during the trials, armed **white mobs** surrounded the courthouse shouting that any defendant found not guilty would be lynched (see **Lynching**).

Dispatched to Arkansas in October 1919, NAACP investigator **Walter White**, who could pass for white, interviewed the governor and investigated the proceedings. Forced to leave when his identity was discovered, White published his findings in the *Chicago Defender*, *The Nation*, and the NAACP's own journal, *The Crisis*. Although the governor asked the U.S. Postal Service to prevent the mailing and distribution of these publications, White's report generated much hostility and controversy. The NAACP raised more than \$50,000 to hire lawyers of both races, such as Scipio Africanus Jones, an African American attorney from Little Rock, and George W. Murphy, a Confederate veteran and former Arkansas attorney general, to appeal the convictions.

Acting on a technicality, the Arkansas Supreme Court reversed the verdicts in six cases, but allowed the other six to stand, finding that the threat of mob violence and the use of coerced testimony did not deny the defendants due process. After winning a stay of execution from the state chancery court, the NAACP attorneys were eventually able to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, where, in a 6–2 decision, the justices held that the mob-dominated proceedings violated the due process provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment. Written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., the majority opinion declared as follows:

But if the case is that the whole proceeding is a mask—that counsel, jury, and judge were swept to the fatal end by an irresistible wave of public passion, and that the State Courts failed to correct the wrong, neither perfection in the machinery for correction nor the possibility that the trial court and counsel saw no other way of avoiding an immediate outbreak of the mob can prevent this Court from securing to the petitioners their constitutional rights.

The Court sent the case back to the lower courts to determine if the claims of mob violence and forced testimony were true. As a result of these proceedings, the state of Arkansas eventually freed all twelve defendants as well as all those convicted of lesser charges who were still imprisoned. *Moore v. Dempsey* set precedents for stricter Supreme Court scrutiny of state trials and for the broader use of federal habeas corpus actions to oversee state trials that may have been conducted in violation of federal constitutional rights.

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### Moynihan, Daniel Patrick (1927–2003)

Daniel Patrick “Pat” Moynihan was an American sociologist, U.S. senator, ambassador, professor, and author of social policy. He is best known as the author of the *Moynihan Report*, a controversial and groundbreaking 1965 analysis of the African American family.

Moynihan was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on March 16, 1927. When he was six, his family moved to New York City, where he attended various public, private, and parochial schools before graduating from Harlem High School. Moynihan participated in four successive presidential administrations, beginning in 1961 with the **John F. Kennedy** administration and continuing through 1977 with the Lyndon Baines Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, and Gerald R. Ford administrations. During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Moynihan was assistant secretary of labor for policy planning. His responsibilities included formulation of national social policy for what would later become known as President Johnson’s **War on Poverty** Program. During his tenure as undersecretary of labor, Moynihan wrote two controversial documents: *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (1963), which he coauthored with Nathan Glazer, and *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, better known as the *Moynihan Report* (1965).

Completed in March 1965, the *Moynihan Report* was initially distributed only to certain members of the Johnson administration; however, in June, when President Johnson delivered the commencement address at Howard University in Washington, D.C., he included in his speech a passage about the black family from Moynihan’s report. The report was not released to the White House press corps until August, during the **Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965**, in what was a half-disguised attempt to provide an explanation for the violence.

Whether or not the *Moynihan Report* satisfactorily explained the causes of the Los Angeles riot and the other urban insurrections that occurred in the mid-1960s (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**), it did accomplish several things, not all of which were to the advantage of Moynihan and the Johnson administration. First, the press coverage the report received propelled Moynihan from civil servant to celebrity status. He was portrayed in the press as an expert on race relations. However, by October 1965, the report had begun to draw criticism both from other social scientists and from the African American community. Sociologist William Ryan used the phrase “blaming the victim” (1971) to describe the findings in Moynihan’s report.

The *Moynihan Report* inspired great animosity because of the methodologies its author used to arrive at his conclusions and the disparaging assumptions that he interpreted as facts regarding the African American family. Moynihan wrote that at the heart of the deterioration of African American society was the disintegration of the African American family; Moynihan saw the family as the primary cause of weakness in the African American community. To conclude his study, Moynihan referred to the condition of the African American family as “the tangle of pathology” (1965).

In 1965, Moynihan left the Johnson administration to become director of the Joint Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1968, he joined the Nixon White House staff as an urban affairs advisor. From 1973 to 1975, he served as ambassador to India. Moynihan was elected to the U.S. Senate from New York in 1976, and reelected in 1982, 1988, and 1994. He chose not to run for a fifth term in 2000 and was succeeded by former First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2001. Moynihan died on March 26, 2003.

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**Moynihan Report.** See *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*

### **Muhammad, Elijah (1897–1975)**

Born Elijah Poole on October 7, 1897, in Sandersville, Georgia, the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad was the leader of the **Nation of Islam** from 1934 until his death on February 25, 1975. Muhammad died four days following the tenth anniversary of the death of **Malcolm X** (1925–1965), one of his most devoted and controversial ministers. Elijah Muhammad was considered by his followers to be the messenger of Allah to the black man and woman in the United States.

The story of Elijah Poole's life is significant because it chronicles the plight of African Americans of his generation, the first generation of free blacks born after slavery. His parents, Wali, a Baptist minister, and Marie Poole, were born in slavery and later became sharecroppers. Elijah, the sixth of the Pooles' thirteen children, quit school when he was fourteen years old to help support his family. Two years later, Elijah left home and supported himself by doing odd jobs. During his travels he met Clara Evans, whom he married on May 2, 1917. In 1923, the couple moved to Detroit, becoming part of the **Great Migration** of blacks from the South to the North during the first decades of the twentieth century. The causes of black migration are varied but the violence and brutality African Americans faced was a significant factor. The violence came in the form of racial **segregation** or **Jim Crow** laws, which forced blacks to live in a world controlled by whites. Groups like the **Ku Klux Klan** terrorized entire neighborhoods with burnings, **lynchings**, rapes, and murders. Violence in the form of racial rioting also became an effective weapon, with the summer of 1919 becoming known as the **Red Summer** because so many

race riots occurred during those months. Hundreds of blacks were killed or wounded. In 1923, Elijah Poole rescued his family from this tragic cycle of violence and death. Later, remembering scenes from his life in the South, he stated that he “saw enough of the white man’s brutality to last me 26,000 years” (Clegg 1997).

In Detroit, Elijah worked for the American Can Factory and the Chevrolet Motor Company. But the stock market crash on October 29, 1929, left Poole and millions of others out of work. It was during this period that Elijah met W.D. Fard (1877–?), the founder of the Nation of Islam. Elijah had also been a member of the Moorish Science Temple of America, founded by Noble Drew Ali (1866–1929). Ali, an adherent of Islam, who possibly introduced Elijah to the faith, was arrested in 1929 and died in jail while awaiting his trial.

Fard founded the Lost and Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America. According to his teachings, human culture began in Africa and white people were inferior. He also preached the philosophy of **Black Nationalism** and separatism, which celebrated the beauty of people of African descent, and indicated that black people should establish a separate nation within the United States. He advised his followers to renounce their Christian or “slave” surname and replace it with “X” to symbolize their independence and rejection of Western culture. Elijah Poole became one of Fard’s most committed converts. He changed his name to Karriem and, in 1934, when Fard mysteriously disappeared, Karriem (soon to be known as Elijah Muhammad) became leader of the Nation of Islam, stating that Fard had anointed him Messenger of Allah.

Muhammad’s leadership did not go unchallenged. Fard’s sudden disappearance and Muhammad’s rise to power were too coincidental for some people, and a power struggle ensued. Muhammad moved to Chicago, where he established another temple. But even in Chicago, he was not free from the infighting. He then moved to Washington, D.C., where he remained until 1941.

After criticizing the government’s internment of Japanese citizens after Pearl Harbor, Muhammad was sentenced to five years in federal prison in Milan, Michigan, for being a draft evader. Released in 1946, he returned to Chicago to assume leadership of the temple he had started ten years before. This time, his authority was not challenged. He became the undisputed leader of the Nation of Islam and proclaimed himself Allah’s last prophet. His mission was to deliver black people out of white slavery. He urged blacks to renounce Christianity and the vices of white society and build a separate black Nation of Islam; separation, not **integration**, was Muhammad’s ultimate goal.

During the 1950s, Malcolm X, with his charismatic leadership, gave the Nation of Islam national visibility. By the early 1960s, he had become chief spokesperson and heir apparent to Elijah Muhammad. However, his meteoric rise to power was abruptly derailed in 1963 when he made inflammatory remarks about the assassination of President **John F. Kennedy**. Muhammad reprimanded Malcolm X and forbade him to make any public statements in the name of the Nation of Islam. This rupture between



Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad was never healed. Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, by men thought to be loyal to Elijah Muhammad, but Muhammad denied any complicity.

The Nation of Islam never fully recovered from the murder of Malcolm X. In the years following Malcolm's death, Muhammad led a quieter, more solitary life. During his last years, he suffered from numerous physical ailments. He died of congestive heart failure in 1975. More than 20,000 of his followers attended his funeral to bid farewell to one of the most powerful African American leaders of his generation. *See also* Farrakhan, Louis Haleem Abdul; Garvey, Marcus.

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*John G. Hall*

### **Myrdal, Gunnar Karl (1898–1987)**

Born in Gustafs, Sweden, in 1898, Gunnar Myrdal received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974, and he is widely regarded as one of the scholarly architects of the Swedish welfare state. Nevertheless, he is best known in the United States for a single work, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy*, a two-volume work published in 1944. The Carnegie Corporation, after several years of discussion, offered Myrdal a contract in 1937 to write a work on the American Negro. Although Myrdal initially did not take the proposal seriously, he eventually accepted the contract and began his work in 1938, after arriving unexpectedly with his wife, three children, two nannies, and a research assistant. Two months of touring the South in 1938, interviewing a wide range of blacks and whites (politicians, scholars, business people, laborers), showed Myrdal the remarkable depth and breadth of **racism** in the South. He recognized that an adequate explanation of racism and its causes would require a huge research effort, and he recruited many scholars to the project, including such notables as Ralph Bunche, Charles Johnson, and E. Franklin Frazier.

Although often described as jovial, Myrdal pushed his collaborators, and was known to be critical of whites and compliant blacks. He also understood that racism in the South was not in contrast to racism in the North, and that many northerners were only able to highlight the atrocities such as **lynchings** that were common in the South; the deliberate and nearly thorough exclusion of blacks in the North reflected a similar degree of racism.

His first outline for the work, offered to the Carnegie Corporation in 1939, was sixty-three pages long, suggesting the scope of the project. He

intended to show that previous scholarship on racism was inadequate, typically reflective of unacknowledged prejudice. More important, he believed in the concept of moral economics, that the social sciences were a means to the improvement of the human condition, and thus he wanted to highlight that the fundamental values of the United States and its citizens focused on all people being equal while the actual behaviors of the people showed ongoing and persistent discrimination. By highlighting the discrepancy between the core values of the nation and its people's behaviors, he hoped to raise their level of understanding and cause change.

Two University of Chicago scholars played an important role in the overall writing of the book, which consisted of several contributions by noted scholars; Myrdal wrote the key chapters and edited many of the remaining chapters. Samuel Stouffer, a sociologist, worked on the book from the spring of 1940 to the spring of 1941 when Myrdal had returned to Sweden because of the outbreak of World War II and his concerns about Sweden's possible acquiescence to the Nazis. His writing on his return was uneven until his wife and long-time collaborator, Alva, returned to the United States in the fall of 1941. Myrdal left for Sweden again in 1942, and Arnold Rose, a graduate student at the University of Chicago, finished the work in a race against pressure to complete the work as quickly as possible. Francis Keppel, head of the Carnegie Corporation, had convinced Myrdal to write the book in lay terms, and he and his fellow authors met that request. A key aspect of the work is the substantial number of appendices, which are, for the most part, the scholarly treatments of the problem as Myrdal saw it.

When the book came out, two characteristics of the United States at the time provided substantial impetus to the generally favorable reception of the book. First, the movement among blacks and some whites for greater political, economic, and social equality for blacks was gaining a great deal of strength, in part because of reactions against race riots in a number of cities, in part because court cases brought by such groups as the Legal Defense Fund of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** were beginning to show success. In addition, World War II illustrated the devastating effects of a totalitarian regime such as the Nazis, and many black soldiers returned home acutely aware that they had fought for democracy in another part of the world but were returning to widespread and politically sanctioned discrimination. Thus, *An American Dilemma* described and analyzed the problems of American values and American prejudices at the very time that many of its citizens were witnessing firsthand the sharp contrast between the American creed of all people created equal and the American behavior of separating blacks and whites in a caste system.

Until the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, conservatives paid little attention to the book, but it was cited in Footnote 11 of the decision, a footnote that drew on a variety of social science scholarship to illustrate the decidedly detrimental effects of discrimination. Thereafter, conservative scholars and commentators denounced the work, while liberals continued to use it as an example of

the destructive nature of racism. The book remained popular for both conservatives and liberals until the late 1960s. By that time one insightful critique of the book became dominant—that Myrdal primarily saw black culture as a reaction to white culture rather than having both African and African American roots that were distinct from white America. In addition, the **civil rights movement** had shifted from the legal and political challenges of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s to a far more militant conception of ways to achieve equality. Moral economics was no longer an answer; confrontation was the means to the end.

A certain irony lies with *An American Dilemma* because of the enormity of its scholarship. Although scholars spent decades contesting many of the specific findings of the book, it was so vast in its discussion of racism that the scholarship on that topic was dampened for many years. Scholars and lay commentators drew on the work rather than directly delving into the topic themselves. It remains, however, a footnote almost as powerful as Footnote 11, a massive and insightful means of viewing U.S. history. *See also An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy.*

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*Philo Hutcheson*

# N

**NAACP.** *See* National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

**NACW.** *See* National Association of Colored Women

## **Nation of Islam**

The Nation of Islam or the Black Muslims is an African American religious movement that was founded in 1930 by W.D. Fard. It is a movement based on an eclectic synthesis of worldly philosophies and religious practices, including traditional Islam adapted to the African American urban landscape. The Nation of Islam had its beginnings in the predominantly African American suburb of Detroit called Paradise Valley, which was the segregated section of Detroit where blacks were forced to congregate by Deed Restrictions that made it illegal for them to rent or own property in other areas. Paradise Valley, eulogized in a series of poems by Robert Hayden called “Elegies for Paradise Valley,” was not only the “heart and soul” of black Detroit, it was also the place where the first seeds of the Nation of Islam were sown among the thousands of black people who had come to Detroit in search of a better future but who, instead, became lost and disillusioned. The Nation of Islam offered many of the faithful tangible hope of salvation. This distinctly African American theology blended elements of Christianity with the **Black Nationalism** of **Marcus Garvey** (1887–1940), and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which specifically addressed the plight of working-class African Americans and celebrated the beauty, strength, and endurance of black people. W.D. Fard, for example, taught his followers that human culture began in Africa. He called on people of African descent to renounce the vices of Western culture, including the slave names that had been given them while they were in bondage.

The teachings of the Nation of Islam struck a responsive chord, especially during the great economic crisis of the 1930s. Although social and cultural conditions, **segregation**, and **racism** influenced the spread of Islam in the black community, it was the zealotry of the founders and subsequent leaders of the movement that have helped sustained the Nation of Islam for over three-quarters of a century. At times mysterious and solitary even to

their closest adherents, the one thing that all the influential leaders of the Black Muslims have had in common is that they were all insightful, charismatic, and controversial. And they were all “children of freedom,” members of the first generation of African Americans born after Emancipation.

Born Timothy Drew on January 8, 1886, in Simpsonbuck County, North Carolina, Noble Drew Ali was the first “prophet” to introduce Islam into the black community in Detroit. He believed that black people in the United States were Moors, a nomadic people of Arab and Berber descent whose civilization flourished in North Africa between the eighth and fifteenth centuries. He founded the Moorish Science Temple of America and published the Holy Qur’an (Koran) of the Moorish Holy Temple of Science. By the mid-1920s, he had established a temple in Detroit. In March 1929, Ali was implicated in a murder and died in jail while awaiting trial.

If Noble Drew Ali was the precursor to the founding of the Nation of Islam, W.D. Fard constructed the final foundation that future leaders were to build on. Another man of mystery, he first appeared in Paradise Valley peddling notions, trinkets, silks, and raincoats. Fard claimed he was from Arabia. He built an organization of 8,000 members, which he called the Lost and Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America. He also founded the University of Islam, the Muslim Girls Training Corps, and the Fruit of Islam, a group of men trained in the use of firearms and self-defense. In one of his most radical moves, Fard advocated an independent nation of African Americans within the United States. Among these many changes, Fard instructed his followers to renounce their slave names and adopt the last name X to symbolize their independence and rejection of Western values. In 1934, at the height of his popularity as leader of the Nation of Islam, W.D. Fard disappeared, and his disappearance remains a mystery. However, his vision continues to provide a spiritual foundation for the Nation of Islam.

One of Fard’s earliest converts was Elijah Poole, a former member of the Moorish Science Temple of America. Under Fard’s guidance, Poole changed his name to Elijah Karriem. Once Fard disappeared, Karriem emerged as **Elijah Muhammad**, stating that the Master had anointed him Messenger of Allah and the new leader of the Nation of Islam. His claims did not go uncontested. It took more than a decade and a move to Chicago for him to become firmly established as the leader of the Black Muslims. Elijah Muhammad proclaimed himself Allah’s last prophet and his mission was to lead his people out of bondage, to free them from the white man’s yoke, because their reign was imminent and blacks must prepare themselves for the day when Allah’s chosen people would rule. He urged them to renounce such vices of white society as alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and profanity, and to build a separate black Nation of Islam within the United States. His ultimate goal was separation, not **integration**.

During the 1950s, with the help of **Malcolm X**, the Black Muslim movement gained its greatest popularity. Malcolm X (formerly Malcolm Little) converted to Islam while in prison between 1946 and 1952. After his release, he became a devoted follower of Elijah Muhammad. A mesmerizing, articulate speaker and charismatic leader, Malcolm X rose quickly in the

ranks of the Black Muslims. By the early 1960s, he had become chief spokesperson for the Nation of Islam and Muhammad's apparent successor. Malcolm X was an advocate of **black self-defense**. His confrontational style and his demand for black revolution attracted young radicals to the movement. One of his earliest converts was Muhammad Ali.

However, by the 1960s, when Malcolm X had achieved national and international reputation, his influence inside the Nation of Islam was beginning to wane. In 1963, he was publicly reprimanded by Elijah Muhammad because of remarks he made after the assassination of President **John F. Kennedy**. Shortly afterward, Malcolm X resigned from the Nation of Islam. In 1965, he was assassinated. After his death, Elijah Muhammad became less active in the organization. For the next decade, groups inside the Nation of Islam began to challenge Muhammad's authority. After his death in 1975, Muhammad's son Wallace D. Muhammad (later known as Warith Deen Mohammed) was named supreme minister. He renamed the organization the World Community of Islam in the West and later the American Society of Muslims, and opened the group to individuals of all races. This change caused dissension within the Nation and, in 1977, a group of Muslims led by **Louis Farrakhan** split from the main body. However, when Farrakhan announced that whites were no longer viewed as evil and that they were welcome to join the movement, the Nation of Islam split into several groups. In 1995, Farrakhan organized the Million Man March. In 2000, Farrakhan and Mohammed ended their rivalry. Mohammed resigned in 2003. *See also* Civil Rights Movement; Farrakhan, Louis Haleem Abdul; Malcolm X; Muhammad, Elijah.

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### **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a sociopolitical body dedicated to ensuring social equity and justice for blacks in the United States. Although its current incarnation is a well-respected and influential organization with a widespread membership and board of governors whose members currently represent twenty-nine U.S. states, earlier forms of the NAACP were marginalized by the political mainstream and, in some states, local offices were the site of race hatred and violence.

The beginnings of the NAACP are to be found in a three-day conference held from July 11–13 in Fort Erie, Canada, in 1904. The twenty-nine

attendees, all black intellectuals, were gathered together there by activist **W.E.B. Du Bois** to organize what would be known as the “**Niagara movement**.” Its purpose was the complete abolition of all forms of racial discrimination and, somewhat ironically, the **segregation** of schools. Race separation was, at that time, desired by some black intelligentsia who felt that **integration** was antithetical to their left-wing social and cultural ambitions. Fearing that integration would result in children who assimilated and thereby valued American capitalism and Judeo-Christian moral dominance, some members of the Niagara movement, Du Bois in particular, argued strongly for educational segregation. This point became too contentious for many more moderate attendees and for any real progress to be made by the movement on a large scale; subsequent efforts by members would thereby forego segregation of education and the long-term wisdom of this decision has been supported by both legislation and the formal mission of what would become the NAACP which “is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination” (NAACP Mission Statement).

In addition to educational segregation, the increased election of blacks into political office and the enforcement of black voting rights in the United States were crucial agenda items of the Niagara movement. Among the notable blacks present at the conference who would become part of its five-year membership as an activist body were John Hope, J. Max Barber, and **William Monroe Trotter**. Although initially a very concentrated and organized effort, the Niagara movement gained little momentum and no popular acceptance, and so its membership and their goals dissolved and revived in the new movement for black rights that would become the NAACP.

The NAACP was founded in New York City on February 12, 1909, heralded by the publication of “The Call.” This announcement urged all leaders to abolish racially biased legislation and to take up the black cause in the United States by enforcing the Thirteenth, **Fourteenth**, and **Fifteenth Amendments**. Published in black newspapers across the United States, “The Call” successfully recruited members into the new social and political body whose national office was located in New York City. The initial board of directors for the NAACP was entirely comprised of whites, including the organization’s first president, Moorfield Storey, a white attorney. W.E.B. Du Bois, the only black initially named to an important position in the organization, was made publicity director and, by extension, editor of the NAACP’s official journal, *The Crisis*. After the initial call for other progressives to join the racial struggle, the NAACP held its first official conference in New York on May 31, 1909, with more than 300 blacks and whites in attendance. Once the NAACP became relatively established, its board of directors became increasingly comprised of blacks; by 1934, most board members were black, and this trend has continued to the present time.

Among the most notable successes of the new social body was its highly organized protest against Woodrow Wilson’s segregation of the federal government (1913) and also against **D.W. Griffith**’s film, *The Birth of a*

*Nation* (1915), in which blacks were portrayed as lazy, violent, and ignorant. Many scenes in the film depicted blacks as rapists, thugs, or watermelon-eating field hands, thus portraying a series of horrible stereotypes to a widespread audience. Outraged by these intensely offensive and socially damaging images, the NAACP launched its earliest widespread anti-defamation campaigns. Through the NAACP's rigorous advertising and lobbying, the racist film was banned or no longer shown in many cities around the country. This first use of organized protest against the film and the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** it glorified set a precedence of success that inspired the organization to move quickly and loudly against any and all misrepresentations of black people and culture. These two protests forced NAACP organizers to recognize the body's growing power and so, in 1917, they chose to use this power as a lever to force the federal government to allow blacks to be commissioned as officers in World War I. This success led to the commission of 600 black officers and the registration of 700,000 blacks for the draft. Integral to the NAACP's protests of black misrepresentation and segregation was their persistent presentation of blacks as fully enfranchised American citizens whose rights were fundamentally protected in the U.S. Constitution. It would be this Constitutional argument that would finally result in the eradication of widespread **lynching**, arguably one of the early NAACP's most important battles.

Perhaps because of its early emphasis on local organizing practices and rigorous recruitment, the NAACP's membership grew quickly, as did its number of branch offices across the United States. By 1919, the NAACP had more than 300 branch offices and 90,000 members. The year 1919 was also a noteworthy year in the NAACP for its publication of its investigative report, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*. Although the organization had spoken out against lynching as early as 1917, with this report, the NAACP took up the anti-lynching cause first emphasized in earnest by journalist **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**. Although the organization never successfully forced anti-lynching legislation to be passed on a federal or state level during this era touted by its chroniclers as the worst period of **racism** in American history, the NAACP's persistent protest against lynching is credited with its decrease and eventual cessation. Equipping all its branches with a flag hung outside each time "A Black Man Was Lynched Today," once again, the NAACP demonstrated the power of collective dissension as President Woodrow Wilson spoke out publicly against lynching. Associated as he was with the Ku Klux Klan prior to his presidency and given his elitist opinions regarding **white supremacy**, Wilson's public anti-lynching statements cannot be underestimated as an important NAACP achievement. Through the body's persistent pressure, Wilson was forced to speak out.

Even as the NAACP was still fighting lynch mobs and mob hostility against blacks on a more general level, they also began to turn their attention to the unequal access to education, housing, health care, and public transportation blacks had historically received. Fighting a series of court cases and legislation involving the unconstitutionality of discrimination in these areas so crucial to civil rights, the NAACP won a string of victories in



state and federal court, as well as in Congress. Notable among these victories were *Buchanan v. Worley* (housing districts could not be forced on blacks, 1917), admission of a black student to the University of Maryland (1935), *Morgan v. Virginia* (Supreme Court recognizes that states cannot segregate interstate public transport by bus or train, 1946), discrimination in federal government offices banned (1948), *Brown v. Board of Education* (the doctrine of separate but equal struck down in favor of desegregation, 1954), and the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.

After a series of race riots and conflicts rocked Arkansas throughout 1919 resulting in sixty-seven blacks being imprisoned and twelve sentenced to death, the NAACP became involved in an ongoing battle on behalf of blacks' receipt of due process under constitutional law (see **Elaine [Arkansas] Riot of 1919**). A nearly five-year engagement in these efforts to ensure fair trial and representation resulted in another landmark case and ultimate win in 1923's *Moore v. Dempsey*, in which the NAACP made large ground against unfair prosecution of blacks and secured the release of many of those imprisoned in the state of Arkansas and other states.

As the **civil rights movement** gathered momentum in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the NAACP discussed the role it would play in these important times. Resolute in their use of state and federal courtrooms to battle racism and discrimination, the body kept itself as a whole out of the often fractious and dangerous social battles being waged on the streets of the South. This, however, did not prevent individual members from engaging in nonviolent protests. In 1960, the NAACP's Youth Council began a series of lunch-counter sit-ins around the South, resulting in the **desegregation** of more than sixty department store eateries. In addition to these nonviolent protests, NAACP members organized widespread civil rights rallies. Due to the rallies' success, the NAACP named its first field director to oversee the legal and safety concerns of these peaceful protests. Ironically, field director and highly successful organizer **Medgar Evers** was fatally shot outside his home in 1963 (just five months before the assassination of President **John F. Kennedy**).

As the civil rights movement evolved, the NAACP did as well, eventually turning its attention to black participation in self-government through voting. Lobbying for voting sites in high schools, the NAACP persuaded twenty-four states to set up such sites by 1979. Concentration on the black vote would continue through the 1980s, as the NAACP extended the Voting Rights Act (1981) and as they registered record numbers of black voters (500,000 in 1982 alone). In tandem with their persistent efforts in the 1980s to increase political participation among the black community, the NAACP also brought global attention to apartheid in South Africa by rallying in New York City (1989) and by encouraging a boycott of that nation by all people of color. By 1993, the anti-apartheid movement was successful, and in 1994, South Africa held its first all-race elections.

Since then, the NAACP has focused on appointing racially sensitive Supreme Court justices, preventing economic hardship in the black community, promoting higher education among blacks and other people of color, and providing alternatives to gang affiliation and violent behavior for black

youths. Still thriving, still with much work to do, the NAACP continues to be a viable social, economic, legal, and political force in, and for, the black community in the United States. Although the organization's earliest and most direct connections to American literature are certainly *Crisis* editor W.E.B. Du Bois (*The Souls of Black Folk*) and poet and lyricist **James Weldon Johnson** ("Lift Every Voice and Sing"), the NAACP is also closely linked to black arts and literature through its nearly forty-year distribution of the Image Awards to black cultural producers such as Nikki Giovanni (*Quilting the Black Eyed Pea*) in 2003.

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Deirdre Ray

### National Association of Colored Women (NACW)

"Lifting as We Climb" was the motto adopted by the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) formed on July 21, 1896, in Washington, D.C. This organization was led by black activist women who had a long history of working toward equality and social justice for their people. The organization included **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, **Mary Church Terrell**, Anna Julia Cooper, Harriett Tubman, and Mary McLeod Bethune. NACW involved the merging of two key black women's organizations—the National Federation of Afro-American Women and the National League of Colored Women. This was a period during which black women's clubs were instrumental in sustaining the spirit and vitality of black communities throughout the United States. NACW published the *National Association Notes* as a tool for disseminating information of interest to black club women.

The black women's club movement evolved out of women joining together to develop mutual aid societies where they could work to ameliorate some of the social problems plaguing their communities. Black women in such cities as Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., formed intercity clubs to combat particular social ills that they witnessed ravaging their communities. The club women understood that a history of

discrimination, oppression, and racial violence was literally crippling thousands of their sisters and they aimed to address these problems through collective social activism. They focused much of their energy on improving the living conditions and status of men, women, and children through educational opportunities, job training, and life skill assessments.

The benevolence of these black women's organizations also inspired them to honor those individuals who were actively engaged in what they deemed important race work on behalf of their people. Club women began to visualize how they might do more to contribute to their various community issues. Thus, the seed was planted for NACW, a coalition of black women's organizations that would build on the history and legacy of the hundreds of black women's charitable organizations.

The formation of NACW grew out of a specific meeting by various representatives of women's clubs who came together on that July day to protest a letter written by James Jacks, the white president of the Missouri Association. Jacks hoped to quell the activities of the anti-lynching campaign organized by Ida B. Wells-Barnett by labeling all black women as prostitutes and thieves in a news publication. In response to this brutal assault of the character and dignity of black women, club women including Terrell and St. Pierre Ruffin held a meeting in Washington, D.C., to discuss how to best respond to Jacks' verbal assault.

At the meeting they rationalized that their response would require a mobilized effort to continue their work for racial and social uplift of their people as a coalition. They elected Mary Church Terrell as their first national president. Terrell, having worked tirelessly to end both racial and gender inequality in the United States, was a founder and natural leader of this organization. Understanding the need for black women's organizations to harness collective energy and individual and/or social activism was essential to her leadership of this organization. Terrell admonished the women in her organization to consider all that they were obligated to do as privileged members of their race who had received education and opportunities for self-improvement. She further acknowledged the dire need for black women to speak out against a heap of injustices across gender and racial lines.

Terrell saw NACW as a vehicle for providing substantive, transformative change in the lives of individuals who were personally affected by the travesty of racial injustice. A gifted orator and leader, Terrell was both convincing and dogmatic in her ability to persuade people to participate in and support her efforts. She regularly gave speeches around the country to increase participation and maximize opportunities to get black women to work together.

Anti-lynching legislation was one of their primary platforms and, more importantly, the NACW women were instrumental in dismantling the oppressive system that allowed lynching to flourish in the United States. During the fifty-year period between 1880 and 1930, there were at least 2,362 black men, women, and children lynched. These startling numbers necessitated action on the part of the NACW. The women of NACW joined forces with the **National Association for the Advancement of**

**Colored People (NAACP)** and worked within their various clubs to support initiatives to promote black advancement. Specific NACW efforts included fundraising for education, training, and social service care for their people. NACW worked with other organizations to form the **National Urban League**. They also raised funds to restore the home of activist Frederick Douglass. In addition, NACW member Ida B. Wells-Barnett encouraged women to participate in both the suffrage and anti-lynching movements. In 1912, NACW began a national scholarship fund for college-bound black women. In 1913, the Northeastern Federation of Women's Clubs worked with the NAACP to hold anti-lynching rallies. More specifically, women in these organizations worked as members of a group called the Anti-Lynching Crusaders to galvanize one million women to suppress lynching and to pass the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill. Although the bill was not passed, the efforts of these women were later the model and inspiration for the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching in 1930. Black women in clubs were influential in fighting racial and sexual oppression through their active involvement in numerous social service activities and their work was instrumental in countering the hegemonic practices of the nation in which they lived. *See also* Anti-Lynching Legislation; Lynching.

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*Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

**National Equal Rights League.** *See* Equal Rights League

### **National Urban League**

The National Urban League was founded in 1911 to ameliorate the social conditions affecting urban American Negroes. Due to the oppressive forces of **Jim Crow** and **segregation**, many southern blacks began to migrate to the North. On September 29, 1910, in New York City, to address the numerous challenges that these new northerners faced, two important individuals were instrumental in creating an organization called the Committee on Urban Conditions among Negroes. Ruth Standish Baldwin, a widow and social activist, worked with Dr. George Edmund Haynes (the first black person to receive a doctorate from Columbia University) to form this organization.

The evolution of the National Urban League occurred when two organizations (the Committee on Urban Conditions among Negroes and the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions among Negroes) merged to form the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes. The

name was shortened to the National Urban League in 1920. The National Urban League originally served those Negroes who were migrating from the South to the North in search of jobs and improved social conditions. The primary purpose of the organization in its early days was to address social and economic issues facing Negroes who were in dire need of employment, job training, housing, and health services. The National Urban League worked to provide assistance through community centers, clinics, camps, and affiliated organizations. The league was led by Professor Edwin R.A. Seligman of Columbia University, Mrs. Baldwin, and Dr. Haynes during the early days between 1911 and 1918.

The organization began to strategically attack perceptions of the intellectual inferiority of Negroes during the 1920s and 1930s. Sociologist Charles S. Johnson became the director of research and investigation for the National Urban League in 1921. Johnson founded the League's first publication. Between 1923 and 1949, the organization published a journal, *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*. The motto of the journal was "Not Aims, but Opportunity." As editor of the journal, Charles Johnson also worked hard to dispel myths about Negroes, and the journal published numerous sociological studies with scientific methods for this purpose. Also, under the editorship of Charles Johnson, *Opportunity* was a leading force in publishing the work of Negro literary writers of the time. *Opportunity* published works by Gwendolyn Bennett, Langston Hughes, **James**

**Weldon Johnson**, and Countee Cullen. It was through this vehicle that Charles Johnson became a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

At the helm of the league from 1918 to 1941 was Eugene Kinckle Jones, who was instrumental in organizing boycotts against companies and employers that would not hire blacks. He consistently pushed schools to expand their vocational programs for young people, and pressured Washington, D.C., officials to include blacks in New Deal programs. He also began the work to get blacks included in previously segregated labor unions.

Lester B. Granger was appointed successor to Eugene Jones and continued to work diligently to integrate the racist trade unions that were in existence at that time. Granger's leadership was focused on increasing the number of job opportunities for blacks and he was successful in developing the league's Industrial Relations Laboratory, which worked to integrate the numerous defense plants that were active during this period. Granger was also very supportive of the National Urban League Guild, which was led by Mollie Moon on behalf of the league.



Cab Calloway painting a picture for the Urban League Art Exhibit by Famous Amateurs, September 1948. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

One of the National Urban League's most famous leaders was social worker and civil rights activist Whitney M. Young, Jr., who succeeded Granger as executive director in 1961. Prior to Young's leadership, the National Urban League was considered one of the more conservative civic organizations. Often referred to as the Urban League, the organization was frequently focused on providing direct social services to its target population. Whitney Young worked actively to move the National Urban League forward and align it with other civil rights organizations. Young worked jointly with other civil rights leaders to organize the March on Washington in 1963. The National Urban League also helped to organize the Poor People's Campaign of 1968. During the ten years that Whitney Young was executive director of the National Urban League, there were significant improvements in the Urban League. The number of local chapters of the Urban League increased from sixty to ninety-eight, the staff of the organization increased from 500 to 1,200, and there was an increased amount of monetary support to the league.

Whitney Young died unexpectedly in March 1971. After the death of Whitney Young, Vernon Jordan became president of the organization. Jordan began to lead the organization in the direction of implementing programs that would focus on health, housing, education, and job training. The Urban League began to publish a journal called the *Urban League Review* in 1975. Jordan also promoted Ron Brown to general counsel of the Urban League. Vernon Jordan was shot in the back by a confessed white supremacist on May 29, 1980, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, after delivering an address to the Fort Wayne Urban League. Jordan was hospitalized for months after this attempt on his life. He decided to resign from the Urban League in 1981. Under his leadership, the National Urban League tripled its budget and was able to hire many additional employees due to Jordan's ability to obtain significant corporate funding for the organization.

John E. Jacob succeeded Jordan as the leader of the Urban League in 1982. In 1982, the organization began publishing *The State of Black America*. Jacob established a permanent development fund to secure the financial future of the league and also established awards and programs in honor of former leader, Whitney Young. The Urban League began to highlight important social justice issues affecting the lives of black Americans. The league focused on emphasizing the importance of implementing self-help programs that would address issues of teen pregnancy and single parenthood in the black community.

Hugh B. Price became leader of the National Urban League in 1994. Price established the Institute of Opportunity and Equality in Washington, D.C. This institute conducted a research and public policy analysis of urban issues. Price also focused on implementing scholarship programs and assessing ways to increase academic achievement among black youth. The current president of the National Urban League is Marc H. Morial, a former New Orleans, Louisiana, mayor, who has already contributed greatly to securing millions of dollars in funding for the League's future endeavors.

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*Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

**Nebraska.** See Omaha (Nebraska) Riot of 1919

### ***The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Moynihan, 1965)***

Known as the *Moynihan Report* because it was published in March 1965 by U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Planning **Daniel Patrick Moynihan**, the study titled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* looked at the potential of contemporary African Americans to move from where they were to where they wanted to be, and where they ought to have been. It found evidence that a weakened and oppressed African American social structure and, in particular, the African American family, was eroding. While many African Americans were advancing socially, many more were falling further behind.

The report acknowledged the effects of chattel slavery and unemployment on African Americans and the inequality that they had experienced throughout the history of the United States. It held that unless this injury was healed, any efforts to end discrimination, poverty, and injustice would result in little change. It did not propose how the injury could be healed, rather it attempted only to define the injury. The report did, however, find that injury to be the most important domestic event of the post-Civil War period in the United States and it recommended that a national effort led by the federal government was required to establish a stable African American social structure.

The findings of the *Moynihan Report* were based on the research of E. Franklin Frazier and other sociologists, who found that the weakened African American family structure served as the basis for many social problems. The findings revealed that almost a quarter of urban African Americans had experienced failed marriages, illegitimate births, and families headed by women. According to the report, these situations meant that the fathers were absent, which caused increased expansion of welfare programs, a predictable outcome on delinquency and crime rates, and the failure of youths to realize the American Dream.

Sociologists, civil rights organizations, and women's organizations viewed the *Moynihan Report* as an instance of blaming the victim. This view persisted because the report was seen as shifting accountability from systematic inequality in the United States to the structural inequality of the African

American family structure. In doing so, it ignored the exclusion of African American men from provider roles and African American families from the commodity culture, consequences that forced African American women into domestic servant roles and prevented African American families from enjoying the benefits of pooling their resources. In essence, the report portrayed the erosion of the American family as a phenomenon unique to African Americans and therefore not as a major problem for other races in the United States.

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Aaron Peron Ogletree

### **Negroes with Guns (Williams, 1962)**

*Negroes with Guns* is a book written by **Robert F. Williams** in 1962, while he was living in exile in Cuba. The title refers to an armed group called the Black Guard, which was formed to defend the black community of Monroe, North Carolina. The book tells the story of a small black community's harrowing confrontation with the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and a racist Justice Department and law enforcement. It also explores the origins of Williams' controversial philosophy of **black self-defense** and subsequent opposition from the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** and civil rights organizations. Although less than 100 pages in length, *Negroes with Guns* inspired a host of black leaders, such as **Stokely Carmichael**, **Huey P. Newton**, **H. Rap Brown**, **Eldridge Cleaver**, and **Malcolm X**, thus helping to usher in the era of **Black Power**.

Black self-defense was not a new concept. After President Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery during the Civil War, anti-black violence ran rampant throughout the South. Free blacks threatened **white supremacy**. As a result, racist whites employed violence, as well as discriminatory laws, to maintain their social, economic, and political dominance. Whites freely threatened, harassed, and murdered individuals and rioted in black communities. In response to these attacks, some blacks fought bravely, though they were rarely successful. During the twentieth century, numerous other black communities were destroyed, such as Greenwood, Oklahoma (see **Greenwood Community**) in 1921 and Rosewood, Florida (see **Rosewood [Florida] Riot of 1923**), and only a few individuals in these communities survived despite attempts at collective self-defense.

In *Negroes with Guns*, Williams explains that he gained his first knowledge of racial violence and black protest through the stories of his grandmother, who had been a slave. Before her death, his grandmother gave him a rifle "that his grandfather had wielded against white terrorists at the turn of the century" (Williams 1998, xvii). After high school, Williams joined the U.S. Marines, where he learned how to handle and use arms.



After being dishonorably discharged from the Marines for challenging its discriminatory practices, Williams returned home to Monroe. Once home, Williams experienced firsthand the violence and threats directed at the small, local chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Although many members quit the organization for fear of their lives, Williams stood firm and was elected president of the Monroe chapter of the NAACP in 1956. Over the next few years, Williams transformed the group. In general, the NAACP was comprised of middle-class and professional blacks, and it strictly adhered to the philosophy of **nonviolence**. In contrast, Williams' chapter consisted largely of veterans, laborers, farmers, domestic workers, and the unemployed, and they subscribed to the concept of self-defense.

In *Negroes with Guns*, Williams describes the circumstances that led him to advocate self-defense. In addition to receiving frequent threats, Williams and other activists, while picketing in protest in 1961 for the right of black children to use a public swimming pool, were threatened and harassed by private individuals and police officers. Two black women, one of whom was pregnant, were assaulted by two white men on separate occasions. Both men were acquitted. After the court case involving the beating and attempted rape of the pregnant woman, Williams vowed publicly to meet violence with violence. Consequently, he was suspended from the NAACP for six months. Delegates at an NAACP convention later made a statement in support of self-defense, but **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, was the only one to publicly side with Williams.

Williams felt that it was only natural and right for a people to protect themselves against brutality, especially in the absence of support from law enforcement and other authorities established to provide that protection. Williams did not disagree with the concept of nonviolence, and his branch of the NAACP engaged in many nonviolent demonstrations. Williams believed that within the movement, both nonviolence and self-defense were acceptable and essential. But he also argued that his philosophy was more effective than those of other civil rights organizations. Because the members of his group were willing to defend themselves, their demonstrations provoked less violence than activities such as the **Freedom Rides**.

Williams' self-defense group, formed in the 1960s and called the Black Guard, proved to be effective in subduing and averting Ku Klux Klan violence. Members of the Black Guard were trained by Williams and were charter members of the National Rifle Association. They received donations from various organizations, churches, and individuals—whites included—to purchase guns and rifles. On several occasions, they engaged in shoot-outs with **white mobs** and the Klan, without fatalities on either side. The Black Guard was even called on when the freedom riders, an interracial group of activists, arrived in Monroe to help the civil rights cause there. With Williams' support and assistance, the freedom riders found volunteers in Monroe, all of whom took an oath of nonviolence, which meant that they were not allowed to defend themselves if attacked. Williams even "stated that if they could show [him] any gains won from the racists by nonviolent methods, [he] too would become a pacifist" (Williams 1998, 41). However, the

freedom riders were attacked, and shortly thereafter, whites drove into the black community and “fired out of their cars and threw objects at people on the streets” (Williams 1998, 47). Blacks armed themselves to defend their community and a riot ensued.

During the riot, Williams helped protect a white couple he believed drove unintentionally into the community. When state troopers arrived to “restore law and order,” Williams fled to New York, where he heard that the white couple he had protected had accused him of kidnapping them. Williams was forced to take refuge in Cuba. He moved to China in 1963. He was allowed to return to the United States in exchange for information President Richard Nixon wanted on China. Until his death in 1995, Williams continued to support the struggle for civil rights.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967**

The Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967 pitted residents of the city’s predominantly black neighborhoods against mostly white police and military forces. After five days of unrest, which ranged from July 12 through July 17, 1967, 23 people were dead, over 700 people were injured, and approximately 1,500 people were arrested. After the **Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965** (also known as the Watts riot) and **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1967**, the 1967 Newark riot was the most severe episode of urban unrest to take place in the United States during the 1960s (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). While a majority of white respondents and some African Americans label the Newark event a *riot*, some black and white political activists refer to it as a *rebellion* or *uprising*. Since the majority of victims were killed or injured by the police and military rather than by civilians of the opposite race, it might be a misnomer to call this event a *race riot*.

### ***Underlying Structural Conditions***

By July 1967, Newark was “ready to riot” (Wright 1968). After nearly three decades of black migration from the South and the flight of the white population to the surrounding suburbs, by 1967, Newark had become a majority black city. “Between 1960 and 1967, the city lost a net total of more than 70,000 residents. In six years the city switched from 65 percent white to 52 percent Negro and 10 percent Puerto Rican and Cuban” (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 57). Yet, despite having attained a residential majority in Newark, black people held little formal political power—only two of nine city council seats. Of 1,512 Newark police officers on duty in 1966, only 145 (less than 10 percent) were black. In the

schools, black teachers remained a minority, while the student body of several schools became largely black and Latino. In 1967, the local branch of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** urged that Wilbur Parker, the first black certified public accountant (CPA) in the state of New Jersey, be appointed to fill an anticipated vacancy on the Board of Education. Despite such pressure, Mayor Hugh Addonizio appointed an Irish high school graduate named James T. Callaghan to the prestigious post. This fueled resentment among black people in Newark who felt that even with the proper qualifications they could be denied commensurate employment.

For less-educated African Americans, particularly recent migrants from the South, the job situation in Newark was worsening. Drawn by the promise of steady factory employment, southern blacks continued to move to Newark. At the same time, however, large employers like General Electric and Westinghouse were closing their manufacturing plants in Newark. As a result, unskilled and semi-skilled industrial jobs were in short supply. Unemployment rose within the city of Newark. By 1967, unemployment among Newark's black population stood at 11.5 percent, roughly double that of the white population. In Newark's predominantly black neighborhoods, a sense of hopelessness set in.

These structural changes were most strongly felt in Newark's Central Ward, a previously mixed neighborhood of black migrants and Jewish immigrants that, by 1967, had been transformed into an almost exclusively black ghetto. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Central Ward became the site of numerous high-rise public housing projects. By 1967, Newark had the highest proportion of residents living in public housing of any city in the country, earning the nickname *The Brick City*. Then, in 1967, Newark's Central Ward became the target of a massive urban renewal campaign centered around the construction of a new campus for the University Medical and Dental School of New Jersey (UMDNJ), formerly located in Jersey City. Newark city officials believed that the medical school would be an anchor for the redevelopment of the Central Ward and began to draw up plans to declare parts of the Central Ward as dilapidated in preparation to clear land for the medical complex. The city's initial plan was to clear 20 to 30 acres of land, but the medical school asked for 150 acres. As a result, the area targeted for renewal was considerably enlarged, which in turn provoked a wave of protest among homeowners and tenants whose land and homes were slated to be taken by eminent domain. Public meetings regarding the medical school became especially contentious, in part due to the presence of militant activists who sought to disrupt the meetings and derail the construction of the medical complex.

Among these so-called militant activists were members of the Newark Community Union Project, an offshoot of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded by Tom Hayden, as well as members of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, and representatives of the United Community Corporation (a local anti-poverty organization). Along with the black nationalist poet/playwright Leroi Jones (now Amiri Baraka), these groups gave voice to the anger of the black community at the white political establishment.

A National Conference on Black Power planned for July of that year raised fears among the politicians and police of the potential for racial unrest.

As with the 1967 Detroit riot, a major source of unrest in Newark involved the deterioration in police-community relations. In the years leading up to the riot, Newark police were involved in a series of high-profile incidents. In July 1965, twenty-two-year-old Lester Long was shot and killed by police after a “routine” traffic stop. A few weeks later, Bernard Rich, a twenty-six-year-old African American man, died in police custody under mysterious circumstances while locked in his jail cell. On Christmas Eve that year, Walter Mathis, age seventeen, was fatally wounded by an “accidental” weapons discharge while being searched for illegal contraband. Despite calls for the appointment of a civilian police review board and hiring of more African American policemen, such proposals went unheeded. On July 7, 1967, just five days before the riot began, Newark and East Orange police raided a house inhabited by a group of Black Muslims. In a fruitless search for illegal weapons, they detained and interrogated the occupants of the house, allegedly beating them with their batons. This incident alone had the potential to spark unrest and certainly helped set that stage for the events that followed on July 12.

### ***The Precipitating Incident***

The Newark Riot of 1967 began on the evening of July 12 with the arrest of a cab driver named John Smith for an alleged traffic violation. After driving past a double-parked police car, Smith and an unnamed passenger were stopped by Officers John Desimone and Vito Pontrelli and pulled over. As the passenger fled the scene, a scuffle ensued between Smith and the arresting officers. John Smith was reportedly beaten by the police officers en route to the Fourth Precinct’s police headquarters on Seventeenth Street and Belmont Avenue (now Irvine Turner Boulevard). According to eyewitness accounts and the officer’s testimony, John Smith was dragged into the Fourth Precinct house and placed in a jail cell. A crowd soon began to gather outside, and local civil rights leaders were contacted by residents of a public housing project that stood across the street from the Fourth Precinct building.

A group of civil rights leaders including Robert Curvin, representative of CORE, arrived at the Fourth Precinct at about the same time as Newark Police Inspector Kenneth Melchior. These civil rights leaders entered the building and were allowed to see the prisoner in his cell. Noting that Smith was injured, Curvin persuaded Inspector Melchior to have Smith transported to the hospital. Due to the crowd assembled at the front entrance, John Smith was taken out the back door to a police car and driven to Newark Beth Israel Hospital. Curvin volunteered to speak to the assembled crowd and was provided with a police bullhorn. By this time, rumors had circulated that John Smith had died in police custody. Curvin stood on top of a police car and sought to calm the crowd, but his speech had the opposite effect. He encouraged people to line up for a peaceful protest, but was soon shouted down. A hail of bottles, bricks, and a couple of Molotov

cocktails hit the Fourth Precinct. Officers charged out of the building to disperse the crowd, but as the crowd dispersed, people started looting nearby stores. The looting did not spread very far beyond the Fourth Precinct.

### ***Initial Police Response***

By the following afternoon, Thursday, July 13, Mayor Addonizio proclaimed that the disturbance was over. However, some police officials worried that that violence might resume at nightfall. A protest rally coordinated by CORE and the Newark Community Union Project (NCUP) was slated to be held at the Fourth Precinct later that evening. Based on his personal premonitions, Deputy Police Chief Redden ordered all of the men under his command to report for twelve-hour shifts. By 7:30 P.M., a crowd of over 300 people stood in front of the Fourth Precinct. Mayor Addonizio sent his personal representative James Threat to inform the crowd that in deference to their demands a well-known African American police lieutenant would be appointed to the rank of captain. This promise failed to ameliorate the anger of the crowd, and soon thereafter, a volley of rocks and bottles was thrown at the police. The event at that time seemed like a replay of the previous evening. Once again, police charged into the crowd and dispersed the protesters, and once again looting spread to the nearby business thoroughfare. But unlike the previous evening, the looting spread in numerous directions, including the downtown. Stores along Springfield Avenue, Prince Street, and downtown on Broad Street were looted and set on fire. By 9:00 P.M., Deputy Chief Redden told the mayor that they needed help, but was overruled by the mayor and Police Director Domenic Spina, who were reluctant to call for assistance from the state police. At 1:30 A.M., Spina called the state police and reminded them of their plan to provide assistance if necessary. At 2:30 A.M., Spina called Mayor Addonizio and said that state police help was needed immediately. Finally, just after 2:30 A.M., Mayor Addonizio called Governor Hughes and asked him to deploy both the New Jersey State Police and the National Guard. By 3:00 A.M., when Colonel Kelly of the New Jersey State Police arrived to meet with Mayor Addonizio, Addonizio proclaimed, "the whole town is gone" (Porambo, 117).

### ***State Police and National Guard Arrive***

Around 5:30 A.M., the first detachment of state troopers arrived in Newark, followed by the first National Guard units around 7:00 A.M. The National Guard and state police set up camp at the Roseville Armory in the city's North Ward. Their arrival was cheered by the mostly Italian residents of that community. A loose command structure was put in place with Colonel Kelly of the state police in nominal command of both the state police and National Guard troops. The Newark police remained under the command of Police Director Spina. But due to incompatible radio frequencies and a clash of egos among leaders of the three agencies, there was little actual coordination of police and military units. Indicative of the larger command problems, Colonel Kelly of the state police had to procure his own

maps of the city. As troops fanned out across the city, they sought to establish a series of checkpoints, with three guardsmen manning each of 137 street blockades. Until Thursday night, there had been only twenty-six arrests and no reported deaths. By the end of the day on Friday, over 900 people had been arrested, and 10 people had been fatally shot (9 of the 10 by police).

As the Newark police, state police, and National Guard patrolled the city from Friday night through Saturday evening, gunfire erupted. Police and military officials claimed that gunfire was the result of snipers, but in a few well-documented cases, police and guardsmen were in fact firing on one another. On Saturday evening, believing that snipers were firing from the rooftops of public housing projects, national guardsmen and state police unleashed waves of machine-gun fire on those buildings, fatally wounding several apartment dwellers, including Eloise Spellman, a mother of ten children who was shot in the neck while pulling her children away from the window. Also on Friday night, Fire Captain Michael Moran was killed while responding to a false alarm at a building on South Orange Avenue. While climbing a ladder to the second-floor window, he was struck in the back by an alleged sniper's bullet. Moran was one of only two whites to die during the entire five days of rioting. The other was Police Detective Fred Toto, who was also allegedly struck by a sniper's bullet the previous evening.

### ***The Riot Dwindles***

By Sunday morning, reports were arriving from residents and merchants who claimed that Newark police and state police officers were shooting into storefronts and looting merchandise. Some shopkeepers, whites included, had painted the words *Soul Brother* on their windows with the hope that their businesses would be left undisturbed, but according to testimony before the Governor's Commission on Civil Disorders, these stories became targets for retribution at the hands of the mostly white police forces. Nonetheless, despite these isolated incidents, the riot was winding down. National guardsmen began distributing food and Governor Hughes offered clemency to any looters who could provide information leading to the arrest and conviction of a sniper (Porambo, 121). During this twenty-four-hour period, from Sunday to Monday morning, three more people were killed: one a suspected looter, another a suspected car thief, and the third, a teenage boy struck by a police bullet while taking out the garbage outside his house. By Monday afternoon, the National Guard barricades had been lifted and the troops had begun their withdrawal from the city.

### ***Aftermath***

At the conclusion of five days of rioting, 23 people were dead and over 750 people were injured. Newark firefighters had responded to approximately 250 fires and 64 false alarms. According to an official count, state police and national guardsmen had expended 13,319 rounds of ammunition (Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorders 1972; Porambo, 122).

Despite the relatively short duration of this episode of unrest, the riot has had a lasting impact on the city of Newark. For some political activists in the black community, the rebellion was empowering, promoting racial solidarity and paving the way for the election of Ken Gibson, the city's first black mayor. Others, both black and white, believe that the riot tore the community apart. After the riot, the pace of white flight accelerated. The last remaining segment of the city's Jewish population, located in the Weequahic section, left the city, as did whites who lived on the city's west side. Those whites who remained were largely from the Italian section in the North Ward and the Portuguese population of the East Ward/Ironbound. Both of these communities had been heavily defended during the riots by a combination of armed citizen patrols and National Guard troops. After the riot, racial polarization increased, manifested by clashes over schooling and housing between Italians and African Americans. Several large insurance companies decided to move their corporate headquarters out of Newark (Prudential Insurance Company was a notable exception). Heavy and light industry continued to decline and unemployment continued to increase. The municipal tax base eroded and city services were cut. The 1970s and 1980s were characterized by poverty, crime, and fiscal crisis. As with Detroit, it is quite possible that this situation would have existed anyway, independent of the riots. Yet, Newark, like Detroit, has struggled with the stigma of being a riot city.

In recent years, beginning in the mid-1990s, Newark has made somewhat of a comeback, constructing a world-class performing arts center, renovating its downtown office buildings, and attracting capital investment from New York-based real estate entrepreneurs. With federal HOPE VI funds, the city has demolished much of its high-rise public housing and replaced it with low-rise townhouses available for low-income residents. Yet Newark continues to struggle with a high percentage of its residents on public assistance, an underperforming school system operating under state receivership, and a recent spate of gang-related homicides. Although the central business district has experienced a renaissance, it is unclear how long it will take for this renaissance to bear fruit in the city's more impoverished and neglected neighborhoods. The future of Newark, almost forty years after the riots of July 1967, remains an open question.

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*Max Herman*

### New Bedford (Massachusetts) Riot of 1970

The New Bedford civil disorders of July 1970—sometimes called *the rebellion* by participants, sometimes simply called *the riots* by local residents—occurred during a summer of ghetto rioting in small cities, with upheavals in nearly a dozen communities in nine states, including **Asbury Park**, New Jersey; Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Lima, Ohio; and Mathis, Texas. By the definitions used in the **Kerner Commission Report (1968)**, the New Bedford violence constituted a serious, even major civil disturbance. During the month, this city of just over 100,000 people, sixty miles south of Boston, witnessed extensive arson, intensive looting, dozens of sniper incidents, and sizeable street crowds confronting local, area, and state police. Although the use of National Guard forces was urged repeatedly by the city government, and a unit at the nearby Fall River armory was placed on alert several days into the events, those forces were never used.

The complaints among the aggrieved in New Bedford, heard from the pulpit, dais, and street corner for years, were similar to those that animated rioting in hundreds of communities between 1963 and 1968: high unemployment, inadequate educational facilities, poor housing, and a shortage of recreation space. The trigger was also familiar: the arrest of a young African American man in the early evening hours of July 8 in the predominantly black West End of town, near the main avenue in that section, Kempton Street. An increasing occurrence in the late 1960s that had generated a ritual inundation of the central police station by family and friends, activists, and community leaders, this time the lid seemed to come off a city long perceived as a backwater in an age of civil rights struggles. The city did have a long tradition of dissent. Religiously tolerant, racially diverse, and socially progressive from its earliest days, it was home to Quakers and Baptists, free people of color (including an especially large fugitive slave community), and a significant abolitionist presence. There were warm-weather youthful skirmishes with police in the sixties, but only with **Martin Luther King, Jr.**'s assassination in April 1968, and the violence paled in comparison to what occurred elsewhere in the country. Generally, New Bedford lived in the shadow of big cities like Boston to the north.

July 8 changed that, at least for the moment. Although spontaneous and initially unorganized, by 1:00 A.M. on July 9, the city witnessed clashes between scores of youth and police and firefighters. There were injuries on both sides, the first of many that month. The young people in the West End built homemade barricades from overturned and burning cars, threw rocks and other debris, started numerous fires, and even began sniping at vehicles moving through the neighborhood, including police vehicles, though no one was shot. On more than one occasion, police drew their guns, though they did not discharge them. Most alarming to some was the common chant from the crowds: *Off the pig!* and *Pigs out of the community.*

This was not merely a reflection of what had become common radical parlance; it indicated the presence of the group that had popularized such language, the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, which everywhere sought to organize and direct such rebellions. Begun in Oakland, California, in the fall of 1966 as



the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, by 1968 it had cropped the title to denote a political party and simultaneously went national. That summer, a chapter was established in Boston. Two years later, there was no organized Panther presence in New Bedford, but there was organizing activity, spearheaded by ex-gang member and radicalized Vietnam veteran Frank “Parky” Grace. For six months, he had been bringing from Boston newspapers, buttons, posters—and sometimes Panthers, who spoke to gatherings of young people at a teen hangout on Kempton Street they called The Club. Some in the audience would come to identify as Panthers and form the core of the future New Bedford National Committee to Combat Fascism (1970–1971), a Panther front organization, and the New Bedford branch of the BPP (1971–1972).

But, that part of July 1970 was in the future on the night of July 8. By the time things had calmed in the wee hours of July 9, police had arrested three men in their early twenties, just the initial crop of hundreds arrested during the month. First was Warren Houtman, a militant black, perhaps for driving with a defective car light, perhaps for demonstrating the sound and speed of his souped-up car—eyewitness, police, and press reports conflict, as do memories. Next was Charlie Perry, known for his street-fighting abilities and a good friend of Parky Grace; he would soon become a Panther, too. That night, he was taken in for helping a black girl escape the police in the troubled aftermath of Houtman’s arrest. And, finally, there was Jimmy Magnett, arrested, apparently, just for being there. Well known as a fiery voice at local meetings and in the letters-to-the-editor column of the local paper, the *Standard Times*, Magnett was identified in press reports as the Defense Minister of a veterans group called the Black Brothers Political Party, a group to which Grace also belonged.

The next night, July 9, the violence escalated and spread to the South End of the city, which meant significant involvement of Puerto Ricans and the key element in New Bedford’s ethnic and racial mix, the Cape Verdeans. The only substantial African migration to America that was not a forced migration of slaves, the Cape Verdeans came from an island archipelago off Senegal that had been colonized in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese as an outpost of the Atlantic slave trade. The islands soon became an entrepot for trade and labor, attracting people from all over the world. Because of extensive intermixing, the islanders ranged in color from dark-skinned to fair-skinned, some with blue eyes and straight hair. The Cape Verdeans, then, were neither white nor black, Portuguese nor African. They came to New Bedford as early as the late eighteenth century—initially, as part of the whaling industry, later to work in the cranberry bogs and textile mills—and found themselves shunned by so-called white Portuguese as “colored,” just as they sought to distance themselves from what they derisively called “Americans de couer” (Americans of color). But, in the context of the mid-1960s emergence of black consciousness in America’s Negro communities, a younger generation of Cape Verdeans would become “black.” And, in New Bedford, the Cape Verdean capital of the United States, the Cape Verdeans outnumbered Negroes by two to one. They would be a significant constituency for those who sought to widen and deepen the rebellion, but especially for those local Cape Verdeans who identified as Panthers.

Parky Grace and Charlie Perry were both Cape Verdean, although they lived in the West End, which was predominantly West Indian, southern black, and Afro-Indian. Another Cape Verdean and Black Panther, Dickie Duarte, would use a megaphone taken in the looting to proselytize young Cape Verdeans at Monte's Park in the South End. Meanwhile, all sought to build ties to the shrewd organizer who emerged among the Latino population farther south, Ramon "Tito" Morales. With a white man arrested carrying a loaded shotgun near the West End, union construction workers threatening to march on it, and three white radicals from Fall River nabbed for attempted arson in support of the rioters—all in the first couple of days—the mayor, city council, police, and press worried about maintaining control.

By Friday, July 10, a crew from Boston's public broadcasting station was in town filming interviews for the July 16 airing of, *Say, Brother!*, the first TV show in the country produced for and by black people. On tape, black men in the West End, where the anger on the screen seemed to rise like the steam from the city's sweltering streets, called the events "the awakening of a sleeping giant"; the mayor called the events a "revolt"; a young black called it a "revolution!" And all this before the incident of Saturday, July 11, which turned street violence into a true conflagration. Early that evening, as scores of mostly young people milled about in front of The Club where the Panthers had proselytized local youth earlier in the year, a gray-and-white 1957 Chevy containing three young whites from adjacent towns breached the barricades set up on the first night of trouble, and stopped in the middle of the street. The driver emerged from the car, laid a shotgun across the roof, and fired point-blank into the crowd. Dozens of shotgun pellets sprayed across the torso of seventeen-year-old Lester Lima, from his neck to his navel, riddling both arms and piercing his heart, liver, and intestines. A Cape Verdean from the South End, he was identified in the press as a black teenager. Whisked from the scene in a car by Magnett and others, Lima died shortly after arrival at the local hospital. Three others were seriously wounded by the scattered pellets.

By the first of the following week, in the wake of a dramatic escalation of violence after the shooting, two outside forces intervened. One, whose effect was largely ephemeral, came from the Massachusetts congressional delegation, most importantly in the person of Edward Brooke, the first black Republican U.S. senator since Reconstruction. After touring the riot areas, he appointed an ad hoc committee of local activists to negotiate with the mayor, city council, and police department. More significant for the course of events was the simultaneous arrival of several Boston Panthers, who set up shop—as a branch of the NCCF—in the partially burned and looted remains of a local institution called Pieraccini's Variety on Kempton Street. For the mayor, the council, and the police, they were the quintessential outside agitators, the cause of the trouble.

During the month of July, this headquarters, as Parky Grace and others called it, became a kind of cross-generational community center; the Panthers ran it, but people of varying degrees of politicization came to talk, debate, discover. It also functioned as a kind of on-the-spot liberation school

with outdoor classes; the text was usually *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. Pieraccini's was also a distribution center for Panther literature—leaflets, pamphlets, newspapers, posters. Most crucially, though, for the political and business establishment in New Bedford, the storefront was a fortress, complete with sandbags, gun slots, and a cache of weapons—thanks largely to the expertise of local radicalized Vietnam veterans.

When renewed rioting began in the South End during the week of July 27, after weeks of skirmishing, and especially when the violent winds blew back into the West End, rumors were rife that the city had had enough and intended to raid Pieraccini's to search for illegal weapons. At a press conference on July 30, the Panthers offered to open their doors, as long as their lawyers could be present. The officers came too late. At about 6:00 A.M. on the morning of July 31, a local resident named Stephen Botelho drove to police headquarters to report that he had been shot. While driving home from work on Kempton Street just after passing Pieraccini's, he claimed, a sniper had shot at his car, wounding him in the right ankle. Botelho's report would provide the catalyst for a massive raid by local police, with state police standing by and hovering overhead in helicopters.

Twenty-one people were arrested emerging from or standing outside Pieraccini's that morning, giving birth to what would be known, briefly, as the New Bedford 21. From the beginning and throughout, the group was associated with the Panthers, for Pieraccini's was essentially a Panther building, occupied by several people known to be members of the Boston Panther chapter. Still, some were merely community supporters, some unaffiliated activists, and some complete innocents. In any case, the charges against those arrested were serious: they included conspiracy to commit murder and anarchy, and to incite riot. Moreover, the original total bail was set at well over \$1 million. The prisoners were questioned by the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, which immediately opened a file on the NCCF and all associated with it.

Although the civil disorder itself was not the doing of the Panthers, Boston or local, it was clearly affected by them; moreover, the city establishment, especially the mayor, would see the entire affair as a product of outside agitators. And, although there were skirmishes in August and even, on occasion, the following fall, the July 31 raid did deflate the revolt. Organizing on behalf of the New Bedford 21 was the focus of local Panther activity that fall and winter; just before the trial was to begin in late March, all of the serious charges were dropped. As for the three whites charged in the July 11 killing of Lima and the wounding of the others, an all-white jury, after deliberating for forty-five minutes, voted to acquit on all charges. A few fires were set, but New Bedford did not erupt at the verdict. And it never did again. *See also* Martin Luther King, Jr., Assassination of (1968); Black Self-Defense; Civil Rights Movement; Police Brutality; Returning Soldiers (World War I).

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*Jama Lazerow*

**New Jersey.** See Asbury Park (New Jersey) Riot of 1970; Jersey City (New Jersey) Riot of 1964; Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967

### **New Orleans (Louisiana) Riot of 1866**

The New Orleans Riot of 1866 was one of the largest and most brutal events that occurred during the city's history. Although unique in its severity, the New Orleans riot was hardly a rare event. Race riots occurred in other cities that summer (**Memphis** in May and Charleston in June), and these related incidents are characteristic of the social, cultural, and racial unrest haunting this time period.

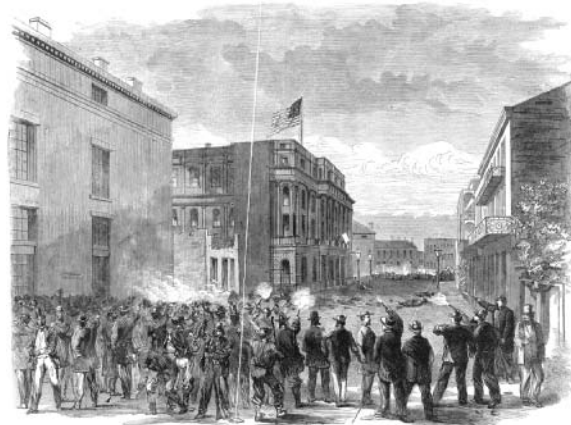
Many attribute the origin of the riot to the controversy surrounding the movement to reconvene the 1864 convention and implement the Civil Rights Act of 1866. This act attempted to grant citizenship to all native-born Americans regardless of race thus giving blacks equal rights and protection under the law. By 1866, some members, Republicans in particular, of the 1864 convention lost their power to conservative Democrats in the election of 1865. As a result, some Republicans deemed this situation as an opportunity to regain power in the state of Louisiana. The 1864 constitution provided two avenues for ratification. The conference could either make a request for the new state legislature to assemble a new convention, or they could ask the legislature to amend the constitution themselves and have it ratified by the people in the next state election. But many of the old members, also known as conventionalists, knew that they would have no power in making changes to the constitution because the Democrats would control a majority of the votes; and the second option would not be suitable to the conventionalists because the legislature would attempt to oppose their amendments to the Constitution. As a result, the conventionalists decided to reconvene without any of the newly elected members of the legislature.

The conventionalists' primary obstacle was getting the support they needed to reconvene the convention. The only person who had the power to reconvene the convention was its president, Judge E.H. Durell. Although he refused to assist the conventionalists and left the city, they issued a call to all of the former members of the convention and met on June 26, 1864. During this meeting, thirty-nine of the original ninety-six members were in attendance. The conventionalists ousted Judge Durell as president and elected Judge R.K. Howell as president pro tem. Their second action was to assign June 30 as the date to reconvene the convention. This political maneuver set in motion the social and political basis for the riot a few days later.

The conventionalists' actions created a recipe for civil unrest in the city. The conventionalists' unlawful attempt to amend the Constitution unilaterally, without regard for their position, angered the legislative members who



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—THE NEGROES MARCHING TO THE INSTITUTE—THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FLAG.  
[Engraved by Thomas S. Davis.]



THE RIOT IN NEW ORLEANS—SCENE AND ABANDON OF THE CONVENTION BY THE POLICE AND CITIZENS.—Engraved by Thomas S. Davis.

A nineteenth-century wood engraving of scenes from the New Orleans riot of 1866. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

controlled the majority of the state's population. Additionally, members of the old planter and merchant aristocracy disliked the conventionalists because they were a threat to the social and political power base they initially established after the war. The larger white population was primarily angered that whites would lose their rights to vote, some former Confederate soldiers would lose jobs in government and, most importantly, that people of African descent might gain the right to vote. The days leading up to the riots were tense and filled with inflammatory speeches made by both supporters of the conventionalists and those who opposed them, which also created tension between the conventionalists and conservatives and blacks and whites.

On the morning of June 30, the city of New Orleans was tense. The first incident of racial violence occurred during a procession of 100 to 150 blacks marching to the Mechanics' Institute, the meeting hall for the convention. Violence erupted when a white boy made insulting remarks to a black participant and kicked him in the back. As the white crowd applauded and laughed, the black man knocked the young man down. A scuffle ensued, which ended in the black man's arrest. Additionally, a black

man began to wave his flag in response to jeers from the white crowd. A policeman responded to this action by firing a shot at the flag bearer.

The riot broke out when another young white boy threw a rock into the black processional crowd of around 1,500 people in front of the Mechanics' Institute at about 1:00 P.M. As the blacks began to rush the boy, violence ensued as gunfire started. Initially, the blacks were able to repel the officers and the white crowd; however, the mob was better armed and eventually overtook them. As a result, many blacks dispersed throughout the city while others took refuge in the institute. Whites chased and harassed blacks within a one- to two-mile radius of the Mechanics' Institute, which led to the brutalization of many blacks who had not participated in the processional. Other members of the mob entered the Mechanics' Institute to take on conventionalists and the remaining blacks. Although some attempted to surrender to the mob, there was no sympathy for the trapped members. Anticipating the federal army would come to their rescue, they barricaded themselves in the hall. Due to either miscommunication or ambivalence on the part of the U.S. government, troops did not arrive until 4:00 P.M. By the end of the riot, over 130 blacks were injured and about 34 were killed; 3 whites associated with the conventionalists were killed and about 17 were wounded; 20 members of the police force were slightly wounded, and 1 person from the **white mob** was killed.

The New Orleans riot placed the social and political attitudes of southerners after the Civil War in perspective for northerners. The brutality of this riot gave the Republicans the ammunition they needed to make their campaign for **Reconstruction** a primary issue in the congressional elections of 1866. After gaining the majority in Congress, they were able to bring about radical Reconstruction and the passage of the Reconstruction Act of 1867.

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*Christina S. Haynes*

### **New Orleans (Louisiana) Riot of 1900**

One of the bloodiest race riots in the United States began in New Orleans, Louisiana, on July 23, 1900, after a clash between the police and Robert Charles, a black Mississippian. The riot ended on July 28, as **white mobs** slowly dispersed after a police wagon carried Charles' bullet-riddled body to the city morgue. In the four days of violence, Charles shot twenty-seven whites, killing seven of them, including four policemen. Sparked by Charles' actions, white mobs attacked African Americans, murdering at least twelve and seriously wounding some sixty-nine others.

Blacks made up more than a quarter of New Orleans' 300,000 residents in 1900. Historically, the city held a special appeal for African Americans because of employment opportunities and relative racial tolerance. Below the surface, however, tensions brewed. A lack of jobs and declining wages pitted black and white laborers against each other by the turn of the century. Moreover, the city's largest employers often hired black workers at lower pay than whites. The New Orleans press contributed to deteriorating race relations. Henry J. Hearsey, editor and publisher of the *States*, the city's foremost afternoon daily, proved especially vitriolic. A former Confederate officer, Hearsey suggested that extermination might settle "the Negro problem."

Robert Charles moved to New Orleans in 1894. At twenty-eight, he had already exchanged gunfire with a white train flagman and pled guilty to selling alcohol illegally in Mississippi. During his six years in New Orleans, Charles worked numerous jobs, supplementing his income by distributing literature for two back-to-Africa causes. Several incidents affected him profoundly while in the city. The illegitimate 1896 state elections ushered in a Democratic administration that disenfranchised blacks through new laws and the 1898 Constitution. Also, in 1896, Louisiana recorded twenty-one **lynchings**, marking a new state record. Finally, Charles' acquaintances maintained that the grisly April 1899 lynching of Sam Hose in Palmetto, Georgia, infuriated him. Against this backdrop, Charles and his roommate, Lenard Pierce, encountered three New Orleans police officers shortly after 11:00 P.M. on July 23, 1900.

As the two black men waited on a street for some female friends, Sergeant Jules C. Aucoin called for Patrolmen August Mora and Joseph Cantrelle to help him investigate two suspicious men. According to Mora, when the police approached Charles and Pierce and asked them questions, Charles gave a vague response and stood up threateningly. Mora grabbed him. Patrolman Aucoin leveled his pistol at Pierce's face. Mora and Charles eventually pulled their guns on each other. Both Mora and Cantrelle shot at Charles, who fell to the ground but got up and ran. Mora took a bullet in the right thigh. Captain John Day of the Sixth Precinct soon learned from Pierce where to look for Charles—a rundown cottage on Fourth Street. Day and four others made their way to Charles' room by 3:00 A.M. on July 24 and demanded entry. As the door opened, Charles shot the captain through the heart. He then shot another patrolman through the head. Two lawmen fired back, but Charles retreated and the officers ran to a neighbor's room. At 4:30 A.M., Charles fired at a corporal on the street, grazing his cap. As the corporal and a colleague fled, Charles escaped to an acquaintance's house fourteen blocks away.

Soon, most of the New Orleans police force gathered at Charles' cottage. Unable to find him, a massive manhunt began. By the morning of July 24, white crowds gathered at Charles' house, the Sixth Precinct stationhouse (where Lenard Pierce remained), and outside the city morgue, where the two dead policemen had been taken. During the day, New Orleans' four major newspapers incited a mob mentality with racist rhetoric. Angry whites met on the streets to discuss revenge, and confrontations with

blacks occurred. The city finally exploded around 8:30 P.M. on July 25, as 2,000 men and teenagers began their rampage.

Heading downtown, the crowd focused their attention on streetcars, where they shot and beat black passengers. By 9:30 P.M., the mob grew to over 3,000 and moved toward the Parish Prison to lynch Lenard Pierce. Rebuffed by police, the group proceeded to the red-light district, concentrating on mostly deserted businesses that featured black or mixed-blood prostitutes. After midnight, the crowd began to diminish, but sporadic beatings and shootings continued throughout the night. The shorthanded and poorly trained New Orleans police force proved incapable—and in some cases, had little desire—to stop the riot. Mayor Paul Capdevielle requested 1,500 citizens to act as special police. In addition, Louisiana's Gov. William Heard sent all area state militia units to the city. Unfortunately, twelve hours passed before troops arrived, allowing more violence against New Orleans' black community. Finally, by sundown on July 26, these forces surrounded the city's most unstable areas.

Meanwhile, Robert Charles remained hidden. Just before noon on July 27, the police learned his whereabouts from a black informer. When a patrol wagon arrived at the residence, Charles hid in a closet. As two officers entered the house, Charles killed one instantly, and the other died slowly of a gunshot wound to the abdomen. As news spread of his discovery, masses of white men and teens swarmed the scene. Charles retreated to the second floor and indiscriminately shot at the gathering crowd. By 5:00 P.M., between 10,000 and 20,000 people congregated on or near the scene. The mayor ordered the state militia units to the site with their two Gatling guns.

Finally, a fire patrol captain set fire to an old mattress near the stairs of the residence. Five minutes later, Charles escaped the inferno. One of the mayor's special police shot and killed him as he fled. A shooting free-for-all then commenced, but before the mob could completely annihilate Charles' body, a patrol wagon retrieved it. Still hungry for vengeance, a crowd gathered outside the morgue, while other bands of whites went in search of more African Americans. Around midnight, another crowd of whites burned down the renowned Lafon Institute, considered the best black school in Louisiana. The next morning, Saturday, July 28, the riot finally subsided. Of the two dozen whites and blacks indicted in the New Orleans race riot, all but one eventually walked free. Charles was buried in an unmarked grave. *See also* Charles, Robert; New Orleans (Louisiana) Riots of 1866.

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*Ann V. Collins*

### **Newton, Huey P. (1942–1989)**

Dr. Huey Percy Newton is best known for his cofounding, on October 15, 1966, of the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** for Self-Defense. He was an



avid activist, intellectual, and political candidate, emphasizing the right to African American self-determinism and the primacy of critical thought.

Newton was born in Monroe, Louisiana, on February 17, 1942, the seventh and youngest child in his family, from Armelia and Walter Newton, a sharecropper and Baptist minister. He was named after Louisiana's Gov. Huey Long. When he was one year old, his family moved to Oakland, California, where he would grow up in poverty and later graduate from Oakland Technical High School functionally illiterate. He later learned how to read using a combination of audio records of Vincent Price narrating poetry and the corresponding written poems to correlate how the words appeared. Soon, Newton found himself attending Merritt College intermittently, ultimately earning an Associate of Arts degree, as well as studying law at Oakland City College and San Francisco Law School. He eventually earned his Ph.D. in 1980 in the History of Consciousness from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

It was largely due to **police brutality** that the Black Panther Party (BPP) was formed. In response to events like the August 11, 1965, harassment of motorist Marquette Frye, his mother, and brother by the LAPD, which sparked what is now known as the Watts riots (see **Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965**), Newton's philosophy of race and democracy solidified. As race riots spread across the United States in the summers of 1965, 1966, and 1967 (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**), the BPP

mobilized local chapters to politicize the actions as urban rebellions. Grassroots responses included the development of "legal first aid" by Newton—small books that included statutes and constitutional rights that informed readers of their rights when confronted by police. Additionally, Newton developed Panther Patrols—carloads of BPP members that would follow and monitor police behavior, often informing black citizens of their rights. Because of police discrimination and brutality, coupled with the BPP decision to counter this repression, Newton and other BPP members were involved in an October 28, 1967 shoot-out with the Oakland police whereby he was wounded and subsequently accused of murdering Officer John Frey. While in jail, several of Newton's BPP members were charged with inciting riots during the **Democratic National Convention of 1968**.

Few can deny that Newton's life was strewn with incidents of violence. Critics such as Tom Orloff of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Stanley Crouch, and author Hugh Pearson have labeled Newton a "thug," "criminal," and "hoodlum," respectively (Jeffries 2002). Several tried to frame Newton in such a reductionist manner.



A poster sponsored by the Black Panther Party features Huey P. Newton. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

First, his association with both the black nationalist tradition of **Malcolm X** and the Leninist tradition of Marxism reduced him, in the eyes of many, to that of a radical extremist. Second, Newton's affiliation with communism and socialism coded him as a central figure in the McCarthy-era culture of fear. Third, Newton is often perceived as simply an outlaw and criminal due to his committed or provisional support of the civil disobedience and race riots of the 1960s and 1970s.

While the aforementioned vilification of Newton arrests the perception of his complexity, so does an overly simplistic heroification. During a rally for Newton on February 17, 1968, a reporter present at the rally remarked, "It was almost as though Huey P. Newton were already dead... We usually require of those among us who would be immortal that they first cease to breathe and be buried before claiming the exalted status" (Moore, 113). The fervor resulted in a cult-like worship of Newton, on which 1960s activist Donald Cox wrote as follows:

For some of us, Huey represented the equivalent of the Messiah. Since we didn't want to see any more of our leaders eliminated, we launched a massive campaign to assure that Huey would not be condemned to the death penalty. A cult of his personality was created. Huey was elevated to the status of the gods, and his every word became gospel. (Cox, 121)

Like many activists, Newton was a complex figure. His radical activism prompted both conservatives and liberals alike to paint Newton as either savior or devil, concentrating on his misdeeds or romanticizing his revolutionary rhetoric. Tragically, in the last years of his life, he developed an addiction to crack cocaine and was fatally shot on August 22, 1989, by Tyrone Robinson, a local drug dealer who, ironically, as a child was fed by the Newton-led BPP breakfast program. *See also* Black Nationalism; Black Panther Party (BPP); Cleaver, Eldridge.

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**New York.** *See* Bensonhurst (New York) Incident (1989); Brooklyn (New York) Riot of 1964; Buffalo (New York) Riot of 1967; Harlem (New York) Riot of 1935; Howard Beach (New York) Incident (1986); New York City

Draft Riot of 1863; New York City Riot of 1900; New York City Riot of 1943; New York City Riot of 1964; New York City Silent March of 1917; Peekskill (New York) Riots of 1949; Rochester (New York) Riot of 1964

### **New York City Draft Riot of 1863**

On Monday, July 13, 1863, the city of New York exploded into racial violence. For five days, the black community was ravaged by mob attacks as disgruntled white rioters expressed their outrage about black emancipation, the Civil War, and the mandatory proscription law President Abraham Lincoln had passed several months earlier. Although the first acts of violence were directed toward government agencies, within hours, the rioters focused on black people, neighborhoods, and symbols of black equality. Before the reign of terror subsided, eleven black men had been lynched, countless men, women, and children had been beaten and maimed, black homes and institutions had been torched, thousands of black people had been driven from the city, and the final death toll still remains unknown. Even after federal troops arrived to restore order, attacks persisted and were not fully quelled until the following Friday. In the months that followed, the devastated black community struggled to reclaim their lives and reassert their right to exist in American society as free and equal citizens.

The prelude to the New York City Draft Riot was deeply rooted in the larger context of American politics during the antebellum era. Not only was



Rioters sacking the brownstone houses in New York. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

riot behavior a common form of political protest in the United States, but these outbursts routinely expressed distinctly anti-black consciousness. There was a particularly disturbing legacy of racial hostility in New York City, which peaked in 1834 with one of the most violent race riots in antebellum America. Racial tensions increased in 1861, when the United States dissolved into civil war over the issue of slavery, and tensions were exacerbated by the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation two years later. As a result, by early 1863, the specter of black emancipation created growing resentment in the North as the war seemingly dragged on interminably. In fact, the Union Army appeared to be in crisis, for lagging support caused soldiers to flee the battlefields (there were an estimated 100,000 deserters), and new recruits were not volunteering to replace them. In the face of such setbacks, the U.S. War Department and President Abraham Lincoln resolved to take drastic action to ensure a successful and rapid Union victory. In March 1863, Congress passed the stringent Conscription Act, which subjected eligible men between the ages of twenty to thirty-five, and all unmarried men aged thirty-five to forty-five, to possible military service. According to the new law, the names of these men would be placed into a lottery and randomly selected to determine who would fight on behalf of the Union. Essentially, the government had effectively imposed a mandatory draft (Bernstein, 7–8).

Although the federal government's actions may have appeared to be a necessary measure to bolster the war effort, there were powerful objections emanating from New York City that posed major challenges to Republican policies. City leaders had expressed consistent opposition to the war; most notably, beginning in 1860, Mayor Fernando Wood established himself as a "Peace Democrat," which meant that he was adamantly opposed to the possibility of war, and fought to make any and all concessions to the South to keep the Union intact. When it became apparent that compromise between the North and South was hopeless, Wood appeared before the common council in 1861. There he argued that the city should secede from the Union and become an entirely independent entity in order to protect its financial interests in the southern economy. Although New York City obviously remained in the Union, Wood did not temper his views during the war; in fact, he adamantly increased his criticism and blasted the Republican Party for waging a war against slavery. As Wood's antiwar rhetoric increased, he rekindled latent frustrations about black emancipation by directing his anger toward the black community, which he blamed for the sectional conflict. In particular, he denounced Radical Republicans for promising "lazy, unfit blacks immediate suffrage, high pay, and social superiority" (Mushkat, 164, 170, 161).

Wood's attitude toward black inequality, the necessity of southern slavery, and his extreme opposition to the Civil War revealed deep-seated notions in New York City that became ideological specters that inspired and haunted the draft riots. Although Wood was voted out of office in 1862 and replaced by Republican George Opdyke, Democrats in New York City formed a new organization in early 1863—the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge (SDPK)—that was designed to articulate their

frustrations and fears about black emancipation. Soon after its establishment, the SDPK blanketed New York City with pamphlets prophesying the horrors that would befall the United States if a Union victory destroyed southern slavery; these noted, in particular, that full emancipation would destroy the social and economic fabric of the nation. More specifically, they argued that free black people would flood into northern cities, take all the jobs, and demand social and political equality (Bernstein, 146–147; Harris, 279–280).

It was into this firestorm of anti-black thought and political agitation against the Civil War that the Conscription Act was thrust in March 1863. Unfortunately, the imposition of the new law served to exacerbate brewing tensions in the city over the war and over black emancipation, since, in light of the draft law's stipulations, the rhetoric of the Democratic Party articulated the concerns of many working-class white New Yorkers. The mandate more severely impacted poor whites and their families who were dependent on them for economic survival, particularly because it was only possible to escape military service if one could afford to hire a replacement or pay \$300 to the government. Even worse, it seemed that the law privileged black men, all of whom were exempt from the draft because they were not considered citizens. As a result, the Democratic Party's insistence that Republican politicians spoiled free blacks and ignored the needs of poor whites appeared to be painfully displayed in the conscription law (Bernstein, 8, 11). Of course, what they failed to recognize is that, to the black community, being relegated to the position of not being citizens was hardly a privilege. But such details mattered little to most white New Yorkers. All they knew was that they were being forced to fight in a war to free the black population, a community they already deeply feared and resented.

Ironically, there was no immediate outcry against the draft law from the white working class in New York City, largely because they believed that the Democratic Party would effectively agitate against the mandate and protect them from military service. Initially, it seemed that they were right. The governor, Democrat Horatio Seymour, vowed that he would fulfill the required quota with volunteers, and if enough people did not appear, he would declare the draft to be unconstitutional. In addition, New Yorkers knew that the local democratic-dominated common council was opposed to the legislation, on the grounds that the Republican federal government was overstepping its bounds. Throughout the month of June, Peace Democrats pacified fears in the city by predicting that a Democrat would be elected as president in 1864, a development that might bring an end to the war, and certainly terminate the Conscription Act. Still, city Democrats apparently felt compelled to renew their public objections to the law the following month at a celebration held in honor of Independence Day. During a rally, they denounced Republican policies, which they described as assaults on rights and liberties. In fact, their protest was so vehement that Governor Seymour predicted that if the draft commenced, the city would be plagued by mob violence. Perhaps recognizing that Seymour might be correct about potential hostility, the city's police superintendent urged

Secretary of War Henry Stanton to cancel a parade of the black 55th Regiment through the city streets. Sadly, however, this attempt to prevent an outbreak of racial violence was not sufficient to stem the tide; shortly thereafter, perhaps to the shock of most New Yorkers, President Lincoln authorized Republican officials to conduct the first draft lottery in New York City, and Governor Seymour's prophecy was fulfilled (Bernstein, 11–12).

Indeed, on Saturday, July 11, the first lottery for the mandatory draft was held in New York City. Although violence was not manifest at the draft headquarters during the day, there were definite rumblings of discontent in the city by that evening. Throughout the night, the streets and taverns were bustling with outraged white workers, expressing their discontent with the draft, the Civil War, the free black population, and plotting an appropriate response. As the editor of the *New York Herald* recalled, "Those who heard the scattered groups of laborers and mechanics who congregated in different quarters on Saturday evening . . . might have reasonably argued that a tumult was at hand" (Bernstein, 13). Frustration mounted the following day, although city officials obviously remained unconcerned—Mayor Opdyke spent a quiet Sunday evening attending the theater with friends. Yet, while Opdyke enjoyed the luxury of highbrow entertainment, the streets of New York were beginning to show signs of the coming violence. That night, reports began to pour into police stations of dangerous and threatening activity. The first revealed the actions of a man named John Andrews, who was roaming the Tenth Ward delivering inflammatory speeches to large crowds denouncing the draft and defaming the black community. Soon, news arrived that several black men had been attacked and severely beaten, and an anonymous man declared that there would be a black man hanging from every lamppost in the city by the following day. As the night progressed, there were also numerous arson attacks in the heart of a black community on Carmine Street. City officials did little in response, evidently concluding that some mild disorder was to be expected and, with the coming workday, there would be no more substantial violence. They could not have been any more wrong (McCague, 54–56).

The morning of Monday, July 13, 1863 dawned in the city of New York, largely devoid of usual signs of a typical workday. Perhaps to the surprise of city officials, the grumbling among angry workers that had commenced over the weekend developed into an organized work stoppage, as white male citizens made it clear that they would no longer tolerate the imposition of the draft law or the Civil War and its threat of black emancipation. By 8:00 A.M., the streets were flooded with protesters marching through the city carrying signs emblazoned with the words "No Draft!" This, however, would not be a peaceful protest. Men immediately set to work destroying telegraph lines, and women angrily pried up the railway tracks with crowbars. The message was clear and strong—there would be no labor performed until politicians responded to their appeal. As the morning progressed, the mob began randomly attacking police officers, severely beating them in order to ensure that the campaign would not be silenced. Support for the movement increased as the hours passed, growing to over 12,000 people in the crowd (Bernstein, 18; McCague, 62–63).

Despite these early signs of discontent, the draft lottery proceeded at 10:30 A.M. at the Ninth District office. A crowd had already gathered there, prepared to bring the activities to a standstill. Soon, the protest swung into full action, as a pistol shot rang out and the mob descended on the draft headquarters. Rioters smashed the selection wheel, which was designed to draw the names of potential soldiers, and set the building ablaze. For the next several hours, the city was in chaos. Most economic endeavors had been brought to a screeching halt, and the streets were overwhelmed with angry mobs expressing their anger about the war, attacking various government agencies, and looting the buildings they destroyed. By the middle of that day, Republican officials had to admit that the lottery could not persist, and they called for a temporary cessation of their duties (Bernstein, 19–20).

This decision was obviously not enough to quell the mob. By that afternoon, what had begun as a political protest was clearly becoming a full-fledged riot, intent not just on ending the draft, but also intimidating and eliminating the free black population. Although some of the original protesters denounced the growing violence in the streets, the movement continued to escalate, and could no longer be controlled. Among the first black victims that day were a young boy innocently making his way through the city and a male fruit vendor who was beaten and robbed. In acts reminiscent of the protest against efforts to desegregate streetcars in the 1850s, black people were randomly snatched from the conveyances and savagely beaten. In addition, arson attacks reemerged that afternoon as the mob turned their attention to black homes on the West Side, which they looted and torched. One of the most well-remembered and egregious acts that day was the destruction of the Colored Orphan Asylum, which had been erected to house 200 unfortunate, parentless black children. Punctuated by cries of “Burn the niggers!” several thousand white rioters stormed the building and chased the young people out into the streets. The orphanage was methodically robbed, pillaged, and subsequently burned to the ground. Although the mob refrained from harming most of the children, one small girl who had taken refuge under a bed during the melee was dragged out and executed. The remaining children escaped and were taken to the Twentieth Precinct police station (Bernstein, 20–21, 36; Harris, 280; McCague, 77–78; Cook, 77–78).

By Monday evening, the violence directed toward the black population accelerated. Indeed, it was clear by then that the purpose of the riot was “not merely to destroy but to wipe clean the tangible evidence of a black presence” (Bernstein, 27). Innocent men and women trying to make their way home were subject to violent beatings and were chased through the streets of the city. As one scholar described the events, “Black folk in neighborhoods throughout the lower East and West Sides were being hunted like animals” (McCague, 93). Black workers were particularly in danger of assault, as mobs began patrolling the docks, determined to drive black economic competition out of the area. These actions were motivated, in particular, by the fact that black laborers had been brought onto the docks to work as strikebreakers a few months prior (Harris, 280; Bernstein, 27–28).



The rioters burning and sacking the colored orphan asylum. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

In addition, boardinghouses that catered to the black population were uniquely targeted, as the inhabitants were driven from their homes, stripped of their belongings, and tortured. As a result, when the first full day of rioting came to close, black New Yorkers began to flee the city in large numbers, yet even this effort did not preclude them from attack. Jeremiah Robinson, for example, disguised himself as a woman and tried to take a ferry to Brooklyn with his wife. However, when his true identity was revealed, Robinson was beaten to death, and his lifeless body was thrown into the river. Those who could not manage to escape sought refuge at local police stations, but soon these sites were so overcrowded that many were turned away and sent back into the streets to fight for their lives (Bernstein, 28; Cook, 83). By Monday night, the city's police force was obviously overwhelmed by the size of the mob and had been rendered powerless to terminate the violence. Yet Mayor Opdyke refused to declare martial law and stood by as the carnage increased (Bernstein, 49).

By Tuesday morning, July 14, it was clear that some sort of extreme action would be required to bring an end to the riot, but politicians were slow to enact an appropriate response. Governor Seymour arrived on the scene and toured many wards in the city, but he did not immediately resort to the use of force to end the violence. Instead, he delivered a speech, hoping to appease the crowd with reassurances that he would do all in his power to declare the draft law unconstitutional and protect his citizens from enlistment (Bernstein, 50). However, what he perhaps did not realize is that the riot was no longer just about the issue of the draft; it had become a ferocious, frenzied effort to eliminate the black community.



As a result, as the second day of the riot began, attacks on individual black people and institutions persisted. William Jones, a brave man who had elected not to abandon the city and attempted to sneak out of his home to obtain some food, was the first slain on that day. However, his boldness was severely punished by the mob; they seized him, put a rope around his neck, lynched him, and then set his body ablaze, all the while pelting him with sticks and rocks. The next attack on a black man occurred shortly thereafter as the mob encountered William Williams, a black sailor, who had made the unfortunate mistake of leaving his ship in search of a grocery store. When the mob found him, he was greeted with cries declaring vengeance on every black person in New York, and he was beaten and stabbed. As the day wore on, the crowd turned its attention to symbols of black success in the city, most notably a black church, which they set on fire and cheered as it burned to the ground. Even the elderly were not above attack; a crowd formed at a home for black seniors and tried to break down the fences and raid the building before a group of benevolent whites intervened. Finally, the angry mob headed into the heart of the black community, where they ravaged dance halls, taverns, and tenements that housed and served the black population. Apparently, they even began to develop a sophisticated strategy for identifying the homes belonging to black people; young boys served as scouts and broke the windows in black houses, which allowed the mob to burn, loot, and plunder those residences that were exclusively black property. As the events on Tuesday made it clear that assistance was desperately needed to end the riot, Mayor Opdyke finally asked Secretary of War Henry Stanton to send troops to the city. Stanton complied and ordered five regiments from the Pennsylvania and Maryland battle lines to regain control of New York City (Bernstein, 27–29, 54; McCague, 103, 120–121; Cook, 98).

Despite the impending threat of military force, violence persisted on Wednesday, as rioters unleashed their rage on black men who had the courage to remain and defend their rights. At 6:30 A.M., James Costello became the first black man to fall. Brandishing a weapon, Costello ventured into the streets, an action for which he would pay a heavy price. He was pursued by an angry group of attackers who dodged a retaliatory pistol shot and viciously beat him. They nearly left him for dead, but when Costello stirred and showed signs of life, the men returned, attempted to drown him in a puddle of water, then dragged him to a tree and lynched him. This was not the only **lynching** that would occur that day. Later in the afternoon, a mob broke into the home of a crippled black coachman named Abraham Franklin. After beating his sister in the streets, they dragged Franklin to a lamppost and hanged him. A similar fate nearly befell Charles Jackson who, in light of the day's events, was finally attempting to escape the city. Before he could succeed, however, a mob pounced on him, beat him, stole his possessions, and threw him into the river, hopeful that he would drown from his injuries. Fortunately for Jackson, he managed to cling to a rock and hide under the wharf until police found him (Cook, 140–141, 143; Bernstein, 28).

What is perhaps the most well-documented assault took place on Wednesday. This attack revealed the mob's twisted obsession with the



An angry mob, many carrying clubs, watches as the body of a lynched African American man burns. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

threat of black equality in the form of racial amalgamation. Rioters descended on the home of William Derrickson, who had married a white woman, Ann, and had a son, Alfred. Led by Democratic politician William Cruise, a crowd raided Derrickson's residence while shouting their intentions to hang him from a lamppost. When they attempted to break down the door, Derrickson dove out the back window and made an escape, confident that the mob would not harm a defenseless woman and child. However, this assumption turned out to be a serious miscalculation, because their mere existence as a biracial family enraged the ravenous horde. Cruise hit young Alfred over the head with an ax, and another in the crowd beat him with a heavy, iron-bound stick of wood. Derrickson's wife tried to save her son by throwing herself over his body, but the mob simply began pummeling her instead. Alfred, who by this time was unconscious, was stripped naked and dragged into the street where his attackers first planned to lynch him, and then decided to burn him alive. Fortunately, a white man intervened and saved his life, although Alfred was left in the gutter covered in blood. Ann never recovered from her injuries and died in the hospital. William Derrickson apparently survived, but one of the rioters reportedly tried to return for him the following day, threatening that if Derrickson was not dead yet, he would come back that night and finish the job (Bernstein, 31, 35; Cook, 135).

Thursday, July 16, brought new hope that the violence against black New Yorkers would eventually cease. Although rioters remained active, most

black people had fled the city and there was little else to do beyond looting. More importantly, by the end of the day, the city was occupied by 4,000 federal soldiers who resolved that they would bring an end to the horrific pogrom that had devastated New York. Their efforts were quite effective. Soon, the city began to demonstrate the signs of resuming normal life: businesses opened and white people returned to their jobs. Yet all indications sent a clear message that black people would still not be safe if they showed their faces in the streets. The children from the Colored Orphan Asylum, who had been hiding out with the police, were evacuated and relocated to Blackwell Island. In addition, city officials made it plain that black people should not yet return; in one case, when four black women asked if their families could go home, the response from the police was unequivocally, "No." Fortunately, by Saturday, July 18, there were 10,000 troops stationed in New York City, determined to impose order and maintain the peace (Cook, 157, 166; McCague, 163). The New York City Draft Riot of 1863 was finally over, but the work of rebuilding the black community had only just begun.

In some ways, the immediate aftermath was almost as distressing for black New Yorkers as the actual events. Although some people trickled back into the city, many refused; in fact, the census of 1865 revealed that the black population had plummeted to its lowest point since 1820—less than 10,000. Indeed, nearly 20 percent of black people who had lived in New York City in 1860 absconded, never to return (Bernstein, 267; Harris, 285). Among the most famous refugees was black activist Albro Lyons, who was well known in his community for diligent work on behalf of fugitives from southern slavery. In fact, during most of the 1850s, the Lyons family operated in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law and, due to their diligent labor, saved numerous fugitives from the horrors of slavery. However, in the midst of the draft riots, Lyons took his family across the river into Brooklyn and vowed never to return. As one scholar explained, "From the moment they put foot on the boat, that was the last time they ever resided in New York City, leaving it forever" (Harris, 238, 286).

Sadly, however, the decline in population was the least of the black community's problems, because those who returned were faced with the tireless and agonizing work of re-creating their lives. In the months that followed, as black New Yorkers tried to resume their lives, they found that the racial hostility that had prompted the riot persisted. Most black men struggled to find employers who were willing to hire them, and streetcar operators regularly refused admittance to black passengers. Even worse was the painful fact that city and state officials stubbornly refused to offer any substantial public assistance to ease their plight. Although the city had formed a Riots Claim Committee, most applications were dismissed. Since black people had voluntarily abandoned their homes, the city argued that it was not obligated to provide restitution for damage or destruction of property. Even those claims that were entertained offered little compensation because payment was for what the belongings were worth at the time of loss, not the price it would cost to replace them. Since most black people were extremely impoverished at the outset of the riot, most of their

possessions were deemed to have little or no value. Adding insult to injury were the committee's nasty retorts that asserted that many black people were simply trying to "cheat the county" by submitting false claims (Cook, 174–176).

Perhaps the most disturbing symbolic demonstration of city officials' indifference came when the black community realized that most rioters, even those arrested, would escape tangible punishment. Of the estimated 12,000 people who engaged in the riot, only 443 were arrested, and more than half of these had their cases dismissed before charges were even leveled against them. Only eighty-one men had a day in court, and most pled guilty to lesser charges and escaped with minor penalties. Ironically, the most severe punishments were enacted on those who had been caught looting; in the end, the men responsible for the beatings, tortures, and lynching of black people essentially emerged with no meaningful repercussions. All of these events nearly caused black New Yorkers to lose all hope, as evidenced by a black clergyman who stated that his only hope for the future of his race was in "the next world" (Cook, 177–178).

There was, however, one redeeming movement among white New Yorkers following the draft riots, which gave black New Yorkers renewed faith that their passion for justice and equality would one day be realized. Days after the conclusion of the riot, a benevolent organization, the Union League Club (ULC), devoted its energies to providing assistance to black survivors. Members of this association had been staunchly opposed to the riot and had pleaded with Mayor Opdyke to bring in federal troops to end the violence. Conscious that city officials were failing to make proper restitution, the ULC raised funds, eventually over \$40,000, and employed a well-respected black leader, Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, to help blacks process claims (Bernstein, 56, 157, 159). It was later reported that, under Garnet's careful guidance, financial aid was doled out to more than 6,300 people. Members of the black leadership, including Garnet and Rev. Charles B. Ray, praised the ULC for its unceasing labor on behalf of the black population, stating, "Gentleman, this generation of our people cannot forget the scenes to which we allude, nor will they forget the noble and spontaneous exhibition of charity which they excited. The former will be referred to as one of the dark chapters of our history in the Empire State, and the latter will be remembered as a bright and glorious page in the records of the past" (Garnet, 60).

Perhaps most poignantly, black New Yorkers' resolve was revealed in December 1863, just five months after American citizens had ravaged their people. At the urging of the ULC, War Secretary Henry Stanton gave permission for a black regiment to be raised among New Yorkers to fight against southern slavery. Even after the frightening outbreak of violence, the black community still flaunted its support for the United States and the war they prayed would free their people, and commenced a movement to take up arms on behalf of the Union. The crowning glory of their efforts came on March 5, 1864, when an estimated 100,000 New Yorkers of all races poured into the streets to watch the 20th U.S. Colored Infantry march into battle on a mission to bring the Confederacy to its knees. The irony of this

occasion was not lost on black New Yorkers; indeed, less than a year after the destructive pogrom, black activist James McCune Smith noted with pride that black Union soldiers were celebrated in the same streets where some of their people had been ravenously hunted by angry hordes:

To have been mobbed, hunted down, beaten to death, hung to the lamp-posts or trees, burned, their dwellings sacked and destroyed, their orphan children turned homeless from their comfortable shelter which was destroyed by fire, and then, within a few months to be cheered along the same streets, are occurrences whose happening put ordinary miracles in the shade; the first, more hideous than hell, the last one which might be, and was, smiled on by heaven. (Garnet, 56–58)

For Smith, and likely other black New Yorkers, such triumphant moments signaled that all hope was not lost, that victory could still follow devastating assaults, and perhaps someday black people might be extended the rights of equality and citizenship. In August 1863, the draft quietly, and unceremoniously recommenced, but the black community was forever altered.

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## New York City Riot of 1900

The Tenderloin section of Manhattan experienced a short but intense race riot on August 15–16, 1900. The violence began two days after Arthur Harris, an African American laborer, stabbed Robert Thorpe, a white policeman who died shortly afterward from his wounds. Although accounts regarding who precipitated the subsequent episode differ, an interracial scuffle broke out near Thorpe's home on the evening of August 15, causing a gathering white crowd to rampage the nearby black district for several hours. Widespread reports of police negligence of, or outright participation in, the riot filled newspaper accounts in the following days. African Americans bore the brunt of the punishment in the wake of the violence.

The New York City Riot of 1900 featured many of the characteristics that other riots during this time period displayed. The city witnessed a sharp increase of African Americans from 1890 to 1910, swelling its black population almost four times. **Segregation** and discrimination, already existent to a certain degree, had solidified by the turn of the century. With the influx

of newcomers, whites thwarted African American efforts to frequent the same churches, theaters, restaurants, saloons, and hotels. Moreover, the Tenderloin region on the west side of the city, where the riot occurred, not only accommodated New York's red-light district and Black Bohemia, but also harbored especially harsh animosities between its black residents and their Irish neighbors. Finally, at the time of the riot, New York City was suffering through one of the worst heat waves in its history.

Like many of his southern counterparts, Arthur Harris migrated north to the New York area from Virginia at the turn of the century to look for work. He held a variety of jobs and met May Enoch, who became his live-in girlfriend and whom he commonly called his wife. On the evening of August 12, 1900, Harris went out to a nearby saloon. Around 2:00 A.M., Enoch went to get him. After Harris left the establishment, he saw a white man grabbing his girlfriend. Not realizing that the man, Robert Thorpe, was a plainclothes policeman charging Enoch with soliciting, Harris fought with him and stabbed him twice with his knife. Enoch fled home and Harris escaped to his mother's house in Washington, D.C. Thorpe died the next day.

In the Tenderloin's racial milieu at the turn of the century, the death of a white policeman at the hands of an African American soon triggered violence. Crowds began to rally outside Thorpe's house, which led to an altercation between a black man and a white police officer. This incident spurred the ensuing riot. News reports the next day depicted the exploding violence as hundreds of white men and women surging from nearby tenements in search of black victims. Throughout the district, in and out of businesses, and on streetcars, the **white mob** attacked unsuspecting African Americans. One person strung a clothesline to a lamppost and sought out someone to lynch. Although the exact number of casualties remains uncertain, a number of black citizens suffered severe beatings and had to be treated at three area hospitals.

Some eighty African Americans later submitted affidavits affirming not only citizen attacks against them, but police complicity in the riot as well. Numerous victims and witnesses attested that when the acting police captain called out the reserves to suppress the violence, many of the authorities instead goaded the mob or simply ignored the brutalities occurring in front of them. The riot itself ended around 2:00 A.M. on August 16, when a thunderstorm struck the city, dispersing the crowd. However, the atmosphere remained charged. In the following month, brawls between blacks and whites broke out periodically, and two people died. Black residents began to stock up on arms and ammunition, and numerous concealed weapons charges followed.

In the wake of the riot, both black and white leaders condemned the unrest and cast blame in numerous directions. Republicans and the Good Government Society politicized the racial violence and traced the **police brutality** to Tammany Hall. Black religious leaders focused their attention on both the white hordes and the police. A citizens' protective league formed to bring suits against the city on behalf of the victims beaten by authorities. No policemen were ever indicted, however. Arthur Harris was

detained in Washington, D.C., and was found guilty of murder in the second degree at his trial in New York. He died on December 20, 1908, in the State Prison at Sing Sing after serving eight years of hard labor. *See also* New York City Riot of 1943; New York City Riot of 1964; New York City Silent March of 1917.

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*Ann V. Collins*

### **New York City Riot of 1943**

On August 1, 1943, a New York City police officer arrested an African American woman for disturbing the peace at the Braddock Hotel in Harlem. Robert Brady, a black soldier in the U.S. military, observed the fracas. He intervened by trying to get the police officer to release the woman. In the ensuing scuffle, the police officer was allegedly hit by the soldier. The police officer retaliated by shooting the soldier in the arm as he attempted to run from the scene. In the process of taking the serviceman away to a nearby hospital, a crowd of nearly 3,000 began to gather. It picked up momentum and fervor as the two, police officer and soldier, moved toward the hospital. Someone in the crowd shouted that a white cop had shot and killed a black soldier. It was not true, but the rumor ignited the crowd. Emotions escalated to mob proportion. The result was a full-fledged riot. The mostly black rioters set fires, broke windows and doors, turned over vehicles, and otherwise wreaked a wave of destruction, mainly against property. This led to looting. Most of the residents of Harlem at the time were black, while most of the businesses were under Jewish or white ownership. Black and white law enforcement officers moved in to restore order, but not before the rioters were beaten and bludgeoned.

Writer James Baldwin provided a firsthand account of the riot in an August 9, 1943, article in *Newsweek*. He wrote, "Windows of pawnshops and liquor stores and grocery stores were smashed and looted. Negroes began wielding knives and the police, their guns. Thousands of police reserves, many of them Negroes, were rushed to the district.... All traffic was rerouted around Harlem. It came down chiefly [to] a battle between the police and the Negro looters." **Walter White**, the head of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, wrote in the *New York Times* on August 4, 1943, that Harlem boiled over. His article described the extent of the damage and great loss as a consequence of the riot.

The Negro press and especially the New York-based *Amsterdam News* published a detailed description of the riot; the details spread throughout the country. After all, the Harlem Renaissance had established Harlem as the cultural center of black Americans. It was also perceived by many as the political center of all black Americans. The mayor at the time was Fiorello LaGuardia. He took swift action to end the riot. He appealed over the radio for calm. Afterward, he sent food to the residents of Harlem. This gesture endeared the mayor to many in the African American community.

Depending on the source, 6 African Americans were killed, from 500 to 1,000 were arrested, and 40 law enforcement officers were injured. It took 6,600 city, military, and civil police officers; 8,000 state guardsmen; and 1,500 civilian volunteers to finally end the riot after nearly two days.

After it was all over, there was much speculation about the causes of the riot. Some advanced the notion that the riot occurred because there were no recreational facilities and parks for the residents of Harlem. Others said the reason was the high cost of food and price gouging by the merchants who owned stores, shops, and other businesses in Harlem. Still another reason given was the need for better housing. **Police brutality** and overall discrimination of Harlem's black population were also cited as reasons.

Those who have studied race riots have found that there are certain sociological and psychological commonalities among race riots. A rumor is one and an environment of mob violence is another. Accepting that observation, the New York City Riot of 1943, which is sometimes called the Harlem Riot of 1943, had these two key elements. According to others, it happened not only as a violent spontaneous response to a specific incident and rumor, but it was also a reaction to **racism**, poverty, **segregation**, and other related socioeconomic factors.

By 1920, Harlem had become predominantly black. The residents were blacks from the West Indies and other states in the United States, especially Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. As blacks arrived, whites fled. During the 1920s, 118,792 white people left Harlem, while 87,417 blacks replaced them there. Unrest in numerous towns and cities around the country was erupting. Some of these disorders, including the events in **Detroit** in 1943, rose to the level of a race riot. In 1944, the year after the Harlem Riot, there were 250 race riots in 47 cities and towns in the United States. **Lynchings**, mostly in the South, were common. Blacks who served in World War II were stationed around the city, visited the city, or were moving there after returning home from the war. Many of those seeking a better life encountered segregation and other barriers to their successful attainment of the American Dream in Harlem. Although life for some blacks in Harlem at the time was vibrant, colorful, and intellectually stimulating, this was not the case for other blacks who were struggling. Even though it was the home of such luminaries as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston, **Claude McKay**, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., **A. Phillip Randolph**, **James Weldon Johnson**, and a host of others, as well as the home of such established institutions as Small's Paradise, the Cotton Club, the Savoy Ballroom, the Apollo Theater, and the Abyssinian Baptist Church, prosperity existed parallel to poverty in Harlem. The residents of Harlem were ready for a change in the social order regardless of their station in life; the riot of 1943 was a sign of pent-up frustration. It only took a single incident to spark the riot.

Perhaps James Baldwin expressed the seething, underlying frustration best when he reflected on the riot years later by writing, "It would have been better to have left the plate glass as it had been and the goods lying in the store. Would have been better, but it would have also . . . been intolerable, for Harlem needed something to smash" (Baldwin 1943).



The Harlem Riot of 1943 has become an important part of history. It was an aftershock of the Harlem Riot of 1935, and a forerunner of the **New York City Riot of 1964**. All pioneered the way for the **civil rights movement** that swept the country in the 1950s and 1960s.

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Betty Nyangoni

### **New York City Riot of 1964**

The New York City Riot of 1964 began in Harlem on the night of July 18. The unrest would later spread to the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in Brooklyn on July 20. Four thousand people in Harlem and another 4,000 in Brooklyn took part in the six-day protest. During the riot, 1 person was killed, 118 people were injured, and 465 men and women were arrested. The riot inaugurated an era of urban unrest that would continue throughout the decade. More people were arrested during the course of events in Bedford-Stuyvesant, but both the riot's symbolic precursors as well as the event that sparked the unrest in 1964 can be traced to Harlem.

Symbolically, the riots of the 1960s marked a change in the demographics of the rioting mob. Before Harlem, mob scenes involved whites attempting to keep blacks from joining American society; afterward, they became the symbol of blacks fighting for their right to be let in. Even though the majority of the pre-1960s race riots were started by whites, in Harlem there had been echoes of 1960s-style racial unrest before—once in 1935 and again in 1942, both times under allegations of police misconduct.

The 1964 riot began under similar circumstances. On the morning of July 16, Police Lt. Thomas G. Gilligan killed fifteen-year-old James Powell, a summer school student at Robert F. Wagner Junior High School. In a turn toward the poetic, Powell and his friends were engaged in horseplay with a building superintendent named Patrick Lynch outside 215 East Seventy-Sixth Street. Witnesses alleged that Lynch sprayed the boys with his garden hose and they chased him into a building. Powell attempted to follow Lynch, but Gilligan intervened, firing two shots, the second fatal. Gilligan claimed that Powell lunged at him with a knife. Later, a grand jury would conclude that Gilligan was not criminally liable for the homicide.

The northern and southern struggles for civil rights are often seen as taking place on different registers, but the Harlem Riot demonstrates their connections. Members of the activist organization the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** planned a rally at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue on July 18. Initially, the rally was planned to protest the disappearance of three

Mississippi civil rights workers. After Powell was slain, the group shifted the focus of the rally to the issue of **police brutality**, a long-standing issue of concern for CORE. After the rally, at which particularly noteworthy remarks were offered by seventeen-year-old Bronx high school student Judith Howell, the 250 attendees moved to the Twenty-Eighth Police Precinct. There, the Rev. Nelson Dukes of the Fountain Springs Baptist Church, Charles Russell of CORE, as well as Charles Taylor and Newton Sewell (identified by police simply as “black nationalists”) entered the building and demanded that Gilligan be suspended. According to accounts, after this group learned that the matter was under investigation, they left the building.

The crowd that had gathered outside, however, was not so easily appeased. On July 19, 1964, the *New York Times* reported that “thousands of rioting Negroes raced through the center of Harlem last night.” Members of the crowd pulled fire alarms and broke store windows. Those arrested faced charges of burglary, felonious assault, resisting arrest, and inciting a riot. Police fired shots into the air to contain the crowds. Five hundred policemen, including the tactical patrol force, of which all members were trained in judo, under age thirty, and over six feet tall, were called into Harlem. The police closed off 125th Street between Third and Eighth Avenues, stood shoulder to shoulder at barricades, and still the unrest was not contained.

Chaos at night and order during the day would mark the six days of unrest. As the protests went on, many Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant residents who abstained from the protest resented the implication that everyone who lived in these neighborhoods was involved in the fray, a complaint given credence by the fact that Commissioner Michael Murphy pled for restraint from the pulpit of all Harlem churches the Sunday after the riots began. Black New York City residents would suffer further indignities during official pleas for peace. Mayor Robert Wagner, on his return from a European vacation, proclaimed, “Law and order are the colored citizen’s best freedom” (“1964”), a galling statement, considering the roots of the disturbance.

After the riot ended, many weighed in on its cause. There was a racial divide among lay explanations for the riot. Whites saw it as a result of outside agitation—agitation that could be linked to individuals. Those who supported this theory were vindicated when Willie Epton, a member of Progressive Labor, an organization formed after the breakup of Communist Party USA, was charged with criminal anarchy, a crime for which he served one year in prison. On the other side of the racial divide, blacks cited social and economic conditions as the cause of the riot.

Racial division was also cited by elite opinion. Then Undersecretary of Labor **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** recommended a strategy of “benign neglect” in avoiding future riots, suggesting that blacks had been promised more than whites could give them. Riots, then, were a symbol of black frustration. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, would recognize the logic of these rebellions and attribute them to official misconduct and economic conditions affecting black urban dwellers. Analysts have stressed the logic of this kind of black protest, suggesting that people resort to such acts when

other political avenues are closed. Efforts have been made to place such rebellions within the context of American history. Violence, it is claimed—particularly violence across ethnic groups—is part of the American political landscape.

Riots would indeed mark the landscape for the next few years. Riots would break out that summer in **Rochester** (July 24–25), New York; nearby **Jersey City** (August 2–4), Patterson, and Elizabeth (both August 11–13), New Jersey; **Philadelphia** (August 28–30), Pennsylvania; and throughout the country in 1965. The New York City riot occurred less than two weeks after the passage of the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** and the infamous Watts riot (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**) erupted the day after Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These uprisings are often thought to be the cause of the loss of moderate white support for the cause of civil rights. The riots are held as a symbol of the eclipse of King's message and the goals of racial civility in the South. Afterward, the civil rights focus would shift to incorporate economic justice in post-migration urban centers. *See also* Brown, H. Rap.

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### **New York City Silent March of 1917**

On July 28, 1917, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** staged a silent march in New York City to protest the **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot** that took place earlier that month. The march was not only a condemnation of the riot that claimed the lives of thirty-five African Americans, but a statement of black America's frustration with the wave of racial violence that had saturated the nation since the late nineteenth century.

Beginning with the race riots that swept the South in Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi during **Reconstruction** (1865–1877), racial violence characterized the nadir in the African American experience (see **Black Nadir**). Racially motivated **lynching** reached an all-time high in the late 1890s, and many blacks hoped the turn of the century would portend a reversal of fortune for blacks. However, early-twentieth-century black migration to northern and midwestern cities proved agitating to predominantly white populated urban centers.

Perceived as threats to the social, sexual, political, moral, and labor order, African Americans served as convenient scapegoats for white angst. Under the guise of protecting white womanhood and eliminating black criminality, **white mobs** used the arrest of any black male suspect as justification for storming jails, kidnapping and lynching the accused, assaulting innocent blacks, and burning down black neighborhoods and business districts.

Within the first decade of the twentieth century, race riots seized **New York City** (1900); **New Orleans** (1900); **Springfield**, Ohio (1904 and 1906); **Atlanta** (1906); and **Springfield**, Illinois (1908).

Continued black migration northward during the World War I era (known as the **Great Migration**) exacerbated white paranoia about ever-growing black urban populations. The context of that migration was particularly significant, as many blacks moved to industrial towns to take advantage of job opportunities created by the War Industries Board. Additionally, when the United States entered the Great War (World War I) in 1917, industrial jobs left vacant by white doughboys were filled by black laborers. Because the War Industries Board had the power to mobilize the workforce and settle manager-labor disputes, labor unrest underscored the period. The government shunned strikes as a means to redress labor exploitation and low wages, arguing that wartime demanded the full cooperation of citizens in increasing production. Nonetheless, job tensions exacerbated racial tensions resulting in race riots in cities like East St. Louis, Illinois.

After news of the East St. Louis riot reached black communities nationwide, outraged black newspapers condemned the riot as a massacre. In response, the NAACP sent **W.E.B. Du Bois** and Martha Gruening to investigate the riot and compile a report. Their twenty-four-page “Massacre at East St. Louis” implicated not only the police force and white citizenry, but national guardsmen as well, in allowing blacks to fall victim to mob violence. The NAACP decided to take a visible public stand by organizing a march down Fifth Avenue, a major thoroughfare in New York City. Well-dressed black men and women wearing white shirts and long white skirts, suits, and hats marched down the avenue in total silence. Their sentiments were expressed on picket signs that condemned lynching and race riots as un-American. The black onlookers were also silent as the only sound heard came from a drum.

The NAACP had its origins in a meeting convened, in part, to address the 1908 Springfield, Illinois, riot. Predominantly a white organization in terms of leadership and financial patronage, the NAACP declared itself to be a champion of racial justice. High-profile blacks such as Du Bois, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** (spearhead of the anti-lynching movement), and **Mary Church Terrell** (founder of the **National Association of Colored Women [NACW]**), helped found the organization. Although the NAACP focused on securing political and civil rights for African Americans, its members did not shy away from addressing racial violence perpetrated against blacks. The demonstration on Fifth Avenue continued a tradition of NAACP and black public protest against racial injustice. *See also* Police Brutality; Segregation.

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### Niagara Movement

Founded in 1905, the Niagara movement, forerunner of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, changed how African Americans responded to racial inequality during the 1900s. Despite attempts by African Americans to assimilate passively into American culture, whites increasingly used intimidation, legal barriers, and **lynching** to reverse gains won by blacks during Reconstruction. Angered by the increase in lynching of blacks, and disgruntled by the accommodation policies of the Atlanta Compromise, **W.E.B. Du Bois** met with newspaperman **Monroe Trotter** and other prominent African Americans to draft resolutions for the Niagara movement in February 1905. The resolutions called for equal suffrage, civil liberty, and access to free education, decent housing, and economic opportunity.

After Reconstruction, the federal government slowly turned from policies promoting equality for African Americans. A series of court cases—*Reese v. the United States* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*—proved detrimental to African American status. In the early 1900s, there were two schools of thought in the African American community. Statesman **Booker T. Washington** urged blacks not to defy whites and to seek equality through hard work and gradual acceptance. On September 18, 1895, Washington gave his famous “Atlanta Compromise” speech at the **Cotton States and International Exposition** in Atlanta, Georgia. In the speech, Washington urged African Americans to refrain from agitation. According to Washington, work, patience, and passivity would lead to economic and social acceptance from white Americans.

Although many African Americans followed Washington’s doctrine, many felt that hard work and persistence did little to advance equality. Washington’s policies faltered under white-imposed literacy tests, intimidation, and lynching. Ultimately, lynching proved to be the catalyst leading to the downfall of accommodation policies by African Americans. Determined to maintain superiority over blacks, whites used the law and physical violence to deny African Americans social and political equality. In the late 1800s, even law-abiding African Americans became targets of lynch mobs. The failure of whites to acknowledge attempts by blacks to peacefully assimilate into American society caused people to criticize of Washington.

Two of Washington’s most vocal critics were Monroe Trotter and W.E.B. Du Bois. Trotter, a newspaperman, attended meetings and openly heckled Washington. Du Bois lauded Washington’s efforts to empower blacks, but questioned his passivity. Both Trotter and Du Bois believed that repeated agitation, not **accommodationism**, offered the best route toward equality

for African Americans. An accomplished intellectual and scholar, Du Bois communicated extensively through writing. During the ten years between the “Atlanta Compromise” speech and the formation of the Niagara movement, Du Bois became increasingly radical, using his poetry to incite African Americans to fight for equality. Disgusted with lack of political progress and upward social mobility, in 1903, Du Bois openly criticized the accommodation policies of Washington. His *Souls of Black Folk*, a collection of poetry, celebrates African American culture while denouncing lynching and divisive social practices.

Increasing racial unrest, economic disparity, and social inequality caused more African Americans to renounce Washington’s passive stance. On July 11, 1905, at the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, the founders of the Niagara movement met to establish the Declaration of Principles for the Niagara movement. The Declaration of Principles set standards for governing the organization and addressing concerns. The introduction congratulates African American attempts to assimilate into American society. Next, the declaration demands certain rights for all men: suffrage, civil liberty, education, and decent housing. In addition to these rights, African Americans acknowledged the duty to vote, obey laws, work, remain clean, educate, and respect themselves and others. The Niagara movement sought equality for all men.

Initially, the movement excluded women. The only woman invited into the 1905 meeting was white social activist Mary White Ovington, a friend of Du Bois. The leading crusader against lynching, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, was denied admittance into the founding meeting. At Du Bois’ insistence, the Massachusetts Niagara Women’s Auxiliary was established until women were formally admitted into the convention the following year.

Sadly, the Niagara movement lasted only a few years. By 1908, the movement was fading. Du Bois’ failure to include the masses of African Americans, limited financing, and his lofty intellectual ideals alienated many Americans. Infighting caused further animosity in the organization. Monroe Trotter maintained a distrust of the wealthy Ovington and other whites. Ultimately, Trotter presented the organization with a revised plan for the movement. When Du Bois refused to give in to Trotter’s objections over the role of members, Trotter left and the rift never healed. To make matters worse, it is rumored that Booker T. Washington paid newspapers not to report on the movement, tipped off whites to meeting places, and encouraged organizational disruption.

Despite shortcomings, the Niagara movement united blacks in America and established a vehicle for protest. Although there were few legal victories, it was the first twentieth-century movement championing unrest to challenge racial inequality by blacks. The movement encouraged others. Empowered by the writings and actions of Du Bois, Robert Abbott founded the *Chicago Defender*, a leading newspaper in the African American community. Founded after the collapse of the Niagara movement, the NAACP effectively won several important legal civil rights decisions during the 1900s. *See also* Accommodationism; Lynching; Segregation.

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## Nonviolence

Nonviolence is a set of moral beliefs and practices that rejects the use of force in the fight for social justice and human or political rights. Although some of the ideas behind the concept date back to the time of Jesus, it is largely associated with Mahatma Gandhi, who used it in his struggle to gain India's independence from Great Britain. In the African American struggle for social justice and civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, is the emblematic figure of nonviolent resistance.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was influenced by the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Hindu principles of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, and the writings of Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin, and Leo Tolstoy, among others. Thoreau's civil disobedience consisted mainly of writing against injustice, notably in his 1849 essay, "Resistance to Civil Government" (posthumously known as "Civil Disobedience"). Thoreau refused to pay the poll tax because the U.S. government sanctioned the holding of African slaves and was involved in other unjust causes, such as the Mexican-American War. Although he did not stage any movement of civil disobedience, his thoughts influenced both Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

As for Tolstoy's influence, Gandhi embraced his strong belief in pacifism, nonviolent resistance, love, and kindness to humanity. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi incorporated Christian ideals as spelled out in the "Sermon on the Mount," which praises humility, poverty, abnegation, and love. Tolstoy and Gandhi also employed Jesus Christ's teaching of love for one's enemy and rejection of the "eye for an eye" doctrine. In the celebrated film *Gandhi* (1982, dir. Richard Attenborough), Gandhi is heard saying, "an eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind."

Also admired by Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin was Gandhi's greatest influence, as the Mahatma (meaning "Great Soul") himself acknowledged. Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1860), a book of essays on economy, motivated Gandhi to start nonviolent resistance. Gandhi was touched by Ruskin's rejection of luxury; as a result, he used his family's wealth to help liberate the oppressed. Ruskin's ideas particularly shaped Gandhi's economic and social philosophy called *Sarvodaya* or "well-being of all."

Of paramount importance in the shaping of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence are *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. A religious ideal in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, the Sanskrit word *ahimsa* means refraining from killing or harming (i.e., nonviolence). *Satyagraha*, also a Sanskrit word, means "holding firmly onto truth" or soul force; the practice of nonviolent resistance involves civil disobedience and noncooperation, but also respect and love for the opponent. Gandhi effectively used it to gain rights for Indian workers in South Africa and to end British rule in India. *Satyagraha* entails *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (nonviolence), and *tapasya* (readiness for self-sacrifice). The practice

of *satyagraha* strives for love for all humanity and demands patience, readiness to be humiliated, acceptance of one's suffering as a means of changing the opponent, and fasting. Far from being passive resistance, nonviolent resistance involves active strategies such as sit-ins, marches, boycotts, peaceful demonstration, workplace occupation, vigils, hunger strikes, and petitions.

The **civil rights movement** in the United States largely followed the principles of nonviolence generally associated with Martin Luther King, Jr., in the struggle to end racial discrimination and social injustice against African Americans. As King argued in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he and his followers knew that people who oppress others, in this case the white supremacists in the south, never relinquish power of their own volition. Southern violence against African Americans had to be forcefully exposed to the rest of the country and the world if changes were to occur. Against **police brutality**, mass arrests, and **lynching**, King and his followers offered soul force. Aware of the formidable power of nonviolence, King himself acknowledged his debt to Gandhi with his commitment to nonviolence as a means of fighting to end racial injustice in the United States. Like Gandhi, King and his followers used a combination of strategies of civil disobedience and noncooperation, including marches, sit-ins, and boycotts. On February 1, 1965, King led a march that was reminiscent of Gandhi's march to the sea to make salt in protest against the British salt monopoly in India. King led the fifty-mile march between Selma and Montgomery, Alabama, to demand voting rights for African Americans and to protest racial violence, **segregation**, and discrimination.

Even though the civil rights movement largely adopted the principle of nonviolence, some African American groups and individuals believed that it was not effective and opted for a call to arms, or at least did not rule out the use of violence. **Malcolm X** considered it criminal to rule out the use of violence in self-defense. Groups such as the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** declared open war on **vigilante organizations**, policemen, and sheriffs who used violence against African Americans. These groups that rejected the principle of nonviolence believed in self-defense to protect themselves, their families, and properties because the U.S. government had, since the **Reconstruction** era, largely ignored white-on-black violence and crime. It has been argued that, even though nonviolence eventually led to the success of the civil rights movement, groups advocating violence in self-defense also contributed to the awareness of the social injustice against African Americans.

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*Aimable Twagilimana*

**North Carolina.** See Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898





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**Ohio.** *See* Cincinnati (Ohio) Riots of 1967 and 1968; Cincinnati (Ohio) Riot of 2001; Cleveland (Ohio) Riot of 1966; Dayton (Ohio) Riot of 1966; Springfield (Ohio) Riot of 1904

**Oklahoma.** *See* Greenwood Community (Tulsa, Oklahoma); Tulsa Race Riot Commission; Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921

## **Omaha (Nebraska) Riot of 1919**

On September 28, 1919, a **white mob** took a black man named Will Brown from jail, tortured, hung, and shot him, then burned his body. Brown had been accused of assaulting a white woman named Agnes Loebeck. When Mayor Ed P. Smith tried to stop the **lynching** of Brown, the mob attempted to hang him as well. After the lynching, the mob burned out the brand new courthouse and then filtered through the city to the black part of town, attacking any black people they found, breaking windows, looting, and setting black-owned property on fire. Federal troops were called in, and when all the damages were tallied, there had been three deaths, more than fifty injuries, and thousands of dollars in property damage.

Economic opportunity in Omaha had long drawn people from a mix of ethnicities, including blacks, whose population doubled between 1910 and 1920, from around 5,000 to more than 10,000. Omaha's social climate during the summer of 1919 was particularly volatile. Several unions had gone on strike, and companies brought in black replacement workers. Sensationalized coverage of the black strikebreaker angle in local newspapers heightened racial tension. Omaha newspapers expressed varying degrees of criticism of the mayor and police department. All summer, the *Bee* and *Daily News* ran inflammatory front-page reports of alleged sexual assaults of white women by black men. The black weekly, the *Monitor*, edited by Rev. John Albert Williams, a local **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** leader, asserted that the *Bee* and *Daily News* had contributed significantly to racial prejudice and tension in the city with their biased treatment of blacks.

The black monthly news magazine, *The Crisis*, reported that Agnes Loebeck and Will Brown knew one another from the Omaha underworld, in which there were several houses where black men met white prostitutes. *The Crisis* asserted that Loebeck took revenge on Brown after a quarrel by alleging the attempted assault. The article also asserted that Tom Dennison was behind the riot as part of an attempt to discredit the mayor and regain political control of the city.

Boss Tom Dennison ran the Third Ward downtown, a vice syndicate, and the local Democratic Party from the back of the old Budweiser saloon on Douglas Street. But beginning in 1916, the Dennison machine came on hard times, lost power, and suffered from infighting. In 1918, Ed P. Smith was elected mayor, forcing Dennison's man, James Dahlman, to give up the mayoral office for the first time in five consecutive terms. The race riot did serve to discredit Mayor Ed Smith's administration, and the Dennison machine returned to power after the 1921 elections.

On the night after the rioting, Omaha was calm. The *New York Times* reported that was due in part to a dramatic rainstorm that drove everyone to find cover all over the city. The article also reported that although business and professional men in Omaha did not approve of the riot, the working class seemed to glory in it, and "scores of young girls in stores and offices were bragging about their part in the mob last night."

The rioting generated a refugee effect. E.L. McDowell, an official at the train station, estimated that 2,000 black people left Omaha by train after the riot. Toll collectors at the Douglas St. Bridge reported that a constant stream of black refugees crossed the bridge to Iowa.

At the request of local officials, the Army sent in Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, who arrived two days after the riot ended and declared martial law. Detachments were stationed in the black neighborhood at Twenty-Fourth and Lake Streets, at the courthouse and city hall buildings, and in South Omaha at Twenty-Fourth and O Streets. To assist in identifying participants, Major General Wood ordered the confiscation of all pictures and plates made by photographers during the riot. Anyone identified was to be arrested by the military at once. The district court ordered a grand jury to convene and investigate the riots.

The grand jury was impaneled on October 8. A month later, 120 indictments were handed down; among them were George and James Sutij, twins, 25; James Shields; Harry Jenkins, 22; Sam Novak, 17; Henry Louis Weaver, 21; William Francis, 16. Most of the 120 people indicted were never successfully prosecuted. Despite all the investigations, confessions, and photographic evidence, all the suspects were eventually released; no one served time. Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, having first attributed responsibility for the riot to the local political machine, later blamed the International Workers of the World (IWW) and the Bolsheviks. Wood was soon using the public's fear of such groups as a cornerstone in his campaign for president. The remains of Will Brown were buried with no funeral service and no mourners. *See also* Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

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Jan Voogd

### Orangeburg (South Carolina) Massacre of 1968

The Orangeburg Massacre, an incident in which three African American students were killed and twenty-seven others were wounded in a confrontation with police, occurred in February 1968 on the adjoining campuses of South Carolina State College (now South Carolina State University) and Claflin College (now Claflin University), two historically black colleges in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Although a great deal of violence occurred during antiwar and **civil rights movement** demonstrations of the 1960s, the Orangeburg Massacre was unprecedented because it was the first time in U.S. history that students were killed on an American college campus. Another aspect of the Orangeburg Massacre that makes it an unparalleled event in the annals of American history is that even though the deaths of the students at South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges occurred two years before the Kent State shootings in which four students were killed and nine others were wounded on May 4, 1970, the Orangeburg Massacre received negligible media coverage. In fact, compared to the national and international media coverage that the tragedy at Kent State received, it was almost as if the Orangeburg Massacre did not happen at all, or, at the very least, was not important enough to report. Perhaps the only event of its kind that received even less media attention was the deaths of two students during an incident at Jackson State University in Mississippi on May 14, 1970. Ironically, the 150 African American students at Jackson State were protesting the incident at Kent State when the National Guard fired into the crowd, leaving two students dead.

There are many possible reasons why the Orangeburg Massacre was neglected by the press. Even in death and injury it seemed that the students of South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges had fallen prey to the racial discrimination they spent their lives trying to overcome. However, an equally plausible reason is that less than two months after the Orangeburg Massacre, while the incident was still under investigation, the nation, particularly

the individuals in the civil rights movement who had committed their lives to ending discrimination in this country, were shocked and angered by the assassination of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, on April 8, 1968.

Whatever the reason for the neglect of the topic, the fact is that on Thursday night, February 8, 1968, members of the South Carolina Sheriff's Office, the South Carolina Police Department, and the South Carolina Army National Guard shot thirty African American college students who had organized what was intended to be a peaceful protest. Approximately 200 students gathered on the adjoining campuses of South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges to protest the continued **segregation** of the All Star Bowling Lane, a bowling alley on Russell Street, within walking distance of the two colleges. The bowling alley was owned by Harry Floyd, a local businessman. Students were frustrated after a week's attempt to persuade the owner of the bowling alley to comply with the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which, in part, authorized the national government to abolish segregation and discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, and, in the case of employment, sex. The students organized a peaceful demonstration on the college campuses where they attended school. The act was signed into law on July 2, 1964, by President Lyndon Baines Johnson and, even though the law stressed voluntary compliance, it also included a stipulation that encouraged resolution of problems by local and state authorities.

During the days leading up to February 8, several representatives from South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges met with the mayor of Orangeburg, the chief of police, and the city manager. The students requested but were denied a permit to march through the streets of Orangeburg or to demonstrate in front of the All Star Bowling Lane.

On Monday, February 5, 1968, a group of students from Claflin and South Carolina State Colleges attempted to desegregate the only bowling alley in town, but they were denied entrance and the police were summoned by the proprietor. After a brief stand-off, the majority of the students returned to their respective campuses.

This effort to abolish segregation was not something new for students of Claflin and South Carolina State Colleges. They, along with black and white citizens in South Carolina, played an active role in the civil rights movement. In July 1955, fifty-seven African Americans petitioned the school board to desegregate the public schools in Orangeburg. A year later, students from South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges organized a nonviolent protest march through the streets of Orangeburg. During February and March, students from Claflin, Morris, and Friendship Colleges conducted sit-ins to desegregate the lunch counter at S.H. Kress, a novelty store or "five and dime," founded by Samuel Henry Kress (1863–1955). On March 15, 1960, demonstrators were drenched with fire hoses and tear-gassed as they marched to protest the segregated lunch counter. In September 1963, over 1,000 protesters were arrested for picketing local merchants. A review of this brief history suggests that the events that took place in Orangeburg during February 1968 were not an aberration but part of the long struggle to abolish segregation and racial discrimination, which was a fundamental goal of the civil rights movement.

On Tuesday night, the local police were waiting when students arrived. The door of the bowling alley was locked, but the students refused to move. Chief of Police Roger Poston was called. When he arrived, the door was unlocked to allow him entrance. Several students rushed the door. They were asked to leave. When they refused, fifteen were arrested for trespassing.

When rumors of the arrests reached the campuses, over 300 students gathered outside the bowling alley. They were met by the Orangeburg Police Department, state police, state highway patrol, deputies from the sheriff's office, and the state law enforcement division (SLED). A city fire truck arrived. The students chose that moment to rush the bowling alley. Someone smashed a plate glass window. The police beat back the crowd with nightsticks. Eight students and one officer were injured.

On Wednesday morning, student representatives from both colleges attended a meeting with city officials to discuss the events of the past couple of days and prevent any potential escalation. The students were again denied a permit to hold a demonstration but were able to submit a list of grievances; their list included: (a) closing of the All Star Bowling Lane until it changed its policy toward segregation; (b) establishment of a biracial Human Relations Committee; (c) service from the Orangeburg Medical Association for all persons, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, or national origin; and (d) compliance of local and state officials with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On Thursday, February 8, 1968, another meeting was convened on campus and was organized by the Black Awareness Coordinating Committee (BACC), a student organizations that included members of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**. Some members of BACC felt that they had been defeated by compromise when the group was denied another permit. The meetings lasted until evening without reaching a solution. The students were denied their permit to demonstrate, and the bowling alley remained segregated. The only concession was that Harry Floyd agreed to close his place of business at 5:00 P.M., several hours earlier than usual. But still, the stalemate continued. Exhausted, frustrated, and disappointed about their lack of progress, dozens of students conversed in small groups. Others wandered aimlessly around the campuses. After the meeting, instead of going straight back to their dorms, over 100 students walked around the campuses, talked in small groups, and wondered what tomorrow would bring.

Because it was a cold winter night, someone suggested a bonfire. It was not long before the blaze became a beacon for other students. It also attracted the attention of the police. Once the authorities arrived they built a barricade on Watson Street separating themselves from the students and the bonfire. There was a sudden tension and a sense of foreboding in the air—the sense that something was going to happen that night.

A fire truck arrived followed by an ambulance, which elicited an angry response from the students. As the firemen extinguished the already dying embers of the bonfire someone out of the darkness yelled, "I'm hit." The

police immediately opened fire. Students, stunned by the sudden assault, ran, screamed, fell to their knees, or dove for shelter. From start to finish, the terror lasted only seconds, but in that terrifying interval, twenty-seven students were wounded and three young men were killed.

Samuel Ephesians Hammond, Jr. (1949–1968), Henry Ezekial Smith (1948–1968), and Delano Herman Middleton (1950–1968) were killed. Samuel Hammond, a freshman from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was shot in the upper back. Henry Smith, a sophomore from Marion, South Carolina, was shot in the right and left sides and in the neck. Delano Middleton, a seventeen-year-old high school student from Orangeburg, was shot in the spine, thigh, wrist, and forearm. His mother worked on campus and he was there visiting friends. This was an unexpected culmination of events that began with so much hope and promise.

Even after an investigation, it was difficult to state exactly what triggered the confrontation. The police claimed that they fired in self-defense. Students claimed that the only shots fired were by the police, that they fired without warning into a defenseless crowd with no means of protecting themselves. The controversy over what actually ignited the Orangeburg Massacre has never been resolved. However, during the 112th Session of the South Carolina General Assembly in 1997–1998, the following resolution was passed (Bill 4576):

To express profound gratitude for the supreme sacrifice made on February 8, 1968, by three young students, Samuel Hammond, Jr., Delano Herman Middleton, and Henry Ezekial Smith, and to recognize their courageous effort by declaring February 8, as Smith-Hammond-Middleton Memorial Day.

Be it further resolved that we pray the governor of our great state immediately issue posthumously to those three brave young men The Order of the Palmetto, and pray also that these awards be presented to South Carolina State University on February 8, 1998, and that South Carolina State University display them in positions of honor and prominence in its Smith-Hammond-Middleton Memorial Center.

Every year, friends, family, and survivors gather on the campuses of Clifflin and South Carolina State Universities to commemorate the Orangeburg Massacre. *See also* Sellers, Cleveland.

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*John G. Hall*

# P

## **Palestine (Texas) Riot of 1910**

Despite the dearth of information available today, the news of the riot near Palestine, Texas, appeared on the front page of many of the major U.S. newspapers at the time. According to these accounts, on the night of July 29, 1910, a **white mob** of at least 200 people drove black residents near the village of Slocum, about fourteen miles south of Palestine, into a heavily wooded area and killed them. The mob cut the phone lines along the way, thus ensuring that news of the violence would be difficult to confirm. Scattered bands clashed and at least eighteen black people were killed. The bodies were left as they fell, in the woods and on the roads. Some of the news accounts reported the number of deaths as thirty or forty.

Texas State Rangers arrived by the next evening, under the command of Capt. Godfrey Rees Fowler, a local son and former Army officer recently returned from Nicaragua. The presence of militia seemed to bring the violence under control after it had spread to the towns of Denson Springs and Elkhart. The state militia guarded the county jail in Palestine, where the first prisoners were placed.

Tension had been building in the weeks prior to the riot. Black farmers had begun to protest the peonage system. A black man had declined to pay a debt sponsored by a white farmer named Redin Alford, and Alford had to pay it. Then, a white man, according to some accounts named James Spurger, refused to work when assigned to a road crew under a black supervisor. There were rumors of secret meetings among black residents, and a black man allegedly confessed to a plan to kill Spurger and his family.

On the night of the riot, a black man, believed to be carrying a shotgun, was declared to be advancing on Spurger. When he refused to surrender, a posse shot him. The rioting followed shortly thereafter. Farmers and other white citizens stocked up on weapons before County Judge B.H. Gardner ordered the sale of firearms to be discontinued and ordered all saloons closed as well.

Sheriff William Black's description of the situation was later quoted widely by many major newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, *New*



*York Times*, and *Atlanta Constitution*. "Men were going about and killing Negroes as fast as they could find them . . . without any real cause. These Negroes have done no wrong that I could discover. . . . It will be difficult to find out just how many were killed. . . . Some will probably never be found."

A grand jury was formed that included District Attorney Harris and District Judge Gardner. The names of fourteen of the dead were established. There were sixteen white men arrested in connection with the riots, including James Spurger, Reagon McKenzie, and S.F. Jenkins. All were held without bail.

A month after the riot, there was a movement afoot to bring justice to the incident. John Siddon, a white man from Volga, Texas, wrote to Cecil Lyon, the chair of the Texas Republican Committee, informing him of the incident and asking for federal intervention. Lyon wrote to President William Howard Taft asking for an investigation. U.S. Attorney General George W. Wickersham replied, promising to look into the matter. In addition, W.H. Ellis, attorney and "concerned citizen" and a group of black ministers wrote to President Taft as well, but the staff attorney who replied to them said that the government would look into the matter only if a federal crime had been committed—one which they had yet to specify. Lawlessness in Palestine had been the object of a congressional investigation in 1886, when violence became part of a labor dispute between the local railroad and its unions. Federal intervention was considered appropriate in matters of interstate commerce.

In Washington, D.C., a meeting of 600 concerned black citizens was addressed by several clergy, including Professor W.H. Hart, Howard University; Rev. J. Anderson Taylor, Trinity Baptist Church; Rev. J. Milton Waldron, Shiloh Baptist Church; and Rev. R.K. Harris, Israel A.M.E. Church. "When so many black men are murdered without indictment, trial, or conviction, as so recently happened in Texas and Florida, we feel it our duty to appeal to the American people to aid us in reenthroning law and order in every community of our country" ("Race War Denounced," 2). In a sermon at the Cosmopolitan Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., the Rev. Simon P.W. Drew declared that the "tale of the wholesale killing of Negroes in Palestine, Texas, must cause every American with any pride of country or hope for its future to hang his head in shame" ("Condemns Texas Slayers," 12).

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*Jan Voogd*

**Parker, Mack Charles (1936–1959), Lynching of**

Mack Charles Parker was a young African American man who was lynched in Mississippi in February 1959 for allegedly raping a white woman. Parker, whose life and death are recounted in Howard Smead's *Blood Justice: The Lynching of Mack Charles Parker*, in many ways served as the impetus for the civil rights legislation of the 1960s and helped bring an end to an era of open and publicly sanctioned acts of violence against African Americans.

Parker was a twenty-three-year-old truck driver who lived in Lumberton, Mississippi. Although he married following his service in the Army, he later divorced and became the sole supporter for his mother, younger sister and her child, and four-year-old brother. Although recognized by his neighbors for taking on the responsibility of this mother and siblings at such a young age, Parker also liked to go out and have a good time with his friends. One such night was Monday, February 23, 1959, when Parker and four friends (Tommy Lee Grant, Curt Underwood, Norman "Rainbow" Malachy, and David Alfred), after receiving their paychecks, went out for the night.

During that same night, June Walters was traveling with her husband, Jimmy, and four-year-old daughter along a road between Poplarville and Lumberton in Pearl River County, Mississippi. At about 11:30 P.M. that night, the Walters' family car stalled and June's husband decided to travel to the nearest town, Lumberton, for assistance. June, who was two months pregnant, and her daughter remained behind, locked in the car. While Jimmy was walking along the desolate road toward Lumberton, Parker and his friends drove by and noticed the car. This is where the events of the night of February 23 and the truth diverge.

What is known is that June Walters and her daughter were attacked. June was taken to an isolated field, beaten, and raped. Her daughter was accosted. After Parker dropped his friends at their homes, he returned to his own home briefly and then went out again. A truck driver found June stumbling along the road, in shock, with her daughter. She claimed that she was attacked by a black man. Parker, who had no previous arrest record, was accused of the crime and jailed. The intersection of race, class, politics, ambition, and hate colored the intervening facts of the case and, inevitably, determined the outcome and Parker's death.

Although no direct evidence connected Parker to the rape of June Walters, this fact did not stop the police from targeting Parker as their primary suspect early in the case. One of the friends with him that night, Curt Underwood, claimed that when they drove past the Walters' car, Parker told him he intended to go back. The father of another of Parker's friends, David Alfred, stated that Parker was the person the police were looking for. In addition, Parker's car was seen that night by a Poplarville police officer. When Parker was brought to the Lumberton jail, after sustaining a bloody beating by police, Walters was unable to identify him in a lineup. Yet, when Parker and the other men in the lineup were asked to repeat the words allegedly spoken by the rapist, Walters identified Parker as the person who attacked her.

From his initial questioning by police until his death, Parker proclaimed his innocence and denied that he had raped June Walters. It wasn't long after Parker was arrested and charged with kidnapping and criminal assault that some of the white residents of Pearl River County began to talk about carrying out their own form of justice. The fact that the victim was unable to identify Parker physically, that there was no evidence linking him to the crime, and that the two lie detector tests he took were inconclusive was not enough to deter locals from wanting to go after Parker. These threats were not taken lightly by Parker, his family, or the local African American community.

Those involved in the conspiracy were from every segment of the Poplarville area community—business owners, laborers, law enforcement officers, farmers, and a preacher. Local sentiment was fueled when Parker's mother hired two African American attorneys to defend her son. There was concern that the attorneys would be allowed to cross-examine a white woman—June Walters—if the case ever went to court. In addition, there was talk that Parker might be cleared of the charges or, if convicted, might win on appeal. The belief that a conviction might be overturned on appeal was a real concern. There were no African Americans on the grand jury that indicted Parker, and there were no African Americans eligible to serve as jurors.

The case transcended the need to convict the person who raped and assaulted June Walters. It was transformed into an occasion to uphold a way of life local residents believed was being challenged and derided. African Americans across the country were demanding legal recognition of their civil rights, demanding the right to vote without encumbrance, the right to equal opportunity in the workplace, and equal educational opportunities. Change was on the horizon and small isolated hamlets and towns like Poplarville felt that they were being ignored by the federal government and the rest of the country, and they were ready to fight back. The incident involving Mack Charles Parker provided them with an opportunity to take a stand and to make a statement.

By the time Parker was transferred to a jail in Poplarville, which served as the county seat for Pearl River, plans were well underway to lynch him. Other prisoners were warned that something might happen and they were directed to point Parker out if it did. On the night of April 24, several cars pulled up to the Pearl River County jail and courthouse, and from among that group, three men entered the jail and forcibly took Parker. They were later identified as J.P. Walker, a former deputy sheriff, James Floren Lee, an itinerant preacher, and Jewel Alford, an officer at the jail.

Although it may not have been a surprise that a lynch mob would come after Parker, it appears that no one who observed the events of that night was prepared for what they saw. Parker, young and strong, despite the beatings given to him by police some months earlier, struggled valiantly for his life. The three men bludgeoned and kicked Parker until he was on the brink of unconsciousness and then dragged him down the jailhouse steps, leaving a trail of blood, and placed him into one of the waiting cars. The mob, minus Jewel Alford, traveled from Mississippi to Louisiana and then back

again, stopping at the Pearl River. Parker was bound, beaten and kicked, and then shot in the heart. His body was then weighed down with chains and tossed into the river.

Lynch mobs in the past had little to fear in terms of retaliation or of being arrested. Yet, it was apparent almost immediately that this **lynching** would be different. The first evidence of this was Governor Coleman's decision to contact the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**. Only hours after Parker's kidnapping, torture, and death, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the White House had been informed of the lynching. In addition, the national press descended on the residents of the county with questions and cameras.

The FBI quickly moved into Poplarville and started their formal investigation. Although some of the residents in Pearl River and the surrounding counties, including Jimmy and June Walters, thought Parker should have been able to stand trial, they also resented what they perceived as the federal government's intrusion. It became clear that not everyone agreed with the actions of the mob, but they would, without hesitation, defend their neighbors, county, and state. More than sixty FBI agents, along with the state police, began an investigation into Parker's disappearance and attempted to locate him.

Ten days after Parker was murdered, on May 4, his body, bloated and decomposed, surfaced. While he was being laid to rest, the FBI accelerated its investigation and attempted to gather evidence that the mob had carried Parker across state lines, from Mississippi to Louisiana, in order to make the charges a federal offense. At every turn, the FBI was met with silence out of fear of retaliation and resentment over their presence. Two potential witnesses who did participate in the investigation later attempted suicide.

Although no confessions were forthcoming from any of the participants in the lynching, the FBI believed that it had enough evidence, including Alford's admission that he helped the mob to gain entry to the jail, to bring indictments and convictions. Despite the testimony of key government witnesses, of the two grand juries (in 1959 and 1960) convened to examine the evidence, neither brought an indictment against any of the members of the mob or their accomplices. None of the individuals who participated in Parker's kidnapping and murder were ever jailed or arrested.

Nonetheless, many Pearl River County residents did not view the inaction of the grand juries as a victory. Tired of the press, government intrusion, and embarrassed that the state's judicial process was not allowed to resolve the case, local citizens were disappointed that Mississippi was not able to show the rest of the country, and the world, they were capable of handling their own problems in a fair and legal manner. This shift in thinking later opened the door for social change in Poplarville, Pearl River County, and the state of Mississippi.

No member of Parker's family remained in Pearl River County after the case was closed. Mack Charles Parker was interred in a simple grave that displayed no vestiges of his horrific death. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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Robin Dasher-Alston

### ***The Passing of the Great Race* (Grant, 1916)**

Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916), was a best-selling book claiming to trace the origins of the United States to the deeds of a heroic Nordic race. Despite the wave of anti-black riots that swept the nation following World War I, many white academics and intellectuals nevertheless believed that the white race was in danger of being overwhelmed by the darker races of the globe. Grant's book argued that only a stringent application of eugenics (forced sterilization and imprisonment of those whose genes were deemed defective) and immigration restriction would preserve what he termed *the Great Race*. Historians have long disagreed about whether Grant's book represents the last gasp of nineteenth-century racial "science," or is best seen as an adaptation of racist ideology to the changing conditions of the twentieth century.

*The Passing of the Great Race* became a best-seller because it both vastly simplified racist science and applied that science ruthlessly and viciously. In the late nineteenth century, white European and American intellectuals had argued for the existence of literally hundreds of races, based on a conception of race that combined physical appearance, language, history, heredity, behavior, intellectual ability, and so on. European whites, they claimed, were at the apex of a vast racial and developmental hierarchy. Antiracist critics of this science, like pioneering anthropologist Franz Boas, had proved that the physical markers of race were notoriously inaccurate as scientific tools, and argued that the critical elements of perceived race difference—language, history, and culture—were not related at all to biology or heredity. Grant's *Passing of the Great Race* attacked these arguments by inverting them. In place of the myriad white races of Europe, however, Grant insisted that there were three: Nordics, or northern and western Europeans, including the English, Dutch, and German forebears of Grant's own illustrious family; Alpines, most prevalent in southeastern Europe and Russia; and Mediterraneans, who ringed the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. But culture, far from being the essence of race, was instead merely an effect of racial heredity. Grant asserted that qualities such as intellectual ability, cunning, honor, and virtue were inescapably biological characteristics, imprinted in the genes and passed down from parents to children. These most important racial characteristics were merely manifested in physical appearance, history, and individual behavior. Nordics were the Great Race in Grant's title who had wrested America from Native Americans and extended their imperial dominions across the world in an inevitable working-out of their innate superiority. Since, Grant argued, race was first and

foremost biological and inherited, only racially pure offspring would retain the characteristics of their exalted forebears. Based on a common, but distorted, version of Gregor Mendel's experiments with hybridization of pea plants, Grant claimed that racially hybrid people reverted to the inferior type. Thus, he famously asserted, "the cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro" (1916). The United States, he believed, suffered from a tragic lack of race consciousness, that is, an acknowledgement that Americans' Nordic heritage was primarily responsible for the conquest, settlement, and creation of the republic. As a result, "race suicide" threatened the "Great Race" and the nation it created. Degeneration of racial stock through unregulated immigration and cross-breeding had to be met, Grant argued, with a stringent program of immigration restrictions and eugenics—forced sterilization of individuals deemed by Grant and his allies as possessing defective racial characteristics, and breeding of the remaining members of the Great Race (Grant 1916).

As ridiculous as Grant's ideas are, their influence on, for example, the concepts of race found in Nazi party ideology is chilling. In the American context, Grant's arguments can be seen to some extent as an elaboration and extension of the typical arguments used to rationalize racial violence: that **lynching**, for example, was necessary to protect the virtue of white women. But, at the time *The Passing of the Great Race* was published, only the beginnings of the massive migration of African Americans to northern cities could be observed. Grant himself was far more concerned with restricting the immigration and reproduction of Alpines and Mediterraneans in the North. However, Grant's intellectual scheme, which ultimately concluded that class differences in America were merely an effect of racial differences, provided an important transition for concepts of race challenged by black migration and the 1919 race riots that accompanied the **Great Migration**. Scholars have long seen the period around the 1919 riots as one of critical changes in academic and popular racial thought, but have disagreed about what changed and why the changes are important. Some writers have argued that Grant's assertion of race as primarily biological was already out of step with ascendant academic claims of race as primarily cultural. In their view, in 1916 academics were already rejecting the vicious conclusions and policies Grant and his allies advocated, and arguing for a new, tolerant view of racial difference that would ultimately dominate the twentieth century. Other scholars have pointed to Grant's continuing role in both public life and academia as a sign that his beliefs were still important justifications for racial violence, and which continued to influence violent groups like the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** well into the twentieth century. See also *The Great Migration; Racism; Red Summer Race Riots of 1919*.

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Jonathan S. Coit

### Peekskill (New York) Riots of 1949

For one week in the waning summer days of 1949, Peekskill, New York, became the center of national attention. Peekskill's days in the limelight came when the celebrated but controversial African American singer, actor, and political activist Paul Robeson appeared to perform in a benefit concert. Between August 27 and September 4, 1949, two riots would occur in Peekskill, the New York State Police would be mobilized, Robeson would be hanged in effigy, a burning cross would light up the night sky, and Peekskill would live, however briefly, on the front pages of America's newspapers. While Paul Robeson was the focal point of all these events, the reasons for the conflict go far beyond Robeson to expose the uneasy intersection of race, anti-Semitism, local politics, and anti-communism in early cold war America. What occurred in Peekskill was in part a race riot, but it is more accurately characterized as a political protest spun out of control, fueled by **racism** and anti-Semitism.

Located forty miles north of New York in the Hudson Valley, Peekskill hardly seems a likely place for cold war tensions to give way to open violence. In many ways, however, conflict in Peekskill should hardly be surprising. The local population of Peekskill in 1949 was predominantly white, Protestant, and voted the Republican Party ticket. Surrounding Peekskill were numerous summer camps filled with vacationers from New York City. These summer residents were largely Jewish, and their politics were not merely leftist but often avowedly socialist or communist. Add to these conditions the normal tensions that exist between full-time and summertime residents in almost any vacation resort area, and the conditions for some type of conflict were present in Peekskill long before Paul Robeson came to town.

Robeson was one of the best known and popular of American entertainers in the mid-twentieth century. After finishing at the top of his class at Rutgers University, while also becoming the first African American all-American football player, Robeson graduated from Columbia University's law school. Finding little work for a black lawyer, Robeson dabbled in professional sports before drawing on his other talents, singing and acting. Robeson's singing quickly propelled him to fame and opened other opportunities for him in acting. Robeson became the first black man to play the role of Othello on Broadway and, most famously, he sang "Old Man River" in the musical "Showboat." Robeson was so popular that CBS Radio chose him to sing the national broadcast premier of the song "Ballad for Americans" in 1939. During the late 1930s and through the 1940s, however, Robeson's stature as an entertainer suffered as he embraced controversial political causes and voiced his admiration for the Soviet Union.

The summer of 1949 was an especially tense time around Peekskill. The early stages of the cold war left many Americans wondering about their future. Revelations about American citizens spying for the Soviet Union, and congressional investigation of the movie industry for traces of subversion left many Americans wary of the loyalty of their neighbors. In Peekskill, the neighbors were easily identifiable and not trying very hard to hide their politics.

The events leading to the Peekskill riots began in April 1949 when Robeson attended a conference of the World Partisans of Peace in Paris. Robeson had long advocated unpopular causes such as the decolonization of Africa. He had openly embraced the Soviet Union and even sent his son to be schooled in Moscow. Robeson also sang for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War when the United States was trying to stay out of that conflict. These were controversial actions, but largely acceptable to the American public before and during World War II. Robeson's behavior crossed the line of acceptability, however, in the tense post-war atmosphere. During the speech he made in Paris, Robeson announced that "our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war on anyone. We shall not make war on the Soviet Union" (Duberman 1988). In 1949, those comments were controversial enough, but they would be overshadowed by what Robeson said next: "It is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who oppressed us for generations against a country [the Soviet Union] which in one generation has raised our people to the full dignity of mankind" (Duberman 1988). These words cemented in many people's minds Robeson's reputation as un-American. In the *Peekskill Evening Star* on April 21, 1949, the headline read, "Robeson Says U.S. Negroes Won't Fight Russia." Four months later, when it was announced that Robeson would be singing in Peekskill, the people there would remember that headline.

By 1949, Paul Robeson had little concern for his popularity. He had all but stopped being an entertainer in order to spend his energy promoting political causes. The only time Robeson would sing was when he was asked to perform in benefit concerts. Such was the case when the **Civil Rights Congress** asked Robeson to perform for them in Peekskill. Once this occurred, the setting for the riots was complete: social, political, and religious differences between year-round and summertime residents, the rising tensions of the cold war, Robeson's controversial speech in Paris, and finally, the invitation from the Civil Rights Congress, which had just been added to the attorney general's list of subversive organizations.

Robeson had appeared in Peekskill before 1949 without incident. This concert, like the others, was open to the public, but really was intended for the summer residents in the camps outside of town. In previous years, Robeson had appeared in Peekskill and barely made a ripple on the local political waters. After his Paris speech, however, there would be nothing quiet about an appearance by Paul Robeson. In 1949, the local newspaper in Peekskill, the *Evening Star*, and an ad hoc coalition of veterans' organizations mobilized to announce to the world that Robeson might be coming to their town, but that did not mean that he was a welcome guest.

Starting a week before Robeson's scheduled concert on August 29, the *Evening Star* published a series of articles, editorials, and letters to the editor expressing a common theme that Robeson was no longer welcome in Peekskill. "The time for tolerant silence which signifies approval is running out" (*Peekskill Evening Star*, August 23, 1949) read one editorial. "No matter how masterful the décor, nor how sweet the music," Americans should



not be duped into following Robeson and his siren's song of communism (*Peekskill Evening Star*, August 23, 1949). A leader of the Joint Veterans Council in Peekskill wrote an impassioned call to stop the concert: "The irony of this meeting is that they intend to appear at Lakeland Acres Picnic Area . . . across the street from the Hillside and Assumption cemeteries. Yes, directly across the street from the resting place of those men who paid the supreme sacrifice in order to insure our democratic form of government. Are we, as loyal Americans, going to forget these men and the principles they died for or are we going to follow their beliefs and rid ourselves of subversive organizations?" (*Peekskill Evening Star*, August 23, 1949).

These passionate words were supported by actions as the Joint Veteran's Council of Peekskill (American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Catholic War Veterans, and Jewish War Veterans) called for a protest march "as a definite stand against the appearance of Paul Robeson" (*Peekskill Evening Star*, August 23, 1949). As the concert approached, the lines were clearly drawn. The *Evening Star* announced the "Russia Loving Negro Baritone" was singing for a "communist front organization" (*Peekskill Evening Star*, August 23, 1949). The protest march had the approval of the veterans' groups, the local newspaper, the Chamber of Commerce, and all the rest of Peekskill. The concert organizers, on the other hand, could count only a small number of like-minded souls as their allies. As the evening of August 27 approached, both protestors and concertgoers made their way to the Lakeland Acres Picnic Area just outside of Peekskill.

There were rising tensions in Peekskill throughout the day of the concert. At one intersection, Robeson was hung in effigy and signs such as "We've got a rope for Robeson" and "Not Wanted—Commies/Wanted—Good Americans," appeared in town. The protest march was scheduled for 7:30 P.M. and the concert for 8:15 P.M. The protest organizers hoped for 5,000 protestors while the concert planners expected a crowd of 2,500. In the end, only 700 marchers turned out, but they were effective in tying up traffic and blocking access to the concert site. On his way to Peekskill, Robeson was stopped and diverted to a friend's house. He would not sing in Peekskill that night.

Back at the Lakeland Acres Picnic Area, however, tensions were reaching the boiling point. At the entrance to the park, protestors and concertgoers were shouting at each other. The concertgoers were treated with variations of "nigger loving, commie, kike bastards" and they responded by calling the protestors "fascists" and "brownshirts." The few concertgoers who made it to Lakeland Acres were outnumbered and clearly got the worst of these exchanges. However unpleasant these events were, nothing that occurred outside Lakeland Acres constituted a riot on the night of August 27. The real problems were inside the picnic grounds.

Of the expected 2,500 concertgoers, only 200 made it inside Lakeland Acres. Once the protest march closed off access to the site, they were effectively trapped inside—afraid to stay, but even more afraid to leave. Despite the obvious potential for trouble, there was minimal police presence at the concert site. Most of the police officers assigned to the event were not there to keep the peace, but rather to collect the license plate numbers

from the concertgoers' cars. When trouble started, these officers were of little help.

Emboldened by the small number of concertgoers and minimal police presence, contingents of protestors left the park entrance and walked inside looking for trouble. Camp chairs and sing-along music books were gathered and burned, concertgoers were terrorized by violence and threats of violence as they huddled together in front of the stage fending off the attacks. Frightening as this was, the worst was yet to come. With the night sky darkened, the concertgoers were startled to see a burning cross on the hillside above them. Fearing the worst, the burning cross was actually the least of the concertgoers' problems. As it turns out, the cross was not the work of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, but rather of a group of thirteen- and fourteen-year-old boys. Of course, discovering later that the burning cross was little more than an adolescent prank does not change the emotional impact that it had on the concertgoers at the time.

Three hundred protestors entered the picnic grounds to fight the concertgoers. The most serious fighting occurred at a bridge where the concertgoers tried to make a stand, but were eventually pushed back to the stage area. When the police finally intervened and ordered the protestors back to the entrance, they instead circled around and attacked from another direction. In the end, the concertgoers could do little more than create a defensive phalanx and hope for the best. While the rioters burned and destroyed everything in sight, the concertgoers responded by singing "We Shall Not Be Moved." Eventually, the police moved in to restore order and managed to arrange safe transport for the concertgoers.

The first Peekskill riot lasted for four hours, but was not marked by any sustained, organized violence or numerous injuries. It would be wrong, however, to measure the significance of the first Peekskill riot based on the number of injuries incurred. For the concertgoers, this was a truly terrifying event. From their perspective, the roadblocks, the burning cross, the fights inside the picnic grounds, and the delayed police intervention seemed like a coordinated and calculated effort to suppress their political viewpoint. To the protestors, the presence of Robeson seemed like a provocation that required a response. Although most did not participate in the rioting, they quickly blamed the violence on the concertgoers. That the protest of Robeson quickly adopted the language of racism and anti-Semitism shows how close to the surface such feelings were. It does not mean, however, that racism and anti-Semitism were the motivating force behind the riots, only that they were contributing factors. The people of Peekskill took issue with Robeson because of his politics; racial factors just made him that much easier to hate.

The events of August 27, 1949, did not remain a local issue. The Peekskill riot became a front-page story across the nation and provoked much editorial commentary. Most editorials deplored the violence while supporting the cause of the protestors. "Those who are opposed to communism cannot destroy it with violence. Force and strong arm tactics are the handmaidens of communist procedures. They love it. They thrive on it," wrote the *Philadelphia Tribune* (September 3, 1949). In Albany, the *Knickerbocker News*

wrote, "We deplore any action that might tend to dignify, or perhaps even martyrize the Negro singer" (September 2, 1949). In newspapers across the nation, this was the consistent interpretation of the first Peekskill riot, except among Robeson's political allies. The Communist Party's *Daily Worker* considered the Peekskill riot an effort to bring about police state terrorism in the America. Aside from this difference in interpretation, Robeson's supporters also asked a different set of questions about the riot; most important was why there was so little police presence and why were they so slow to react? Were they, Robeson wanted to know, working together with the protestors? Just as there is no evidence to support the charges that the concertgoers started the fighting, there is no evidence that the police were involved in a conspiracy to allow the riot.

After the August 27 riot, both the concertgoers and the Peekskill veterans considered their next steps. For the concertgoers, it was obvious that they needed another concert and it needed to be in Peekskill. They quickly secured another site near Peekskill and held a series of public events in New York to publicize a concert featuring Robeson for September 4, 1949. Back in Peekskill, the Joint Veterans Council also organized another protest parade. In spite of the possibility of violence, neither group considered moving its event. If the first Peekskill riot took everyone by surprise, both sides took precautions to be prepared for anything on September 4.

Hoping to avoid a repeat of the violence, New York's Gov. Thomas Dewey called for everyone to keep their heads while placing one-quarter of the entire state police force around Peekskill on September 4. From a variety of jurisdictions, 900 police officers were on hand in Peekskill, along with various emergency vehicles and even a helicopter. They were all in place by 9:00 A.M., five hours before the start of the concert.

In New York, concert organizers loaded buses full of Robeson supporters for the short trip to the Hudson Valley. Among these supporters were some 2,000 men who volunteered to create a human fence around the concert site. Of these, there were a few who would stand around Robeson as human shields while he sang.

The day of the concert was long, hot, and tension-filled. The protestors marched holding up signs that read, "Wake up America—Peekskill Did!" The concertgoers passed through a shower of insults as their buses made their way to the concert site, but once inside, they were able to enjoy the show unmolested. In all, 20,000 people made it to Peekskill to hear Paul Robeson sing on September 4, 1949, while approximately 5,000 protested his appearance.

While Robeson was onstage singing "Go Down Moses," and "What America Means to Me," the protest march broke up. It looked as if there would be no second Peekskill riot. But when the concert ended and the buses and cars filed out of the parking lots, they encountered a strange scene. Stationed along the narrow two-lane roads leading away from the concert site were hundreds of police officers, and behind them were angry mobs of people waiting to throw stones and disrupt the exit from the concert. In an effort to maintain some general sense of order, the police officers were under orders to hold their positions rather than vacate their posts in the

event of trouble on the road. There would be plenty to keep the police occupied in the hours ahead.

As the first of the cars and buses eased out of the concert site, they were met by an angry mob. As they pulled away, they were hit with a barrage of stones. When the stones shattered the windows, the drivers were forced from their vehicles and were set on by gangs of young men who beat them. When the police realized what was happening, they stopped the exiting traffic and tried to disperse the crowds. Forty-five minutes later, the exodus began again with only slightly better results. The exit was clear, but as the cars and buses drove away from the police protection, they were showered with stones, logs, and other missiles.

Given the circumstances, it is remarkable that no one was killed in either riot in Peekskill. The reaction to the second riot was predictably similar to the earlier commentaries. Robeson's supporters called it the rise of fascism in America; others denounced the violence but wondered if somehow the communists were to blame. The events in Peekskill were not exactly a race riot because the motivating force behind the protestors was anti-communism. The riots were not even about communism in the abstract—they were about the personification of the communist traveler, Paul Robeson, coming to sing in Peekskill. What is most disturbing about the riots is that they expose how close to the surface racial and anti-Semitic feelings were in Peekskill, and how easily the intersection of politics, race, and a unique set of local issues could erupt into violence.

*Further Readings:* Duberman, Martin. *Paul Robeson*. New York: Knopf, 1988; Walwik, Joseph. *The Peekskill, New York, Anti-Communist Riots of 1949*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

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**Pennsylvania.** See Chester and Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1918; Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riot of 1964; York (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1969

### **Pensacola (Florida) Riot of 1976**

A period of intense racial animosity peaked in Pensacola, Florida, during a police-initiated assault of black protestors on February 24, 1976. Hostilities between the races in northwest Florida began in 1973 when a local high school used Confederate imagery as its mascot. The enormous division that characterized race relations grew in 1975, when five black fishermen disappeared in local waters under circumstances that suggested foul play. Area authorities declared that the men drowned accidentally, but blacks believed whites murdered them. The Pensacola chapters of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** organized public demonstrations and demanded justice in the matter, but another event soon captured local attention.

On December 22, 1975, an Escambia County Sheriff's Deputy named Doug Raines shot black motorist Wendel Blackwell in the head at point-blank range, killing him instantly. Eyewitness reports differed on whether Blackwell possessed a handgun or if Raines planted it near his body.

The Sheriff's Department, however, declared the shooting justifiable and refused to discipline Raines. The leaders of the local NAACP and SCLC, Rev. B.J. Brooks and Rev. H.K. Matthews, respectively, led demonstrations in downtown Pensacola, met with Gov. Reubin Askew to voice their concerns, demanded a federal investigation of the Blackwell shooting, and boycotted local stores. Most importantly, they met nightly at local churches and organized protests.

On the evening of February 24, 1976, nearly 500 blacks gathered at their usual demonstration site on the grounds of the county Sheriff's Department. They followed their familiar routine of singing, praying, and chanting for white leaders to deliver justice. Although Rev. H.K. Matthews led most activity through a bullhorn, Rev. Jimmie Lee Savage led the crowd in a chant that declared, "Two, four, six, eight, who shall we incarcerate? Untreiner, Raines, the whole damn bunch!" The crowd laughed, joked, and reflected a festive mood, but deputies felt threatened by the particular demonstration and later claimed that blacks displayed weapons and repeatedly threatened them. Because he deemed the group threatening, Sheriff Royal Untreiner ordered seventy nightstick-wielding deputies to dissipate the demonstrators ninety seconds after telling them to leave the premises.

Officers moved into the crowd swinging nightclubs and arresting anyone who offered the slightest resistance. Many protesters received injuries during the melee and required hospital treatment. Untreiner justified his officers' actions and explained that the dangerous mob threatened to riot. In addition to breaking up the crowd, deputies demanded that bystanders from the local newspaper, the *Pensacola News-Journal*, help apprehend and arrest protesters. The journalists were also told not to describe the tumultuous scenes in their articles or they risked punishment, so they complied. Deputies ultimately arrested thirty-four adults and thirteen juveniles on misdemeanor unlawful assembly and malicious trespassing charges. In addition, law enforcement officials added felony extortion counts to the Matthews and Brooks charges three days after their arrests. Police witnesses accused the men of leading chants that threatened to "assassinate" rather than "incarcerate" Untreiner and Raines in an attempt to intimidate the sheriff into removing Doug Raines from active duty.

The arrests of Brooks and Matthews initiated the decline of Pensacola's civil rights struggle. National civil rights organizations withdrew their support of the local movement, and the United Klans of America started a chapter in the racially divided panhandle. On June 10, 1975, a county jury found Brooks and Matthews guilty of felony extortion. The judge gave Brooks five years of probation on the condition that he participate in no public demonstrations, but Matthews, the primary spokesman of the Pensacola black community, received five years of hard labor in state prison. He served sixty-three days of his term before he received clemency, and left the state after his release. In 1979, he received a full pardon of all charges. The 1976 Pensacola riot, therefore, initiated a collapse of the area black freedom struggle and represented a nadir in race relations that still haunts the city.

*J. Michael Butler*

### Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riot of 1964

Two weeks after President Lyndon Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** in the presence of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, racially motivated riots exploded in several northeastern cities, including New York City (July 18–23); **Rochester**, New York (July 24–25); **Jersey City** (August 2–4), Paterson (August 11–13), and Elizabeth, New Jersey (August 11–13); and **Chicago**, Illinois (August 16–17). From August 28–30, 1964, Philadelphia erupted in violence and looting in response to the arrest and rumored death of Odessa Bradford in the predominantly black **ghetto** of North Philadelphia, marking a downturn in Philadelphia's population size, economic development efforts, and national reputation.

On the evening of August 28, 1964, Odessa Bradford's car stalled at Twenty-Third Street and Cecil B. Moore, formerly Columbia Avenue. Two police officers urged her to move the vehicle out of the way of traffic; however, unable to comply because the car was disabled, an argument began between Bradford and police officers, one white and one black. The officers attempted to remove her from the vehicle as a crowd gathered. One man, whose identity is unknown, attempted to help Bradford, but was also arrested with her. Rumors that Bradford and her would-be protector had been killed proliferated throughout the surrounding neighborhood and a riot ensued. Blacks, in a reversal, threw rocks from inside their apartments and on the street, physically challenged police officers outright. Outnumbered, the Philadelphia Police Department was forced to retreat. Over the next two days, the North Philadelphia neighborhood surrounding Temple University was battered and looted by thousands of people. When the riot officially ended, more than 300 people were injured, close to 800 had been arrested, and over 220 stores and businesses were damaged or permanently devastated. In addition to demonstrating the level of racial unrest in Philadelphia, the Bradford incident and the riot that followed mark the beginning of significant demographic, economic, political, and social changes in Philadelphia.

By 1970, in North Philadelphia, which extends to the Olney, East and West Oak Lane, and Mount Airy sections of the city, a considerable change in population had begun. The city's overall population dropped below two million as the city lost over 53,000 residents, most of them white. Blacks, who migrated from other parts of the city, suburban slums, and southern states, such as Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, moved into homes sold, abandoned, or rented by whites in the North Philadelphia area. Whites moved to nearby and budding Bucks, Chester, and Montgomery counties, and as their employers followed, the city suffered an economic recession from which it has yet to recover. Although the 1964 race riots in North Philadelphia are not solely blamed for the shifts in population or the economic downturn of the city, the incident is historically noted for encouraging white majority voters to support Police Commissioner Frank L. Rizzo in his first run for mayor in 1971. Rizzo was known for not only leading Philadelphia politics with an iron hand, but also for being quick to use force when confronting blacks in the city. It was under his leadership as police

commissioner that Bradford was arrested and the 1964 riot ensued, and it was under his mayoral administration that reported incidents of **police brutality** against Philadelphia's black residents dramatically increased.

By 2004, blacks were not only the racial majority of Philadelphia, but John F. Street, a black man, was in his second term as mayor. In the North Philadelphia neighborhood in which Bradford and residents confronted police in what was argued to be **black self-defense**, Temple University has spearheaded a new growth of businesses and a large portion of housing in the area has been rebuilt.

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*Ellesia Ann Blaque*

### Police Brutality

Formal policing began in the United States in the major urban areas such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia when these municipalities paid officials for crime control in the mid-nineteenth century, primarily in response to riots by newly arriving immigrants. Prior to this time, policing was mostly carried out through the "night watch" system, an idea borrowed from Europe in which local citizens were required to observe and report criminal behavior to authorities.



SNCC leader John Lewis cringes as a burly state trooper swings his club at Lewis' head, 1965. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Southern cities such as New Orleans, Louisiana, also began to develop professional police forces in the nineteenth century although southern slave patrols and vigilante committees continued to be the primary means of controlling slave escapes and revolts, which became increasingly common during the early and mid-nineteenth century. Racial conflicts did not end with the emancipation of slaves; the **lynching** of blacks continued at a startling rate, with the newly emerging police forces often ignoring the practice or even actively participating.

As an abuse of authority and power, agents of social control express police brutality through physical, emotional, or legal exploitation of those under their control. More than any other type of police misconduct, this type of violent behavior by police has resulted in calls for reforms by the public. In fact, local and national commissions have chronicled police excesses of force, including a report from the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (1931), which resulted in a book titled *Our Lawless Police*. In addition, reports have been drawn up by the mayoral commission on police actions during the Harlem riots (1935), the President's Commission on Civil Rights (1947), the U.S. Civil Rights Commission (1961), the McCone Commission (1965), the Crime Commission (1967), the National Commission on Civil Disorders (commonly known as the **Kerner Commission Report** of 1968), the Knapp Commission (1972), and the Christopher Commission, which reported on the Rodney King beating (1991). Police brutality has occurred throughout police history and has been especially prominent, or at least visible, during race riots.

American policing as we know it today traces back primarily to England and the London Metropolitan Police. In the early years of the American police, the early 1800s, the departments were not as well organized as those of their British predecessors. Boston experienced a riot at the inception of its police department in 1837 when a mob of Protestants attacked the homes of the newly arrived Irish immigrants. In 1845, New York City formed its first police department. On July 12 and 13, 1863, the New York police had to quash the **New York City Draft Riot of 1863**, which occurred when a large group of whites rose in opposition to being drafted to fight in the Civil War.

One of the earliest documented accounts of unnecessary police force at the dawning of the twentieth century occurred in **New York City** in 1900 when a confrontation between a white officer and a black citizen erupted in mob activity that involved police and a large number of Irish immigrants, who together attacked blacks in the area. Riots at the beginning of the century also occurred in **Springfield**, Ohio (1904); **Greensburg**, Indiana (1906); and **Springfield**, Illinois (1908).

In 1917, a riot occurred in Houston, Texas, when a group formed to protest the practices of the city police department after an incident in which white police officers refused to turn over a suspect in compliance with the instructions of a black military officer. They placed another military officer in custody, beat him, and later shot at him when he attempted to escape. As word of the incident got out, several black citizens armed themselves and shot two white police officers. A firefight between the two groups



resulted in the deaths of eleven to seventeen white officers and four black soldiers. The surviving black soldiers were either executed or given life sentences in prison.

The National Commission on Law Enforcement and Observance, which is more commonly known as the Wickersham Commission, released its well-known report in 1931. This document noted the use of excessive police force and intimidation by officials, commonly referred to as “the third degree” and suggested that it was widespread by the time of the report’s release. Despite recommendations from the national commission report, police brutality continued.

In 1935, riots in Harlem, New York, broke out after rumors spread that a black youth had stolen a knife and was beaten to death by police. The effects of the Depression are often blamed as an underlying cause of the incident, but conditions of police brutality as a common way of life in the area are also cited as a factor. The Harlem Riot Commission Report was very condemning in its description of the police responses during the disruption.

In the 1940s, excessive police force was a common theme in the race riots of that decade. A major exodus of African Americans from the South to northern factories set the stage for confrontation. Serious complaints of police brutality occurred during the riots in **Detroit** in 1943 when a fight erupted between young black and white men in a predominantly recreational area of the city. Looting followed by rioting occurred and was so extensive that federal troops had to be called in to suppress the activity that left 34 people dead and over 1,000 injured. **Thurgood Marshall**, a young civil rights lawyer who later became a U.S. Supreme Court justice, rebuked the police actions during this riot by claiming that the police used undue force. Measures taken by the police to control white and black citizens in the riot were unequally represented, according to Marshall, as blacks were dealt with in an unnecessarily harsh manner while the violent actions of whites were ignored or condoned. A governor’s commission report, however, stated that the actions of the police to contain the situation were appropriate.

The inner-city disturbances that occurred during the 1960s also brought many complaints of police brutality. A series of so-called **ghetto** riots occurred in several U.S. cities. In the 1960s, race riots erupted in large and small cities across the nation, such as Chicago, Illinois; **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**; Savannah, Georgia; and Cambridge, Maryland. However, the most visible example of police brutality took place in Birmingham, Alabama, where officers under the supervision of city Police Commissioner **T. Eugene “Bull” Connor** attacked a group of young children and adolescents who were peacefully marching in the city. Dogs were unleashed on the crowd and high-pressure water hoses and cattle prods were used against the protesters even though they were not directly attacking anyone. This event is responsible for furthering public attention and outrage at police abuse of power.

In the Los Angeles area known as Watts, another example that is commonly cited as excessive and unnecessary police force occurred in 1965

(see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**). Like the 1943 encounter in Detroit, the riot, which in this case lasted almost a week, claimed the lives of 34 people and left over 1,000 injured. Police made approximately 4,000 arrests and rioters caused nearly \$40 million of property damage. Many of the injured were police officers, firefighters, National Guard soldiers, and other government agents. Several sources reported that police brutality was used in the Watts riot. Although the McCone Commission cited the area's poor social and economic conditions as a cause of the event, the most salient factor leading to the riot involved a growing rupture in the relations between the black citizens and mostly white police. There was a particular dislike and distrust of Police Chief William H. Parker, who was viewed by black Watts residents as an advocate of police brutality due to police tactics and his insistence on his officers possessing a paramilitary presence in the community.

The **Long Hot Summer Riots of 1965–1967** involved over several hundred race riots in a number of cities and rural areas. It was reported that small events ignited the riots and one of the primary causes was poor police–community relations. The resulting police responses were seen by many as excessively violent or as possible contributors to already volatile conditions. Detroit, the home of the disastrous riots of 1945, had one of the worst riots of this period as well.

**Newark**, New Jersey, also saw major rioting during the summer of 1967. When an African American cab driver named John Smith was arrested and subsequently beaten by police on the way to the precinct, a crowd rioted was after an inaccurate report that the officers had killed him.

The 1970s did not see the same level of riotous behavior as the previous decades, but police misconduct was still at center stage, especially in regard to corruption, due in large part to the attention given Frank Serpico, the New York Police Department detective who exposed the high level of corruption that went on in that agency. One incident that occurred at the very end of the decade did, however, bring charges of police brutality. On December 17, 1979, police in Miami, Florida, gave chase to an African American man who supposedly was engaged in traffic violations on his motorcycle. Six white officers attacked Arthur McDuffie and proceeded to beat him until he was unconscious. He died a few days later. Three days of rioting followed his death; eighteen people were killed and much property was damaged.

Although there were not many serious race riots in the 1980s, an event in the early 1990s made an indelible mark on the issue of police violence. Perhaps the case most commonly connected with police brutality occurred on March 3, 1991, in Los Angeles when an African American named Rodney King was traveling at a high rate of speed in his car with two other men and was stopped after a chase by officers of the California Highway Patrol. King later claimed that he had refused to stop because he was on probation for robbery. Officers from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and from the Los Angeles Unified School District Police joined the chase. By the time King's vehicle was stopped, a host of officers, including twenty-three from the LAPD, had congregated on the scene, including officers hovering

overhead in a police helicopter. King failed to exit the vehicle when ordered to do so by officers, although his passengers quickly complied. It is reported that King, acting in an erratic manner, ran at police. The officers believed that King was high on drugs and shocked him with a taser. Four officers began beating him with nightsticks and kicking him as he lay on the ground. King ended up with fractures to his skull, broken teeth, a broken ankle, internal organ damage, and brain damage as a result of the fifty-six blows that were dealt by the four officers.

A white amateur video camera operator who was watching from his apartment captured the King beating on film. The camera operator, George Holliday, attempted to provide this film to the LAPD the next day; a sergeant at the station was not interested in the tape, so Holliday went to local television stations that broadcast the video that night. The victim's brother, Paul King, also attempted to complain to the LAPD, but was turned away. By the next day, the ninety-second tape was shown on national television and interest in the case began to grow. When LAPD Chief of Police Daryl Gates and L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley, a former police officer, saw the video, they both displayed disgust over the brutal treatment of King.

The four officers who were directly involved in the beating—Stacey Koon, Laurence W. Powell, Timothy Wind, and Theodore J. Briseno—were indicted for assault. Due to the intense media exposure surrounding the case, a trial was scheduled in a new venue in Ventura County. A jury of ten whites, one Asian American, and one Latin-American acquitted the four officers of the charges against them. Within a few hours of the verdict, explosive rioting and looting broke out in Los Angeles, followed by disturbances in Atlanta, Georgia; Seattle, Washington; and Madison, Wisconsin. The violence in Los Angeles became extreme and the LAPD enlisted the assistance of county, state, and federal law enforcement to stop the riots (see **Los Angeles [California] Riots of 1992**). President George H.W. Bush intervened and ordered the military to establish order in the main hot spots of civil disruption. The massive violence, arson, and looting that accompanied the rioting resulted in over 54 deaths, 2,000 injuries, and great property loss, making it the largest outbreak of riot violence in the United States in the twentieth century.

The four officers were then charged with civil rights violations and were found guilty in federal court. A special commission to investigate the L.A. riots was assembled and Attorney Warren Christopher was called on to lead the investigation. Many have surmised that the LAPD, headed by Chief Daryl Gates, who was a young officer at the time of the 1965 riots, had an overly aggressive tone and a pervasive racist ethos.

Theorists have long speculated the potential causes of police brutality; however, the issue is complex and multifaceted. In many of the riot situations discussed above, the precipitating factors were essentially minor issues that were worsened by underlying social conditions. The cities where the violent activity occurred all have their own unique qualities that added fuel to the fire, or perhaps made conditions more amenable to compromise. Some cities saw more than their share of riots and police violence, including Harlem, which experienced major race riots in 1935, 1943, and

1964. Economic problems due to periods of depression, occupational competition, and poor housing, were often factors. And, of course, America's unique history of race relations, brought about by slavery, played a major part in all of the race riots. Regarding police brutality in relation to these riots, several factors also appear to present themselves and involve personal characteristics of the officers, agency philosophy, and police–community relations. Again, the issue of **racism** due to the nation's distinctive past is a recurring issue in police brutality in the United States.

Although excessive police force and intimidation has marred the history of American law enforcement, it should be noted that not all those who have been called to serve and protect have been guilty of this type of misbehavior. Most police officers believe in the law that they are required to uphold, and most understand that excessive force is unacceptable. It is important to note that commissions have always been formed to produce reports that not only describe the riot behavior and resulting police action, but also make recommendations for improvement. Greater police professionalism, through an increase in education and training programs, will hopefully reduce the amount of excessive force that is used by officers to control riots. *See also* Connor, T. Eugene “Bull”; Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943; Harlem (New York) Riot of 1935; Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965; Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992; Newark (New Jersey) Riot of 1967; New York City Draft Riot of 1863; New York City Riot of 1900.

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*Leonard A. Steverson*

## Poverty

Despite the United States being one of the richest countries in the world, many people in the nation are affected by poverty, which has long been an important cause of race riots.

Currently, over 37 million people go without proper nutrition, adequate housing, access to health care, or a good education, and these people generally experience a grim quality of life. In other words, they receive or earn insufficient income to pay for life's basic necessities. The official poverty rate in 2004 was 12.7 percent, an increase from a 12.5 percent rate in 2003. While the poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites increased slightly

(from 8.2 percent to 8.6 percent), and decreased for Asians (to 9.8 percent from 11.8 percent), the poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics remained unchanged between 2003 and 2004 (24.7 percent and 21.9 percent, respectively). The poverty rate for children under eighteen years of age is higher (17.8 percent) than for those from ages eighteen to sixty-four (11.3 percent) and for people ages sixty-five and older (9.8 percent). Over the decades, many of the differences between different groups in the United States have remained stable. For instance, women consistently face a greater risk of poverty than men, regardless of age, race, or ethnicity (i.e., the feminization of poverty) (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2005).

The most significant change in poverty rates has been among the nation's sixty-five-and-older population, reflecting the success of Social Security (including Medicare) and private pension plans. It is important to note that blacks are almost three times as likely to live in poverty as whites, just as they were in the 1960s. Today, about one million black children live in extreme poverty, and those who live in a household headed by a single parent are especially likely to be poor. The origins and persistence of poverty among blacks are not simple, but they are tied to the **racism** and exclusion experienced by blacks, especially in the labor and housing markets. Today, there are two different federal poverty measures: *poverty thresholds*, based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's economy food plan, and *poverty guidelines*, which are a simplification of the poverty thresholds used to determine eligibility for a number of federal and state programs. Poverty thresholds are determined after the year is over, and are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey from March of the current year. These thresholds are primarily used for statistical and research purposes. On the other hand, poverty guidelines are issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at the beginning of each year and, again, they are used to determine eligibility for a variety of programs. When we speak of the federal poverty level or poverty line, we are referring to poverty guidelines.

The nature and prevalence of poverty in the United States has been a source of political debate since the concept was officially defined and measured by the federal government in the early 1960s. The measure of poverty not only impacts public perceptions of the relative well-being of the U.S. population, but also impacts public policies and programs. The current poverty measure is based on a definition developed by the Social Security Administration in 1964 (revised in 1969 and 1981). After much debate, the first official measure of poverty was developed by Mollie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration. At this time, it was assumed that people experienced poverty on a temporary basis. Orshansky published an analysis of the poor population using poverty thresholds in a January 1965 *Social Security Bulletin* article. She based her poverty thresholds on the economy food plan, which was the cheapest of four food plans developed by the Department of Agriculture, which had based these plans on the 1955 Department of Agriculture's Household Food Consumption Survey that measured the amount of income families spent on food. Orshansky knew that families of three or more persons spent about one-third of their net

income on food. She took this information and then multiplied the cost of the economy food plan by three to arrive at the minimal yearly income for a family. Using 1963 as the base year, she calculated that a family of four (two adults and two children) would spend \$1,033 a year on food. Based on the 1955 survey, and using her formula, she concluded that \$3,100 a year was the poverty threshold for a family of four in 1963.

The original poverty thresholds took into consideration family size, farm/non-farm status, the number of children in the family, the gender of the head of household, and the aged/non-aged status, resulting in a matrix of 124 poverty thresholds. In 1965, a year after declaring the **War on Poverty**, the Johnson administration's newly established Office of Economic Opportunity adopted Orshanky's poverty thresholds as the working definition of poverty. By 1969, the federal government recognized that because of inflation, the measure no longer accurately reflected the cost of living. Thus, that year the poverty thresholds were reexamined and adjusted for price changes. At this time it was decided that the poverty thresholds would be indexed by the Consumer Price Index rather than the per person cost of the economy food plan. The Bureau of the Budget (now called the Office of Management and Budget) designated the revised poverty thresholds as the government's official statistical definition of poverty. Since then, various committees and task forces have been charged with the task of examining whether, and how, the poverty thresholds need to be adjusted.

In 1992, the Panel on Poverty and Family Assistance was formed to conduct a study on measuring poverty. In 1995, the panel released its report called *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*, which included a new way of determining an official poverty measure. Yet, the U.S. government has made no significant changes in the method it uses to measure poverty. Hence, each year, the U.S. Census Bureau updates the poverty thresholds accounting for inflation only. Once again, poverty guidelines are slightly different from poverty thresholds. They are a simplification of the poverty thresholds developed for administrative purposes. The Department of Health and Human Services issues poverty guidelines every year in the *Federal Register*, and they are designated by the year that they are issued. For instance, the 2006 poverty guideline for a family of four is \$20,000 in the forty-eight contiguous states and the District of Columbia. Programs and policies that use poverty guidelines to determine eligibility include: Head Start, the Food Stamp Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the National School Lunch Program, among other programs. However, there are notable exceptions to federal, state, and local poverty programs that use the poverty guidelines to determine eligibility. For instance, the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit does not use the poverty guidelines, and public housing programs, like Section 8 Housing, use the area median income to determine eligibility.

The manner by which the federal government measures poverty has not gone without criticism. One criticism involves the types of income that are excluded from the poverty measure. Some argue that by not including the income from public assistance that many poor families receive

(e.g., the cash value of food stamps and health insurance benefits), the extent of poverty in the U.S. is overstated. Another criticism involves expenses that many families consider critical to their budgets, but that are excluded from consideration in the poverty calculation. The cost of child-care, for instance, was not considered by Orshansky since the families that participated in the 1955 Department of Agriculture household survey involved one wage earner and a stay-at-home parent. Also, work-related expenses, such as commuting, are part of life today and have a significant impact on a family's budget. By ignoring these expenses, the poverty measure underestimates poverty. Also, the poverty measure still assumes that families spend one-third of their income on food, when in reality food makes up about one-sixth of families' expenditures. The costs of housing, utilities, and transportation are much greater today than they were in the 1960s. The key issue here is cost. If the government considered all of these factors in the way it measures poverty, the number of people falling below the poverty line would increase significantly, and the costs of providing assistance to these individuals would then be considerably higher than they are today. Recently, community-based organizations around the country have advocated for "living wages." These organizations argue that instead of using poverty as the standard measure for well-being, we should develop a measure of living wages, defined as the minimum hourly wage necessary for an individual to achieve a basic standard of living in a particular community. The basic argument is that limited public funds should not subsidize poverty-wage work. Rather, private enterprises that benefit from public funds (e.g., through service contracts and tax abatements) should pay their employees a living wage. Most people agree that poverty is a serious problem in our society. However, there is a lot of disagreement in what can be done about it. Some blame the poor for their own situation, pointing to cultural traits that are said to keep people in poverty. Others look at structural causes to explain poverty and focus on cycles and structural forces, such as racism and the restructuring of the U.S. economy, that are said to prevent people from escaping poverty.

Regardless of how we explain poverty, it has been seen as a major cause of racial violence in American history, particularly in terms of the urban race riots of the twentieth century. If not the main causes of race riots in the United States, the unemployment, poverty, and low-quality housing that large numbers of poor urban minorities experienced did contribute to the tinderbox. In the 1960s, two federal initiatives—the War on Poverty and the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**—were enacted and largely aimed at improving the well-being of blacks and, thus, reduced the racial tensions of the era. In fact, it was President **John F. Kennedy** who in 1963, at a time when racial issues were reaching a boiling point in the South, framed civil rights issues in economic terms. For instance, he revived an earlier request for educational and training programs that would benefit people of all races and that later became a significant part of President Johnson's antipoverty initiatives. Over the years, the condition for most blacks improved significantly, yet the gap between conditions for blacks and those of non-Hispanic whites in the United States remains significant,

contributing greatly to the high level of inequality present in one of the richest nations in the world.

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### ***Powell v. Alabama (1932)***

*Powell v. Alabama* was one of the U.S. Supreme Court’s early opinions that expanded the scope of the Fifth Amendment. In this case, for the first time it was suggested that the right to counsel was a national right, if only in capital cases, and that aspect of the Bill of Rights was applied to the states. The case resulted in more trials, convictions, reversals, appeals, and retrials than any crime in American history.

The case revolved around nine black teenagers who were accused of raping two white girls on a train traveling through the South in 1931. The group became commonly known as the Scottsboro Boys (see **Scottsboro Case**). The incident stemmed from a fight that broke out on the train between the nine black youths and several whites. The confrontation ignited when a white youth crossing on top of the train stepped on the hand of Haywood Patterson, one of the black youths, who was hanging onto the side to the train. A stone-throwing fight then erupted between Patterson and his friends and the white youths. The result was that almost all of the whites were forced off the train, with the exception of one, Orville Gilley, whom Patterson saved. Some of the whites who were forced off the train complained to the stationmaster that they had been attacked by a gang of blacks. The next town was notified, and when the train arrived in Paint Rock, Alabama, an armed posse surrounded, tied up, and hauled the nine black youths off to jail in Scottsboro, Alabama.

However, it would turn out that the key element of that stop in Paint Rock was not the fight that had broken out, but the complaint of two white girls—Victoria Price and Ruby Bates—who had also been on the train. The girls claimed they had been raped by a gang of twelve blacks at pistol and knife point. Price positively identified six of the nine Scottsboro Boys.



The others were assumed guilty by association. Attempts by the boys to deny the accusations were met with violence, and the threat of a **lynching** materialized as the nine sat in jail. Several hundred local citizens gathered around the Scottsboro jail looking for quick justice on the night of their arrest. However, courage on the part of the local sheriff, and the order by Alabama's Gov. B.M. Miller to send the National Guard, quieted the crowd, which eventually dispersed.

Amidst this fear of potential violence and lynching, local officials in Alabama hurried through the legal proceedings. All but one of the trials was held and concluded in one day. The counsel afforded to the defendants was suspect at best, with one having no experience in criminal law at all. The lawyers and defendants met only right before the trials began, giving them no time to plan a defense, and both lawyers acted minimally in their appearance in court. The nine were quickly convicted and sentenced to death. The ruling was appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court, which ruled 6–1 that the trial was fair, and subsequently appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. What was an obvious perversion of due process to many outside the Deep South, and even some within, became a national cause, hailed by diverse organizations from the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** to the Communist Party.

The Supreme Court agreed to hear the appeal combining *Weems v. Alabama* and *Patterson v. Alabama* into the case of Powell. Justice Sutherland explained that, in his opinion, the trial had been unfair. He concluded that the lack of effective counsel had violated the defendant's right to due process as required by the **Fourteenth Amendment**, and to counsel as guaranteed in the Fifth Amendment.

The decision overruled an earlier decision from 1884, *Hurtado v. California*, in which the Court ruled that the specific dictates of the Fifth Amendment did not apply to the states via the Fourteenth Amendment. *Powell* rejected that reasoning and represented a major step in extending the Bill of Rights to the states, which had begun not even a decade earlier in a series of cases referring to the First Amendment. This was the first time that, with the exception of free-speech guarantees, the Bill of Rights was impressed on state governments.

Justice Sutherland's opinion noted that the atmosphere around the case was unfriendly, unsettling, and downright hostile. With the threat of mob violence hanging over the proceedings, the defendants were escorted to and from the jail under armed guard. The judge made no effort to afford the defendants any help, including never asking them if they wanted counsel. The counsel that was eventually procured (with no help from the court), and paid for by concerned citizens was useless. One lawyer, from out of state, had no knowledge of Alabama law and was not even a member of the local bar. The other was so drunk he could barely stand. The Supreme Court noted that the trial court could have granted a delay to give the eventual counsel some time to prepare, or even find some effective counsel. In the end, the trial court did not even consider the issue of counsel as a vital and important component to the proceedings.

Sutherland made it clear that the counsel in this case was vital for justice to be achieved. The failure of the trial court to secure lawyers that were not in the least bit effective, or capable of being so, denied the defendants due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, Sutherland was careful to limit the ruling to capital cases, noting that whether there was such a need in other criminal cases was not at issue in this case. (That decision would take thirty more years; in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, the Court did extend the right to counsel to non-capital cases.) But the Court noted very specifically that in any capital case, when the defendant was not able to hire a lawyer and was incapable of making a proper defense because of a variety of circumstances, the demands of due process of law made it the duty of the Court, whether it was asked or not, to assign counsel. Any contrary decision would deny the basic “immutable principles of justice which inhere in the very idea of free government” (*Holden v. Hardy*, 169 U.S. 366, 389). See also Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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Gary Gershman

### Press Coverage of Racial Violence

Historically, white press coverage of incidences of racial violence has often perpetuated racist beliefs about blacks, augmented racial tensions, and in some cases, generated more violence. There also exist examples of both black and white presses that have helped cover racial violence in a balanced and productive way.

Few crimes were covered as extensively as **lynchings** in the South. The *New York Tribune* reported on the lynching of **Sam Hose** on April 14, 1899, in the following way:

In the presence of nearly 2,000 people, who sent aloft yells of defiance and shouts of joy, Sam Hose (a Negro who committed two of the basest acts known to crime) was burned at the stake in a public road, one and a half miles from here. Before the torch was applied to the pyre, the Negro was deprived of his ears, fingers, and other portions of his body with surprising fortitude. Before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits and even the tree on which the wretch met his fate was torn up and disposed of as souvenir. . . . Those unable to obtain the ghastly relics directly, paid more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them. (Hine et al., 320)

This report is indicative of how southern journalists depicted lynchings. In these articles, the lynchings were graphically described and blacks were labeled as “wretches,” “fiends,” or “desperadoes” (Perloff, 315). The victims were invariably considered to be guilty, with or (more often) without benefit of trial or substantiated evidence. Although lynching was an extralegal

activity, newspapers glorified and defended it as being right and proper, and necessary to achieve justice. Those who carried out the lynching were characterized as somber, duty-bound, upstanding leaders and members of the community. The victims of the alleged crimes were invariably portrayed as innocent. The advertisement of an impending lynching was written in language ranging from grave to celebratory.

These articles contributed also to the general miasma of racial tensions within the community. The portrayal of blacks in a derogatory fashion in local newspapers was one of the circumstances that, in 1919, fueled riots in **Washington, D.C.**; **East St. Louis**, Illinois; and **Chicago**, Illinois. Reed W. Smith claims that “by continually publishing stories and editorials about the supposed black threat,” Georgia journalists “helped keep white Georgians agitated” and perpetuated fear among its readers (Smith, 83). Newspapers that presented blacks as being prone to crime further justified the rampant killings of innocent black men whose only offense was the color of their skin.

Although blacks spearheaded the large-scale attack on lynching in their own newspapers, white presses also made contributions. Notably, the *Chicago Tribune* was the first to keep statistics of the people lynched and the motives given for their executions. In his article “The Press and Lynchings of African-Americans,” published in the *Journal of Black Studies*, Richard M. Perloff claimed that the *New York Times* severely criticized lynching but often did not question the alleged guilt of the blacks. Coverage from the black perspective emerged in numerous papers founded by **W.E.B Du Bois**, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, and others. These papers provided an unbiased record of numerous lynchings, arguments in defense of (or sympathetic to) the black victims, and positive representations of blacks, and were instrumental in combating anti-black violence.

The mainstream press played an essential role during the tumult of the **civil rights movement** of the 1950s and 1960s. Activists were assailed with violence during nonviolent protests and demonstrations, and several lost their lives in the struggle to obtain civil rights and eradicate **segregation**. The civil rights movement achieved many successes, mostly as a result of news and television coverage. At first, the press was not sympathetic to the movement, blaming the activists for white retaliatory violence. But as time passed, and the troubling accounts and images were projected for all the world to see, the pressure for federal legislation and enforcement mounted.

During the riots in the urban **ghettos** of the mid-1960s, as well as in the 1980s and 1990s, many blacks criticized the way the mainstream press portrayed racial violence. Blacks accused white reporters of portraying young blacks as criminals, hoodlums, and troublemakers. They also condemned the fact that their focus was on looting and the destruction of property rather than on the triggering circumstances such as **racism** and **poverty**. Authors David L. Paletz and Robert Dunn found fault with the press coverage of the Winston-Salem, North Carolina, riot in 1967. For example, the *Winston-Salem Journal*, although racially progressive, used mild language and excluded the perspective of the rioters. This practice was used by some newspapers to help quench racial conflict. *See also* Press Instigation of Racial Violence.

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Gladys L. Knight

### Press Instigation of Racial Violence

Press instigation concerns the proclivity of newspapers to provoke violence. The first newspaper was published in America in 1690. Since then, the press has provided a vital service, keeping the American people informed on events, whether local, national, or international. One of the most controversial aspects of newspaper publishing is its inherent ability to influence public emotion, opinion, and attitude, and to incite action. Throughout its history, the American press has frequently encouraged or directly instigated violent activities, just as it has also helped to end violence. This is particularly true in racial violence.

During **Reconstruction**, **white mobs** attacked and terrorized the newly freed slaves and their supporters. The **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** was one of the most notorious organizations formed to control and oppress blacks through violence. Generally, the early conservative southern press encouraged violence by covering the activities of the Klan and condoning its practices. For example, the Richmond *Dispatch* listed the objectives of the Klan as follows: to "kill the kullered kuss" and "clean out the karpet-baggers" (Trelease, 61–62). There were also numerous newspapers published by the Ku Klux Klan itself.

Journalists in the North and the larger cities of the South generally opposed anti-black violence. The Kentucky *Courier-Journal* wrote: "This thing of serving notices of exile on Kentuckians at will, and hanging or shooting, at midnight and in their own door-yards, men who stand convicted of no crime, is a burning disgrace to the State" (Trelease, 282). The rebuttal to violence was often more fierce when it was against white supporters, rather than blacks. Sometimes, liberal presses, such as the *Atlanta Constitution*, inconsistently condoned violence against blacks in one issue and lambasted it in the next. When federal troops were positioned across the South in response to the massive violence inflicted on both blacks and whites, conservative presses toned down their support for organizations such as the Klan. This did not curtail the violent activities, however, and the occurrences of **lynching** and rioting increased and eventually swept across the nation.

Lynching was rampant between 1889 and 1932. Newspapers openly encouraged community involvement in lynching and sensationalized their accounts with lurid detail. Following a crime, conservative presses vilified the alleged lawbreakers, exaggerated the innocence of the white victims, and often hinted that swift justice was sure to follow. Reports thus embellished helped to justify and indeed spur on the incidence of lynching. In 1899, the *Atlanta Constitution* instigated a lynching when it “offered a \$500 reward for the capture of Sam Holt, a black man that Georgia authorities were hunting for suspicion of raping a white woman and murdering her husband” (Smith, 58).

Ironically, the same medium used to provoke violence was frequently used to protest it. The *Chicago Tribune* was the first newspaper to publish statistics on lynching. It was followed by such organizations as the Tuskegee Institute and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. **Ida B. Wells-Barnett** regularly castigated lynching in her newspaper, *Free Speech and Headlight*. When a **white mob** destroyed her office in retaliation to her outspokenness, she resumed her struggle in Chicago, Illinois. **Mary Church Terrell**, using the same gruesome descriptions previously printed in prominent pro-lynching newspapers, condemned lynching in a letter that was published. *The Crisis*, along with numerous anti-lynching women’s associations, was also instrumental in exposing lynching and other atrocities against blacks. Although unsuccessful, the creation of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill illustrated how prominent this issue had become (see **Dyer, Leonidas C.**). The cumulative result was that large-scale press endorsements of lynching diminished. Some presses formerly in favor of lynching began criticizing violence against blacks. However, black journalists such as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, and **A. Philip Randolph**, as well as militant leaders of the 1960s, often used the press as a forum to advocate **black self-defense**, which often intensified already volatile situations.

The press was sometimes responsible for provoking riots. In the **Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898**, Alex Manly, the editor of a local black newspaper, published acerbic comments charging that the sexual crimes of white men against black women were equally as bad as those of black men against white women. This article triggered a riot that resulted in the destruction of the newspaper office and the murder of several black men. Some 1,500 blacks fled their homes, which were immediately purchased by whites at low cost. In the **Atlanta (Georgia) Riot of 1906**, three local papers, the *Constitution*, the *Journal*, and the *Georgian*, exaggerated and falsified reports of black crimes against white women. These accounts contributed to pre-existing racial tension, which erupted into a full-scale white riot after a white man, waving an Atlanta newspaper recounting another reputed black crime, challenged the locals to take law into their own hands. Some blame repeated televised broadcasts and heavy **press coverage** for the **Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1992** that ensued after white police officers escaped severe punishment for the beating of **Rodney King**. See also *Police Brutality*.

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### Progressive Era (1890–1930)

The Progressive era (1890–1930) was a period of intense and wide-ranging reform, led primarily by middle- and upper-class whites. Milestones included the purging of corrupt businesses and government bodies, the development of factory standards, better work environments and child labor laws, and the campaign against **poverty** and prostitution. Also critical was the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, which outlawed the manufacture, transportation, import, export, and sale of alcoholic beverages, and the Nineteenth Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote. However, it was primarily blacks, not whites, who launched campaigns to demand equal rights and freedoms for blacks and to end the white-on-black violence that persisted throughout this era.

Although the 1890s marked the beginning of a period of great achievement for most of white America, it also witnessed the birth of **Jim Crow** laws and customs for blacks. Jim Crow put legally binding restrictions on nearly every aspect of black life. Particularly in the South, though to a small degree in the North, blacks were confined to black-only neighborhoods, restaurants, and schools. What the laws did not address, the rules and customs of **racial etiquette** covered. Racial etiquette prescribed how blacks were required to interact with whites. Blacks who violated the most minor of these rules were invariably beaten, torched, or lynched.

**Lynching** was a prominent means of punishing blacks during the Progressive era. Between 1889 and 1918, approximately 2,460 blacks were lynched in the southern states alone. Blacks were lynched over accusations of murder, rape, attack against a white woman, white racial prejudice, and for merely achieving some economic or social success. Among the infamous lynchings of this period were those of **Sam Hose** in 1899, **Jesse Washington** in 1916, and **Mary Turner** in 1918.

A surge of riots also engulfed black communities during this period. Racist **press coverage** detailing accusations of black attacks against white women instigated a riot in **Atlanta**, Georgia (1906), that resulted in the indiscriminate torture and beating of blacks, twenty-five black deaths, and one white death (Hine et al., 380). After a black man was accused of raping a white woman, a riot erupted in **Springfield**, Illinois (1908); “six black people were shot and killed, two were lynched, dozens were injured, and damage in the thousands of dollars was inflicted on black homes and

businesses. About 2,000 black people were driven out of the community” (Hine et al., 380). The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** was established in the aftermath of this tragedy.

A riot in **East St. Louis**, Illinois (1917), was triggered when blacks replaced white workers on strike at the Aluminum Ore Company. Thirty-five blacks and eight whites died. In **Houston**, Texas (1917), a riot ensued when blacks from the North, unaccustomed to Jim Crow, attacked a police station in response to the beating and incarceration of a fellow soldier. Sixteen white and Hispanic residents, five police officers, four black soldiers, and two black civilians died. In a riot in **Chicago**, Illinois (1919), a young black man drifted into the white-only section of a beach and was stoned and drowned to death, triggering violent confrontations between white and black gangs. Twenty-three blacks and fifteen whites died. The **Elaine (Arkansas) Riot of 1919** began when white deputies tried to break up a black union meeting. Although whites murdered dozens of blacks without repercussions, twelve blacks were sentenced to death and sixty-seven were sent to prison. In the **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921**, blacks rallied to defend a black man accused of assaulting a white woman. This led to a deadly confrontation that spread to the nearby black **Greenwood Community**.

Despite the inequality and violence all blacks faced, the Progressive era saw the emergence of a rising black middle and upper class. A significant number of black leaders, such as **W.E.B. Du Bois** and **Mary Church Terrell**, emerged from this elite group. At the forefront of the anti-lynching movement were **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, black publications such as *The Crisis*, and organizations such as the **National Association of Colored Women (NACW)** and the NAACP. Southern white liberal organizations and newspapers soon followed in their footsteps. These individuals and organizations also fought against Jim Crow and racial rioting. At the close of the Progressive era, **Marcus Garvey** heralded the call for black empowerment, thus initiating the turn toward a positive **racial consciousness** for the lower classes.

The most progressive changes for blacks during this era were the emergence of the black elite, the migration of blacks out of the tumultuous South, a burgeoning racial pride, and the marked decrease in the annual number of lynchings in the nation. On the other hand, the Progressive era did not bring about the elimination of discriminatory laws or the permanent abatement of race riots. *See also* Chester and Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1918; Dyer, Leonidas C.; Niagara Movement.

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# R

## Racial Consciousness

Racial consciousness is the awareness of genetically disposed differences based on skin color, facial features, ancestry, and genetics. At best, racial consciousness produces pride and dignity, as well as important artistic and intellectual work, and the appreciation thereof. At worst, racial consciousness is expressed in an intense fear, hatred, and prejudice of a group of a different race and, as a result, plays an enormous role in the perpetuation of racial violence. Numerous examples of racial brutality in America's past and present illustrate this point.

Racially conscious groups that have participated in racially motivated violence are characterized by narcissism, negative attitudes and beliefs about other races, racial obsession, self-imposed isolationism, and propensity for aggression. *Narcissism* is a term defined as more about "the human need to feel special, set apart, and touched by grace, than about hatred" (Dickerson, 55). Unfortunately, narcissism combined with the other traits mentioned can be destructive. Racial attitudes and beliefs, including prejudice and stereotyping, refer to the notion of vilifying and constructing generalizations about another race. Racial obsession concerns a preoccupation with viewing the world in terms of race. Self-imposed isolationism occurs when groups of one particular race separate themselves from a different race. Aggression is the tendency or willingness to engage in combative activities.

Black and white racial conflict in America originated long before the advent of slavery. Whites in America had negative stereotypes of Africa and its inhabitants. Africa was thought of as a savage country, and its people were considered equally barbarous. Many whites thought Africans were ignorant, and these whites looked down on African beliefs, culture, and traditions. Even the color black was synonymous with all things inferior, evil, and negative. Conversely, white Americans exalted in their **whiteness**, culture, and presumed purity and intelligence. The consequence of these racist stereotypes and prejudices facilitated the institution of slavery, which also furthered the dehumanization of Africans.



Africans also constructed stereotypes and prejudices about their white slaveholders. During the Middle Passage, the horrific journey from Africa to America, rumors abounded that the whites were cannibals. Although some Africans accepted the notion of white superiority, others, as a result of the system of slavery and the abuses and atrocities they suffered from it, saw all whites as oppressors. As a result, Africans often victimized whites indiscriminately during the slave uprisings of the 1700s.

Whites were the primary instigators of the majority of the violence against blacks from the mid-1800s to the 1960s, and white consciousness was at its most violent, unified, and powerful. The tradition of **vigilantism** played a significant role in the general aggressiveness of whites during this long period. Whites were quick to respond violently to any perceived injustice and felt it their duty and right to do so. Racial obsession was evident in the fact that the victims of violence were predominantly black, not white. Racist attitudes and beliefs, such as the inferiority and alleged inherent immorality of blacks, helped whites justify racial violence. The racial consciousness of local and federal authorities made it easy for them to neglect to protect blacks or to participate in anti-black violence themselves.

This phenomenon is evident in the anti-black and anti-abolition riots in the North during the mid-1800s. **White mobs** mercilessly attacked the growing population of free blacks that threatened all-white communities. Mobs also rioted against white abolitionists in pursuit of an integrated society. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln emancipated black slaves. White abolitionists rejoiced, while many other whites, particularly in the South, were outraged. Many turned to violence and intimidation to maintain **white supremacy**. Numerous **vigilante organizations** and white mobs formed.

The effects of racial consciousness continued through the **Jim Crow** era, which lasted from the 1890s to the 1960s. During this period, whites violently enforced legally imposed **segregation** to maintain non-contact between the races. Many whites rampantly abused and murdered blacks to maintain black subservience to white dominance. Often, when one black was accused of raping or assaulting a white person, all black males, and indeed, the black community at large, were fair game. The primary motivations for violence during World War I and World War II were competition for housing and employment and general tensions resulting from racial hatred.

In the 1960s, black militant organizations formed in response to unremitting white violence. Blacks asserted a massive black consciousness. Although this was a positive phenomenon for most, segments of the population endorsed an intense hatred for whites. They believed all whites were racist and responsible for their systematic oppression. Blacks isolated themselves from whites and engaged in random attacks against whites. Nathan McCall, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, describes his participation in the beating of a white stranger who entered a black neighborhood in *Makes Me Wanna Holler* (1994). In the black rioting of the 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s, blacks, frustrated by the horrendous effects of two centuries of white racial consciousness, lashed out against unsuspecting whites and symbols of white power.

Although massive racial violence in the United States had abated considerably by the beginning of the twenty-first century, racial consciousness still thrives in the hearts of blacks and whites, and some believe its existence portends an impending race war. *See also* Racism; White Supremacy.

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## Racial Etiquette

*Racial etiquette* is a term used to describe the informal rules of conduct between blacks and whites. These rules reinforced **white supremacy** and black inferiority, and supported pre-existing discriminatory ordinances, such as the slave laws, the black laws in the North, the **black codes** during the **Reconstruction** period, and the **Jim Crow** laws. Enforcement of racial etiquette was at its peak during the Jim Crow era and was most prevalent in the South. Whites, embittered and threatened by the status of the newly emancipated blacks, often resorted to violence.

The rules of racial etiquette dictated the speech, manners, behaviors, and actions of whites and blacks. Blacks addressed whites with titles, such as *boss* or *cap'n*, *Mr.*, or *Miss*. Whites, on the other hand, referred to black men, regardless of their age, as *boy*, *uncle*, or *nigger*. They referred to black women as *girl*, *gal*, or *auntie*.

Racial etiquette also prescribed rules for blacks in public places. Blacks were not permitted to eat with whites in restaurants, although black women who took care of white children were an exception to this rule. Blacks were also not permitted to sit and eat in most restaurants. As a result, they often had to bring their own dishes to carry out their food. At department stores, blacks could only try on outfits over their street clothes. They could not try on shoes in most stores. Clerks assisted white customers before blacks. Blacks were forced to use back entrances of buildings and homes. Even on the western frontier, where blacks generally experienced more freedoms than those living in the South or the North, some saloons segregated their bars so that whites sat at one end and blacks at the other. Where Jim Crow laws were not enforced, racial etiquette demanded sections and places in town where blacks were allowed.

In all social interactions, whites expected blacks to show deference to them. Blacks could not assert themselves, even in self-defense. In many situations, blacks pretended to be less intelligent than whites and acted in ways that exaggerated their inferiority, made fun of themselves, or played on stereotypes. Blacks gave up seats on public transportation systems and moved aside to give whites the right of way on sidewalks. Although whites and blacks could talk openly in public, blacks were expected to remove their hats in the presence of whites. They were also expected to avoid eye contact with whites, and never shake hands. Touching whites, whether deliberately or by accident, was forbidden. Few actions were more perilous

than for a black man to look at a white woman. Racial etiquette did not obligate whites to show blacks the same respect. Whites were not allowed to appear too congenial with blacks in public. For example, white conductors were prevented from helping black women with their bags.

Violence toward those who transgressed the rules of racial etiquette was often immediate and harsh. A black veteran who breached racial etiquette by refusing to step off a sidewalk for a passing white policeman was a catalyst for the **Memphis (Tennessee) Riot of 1866**. The ensuing violence spread to unarmed black veterans and a nearby black community. Whites robbed blacks, set churches, schools, and houses on fire, raped women, and beat children. Forty-six black men and two white men were killed. One of those white men was attacked because he was in violation of the racial etiquette that disallowed whites from talking amicably to blacks. In 1876, a black militia company marching through Hamburg, South Carolina, refused passage to two whites. A **white mob** confronted the militia, resulting in the executions of five of the black men. During the same period, white clergy killed a black man for defending another black man who had been removed from a church service. Another black man was murdered for asking for wages owed to him. A black man was killed in Texas for not removing his hat in the presence of a white woman. Blacks suffered numerous attacks whenever they resisted the rules of racial etiquette by showing themselves to be equal or superior to whites. This involved such acts as wearing better clothes, owning successful businesses, and acquiring wealth, education, and reputable positions.

A great number of violent events were triggered by perceived affronts to white women. **Lynching** was the most common punishment for black men who were accused of raping white women. Often, white mobs lynched not only the accused perpetrators but any black man, regardless of age, who crossed their path. Several riots began or were intensified as a result of unsubstantiated rumors or accusations that a black man looked at, touched, attacked, or raped a white woman. Whites angered by a series of perceived attacks on white women rioted in **Washington, D.C.**, in 1919. One of those attacks included a black man who bumped into a white woman. Racial etiquette prevailed with little change until it lost considerable strength after the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. *See also* Black Church Arsons; Black Self-Defense; Castration; Frontier Justice; Racism; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Segregation; *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*; Till, Emmett; Vigilante Organizations; Vigilantism; White Supremacy.

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### **Racial Stereotypes**

Originally, a stereotype referred to a rigid and simplistic “picture in the head” (Lippmann 1922). In current usage, stereotypes are unreliable



Amos 'n Andy performing "The Open Air Taxi Company," 1930. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

generalizations about all members of a group without regard for individual differences. They can be positive (women are nurturers) or negative (athletes are dumb), but stereotypes are inaccurate when applied to every member—or most members—of a group. When applied to races, stereotypes are constructed beliefs claiming that all members of a race share given characteristics, usually negative. Stereotyping causes people to view Native Americans as alcoholics, Puerto Ricans as violent criminals, and white Americans as heartless bigots. A stereotype may contain a kernel of truth, but that kernel is exaggerated and too broadly applied.

There may be an innate tendency for humans to think categorically; however, stereotypes are learned. No child is born believing that blacks are naturally great athletes. That stereotype is acquired from many sources, including family, friends, books, television, and movies. A person may meet a talented black athlete and stereotypically conclude that 1) the person's athleticism is inherent, not the result of hard work; 2) the person is a good athlete *because* he or she is black; or 3) all blacks *must* be good athletes.

Humans have a tendency to overestimate the differences between their group and other groups, and to underestimate the differences that exist within their group. This we-they thinking is a crucial component of stereotyping. All Jews ("they") are seen as being preoccupied with money; whereas "we" have some people in our group who are infatuated with money—but they are few and not *as* obsessed—and "we" have many members who are not fixated with money. This stereotype is supported by

anecdotal evidence, for example: “My uncle told me about a Jewish merchant who tried everything to sell him a car.”

Stereotypes are often based on limited, inaccurate information. Blacks are stereotyped as drug users in movies, novels, and everyday conversations. In 1999, blacks constituted 13 percent of the country’s drug users, roughly equal to their representation in the American population. Yet blacks made up 37 percent of those arrested on drug charges, 55 percent of those convicted, and 74 percent of all drug offenders incarcerated in prisons. Whites constitute 80 percent of the country’s cocaine users; however, they are not collectively stereotyped as drug users, and law enforcement efforts are concentrated on drug use in inner cities (Schaefer 2004).

Stereotypes undergird racial discrimination. To justify the taking of Indian land, colonists propagated the stereotype of Native Americans as thieving, murdering savages. During the **Jim Crow** era, the stereotype of African Americans as ignorant, culturally deficient parasites was used to keep blacks at the bottom of a racial caste system, where they were not allowed to vote, compete for professional jobs, or attend white schools.

All stereotypes reduce individuals to an inflexible image, but with some racial stereotypes the targets have their worth as humans—even their humanness—assailed. When Chinese men arrived to work on the transnational railroad, they were seen as lesser humans with strange eyes, effeminate hair and clothes, and odd cultural patterns. Laws were passed that prohibited them from owning land and marrying American women.

Some stereotypes are relatively trivial—blacks do not like cold weather; whites smell bad when wet—but many stereotypes have significant consequences. During slavery, black men were often portrayed as Toms—physically weak, submissive servants—or Sambos—lazy, childlike buffoons. These portrayals were pragmatic and instrumental. Proponents of slavery created and perpetuated caricatures and stereotypes that justified slavery. If slaves were childlike, then a paternalistic institution where masters acted as quasi-parents to their slaves was humane. Neither the Tom nor the Sambo was a threat to whites. After slavery, many whites feared that the emancipated blacks would gain revenge. A new caricature of the black man—the brute—emerged. This portrayal stereotyped black men as innately savage, animalistic, destructive, and criminal—deserving punishment, maybe death. Between 1882 and 1951, whites lynched at least 3,437 blacks. Americans from all strata accepted **lynching** as a necessary evil to combat the black brute. In the 1990s, the brute caricature reemerged in the American psyche as young black males were portrayed as thugs, gangsters, and menaces to society.

Social scientific research on prejudice indicates that white Americans have become less willing to express prejudice openly. White Americans who believed blacks were innately less intelligent than whites declined from 53 percent in 1942 to about 20 percent in the 1960s to less than 10 percent in the 1990s. National surveys conducted from the 1950s through the 1990s, with few exceptions, showed less resistance among whites to racial **integration**. For example, 30 percent of the whites sampled in 1942 said that blacks should attend schools with whites, but by 1970, 74 percent of whites supported integrated schools, and in 1991, the number had risen to 93 percent

(Schaefer 2004). These statistics indicate racial progress; however, it is possible that traditional surveys underestimate negative racial views.

In research at Stanford University, black students performed worse than white students on standardized achievement tests when they were told that the test measured intelligence. When the test was presented as a problem-solving exercise, black students did as well as white students. Black students know that some whites believe that blacks are less intelligent than whites, but this research suggests that the mere awareness of the negative stereotype has negative consequences for the target individuals. This is the power of negative stereotyping.

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*David Pilgrim*

## Racism

The term *racism* refers to prejudice and discrimination based on the belief that some races are intellectually, culturally, and/or biologically superior to other races.

As a theory, racism assumes that an individual's abilities and potential are directly related to his or her race. The term *racialism* was initially introduced, but in the 1930s the term was shortened to *racism*, and it was not until the 1950s that it became popular. Today, the use of the term *racialism* is often believed to be a less negative term and it is commonly utilized by those who argue that there are differences between racial and ethnic groups that can be scientifically substantiated.

Since it was first introduced, diverse definitions of racism have emerged. Some are broad and encompass several forms of racism, and other definitions are narrow and address specific forms that racism may take. *Overt racism* is often referred to as *traditional racism*, *old-fashioned racism*, or *Jim Crow racism*, and it is exemplified by obvious racist behavior such as **lynchings** or physical attacks. A close relative of overt racism is *scientific racism*, which implies that scientific research can substantiate claims that some groups are genetically inferior to others. Since the 1950s, these types of racism have become less common, yet they are still part of American culture. In 1998, for instance, three white men with ties to racist groups in Jasper, Texas, chained a black man, **James Byrd, Jr.**, to the back of their truck and dragged him to his death.

A recent example of scientific racism can be found in Herrnstein and Murray's book *The Bell Curve* (1994), in which the authors attempt to establish a genetic link between race and intelligence. A more subtle and elusive form of racism, known as *aversive* or *covert racism*, is more common today. This type of racism may involve avoiding contact with people of another race or ethnicity, or laughing at or telling jokes about other racial or ethnic groups, usually based on stereotypes about these groups. Another type of racism, referred to as *laissez-faire* or *symbolic racism*, has also become more popular since the 1950s. This form of racism involves

blaming racial and ethnic minority groups themselves for lagging behind the dominant group (e.g., in educational attainment and socioeconomic status). It also tends to include the dominant group's resistance to policies that attempt to rectify past discrimination (e.g., affirmative action), and stereotypical portrayals of racial and ethnic minorities in the media. *Color-blind racism*, which is closely related to *laissez-faire racism*, involves the denial of the existence of racial differences and the belief that racial problems will only disappear when race is ignored altogether. This type of racism may not include any explicit intent to harm racial and ethnic minority groups, yet the idea that race and ethnicity are irrelevant tends to blind people to the very real effects race and ethnicity have on people's lives.

*Institutional racism* involves the negative and oppressive treatment of one race or ethnic group, presumed to be inferior, by institutions, including government agencies, corporations, and other organizations. *Racial profiling* and *redlining* are examples of this type of racism. Whatever the specific form racist ideology takes, its primary function is to justify the domination and exploitation of one racial or ethnic group by another based on its presumed biological, cultural, or intellectual inferiority. The connection between racism and race riots is quite obvious. Race riots reflect the anger and frustration among racial and ethnic minority groups that have endured decades of prejudice and discrimination and are often sparked by incidents involving racial profiling, **police brutality**, and other actions perceived as discriminatory.

Racism, and the many forms it can take, is the fundamental cause of riots and civil unrest in which race or ethnicity play a key role. The race riots that took place in many U.S. cities during and before the 1960s were fueled by the clash between the increasing aspirations for a better life among racial and ethnic minority groups and the racist and hostile opposition exhibited by the white majority. Further, these riots provide the backdrop to the **civil rights movement** and the legislative changes it brought about.

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### Racist Organizations

Racist organizations, groups based on anti-black or anti-white hatred, have historically been the primary instigators of racial violence in the United States, and their response to violence has generally been to generate more



The burning of the Henry Shepherd house by the Ku Klux Klan. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

violence. Grassroots organizations, legislation, and law enforcement have all helped to dismantle a number of racist groups and to substantially lessen the violent outbreaks of extant organizations. Contemporary racial violence has decreased substantially and is largely incited by private individuals. However, the influence of racist organizations is strong.

White racist organizations originated in the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. The most notorious of these organizations was the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, whose members dressed in ghostly white robes and cone-shaped masks and terrorized blacks with their eerie silent marches and infamous nightriding. Numerous Klan-like groups and **vigilante organizations** intimidated, terrorized, attacked, and murdered the newly freed black slaves and their white supporters. To white racist organizations, violence was an acceptable and glorified means of maintaining **white supremacy** and black oppression. In response, liberal Republicans insisted on federal intervention. The presence of federal troops, as well as the passing of the Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871, put a brief stop to the rampant violence.

While black and white Republicans passed legislation to ensure freedom for blacks during **Reconstruction**, conservative Democrats worked with organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, the **White League**, and the Red Shirts to devise machinations to remove the liberals from power in the South. Through violence, the Democrats were able to seize power and once again dominate the South. At the same time, the federal government withdrew its troops and ended Reconstruction. However, this did not put an end to anti-black violence. In fact, **lynching** became the norm between the



1880s and 1930s, as racist organizations sought to enforce **Jim Crow**. Racist organizations regularly justified violence as a necessary means to control alleged black crimes and violence.

**D.W. Griffith's** film *The Birth of a Nation* and the **press coverage** of the trial and lynching of accused Jewish murderer Leon Frank were said to be responsible for the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915. At its peak, the Klan comprised 15 percent of the nation's population. The Klan targeted blacks as well as Catholics, Jews, and immigrants, and endorsed white supremacy, **racism**, and lynching. Its activities included marches, rallies, and cross burnings. Its membership spread to the Midwest, the North, and Canada. The Klan disbanded as a result of scandals such as that involving Republican David Stephenson, a prominent leader, who was convicted of the rape and murder of Madge Oberholtzer; its association with Nazi organizations; its involvement in the **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943**; and the 1944 revelation that the organization owed \$685,000 in back taxes.

Klan activities were again revived in the 1950s in response to the emergence of the **civil rights movement**. The Klan was behind many of the violent attacks and threats against both black and white activists, particularly during the **Freedom Rides** and **Freedom Summer (Mississippi) of 1964**. It was also responsible for the infamous bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young black girls. However, this surge of violence backfired on the Klan because it helped to win civil rights for blacks. As news spread of the senseless killings of black and white activists, public sentiment swung against racist organizations and support for civil rights burgeoned. The violence also forced the federal government to intervene on behalf of the civil rights activists and to accelerate the eradication of **segregation**.

Another outcome of the violence that occurred during the civil rights movement was the emergence of black militancy. The **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, growing increasingly exasperated with the violent attacks, adopted the ideologies of **Black Power** and **black self-defense**. Other black militant groups included the **Nation of Islam** and the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**. These organizations were sometimes referred to as racist organizations because of their separatist views and willingness to use violence. However, only a small segment of black militants engaged in racial violence, which resulted in a number of crimes and violent attacks against innocent whites. The majority of the organizations were genuinely responding to perceived needs in the community and the day-to-day realities of **racism**.

Black militant groups were most popular in the cities of the North where crime, drugs, **police brutality**, unemployment, and **poverty** prevailed. These groups warned of black rebellion in response to oppressive conditions in the **ghettos**. When riots did erupt across the nation during the 1960s, black militant leaders were almost exuberant. Although these organizations were not directly responsible for the riots, their influence was evident. The Black Panthers formed during the 1960s to defend their community against racist police officers. This group eventually collapsed after it was infiltrated by the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**.

The majority of hate crimes (including vandalism, violent attacks, and murders) are perpetrated by individuals, not racist organizations. Nonetheless, these individuals are often heavily influenced by contemporary racist organizations such as the National Alliance, Neo-Nazis, the Skinheads, the Council of Conservative Citizens, the Aryan Brotherhood, and the Ku Klux Klan. A number of these organizations believe that a global racial war is at hand and are actively preparing for it. Meanwhile, contemporary black racist organizations continue to advocate racial violence.

Numerous efforts have been made to quash hate crimes and racist organizations. The Southern Poverty Law Center has waged many legal battles against the Ku Klux Klan and, along with the Anti-Defamation League and the FBI, publicizes racial activities and crimes. Diversity and tolerance education is regularly taught in the workplace and in the classroom. **John Conyers**, Democratic representative of Michigan, along with a small group of politicians, introduced the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2005.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Radio Free Dixie**

*Radio Free Dixie* was a radio program broadcast from Havana, Cuba, on Friday evenings at 11:00 P.M. from 1962 to 1965. **Robert F. Williams**, helped by his wife, Mabel, was its conductor. The program's strong signal made it heard almost everywhere in the United States, although it was primarily aimed at African Americans living in the South because, as Williams put it, they did not have any voice. *Radio Free Dixie* called on African Americans to rise and free themselves. As Williams said, *Radio Free Dixie* was the first radio program on which black people could say whatever they wanted and did not have to worry about sponsors.

Although the program had its roots in African American cultural traditions, it was also highly innovative, for Williams was close to the black arts movement and the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**. His choice of music included such African American artists as Leadbelly, Joe Turner, Abby Lincoln and Max Roach, Otis Redding, Nina Simone, The Impressions, and Josh White. Selections heard on *Radio Free Dixie* included not only jazz (dubbed "freedom jazz"), but also blues and soul music. Among the well-known listeners were Amiri Baraka, Richard Gibson, Conrad Lynn, and William Worthy. Listeners sent Williams hundreds of records to be played. The show highlighted the anthems of the southern movement. Williams' use of jazz was intended as a new type of political propaganda. He saw *Radio Free Dixie* as much more than a radio program; for Williams, it was a political act meant to reassure African Americans and help them free themselves from an overly racist American society. Williams mixed music with news about racial violence or voter registration campaigns in the South. Music was intended to motivate people in their struggle.

*Dixie* was a familiar song composed in 1859 by Dan Emmett, a member of the Bryant's Minstrels troupe in New York. During the Civil War, the

song reinforced and strengthened white identity in the South, which it pictured as a happy land. For a large number of Americans, the song retained its wartime and racial connotations in the twentieth century. During the **civil rights movement**, *Dixie* served as an anthem for white southerners and a reminder of **racism** and slavery for African Americans. Williams rejected the white southerner vision of the South as a happy land and used the word *Dixie* in an attempt to free the South from cultural, as well as political, **racism**. In a press conference after a trial in which a white man was acquitted for the attempted rape of a black woman, Williams said: "If the United States Constitution cannot be enforced in this social jungle called Dixie, it is time that Negroes must defend themselves" (Williams 1959).

Williams was at odds with the civil rights movement. He called for **black self-defense** and published *Negroes with Guns*, although he also called for the continued pressure of nonviolent direct action. Williams believed in flexibility in the freedom struggle. For some time, he was leader of the local chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and helped increase the membership from 6 to 200. He also formed the Black Guard, an armed group committed to the protection of the local black population, since calls of African Americans to law enforcement often went unanswered. He brought to the attention of national and international media the reality of **Jim Crow**.

Although Williams eventually went into exile, living in Cuba, the U.S.S.R., and Red China, he was neither a communist nor a black nationalist, but called himself an internationalist (see **Black Nationalism**). He realized that lack of freedom tainted communist regimes, and their view of the United States as imperialist distorted a political reality that was much more complex. Moreover, communist regimes did not understand the racism faced by African Americans, either because there were no important ethnic communities in their countries, or because such communities had already been marginalized and removed from the public consciousness.

*Radio Free Dixie* provided African Americans with a new way of grappling with **racial stereotypes** and lack of confidence. Williams was an influential figure in the struggle for civil rights, and his call for flexibility was followed by young black activists across the South who rejected the tactics of **nonviolence**. By broadcasting for the South, Williams intended to raise the level of confidence in African Americans. He gave new arguments to the **Black Power** movement and, although far from the United States for a number of years, he was an inspiration to, and a strong supporter of, the African American struggle for civil rights.

Eventually, CIA jamming and Cuban censorship ended *Radio Free Dixie*, but WBAI in New York and KPFA in Berkeley, California, often rebroadcast tapes of the shows. Bootleg tapes were also circulated in Watts and Harlem. The program ended in 1965 but Williams' influence has continued ever since.

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*Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan*

**RAM** See Revolutionary Action Movement

**Randolph, A. Philip (1889–1979)**

Asa Philip Randolph was an activist, union organizer, and civil rights leader. Born on April 15, 1889, in Crescent City, Florida, to Rev. James William and Elizabeth Robinson Randolph, he had one brother, James. When Randolph was two years old, the family moved to Jacksonville, Florida. He obtained his early education there and graduated from the Cookman Institute. He excelled academically. After graduating from high school, he decided that opportunities were limited for him in Jacksonville. Soon, he left for New York City. He settled in Harlem. His initial ambition was to study acting. Before long, he entered the City College of New York, where he became a student of economics and philosophy. He taught at the Rand School of Social Science. It was during this time that he met well-known socialists Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. Socialism appealed to him, which led him to join the Socialist Party. While living in New York City, Randolph met and married Lucille Green. She was a widow from Virginia. She was a teacher by training, but when they met she was the owner of a thriving hair salon. Using resources from the business, she was able to provide financial and other support to her husband's efforts. Lucille Green



Asa Philip Randolph seated with President Lyndon B. Johnson. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Randolph shared many of her husband's ideals and they remained married until her death on April 12, 1963. There were no children born to the union.

To disseminate the vision that Randolph had regarding African Americans and the future of American society in general, he began publishing a new magazine. He cofounded and coedited it with his good friend Chandler Owen. First published in 1917, this new publication was called *The Messenger*. Later, the name was changed to *The Black Worker*. The publication mostly addressed issues surrounding socialism, **integration**, **nonviolence**, and unionism. Randolph believed that the condition of blacks in America at that time was not unlike that of other groups in the society. He believed that the source of the problem, which all poor and working-class people faced, was the uneven distribution of power, wealth, and resources. One issue of the magazine editorialized that “the employing class recognize no race lines. They will exploit a White . . . as readily as a Black” (Randolph, 11). Profit was the motive and it was more important than race. Thus, Randolph envisioned a critical role for unions to play. Unions could unite workers across the spectrum. Only then, he believed, would American society be changed.

On the throes of the United States entering World War I, Congress passed the Espionage Act. It called for a fine of \$1,000 and twenty years in prison for interfering with military recruitment. It was during this time that Randolph's opponents often referred to him as “the most dangerous Negro in America” (Brinkley, 83). *The Messenger* carried articles that were staunchly against the war. Randolph rejected the claim that the war was “to make the world safe for democracy” (Wilson 1917). This was particularly unbelievable to him when he saw blacks being lynched and subjected to outright discrimination in the United States, the bastion of democracy. He became embroiled in a public dispute over the war issue with **W.E.B. Du Bois**, who urged blacks to participate in the war.

During one of the many trips that Randolph took around the country lecturing, organizing, and espousing his war views, he and his friend Owen were arrested in Cleveland, Ohio. The charge was treason. Seymour Stedman, a socialist lawyer, successfully got the pair released in his custody. This did not deter Randolph and Owen. They continued their antiwar crusade. Soon, Randolph himself was drafted to serve in the war. Just one day before he was scheduled to report for duty, the war ended.

In 1925, the dream of forming a union for workers was fulfilled. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was formed. Amid ugly and vicious attacks, a union was finally organized. It was a momentous occasion in the history of unionism within the United States. The new union prevailed over one of the most powerful and richest companies in the country—the Pullman Company. Most of the workers were black men. In 1935, the union officially became a part of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). After the AFL joined with the Council of Industrial Organization (CIO), Randolph was appointed to the executive council and became a vice president in 1957. At many meetings, conferences, and conventions of the organization, Randolph often found himself out of step with many of the AFL-CIO

leadership. His was the constant voice urging the unions to rid their ranks of discrimination. True to his earlier beliefs, he championed the rights of not only blacks, but poor whites, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Mexican-Americans and other minorities.

In 1940, just prior to World War II, Randolph embraced the problems of discrimination of blacks from wartime factory jobs. He was relentless in his efforts to change discriminatory practices in the industry. One strategy he proposed was a march on Washington. His hope was that the march would get the attention of the federal government and persuade Washington officials to abolish discrimination. Randolph's union had a natural constituency of black labor unionists and other sympathizers, and getting thousands of workers to descend on Pennsylvania Avenue in the nation's capital would send a powerful message. It is widely acknowledged that the prospect of a march of this magnitude weighed heavily on President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 8802, which banned discrimination in defense plant jobs. It was no small feat that the most powerful leader of the world responded to the demands of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, essentially a black labor union. The march was called off as a result of the president's proactive measures. The mission was accomplished.

On July 26, 1948, Randolph pursued and won another battle against discrimination. He called on blacks to refuse to serve in the military because it was segregated. He pressed another U.S. president, Harry Truman, to sign an order to end discrimination in the armed forces as well as in federal civil service jobs. The order also provided for blacks to enter the Army and Navy service academies. Although other blacks and their supporters pushed for these changes, Randolph was clearly in the forefront. He founded and served as president of the Afro-American Labor Council from 1960–1966.

In 1964, Randolph served as a pivotal figure in the legendary March on Washington where **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, delivered the "I Have a Dream" speech. Joining him in organizing labor unionists to participate in the march was a seasoned civil rights warrior, Bayard Rustin. He had been involved in planning the 1940 March on Washington that had been abandoned. The AFL declined to support the march, but Randolph successfully recruited a number of rank and file members of unions to participate. By the time of the 1963 March on Washington, Randolph was recognized as the elder statesman of the **civil rights movement** and he was frequently referred to as such. After the March on Washington, which was held on August 28, 1963, he joined Dr. King, Whitney Young, **Roy Wilkins**, and other civil rights leaders in meeting with President **John F. Kennedy**. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented Randolph with the Presidential Medal of Honor. The legacy of A. Philip Randolph is far-reaching. He was an indisputable pioneer in the American civil rights movement. He opened up unprecedented opportunities for blacks and other minorities in labor unions and other walks of life. One of his favorite quotes was "A quitter never wins and a winner never quits."

On May 16, 1979, A. Philip Randolph died in New York City. He had risen from being viewed as the most dangerous Negro in America to one of the most influential and respected black leaders in the United States. It

seemed altogether fitting that President Jimmy Carter would attend his funeral. *See also* Lynching.

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Betty Nyangoni

### **Randolph, Benjamin Franklin (c. 1820–1868)**

A state senator and Republican Party organizer in South Carolina, Benjamin Randolph was among the first African American political leaders to be murdered for speaking out against racial discrimination in the **Reconstruction** South.

Born free to mixed-race parents in Kentucky, Randolph grew up in Ohio, where he attended Oberlin College between 1857 and 1862. Having studied at the college’s theological seminary, Randolph was ordained into the Methodist Episcopal Church shortly after graduation. Becoming chaplain with the 26th Colored Infantry Regiment, Randolph was posted to Hilton Head, South Carolina, in 1864. He returned to South Carolina in 1865 as an agent for the American Missionary Association. In 1866, he founded the *Charleston Journal* with Rev. E.J. Adams and, in 1867, became editor of the *Charleston Advocate*. In the latter year, Randolph also received a Freedmen’s Bureau appointment, working first as a teacher and then becoming assistant superintendent of schools, a position he used to advocate complete **integration** of public education in South Carolina.

As a traveling minister who actively worked for the recently formed state Republican Party, Randolph encouraged political activism among the state’s Methodist Episcopal congregations. In 1867, he was elected vice president of the Republican state executive committee, and became committee chairman in the following year. In 1868, he became one of 226 African American delegates elected to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention, where his powerful speeches on behalf of African American civil rights aroused the ire of Democrats. Elected to the state senate from Orangeburg County in 1868, Randolph demanded that no African American in South Carolina be discriminated against on the basis of race.

On October 16, 1868, while canvassing for the Republican Party in the mostly white upland counties of the state, Randolph, who had been warned of the risks of openly campaigning on behalf of the freedmen, was shot and

killed by three white men as he stepped from a train at Hodges Depot in Abbeville County. Committed in broad daylight, the murder was rumored to have been the work of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. Although a mentally disturbed white man later confessed to involvement in the crime, he died, perhaps as a result of foul play, before he revealed who had paid him to kill Randolph. One of six black delegates to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention who were later slain by the Klan, Randolph was honored in 1871—a time when blacks were excluded from burial with whites—by the founding of Randolph Cemetery, a burial place for African Americans in Columbia, South Carolina. Randolph is today remembered as one of the most radical and influential African American leaders of the Reconstruction period. *See also* Disenfranchisement; Racism; Segregation.

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*John A. Wagner*

### Rape, as Provocation for Lynching

**Lynching** is the illegal killing of a person by mob action, which usually involved torture, mutilation, and hanging. It denotes mob action that takes place without due process of the law—no trial, no defense, no attorneys, no judge, no jury. The illegal action was particularly prevalent in the southern states during the late 1800s and into the early 1900s. African Americans were most often the victims of this vigilante movement carried out by **white mobs** and often witnessed by inhabitants of an entire town. **Vigilante organizations** such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** frequently initiated and executed the deadly practice, complete with torture and maiming of the individual prior to the hanging. A lynching would commonly be advertised in local newspapers and great crowds would appear to witness the event. The stereotype of the hypersexuality of the black male was central to the number of lynchings that used rape of white women as justification for the mob's brutality and killing. Body parts of the victim, including ears, noses, fingers, and genitalia were often given to members of the attending crowd as souvenirs. Authorities of the law did not intervene on the victims' behalf, and there are only rare cases in which the perpetrators were ever tried and punished for their illegal participation and actions in the execution of thousands of African Americans and supportive Caucasians.

Five hundred African Americans were lynched from the 1800s to 1955 in the state of Mississippi, while some nationwide estimates for the same time frame near 5,000 victims. Others report that between 1884 and the beginning of World War I, between 3,600 and 3,700 incidents of lynching occurred. The Tuskegee Institute reports that between the time when solid



statistical data was available in 1882 to 1964, a total of 4,743 people died as a result of lynching, with 3,445 people being black and lynched by whites.

The term *lynch* was most likely derived from Colonel Charles Lynch (1736–1796) who fought in the American Revolution and was a torrid justice of the peace in the state of Virginia. Those Caucasians who publicly supported abolition or the eradication of the practice of lynching were also targeted by the mobs and lynched. Elijah Parish Lovejoy is an example of this form of Caucasian lynching. He, as a white man, wrote articles in 1837 expounding on the evils of slavery and calling for an end to lynching. He was, himself, lynched and killed for these actions.

Accusations of black men raping white women were but one of the many reasons given for lynching. It is commonly thought that rape constituted the most essential and popular provocation for lynching, but current research does not confirm this perspective. John Hope Franklin writes that “in the first fourteen years of the twentieth century only 315 lynch victims were accused of rape or attempted rape” (Franklin 1967). He notes that homicide, robbery, insulting whites, and other offenses constitute the bulk of justifications for lynching. The primary provocation for lynching was, instead, accusations of slave insubordination. The perception of an uppity attitude on the part of an African American person was sufficient mob justification for lynching. Black men were most often the victims, but many African American women were also lynched for allegedly displaying signs or attitudes of superiority—or the lack of humbleness, debasement, and subservience that was expected of blacks and desired by the dominant Caucasian population.

There are estimates that approximately one-fourth of the killings from 1880 to 1930 were motivated by accusations of rape (PBS Online). In 1933, Dr. Arthur Raper wrote a book titled *The Tragedy of Lynching* on the practice of lynching in the United States beginning in 1889. He reported that over four-fifths were of African American descent and less than one-sixth of the victims were accused of rape.

Concerns of rape across the black-white barrier remained an issue, regardless of the number or actual percentages of lynching provoked by accusations of rape. The threat of lynching was a horrific tool of the status quo used to maintain social dominance and control over emancipated or enslaved African Americans. White slave owners were known to rape black female slaves without reprisal or any sanctions. White men also feared the black man for his supposed virility, coupled with the stereotypical assumption that all black men possessed an intense desire and uncontrollable lust for white women. This fear was only intensified by the white man’s perception of the white woman’s returned attraction to African American men. Caucasian men of the time—especially in the South—would tolerate the image of the subservient, docile, unthreatening black man who happily expressed gratitude for the white man’s paternalism. The counterimage of the virile, sexually superior black man seeking out white women for erotic pleasure or rape was an intolerable perception for the Caucasian slaveowner to endure . . . especially when he suspected reciprocity on the part of his Caucasian female partner. Some white women also falsely accused

African American men of rape, and although some women later recanted and told the truth that a rape was not committed, their confession often did nothing to nullify the mob's original intent and execution of a lynching.

In her 2003 book *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*, Joane Nagel artfully describes the phenomenon in her chapter titled "Sex-Baiting and Race-Baiting: The Politics of Ethnosexuality":

I have argued that there is no more potent force than sexuality to stir the passions and fan the flames of racial tension. Sex-baiting can be as provocative as race-baiting in conjuring up a vision of ethno-sexual threat. In fact, sex-baiting is a mechanism of race-baiting when it taps into and amplifies racial fears and stereotypes, and when sexual dangerousness is employed as a strategy to create racial panic. Sex-baiting and race-baiting often are used together by defenders of particular ethnosexual orders to maintain the status quo. It is the sexualized nature of things ethnic, racial, and national that heats up the discourse on the values, attributes, and moral worth of Us and Them, that arouses anger when there are violations of sexual contact rules, that raises doubts about loyalty and respectability when breaches of sexual demeanor occur, that provokes reactions when questions of sexual purity and propriety arise, and that sparks retaliation when threats to sexual boundaries are imagined or detected. (255)

The point of imagined actions driven by fear is also an important aspect of this phenomenon. Whether or not a black man really raped a white woman was often inconsequential and secondary to the fact that the action was considered reality by the lethal crowd. This accentuates the Thomas Theorem, which states that "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928). The alleged rapes did not have to be real to satisfy their function to the perpetrators of crimes such as lynching. They needed only be perceived as real in order for the consequences of lynching to become very real. Assigning hypersexuality to subordinate but threatening groups is not uncommonly used by the dominant society in order to justify horrendous behavior, including torture, bodily dismemberment, **castration**, and eradication of entire populations.

African American editor **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, a strong social activist, found that consensual sex between black men and white women was prevalent at the time, even though it was forbidden. She also found that the accusations of rape used as rationale for lynching were but another form of the white male-dominant population seeking social control over the Caucasian female population. Historic legislation from 1870 to 1884 supports her finding, with eleven southern states passing laws to ban miscegenation, or marriage across racial and ethnic lines.

Wells-Barnett, a graduate of Rust College in Memphis, Tennessee, and teacher in 1888, sparked an intense campaign against lynching in the United States. She traveled to England to promote her cause on the world stage and became the editor of a local black newspaper titled *The Free Speech and Headlight*. She found it necessary to write editorials under the pen name of Iola. In 1895, Wells-Barnett published *A Red Record*, her study of race and the practice of lynching in the United States. She was particularly focused

on the men who were hung due to accusations of rape. She found that in her own town of Memphis, African American men were being lynched, not predominantly because of accusations of rape, but because they were financially and independently established members of their newly thriving African American communities. **Reconstruction** had made African American affluence vibrant in many towns throughout the South. Wells-Barnett also joined forces with **W.E.B. Du Bois** in her fight for social justice and equality. She was forced to leave Memphis and took residency in Chicago.

For decades, strong opposition to lynching was not forthcoming from government or law enforcement agencies. Finally, in 1948, President Harry Truman supported legislation that posed a serious threat to the practice of lynching. The United States Senate—in particular, southern representatives—blocked the passage of Truman’s bills. The determined intent of the federal government, however, could not be dismissed. Truman developed the **Civil Rights Commission** as a long-standing facet of the federal government to monitor the cessation of the crimes of lynching.

Caucasian women, predominantly from the South, formed an anti-lynching movement through an association named the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL). This organization protested the violent practice of lynching perpetrated in name of protection of white women. It began in the 1920s and by the 1940s had impacted the end of this violent social action. In 1900, the African American Congressman George White brought forward the first anti-lynching bill, which died in the House Judiciary Committee. Lillian Smith is considered one of the most literate Caucasian females who wrote with the hope of ending lynchings. In her 1944 novel *Strange Fruit* and an anthology titled *Killers of the Dream*, Smith examines lynching in terms of the **racism** and sexism that was prevalent in the South. Actions of these individuals and other anti-lynching organizations eventually brought about the end of lynching in the United States. *See also* Dyer, Leonidas C.

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*Sheila Bluhm Morley*

### Reconstruction (1865–1877)

Reconstruction is the period that followed the Civil War (1861–1865) and ended with the reintegration of the Confederate States into the Union. It also produced a legal framework allowing African Americans to live as citizens in a post-slavery American society. This was done most notably through three amendments to the U.S. Constitution and several civil rights acts. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished all forms of slavery; the **Fourteenth Amendment** gave African Americans citizenship and promised them equal protection under the law; and the **Fifteenth Amendment** extended the right to vote to black men. On April 9, 1866, the Republican-dominated Congress overrode President Andrew Johnson's veto and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (also known as the New Freedman Bureau Act), which gave citizenship to any person born in the United States, with rights and privileges such as voting; owning, selling, and inheriting property; and suing and giving evidence in court. President Johnson had questioned the qualification of former slaves to be citizens and had deemed the bill too favorable to blacks and unfair to whites. The act was essentially ignored and was only enforceable after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, which reaffirmed citizenship rights and privileges to former slaves and the "equal protection of the laws."

Because of the relentless racism and violence of **vigilante organizations** such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, and the continuous resentment of the South, which felt humiliated by defeat and by what it perceived as imposition by the northern victors, African Americans could not fully enjoy the rights promised by the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment. From 1870 to 1871, Congress passed three acts known as enforcement acts (the Enforcement Act of 1870, also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1870, and two enforcement acts in 1871), mainly targeting the Ku Klux Klan, who were using violence to prevent African Americans and some whites from voting, holding office, serving on juries, or attempting to get educated.



A Thomas Nast cartoon, "Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction and How It Works," published in 1866. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



African Americans hiding in the swamps of Louisiana, 1873. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

In 1870, Massachusetts Congressmen Charles Sumner and Benjamin Butler introduced a bill to reaffirm equality and justice for all Americans as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. What became known, after years of negotiations, as the Civil Rights Act of 1875 sought to end discrimination and **segregation** against African Americans in the enjoyment of public places, facilities, and conveyances. In 1883, however, following southern legislatures' reversal of the legal achievement of Reconstruction and the general violence against blacks in the South, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional on the grounds that discrimination in public facilities was not within the power of Congress to legislate, nor was it a federal offense against the Thirteenth or Fourteenth Amendments.

Other problems that newly freed African Americans had to face included laws that had been in place in the past, such as the so-called **black codes**, a set of local and state laws already in place in the North before the Civil War and put in place by former slave states in the South to limit the civil rights and privileges that African Americans acquired as a result of the amendments and the civil rights acts. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments offered protection but did not completely shield African Americans from the intimidation and violence of white supremacists, the frequent burning of newly established black schools, and the beating and murder of teachers in those schools.

The promise of Reconstruction was further shattered by the violence of post-Reconstruction, which started after the Union Army pulled out of the South. Previously humiliated by the defeat in the Civil War, the South embarked on a steady and unapologetic course to reverse the achievement of Reconstruction. Tactics including the grandfather clause, literary test, the poll tax, and sheer violence led to the legal **disenfranchisement** of African Americans. The triumph of **Jim Crow** laws was sealed by the landmark Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896 that legalized segregation and discrimination, thus crushing the promise of racial harmony generated by the idealism of Reconstruction.

In spite of legal wrangling, the reconfiguration of the plantation system through the practice of **sharecropping**, and the continuing **racism** and discrimination against African Americans, Reconstruction brought hope to newly freed African Americans. Thousands of black and white volunteers, missionaries, and churches in or from both the North and the South established thousands of new schools and/or labored to educate the black population of all ages whom the institution of slavery had, by and large, forbidden to learn to read and write. Within three years of the end of the Civil War, several institutions of higher education were also launched; they included Fisk University, Hampton University, Howard University, and Morehouse College.

Even in the face of many daunting challenges, the amendments to the Constitution and the civil rights acts that followed the end of the Civil War allowed African Americans to vote, seek political office, own personal and real property, own the fruit of their labor, and use public facilities. Unfortunately, all of these achievements were legally suppressed by the triumph of post-Reconstruction Jim Crow laws. *See also* Disenfranchisement; Fifteenth Amendment; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow.

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*Aimable Twagilimana*

## Redlining

Derived from the practice of banks, which drew red lines on city maps to mark areas and neighborhoods in which they did not want to lend money, the term *redlining* describes the refusal of banks and other institutions to provide services, such as banking and insurance, to residents of certain areas. Although this practice is illegal in the United States when it is based on race, religion, gender, disability, ethnic origin, or the presence or absence of children in a family, it has been used, especially against African Americans and other racial minorities, to restrict their ability to obtain affordable housing to only certain areas or parts of a city, and thus greatly increased residential **segregation** in the United States in the early and mid-twentieth century.

The practice of redlining was given major impetus by the Housing Act of 1934, which was passed to foster the development of affordable housing

for the urban poor. Despite this basic aim, the act also required cities to designate certain areas and neighborhoods for particular racial groups, a practice that effectively prevented minorities from obtaining mortgages for housing outside their designated areas. In many cities, such as Philadelphia, Boston, and Kansas City, redlining forced African Americans into certain well-defined neighborhoods and preserved the all-white composition of others. Today, the federal government requires all banks to provide a map showing the locations of recent home loans it has made in a city to assure potential customers that no redlining is taking place. *See also* Ghettos; Integration.

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*John A. Wagner*

### **Red Scare and Race Riots**

The term *red scare* refers to two periods in U.S. history, both marked by widespread and intense nationalist and anti-radical sentiment. During the first Red Scare, 1917–1920, the U.S. government, industry leaders, soldiers, and citizens attacked communists, socialists, anarchists, labor organizations, and recent immigrants, particularly German-Americans. The scare found U.S. blacks in the midst of both a regional and psychological shift, changes that served to further threaten a nation in the throws of hysteria. Blacks were both victims and actors in the events surrounding the Red Scare, as many of the blacks who sought to change the status quo by seeking economic opportunity in northern cities were included among accounts of the radicals who posed a threat to America. During the high tide of the scare, in 1919, there were seventy-eight **lynchings** and twenty-five race riots, phenomena that caused **James Weldon Johnson** to dub the summer and autumn of 1919 the "Red Summer." The rise of *the New Negro* (a term coined by black philosopher **Alain Locke**), or the change in black self-understanding, was also a source of anxiety for whites, as blacks fought back against the mobs that attacked them.

Wars often serve to bolster nationalist sentiment in a nation. When groups of people, divided by race, class, gender, and region, can come together against a common enemy, they are able to forget the problems they have with their fellow citizens. President Woodrow Wilson put this social tendency in overdrive in the United States as he took extraordinary steps to manufacture national cohesion before American entry into World War I in 1917. Wilson created the Committee on Public Information, led by journalist George Creel, which distributed an enormous amount of pro-America propaganda—more than enough, it turns out, than was necessary to sustain the war effort; after the Great War, a violently nationalist populace, aided

by industrial leaders, journalists, and the U.S. government, still hungry for a foe, turned its attention away from foreign enemies and took steps to root out the enemy within.

Anarchists were responsible for a series of bombing attempts throughout the country. Many Americans were concerned that these attempts might succeed, especially in the wake of Russia's Bolshevik Revolution. During the scare, Congress broadened the Espionage Act to include the Sedition Act of 1918, an act that made it illegal to speak out against the government and gave the Postmaster General the power to intercept dissenter mail. In November 1919, and on New Year's Day 1920, Attorney General Palmer authorized the infamous Palmer Raids. On January 1, officials arrested over 10,000 communists, left-wingers, and people with foreign-sounding names. Among the lay population, anarchist plots seemed illogical to many, and were unpredictable and shrouded in secrecy; workers, on the other hand, presented visible targets (Tuttle, 1970). With each passing strike, citizens began to more closely associate labor unrest with the ongoing plot to overthrow the U.S. government.

In 1919, the U.S. was also in the midst of massive labor unrest, as factories switched to peacetime production and soldiers returned to strained domestic labor markets. According to reports, there were as many as 3,000 labor disputes, strikes, and lockouts, involving over four million workers (Hallgren, 1933), as workers whose salaries had been frozen to help out with the war effort began to organize for better conditions. The Seattle General Strike, which took place from January 21 through February 11, began in earnest when 25,000 workers joined 35,000 striking shipyard workers and succeeded in shutting down the city. The Cleveland May Day Riot was also a major event, as local unionists, socialists, communists, and anarchists met at the behest of socialist leader Charles Ruthenberg to protest the detention of Eugene Debs. The September Steelworkers Strike grew to include 365,000 workers around the nation.

The communist and striker became intertwined in the American mind; industrialists, journalists, and officials only served to help Americans conflate the two. In addition to journalists' accounts that condemned strikers as un-American, industrialists fighting collective bargaining efforts were not afraid to exploit nationalist sentiment. Although involved in a noble battle for fair working conditions, workers were not immune to **racism**. Labor leaders and industrialists alike mobilized anti-black sentiment, often with violent consequences.

As stated above, blacks were both actors and objects of violence during the Red Scare. As the conventional belief in black inferiority met the new-found hatred of foreigners and anyone who might upset the status quo, both attitudes merged against black efforts to realize the benefits of American society. Many of the 450,000 blacks who relocated to urban centers met angry whites who were afraid of what the influx of black workers would do to their economic and social standing. Any survey of the mobs that attacked blacks during the Red Summer found frustrated white workers and soldiers without a war to fight among the participants.



A change in attitude accompanied the black migration. The argument that blacks should not seek political and social equality, championed by **Booker T. Washington**, fell out of favor among the black population, as post-war blacks had reason to believe that they deserved full citizenship. The president's efforts to create national pride did not bypass the black community. African Americans were soldiers in the Great War, bought Liberty Bonds, and followed rationing restrictions (Tuttle, 1970). The Harlem Renaissance, the most well known of the New Negro efforts, and Carter G. Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, founded in 1915, stand as evidence of a move to celebrate black historical and cultural achievements and the decision to reject the conventional belief in white superiority. Black newspapers, including **W.E.B. Du Bois's** *The Crisis* and the *Chicago Defender*, encouraged blacks to hold their heads high as they relocated to cities across the country. Although many blacks lost their lives in the **Red Summer**, black people were no longer willing to believe that they deserved to die according to the whims of whites. Blacks heeded **Claude McKay's** Red Summer call, and mobs met them, "pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!" (McKay, "If We Must Die," line 14). *See also* Black Self-Defense; Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919; East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917.

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*Sbatema A. Threadcraft*

### **Red Summer Race Riots of 1919**

The race riots of the Red Summer represent the height of **white mob** riot activity in the United States, never surpassed in frequency, breadth, or severity. In addition to the seventy-eight **lynchings** of black individuals by white mobs that year, white mobs also attacked entire black communities throughout the United States. The most well known of the Red Summer race riots are those that occurred in **Charleston**, South Carolina (May); **Chicago**, Illinois (July); **Longview**, Texas (July); **Washington, D.C.** (July); **Knoxville**, Tennessee (August); **Omaha**, Nebraska (September); and **Elaine**, Arkansas (October).

In May 1920, congressional Rep. **Leonidas C. Dyer** introduced an Anti-Lynching Bill in the House of Representatives. The bill contained a list of twenty-six riots, put together from the records of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and the Tuskegee Institute. The locations were Bisbee, Arizona; Elaine, Arkansas; New London, Connecticut; Wilmington, Delaware; Washington, D.C.; Blakely, Dublin, Millen, and Putnam County, Georgia; Chicago and Bloomington, Illinois; Corbin, Kentucky; Homer and New Orleans, Louisiana; Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland; Omaha, Nebraska; New York City and Syracuse, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Charleston, South Carolina; Knoxville and Memphis, Tennessee; Longview and Port Arthur, Texas; and Norfolk,

Virginia. Sen. Charles Curtis from Kansas introduced an anti-lynching bill to the Senate and used similar information.

Scholars have not yet determined the official total number of Red Summer riots, but the most often stated count is twenty-six. Several factors make it difficult to establish an accurate number. At the time of the incidents, local officials sometimes suppressed information, invoking a code of silence. As time went on, many people wanted to forget the incidents; consequently, much information has been lost. Alternately, it was common practice for newspapers at the time, both white and black, to sensationalize any news whatsoever. Exaggerating, or in some cases even inventing, racial conflicts sold papers, so newspaper accounts cannot be taken at face value.

These local, national, and international newspaper accounts and other reports do suggest additional locations. The black press in both the United States and Great Britain devoted attention to the reporting of race riots, often in more graphic detail and with a political edge. Using these sources, an extended list of possible incidents in the United States contains fifty-six entries. A verification model in which an incident must appear on one of the NAACP, Tuskegee, or Dyer lists, in addition to a newspaper account, or be referred to in official government accounts, either local or federal, adds these riot locations to the ones on the Dyer list: Mulberry, Florida; Berkeley, Milan, and Cadwell, Georgia; Camp Zachary Taylor, Kentucky; Gary, Indiana; Bogalusa, Louisiana; Youngstown, Ohio; and Donora, Pennsylvania.

Another factor affecting the count is the definition of terms. Incidents such as those in Chicago and Omaha involved mobs of hundreds of whites rampaging through black neighborhoods, looting and burning property and injuring people. These are clearly riots. In some incidents, however, such as those in Bisbee and New London, the mob comprised authorities of the law acting outside their official capacity while on duty. This type of situation requires interpretation as to whether, and at what point, the action became unlawful, thereby making it a riot. Other incidents involved smaller mobs, or the white mob was met with the resistance of an equal number of black people, and so these events may be considered by some sources or researchers to be fights or clashes, rather than riots.

The NAACP annual report from the years 1919 until 1923 uses the phrase *race riot* when reporting events in which white mobs targeted black communities. As the frequency of these events declined, the phrase fell out of common use, until, briefly, during the spate of riots after World War II. Then, during the riots in the 1960s, use of *race riot* was revived to describe events of destruction by mobs made up of black people. Such a transformation in meaning can generate confusion and can hide white responsibility for violence. Additionally, an alternate phrase, *white mob violence*, was used by many of the newspapers at that time as a euphemism for lynching.

In many ways, the Red Summer's anti-black riots were similar to lynchings. Both lynching mobs and rioting mobs used precipitating events as excuses to try to justify their violence, and in both cases these excuses were usually an alleged crime or social trespass of some sort by a black individual. Accusations of murder and rape were common, but sometimes it was an offense as minor as the failure to remove a hat. Both riots and

lynchings were often inflamed by **rumors**, and were promoted and sensationalized in **press coverage**. The riots often included the murder of an accused person, and this murder was sometimes performed as a carefully enacted lynching ritual, with the riot preceding and/or following. Riots and lynchings produced a similar result—the targeted community was terrorized.

Yet the riots differed from lynchings in significant ways. Riot participation consistently crossed lines of age and gender. A riot targeted the entire community directly, while lynching targeted the community as a whole indirectly. Lynchings were highly ritualized, whereas riots, while conforming to a certain pattern, were less organized and more chaotic and random. Despite its popularity during the Red Summer, rioting never attained the level of societal approval that lynching did.

There was no one simple cause for this epidemic of white mob violence directed at black people. In some of the urban locations, there had been significant growth in the black population, resulting in overcrowding in the black neighborhoods and pressure on white neighborhoods to accommodate in various ways. World War I had just ended and many demobilized white troops returned home to find themselves competing with black workers for jobs and homes. Also, the war itself had acclimated people to the idea of using violence to solve problems, and had desensitized people to the horror of violence. Each of the Red Summer riots was a result of these overarching general factors combining with many other factors specific to each location.

The riots of the Red Summer can be sorted into four localized context categories. There were riots that occurred in relation to a labor dispute; involved military personnel as rioters or targets; related to local politics and a “boss” or political machine; and riots that rose out of a threatened, perceived, or actual rupture of the local racial caste system.

### ***The Labor Riots***

Lumber camps, textile mills, steel mills, mines, and waterfront docks were all sources of dangerous jobs requiring great numbers of strong laborers, and were places where black workers found employment during World War I. In 1919, unions were actively organizing in these industries, as they had been throughout the war. The racial composition of the unions varied. Many were all white, some were all black, some were biracial, with separate subdivisions by race, and a very few were beginning to be interracial, with membership recruitment from among both black and white workers. The high level of union activism heightened the tension among all parties in these industrial communities, adding yet another factor to the volatile post-war atmosphere, so it is no surprise that some of the Red Summer race riots occurred out of this context.

The labor-related riots took two forms. One pattern, by far the most common, was that of a mob of white strikers attacking black workers, regarding them as their enemy, competing for scarce jobs and status. During the Great Steel Strike, which affected much of the industrial Northeast for several

months, as many as 40,000 black workers were brought in as strikebreakers. In Syracuse, New York, in July, striking iron molders attacked black workers at Globe Malleable Iron Works using clubs, stones, and firearms. Injuries to both workers and strikers occurred. Police made arrests and assigned all mounted officers, reserve patrolmen, and detectives to the area. Four white men were charged in the rioting.

In Gary, Indiana, the unions had excluded black workers who were already working in the mills. Once the steel strike began, they did try to get black workers to support it, but without success. U.S. Steel used local and non-local black strikebreakers, housing them in the plants or transporting them to and from work, for their safety. The riot in Gary occurred when several thousand strikers left a mass meeting and came on a streetcar bringing forty strikebreakers, many black, into town. The strikers attacked the streetcar with stones and bricks, beating the workers and dragging them through the streets. Witnesses said that two of the black workers fought back with razors. The governor ordered in the state militia and finally requested federal troops. General Leonard Wood, fresh from riot duty in Omaha, Nebraska, immediately declared martial law. The rioting in Gary broke the unions there.

For the *New York Times*, reporting the Great Steel Strike in Donora, Pennsylvania, the news was not that the strikers attacked the workers, or that most of those workers were black, but rather that the bulk of those attacked fought back. The first of two altercations occurred in the morning when black workers returned to work at the American Steel and Wire Company. They were attacked by strikers throwing bricks, and several of the workers were hurt. The workers then fired at the strikers with revolvers, wounding two men in the legs. State police broke up the incident. Then, that evening, strikers again threw bricks at the workers, injuring one woman and several men. Shots were fired without hitting anyone, and the workers fought back with fists and bricks.

In Youngstown, Ohio, also during the Great Steel Strike, black workers at Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company were attacked by strikers. Several workers were injured, one critically; one was killed. No injuries were reported among the strikers.

There were, on the other hand, industries and regions where black workers were union members. The other type of labor-related race riot took the form of a white mob, comprising company-hired assailants acting on behalf of an employer, attacking black union members out on strike. This type of riot was rare, and during the Red Summer happened only in Bogalusa, Louisiana, and Mulberry, Florida. In Bogalusa, the Great Southern Lumber Company, unhappy with unionizing in general, perceived the union of black lumber workers as a particular threat. A mob led by company men waged a violent campaign of fear and intimidation over a series of months, harassing the workers and their families, both white and black, in their homes. This campaign culminated in a riotous shoot-out in which four union men were killed.

In Mulberry, Florida, in what was probably an attempt to scare the black strikers back to work, a group of at least four white company guards from

Prairie Pebble Mine fired directly into the black section of town, reportedly as many as twenty-five rounds, from high-powered rifles. At least three black people were hit; one, a two-year-old black boy, was killed, and the woman holding him, possibly his mother, was seriously wounded. Another black man was killed the same night when the guards continued to fire into Mulberry's black neighborhood.

### ***The Military Riots***

The military subculture offered a particularly complex environment for interracial conflict to play out. While black troops had met with great success overseas during the war, and many had discovered a new definition of freedom, back in the United States during the Red Summer it was a different story. Many racist whites were threatened by the appearance of uniformed black men, and many white veterans were anxious to see any vestige of the temporarily esteemed status of their black compatriots restored to its pre-war marginality. After the war, the government was closely studying the performance and role of black troops in order to determine the future attitude of the military toward its racial composition. Due in part to these complicated factors, the riots of the Red Summer display a full range of military involvement, with black soldiers in different roles in various circumstances, being alternately targets of violence, upholders of the law, and activists for change. White soldiers, as well, were variously stopping riots and starting them, and the target of the violence was sometimes black soldiers and sometimes black civilians.

Mobs of white sailors started riots in Charleston, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C., targeting black residents and their property indiscriminately. In Washington, D.C., the mob's excuse was an alleged assault by two black men on a white woman, following a barrage of newspaper sensationalism promoting fear of a black crime wave, and the rioting continued for days. In Charleston, the alleged offense was the pushing of a sailor off the sidewalk. In both cases, Marines were called in to stop the rioting.

In New London, Connecticut, tension between white sailors and black sailors erupted in violence. Each side had accused the other of lying in wait for them as they crossed Long Cove Bridge after dark. When two white "bluejackets" were arrested for a fight, their comrades were unable to make the police turn them loose. In frustration, the white sailors raided the Hotel Bristol, a popular congregating spot for black sailors. A group of hotel patrons was thrown into the street and severely beaten. Reinforcements arrived on both sides and the fighting continued. The town's police, even with the help of the fire department, were unable to stop the riot. Marines with rifles came and restored order.

In Bisbee, Arizona, local officials and off-duty white infantrymen harassed and assaulted with gunfire the black 10th U.S. Cavalry. Five people were shot. George Sullivan, a white military policeman with the 19th Infantry, passed by Brewery Gulch, a club popular with black soldiers, and there were words between him and five 10th Cavalrymen. The black soldiers went to the police station and reported the incident, and the police chief

tried to confiscate their weapons. When they refused to give up their guns, the police went up to Brewery Gulch to disarm any black troops with weapons. Gunfire was exchanged, repeatedly, until fifty black soldiers were placed in custody. During the melee, bystanders were shot as well, including Teresa Leyvas, a Mexican resident of Bisbee who was struck in the head.

A celebration honoring the return of Norfolk, Virginia's black veterans was halted because of rioting in which six people were injured. The Norfolk City Council had planned a week-long celebration, but on the first day of the festivities, a black soldier was arrested and a riot followed. Soldiers and Marines were sent in from the naval base to help restore order.

At Camp Zachary Taylor, tension simmered for months between the black soldiers stationed there and the white residents of Louisville, Kentucky, as well as between the white soldiers stationed there and the black residents. Many fractious incidents occurred, but one in particular stood out, involving many black soldiers and a large crowd of whites, both military and civilian. The fracas developed when local white authorities arrested a black soldier, and his compatriots reacted with resistance. Violent confrontation followed.

### ***The Local Political Machine Riots***

Political players vying for power have exploited social turmoil to reach their goals since time immemorial, and such appears to be the case in at least three of the Red Summer riots. A relationship between a key player in the incident and the mayor of the locality or some other community leader is a red flag to identifying riots in this local context category.

In Milan, Georgia, Berry Washington was a venerable figure in the black community. When two white men, John Dowdy and Levi Evans, came into the black neighborhood and attacked two girls, Washington shot and killed one of the men. That the dead man was the son of a local minister is no doubt of some importance in the events that followed. A mob of 75 to 100 people lynched Washington and subsequently forced the entire black community out of their homes for two days.

Another example is the riot in Knoxville, Tennessee. Maurice Mays was a politically active man about town. It was rumored that his real father was the mayor of Knoxville, and son or not, on the day the trouble started, Mays had been distributing campaign literature for the mayor's reelection. Mays had his enemies among the police, and it was one of these enemies who arrested him for the murder of a white woman. The mob in Knoxville did not want to wait for the trial and was set on lynching him. He was successfully protected by the authorities, who moved him to another town, but when the mob was unable to obtain Mays, they raged through the black part of town, burning homes and shooting people. Seven people were killed, and twenty were injured.

In Omaha, Nebraska, Mayor Ed Smith was nearly killed when he attempted to stop a mob, numbering more than 1,000, from lynching a black man, Will Brown, accused of assaulting a white woman. After burning

the courthouse, hanging and shooting Brown, and burning his body, the mob cut a path of destruction through Omaha's black neighborhoods. The mob's actions may have been motivated, defined, and even paid for, by the political machine of Tom Dennison. From 1897, Dennison had a mayor of his choice in place for twenty-nine years, except for the 1918–1921 term, and he had a close relationship with the publisher of the *Omaha Bee*, which had been running sensationalized crime reports all summer. This, along with financial connections to certain leaders of the rioting mob, suggests that Dennison may have hoped to use the riot to discredit the local administration. In the next election, Smith was voted out of office, replaced with Dennison's man, James Dahlman.

### *The Caste Rupture Riots*

The formal and informal structures of the binary black/white caste system, also known as the **Jim Crow** laws, were challenged in many ways after World War I, for the first time since **Reconstruction**. During the Red Summer, white mobs used these perceived caste ruptures as justification for violence.

One type of caste rupture, long at the heart of many racial conflicts, was demographic. The movement of black residents out of the neighborhoods allotted to them and into white neighborhoods heightened racial tension in many urban areas in the North. Demographic caste rupture was behind the rioting in Baltimore, Maryland, for example, where groups repeatedly clashed during the Red Summer as black residents moved into previously all-white neighborhoods. In one incident, white youths were harassing black residents with noise and taunts, and the residents complained to police many times without result. When the black residents confronted the youths, a mob of fifty whites, armed with bottles, bricks, and rocks, rioted. Police from two districts came to stop the disturbance.

The struggle of the black farmers in Phillips County, Arkansas, near the town of Elaine, represents economic caste rupture, as they began to try to break out of the peonage system by forming a Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America. The southern agricultural system was structured in such a way that most blacks worked as farmhands or sharecroppers. The landlord provided supplies in advance, receiving in payment a share of the season's crop. The situation was rigged so that the sharecropper would remain perpetually in debt. The landlord rarely gave a written statement of account to the sharecropper, which many illiterate sharecroppers would not have been able to read, and the crop was just never enough to pay off what the sharecropper owed for supplies. The whites in Phillips County were highly fearful of the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America alliance, and rumors spread that an organized insurrection was imminent. On this pretext, white mobs, bolstered with people from nearby counties in Tennessee and Mississippi, hunted down, captured, and killed hundreds of black people, not only the farmers, but others as well. The highest-profile deaths were those of the four Johnston brothers, among them a doctor and a dentist, who were killed while in custody of the authorities.

Other riots occurred out of a more general context of caste rupture in which whites were threatened by perceived differences in quality of life. In both Millen and Cadwell, Georgia, a fear that Blacks were building a strong cultural alliance led whites to attack the symbols of the black community along with its leaders, burning a total of eleven church and lodge buildings and killing eight people. White locals in Corbin, Kentucky, ran black railroad workers out of town for challenging local social mores. Similarly, in Longview, Texas, whites were threatened by the economic success of the local black community and its increasingly expanded worldview inspired by the national black press. There, a mob of 1,000 white men, armed with rifles, pistols, and stolen ammunition, went to the black neighborhood, set several houses on fire, and shot several people.

Isolated incidents of caste rupture precipitated other riots. In Dublin, Georgia, black citizens fought against a mob to prevent a lynching. In New York City, a black man grabbed the straw hat of an off-duty white police officer. The officer retaliated by shooting his gun, and a racial melee ensued, involving large numbers of whites and blacks fighting one another.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, having had a huge race riot in 1918, suffered through the Red Summer with several racial clashes, one of which was reported as a riot. At a carnival, a crowd of whites fought a crowd of blacks, but most trouble was averted when 100 police officers showed up and made arrests.

In Wilmington, Delaware, a white mob formed in hopes of lynching two black men accused of killing a police officer, but the men had been moved to Philadelphia. Someone opened fire on the mob, which fired back and then proceeded to move through the black neighborhood vandalizing homes and other property.

The contagion theory of rioting has been applied to the Red Summer, the hypothesis being that many of these riots would not have happened without those that preceded, leading the way. This theory is practically impossible to test, but one riot was so lame in its triggering incident and weak in its execution that contagion is the most likely explanation. On a Port Arthur, Texas, streetcar, a black man was accused of smoking in the presence of a white woman. A white mob, estimated by witnesses as numbering forty, attacked him, and a group of black men, numbering about twenty, fought back. Port Arthur is located between Houston, which had a serious race riot in 1918, and Longview, a location of one of the major Red Summer riots, which had occurred only a week or so prior to the Port Arthur incident.

The Red Summer rioting in Chicago crosses the categories, because labor issues, political maneuvering, as well as demographic caste rupture, were all present. The incident that triggered the rioting there was the stoning and subsequent drowning of teenager Eugene Williams. Williams had, while swimming, strayed into the white part of the lake, and white people started throwing rocks at him. Unable to keep his head out of the water because of the rocks, he drowned. When a police officer at the scene refused to arrest the rock throwers, black citizens became angry, and the officer arrested them instead. Whites throughout the city used this as an



opportunity to vent their rage, stoked that summer by competition for jobs and housing. White gangs, such as Regan's Colts, sought out trouble as a way of asserting power. Some scholars argue that labor unions played a large role, particularly in the meatpacking industry, while other scholars counter that if labor had gotten involved, things would then have been much worse, given meatpackers' skill with knives.

### *Analysis*

Immediately after World War I, the entire world reeled with change. There had been the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917. In Peru, there were rebellions and a great climate of unrest as the indigenous people revolted in unprecedented number and uprisings were met with massacres and mob violence. There were labor strikes in Colombia; the British government killings of many protesters in the Amritsar province of India; and unrest in many Muslim populations. In South Africa, defiant demonstrations led to skirmishes between protesters and police, and later to conflict between groups of whites and blacks.

During the five-year span of World War I and subsequent post-war adjustment, from 1917 to 1921, the tenor of the times reverberated with increased nativism, racism, fear, suspicion, and economic uncertainty. A key feature of the political climate was the Red Scare, promoted and driven by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. Promoting the fear of a *Red menace* made up of anarchists, radicals, Bolshevik propagandists, and revolutionaries, Palmer suspected the American labor movement was being infiltrated and polluted. Palmer used labor unrest and a series of letter bombs as evidence that sinister organizing was taking place nationally.

Palmer and his believers thought this radical trade unionism was gearing up to destroy capitalism in the United States and establish a new social order, ruled by the workers. Race was a focus of this Red Scare fear. The federal government was convinced that American blacks as a group were vulnerable to the persuasions of the Bolsheviks, and much money and resources were allotted to monitoring and infiltrating radical black activity. The Department of Justice, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, the State Department, the General Intelligence Division, the Department of the Post Office, the Military Intelligence Division, and the Office of Naval Intelligence are all on record as being concerned with finding a link between Bolshevik propaganda and black militancy. Black publications, including the *Messenger*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Whip*, the *Crusader*, and the *Emancipator* were carefully watched for what was referred to as *Negro subversion*. Some of the weekly newspapers and monthly magazines were investigated and censored, and in some cases were withheld from distribution, or confiscated altogether. The Post Office sometimes revoked the second-class permit of a publication, forcing an underfunded publisher to pay first-class postage rates, effectively silencing the issue.

It was in this climate that race relations among the U.S. populace took on the volatility that allowed for the violence of the Red Summer. White violence increased and diversified. Black response became more active and

focused. World War I had brought something new to the United States—that of the heroic return of the black soldier. One reaction was the revival of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, and the Red Summer race riots were akin to this spirit. This racism was not universal. Both the mayor of Knoxville and the governor of Tennessee, for example, went on record as repudiating the organization. The national black news magazine *The Crisis* summed up the situation by pointing out that the black soldier, after facing chemical warfare and artillery fire in the war, was not going to be intimidated by a bunch of cowards running around in bed linens. Rather, the article said, the war had taught black soldiers to face a danger and see it through.

The Red Summer race riots became a turning point in the history of race relations in the United States. White racists learned that the mob spirit methodology was not the powerful tool it may once have been, and that white mob violence would be met with both theoretical and practical resistance from black people, along with societal resistance, in the form of legislation and social policy lobbying and activism. Although ultimately the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was not enacted, the fight for its passage was part of a social and cultural force that laid the groundwork for the later rise of the **civil rights movement**.

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Jan Voogd

## Reparations

Reparations are defined as the act or process of making amends through compensation or some other means. Efforts to allocate reparations to black slaves and their descendants in America have a long and thorny history. Early on, some whites made significant attempts to address the damage slavery had inflicted on freedmen and freedwomen, but they were thwarted at

every turn. **White mobs**, particularly in the South, often used violence to suppress blacks, thus preventing them from seeking restitution. Significant black crusades for reparations did not occur until the 1950s. A number of individuals and organizations have since joined the movement, but they continue to face massive resistance. In 1994 and 2004, respectively, survivors of the **Rosewood** massacre and the **Tulsa** race riot received reparations.

During **Reconstruction**, several attempts were made to ameliorate the residual aftereffects of slavery on blacks. Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau to provide aid to former slaves. This aid focused on what the Bureau believed to be their most urgent needs—food, medical care, education, and land. The bureau, with the help of numerous blacks, was able to accomplish this goal to a limited degree. Their greatest contribution was the establishment of new schools. For the first time ever, black politicians were elected into office. However, by 1877, southern white Democrats had ousted all black politicians from office throughout the nation.

In 1865, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman declared that the land confiscated during the war should be given to former slaves. Congress charged the Freedmen's Bureau to distribute that land. Word of the promise of "forty acres and a mule" spread quickly amongst blacks. However, President Andrew Johnson returned the land to the former slave owners instead. In 1866, opposition to Congress' Southern Homestead Act prevented all but 1,000 blacks from buying land at low cost. Thaddeus Stevens proposed a slave reparations bill, which would allot forty acres of land and \$100 to build a home for every recently freed male, but it did not pass. A few proponents of **Black Nationalism**, such as **Henry McNeil Turner**, also advocated reparations. Turner sought financial assistance from whites to support black migrations to Africa. He believed blacks were owed remuneration as a result of several hundred years of forced slavery and unpaid wages. He received support from the American Colonization Society (ACS). In 1915, blacks failed to win a lawsuit against the U.S. Treasury Department for labor rendered during slavery.

Blacks benefited little from Reconstruction, as systematic subjugation and violence kept blacks in check. Landless, penniless, and denied the freedoms and opportunities they had anticipated after emancipation, blacks were disheartened. Nonetheless, with the exception of a few dauntless leaders, blacks did not openly demand retribution. White mobs squelched black opponents and white sympathizers through violence and intimidation. Following Reconstruction, race riots occurred throughout the nation. In these riots, whites often murdered and raped blacks, and burned down their homes, churches, and businesses. Among the decimated communities were Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Rosewood, Florida.

The **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921** was one of the most horrendous assaults on a black community in the nation. A young white woman charged that she had been raped in an elevator in a public building by a black youth, who was put in jail. Armed black men, hearing rumors that a white mob had formed to lynch the youth, gathered to guard him. A mob confronted the black men and a riot ensued. By the time the National

Guard arrived, the community had been ravaged: white mobs killed several hundred blacks, looted their homes, and burned down more than 1,200 buildings. Fifty whites were killed, and no members of the mob were charged with crimes.

On New Year's Eve, 1923, a white mob invaded the thriving black community of Rosewood after a white woman named Fannie Taylor falsely accused a black man of attacking her. During the seven days the riot lasted, the mob burned Rosewood to the ground and murdered eight to seventeen people (the actual numbers are not known). Many of the survivors narrowly escaped by hiding in nearby swamps. With help from local whites, they eventually managed to get out of Rosewood. Local law enforcement did not provide protection, and the perpetrators were never punished. Out of fear, the survivors did not attempt to return to Rosewood to reclaim their property, nor did they speak out against the violence against them.

The modern reparations movement occurred simultaneously with the nonviolent activism of the 1950s and 1960s. In 1955, Queen Mother Audley Moore founded the Reparations Committee of Descendants of the United States Slaves. On a Sunday morning in 1962, the committee filed a claim in California, without results. Seven years later, **James Forman**, a member of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** proclaimed his Black Manifesto at the Riverside Church in Manhattan, New York. The manifesto demanded \$500 million from the churches and synagogues and outlined how the money would be used to finance social programs, businesses, education, and other institutions to advance blacks. Surprisingly, the minister of the church was sympathetic. In a radio announcement, he acknowledged the abuses and degradations long suffered by blacks and defended Forman's demand for redress.

Reparations activism increased during the latter half of the twentieth century. The 1980s brought forth critical wins in reparations for other racial groups. For example, in 1980, the Supreme Court ordered the federal government to pay eight Sioux Indian tribes \$122 million to compensate for the illegal seizure of tribal lands (in 1877). In 1988, the United States issued an apology and paid out \$1.25 billion to 60,000 Japanese-Americans who had been forcefully placed into internment camps during World War II. As blacks continued to grapple with state and federal governments for reparations, the wins experienced by other races helped support their cause.

In 1989, Rep. **John Conyers** introduced the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, the first of several reparations bills he proposed to the House of Representatives. None of these bills passed. Also in 1989, Detroit City Council member Ray Jenkins requested \$40 billion in federal education monies to form a fund for black college and trade school students. In *Cato v. United States* (1995), blacks were denied \$100 million in reparations and an apology for slavery. In 1997, President Bill Clinton spoke of the evils of slavery and the need to resolve the effects it had on blacks. In 2000, Rep. Tony Hall proposed bill H.R. 356, which would acknowledge and apologize for slavery. This bill did not pass. In 2002, a former law student filed a federal lawsuit against several American corporations for their involvement in slavery. None of the companies has

yet to pay reparations to blacks, but Aetna did make a formal apology for having insured slaves. Compensation is sought for the profits the companies gained at the expense of enslaved blacks, and for wages not paid to slaves. Many other individuals and organizations, such as the **Nation of Islam** and the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University, have contributed to the struggle for reparations. These groups regularly sponsor conferences and engage in marches to rally support.

Despite the repeated refusal to grant reparations, victims of the Tulsa, Oklahoma riot (1921) and the Rosewood massacre (1923) achieved significant victories in 1994 and 2004. In both of these incidents, white mobs either destroyed or stole property that had belonged to blacks. **White capping** was a common occurrence, particularly in the South and between 1900 and 1929 (Winbush, 48). The practice, which got its name from the white caps the participants wore, involved whites who terrorized and threatened blacks for the purpose of seizing their property. Between 1880 and the 1900s, there were at least 239 occurrences of white capping (Winbush, 49).

In 1997, the Oklahoma Legislature created the **Tulsa Race Riot Commission** to explore recommendations for reparations. In 2002, Tulsa race riot survivors received reparations payments totaling \$28,000. After a two-year legal battle, Florida's Gov. Lawton Chiles approved the Rosewood Claims Bill, which provided more than \$2 million in reparations for the survivors, as well as scholarships for their descendants. This win was an acknowledgement that the state was responsible for not protecting the lives and property of its constituents. Significantly, the Rosewood attorneys partially predicated the lawsuit on cases involving Japanese-Americans and Jewish Holocaust survivors.

Blacks believe reparations, whether in the form of monetary compensation, stock, land, a formal apology, or other actions, are crucial to righting the wrongs committed against—and still affecting—blacks. They argue that some whites unlawfully deprived their ancestors of freedom, life, property, equality, as well as social, economic, and political power, and that atonement is necessary.

The arguments against reparations movements are numerous. Former President Bill Clinton, although he empathized with the horrific history of blacks in America and took on a race relations initiative, commented that too much time had elapsed since slavery, and that the persons culpable for the suffering of blacks no longer existed. In place of reparations, he recommended that the country must come up with remedies to fix the disproportionate hardships experienced by blacks. Other individuals opposed to reparations point to the innumerable programs to alleviate current social problems for blacks and other disadvantaged groups. Clinton also suggested that America should work toward creating a more diverse and racially inclusive democracy. On the other hand, many supporters of reparations are not looking for corrective programs. They argue that programs such as affirmative action have better assisted other groups—not blacks—and do not make amends for the monies owed their ancestors for their slave labor, the indignities and hostilities inflicted on them, or their lost property.

Another prominent opponent is David Horowitz, a conservative author and political commentator who wrote *Uncivil Wars: The Controversy over Reparations for Slavery* (2002). One of his arguments against reparations is that they are racist. Opponents also argue that blacks are better off in America than they would have been in Africa. They also believe that the impoverished and crime-ridden inner cities—not slavery—are the cause of the current plight of blacks and point to the many blacks who have done well in America. Other popular arguments include the point that a reparations plan would be too expensive, and that slavery, though horrendous, was sanctioned, and, therefore, amends cannot legally be made.

Reparations adherents believe that expiations are more than reasonable and justifiable. They assert that the concept is not racist, and that reparations will actually help relieve the disillusionment many blacks feel toward the United States, and the feeling that America exhibits enmity toward them. They also point to the conditions of slavery that caused the so-called modern-day ills, such as broken families and poverty. They believe that life under **Jim Crow**, where blacks were denied the access, opportunities, and resources to better themselves, continues to affect them today, and that successful blacks make up only a small percentage of the population. Although slavery was legal, reparations activists claim that since Reconstruction, many whites have violated federal ordinances, such as the **Fourteenth Amendment**, to secure control over blacks.

Reparations proponents look to other groups and their causes to strengthen their arguments. For example, Holocaust survivors received reparations despite laws that enforced discrimination against Jews, and tort laws permit individuals who have been harmed by toxic waste to seek out compensation for medical care costs, lost wages, and pain and suffering, even if the exposure originated from an incident that occurred over 100 years ago. The recent triumphs of the Rosewood and Tulsa race riot survivors are two poignant cases in point. Reparations activists celebrated when, after many years of blatant, unrepentant, and uncensored crimes against blacks, the authorities finally acknowledged responsibility and made amends to the victims. *See also* Poverty.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### Returning Soldiers (World War I)

Having fought for democracy abroad, black soldiers returning from service in World War I hoped that their participation in the war effort would mean better treatment and more respect for African American rights at home. Black soldiers thus became a metaphor for these rising expectations and helped spur within the African American community the civic engagement, political militancy, and sociocultural activities that marked the New Negro renaissance between 1918 and the Great Depression. Northern

migrants and southern debt peons alike contributed 2.3 million African American men who registered for the draft. About 370,000 eventually served in all military branches, 200,000 overseas, mostly as stevedores and laborers, and 42,000 in combat duty.

**W.E.B. Du Bois** urged African Americans to “close ranks” (1918) in supporting the U.S. war effort while simultaneously pushing for the establishment of a training camp for black officers at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Domestically, the racist film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the presidency of segregationist Woodrow Wilson, and the mistreatment of black military enlistees was partially offset when some white American soldiers praised black military bravery and the French celebrated African American heroism by awarding one of the four black regiments, New York’s 369th (the “Harlem Hellfighters,” the longest-serving U.S. regiment), the Croix de Guerre.

Soldiers returned, in the words of Du Bois in the May 1918 issue of *Crisis* magazine, “fighting,” demanding that the United States “Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.” They were instead greeted by escalating race violence. Some soldiers were lynched for wearing their uniforms. **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** membership soared. African Americans—including many combat-trained veterans—fought back, literally and figuratively. The flood of northward migration momentarily slowed, then exploded. A decade-long explosion of activism included demands for southern voting rights and anti-segregation legislation, Pan-Africanism, anti-lynching campaigns, and the birth of the “Jazz Age,” led by the 369th Regiment’s band and its leader, James Reese Europe. *See also* Racism.

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Gregory E. Carr

### Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) was a militant organization founded in the 1960s by Max Stanford (also known as Muhammad Ahmad). RAM was notorious for its reputed role in the conspiracies to assassinate civil rights leaders and in the ghetto riots of the 1960s.

Stanford fashioned RAM from an amalgam of the philosophies endorsed by **Malcolm X (Black Nationalism)**, **Robert F. Williams (black self-defense)**, and Queen Mother Audley Moore (Marxism). RAM recruited youth from within black ghettos, prisoners, and ex-convicts as members. It influenced blacks who had rejected the nonviolent methodology and integrationism of the original **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, and supported the rise of like-minded militant organizations such as the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**, the Black Liberation Army, and the League of Revolutionary Black

Workers. Stanford himself cofounded the African Liberation Support Committee and was instrumental in the struggle for **reparations**.

The violent orientation of RAM made it a target of the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, which infiltrated the organization with its agents. In 1967, Stanford and several other members were arrested for allegedly plotting to assassinate several civil rights leaders. RAM claimed that the charges were never substantiated. RAM was also accused of plotting the violent rebellions within the nation's ghettos. Despite the fact that **Roy Wilkins** was one of the reputed targets of RAM's assassination plot, he stated in its defense that the riots were the independent responses of poor blacks who felt "abandoned by his government and his country" and "isolated, of no importance in the United States" (Wilkins, 324–326).

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### **Richardson, George (dates unknown)**

George Richardson was an African American handyman whose arrest for the alleged rape of a white woman precipitated a series of events that led to the deadly **Springfield (Illinois) Race Riot of 1908**.

The 1908 Springfield riot was one of the worst to occur in the Midwest during the first decade of the twentieth century. On August 14, 1908, Mabel Hallam, the wife of a streetcar conductor, claimed that Richardson had raped her. On the evening of August 14, Richardson and another black man were arrested. Fearing for the safety of his prisoners, Sheriff Charles Werner, assisted by restaurant owner Harry Loper, removed them from jail and safely transported them to Bloomington. Enraged, a **white mob** attacked Loper's restaurant, destroying the building and the car used to drive Richardson and the other man out of town. The mob then invaded Springfield's black neighborhood, beating its residents and destroying its homes and businesses. One older black man who had been married to a white woman for over thirty years was lynched in a tree across the street from his house (see **Lynching**).

On August 15, Illinois Gov. Charles S. Deneen sent some 4,000 troops to restore calm, but they were slow to arrive. By the next day, eight blacks were dead, and seventy people, both black and white, were injured; the neighborhood was destroyed, and thousands of blacks had fled Springfield. Although no rioters were arrested, the violence embarrassed the white community because of the negative attention the riot brought the city. For this, whites blamed the black community. Several months later, Mabel Hallam admitted that she had falsely accused Richardson and had instead been beaten by a white man; George Richardson was then released from jail. In 1909, black and white activists met in New York to protest the Springfield riots. The meeting resulted in the founding of a new civil rights



organization, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. See also Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

*Further Reading:* Senechal, Roberta. *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

*Paulina X. Ruf*

### **Rochester (New York) Riot of 1964**

Like many race riots, the single cause of the one in Rochester, New York, on July 24–26, 1964, is not fully clear because the riot was a response to a larger set of issues and situations that were building. The conditions leading up to the weekend of rioting can shed light on the building tensions in the western portion of New York State. At the time, Rochester boasted the lowest unemployment rate for both blacks and whites in New York State, but many blacks felt disenfranchised with respect to their education and place within the economy.

In the decade and a half preceding the riot, there was a population explosion within Rochester's minority community. According to the 1950 census, there were 8,247 non-whites by 1960; that figure more than tripled to 25,067 residents. The population increase can be attributed to the settling of migrant workers and the arrival of professionally trained blacks to work at the city's industries (e.g., Bausch and Lomb, Eastman Kodak, and Xerox).

**Integration** of the new residents within the community did not occur. Residential **segregation** was vast. The housing discrimination against blacks was without regard to economic status or educational background. The 1955 census gives a picture of the socioeconomic situation within the black community. The census found that 56.9 percent of employed black men and 63.4 percent of working black women were classified as domestic workers, service workers, or unskilled laborers. Meanwhile, less than 11 percent of white men and 17 percent of white women were in the same positions.

With the influx of new black residents to Rochester, the education system became *de facto* segregated. Thirty percent of the public schools were predominantly black. By May 1962, the New York Chapter of **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** filed a desegregation lawsuit on behalf of twenty parents. Interestingly, this was the first legal action against school segregation that was taken up by parents of both races.

Finally, in the years leading up to the Rochester riot, as was the case in many other cities around the country, there were a number of **police brutality** allegations within the black community. As a result of the allegations, the NAACP and the police department investigated; however, the police would not publish their report.

The tensions brewing in Rochester led to a confrontation late Friday, July 24, 1964. Police were called to pacify an inebriated black man who was reportedly causing a disturbance at a street dance in Rochester's Seventh Ward. When the police arrived, they were surrounded by those attending

the dance. Bottles were thrown, the crowd grew, and every policeman in the city was called to the area. The crowd outnumbered the police and looting ensued. White businesses, even those that served the black community, were pillaged. Around 2:00 A.M., as white Rochester residents heard reports of the rioting, they began to amass in the area. The police stood between the two groups and, by 4:00 A.M., used fire hoses to break up the crowds. On Saturday morning, the city manager declared a state of emergency.

Black community leaders responded Saturday morning by calling for calm, but they were not successful. The violence continued that evening. An 8:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. curfew was imposed throughout the city and the county went dry for five days. Despite the curfew, the rioting continued, shots were fired into the air, rocks and bottles were thrown, and police reacted by using tear gas. By Sunday, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered 250 National Guard troops to subdue the rioters. They were successful. In the end, the rioting in Rochester took place over approximately sixty hours, resulted in 4 deaths, some 350 injuries, more than 800 arrests (both black and white), and property damage costing more than \$1 million.

By November 1964, Edward Rutledge, executive director of the National Commission Against Discrimination in Housing criticized Rochester for not conducting a public hearing or investigation on the social causes of the riots. As a result, by March 1965, Mayor Frank T. Lamb and Rev. St. Julian A. Simpkins, Jr., announced the formation of a new committee designed to promote interracial understanding. The committee was designed after Cincinnati's Friendly Relations Committee (later the Cincinnati Human Relations Committee) that was started after the **Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943**.

However, perhaps the most important outcome of Rochester's race riots was bringing together the black community and giving them a voice. After the riots, the Board of Urban Ministry (BUM), an assembly of Rochester's Protestant clergy, encouraged black religious leaders to organize the community. The ministers decided to invite the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** to help organize the black religious community. The SCLC declined and suggested that the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in Chicago be consulted.

As a result, a new community-based black-activist organization formed FIGHT (freedom, integration, god, honor, today; the "I" later changed to "independence"). FIGHT allowed Rochester's black community to speak for themselves on issues of civil rights. White civil rights supporters formed a sister organization, Friends of FIGHT (later Metro Act) to support the movement. FIGHT is best known for taking on Eastman Kodak and demanding that the company implement a job training program and hire 500 to 600 members of the black community. FIGHT was responsible for placing over 700 people in jobs by 1967. *See also* Civil Rights Movement.

**Further Reading:** *July '64*. Directed by Carvin Eison. Produced and written by Chris Christopher. Rochester, NY: ImageWordSound, Independent Television Service (ITVS), National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), and WXXI-TV, 2004; Papers on the Rochester Race Riots are available at the University of Rochester Rush

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*Noah D. Drezner*

### **Roosevelt, Eleanor (1884–1962)**

Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), was a strong supporter of African American civil rights both during and after her husband's presidency.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was born in New York City on October 11, 1884, to Elliott Roosevelt and Anna Eleanor Hall, and had two younger brothers. The Roosevelt family was one of wealth and family lineage, yet not immune to marital tensions and alcohol abuse. After the death of her parents, a ten-year-old Eleanor went to live with her maternal grandmother. In 1899, Eleanor was sent away to the Allenswood Academy in London, where her liberal views flourished. In 1902, she returned to New York, where she joined the National Consumers League and volunteered as a teacher. That summer, she would be reintroduced to her distant cousin, Franklin Roosevelt. After a year of secret courtship, they became engaged on November 22, 1903. The couple was married on March 17, 1905. Her uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt, gave the bride, his favorite niece, away.

Within a year, Eleanor gave birth to Anna, followed closely by James, Franklin (who died at birth), Elliott, Franklin, and John. In 1908, FDR's mother gave the young family a townhouse, right next door to her own, in New York City. In 1911, when her husband was elected to the New York state senate, Eleanor eagerly agreed to move the family to Albany where she would not be under the close scrutiny of her mother-in-law. Two years later, Franklin joined Woodrow Wilson's administration and the family moved to Washington. In the years to follow, Eleanor became more independent and politically astute, stepping outside tradition and taking on a more public political role. In 1920, the family returned to New York.

Not satisfied with tea parties and luncheons, she joined the Women's Division of the Democratic State Committee and the New York chapters of the Women's Trade Union League and the League of Women Voters. After Eleanor discovered Franklin's affair with her social secretary, their marriage became one of professional collaboration and both sought support outside their marriage (PBS Online 1999). In March 1933, Eleanor accompanied her husband, who had been governor of New York, to the White House, not knowing that she would become the longest serving First Lady of the United States.

Throughout her husband's presidency, Eleanor was a vocal supporter of the American **civil rights movement** and of African American rights. She supported the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and joined local chapters of the NAACP and the **National Urban League**, becoming the first white Washington, D.C., resident to do so. Before the 1936 election, Franklin finally allowed her to address the NAACP and National Urban League annual conventions. After the election, she increased her activism, supporting **anti-lynching** legislation and



Eleanor Roosevelt and Roy Wilkins. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

convening the National Conference of Negro Women at the White House. When opera singer Marian Anderson was not allowed to perform at Washington's Constitutional Hall, which was owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution, because she was black, Eleanor arranged her performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial with over 70,000 in attendance, and resigned her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Despite these efforts, after the 1943 **Detroit** race riots, the *Jackson Daily News*, a Mississippi newspaper, blamed the riots on Eleanor's efforts toward social equality, suggesting that the riots were the result of an attempt to put into practice what she advocated. After her husband's death and the end of World War II, she played a significant role in the formulation of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She continued to write and remained politically active until her death on November 7, 1962. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was buried next to her husband in New York on November 10, 1962.

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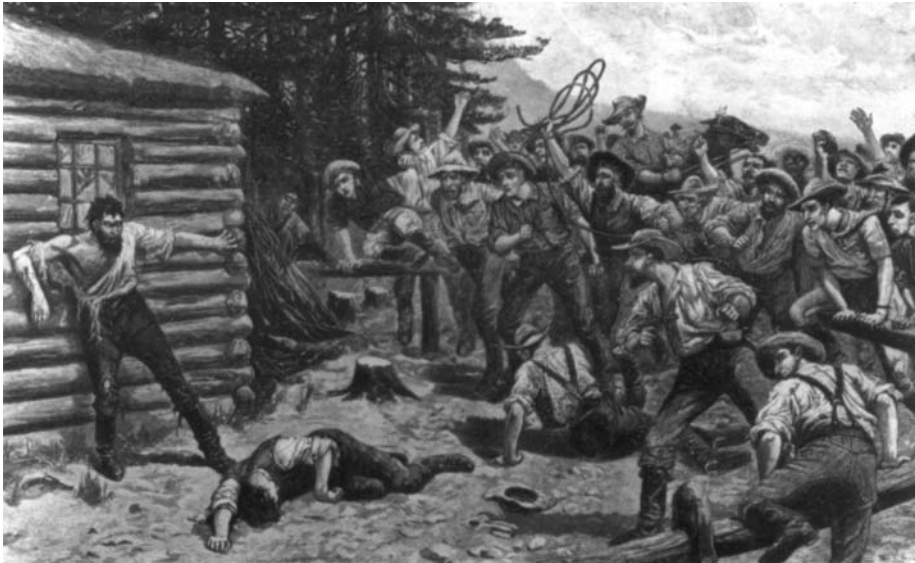
*Paulina X. Ruf*

***Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch (White, 1929)***

Published in 1929, **Walter White's** *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch* was praised by **James Weldon Johnson** as the most comprehensive and authoritative treatise on **lynching** to date. Building on the important work of anti-lynching crusader **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, *Rope and Faggot* explores the social, political, and economic motives behind lynching. According to White, less than 30 percent of African American men lynched in the South were actually accused of sexually assaulting white women. More often than not, lynching was used as a means of intimidation, as an attempt to control black labor. *Rope and Faggot* publicized these and other harsh truths about the phenomenon of lynching.

Walter White first experienced the dark, violent side of human nature at the tender age of thirteen during the Atlanta race riots (see **Atlanta [Georgia] Riot of 1906**). In his autobiography, *A Man Called White* (1948), White admits to being too naïve to fully appreciate the ramifications of the mounting racial tension that preceded the riots. He recalls reading the inflammatory headlines in the local newspapers, which fuelled the flames of racial hatred with their accounts of alleged rapes and other crimes committed by African Americans. Barricaded inside his home while an angry **white mob** marched through his neighborhood, White was enlightened to the fact that he belonged to a race condemned to suffering and abuse for no less a reason than the pigmentation of their skin. Yet, even as a boy, White recognized the inexplicable—that his skin was as white as the skin of those who sought to destroy him. With his blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin, Walter White could have aligned himself with the dominant race. Instead, White chose to use his fair complexion to investigate crimes committed against members of his own race.

While working undercover for the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, White investigated more than thirty lynchings and eight race riots, the facts of which would later be published in *Rope and Faggot*. Within two weeks of joining the NAACP, White requested permission to investigate the lynching of an African American sharecropper in Tennessee named Jim McIlherron. The trepidation White felt as he embarked on his first planned attempt to pass as a white man was intensified by his knowledge of the severity of the penalty for such a trespass should he be caught. By feigning first ignorance of, and then a lack of interest in, the lynching, White successfully entrusted himself to the guilty parties. Boasting of more exciting lynchings, White was able to goad the participants into revealing the exact details of the murder. Despite the harrowing nature of this experience, White continued to pass for white in an attempt to expose the magnitude and severity of the lynching epidemic in the South. He even went so far as to infiltrate the most notorious white supremacist organization, the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. Although his deception was eventually discovered and his life threatened, White was nonetheless successful in obtaining incriminating evidence against the Klan. With the assistance of an ex-Klan member, White was able to confirm the Klan's involvement in a triple lynching in South Carolina. Ironically, when it



"Judge Lynch" California Vigilants, 1848. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

was revealed how he obtained the pertinent information, it was White who was threatened with prosecution. The culmination of more than a decade of hands-on research, *Rope and Faggot* was the first full-length indictment of lynching of its time. Through *Rope and Faggot*, Walter White hoped to expose the barbarity of lynching and to sway public opinion against the perpetrators of such heinous crimes.

**Further Readings:** Janken, Kenneth Robert. *White: The Biography of Walter White, Mr. NAACP*. New York: The New Press, 2003; White, Walter. *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White*. New York: Viking Press, 1948; White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot*. New York: Arno Press, 1969.

*Carol Goodman*

### **Rosewood (1997)**

*Rosewood* is a riveting historical drama based on the true account of white rioting in the small black community of **Rosewood**, Florida, in 1923. Although debuted in 1997, the impetus for the movie began fifteen years prior with Gary Moore's article in the *St. Petersburg Times*. His article first exposed the public to the horrifying events that transpired in Rosewood. Shortly thereafter, the television news program *60 Minutes* aired a report featuring a few of the survivors and *Esquire Magazine* also featured an article on the tragedy. Attempts to produce a movie failed until 1994 when John Singleton, who received a 1991 Oscar nomination for *Boyz N the Hood*, accepted Peters Entertainment's offer to make *Rosewood*. Singleton interviewed a few of the survivors and enlisted Wynton Marsalis to compose the music, Gregory Poirer to write the screenplay, and assembled a remarkable cast.

The movie begins with a camera shot high above the town of Rosewood; the camera then pans across the various homes, a Mason hall, children happily playing, and a lush vegetable garden. Singleton casts the film in streaming golden sunlight, echoing the tranquility of the town and its people. Sarah Carrier (Esther Rolle), a resident, calls Rosewood “heaven on earth.” Rosewood is one of numerous towns established by blacks.

Singleton depicts most of the individuals from the real-life Rosewood in his film. John Wright (Jon Voigt) owns a store in Rosewood. He is instrumental later in defending blacks against the **white mobs** from Sumner, a nearby white town. Sylvester Carrier (Don Cheadle) and his family are also portrayed. A fictional character, Mann, a World War I veteran, rides into town, looking to settle down. His budding love with the town’s schoolteacher, Miss Scrappie (Elsie Neal), will soon be disrupted.

Singleton adroitly portrays two worlds. Blacks control and maintain one world, where they exhibit mutual respect and camaraderie. Whites dominate the nearby town, Sumner. Outside of Rosewood, blacks must wear the masks of inferiority. Bound to the rules of **racial etiquette**, the elderly Sarah Carrier refers to a white man as “Mr. Taylor,” while he calls her by her first name. His wife calls her “Aunt Sarah.” At an auction, Mann (Ving Rhames), the hero of this tale, and other blacks, are forced to stand in the back or off to the side. Whites scoff when Mann wins a bid for five acres of land. Racial tensions shade nearly every encounter. Even in the halcyon quiet of Rosewood, blacks are not exempt from feelings of hostility toward whites.

The film takes a catastrophic turn when a white woman, Fannie Taylor (Catherine Kellner), accuses a black man of beating her. The real perpetrator is a white man with whom she is having an affair. Whites retaliate by obliterating Rosewood, murdering innocent blacks, and hunting down survivors in the swamps. Mann evades death and rescues a few women and children. The movie ends with Rosewood—which had epitomized a refuge from **racism**, inhibiting laws, and violence—ablaze in flames.

Critics applauded Singleton for *Rosewood*. They also criticized it, mostly because Singleton strayed from the facts of the incident and omitted the detail that survivors and their descendants received **reparations** in 1994. The movie was not a success at the box office. Nevertheless, *Rosewood’s* significance surpasses its flaws. It not only shows the prosperity of a town created by blacks, it brings national attention to the victims of racial violence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Rosewood (Florida) Riot of 1923**

The town of Rosewood, Florida, which had previously seen little racial conflict, erupted in racially motivated violence in January 1923. An accusation from a white woman from a nearby town about an assault by a black man caused Rosewood to experience mob behavior, collective amnesia, and

many years later produced a movie and debate over reparations to the families of the Rosewood victims.

The town, now nonexistent, was located in Levy County on the western coast of the state of Florida, forty miles west of Gainesville, and nine miles east of Cedar Key. By 1923, Rosewood was comprised of approximately 120 to 150 residents, most of whom were African American. The small town consisted of approximately thirty homes, which were mostly small shanty shacks, a post office, a hotel, and a few small businesses, a school, a few churches, a Masonic lodge, a railroad depot, and a sawmill. One of the small businesses was a general store that was operated by the town's only white resident, John Wright.

The town received its name for the area's abundance of trees that were highly valued for furniture. When the trees had been exhausted, mill operations were moved from Rosewood to the predominantly white community of nearby Sumner, and many of the residents of Rosewood found work at the Sumner mill. The men who continued to work in Rosewood were primarily farmers, hunters, and trappers. The women of Rosewood often found work as domestic laborers for the white families of Sumner. According to reports, there had been a generally harmonious relationship between the blacks and whites of the area until January 1, 1923.

With the new year came an unusually cold spell of weather, causing frost to accumulate on the palmettos that covered the area. Although it was New Year's Day, the mill at Sumner continued to operate and the mill workers from Rosewood made their normal three-mile walk to their workplace. James Taylor, a white mill worker, was on the job at the mill that day, having left his young housewife, Fannie, and their two children at home. At one point that morning, Fannie came running out of the Taylor home, crying and shrieking that she had been assaulted, perhaps sexually, by an unidentified black man. Fannie Taylor told her neighbors of the attack and produced visible bruises, such as a bleeding mouth, as a confirmation of her story and was taken to a neighbor's house when she became faint. Several of Sumner's citizens gathered outside of the house and quickly spread the word of the attack. The white community became extremely angry and set out to find the perpetrator of this act. Although the young housewife was obviously assaulted by someone, no examination was ever performed on Taylor by a physician.

The black community, however, had a different version of the story. On hearing the accounts of the alleged attack, Sarah Carrier, a housekeeper for Mrs. Taylor, and her granddaughter both claimed that an unidentified white man visited Taylor at her home that morning. They believed that she and this unknown person were secretly having a romantic affair, and that morning they got into an argument and he physically assaulted her.

A group of white men from the Sumner area embarked on a hunt for the black man they believed was responsible for the attack. Robert Elias "Rob" Walker, the Levy County sheriff, had reported that an escapee from a prison work crew named Jesse Hunter was being sought and this person became the key suspect. The sheriff brought in tracking dogs and the trail was followed to Rosewood.



Aaron Carrier, a black resident from Rosewood, and a veteran of World War I, was questioned and coerced into providing information about the whereabouts of Jesse Hunter, the alleged attacker. After being tied to the back of a car and dragged, Carrier stated that Sam Carter, a local blacksmith, might be responsible for hiding the assailant. Carrier was delivered to a jail in Bronson, Florida, for his protection, and was later removed from the area. The bloodhounds carried the angry mob to Sam Carter's house. The whites became convinced that Carter was guilty of hiding the fugitive from the authorities. Carter, who was not at home, was found at a relative's house and abducted. The posse strung up Carter over a tree limb to get him to tell them where he hid the culprit.

Ernest Parham, a white citizen and an employee of the general store, later claimed that he implored the mob to release Carter, which they did. The posse began to cut him with knives to force him to give information as to where the wanted man was left by Carter. Seriously wounded by the knife cuts and beatings, Carter led the group to a place where he claimed to have left Hunter. The dogs failed to pick up a scent, however, and Carter was unexpectedly shot in the face and killed by one of the members of the mob. Authorities found Carter's mutilated body the next day. From reports, it seems possible that neither Sheriff Walker nor his deputy Clarence Williams were aware of this vigilante squad.

Three days had passed since Fannie Taylor made the accusations when the Sumner residents heard that Hunter was in Rosewood, in the care of a man named Sylvester Carrier, known locally as "man." Carrier was a large man who had an intense anger toward whites in the area. A mob of white men went to Carrier's residence that night, broke into the home, and was met with gunfire from Carrier. Two of the members of the mob, C.P. Wilkerson and Henry "Boots" Andrews, were killed when they tried to enter the residence; the other members of the party retreated from the house. Gunfire resumed by both groups, however, and Sarah Carrier was killed in the gunfight. The children in the house, who had been moved upstairs for protection, retreated into the woods with adult relatives. Sylvester Carrier was reportedly killed in the exchange of gunfire; however, some reports say that the person believed to be Carrier was actually someone else and that Carrier left that night and moved away from Rosewood. This version was believed by many, as it was claimed that Carrier sent cards and letters to Rosewood families years after the incident.

The violence increased the following day as people from other North Florida towns and cities such as Gainesville and Jacksonville, and even some people from towns in South Georgia, came to observe the situation playing out in Rosewood. It appears that they also came prepared to participate, if possible. Ailing widow Lexie Gordon was killed and her house was set ablaze, Mingo Adams was shot by an angry mob north of town, and James Carrier, who had been rescued from the swamp, was killed after being forced to dig his own grave.

Seeing the situation escalate, some whites from Sumner came to the aid of the blacks, hiding them and arranging for safe passage from the area. Two white conductors from Cedar Key, on hearing of the carnage in

Rosewood, sent railcars into the area to transport blacks. Only women and children were allowed to take the train ride because hauling the male passengers would be too risky for the conductors and crew as well as the women and children. The general store owner, John Wright, also hid several of the blacks in his expansive home until they could be rescued by the train and relocated to Gainesville. Homes in Rosewood were burned to the ground, but Wright's house was passed over since he was the only white resident in the town.

After five days, the racial violence sparked by Fannie Taylor's accusations in the small town of Rosewood ended. The remaining residents eventually moved away when the sawmill in Sumner burned and relocated to Pasco County. Rosewood survivors moved to Jacksonville, Miami, or out-of-state locales.

A special grand jury was convened on January 29, 1923, in Bronson at the request of Gov. Cary Hardee to investigate the incident at Rosewood. The grand jury found no evidence of criminal activity by law enforcement officials in the handling of the situation. Charges were never brought against any of the people who were involved in the Rosewood killings, participated in arson, or were a party to the alleged assault against Taylor. There are no records of the grand jury proceedings, except for descriptions that were given in local newspapers.

Newspapers, not only in Florida but those across the nation, reported the events of the Rosewood melee. For the most part, the issue left the public eye until 1982, when a journalist named Gary Moore investigated the history of the Rosewood situation and reported on it in a local publication called *The Floridian*, a magazine supplement for the *St. Petersburg Times* newspaper. The article gained national attention and, in 1983, CBS aired a segment of its *60 Minutes* news program on the events in Rosewood in 1923.

In 1993, largely due to the work of Arnett Doctor, a descendant of Rosewood survivor Philomena Goins, the matter appeared before the Florida state legislature in an attempt to recognize the event and to consider compensation to the families of the victims. As a result of House and Senate bills, an investigation was promulgated and a research team of scholars from three state universities, the University of Florida, Florida State University, and Florida A&M, were commissioned to provide additional information about the events. Issues were raised about possible reparations to the families of the Rosewood victims and connections were made between other complaints that ended up providing reparations, especially in the case of the evacuation and displacement of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Since both cases involved relocation without the ability to return to their homes (in the Rosewood situation, they were unable to return due to fear), the fact that law enforcement at the time did little to fully investigate the situation or arrest those responsible, and due to the failure of the legal system to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of the violence, awards in the amount of \$220 to \$450,000 were given to 172 Rosewood survivors for emotional trauma. Also, funds were provided for demonstrated property loss as a result of the massacre. In addition, the Rosewood Bill required an investigation into any possible surviving perpetrators to consider criminal proceedings; this investigation occurred and there were no survivors

located. The last provision of the bill was to provide a state university scholarship for the Rosewood descendants.

In 1996, a book about the incident titled *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood*, was published. It was followed by a movie version simply titled *Rosewood* that was released by Warner Brothers Motion Pictures in 1997. Many Americans who had never heard the story of a southern town that was wiped out because of racially motivated behavior that left several dead, many traumatized, and many more displaced, were stunned to learn of the event. The lives of those involved with the so-called massacre and their descendants would forever be changed as a result of the events in Rosewood, Florida, on New Year's Day in 1923.

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*Leonard A. Steverson*

## Rumors

A rumor is a statement, usually unsupported by specific evidence, often exaggerated, that is widely repeated and discussed. Rumors have played critical roles in American race riots, even if their existence, effects, and meanings have generated important differences of opinion among scholars.

Most race riots can be traced not just to initiating events, but also to rumors—the varying accounts of the event that participants and bystanders, as well as those with no firsthand knowledge of the events in question, spread throughout the city or town. A race riot in **Houston**, Texas, in 1917 was sparked by two inaccurate rumors that surfaced after a black soldier, Charles Baltimore, was beaten and taken into custody by a white police officer. As Baltimore tried to escape, the police officer shot at him several times. A rumor began to spread that a black soldier had been killed, but Baltimore was actually still alive. The idea that one of their own men had been murdered made the rest of Baltimore's battalion want to retaliate. With the black troops already up in arms, another rumor surfaced that a white mob was coming to attack the black troops. Violence pervaded Houston as the black troops marched on the city. Over a dozen people were killed in just a few short hours.

The 1919 **Chicago** race riot began after large crowds of whites and blacks witnessed the murder of Eugene Williams. However, within hours of the event, rumors of far more extensive violence swept the city. In one case, the black-owned *Chicago Defender* alleged that a **white mob** had cut off a black woman's breasts (August 2, 1919). Both white-owned and black-owned newspapers printed stories, based on rumors, in which babies had been slaughtered by mobs of the other race.

Perhaps the best-documented single instance of a rumor inciting racial violence occurred in the 1943 **Detroit** race riot, in which a black man, after fighting with white youths at Detroit's Belle Isle park, made his way to a nightclub popular with African Americans, took the stage holding a briefcase, claimed he was a police officer, and told the crowd that white youths had thrown a black mother and baby off a bridge.

Finding that a pattern of rumors fuels race riots is perhaps not surprising. A riot is, by definition, a breakdown of public order, and a critical element in public order is the generation and dissemination of verifiable information. If a news reporter is unable to respond to a riot call until the riot is well underway, for example, that reporter may witness hundreds of people engaged in violent acts, but be essentially unable to get reliable information on how the melee began. However, this distance between verifiable information and rumor has caused no end of debate, not only for those individuals and communities who participated in and were victimized in race riots, but also for contemporary observers and scholars. Especially in the twentieth and twenty-first-century North, white and black commentators such as Terry Ann Knopf (*Rumors, Race, and Riots*, 1975) and Gary Alan Fine and Patricia A. Turner (*Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*, 2001) writing about race riots have linked the prevalence of rumors in riots to the irrationality of mobs. By contrast, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rumor often provided more direct justification for racial violence. In 1741, in New York, rumors claiming that slaves had set a series of fires in preparation for a large-scale revolt led to the arrest and forced confession—through torture—of 200 enslaved Africans. Today, historians dispute whether or not the conspiracy even existed. At the height of **lynching** in the United States, roughly 1880–1930, lynchings themselves would be cloaked in secrecy by white law officers, newspaper editors, and other elites by claims that the upcoming event was only a rumor being spread by shadowy figures. That newspaper accounts of these “rumors” mentioned committees appointed to oversee local arrangements for the events, attended by hundreds of white onlookers, only heightens the contrast between official denials of knowledge and rumors.

Rumors have been particularly problematic for scholars of riots as well. In attempting to understand rumor, scholars of riots have paid much attention to theories on the behavior of crowds. Some historians argue that, in the premodern period, crowds gathered and acted to enforce community norms against, for example, merchants believed to be hoarding foodstuffs in difficult economic times. In these cases, rumors serve as a kind of popular check on elite power. Scholars of race riots have, with good reason, avoided claiming any kind of rationality behind the rumors that fuel racial violence. Instead, many have argued, crowds or mobs in race riots behave in inherently irrational ways; charismatic leaders goad the crowd into increasingly violent acts, and participants in mobs lose their inhibitions against violent behavior because the mob itself undermines a sense of personal responsibility for one's actions. This dynamic, however, raises an important problem. On the one hand, scholarly consensus is that race riots occur as a result of tensions caused by real social, cultural, economic, and political changes. On

the other, if fictitious information and exaggerated rumors cause and exacerbate riots themselves, how can we connect rumors with the reality of racism? *See also* Police Brutality; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Jonathan S. Coit*

# S

## **Sainte Genevieve (Missouri) Riot of 1930**

The Sainte Genevieve (Missouri) Race Riot was a four-day racial disturbance occurring between October 12 and 15, 1930, during which mobs of armed white vigilantes drove nearly all of the black residents from this small Mississippi River town, including several families whose ancestors had lived there for more than a century. The mob's action irrevocably changed the racial composition of the town and almost completely destroyed its long-standing African American community. Except for the double murder that triggered the unrest, no bloodshed or property destruction actually occurred during this incident, which might be more accurately described as a "near riot" or "averted riot." Nonetheless, **white mobs** succeeded in using racial terrorism, intimidation, and threats of violence to decimate Sainte Genevieve's African American population and to reinforce the community's traditional racial hierarchy.

Founded around 1750, Sainte Genevieve was one of the first French colonial outposts west of the Mississippi River; today it holds the distinction of being Missouri's oldest permanent white settlement. In 1930, on the eve of the riot, Sainte Genevieve was a lime-mining and agricultural center with a population of 2,658 residents, the overwhelming majority of whom were white Roman Catholics. Many of the town's adult male residents worked for one of the four lime-mining companies in the area, one of several stone quarries, or for the Missouri-Illinois Railroad, which maintained a roundhouse and shop just north of town. Approximately 160 African American residents also lived in the town, with an almost equal number scattered throughout the surrounding county. Race relations in Sainte Genevieve were complicated by the fact that, at the time, two distinct black communities actually existed within the town. One group consisted of approximately seventy longtime residents. Many of them were descended from Sainte Genevieve County slaves and free people of color, some of whom were of mixed French and African heritage. The other group consisted of about ninety southern migrants, chiefly from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, who had arrived during the mid-1920s to work in the local lime

mines and rock quarries. Most of these newcomers were Protestants, owned little or no property, and lived in a shantytown called the Shacks or in mining camps on the outskirts of town. Apparently, the two black communities seldom interacted.

The trouble that precipitated the four-day Sainte Genevieve race riot began on Saturday night, October 11, 1930, when two white lime kiln workers named Harry Panchot and Paul Ritter attended a black dance at the Shacks. At around 12:50 A.M., as the dance broke up, three black migrants—a quarry worker named Lonnie Taylor, originally from Tennessee; Columbus Jennings, a Mississippi native and also a quarryman; and Vera Rogers, from nearby Crystal City, Missouri—offered Panchot and Ritter \$1.50 to drive them to a craps game at a boat landing located two miles north of town. According to Ritter, when the group arrived, the two black men drew .38-caliber revolvers, ordered them out of the automobile, and then robbed them of \$45 in cash and a pocket watch. After collecting their valuables, Taylor fatally shot Panchot in the chest at point-blank range and then fired once at Ritter, wounding him in the abdomen. The bullet lodged in Ritter's spine, paralyzing him below the waist. Taylor and Jennings then dragged the white men to the edge of the riverbank and heaved them into the Mississippi River. The frigid water revived the unconscious Ritter, and, after realizing he was still alive, Taylor and Jennings hurled rocks at the wounded man, one of which fractured his skull. Thirty minutes later, federal prohibition agents, who were guarding a confiscated bootlegger's boat nearby, heard Ritter's cries for help. They rescued him and recovered Panchot's body from the river. Ritter was rushed by ambulance to St. Anthony's Hospital in St. Louis, where he was diagnosed to be in critical condition.

Within hours of the shootings, Sainte Genevieve County Sheriff Louis Ziegler and his deputies launched an intense manhunt for the alleged murderers. They soon arrested Taylor, Jennings, and Rogers, whom several witnesses had seen leaving the dance in Ritter's automobile. Meanwhile, news of Panchot's murder and Ritter's wounding spread throughout the town and the surrounding countryside. As Sunday Mass let out at the Sainte Genevieve Catholic Church, a crowd of more than 500 people assembled at the courthouse to await news of the ongoing investigation. Inside the courthouse, after more than four hours of intense questioning, Jennings and Rogers confessed to being at the boat landing the previous night. They both denied taking part in the shooting, and claimed that Taylor was the actual triggerman. Confronted with his accomplices' signed statements, Taylor confessed to shooting the two white men, but stated that he had done so in self-defense. He had shot the men, he told authorities, during a fistfight that broke out after Ritter insulted Rogers by offering her 50¢ to have sex with him. What actually transpired will probably forever remain a mystery, but after wringing confessions from the three prisoners, Sheriff Ziegler and two deputies whisked them away to Hillsboro, Missouri, located forty miles to the northwest, to prevent them from being lynched by the angry crowd gathered outside.

That Sunday night, armed bands of white men in automobiles visited the black districts in Sainte Genevieve and the outlying districts and warned

black residents to leave town by 5:00 P.M. the next day, or else face serious reprisals. These self-appointed vigilantes, some of whom a St. Louis newspaper claimed belonged to the Knights of Columbus, made no distinction between longtime residents and recent newcomers; all African Americans, regardless of family background or social status, were banished from Sainte Genevieve. On Monday morning, October 13, the exodus began, and throughout the day, more than 200 terrified black residents fled the town and the surrounding area. Sheriff Ziegler, fearing possible mob violence, telephoned Missouri's Gov. Henry S. Caulfield to request the assistance of the National Guard in maintaining the peace during the mass exodus. Acting on the sheriff's request, the governor dispatched Companies M and H of the 140th Infantry from the towns of Festus and DeSoto, thirty miles and forty miles, respectively, to the northwest, to restore order in Sainte Genevieve and prevent any further disturbances. Approximately ninety national guardsmen arrived in Sainte Genevieve that evening, set up machine guns around the courthouse and on the roof of the City Hotel, and patrolled the town. By nightfall, only three black families remained in Sainte Genevieve, at least one of which sought protection with Fr. Charles Van Tourenhout, pastor of the local Catholic church.

On Tuesday afternoon, October 14, the National Guard withdrew from a quiet Sainte Genevieve. But when the second shooting victim, Paul Ritter, died at 1:15 P.M. in St. Anthony's Hospital, news of his death triggered renewed mob action in Sainte Genevieve. Around 10:30 P.M. that night, three carloads of white men armed with shotguns and rifles attempted to kidnap a mailcarrier named Louis "Cap" Ribeau, one of the few black residents who had refused to leave town. After seizing Ribeau, the mob huddled on the road in front of his home to discuss what to do with him. An approaching car accidentally collided with one of the mob's parked cars and then plowed into the group, knocking down Ribeau and several others. No one was seriously injured, but in the ensuing chaos Ribeau managed to escape into the woods and find safe harbor with a neighboring white family, who hid him in their well for the night.

Notified of the attempted kidnapping, Sheriff Ziegler and several deputies arrested six white Sainte Genevieve men (Russell Stockle, James Hurst, William Martin, J.A. Crowley, Herman Steiger, and Louis Ryan) on charges of unlawful assembly. Rumors soon circulated, however, that a mob might attempt to spring the six men from the Sainte Genevieve County Jail, and Sheriff Ziegler, fearing that he could not repel such an attack, again requested the National Guard's assistance. Companies M and H, whose members had only hours before returned to their homes, again rushed to Sainte Genevieve. When the troops arrived at 3:00 the next morning, they mounted machine guns in front of the jail and on the porch of the Ribeau home, and patrolled the streets of Sainte Genevieve.

On Wednesday morning, October 15, Cap Ribeau boarded a train for St. Louis under the armed guard of postal inspectors. According to the *St. Louis Argus* (October 17, 1930), he was in "a highly nervous state" from his traumatic encounter, and was admitted for treatment in a St. Louis sanitarium. Sainte Genevieve civic leaders and National Guard officers held a mass



meeting at the courthouse that afternoon to discuss how best to end the racial disorder. Before a standing-room-only crowd, Fr. Van Tourenhout called on every citizen to cooperate in combating the racial strife that had wracked the town. That evening, the local post of the American Legion called an emergency meeting during which its members unanimously pledged to serve as sheriff's deputies in quelling any future mob outbreaks. The Legionnaires also adopted a resolution guaranteeing protection to "certain native, property owning blacks" (*Ste. Genevieve Herald*, October 18, 1930) if they wished to return to their homes. Absolutely no other African Americans would be permitted to return to Sainte Genevieve, however. By the following day, Thursday, October 16, the crisis in the community had subsided, and the National Guard troops, whose strong presence very likely prevented a full-blown race riot from erupting, returned to Festus and Desoto. Their departure marked the end of what one local newspaper called "one of the most serious situations ever experienced in Sainte Genevieve" (*Ste. Genevieve Herald*, October 18, 1930). But the aftershocks of the four-day racial disturbance reverberated in the community for decades to come.

On October 15, 1930, the six men arrested for attempting to kidnap Ribeau were tried in a Sainte Genevieve court and pled guilty. Each was fined \$300 or sentenced to six months in jail, or both, but the judge stayed their sentences on promise of good behavior, and Wednesday evening the men were released. Two days later, however, U.S. postal inspectors rearrested the six men on federal warrants, charging them with conspiracy to prevent a federal employee from performing his duties, a crime punishable by a maximum sentence of six years in the penitentiary, a \$5,000 fine, or both. In March 1931, all of them pled guilty in a U.S. district court in St. Louis and were paroled. Meanwhile, Lonnie Taylor and Columbus Jennings were tried for the first-degree murders of Panchot and Ritter in circuit court in Farmington, Missouri, on a change of venue. Both men were convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City. Charges against their female companion, Vera Rogers, were eventually dismissed.

In the week following the riot, Sainte Genevieve civic leaders invited some seventy longtime black residents who had fled their homes to return to the community. Eventually, almost all of them did return, but the mobs succeeded in banishing the black migrants who had been recruited by the local lime plants and stone quarries, and the town's African American population never again reached pre-riot levels. In fact, in the decades following the riot, Sainte Genevieve gained a reputation as a town hostile to African Americans. By 1940, the number of black residents living in Sainte Genevieve had dwindled to only forty-five. By 1960, only sixteen remained. Today, Sainte Genevieve, a town dedicated to preserving and trading on its French colonial historical past, has largely forgotten this incident, which so dramatically affected its racial demographics. Indeed, the first historical account of the riot did not appear until 1999, almost seventy years after the incident. Meanwhile, Sainte Genevieve's African American population, which numbered slightly more than 120 in the 2000 census, is slowing beginning to increase.

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*Patrick Huber*

## San Francisco (California) Riot of 1966

In 1966, San Francisco experienced its only race riot, the result of a police shooting in the Hunters Point area of the city. However, leading up to the riot, many conditions for African Americans had become desperate. Overcrowded and segregated neighborhoods, insufficient and poor-quality housing, **police brutality**, and underemployment had grown worse since the end of World War II. By 1966 racial tensions were stretched tight.

Prior to the 1960s, San Francisco had one of the most proactive stances toward race relations of any city in the United States. As early as 1942, concerned citizens formed the Bay Area Council Against Discrimination (BACAD), an organization that would become the prototype for interracial societies during that time. Functioning as a pressure group and fact-finding agency, the BACAD forced city officials, business leaders and trade unions to implement nondiscriminatory policies. By 1944, the Council for Civic Unity (CCU) formed under the direction of Edward Howden and soon became the premier interracial organization working against discrimination in San Francisco. Its aim was to end discrimination in housing, employment, health, recreation, and welfare. It scored many victories throughout the 1950s.

However, organizations that combated racial discrimination were fighting an up-hill battle. For one, San Francisco's population was increasing faster than the housing market was able to accommodate. Between 1940 and 1950 the city's population increased by 22 percent and the African American population increased nearly 800 percent. Discrimination in housing was the norm and both **redlining** and restrictive covenants functioned to keep African Americans segregated primarily in just two enclaves: Hunters Point and the Western Addition. Further, employment prospects were grim, especially for African American youth. Shortly after World War II, many African Americans who had migrated to San Francisco for wartime employment were laid off their jobs. The combination of fewer jobs, poor-quality housing, and ever-increasing population proved volatile and it was under these conditions that San Francisco experienced its first race riot.

On September 27, 1966, police officer Alvin Johnson attempted to stop a car in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Hunters Point. The two teenagers who were in the vehicle fled the scene, and Johnson chased one youth, Matthew Johnson, across an empty lot. When Matthew Johnson ignored Officer Johnson's command to stop, the officer shot and killed him. Shortly thereafter, a crowd of residents gathered and demanded a meeting with Mayor John Shelley. However, by the time the mayor arrived at the Bayview Neighborhood Center, the crowd had grown both in size

and discontent, and the mayor was forced to retreat as people threw bricks and a firebomb at him and the police. After the mayor's hasty departure, 200 police officers were called in to seal off a six-block area of Hunters Point. Although some youths managed to leave the area and smashed windows in other districts of the city, most of the disturbance was contained in Hunters Point.

One important aspect of the riot is that many of the leaders of the community, moderate middle-class residents, were totally unable to assuage the anger of the lower income younger residents. This would foreshadow an ongoing conflict between the two groups that would only deteriorate over the next decade.

The Hunters Point riot lasted 128 hours and, in contrast to the 1965 Watts riot (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**), was characterized by only minor incidents of violence and looting, mainly directed at white- and Chinese-owned businesses. In the end, property damage was estimated around \$100,000 and no one was killed; 146 people were arrested, 2 police officers were hurt, 42 African Americans were injured (10 from gunshot wounds) and many fire department vehicles and police cars were damaged.

City officials blamed the riots on unemployment among African American youth but failed to note that abysmal housing conditions in the area and ongoing tension between the police and the African American community were contributing factors as well. Following the riot, a presidential task force reported that a lack of good jobs for low-income minority youth was the primary cause of the disturbance. It urged local, state, and federal agencies to create employment opportunities for the residents of the area. After the riot, although unemployment remained high and police-community relations floundered, San Francisco's race relations remained relatively calm for the rest of the decade. *See also* Segregation.

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*Paul T. Miller*

**SCLC.** *See* Southern Christian Leadership Conference

### **Scottsboro Case (1931)**

In 1931, a series of court trials involving an alleged rape of two white teenage girls by nine youths in Scottsboro, Alabama, reflected the climate of racial relations in the South preceding the Great Depression. The allegations sparked violent responses that almost resulted in a **lynching** and spawned legal actions that spanned several decades. A hotly debated issue in the 1930s and 1940s, the controversy died down until a movie about the case, titled *Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys*, broadcast in the 1970s, brought the issue back to the nation's attention.

The effects of the Depression were evident by the poverty-stricken people who rode freight trains during the early 1930s in search of employment. On March 25, 1931, a fight broke out between several young people on the Chattanooga to Memphis train in Tennessee. A number of black boys threw a smaller group of white boys from the train. When the injured boys caught the attention of a train stationmaster, the sheriff of Jackson County, Alabama, was contacted about the incident. Sheriff W.L. Wann ordered his deputy to deputize as many men as possible in the town of Paint Rock and bring them to the next stop in Scottsboro. A posse was formed and met the train. After a search, they found nine black youths, one white boy, and two white girls dressed in caps and overalls. The girls were not immediately identified as females due to their dress. When Victoria Price and Ruby Bates were questioned, they stated that the black boys had raped them at knife-point on the train. The boys were taken to jail and word of the incident quickly spread throughout the area. On March 26, a crowd gathered with the intention of lynching the nine boys, a common practice in the South at the time. Sheriff Wann was able to fend off the mob and tried to send the accused boys to another jail for their safety, even going as far as contacting the National Guard for assistance.

The nine defendants—Clarence Norris, Charlie Weems, Haywood Patterson, Olen Montgomery, Ozie Powell, Willie Roberson, Eugene Williams, Andrew Wright, and Roy Wright—ranged in age from twelve to twenty. On March 30, a grand jury indicted the youngsters for rape. On April 6, the first of a series of legal actions took place as the nine went on trial before Judge A.E. Hawkins. Eight of the nine “Scottsboro Boys” were found guilty and sentenced to death. Only Roy Wright, whose trial ended in a mistrial, escaped the death penalty. The pace of the trial process seemed to reflect the intensity of the prosecution and jury to convict the defendants.

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** decided not to appoint an attorney to represent the boys due to the controversy over the case. The Communist Party decided to take the case and represent the youths through its legal arm, the International Labor Defense (ILD); this was seen as an opportunity to promote the party in America by connecting the issue to the oppression of workers nationwide. The trial drew not only national attention but international notice due to the details of the case, the obvious racial implications, the youthfulness of the defendants, and the swiftness of the disposition.

The case was appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court and the convictions were upheld except for that of Eugene Williams who was deemed to be a juvenile according to state law. In May 1932, The U.S. Supreme Court reviewed the case and reversed the decision due to inadequate representation of the defendants in the case.

In January 1933, Samuel S. Leibowitz was hired by the ILD as the Scottsboro Boys’ defense attorney. In April of that year, a second trial again resulted in convictions and a sentence of the death penalty. The next month, there were many protests throughout the nation, including a large protest march in the nation’s capital. Judge Edwin Horton, Jr., the new jurist in the case, overturned the verdict and granted a new trial. Shortly

afterward, jurisdiction was transferred from Judge Horton to William Callahan. Judge Horton later lost a bid for reelection, most likely due to his perceived leniency on the Scottsboro defendants and would never return to the bench.

Over the next several years, there was a series of local court convictions followed by appeals, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Even the recanting of the rape accusation by one of the victims failed to change the jury's mind about the boys' guilt. Although Governor Graves denied the parole applications in 1938, some of the defendants were later covertly granted parole in the 1940s. In 1976, Clarence Norris, the last of the Scottsboro Boys, was given a full pardon by Alabama's Gov. George Wallace, ending a series of legal actions dealing specifically with the defendants in the case.

However, that was not the last of the legal activity involving the alleged victims. When a made-for-television movie about the Scottsboro case called "Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys" was aired by NBC in 1976, both Ruby Bates Schut and Victoria Price Street filed lawsuits for libel, slander, and invasion of privacy. Ms. Bates Schut died before her case was completed and Ms. Price Street lost her case against the network. *See also Powell v. Alabama* (1932).

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*Leonard A. Steverson*

## Segregation

Segregation is the separation of people from the dominant population, based on minority group status that may be established on issues of race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability, and other human or social variables. Two forms of segregation currently in use are *de jure* segregation and *de facto* segregation. *De jure* segregation is the formal, legal form of segregation that is both permitted and enforced by law. *De facto* segregation, on the other hand, is not dictated by law. It separates people through informal societal customs, norms, and personal decisions.

One of the most infamous examples of *de jure* segregation was established when the United States enacted the **Jim Crow** laws that stood from the 1870s to the 1950s when the modern **civil rights movement** was instrumental in repealing them. Under the Jim Crow laws, *de jure* segregation formed bilinear institutions and facilities throughout society. One system was established for the dominant Caucasian population and the other for African Americans.

Jim Crow laws affected nearly every aspect of social life, down to the most minute details. African Americans were often not allowed to walk through the front door of a building if a back door was available. Lunch counters and restaurants were segregated with either no place for African Americans and other minorities, or a subordinate location. The foremost seats of public



White students in class at the University of Oklahoma, and G.W. McLaurin, an African American, seated in an anteroom, 1948. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

buses, trains, and planes were reserved for Caucasians. Any person of a minority group had to sit in the back of that form of public transportation. Segregation resulted in separate restrooms for Caucasians and African Americans. Separation along perceived racial lines was also established in churches, public schools, movie theaters, hotels, and many retail establishments.

Of course this segregation based on race meant that society would have to have definitive measures by which to ascertain if a person was Caucasian or African American. How was this to be accomplished when the concept of race is biologically insignificant and multitudes of people had backgrounds of mixed ethnicities? It was decided that the defining factor would be the One Drop Rule. In other words, if a person had one drop of African blood in their system, they were considered to be from a minority group and not allowed to enter the segregated white societal system.

In an effort to become even more technical on the matter, it was decided that if a person had a fraction of  $\frac{1}{32}$  African blood in their bodies, they were to be considered black and they were to be segregated into the subordinate system of societal existence. This factor of attempting to determine racial identification by fractions is also known as the Rule of Hypodescent.

Jim Crow laws were first challenged in 1896 by a man named Homer Plessy who brought the *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court decided that the Jim Crow laws in place at that time were “not constitutionally impermissible under the **Fourteenth**

**Amendment's** Equal Protection Clause." In other words, the law was upheld and it was decided that the racially based dual systems were not illegal. Separate-but-equal facilities and social institutions were permissible. The states were legally allowed to racially segregate on the basis of race in all factions of life.

Of course, the facilities and social institutions afforded African Americans were substandard to those experienced by the Caucasian population. The *separate* part was in place, but things were not *equal*. In fact, the inequalities between the two systems were so significant that it remains a startling fact that the Jim Crow laws survived some eighty years of enforcement in the United States.

These decades of *de jure* segregation were challenged once again when in 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). The segregated educational system of the day was definitively unequal and presented an important and widespread form of discrimination in schooling. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren of the U.S. Supreme Court determined that every faction of this well established dual system of segregation was "inherently unequal." The Supreme Court declared that segregation in any form was unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Enacting the law was not, however, immediate. nor did it occur without major incidents. A year after the U.S. Supreme Court made its ruling, Jim Crow laws would still be upheld around the country. In Montgomery, Alabama, for example, Rosa Lee Parks publicly challenged the Jim Crow laws by defying their mandates. In 1955, she was taking a public bus home from an exhausting day at work. She was African American and knew that society and the Jim Crow laws dictated that she ride in the back of the bus. She sat in a front seat and refused to give up that seat to a white man who demanded it. Deputy Sheriff D.H. Lackey arrested and fingerprinted her for this violation of the Jim Crow laws. She was photographed by the law enforcement agency with her conviction number of "7053." Her arrest sparked a protest by the African American community who, in turn, refused to use the public transportation system for the next 380 days, under the boycott direction and guidance of **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

This courageous act is considered one of the great turning points that led to the modern civil rights movement. Rosa Lee Parks died Monday, October 24, 2005, at age 92. She is the first woman to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. The bus on which she refused to give up her seat is now preserved in a Detroit museum. On September 14, 1996, President Bill Clinton awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Rosa Lee Parks for her brave, society-changing act of peaceful protest.

The civil rights movement was sparked, but as late as 1962 states were not complying with the 1954 Supreme Court ruling against segregation. In 1956, the University of Alabama received orders from the federal government stating that female African American student Aurtherine Lucy could not be denied admission to the university because of her race. She was admitted, but was assaulted by mobs. The university then suspended her, claiming it was for her own safety. When Lucy filed suit against the school for being unable to protect her and for supporting the **white mob**, the



A Caucasian woman and an African American woman sitting side by side on stools at a lunch counter, protesting segregation, 1960. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

university expelled her. The expulsion was not overturned by the University of Alabama Board of Trustees until the 1980s.

In 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower found it necessary to call in the National Guard to protect four African American students in Little Rock, Arkansas, trying to integrate the educational system. In 1962, President **John F. Kennedy** also used federal guardsmen to ensure the safety of African American student **James Meredith** as he began attendance at the University of Mississippi. In 1963, Gov. George Wallace of Alabama stood at the doors of the University of Alabama, deterring any African American students from attending the university.

By 1964, only 2 percent of southern African American children attended schools in which segregation did not exist. The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare decided in 1966 that it would establish very specific goals for each segregated school and cut off federal funding if the schools did not comply.

In the shadow of decades of *de jure* segregation, the practice of *de facto* segregation remains in place to this day. In the area of housing discrimination, **redlining** and gerrymandering are well-established practices. Despite the fact that the **Civil Rights Act of 1968** prohibits any form of discrimination in housing, members of minority populations are shown homes in the areas of a city in which realtors believe they would be residing with residents of their same racial or ethnic background.

In the current educational system, some 60 percent of elementary schools and 80 percent of secondary schools use *tracking* to segregate students. Incoming students are labeled as either *gifted* or *college prep* and



given challenging work with positive expectations of success. These are by far the slots occupied by Caucasian students. Minority students are often tracked into special needs groups and are channeled in a general curriculum without expectations of continuation into higher education. African American students are also more likely than white students to be labeled as emotionally disturbed or learning disabled. The individual is held accountable for their own educational success or failure without regard to previous unequal educational opportunities or systems.

Occupational segregation also exists to this day, and is often measured by the Duncan's D tool. In 1992, the U.S. government called together a panel of experts to study American occupational trajectories. The commission discovered that women and racial minorities are often hired and allowed promotion to a certain mid-management level where they hit the "glass ceiling." They are stopped from obtaining top-level executive positions, but can still see through the ceiling to their Caucasian male counterparts progressing up the career ladder to higher and higher positions above them. Women are also still segregated into traditionally female jobs, which the majority of the time are low-paying, without benefits, and with little to no pension offers. Disparities can be tracked back to education on the university level, where the majority of nursing students are female and the majority of engineering majors are male. If multiple jeopardies are attached, we find the old, minority female on what is known as the *sticky floor*; unable to even reach the first rung of the career ladder, being segregated into the lowest-paying jobs.

The 2000 U.S. Census Bureau uses an "index of dissimilarity" (Community Research Partners 2005). It scores from zero to 100, with a score of zero indicating that no segregation exists and a score of 100 indicating total segregation within a city. Detroit currently holds the position of having the highest percentage at 84.7 percent. This means that 85 percent of whites or blacks would have to move to balance racial proportions of the total metropolitan area. In other words, the segregation fact is among the highest in the nation. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, stands in second place at 82.2 percent, followed by Chicago, Illinois (80.9 percent), and Newark, New Jersey (80.4 percent). Similar patterns for other minority groups have been found nationwide, as Latino and Asian percentages reflect high levels of segregation (Community Research Partners 2005).

Antidiscrimination laws (striking down most mandatory retirement laws) and social policies (such as Affirmative Action) are in place to break down walls of segregation, although their effectiveness in changing society is often challenged. Literally speaking, we segregate males and females by bathrooms. We segregate prisoners from the general population. We segregate the frail elderly in nursing homes, the mentally ill in psychiatric hospitals and wards, and the physically ill in hospitals. Many of these current forms of segregation, however, do not reflect the social injustices and inequality that exist when race, gender, class, ability, and age are used as the criteria for unequal treatment resulting in segregation. For example, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibited the segregation of people with physical disabilities from public buildings. Prior to this act

becoming effective in 1992, anyone using a wheelchair or other walking aid could not gain access to numerous buildings, thus causing their direct segregation from service providers intended for all people.

Self-segregation also exists. This implies that women and minority groups may opt to segregate themselves from the dominant or general population. Many people choose to self-segregate in order to live in neighborhoods and join organizations in which their sex, age, race, ethnicity, or class are dominantly represented. In 2003, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum attempted to explain self-segregation in terms of the development of racial identity in her book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*

As American society continues to become more biracial and multiracial, many changes are expected, and it is hoped that segregation perpetrated for inequality will give way to positive forms of segregation that are self-selected and productive. *See also* Integration.

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*Sheila Bluhm Morley*

### **Sellers, Cleveland (1944–)**

Cleveland Sellers is a civil rights organizer and activist, an advocate of Pan-Africanism, and a former **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** executive board member.

Born in segregated Denmark, South Carolina, on November 8, 1944, Cleveland Sellers and his older sister Gwendolyn grew up in a working-class home. His father, a disciple of **Booker T. Washington**, was a farmer, restaurateur, taxi driver, and real estate owner, and his college-graduate mother was a teacher and dietician at Denmark's South Carolina Area Trade School.

Sellers became aware of class divisions in the black community when, among other things, he saw friends from the poor section of black Denmark eating out of trash cans. He had little contact with whites before his teenage years. By the late 1950s, Sellers was radicalized while following televised accounts of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the **Emmett Till** murder, and **integration** of Little Rock High School, among other events.

Sellers graduated from Voorhees High School and Junior College, where he watched news accounts of the first sit-in, which occurred on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Two weeks later, Sellers helped plan a sit-in involving Voorhees students at a local drugstore. He expanded his protest activities to Rock Hill, North Carolina, where he met Ruby Doris Smith of the SNCC. Sellers subsequently founded a youth chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** in Denmark, South Carolina.

In September 1962, Sellers enrolled at Howard University, where he met **Stokely Carmichael** and joined the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), a friends of SNCC affiliate. NAG assisted with logistics for the 1963 March on Washington, and Sellers went to Cambridge, Maryland, to assist Gloria

Richardson and the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee in organizing a protest against visiting Alabama Gov. George Wallace. The protesters were gassed and shot at by law enforcement, and Sellers was among those who were arrested.

Sellers recruited students for **Freedom Summer** (Mississippi) of 1964 and worked in the Mississippi Summer Project. He helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, participating in the famous confrontation at the Democratic National Convention in August 1964. Sellers was named project director of SNCC Mississippi field operations, where he helped execute the Mississippi Challenge to congressional elections and helped provide SNCC logistical support for the Selma to Montgomery March of 1965.

In November 1965, Sellers was elected SNCC national program secretary, joining John Lewis (chairman) and **James Forman** (executive director) on the three-person Executive Committee of SNCC, which was rapidly moving in a black consciousness and internationalist direction. SNCC issued an anti-**Vietnam War** statement in January 1966. Sellers helped create the **Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO)** in Alabama and was reelected as program secretary in the spring 1966 election that brought Carmichael to the chairmanship. As demonstrated by its support for **James Meredith's** March Against Fear, SNCC thereafter shifted to a **Black Power** philosophy, which **Roy Wilkins** and Hubert Humphrey criticized at the July 1966 NAACP National Convention.

Heavily influenced by **Malcolm X**, by the work of Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon, and by international liberation struggles, Sellers refused to be drafted into the U.S. Army in May 1967. SNCC thereafter became more militant. The dismissal of white staffer Bob Zellner was followed by a series of increasingly violent confrontations with law enforcement, which culminated in the Cambridge, Maryland, shoot-out that resulted in the arrest of new SNCC Chairman **H. Rap Brown**. An SNCC position statement on anti-Zionism in Palestine also led to increasingly shrill criticism of the organization. In October 1967, Sellers, who with Carmichael had not stood for reelection to the SNCC executive board, moved to Orangeburg, South Carolina.

That same month, Sellers assisted the Black Awareness Coordinating Committee, a group of students from historically African American South Carolina State University, protest segregationist policies at a local bowling alley, which led to a series of increasingly violent confrontations with police. Shortly thereafter, on February 8, police, state troopers, and the South Carolina National Guard attacked the South Carolina State campus, wounding twenty-seven (most while attempting to flee) and killing three students. Shot during this "Orangeburg Massacre," Sellers was arrested and held on \$50,000 bail as the principal organizer of the student protests. In 1970, a jury convicted him of inciting a riot and he spent seven months in jail as a consequence.

The April 1968 murder of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, accelerated the deterioration of SNCC. In February 1968, Forman, Carmichael, and Brown entered into an alliance with the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**; Sellers was jailed on a draft evasion charge (eventually dismissed) and a Louisiana weapons charge. In 1969, he took a position as lecturer in the Africana Studies

Program of Cornell University, enrolling at Harvard to pursue a master's degree in education the same year.

In the following year, he declared a Pan-Africanist philosophy and expanded his activities, working with the Student Organization for Black Unity, African Liberation Day, and Malcolm X Liberation University, among other efforts. He was also affiliated with Stokely Carmichael's (Kwame Ture's) All-African People's Revolutionary Party. In subsequent years, Sellers received a doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (1987) and taught at both that university and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Shaw. He is currently director of African American Studies for the University of South Carolina. On July 20, 1993, he finally received a pardon from the Parole Board of South Carolina for his conviction in the Orangeburg incident.

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*Gregory E. Carr*

## Sharecropping

Sharecropping is a system of farming in which poor farmers (sharecroppers) work a parcel of land that they do not own in return for a portion of the crop raised or for a wage. Sharecropping arose in the American South



African American tenant farmer on his front porch in Oklahoma, 1939. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

during **Reconstruction** in response to the abolition of slavery because it allowed the traditional subservient status of blacks to landowning whites to be maintained by legal means. With the abolition of slavery by the Thirteenth Amendment, African Americans had to be paid for their work in the fields. Labor contracts were issued that provided plant workers with wages, housing, clothing, and food in return for their work. African American workers lacked capital and resources and were forced to enter into labor agreements with their former masters. Normally, wages were a small share of the crop—one-eighth or even less—amounts that often permitted the sharecroppers to make only a subsistence living.

Sharecropping was a practice supported by the **Freedmen's Bureau** and originated in the **Black Codes** enacted during the period of presidential Reconstruction under the idea that freedmen could make their way in American society if they worked hard. As small, independent farmers, sharecroppers cultivated a plot of land that belonged to the landowners. In exchange, they were given a house, a mule, tools, seed, and a share of the crop, usually between one-third and a half. At first sight, it was a fair trade agreement, but in reality it proved a kind of neo-serfdom because the sharecropper in effect remained attached to the land and the owner. The sharecroppers did not raise enough of a crop to pay for their expenses. Most of the time they had to pay the plantation owners inflated prices for necessary supplies and equipment. When they did not have money to pay for these items, the sharecroppers were given the goods at extortionate rates of interest so that owners could sometimes claim 100 percent of the crop. In the end, African American fieldworkers were driven into subsistence farming to pay their debts, although they did not succeed in the endeavor. The result was that sharecropping limited black mobility and held a captive labor force at extremely low cost in the plantations that helped develop the South.

In an attempt to improve conditions, sharecroppers allied with poor white farmers in the People's Party in the 1890s. The alliance threatened the political supremacy of the white planter class. However, by the end of the decade, the People's Party had lost its challenging force as a consequence of racial enmity. Thus, African Americans were excluded from political life.

Sharecropping had some consequences in African American culture as well. It was not a communal working practice, instead it was based in a system that favored individualism. As a result, slave gangs were replaced by individuals who worked their plots of land. This resulted in the evolution of traditional ballads and worksongs into the Blues, a more individualistic form of music.

The heyday of sharecropping spanned the period from 1865 to 1930, when mechanization of fieldwork resulted in large numbers of unemployed workers. But there were other causes of sharecropping's decline. Although sharecropping favored African Americans staying in the South, many left anyway, fueling the **Great Migration** of the early twentieth century. Sharecropping was the economic form of a social system that enforced social subordination to whites with its consequent loss of home and work, and even led to **lynching**. The worsening economic conditions of agriculture in

the early twentieth century, with a new insect pest, the boll weevil, was another cause for the decline of sharecropping. The boll weevil arrived in Texas in the 1890s and reached Georgia and the Carolinas in the 1920s. It destroyed the crops to the extent that African American workers could hardly subsist. Finally, the opportunities that the industrial boom in Detroit offered were much more attractive to younger generations than the repetition of a way of life that did not offer real opportunities.

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*Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan*

### Sharpton, Al (1954–)

Alfred (Al) Charles Sharpton, Jr., was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Alfred Sharpton, Sr., and Ada Richards Sharpton on October 3, 1954. Rev. Al Sharpton grew up in both Brooklyn and Hollis in Queens, New York. From the age of four, young Al began preaching in the pulpits of Pentecostal churches. From 1969 to 1971 Sharpton worked for two years with Operation Breadbasket, which was led by Rev. **Jesse Jackson**. Through this organization, he led protests against companies that discriminated against black people. Reverend Sharpton later founded the Brooklyn-based National Youth

Movement. Through this organization he advocated against **police brutality** and racial discrimination, and organized civil protest demonstrations. He attended Brooklyn College during the 1970s, but later dropped out to work with the singer James Brown. While working with James Brown, he met his wife Kathy Jordan, who was a backup singer for Brown. He married Kathy Jordan in 1983, and the couple later had two daughters, Dominique and Ashley.

Sharpton became known as a public persona during two controversial and significant cases involving two New York teenagers, Michael Griffith and Tawana Brawley. Griffith was a young African American man killed in a predominantly white area of **Howard Beach** in Queens in December



Al Sharpton appears on *Saturday Night Live*, 2003. Courtesy of Photofest.

1986. The Howard Beach killing made national headlines and was considered one of the most significant racial hatred cases of the 1980s. Sharpton worked closely with two African American lawyers, Alton Maddox and C. Vernon Mason, to lead protest marches in Howard Beach. The leaders of the protest demanded that a special prosecutor be assigned to investigate the murder of Michael Griffith and prosecute his killers. The special prosecutor was eventually assigned in this case and three white youths from Howard Beach were convicted of manslaughter in Griffith's death.

Tawana Brawley was an African American teenager who alleged that she was beaten and sexually assaulted by white men in Wappinger Falls, New York. According to Brawley, the attack took place in November 1987. Sharpton became involved in the case and was a leading spokesperson in support of Brawley. Sharpton and others pressured the local police department and investigators in the case primarily because the incident involved the assault of a young African American woman and white male perpetrators. The case was later dropped by the police department and the state attorney general because after an intense investigation it was concluded that Tawana Brawley and her mother had fabricated the story to protect the girl from a harsh punishment by her stepfather.

These two incidents catapulted Al Sharpton into the national limelight. He became known as a brazen and loquacious advocate for social justice. In 1990, another African American teenager was killed in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, New York. **Yusef Hawkins** was murdered by a group of whites. A leading activist and agitator, Sharpton again became actively involved in protest demonstrations to raise awareness of the case. During one of these protests, Sharpton was stabbed by a white man. After his recovery, Sharpton began to shift his political agenda and focused on running for political office. He ran in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate in 1992. Although he did not win the election, he did receive tremendous support in the African American community, including two-thirds of the black vote. He again ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1994.

Sharpton's political and professional career has been laced with controversy. At one time, he was labeled an informant for the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**. He was also sued for defamation of character and came under fire for both tax and financial fraud charges against his youth organization. Sharpton was acquitted of the tax and financial fraud charges but was required to pay \$65,000 in a defamation suit by a white attorney he had accused of being involved in the rape of Tawana Brawley. These controversies have contributed to the public perception of Al Sharpton as a divisive figure who sometimes engages in self-aggrandizement and promotion.

Sharpton's most important contribution to the cause of civil rights and social justice came after the brutal murder of an innocent man that took place in New York. **Amadou Diallo**, an unarmed African immigrant was shot forty-one times by four white policemen in February 1999 in New York. This horrific killing led Sharpton to mobilize the city and organize many civil protests against police brutality within Manhattan. This significant event led hundreds of whites and African Americans to join together

in civil protest to end the continued racial profiling and brutality that many African Americans were experiencing in New York City. Sharpton, along with many of his supporters, was arrested during some of these protests. Sharpton sought nomination as the Democratic candidate for the U.S. presidency in 2004. Although he did not receive the nomination, he did stimulate the election with his forthright speeches and his challenges to those candidates who would eventually receive their party's nominations.

Sharpton is both a controversial and passionate leader who has inspired debates on issues as important as police brutality, racial bigotry, and employment discrimination. His brash style and biting intellect are juxtaposed with his outward appearance (which includes a processed hairstyle reminiscent of James Brown) and the pedantic speech of a Baptist preacher. Al Sharpton has become one of the most notorious African American activists of the early twenty-first century.

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*Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

## Shotgun Policy

The term *Shotgun Policy* refers to the violent exploits of conservative whites against blacks and Republicans to restore the Democrats to power in Mississippi in 1875. The tumultuous overthrow of Republican governments, also known as Redemption, took place throughout the South and inaugurated the ensuing years of unrestrained violence against blacks.

Prior to the Civil War, Mississippi, like other southern states, was dominated socially, politically, and economically by white landowners. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the black slaves. Conflicts in regional interests precipitated a split between the Union of the North and the Confederacy of the South and resulted in the Civil War.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the federal government established the policy of **Reconstruction**, the purpose of which was to reintegrate the southern states into the Union, provide assistance to the newly freed slaves, and set up Republican-led state governments. Conservative Democrats were infuriated by these changes. **White mobs** and newly formed organizations, such as the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, attacked and murdered black and white teachers who established schools for former slaves. They also terrorized black and white Republican politicians. In response, the federal government installed troops across the South to suppress the violence.

However, Democrats conspired to regain control of their state governments. Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina were the first states to seize back power. To do this, they resorted to fraudulence and violent intimidation. In 1870 and 1871, the federal government attempted to restore order by creating anti-Klan laws, but the success of these laws was short-lived. In



1874, white mobs murdered black and white Republican leaders and destroyed crops and homes. Violence erupted at the polls in Louisiana between 1868 and 1876.

In 1875, white Mississippians unleashed their infamous Shotgun Policy. In the same year, whites murdered thirty teachers, church leaders, and Republican officials in Clinton. Riots broke out in Vicksburg and Yazoo City, Mississippi, as well as in other southern states. White Mississippians also tormented and even lynched blacks to keep them from the polls. In response, politicians fled Mississippi in fear of their lives or were coerced to join the Democrats, and numerous blacks refrained from voting on election day.

Mississippi's Governor Ames appealed to President Ulysses S. Grant for assistance, but Grant was already preoccupied with problems of his own. Ames met with representatives from the Democratic Party, and they agreed to a peaceful election day in exchange for Ames' promise not to organize a black militia. Although Ames kept his bargain, the Democrats set homes on fire before election day and set up armed guards at the polls. While most blacks hid in the woods and stayed away from the polls, the Democrats celebrated their win. Following their return to power, conservative whites set about resuming their pre-Civil War life in Mississippi. Although blacks were legally free, they were bound by oppressive and discriminatory laws and practices (see **Black Codes**). Meanwhile, the violence against blacks continued unabated, and this time, the federal government did not intervene on the behalf of blacks.

Similar attacks against blacks and Republican politicians persisted throughout Redemption. In 1876, whites in South Carolina emulated Mississippi's Shotgun Policy. On the Democrat side were 600 Redshirts who beat and killed blacks to keep them from voting. Although President Grant sent federal troops, the Democrats retained power. By 1877, all of the southern states of the Confederacy were under Democratic control.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

**Silent March of 1917.** See New York City Silent March of 1917

### **Simmons, William J. (1882–1945)**

William Joseph Simmons founded the second incarnation of the **Ku Klux Klan** in 1915. Simmons was born in 1880, to a country physician and former Klansman on a farm near Harpersfield, Alabama. He had little formal schooling. Simmons served in the Spanish-American War and attempted afterward to pursue a career in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His several years of itinerant ministry in Florida and Alabama were not rewarded by a permanent church, sparking his departure from the group.



William Joseph Simmons, 1921. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Simmons joined over a dozen various Masonic orders, including the Woodmen of the World, where he—as did all his fellow Woodmen—received the honorific title of colonel. Simmons combined fraternal membership and personal career by becoming a field representative and salesman of fraternal insurance for the group. He sought the revival of what he called the original Klan of the lost era—the period of southern humiliation, defeat, and redemption starting with the original Klan's birth in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee.

According to Klan lore, Simmons swore at that time to found the Klan memorializing organization. According to Jonathan B. Frost, a fellow Woodman who joined the reborn Klan and later embezzled several thousand dollars from its beginning coffers, Simmons took the idea of restarting the Klan from a presentation he had made at a Woodmen's convention. A subsequent period of convalescence following an automobile accident led Simmons to develop detailed plans for rebuilding the Klan, an idea that had possessed him more firmly after having perhaps read of the March 1915 release of **D.W. Griffith's** paean to the Klan, *The Birth of a Nation*. After the film opened in December in Atlanta, Simmons persuaded the theater owner to allow him to view it free and repeatedly.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1915, Simmons and fifteen others ascended Stone Mountain in Georgia, where he led them in the first initiation ceremony of a memorial organization to the original Klan, known as The

Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. The ceremony followed the general format of the initial Klan ceremony nearly fifty years before—an altar held an American flag, an open Bible, a sword, and a canteen of water. One major innovation was to become the lasting symbol of the various Klan and Klan-sympathizing groups—the erection and burning of a Christian cross. This symbol could be seen from nearby Atlanta.

The next week, Simmons incorporated the organization in Fulton County, pursuing yet another departure from original Klan procedure. Simmons, unlike his predecessors, sought to have the Klan protected by legal status and situated to assume a remunerative function as well. Drawing on research on the original Klan, he completed a fifty-four-page *Kloran*, a text of ritual, administrative rules, and coded jargon that was to serve as “the book” governing Klan business.

Simmons divided the country into eight administrative domains. Each domain was governed by a Grand Goblin, then a state (province) hierarchy, then intrastate provinces, and finally the local Klanverns. Many of these Klanverns assumed the names of preexisting or newly named organizations to avoid detection and to lend their efforts to ongoing work, such as the 100 percent Americanism movement in Colorado.

Until 1920, the Klan was confined almost exclusively to Georgia and Alabama. In 1920, however, Edward Young Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler formed the Southern Publicity Association and used it to parlay national anti-black, anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-Asian, and pro-Nativist sentiments into an explosion of Klan membership from 2,000 to 50,000 members by the time of congressional hearings on Klan activities in 1921. By 1924, 40 percent of the Klan’s membership was in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, followed by a quarter in six southwestern states. Only 16 percent were in the southeast.

By 1923, Simmons had come into conflict with the organization by supporting Clarke and Tyler during a series of Tyler’s indiscretions. Simmons’ own incompetence and alcoholism led to his removal as Imperial Wizard in favor of Dallas’ Hiram Wesley Evans. A series of legal battles ensued, leading to his banishment on January 5, 1924. He died in May 18, 1945, in Luverne, Alabama. The organization he restarted continues to hold sway in the popular imagination and to morph into other white supremacist organizations. *See also* Ku Klux Klan (KKK); White Supremacy.

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Gregory E. Carr

**SNCC.** *See* Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

**South Carolina.** *See* Charleston (South Carolina) Riot of 1919; Orangeburg (South Carolina) Massacre of 1968

### **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was led by the Rev. **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, and was, if not the driving force of the

**civil rights movement**, often the most visible image of the movement. Reaching its peak in the mid-1960s, SCLC was formed in the aftermath of the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Because King was its leader from its inception until his death in 1968, the history of the two are closely intertwined.

SCLC was created to fill a gap left by the perceived shortcomings of other organizations. For example, by 1955, the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, although committed to **nonviolence**, had failed to organize on a large scale, and its northern flavor and interracial board seemed to contradict what had created change in Montgomery—a southern-based black movement. It was into this apparent void that organizers stepped and created SCLC.

SCLC, on its founding, was also seen as distinctly different from the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, although there was much crossover. SCLC was exclusively southern. There were no individual memberships. SCLC acted as an umbrella organization, which, together with its regional flavor, would weaken it as it moved north after 1965. The organization consisted mainly of black ministers and seemed to operate in many ways as a political manifestation of the southern black churches. The first president of SCLC was King, and its first treasurer was Rev. Ralph Abernathy. The organization reflected King's commitment to nonviolent direct action as a technique to battle all forms of **racism**. SCLC, with King at the helm, tried to use these nonviolent tactics to pressure political forces in Washington, D.C., to create change at both the local and national levels.

In the years after Montgomery, King's efforts often came up short. By 1960, massive resistance from white southerners had limited the ability to extend equal rights to African Americans. Voting, the **desegregation** of public schools, and the **integration** of most public facilities had come to a standstill, despite the apparent progress in Montgomery and the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Galvanized by the sit-in movement, organized by students in places such as Greensboro, North Carolina, King seized another opportunity in 1961, in the midst of the **Freedom Rides**, to challenge the power structure of Albany, Georgia. King relished the opportunity because many SCLC actions had stalled in the wake of Montgomery and direct action initiatives had passed oftentimes to the activists of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and CORE. From December 1961 to July 1962, King went to jail three times along with thousands of others in the Albany movement, all to no avail. King and SCLC failed to break the intransigence of Albany Police Chief Laurie Pritchett, and without federal support—because black protestors appeared to be arrested without excessive force—the administration of **John F. Kennedy** refused to step in. Albany showed SCLC that direct confrontation was needed between civil rights demonstrators and segregationists.

SCLC became involved in the Voter Education Project (VEP) between 1962 and 1964 (together with organizations like the NAACP, SNCC, and CORE) to line up black voters and get them registered. However, because

the federal government failed to really support the initiative with protection for workers, this effort met with mixed results.

By 1963, it was obvious to SCLC that direct confrontation was needed in the wake of previous failures. SCLC decided to provoke a confrontation in Birmingham with its police commissioner, **T. Eugene “Bull” Connor**. Protests, combined with what had already been going on under the direction of Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, ignited federal involvement. Unlike Albany, news cameras highlighted the images of peaceful demonstrators being brutalized by Connor’s police who used dogs and fire hoses. Although the forced confrontation by SCLC and its supporters initiated a compromise, it did not end the violence, and bombs ripped through the city. Several months later, the basement of a Birmingham church exploded and killed four young black girls (see **Black Church Arsons**).

In the wake of Birmingham, and tepid promises by the Kennedy administration regarding civil rights, SCLC joined with other organizations to help **A. Philip Randolph** lead a massive march on Washington, D.C., that he had first proposed twenty years earlier. The March on Washington featured a host of speakers, including King, who delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Despite the March and King’s glowing rhetoric, the civil rights bill stalled in the House of Representatives. It was not until the assassination of President Kennedy that the bill finally managed to get passed into law.

SCLC’s next big push came in 1965 in Alabama. King and SCLC helped orchestrate a march from Selma to Montgomery to highlight the lack of ability of blacks to vote in Alabama. The Selma march started with nationally televised violence and the black marchers were forced to retreat under the onslaught of the police (see **Bloody Sunday [1965]**). King, who missed the first march, attended the second one, and with federal protection, completed the march from Selma to Montgomery. Despite the protection, deadly acts persisted, as Viola Liuzzo, a white SCLC volunteer from Detroit, was ambushed and shot on the highway between Selma and Montgomery. The result of the violence-marred march was the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which marked a watershed in the black freedom struggle. It was the climax of SCLC’s influence and the massive demonstrations that were used to pressure the federal government to act.

In the wake of Selma, the rise of **Black Power** advocates and the continued estrangement of SNCC from SCLC led to the diminution of the latter’s influence. It oftentimes was left with the difficult job of trying to find the middle ground between the more traditional groups, such as the NAACP and the **National Urban League**, and aimed at integrating society via lobbying Congress and litigation. On the other side were SNCC and CORE, which rejected integration and nonviolence and espoused armed **black self-defense** and **Black Nationalism**. For example, **Stokely Carmichael**, the chairman of SNCC, championed Black Power. SCLC still tried to mobilize blacks to confront racism in the streets, and in 1966, as Carmichael’s cries grew louder, King and SCLC moved the battle north and began to combat slum conditions and housing discrimination in northern cities.

By the time King was gunned down in Memphis in 1968, SCLC's message had become more radicalized as King campaigned for workers rights in Memphis, Tennessee, and against the **Vietnam War**. But SCLC's influence continued to wane in the North because of the lack of a cohesive religious organization as was seen in the South, and the southern nature of the organization failed to always reflect the needs of the northern urban population. After King's assassination in 1968, SCLC leadership was deeply divided over the organization's future. Nevertheless, led by King's family and friends, SCLC continued fighting segregation and discrimination. *See also* King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of.

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*Gary Gershman*

### Southwest Missouri Riots (1894–1906)

Between 1894 and 1906, a series of race riots (or near riots) engulfed four southwest Missouri towns. During these disturbances, rampaging **white mobs** lynched at least eight African Americans and then expelled hundreds of others from the towns of Monett in 1894, Pierce City in 1901, Joplin in 1903, and, to a lesser degree, Springfield in 1906. Occurring within a span of twelve years and a radius of eighty miles, these four episodes represent the largest documented cluster of post-Civil War race riots in American history. The southwest Missouri riots resulted from a volatile combination of virulent **racism**, white fears of black sexual predations, growing African American urban populations, intense labor competition, and, in at least two cases, political rivalry between the races. In each case, the southwest Missouri riots originated with a **lynching** of at least one African American man accused of a violent crime, but bloodthirsty white mobs, unsatisfied with murdering only the black suspects, turned their racist fury on entire African American communities. These riots consequently led to mass exoduses of black residents from these four towns. In a particularly cruel twist of fate, some black refugees who escaped the Monett race riot fled to Pierce City, from which they were soon chased to Joplin or Springfield, where they would, for the third time, find themselves the targets of mob violence.

The first race riot in this cluster erupted in 1894 in the railroad town of Monett, a division point on the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad established only seven years earlier. Most of the town's approximately 3,500 residents worked for the San Francisco Railroad or an affiliated industry. In

1894, on the eve of the riot, Monett was a rowdy boomtown on whose streets scenes of public drunkenness, knife fights, and gunplay were commonplace. Although fewer than 100 African Americans lived in Monett, bitter feelings existed between the races in large part because of job competition and an 1892 murder of a white man by a black waiter. The incident that triggered the Monett riot occurred at 10:00 P.M. on the night of June 20, 1894, when a group of five white railroad brakemen clashed with an equal number of black laborers outside a saloon. During the drunken altercation, one of the black men fatally shot Robert Greenwood, a San Francisco Railroad brakeman and the grandson of a Bentonville, Arkansas, judge. An intensive search resulted in the arrest of Ulysses Hayden eight days later in nearby Neosho, Missouri. Hayden admitted being among the group of black laborers the night of the murder, but he denied firing the shot that killed Greenwood, a conclusion a coroner's jury also reached in the days after Hayden's death. Nonetheless, later that night an enraged gang of between 50 and 100 white men, many of them railroad employees, boarded the train on which Hayden was being transported back to Barry County and forcibly removed the prisoner from the custody of law authorities. One mile south of Monett, the self-appointed executioners avenged Greenwood's death by hanging Hayden from a telegraph pole alongside the railroad tracks.

Later that night, following Hayden's lynching, the white mob ordered all African Americans to leave Monett or face serious reprisals. Fearing for their lives, black residents fled to Pierce City, Joplin, Springfield, and other nearby towns, and a few days later the *Carthage Press* reported, "Today there is not a darkey in Monett, nor does one dare to set foot in the town" (Stringer-Bishoff 1994). A coroner's inquest found that Hayden had died, as in so many other cases of lynching, at "the hands of unknown parties," and Barry County authorities made little effort to apprehend his murderers. (Stringer-Bishoff 1994). Although a few black porters who worked for the San Francisco Railroad continued to live in the town in the following decades, Monett largely became a "sundown town" in which African Americans were not welcome after dark. "Across the main street of Monett for years," reported the *Chicago Tribune* in 1901, "there has been a sign reading: 'Nigger, don't let the sun go down,' and no Negro has been permitted to remain inside the town after dark" (Stringer-Bishoff 1994).

Seven years later, an outbreak of collective racial violence rocked Pierce City, a railroad town established in 1870 and located five miles northwest of Monett, in adjoining Lawrence County. In 1900, Pierce City contained 2,151 residents, of which 175, or 8 percent, were African American. On the eve of the race riot, the town was reeling from a recent crime wave attributed to transients and an economic downturn resulting from a drought-induced crop failure. Under these conditions, the murder of a local white woman, allegedly by a black assailant, sparked a lynching and a full-blown race riot far deadlier than the one that had struck Monett.

Around 12:30 P.M. on August 18, 1901, a passerby discovered the body of Gisela Wild, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of a German farmer, under a railroad bridge on the outskirts of Pierce City. Her throat had been slashed,

and her assailant had unsuccessfully attempted to rape her. Law enforcement officers found several witnesses who reported seeing an unidentified black man near the scene of the crime shortly before the murder, and suspicion soon fell on Will Godley, a thirty-two-year-old local black laborer with a criminal record. In 1891, Godley had been convicted of raping a local elderly white woman and was sentenced to ten years in the state penitentiary. At the time, only the protection of the National Guard and the decisive actions of a Pierce City marshal saved Godley from a lynch mob. In 1899, after serving seven and a half years of his sentence, Godley gained an early release for orderly and peaceable conduct and returned to Pierce City.

On August 19, the day after Wild's murder, police arrested Godley and Gene Barrett, a seventeen-year-old black railroad porter whom authorities believed was also involved in the crime. That evening, a mob of 1,000 men, some of whom had traveled to Pierce City from the surrounding countryside, stormed the jail with sledgehammers and removed both Barrett and Godley from their cells. Although the local National Guard unit stood prepared for mobilization, the Lawrence County sheriff refused to wire the Missouri governor to request assistance. Meanwhile, some members of the mob broke into the local armory and took 50 rifles and some 600 rounds of ammunition. In the downtown business district, the ringleaders of the mob attempted to extract confessions from the two suspects. Terrified, Barrett proclaimed his innocence and accused another black porter of committing the murder. His accusation probably saved his life. An unidentified man whisked Barrett through the mob, and law enforcement authorities transported the prisoner to the Mount Vernon jail for safekeeping. Godley, however, refused to speak. The frenzied mob hanged him from the balcony of the Lawrence Hotel and then riddled his dangling body with hundreds of rounds of gunfire.

After lynching Godley, scores of still-angry white men rampaged through a black neighborhood in search of Pete Hampton, described in accounts as Godley's half brother, who was suspected in the unsolved murder of a night watchman nine months earlier. Some black residents, seeking to protect their property and families, fired on the mob. The white men retreated, reorganized, and then launched a second invasion. The mob torched four black-owned homes before locating Hampton at the house of his seventy-year-old stepfather, French Godley. Barricaded inside the house, Hampton returned the mob's fire, and a deadly shoot-out ensued. When the gunfire from inside the house ceased, the mob set fire to the Godley home. According to the *Lawrence Chieftain* (August 22, 1901), "The attack on the Negroes continued as long as one of the hated race could be found," and it was six hours before the violence finally ended.

The next morning, law enforcement officers discovered the charred remains of Pete Hampton and French Godley in the smoldering ruins of the home. Rumors circulated in the aftermath of the riot that a black mob from surrounding towns was planning to attack Pierce City in retaliation, forcing the sheriff to request, finally, the assistance of the local National Guard. Fearing an invasion, some 500 armed white men stood guard around the town. The *Joplin Globe* headlined its account, "Race War Possible in Pierce



City,” but the rumors proved false, and no assault occurred (Stringer-Bishoff 1991). During the six-hour riot the previous evening, virtually all of the town’s black residents, as well as those who lived on the outskirts of town, fled Pierce City. Many of them went to Joplin, Carthage, and Springfield. “The citizens of Peirce [*sic*] City declare no Negro shall ever live there again,” reported the *Chicago Tribune*. “Most of the refugees are making through the woods to Joplin, as Monett, the nearest town, has for years refused to permit a Negro to reside there” (Stringer-Bishoff 1994). The Pierce City race riot made front-page newspaper headlines and attracted sharp criticism across the nation, including from celebrated author Mark Twain. After reading a report of the incident in the *New York Weekly Post*, Twain wrote a scathing essay titled “The United States of Lyncherdom” (1923), in which he condemned the nation and his native Missouri in particular for the recent nationwide surge of violence against African Americans.

Less than two years after a white mob banished Pierce City’s African American population, a deadly race riot engulfed nearby Joplin, Missouri. Located near the Kansas border, Joplin was, around the turn of the twentieth century, a bustling zinc and lead mining center plagued by public drunkenness, crime, and disorder. By 1900, 26,023 people inhabited the city, including a sizeable population of miners, railroad workers, and transient laborers. Joplin was segregated, and its 733 black residents, who comprised slightly less than 3 percent of the town’s population, were restricted to living in two neighborhoods. A recent crime wave, which the *Joplin Daily Globe* attributed to “gangs of tramps” (April 15, 1903), had exacerbated racial tensions in Joplin.

On April 14, 1903, an unidentified black transient shot and killed thirty-four-year-old Officer Theodore Leslie, a one-year veteran of the Joplin Police Department, during a shootout in the Joplin rail yards. A group of men working nearby pursued the assailant and managed to wound him before he eluded them in the darkness. As news of Leslie’s murder spread, a posse of 500 men organized an unsuccessful manhunt to find his killer. The following morning, April 15, two local men captured a twenty-three-year-old black man named Thomas Gilyard, who was suffering from a serious gunshot wound to the leg. A migrant worker from Mississippi, Gilyard told authorities that he had arrived in Joplin only two days earlier. Within a few hours of his arrest, a mob of 3,000 gathered outside the Joplin jail and, using large poles as battering rams, broke through one of the building’s sidewalls and dragged Gilyard from his cell. Two blocks from the jail, mob ringleaders attempted to hang their prisoner from a telephone pole, but a dozen or so city leaders, including the mayor and prosecuting attorney, temporarily thwarted them. With the noose still around Gilyard’s neck, the two groups of men engaged in what the *Joplin Daily Globe* described as “a tug-of-war” (April 16, 1903) struggle over control of the rope and the man ensnared by it. The mob prevailed and hanged Gilyard from a telephone pole.

Two and a half hours later, at around 8:00 P.M., the mob reformed and began its violent invasion of the African American neighborhood called

Kansas City Bottom. The mobsters stoned black pedestrians and torched several homes and businesses. When the Joplin Fire Department arrived to extinguish the blazes, members of the mob turned on the firefighters, slashing their hoses and forcing them to retreat. The mob then attacked residents and destroyed property in Joplin's other black neighborhood, but no one was killed. Roughly half of the city's African American residents fled for their lives, including, according to legend, future Harlem Renaissance writer Langston Hughes and his family. Most never returned again. The following month, an all-white grand jury made the highly unusual decision to indict three Joplin men for their alleged involvement in Gilyard's lynching. One of them was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to ten years imprisonment, but his conviction was overturned on appeal. In a second trial, he won acquittal, and the charges against the other two defendants were dropped.

In the aftermath of the 1903 riot, many of Joplin's dispossessed black residents sought sanctuary in Springfield, Missouri, located seventy-seven miles to the northeast, and it was here, three years later, that the final race riot of the southwest Missouri cluster occurred. In 1900, Springfield was a flourishing Ozarks city with a population of 23,267 residents, of whom 2,268, or fewer than 10 percent, were African American. Springfield's black community contained a prosperous and affluent middle class comprised of doctors, lawyers, dentists, and businessmen and, although segregated, African Americans wielded considerable influence in local Republican politics. Between 1870 and 1900, Springfield had enjoyed relatively harmonious race relations, but as the city entered the twentieth century, race relations became increasingly strained, particularly during municipal elections and in the local vice district of saloons, pool halls, and brothels where black and white working people often mingled. The recent unsolved murders of two white men, one in December 1905 and the other in January 1906, allegedly by African Americans, also inflamed racial animosity.

These smoldering tensions that gripped Springfield erupted into violence during the Easter holiday of 1906. On Good Friday, April 13, 1906, Mina Edwards, a white woman of dubious reputation who had moved to Springfield only a month before, claimed that two masked black men had sexually assaulted her. According to her and her companion, a twenty-two-year-old hotel clerk named Charles Cooper, Cooper was escorting Edwards to work when two black assailants knocked him down, dragged her into a field, and raped her. The next morning, police arrested two suspects, twenty-year-old Horace Duncan and twenty-one-year-old Fred Coker, both of whom were longtime Springfield residents and considered upstanding citizens. Neither had ever before been in trouble with the law. When their white employer told police that Duncan and Coker were at work at his livery stable and transfer company at the time of the alleged assault, authorities released them. But the two men were soon rearrested when Cooper swore out a complaint that they had stolen his pocket watch. That night, around 9:00 P.M., a mob of 1,000 white men, many of them drunk and indiscriminately firing guns into the air, stormed the jail and, in the absence of any resistance from law enforcement authorities, entered Duncan and Coker's cell and

bludgeoned them with sledgehammers, probably killing Coker. The mob dragged the unconscious or already dead men through the streets to the Springfield city square and then hanged them from Gottfried Tower, a metal structure adorned with electric lights and crowned with a replica of the Statue of Liberty. Mob members then built a bonfire at the base of the tower, doused the dangling corpses with coal oil, and set them ablaze. A crowd of between 5,000 and 8,000 spectators, including hundreds of women and children, witnessed the ghastly spectacle. Local police officers, who were reported to have been standing around the edge of the mob, made no attempt to interfere. Still not satisfied, the bloodthirsty mob returned to the jail and removed Will Allen, a young black man charged with the recent murder of a Confederate veteran. The mob also dragged him to the city square, hanged him from the tower, and burned his body.

The following day, Easter Sunday, large crowds of churchgoers dressed in their Easter best converged on the scene of the lynchings, and some of them even sifted through the smoldering ashes for souvenirs of bone fragments and charred flesh with which to commemorate the previous night's orgy of violence. Meanwhile, rumors circulated that new mobs were forming for the purpose of invading Springfield's black neighborhoods and burning families out of their homes. The Greene County sheriff, fearing more bloodshed, telephoned Missouri's Gov. Joseph Folk, who sent five National Guard units to maintain order. National Guard troops patrolled the city's streets for ten days, but no other outbreaks of violence erupted, and Springfield's African American community was spared the fate suffered by those in Monett, Pierce City, and Joplin.

In the weeks following the bloodletting, as many African American families fled the area, Springfield drugstores and soda parlors sold postcards emblazoned with gruesome photographs of the dangling corpses. One enterprising local businessman even struck souvenir medals commemorating the triple lynching. One side of the medal read "Easter Offering," and the other side read "Souvenir of the hanging of 3 niggers, Springfield, Missouri, April 15, 1906" (Lederer 1981). Meanwhile, a grand jury determined that Duncan and Coker were innocent of any crime, and it was later revealed that Mina Edwards and Charles Cooper had fabricated the entire story about the rape. Governor Folk, for his part, publicly condemned the Springfield lynchings and offered a \$300 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the ringleaders. Eventually, eighteen men, including at least one policeman and the sons of two prominent local businessmen, were indicted for their alleged role in the triple lynching. The first of these court cases for second-degree murder ended in a mistrial, and the charges against the other defendants were eventually dismissed.

Springfield's Easter lynching marked the culminating race riot in southwest Missouri at the turn of the twentieth century. The contagion of bloodletting and violence in these four towns resulted in the following decades in the mass exodus of hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of African Americans from the region. According to the 2000 census, the black population in southwest Missouri nowhere near approaches what it was a century ago. Although African Americans comprise slightly more than 11 percent of Missouri's total

population, they comprise between one-tenth of 1 percent and slightly more than 2 percent of the population in the four counties in which these race riots erupted. But this sharp decline in the African American population cannot be solely attributed to the riots. Historical patterns of black migration, which had begun in the 1890s, have also contributed to the current racial demographics of southwest Missouri.

The race riots of southwest Missouri represent defining historical events in these four communities but are often ignored in local city and county histories. Interestingly, though, both citizens of Pierce City and Springfield, reflecting a larger national trend, have recently acknowledged their community's shameful histories of racial violence and the lasting effects of the riots. In 2001, a group of Pierce City residents marked the centennial of their town's riot by erecting a monument in a local cemetery. The following year, the city of Springfield installed a bronze plaque in its downtown business district commemorating its Easter lynchings. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Patrick Huber*

### Springfield (Illinois) Riot of 1908

In August 1908, Springfield, Illinois, experienced three days of racial violence after the murder of a white man and the alleged rape of a white woman by black men. In response, an angry mob of white rioters wreaked havoc on the city, destroying black businesses, homes, and lives. Still, Springfield's black citizens, supported by their friends and families, defended themselves against the attack, killing and wounding several rioters. When the riot subsided, officials reported that two black men had been lynched, five white men had been killed, and hundreds had been wounded. In the end, the majority of rioters indicted for their crimes were acquitted of all charges.

Although the riot occurred in August, an incident that happened on July 4, 1908, initially led to the violence. That night, a black man allegedly entered the home of white mining engineer Clergy Ballard and attempted to assault Ballard's daughter. Ballard, awakened by his daughter's screams, grabbed the intruder and fought with him; however, the intruder managed to break away from Ballard by slashing him with a razor. Ballard's sons, also awakened

during the fracas, chased the intruder but failed to catch him. Ballard later died from his wounds.

The next morning the city's newspapers printed stories about the attack on Ballard's daughter and the death of Clergy Ballard. As family and friends mourned, the police and community began their search for the attacker. The police scoured the black community questioning black men, but by late afternoon they still did not have any leads. However, before long they received their first break in the case. Four high school girls, schoolmates of Ballard's daughter, discovered a man asleep on the side of the road a few blocks from the Ballard home. Assuming this was Ballard's murderer, one of the girls immediately telephoned her father's saloon, the Ballard home, and the police. Within minutes, Ballard's sons, family, and friends arrived on the scene, grabbed the man and commenced to beat him brutally. The police arrived seconds later, saving him from sure death.

The man was identified as Joe James, a Negro drifter from Alabama who once was arrested in Springfield for vagrancy. According to officers, James had lived and worked for a year in East St. Louis before coming to Springfield in June. He also became a jail trustee, often running errands for the officers while serving out his time for the vagrancy charge. Now, James was the lead suspect in the murder of Clergy Ballard. The police questioned James about Ballard's murder, but he would not confess to the killing. James claimed to have passed out from drinking too much alcohol and could not remember anything from the previous night. Also, James was not in possession of the murder weapon. Nevertheless, the police charged James with Ballard's murder.

During the early twentieth century, in cities and towns across America, racially motivated crimes often led to **lynching** or a riot. Fortunately for Springfield, these did not occur after James was captured. Although racial tensions within the city did intensify, those initial, intense feelings of hatred toward blacks seemed to diminish before long. Through their actions and words, many of Springfield's citizens expressed their desire to grant James a fair trial. Springfield authorities appeared to be for law and order by quickly impaneling a special grand jury to hear the Ballard case. Unfortunately, many citizens did not share this spirit of fairness.

Throughout July and into early August, Springfield's mainstream newspapers printed racially intense stories. One told of a black man who was viciously attacked by a mob of white men near the Ballard residence. The victim escaped after police arrived; however, the newspaper remarked that he would have been lynched if it were not for the arrival of the police. The heated stories continued as one explained how a white woman was nearly assaulted by a black man and another story told how two black men fought with two Greek men, wounding one of the Greeks with a razor.

On Friday, August 14, largely because of the sensationalized stories printed in the newspapers, the growing racial tension within the city had reached its limit. The press headlined stories about the rape of a young white housewife, Mabel Hallam. Hallam claimed that a black man broke into her house and sexually assaulted her. The police immediately began their search, apprehending black men of suspicious character. In reality, the

police were indiscriminately questioning and arresting a number of black men without provocation.

After the police questioned the men they apprehended, they were taken to Hallam's house. She would then confront the suspects with questions of her own. If she could not identify any of them as her attacker, they were released. This practice continued through the morning hours until officers picked up three laborers working near the Hallam's house. Like the others before them, the three men were subjected to the questioning process and were released after answering all questions; however, before they could leave the Hallams' yard, the police stopped them. **George Richardson** and a man named Rinehart were again questioned by Hallam; yet, she was still unsure if either of them was the rapist. Finally, after asking Richardson another question, she proclaimed that he was her attacker. Richardson was arrested and taken to the police station where Hallam officially identified him in a police lineup.

The news of Richardson's arrest caused fury throughout most of the white community. Calls for immediate justice were echoed by Hallam's husband, Ballard's friends, and many white residents. In front of the jail where Joe James and now George Richardson were being housed, a small group of angry men and boys began to form. As the crowd grew larger, so did the tension within the city. Increasingly, blacks were unsafe venturing into certain areas of Springfield. Reports circulated that blacks around town were being randomly attacked by whites. Initially, most of these reports were thought to be fabricated until it was confirmed that a group of white men did, in fact, beat an innocent black man with bricks and bats. As more people headed to the jail out of curiosity, rumors of lynching escalated. By mid-afternoon, the jail crowd numbered in the thousands.

Charles Werner, county sheriff and jail overseer, was responsible for the safety of the prisoners. He understood the situation was intensifying beyond his control and could possibly erupt into a riot. Still, Werner refused to contact the state militia for assistance. Instead, Werner believed he could devise a plan that would save James and Richardson from the lynch mob, protect the jailhouse from destruction, and save hundreds of lives by preventing a riot from occurring. He contacted Harry Loper, a local restaurant owner who owned a car, and asked for his assistance in transporting the prisoners to another town. Loper agreed. Hidden from the rowdy crowd, Richardson and James were secretly removed and driven a few miles from town to a train waiting for them. They were handed over to armed guards and taken by train seventy miles north of Springfield to a prison in Bloomington, Illinois.

By evening, the crowd had grown to approximately 5,000. As people left work and headed home, many whites proceeded to the jailhouse yard by way of the local saloons. Most of them, full of liquor and aroused to be a part of the excitement, joined the crowd in front of the jail, shouting insults at the authorities. On this Friday night, the city was filled with out-of-town visitors looking for weekend entertainment. The crowd in front of the jail was comprised mostly of men, women, and children of different classes, ages, and ethnicities. Although most were lower- and middle-class whites,

there were a few upper-class whites among the group. The majority of the people present were native-born (American) citizens; however, there also were a few foreign-born (immigrant) residents in the crowd.

Blacks, after hearing about the day's earlier attacks on innocent black people and the constant rumors of lynching, stayed away from the jailhouse. Though some assumed there was no need for alarm, several believed that trouble was imminent and prepared for a possible mob attack. Several blacks, acting on their knowledge of previous race riots that occurred in various cities across America, secured their family, property, and neighborhoods by purchasing guns and ammunition for protection.

Unmistakably, the situation in Springfield was becoming worse. The unruly crowd at the jail continued to ridicule Werner, requesting that James and Richardson be released to them. Earl Hallam, Mabel Hallam's husband, was leading the taunts. Stubbornly, but strategically, Werner maintained his position, refusing to release the men to Hallam and the mob. As Hallam argued with Werner, it was rumored that the prisoners had been secretly removed. Prompted by these rumors, Hallam demanded that Werner allow him to tour the jail and prove these accusations to be false. Initially Werner refused, but after more heated debate he agreed to let Hallam enter the jail. After a few minutes, Hallam returned to the entrance and announced that James and Richardson were gone.

Werner, probably hoping that the confirmed absence of the prisoners would convince everyone to leave, was surprised by the crowd's reaction. In total disbelief, the crowd became extremely irate and threatened to destroy the prison. However, they were quickly distracted by the news that Harry Loper assisted on the removal of James and Richardson.

Immediately, the mob's attention shifted from destroying the jail to destroying Loper. The large mob marched toward Loper's restaurant shouting racial insults toward blacks and Loper. Several rioters expressed their desire to lynch Loper for saving the lives of James and Richardson and frustrating their plans to run blacks out of town. As they reached the restaurant, the mob rushed the building, throwing bricks through the window and demolishing Loper's car. Some members of the mob deliberately shot at Loper, but missed him. Others looted the cash register and burned down the building. After the destruction of Loper's restaurant, several people had suffered injuries and at least one person, a nineteen-year-old white man, was dead.

The mob, continuing on their rampage, quickly shifted their focus from Loper and his property, and headed to the Levee and Badlands. Through the years, the Levee and Badlands had gained reputations as heavy crime districts in Springfield. The shops, saloons, apartments, and homes in the area were mostly inhabited by poor blacks and members of Springfield's underclass. Both areas had long been viewed by most of the city's white and black upper- and middle-class residents as a disgrace to the city. Meanwhile, the Levee was actually Springfield's black business district while the Badlands was home to many impoverished blacks that were new to the city. Nonetheless, the mob, bent on destroying the black community, stormed through the Levee and Badlands looting and burning businesses and homes.

Rioters primarily targeted black saloons and barbershops because of their importance within the black community. Black-owned saloons in Springfield, as in most American towns and cities, were not only places of leisure, but often served as the headquarters for many black politicians. Moreover, the black barbershop was not only a place for a haircut and shave, but also a place where blacks could discuss and debate the issues of the day. While the mob destroyed these establishments, they also searched for any black person they could find. Blacks trying to escape were pulled off railcars and beaten while others were chased, caught, and beaten into unconsciousness. Only a few trapped by the mob got away, such as the black man who escaped by slashing people with an open razor as he ran through the crowd.

As the mob continued through the Levee, they were surprised at Eighth and Washington Streets by a group of armed blacks stationed on top of a saloon. The blacks fired into the mob, striking a few rioters and causing others to retreat behind buildings. By strategically placing themselves on top of the building, the black shooters gained an advantage over their attackers. Their elevated post allowed them to act as snipers, taking clear shots at rioters below. Simultaneously, one block away at Seventh and Washington Streets, another group of blacks positioned themselves similarly on top of a house and shot into the mob. The attempts by rioters to fight back by entering the saloon and the house failed as the black snipers forced them to retreat several times. Eventually, both black sniper groups, low on ammunition, escaped unharmed.

Notwithstanding, the mob pushed forward, furthering their work of death and destruction, displacing blacks all over the city. Some blacks sought refuge from their white employers, who hid them in their homes. Others headed to the state armory building or state fairgrounds, where the militia had established refugee camps for the victims. Several left the city seeking shelter and support from relatives or friends in surrounding towns. Many found protection with friends and relatives in a predominantly black enclave on the city's eastside. Still, most decided to stay and protect their homes from the mob.

Blacks living within the northeast and southeast sections of the city established armed patrols in order to keep rioters at bay. Most blacks on the eastside were upper- and middle-class residents who held responsible, good-paying jobs and owned their homes. They had worked hard to establish themselves and refused to let an angry **white mob** destroy their family, property, and future. Black men, women, and children organized a defense tactic that spanned across the neighborhood, placing groups of armed men and women in strategic locations. Some groups maneuvered among houses looking for intruders, and others even rode the railcars making sure rioters were not entering the neighborhood. The organized defense proved to be successful. Rioters never entered these carefully patrolled areas.

In other sections of the city, several black men, sending their families away, stayed at home to protect their property. Scott Burton, a black barber, was one of these men. After sending his family out of town to safety, he armed himself with a shotgun and prepared to defend his home. Ultimately,



the mob reached his front porch. Burton was ready for the attack, shooting into the rushing mob and spreading buckshot into the rioters. But Burton's actions were not enough to stop the onslaught. The mob continued to push forward, forcing Burton to escape through a side door. Although quickly surrounded by the mob, he still attempted to get away, but was knocked unconscious. People spat in his face, punching and kicking him. Then someone slipped a rope around his neck and dragged him to the nearest tree. Burton was hoisted up and lynched in front of a saloon.

The rioters began to celebrate by dancing around the dangling corpse while riddling his body with bullets. Finally, the mob's celebration was halted by the arrival of the state militia, which had been called out by Gov. Charles S. Deneen, to end the violence and restore order. Unfortunately for Springfield, the arrival of the militia was too late. When the troops reached the city, most of the damage had been done, and Scott Burton had become the first known lynching death of the riot.

The following day, Saturday, August 15, the downtown area was filled with people wanting to view the destruction. The scene was almost carnival-like as curious sightseers toured the burned-out Levee district and posed for pictures in front of the tree where Burton was hanged. Many ripped bark from the tree to keep as souvenirs while others purchased photos of Mabel Hallam. The city's newspapers included stories of the Burton lynching, the burned-out Levee and Badlands, and the so-called black exodus from the city. In reality, the exodus was temporary, and the number of blacks leaving was much lower than reported. Still, the city's newspapers printed accounts of over 2,000 blacks fleeing Springfield with intentions of never returning. Adding to the stories being written by local reporters, journalists from various state and national news publications arrived in the city to write accounts of Friday night's mayhem.

William English Walling, a social activist from New York, had been in Chicago when he heard about the riot. He traveled from Chicago to Springfield to see the destruction and record people's reactions of the event. After interviewing several white residents, he was appalled by their statements. He concluded that most whites agreed with the actions of the mob. Walling noted how Governor Deneen assumed that the city's blacks were insane for challenging the rioters by fighting back, but Walling insisted that blacks were only defending themselves. Indeed, blacks were defending themselves and continued to prepare for the worst. During the rest of August 15, blacks were threatened and harassed as whites discussed plans for more attacks at nightfall. Many black residents, refusing to be affected by the threats, appealed to family and friends for armed support. Blacks from nearby towns and as far as Chicago arrived in Springfield with guns and ammunition to assist their relatives. Several blacks sent out messages to the white community that they were armed and ready to protect their families and property.

At dusk, gangs of whites began to gather. This time, the groups were smaller in size and more organized in their tactics. They had planned attacks on black homes located in the central western sections of the city. Although their target area was predominantly white, some blacks did live

within the vicinity. The mob's movement indicated clearly that they did not intend to attack the heavily armed, predominantly black neighborhoods on the city's eastside. The gangs also had to contend with the militia that exchanged gunfire with rioters often throughout the evening. Yet, the militia was spread out around the city, mainly guarding intersections near the white business district as well as some residential areas. The positioning of the troops allowed rioters to employ hit-and-run tactics on black homes.

Such tactics were used against the home of William Donnegan, an eighty-six-year-old retired shoemaker, who had lived in Springfield for several years. Donnegan, who was married to a white woman, lived on Springfield's predominantly white central westside. As Donnegan and his family hid in the house, the mob stormed their residence, overtaking Donnegan and dragging him to the front yard. As one person slashed his throat, another wrapped some rope around his neck. He was strung up a tree and hanged. The militia, arriving within minutes of the lynching, realized Donnegan was still alive and cut him down. Unfortunately, his slashed throat proved fatal. Donnegan had officially become the second lynching death of the riot. For the rest of the night, small gangs of whites made attempts on black homes, but did not succeed in lynching anyone else. Several blacks who did not trust the militia's protection continued to arm themselves, defending their families and property.

On Sunday, August 16, Governor Deneen began ordering troops from the city. Although small disturbances would continue throughout the week, most state and city leaders agreed that the riot had been contained and further mob action was not probable. Almost immediately, the city began to move forward with the healing process. In the city's black and white churches, pastors stood in front of their congregations preaching repentance and reconciliation. They demanded that people stop the fighting and come together for law and order. From the death tolls and damage reports, everyone seemed to understand that enough harm had been done. The riot's casualty reports revealed more whites than blacks had been killed, with circulating rumors telling how thirty to forty whites had been killed and secretly buried. Within the downtown district, over \$100,000 in damage had been inflicted on black and white businesses. Several black businesses had been totally destroyed. Moreover, black homes had been burned, black men lynched, and black people harassed by the militia. During the three days of rioting, the militia had been responsible for imposing curfews on black residents and confiscating their ammunition and guns, effectively disabling blacks from defending themselves against mob attacks. Regardless, it was obvious blacks and whites had suffered during the riot and now both races demanded justice.

By Monday, August 17, the riot was officially over. The city's leadership, embarrassed and outraged, vowed to bring all rioters to justice and restore the fair name of Springfield. White business leaders and professionals met to denounce the actions of the mob and offer resolutions confirming their allegiance to law and order. At the meeting, white leaders vowed to protect all citizens regardless of race or nationality; however, they refused to invite Springfield's black leadership to their meeting. While wanting to participate

in the process, the city's black leaders felt slighted. They were left to denounce the riot and present their own resolutions for law and order. Still, many black leaders hoped to form an alliance with the city's white leadership. So, black leaders, within their resolutions, made it a point to announce their support for the actions taken by the city's white leaders.

Within days of the meetings, a special grand jury was impaneled to try members of the mob. With help from the city's white leaders, the assistant state attorney issued 107 indictments. The cases had to be handled in chronological order, so Joe James' case would be tried first.

Joe James, the alleged murderer of Clergy Ballard, attained representation from two black Springfield attorneys, O.V. Royall and A.M. Williams. After James pleaded not guilty, Royall and Williams attempted to move the trial to another county. They believed James could not receive a fair trial in Springfield, especially after the riot. However, their request for a change of venue was denied by Judge James A. Creighton. Creighton reasoned that James would receive a fairer trial in Springfield because, as he believed, the negative sentiments toward blacks within the city had subsided. Yet, minutes before the trial began, a black effigy of James had been strung up in the courthouse yard. Also, a letter was found that threatened more rioting if James did not hang for the murder of Ballard. Contrary to Creighton's rationalization, it was evident that negative feelings toward blacks had not subsided within Springfield. During the trial, the arguments posed by James' attorneys did not convince the jury of his innocence. Consequently, James was convicted of Ballard's murder and sentenced to death by hanging.

The next trial would have been George Richardson's, but the court dismissed his case. In preparation for the hearing, both Mabel Hallam and Richardson were examined by the state board of health's laboratory technician. Hallam's test results showed that she had contracted a sexually transmitted disease, presumably from the attack. The authorities, assuming that Richardson gave her the disease, were astonished by Richardson's test results. His exam showed that he did not have a sexually transmitted disease; therefore, he could not have raped Hallam. With this new evidence, detectives forced Hallam to admit that Richardson was not her attacker. Out of sheer embarrassment, Hallam lied again. She told police that she made a mistake, accusing another black man of the assault. After the police made a few inquiries, they concluded that the new suspect did not exist. Finally, it was revealed that Hallam had fabricated her story. She had actually been having an extramarital affair while her husband was at work, and it was Hallam's lover, a white man, who had assaulted her.

After Richardson's release, the prosecution shifted its focus to the 107 riot indictments. The assistant state attorney planned to present his case against the mobs' ringleaders and then the remaining riot participants. The ringleaders were identified by witnesses as "Bloody" Kate Howard, a proprietor of a brothel that led the mob in the destruction of Loper's restaurant; "Slim" Humphreys, a neighborhood huckster who guided rioters to the homes of blacks, specifically William Donnegan's home; and Abe Raymer, a Jewish man who was accused of lynching Donnegan, participating in the Scott Burton lynching, and helping in the destruction of Loper's restaurant.

Yet, Kate Howard never made it to trial; before the trials began, she committed suicide. Therefore, Abe Raymer would be tried first.

During Raymer's trial, witnesses placed him at the Donnegan lynching. They accused Raymer of slashing Donnegan's throat and lynching him. Although the testimonies against Raymer were damaging, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. The court's ruling crippled the prosecution's case, setting a precedent for the remaining trials. Out of 107 indictments issued by the state, one person was convicted of theft.

The black community was appalled by the outcome of Raymer's trial and the acquittal of the other rioters, but most white residents, especially the city's white leadership, viewed the rulings as fair. The jury, unabashed by their decision, believed that they had done the right thing by allowing the rioters to go free. Many jurors expressed their approval of the mob's work by commenting how something had to be done to keep blacks in their place. Most jurors agreed that if they had convicted the rioters for their actions, Springfield's blacks would have believed they were as good as white people. The city's black leadership and community were devastated after realizing there would be no justice for them.

On October 23, 1908, Joe James was executed in front of a crowd of 147 witnesses. In a sense, his death symbolized the final chapter of the riot; however, it also symbolized the birth of increased **segregation** for Springfield's black community. Many white Springfield businesses had always practiced segregation, but segregation became a community norm after the riot. Several white businesses and homes that employed blacks fired their black employees. Blacks, who were previously allowed to patronize certain restaurants and theaters, were refused service or were forced to sit in theater balconies, away from white customers. Most blacks were not allowed to purchase homes in certain areas of the city. Some home developments contained specific clauses that disallowed the sale of these properties to blacks. On one hand, some whites were against segregating their places of business or releasing their black employees. On the other hand, serious threats from secret white organizations and other white groups directed at white business owners for employing or selling merchandise to blacks could not be ignored. Out of fear for their lives, these business owners acquiesced to the threats. City officials also felt pressure to obey anonymous threats. Mayor Roy Reece oversaw a city payroll that included an all-black fire department and four black police officers. During the riot, Reece received several intimidating letters urging him to remove all blacks from city employment. Also, several members of the mob had expressed their disgust with Reece for employing blacks. In response to the threats, Reece released the black firefighters from employment. Later, the city's black officers were removed from duty.

Through it all, Springfield's black residents continued to push forward and attempted to rebuild the black community. But the city's black leaders encountered great difficulties in convincing other blacks that Springfield was a good place to live. Unfortunately, segregation and memories of the riot atrocities eventually would take their toll. Before the riot, Springfield's black community was second only to Chicago's black community in

population and had one of the fastest-growing black communities in the state. By 1920, Springfield's black population had significantly decreased to levels lower than its 1900 and 1910 population totals.

Conversely, Springfield's white community forged ahead with repairing the city's name and preparing for the centennial celebration of Springfield's favorite son, Abraham Lincoln. February 12, 1909, would mark the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. Locally, many perceived that Springfield's white leadership had fixed the problems associated with the riot, and heaped praise on those white leaders for their immediate calls to action, although no one had been convicted for serious riot offenses.

Nationally, many whites applauded the work of the mob and approved of the outcomes. In contrast, many whites across the country were disgusted by the Springfield riots. Prominent among them was New York socialist and social worker Mary White Ovington. After reading William English Walling's article on the riot, Ovington wanted to prevent further senseless attacks on black communities across the nation. Ovington, along with prominent whites and blacks such as **W.E.B. Du Bois**, met in New York and formed the National Negro Committee, which ultimately changed its name to the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**.

From the riot aftermath, one can clearly deduce that Springfield's white community blamed the black community for the riot. Most white residents believed that crimes perpetrated by blacks toward whites had gone too far, and the mob's work was justifiable in preventing further black-on-white crime. However, the true reasons for rioting went beyond black criminal activity or, as some scholars believe, the migration of blacks from the south to the north in search of white men's jobs. Actually, the progressive advancement of Springfield's blacks educationally, politically, and economically caused many white residents to express feelings of hatred and resentment toward blacks. Springfield's whites felt that the city's blacks had stepped out of their proper societal place by reaching a certain level of affluence within the community. The acquittal of the riot participants, regardless of the crime, and the increased segregation was a message to Springfield's black community that whites were still in control. *See also* Black Self-Defense; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Richardson, George (dates unknown); White Mobs.

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*Anthony M. Landis*

### **Springfield (Massachusetts) Riot of 1965**

The Springfield (Massachusetts) Riot of 1965 was a violent confrontation between blacks and white police officers. The 1960s and 1970s were a time when black riots in cities across the nation were an all-too-common

occurrence. These riots, including the Springfield riot in Massachusetts, marked a significant change in the patterns of racial violence. Before the 1960s, whites were the primary instigators of riots. Whites destroyed black property and deliberately assaulted black citizens. Blacks generally targeted property in their own communities rather than individuals. White **racism**, particularly **police brutality** and harassment, was a major factor contributing to riots incited by blacks.

The riot in Springfield, Massachusetts, occurred on July 17, 1965. The incident was brief and did not result in any fatalities or damage to property. However minor the conflict, the riot epitomized the racial tensions between blacks and whites. The riot began when police attempted to break up a fight outside a black nightclub. Police later asserted that they had arrested eighteen of hundreds of black bystanders who threw rocks and bottles at them. Blacks insisted that they acted in self-defense in response to excessive police force. Nevertheless, the police officers were not charged with any crime. The local branches of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** and the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** organized a series of nonviolent protests, such as marches, at City Hall and in the downtown area throughout the summer. They demanded an official investigation of the incident. Their protests brought no change, no justice, and no official action to resolve the tense race relations. *See also* Black Self-Defense; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Nonviolence.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### Springfield (Ohio) Riot of 1904

The Springfield (Ohio) Riot of 1904 was not an aberration in early-twentieth-century race relations. Not since the **Reconstruction** era (1865–1877) had race riots swept the nation as they did in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Reconstruction riots were confined to the South—**New Orleans**, Louisiana (1866), (1868), (1874); **Memphis**, Tennessee (1866); and Meridian (1870), Vicksburg (1874), and Yazoo City, Mississippi (1875). However, the turn of the twentieth century saw racial violence against blacks spread north to cities where many African Americans migrated in search of economic, social, and political opportunities.

Springfield, Ohio, was one city where blacks had established a vibrant community in the section of town known as the Levee. Many of the black industrial workers and day laborers resided in this section of Springfield, which included a black business sector and informal economy (prostitution, barrooms, and gambling parlors).

On March 6, 1904, an African American resident of Springfield, Richard Dixon (also reported as Richard Dickerson) went to the Jones hotel in the Levee to retrieve his clothes from a woman, Anna (a.k.a. Mamie) Corbin, who was purported to be his mistress. Dixon requested that a police

officer, Charles Collis, accompany him to Corbin's room to reclaim his clothes. Various newspaper sources reported that Dixon and Corbin quarreled until Dixon took out a gun and shot the woman. The police officer attempted to subdue Dixon, only to be shot four times by the assailant. Dixon escaped and immediately turned himself in at police headquarters.

When news of the shooting and death of the white police officer reached the wider Springfield community, white men and boys gathered at the jail that next evening. Initially, some 300 male whites stood outside the jail demanding the release of Dixon, shouting "lynch the nigger." At one point, the police had dispersed the crowd, but a small group of men diverted police attention so that some 250 men could storm the jail and kidnap Dixon. An estimated mob of 2,000 to 2,500 men blocked the prison gates outside, preventing the police force from protecting Dixon. The white men took Dixon away and lynched him.

When news of the **lynching** reached the black community, African Americans prepared to defend themselves, as rumors circulated that the mob intended to invade the Levee. Springfield's Mayor G.J. Bowlus called Gov. Myron T. Herrick to send troops to subdue the potential rioters. Indeed, on March 9, some 2,000 white men shot bullets into the Levee and then set it ablaze, burning down mostly black-owned homes and businesses. Some newspaper sources numbered the mob that invaded the levee at 5,000. Springfield, Ohio, would experience another race riot in 1906.

Springfield was not the first city to experience race riots in the opening years of the new century. New Orleans and **New York City** both erupted in racial violence in 1900. During the same year as the second Springfield riot, "race wars" broke out in **Atlanta**, Georgia; **Greensburg**, Indiana; and **Brownsville**, Texas. In 1908, the **Springfield**, Illinois, race riot would lead to the creation of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. All these riots had one element in common—white fear of a growing black presence.

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*Jeannette Eileen Jones*

### ***Strange Fruit* (Allan, c. 1937)**

In 1939, Abel Meeropol presented a song to blues and jazz performer **Billie Holiday** that he wrote. The song was titled *Strange Fruit*. Meeropol, a Jewish high school teacher and union activist from the Bronx, wrote the song to protest the **lynching** of black southerners and asked Holiday to perform his piece. She agreed, and her haunting version of *Strange Fruit* became an anthem against **racism** that the British magazine *Q* called "one of the ten songs that changed the world" (January 2003). Jazz writer Leonard Feather deemed *Strange Fruit* "the first significant protest in words and music, the first un-muted cry against racism," while record producer Ahmet

Ertegun declared it “a declaration of war” and “the beginning of the civil rights movement” (Margolick, 14, 10). In short, few songs have had the impact on race relations that *Strange Fruit* continues to possess.

The “strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees” that Meeropol referred to were African Americans who hanged after their execution at the hands of a lynch mob. Although the most active period of lynching in American history had passed, the practice continued to plague the south when Meeropol, who used the pseudonym Lewis Allan, wrote *Strange Fruit* in the mid-1930s. He wanted to bring attention to this injustice, in hopes that the federal government would pass a national anti-lynching law. Meeropol’s powerful prose contrasted the horrors of lynching with the gentility of the “gallant south.” A “pastoral scene” of “poplar trees” could not hide “the bulging eyes and the twisted mouth” of “black bodies swinging in the southern breeze.” The song ended with the profound line, “Here is a strange and bitter crop.”

Holiday first performed *Strange Fruit* at New York’s only integrated nightclub, Café Society. When the song ended, Holiday later commented that “There wasn’t even a patter of applause when I finished. Then a lone person began to clap nervously. Then suddenly everyone was clapping” (Margolick, 9). The song proved so powerful that she closed all performances with *Strange Fruit*. Word of the provocative song quickly spread throughout the city’s liberal white elite, and Café Society mentioned the piece in its advertisements to attract customers. The *New York Post* reviewed Holiday’s performance of *Strange Fruit* and said, “If the anger of the exploited ever mounts high enough in the South, it now has its Marseillaise” (Margolick, 62).

The song was so intense, its topic so unpleasant, that white nightclub patrons sometimes assaulted Holiday for performing *Strange Fruit*. Some theater owners prohibited her from including the song in her act, and the BBC and several American radio stations refused to play the record. Even Holiday’s label, Columbia Records, refused to record the song. It was eventually produced and marketed by the smaller Commodore Records company. There is little evidence that performances including *Strange Fruit* ignited racially motivated riots. But the potential for violence existed every time Holiday performed the inflammatory song because of the genuine emotions, both positive and negative, it evoked. For instance, she told one newspaper that she was chased out of Mobile, Alabama, for singing *Strange Fruit*, but provided few details. Several stories also circulated of southern jukeboxes that were demolished because the tune appeared on their playlists.

The power *Strange Fruit* possesses is evident in the numerous artists who have performed the song. Josh White, Sidney Bichet, Tori Amos, Cassandra Wilson, Pete Seeger, Ella Fitzgerald, Lou Rawls, Diana Ross, Sting, and UB-40, among others, have recorded their version of the piece. The song still evokes the horrors of late-nineteenth and twentieth-century lynchings that took place in the United States, but it is also used to protest social injustices on a much broader scale. The fact, however, that *Strange Fruit* exposed the inhumanity of lynchings in such a troubling and intense



manner made it both an anthem of the national anti-lynching movement and a timeless part of American popular culture.

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*J. Michael Butler*

### **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a civil rights organization founded in 1960 by African American college students committed to the abolition of **segregation** and seeking to encourage African Americans to become more politically active in the **civil rights movement**. On February 1, 1960, four African American students entered the Woolworth Store on South Elm Street in Greensboro, North Carolina, and sat down at the counter reserved for whites only, and they refused to leave until they were served. The four students—Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair, Jr., and David Richmond—were all freshman from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. The waitress and manager refused to serve them, and the restaurant closed early to be rid of the students. Expecting to be beaten and arrested, all four students walked out of Woolworth's unharmed. Whether they realized it or not, their actions became the catalyst that helped change racial relations in the South because almost immediately, other students, black and white, participated in nonviolent sit-ins and direct-action demonstrations that challenged segregation not only in North Carolina but in fifty-four cities in nine states throughout the South.

Ella Josephine Baker (1903–1986) was one of those individuals. A former member of the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** under the guidance of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, Baker left SCLC after the Greensboro sit-ins. She was inspired by the courage of the student activists and wanted to do something to help further their cause. She organized a meeting at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, for student leaders, including representatives from SCLC, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. From that meeting, SNCC was born. Both SCLC and the NAACP wanted students to become part of their larger, more established organizations, but Ella Baker insisted that the students remain independent.

SNCC's significance to the civil rights movement cannot be overestimated, not only because of its myriad achievements, inventiveness, and determination in the struggle against segregation, but also because of the impressive array of young activists, like Julian Bond, who passed through its ranks. These men and women challenged the injustices, degradation, and violence that destroyed and distorted the hopes and dreams of generations of Americans, both black and white.

While Ella Baker preferred to remain in the background, quietly encouraging young activists, Fannie Lou Hamer (1917–1977), SNCC field secretary,

took an active part in voter registration in the South. Hamer also helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in 1964, which challenged the all-white Mississippi delegation to the Democratic National Convention. Diane Nash (1938–) and Ruby Doris Smith-Robinson (1942–1967) were SNCC members who participated in a demonstration at Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where the concept of *jail-no-bail* was first introduced. After being arrested, protesters refused to pay their fines or bail, preferring to serve their sentences instead.

Nash also participated in the **Freedom Rides**. In May 1961, members of SNCC and CORE organized bus trips throughout the South in an effort to test compliance of the Supreme Court ruling in *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960), which declared segregation in interstate transportation unconstitutional. Thirteen passengers, seven African Americans and six whites, who became known as freedom riders, boarded two buses, Greyhound and Trailways, in Washington, D.C., with the intent of traveling into the Deep South. The riders encountered few problems as they traveled through Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. However, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, John Lewis and another rider were beaten and kicked. In Anniston, Alabama, a group of white men, including members of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, attacked the passengers and burned their bus. The riders ended their protest in Birmingham, Alabama, unable to find a driver willing to continue the trip. It was at this point that Diane Nash recruited another group of freedom riders to complete the trip. They too were victims of violence, including being arrested for entering a Whites Only waiting room. But this second venture attracted national attention, including that of Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy**. Ultimately, the riders were forced to end their journey on the road. Those who wanted to complete the trip to New Orleans had to get there by plane.

Many other notable African Americans joined the ranks of SNCC. Marion Barry was the first chairperson of SNCC and established its headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Following Barry's departure, Charles McDew, a founding member of SNCC, was elected chairperson (1961–1963). He was replaced by John Lewis, one of the most influential members of SNCC. His influence was not only important inside SNCC but throughout the civil rights movement as a whole. He helped plan the March on Washington (1963), where Martin Luther King, Jr., made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech before a crowd of over 250,000 people. Lewis was also one of the keynote speakers. One of the most memorable moments in Lewis' career as a civil rights activist occurred in 1965 when he marched with King and 525 marchers from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in an effort to secure voting rights for African Americans. When they attempted to cross the Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, the marchers were attacked and beaten by state troopers. The attack was so vicious that the incident became known as **Bloody Sunday**.

The five years between 1963 and 1968 were pivotal years for the members of SNCC. From its inception, SNCC was committed to the principles of **nonviolence**. The articles of the founding mission statement emphasized that the philosophical and religious principles of nonviolence would serve as the foundation of the organization's purpose, belief, and action. The founding members chose nonviolence as their sole course of action because

they believed nonviolence created an atmosphere of reconciliation and justice. Nonviolence would be the weapon they would use to combat the violence of segregation and **racism** and achieve their ultimate goal of a racially integrated society based on the principles of justice and equality.

But the events of the mid-1960s challenged their commitment. It became increasingly difficult to practice nonviolence in a country that was being consumed by violence, and the struggle within the ranks of SNCC to come to terms with this paradox created dissension and conflict. It reached a point where every victory became bittersweet and every triumph was overshadowed by a sense of loss and defeat. Under these circumstances, it is a testimony of the strength and commitment of the individual members that they continued the struggle for civil rights. However, even though the struggle continued, many activists, not only within SNCC, but in the civil rights movement as a whole, began to contemplate more radical, militant, and nationalist or race-conscious approaches. The events of 1963 alerted many members of the civil rights movement that nonviolence might not be as effective a strategy as it was in the early part of 1960s during sit-in demonstrations. For example, on August 28, 1963, the March on Washington was an undisputed triumph and seemed to mark a positive turning point in the civil rights struggle. However, the murder of **Medgar Evers** on June 11, 1963, seemed to cast an ominous shadow over the events that took place in Washington, D.C. (see **Evers, Medgar, Assassination of**). And, coincidentally, the death of **W.E.B. Du Bois** on the eve of the March on Washington seemed equally ill-omened. To add to this sense of loss and triumph, on Sunday, September 15, 1963, a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church killing four African American girls—Carol Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins. Finally, President **John F. Kennedy** was assassinated on November 22, 1963.

The following year brought even more changes for SNCC. On July 2, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. In a passage that recalled the Greensboro sit-ins, the act declared the following:

All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any public accommodation . . . without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origins. (Title II, Sec. 201, [a])

On July 18, 1964, a riot broke out in Harlem, a historic African American community in New York City. James Powell, a young African American, was fatally wounded by a white police officer. Members of CORE organized a peaceful protest but tempers flared and the demonstration turned violent. The riot raged two nights before erupting in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn. More than just calling the philosophy of nonviolence into question, the Harlem riot foreshadowed insurrections, like the Watts (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**) riot, which would erupt in African American communities throughout the late 1960s.

Harlem was not the only place where violence erupted. During the summer of 1964, thousand of activists came to Mississippi to participate in an intensive voter registration drive. It was called **Freedom Summer** and

was, to a large extent, the brainchild of Robert Parris Moses. He had been one of the first SNCC workers to register black voters in Mississippi. Moses had also helped found the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of several civil rights organizations, including SNCC, the NAACP, and CORE. Because of the intensity of the project, Freedom Summer was considered to be one of the major milestones of the civil rights movement. Besides voter registration, Freedom Summer volunteers also established numerous Freedom Schools throughout the state in an effort to address some of the racial inequalities inherent in the educational system. Although the work was rewarding, Freedom Summer activists became targets for the police and white supremacists. Black churches, homes, and businesses were firebombed (see **Black Church Arsons**). Black and white volunteers were arrested and beaten by **white mobs** and the police (see **Police Brutality**).

But the tragic event that captured the attention of the nation was the murder of three Freedom Summer activists. On June 21, James Earl Chaney (1943–1964), Andrew Goodman (1943–1964), and Michael Schwerner (1939–1964) were arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Six weeks later their bodies were discovered under a dam. Following the murders, many of the activists involved in the Freedom Summer were convinced that nonviolence was not the answer. Many members of SNCC voiced the opinion that workers should carry weapons. This shift away from the philosophy of nonviolence continued. During the Los Angeles (California) Riots of 1965, many members declared that the time had come for blacks to seize power and abandon their old policy of nonviolence. By May 1966, the transformation was complete. John Lewis, still an advocate of nonviolence, was replaced as chairperson of SNCC by **Stokely Carmichael** (Kwame Ture), who called for offensive violence to overthrow oppression. His rallying call was **Black Power** and **black self-defense**. SNCC severed ties with its white supporters and several civil rights organizations like SCLC and the NAACP. By 1967, SNCC began to suffer major internal problems. Its staff and membership dwindled and so did its funding. In June 1967, Carmichael left SNCC and became a member of the **Black Panther Party (BPP)**. He was replaced by **H. Rap Brown**, who renamed the organization the Student National Coordinating Committee, deleting the word *nonviolent*. During the summer of 1967, Brown was arrested for inciting a riot. In May 1968, he left SNCC because of his legal problems. SNCC continued to function into the early 1970s, but it no longer possessed the power and enthusiasm of the student movement that Ella Baker helped found in 1960 during the Greensboro, North Carolina, sit-ins. *See also* Black Nationalism.

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*John G. Hall*

**Sweet, Ossian H. (1894–1960)**

Dr. Ossian Sweet, a former resident of Florida, migrated to Detroit during the **Great Migration** of African Americans from the South to major northern industrial cities in the United States (1910–1920s). His purchase of a home confronted racial **segregation** in Detroit, Michigan, and answered the question of whether an African American had the right to defend his or her property.

Most Detroit residents of apparent African American descent were forced to reside in an eastside location known as Paradise Valley. In May 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet made arrangements to purchase 2905 Garland Street, a single home bungalow in what appeared to be an all-white eastside neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan. The immediate area included apartments, grocery store, and an elementary school. Sweet made himself visible as he inspected the property and its surroundings. The home's previous owners, Ed and Marie Smith, had occupied the Garland home for two years. Ed Smith was an African American with a light complexion and apparently the neighborhood Negro haters overlooked or were ignorant of his lineage. Nevertheless, once sale of the Garland house was known, Marie Smith received a threat for selling the house and was told that the caller would get Sweet as well.

Sweet graduated from Wilberforce College, followed by Howard University School of Medicine. Raised in a politically conscious and hardworking family with at least nine siblings, Ossian Sweet's father, Henry Sweet, believed in self-sufficiency for his sons. Consequently, Ossian Sweet financed his own education. After graduating with his medical degree in 1922, Sweet married Gladys Mitchell and both traveled to North Africa and Europe—Germany, France, Austria, Vienna, and England—where he received further specialized medical training. Sweet chose to practice gynecology and obstetrics at Detroit's progressive New Negro hospital, Dunbar Memorial Hospital (named after poet and writer Paul Laurence Dunbar). The Sweets had one child, Marguerite Iva Sweet, their daughter.

In 1925, the Detroit, Michigan, arm of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** was large and active. In the 1923 Detroit mayoral election, KKK candidate Charles Bowles narrowly lost to John Smith. Commonly, during 1925, mobs of racist whites quickly formed to keep African Americans from integrating neighborhoods. On June 23, 1925, Dr. Alexander Turner, along with his wife and mother-in-law, were moving into their home on Spokane Street when they were met by the Tireman Avenue Improvement Association—hundreds of neighbors who gathered in front of them with rocks, potatoes, and garbage to throw at Turner's westside home. At gunpoint, two men forced Turner to sign his deed over to them and, with the help of the police, had the Turner family escorted from the premises. One block away from the *de facto* designated Negro neighborhood, Vollington Bristol constructed and moved into his apartment building on July 7, 1925, and refused to adjust his rent and choice of who could rent an apartment. Several days of violence ensued. On June 10, 1925, John Fletcher was preparing to have dinner with his wife and two children when a mob of neighbors began attacking

the house. Two shots were fired from the Fletcher home, injuring a youth. Fletcher was jailed for an evening and the family later fled their home. Hence, Dr. Sweet knew what to expect from an angry **white mob** when he moved into his Garland home.

Sweet's pending move to Garland Street encouraged the formation of the Waterworks Park Improvement Association, which held at least one meeting at Howe Elementary School (named for abolitionist and composer of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, Julia Ward Howe), located across the street from Sweet's home. Sweet notified the Detroit Police Department of his intention to move into his home. On September 8, 1925, Dr. Sweet and his family and friends moved in their Garland home. On their first evening, it is estimated that a group of 500 to 800 individuals, led by the Waterworks Park Improvement Association, gathered in front of the Sweet home.

On September 9, 1925, another large crowd gathered and some individuals began chucking rocks into 2905 Garland. About 8:30 P.M., fearful occupants fired shots from the upper level of the home. Leon Breiner was shot and killed, and another neighbor, Eric Houghberg, was shot in the leg. Eleven occupants were taken into custody, including Gladys Sweet, and were charged with first-degree murder.

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** hired famed attorney Clarence Darrow, assisted by Arthur Garfield Hays, to defend the eleven defendants. Judge Frank Murphy allowed Gladys Sweet to be released on bail on October 2, 1925. The other ten defendants were Dr. Ossian Sweet, Henry Sweet, Dr. Otis Sweet, William E. Davis, John Latting, Joe Mack, Leonard Morris, Morris Murray, Charles Wasington, and Hewitt Watson. On November 27, 1925, Judge Frank Murphy declared a mistrial and dismissed the jury when they were unable to reach a verdict after forty-six hours of deliberation. The defendants were released on bail in December 1925.

Henry Sweet fired the gun that killed Breiner. The trial, *Michigan v. Sweet* began on April 13, 1926. On May 13, 1926, after four hours of deliberation, Henry Sweet was found not guilty. Over a year later, in July 1927, the prosecutor dismissed all charges against the remaining defendants. The Sweet case reinforced the right of an African American to self-defense.

Tuberculosis claimed the lives of Sweet's daughter in 1926 and his wife in 1928. Dr. Sweet was unable to sell his home until 1944. He committed suicide on March 19, 1960. The Sweet home is listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*. See also Detroit (Michigan) Riot of 1943.

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*Regina V. Jones*



# T

## **Tampa (Florida) Riots of 1987**

In Tampa, Florida, the months of February to April 1987 brought several nights of violence, citizens in fear, and heightened tension between police and citizens. Between November 1986 and April 1987, four black men died at the hands of white Tampa police. These incidents heightened already strained tensions between black citizens of Tampa and local police, and served as the impetus for angry citizens to take to the streets throwing rocks and bottles. Combined, these violent outbreaks are called the Tampa Riots of 1987.

Rioting began the night of February 19, when a white police officer used a controversial chokehold technique to subdue Melvin Eugene Hair, a black man in custody. As a result, Hair died of suffocation. On the same night, local television news stations reported the outcome of a city attorney's office investigation into the arrest of Dwight Gooden, star pitcher for the New York Mets and prominent black citizen of Tampa. Gooden was arrested the previous December after having been stopped for a traffic violation that escalated into a fight. As a result, Gooden was left visibly swollen and bruised. The city attorney's report blamed Gooden for starting the fight with police.

Both of these incidents came on the heels of the death of Franklin A. Lewis, a sixteen-year-old who was shot by police after allegedly shooting a gun into a crowd. The official investigative report following Lewis' death exonerated the officers, reporting that they had used necessary force to subdue their suspect. However, Tampa's black citizenry was not satisfied with this account, suspicious that no gun was found on Lewis' body. Many blacks in Tampa were becoming more and more incensed, alleging that police targeted them specifically, viewing them as criminals to be subdued and controlled rather than citizens to be protected. In that vein, they charged that police took liberties with young black men especially, brutalizing them without repercussion.

The news of Hair's death, coupled with the city attorney's report that reflected unfavorably on Gooden, was incendiary. Several black youths



gathered outside, discussing the incidents. As they discussed the incidents, their discontent grew, and one of them set fire to a dumpster. That drew a crowd, which then began to throw bottles and rocks. The violence continued for the next three days, causing police to cordon off a section of the city where even media were not allowed. Similar incidents continued sporadically through April of that year, sparked by continuing tensions with police. Two more black men died at the hands of white police officers, inciting the city's youth, who were already tense and angry. During waves of violence, rioters threw bottles and rocks at police, whites driving through the neighborhood, and the media.

By April, Tampa was a hotbed of anger, frustration, and tension. The waves of violence ended, leaving in their wake an unmistakable outcry from the black citizens of Tampa, who resented the treatment they were receiving from the police. Response was swift—there were several **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** investigations into police department practices, Tampa's mayor pushed to substantially increase the number of black police officers on the force, and several task forces and city council committees were formed to look into racial tensions in the city. Both the police force and the local government pursued the reduction of **police brutality** and racial profiling.

Because police practices received the lion's share of attention and funding, the deeper, less visible issues received considerably less attention. By and large, the riots occurred in Tampa's College Hill and Ponce de Leon neighborhoods, two extremely impoverished sections of the city that are home to the majority of Tampa's public housing projects. In these areas, the overarching issues of extreme **poverty**, dwindling opportunities for social and economic growth, and insufficient housing fueled residents' unrest. For example, cuts in social programming left the housing authority grossly underfunded. While each apartment cost an average of \$175 per month to maintain, the housing authority received less than \$100 per month for each apartment, rendering adequate maintenance impossible. These same funding cuts resulted in decreased grant and loan programs in black communities. And those who did secure funding found it difficult to then obtain insurance. Such conditions, as outgrowths of poverty, have been shown to be predictors of high crime rates and citizen frustration.

Local authorities, however, responded with less action around the issues of poverty than around police practices. Although a summer job placement program for the community's youth was formed, and a task force was created to investigate community needs, this was considerably less programming than was set up for the Tampa Police Department. By giving less attention to the larger issues of poverty and economic growth for residents of these neighborhoods, the city was ineffective in addressing the very conditions that made it necessary for the police to be such a strong force in the affected neighborhoods. Indeed, the College Hill and Ponce de Leon neighborhoods continue to struggle with high poverty rates, high crime rates, and tension with the police.

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**Tennessee** See Chattanooga (Tennessee) Riot of 1906; Knoxville (Tennessee) Riot of 1919; Memphis (Tennessee) Riot of 1866

### **Terrell, Mary Church (1863–1954)**

Mary Church Terrell was a lecturer, political activist, and educator during the tumultuous **Jim Crow** era in the United States. As a black woman, Terrell enjoyed privileges and advantages not available to most blacks. Hers was a life that defied the constraints imposed by society on her race and gender. However, the **lynching** of a close friend propelled Terrell to relinquish the isolation of her immediate world and commit her life to public activism. Among the most critical issues confronted by Terrell were violence against blacks, **segregation**, and women’s suffrage.

Mary Eliza Church was born free to former slaves on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee, during the Civil War. On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery. While blacks were in the throes of adjusting to post-slavery life during **Reconstruction**, Mary was raised in the comfort, security, and safety of her parents’ home. Mary’s parents instilled in her the importance of education. Rather than send her to a segregated school, they enrolled her in the Antioch College Model School. Although she lived during this time with the Hunsters, a black family, she was the only black in her class. Two years later, she enrolled in a local public school. During this period, white southerners were seizing back political control across the South by violently assaulting both black and white opposition and engaging in other unscrupulous tactics. By 1877, all the southern states were under the tyrannical rule of the white Democrats. Once in power, they dismantled the rights and freedoms blacks had gained during Reconstruction. In their attempt to maintain **white supremacy**, whites instigated riots, and lynched, beat, and terrorized blacks on a regular basis. The federal government did nothing to relieve or remedy the situation.

In the midst of this turmoil, Mary graduated from a public high school and, afterward, attended Oberlin College, one of the few integrated universities at that time. Few women pursued higher education in that era. The few black women who attended college generally went to the historically black colleges that had been established during Reconstruction. Women who went to college usually did not aspire to careers. More often than not, women were denied employment and were restricted to being wives and homemakers. For women, education was a symbol of status within elite society, and only a few years of college were obligatory. Mary, on the other hand, earned a bachelor’s degree in classics. She then took a teaching position at Wilberforce College in Ohio, while simultaneously pursuing a



Mary Church Terrell, circa 1890. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

master's degree. Named after the abolitionist William Wilberforce, this college was the first of its kind to be owned and operated by blacks. Her father was devastated; like most of society, Mary's father believed her place was to marry and start a family. Mary's decision caused a rift with her father that lasted several years.

While Mary's professional career peaked, conditions in the South, and in the North to a lesser degree, steadily worsened. In the absence of slavery, whites found other ways to maintain social control. **White mobs** hunted down blacks who were purported to have committed crimes against white women or who challenged the laws of **racial etiquette**. Often, no reason was needed at all. Black men of all ages were the common target, and lynching was the common method of execution. Lynching was often accompanied by burning, maiming, or castrating the victim. Whites sometimes kept body parts for souvenirs. Lynching occurred without judge, jury, or trial, whether in the privacy of the mob or before a crowd ranting its encouragement. These executions often preceded unbridled violence

against unsuspecting blacks and their communities. Whites were rarely, if ever, charged and punished for their crimes.

In 1886, as violence raged in the South and in the North, and discriminatory laws were established across the nation, Mary accepted another teaching position at the Colored High School in Washington, D.C. During this period, Washington had a large community of progressive and well-to-do blacks. Although they led more privileged lives than the majority of blacks, they were, as a whole, excluded from mainstream society and confined behind the color line of segregation and discrimination. At the high school, Mary met her soon-to-be husband, Robert Heberton Terrell, a graduate of Harvard University. In 1901, Terrell was appointed justice of the peace by President Theodore Roosevelt. The following year, he was appointed to the Washington, D.C., Municipal Court, the first black to hold that position.

On earning her master's degree, Mary traveled to Europe, as was the practice of both the white and black elite. She became fluent in French, German, and Italian. Two years later, in 1891, she returned and married Robert Terrell in Memphis, Tennessee. Under her new name, Mary Church Terrell, she returned to Washington, D.C., with her husband. She willingly surrendered her career and appeared to prepare for the life that her father had once envisioned. But high-society wives who had forgone professional careers were often privately active in meaningful philanthropic societies, organizations, and activities. Terrell might well have been one of them, but prompted by a personal tragedy, she did not follow this type of quiet activism.

In 1892, Terrell was pregnant with her first child when she heard the news that her friend from Memphis, Tennessee, Tom Moss, had been lynched by whites who were jealous of the success of his grocery store. Terrell was devastated. She was again grief-stricken when her baby died a few days after birth. To come to terms with the loss of the baby, she reasoned to herself that it might have been marred by her grief and mental preoccupation with the violent death of Moss. In the same year, Terrell turned her sorrow into activism. She spearheaded a campaign against lynching and eventually collaborated with Frederick Douglass. Together, they went to Washington, D.C., to galvanize support from President Benjamin Harrison, but to no avail.

Undeterred, Terrell pursued another issue—women's suffrage. She cofounded and was the president of the Colored Women's League. In 1896, the league joined with other black women's organizations to become the **National Association of Colored Women (NACW)**. Terrell was the founder and president of this association until 1904. In 1898, the year she gave birth to a daughter named Phyllis, Terrell was appointed honorary president for life. In 1905, she adopted a niece named Terrell Church.

The Colored Women's League went beyond working toward women's suffrage. It also established daycare centers for black children of working mothers and campaigned for improved working conditions for black women. It also fought for equal rights for blacks, and the elimination of Jim Crow laws. Despite their wealth, the accolades, and degrees, the black elite suffered greatly at the expense of Jim Crow legislation. Terrell herself had once, in her youth, challenged Jim Crow. Terrell's father had purchased a first-class seat for her, although Jim Crow sent segregated blacks to the second-class seats. Nevertheless, Terrell was allowed to keep her seat when she told the conductor that her father would sue the railroad if he made her move.

From 1892 to 1954, Terrell lectured on social and racial issues in the United States and abroad. During one presentation at the International Congress of Women in Berlin, Germany, she spoke in German, French, and English. In 1895, Terrell became the first black woman to be elected to the District of Columbia Board of Education. She was a member of the board from 1895 to 1901, and again from 1906 to 1911. Terrell's clout grew quickly, as did her network of influential friends. She befriended and collaborated with giants, such as **Booker T. Washington**, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Susan B. Anthony. In 1901, **W.E.B. Du Bois** invited her to become a charter member of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. She later founded the NAACP's Executive Committee and was a member of a group that investigated police harassment against blacks. She was also a member of Carter G. Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Terrell maintained her interests in intellectual pursuits by joining the Bethel Literary and Historical Association.

Meanwhile, as violence continued unabated across the nation, Terrell used her influence to champion the rights of the victims of violence and discrimination. She did not censor her opinions, no matter how powerful

her opponents were. In 1904, Terrell wrote one of many articles to protest violence—lynching in particular—against blacks. In this article, she discussed the history of violence against blacks since the time of slavery, sparing no details. She wrote boldly that **racism** and lawlessness, not justice, were the real motivation behind the grievous executions of blacks. She also exposed the misconception that violence was limited to the South, proving that it was quickly intensifying across the nation.

Shortly after the **Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906**, she openly condemned President Theodore Roosevelt for dismissing three companies of black men from the Army without due process and without sufficient proof of involvement. The 167 black men were accused of having instigated a shoot-out on August 14 that injured a policeman and a resident. These men were also “barred from rejoining the military and from government employment, and were denied veterans’ pensions or benefits” (Hine et al., 344). Nothing was done to the whites and Mexicans who had harassed and attacked the black soldiers prior to the riot.

Terrell continued to challenge lynching, as well as other adverse conditions besetting blacks, particularly in the South, such as chain gangs, peonage, and **disenfranchisement**. In 1920, Terrell’s responsibilities expanded to include the supervision of all campaigns among black women on the East Coast.

Despite Terrell’s active schedule, she and her husband made time to indulge in the pleasantries of the black upper class. Washington, D.C., was the dwelling place of some of the most prominent elite black families. Like the white upper class, blacks enjoyed the world of culture and a lavish lifestyle. The Terrells “attended balls, concerts, and parties, traveled extensively, and belonged to Washington’s most exclusive black congregation, the Lincoln Temple Congregational Church, and she was active in Delta Sigma Theta sorority” (Hine et al., 372). In 1936, the Terrells were one of the first black families to move to LeDroit Park, which was originally an all-white suburb. Their house still stands today.

The 1940s and 1950s remained rigorous for Mary Church Terrell. In 1940, she wrote an autobiography titled *A Colored Woman in a White World*. In 1949, she chaired the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of District of Columbia Anti-Discrimination Laws. In the following year, she collaborated with a group of other blacks to challenge racial segregation. On February 28, they entered Thompson Restaurant, which was designated for whites only, to test the anti-discrimination laws that had been established in 1872 and 1873. When Terrell’s group was denied service, they filed a lawsuit. The case, *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co.*, went to the U.S. Supreme Court, where Terrell testified. While waiting for a decision, Terrell led and participated in several types of nonviolent protests that were commonly used in the **civil rights movement**, such as boycotts, picketing, and sit-ins. On June 8, 1953, the court ruled that segregated eating places in Washington, D.C., were unconstitutional. Other victories, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling, which eradicated segregation in public schools and prompted the complete annihilation of Jim Crow legislation, marked a significant change for blacks in American society. After many long

and strenuous years of activism, Terrell witnessed the dawn of a new, albeit slowly improving, world. When she died on July 24, 1954, she knew her labor had not been in vain. *See also* Anti-Lynching Movement.

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**Texas.** *See* Beaumont (Texas) Riot of 1943; Brownsville (Texas) Riot of 1906; Byrd, James, Jr. (1949–1998) Murder of (1998); Dallas (Texas) Disturbance of 1973; Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917; Longview (Texas) Riot of 1919; Palestine (Texas) Riot of 1910; Texas Southern University Riot of 1967

### **Texas Southern University Riot of 1967**

The Texas Southern University (TSU) Riot (also referred to as the TSU Riot, TSU Police Riot, or TSU Disturbance) was a violent encounter between the Houston Police Department (HPD) and students on the TSU campus on the night of May 16–17, 1967. The riot had a number of causes, but stemmed mainly from sit-ins at a garbage dump and HPD's heavy-handed tactics.

On May 8, eleven-year-old Victor George fell into a garbage-filled pond and drowned at Houston's Holmes Road Dump. The city government traditionally placed landfills in segregated neighborhoods, and in 1967 most city dumps were located in black subdivisions. Beginning around May 15, students from TSU and other local universities sat down in front of the dump's entrance to stop the garbage trucks from entering the facility. The protestors hoped to convince the city to close the dump. Instead, the police responded by arresting large numbers of the students and their leaders. The students returned the following day and continued to sit-in at the dump. More arrests followed this protest. After these sit-ins, activists gathered for a number of rallies at local churches. At these rallies, militants called for battle with the police. When the police learned of this call to arms they assumed TSU students had issued it.

Police followed the students back to TSU, used squad cars to blockade the roads leading to the campus, and shut down the school. The mostly male students fought back by throwing rocks and bottles at the officers, and by setting fire to several garbage cans. Students then barricaded themselves in the dorm rooms and exchanged gunfire with the police, who had surrounded the dormitory. Mayor Louis Welch appealed to black civic leaders to convince the students to surrender. Police escorted Rev. William Lawson, who was one of the organizers of the dump protest, to TSU with the hope that he could entreat the students to yield to the police. He found the students unorganized but unwilling to disperse. After Lawson informed HPD officials that the students would not surrender, the police opened fire, charged the dormitory, ransacked the rooms, and arrested nearly 500

students. Only a few students were injured in the melee, but two police officers were wounded. Officer Louis Kuba was the only fatality.

Houston's daily newspapers reported that the police fired between 3,000 and 5,000 rounds of ammunition at the dormitory. The papers justified police actions by fabricating accounts that the students were armed with guns and Molotov cocktails. Other papers reported that students had shared one .22-caliber pistol—a .22 was the only gun found in the dorm rooms. The district attorney charged five students with the murder of Officer Kuba. The black community vigorously supported this TSU Five. After three years of legal wrangling, the judge dismissed the charges against the TSU Five. The judge decided that evidence needed to prove the case did not exist, and that Kuba probably died from a ricocheting police bullet.

The TSU Riot stands as the most violent episode in the struggle for black rights in Houston. The only other riot to occur in the city's history was the 1917 mutiny of black soldiers stationed in Houston. A congressional investigation blamed the TSU students for the riot, but the details of the disturbance indicate that the police were largely responsible. HPD blockaded the campus and effectively shut down the school without considering how the students might react. Combined with anger over the Holmes Road Dump incident and the general mistrust and fear that many blacks felt toward police, the students' resistance seems hardly surprising. *See also* Civil Rights Movement; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Houston (Texas) Mutiny of 1917; Police Brutality.

**Further Reading:** Justice, Blair. *Violence in the City*. Forth Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1969.

Brian D. Behnken

### ***Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918* (Gruening and Boardman, 1919)**

In an effort to investigate and expose the horrors of **lynching**, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** published a book in 1919 titled *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*, written by Martha Gruening and Helen Boardman. The NAACP's publication of this book was indicative of the organization's numerous and strenuous efforts to eradicate lynching in the United States.

Lynching was a heinous crime instigated by racial hostility and heightened during the **Jim Crow** era in the United States. Lynching peaked in the years after Emancipation in the late nineteenth century and in the early to mid-twentieth century. Lynch mobs often murdered Negro men and women whom they deemed guilty of a variety of crimes that could include verbally protesting mistreatment by whites or physically or verbally assaulting whites. These **white mobs** often did not require evidence of any crime; rather, they purposefully sought out individuals based on their status as Negroes.

The formation of the NAACP was rooted in an event that occurred in the hometown of President Abraham Lincoln. A race riot occurred in **Springfield**, Illinois, in 1908 and was preceded by race riots in several other

cities, including **Wilmington**, North Carolina (1898); **New Orleans**, Louisiana (1900); and **Atlanta**, Georgia (1906). Vicious lynchings occurred in each of these cities during all of these riots and on numerous other occasions. The Springfield riots culminated in the deaths of both blacks and whites and led to such conferences as the National Negro Convention, which was considered the first official meeting of the NAACP. The NAACP was established by **W.E.B. Du Bois**, Mary White Ovington, and others in 1909 in the aftermath of the Springfield violence. Du Bois, a noted author, educator, and professor, was also considered one of the leaders of the Negro intellectual protest movement. Ovington was a descendant of New England abolitionists who had previously lived among poor Negroes in New York. These two individuals joined with others in an effort to fight social injustice and to establish an organization that would achieve this goal.

The NAACP was initially formed by an interracial group that was committed to speaking for Negroes in the United States. The organization spoke to Negroes and on behalf of Negroes, encouraging individuals and organizations to engage in activities that would advance the status and social and political conditions of Negroes in the United States. The NAACP laid the foundation for the **civil rights movement**, which would follow half a century later. The organization was also instrumental in obtaining civil and legal rights for Negroes well into the twentieth century.

In 1918, John Shillady became executive director of the NAACP. He is credited with greatly increasing the membership and encouraging and overseeing *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*, the first book publication of the NAACP. Under his leadership, the NAACP decided to take a stance on lynching, one of the most pressing contemporary issues concerning the safety and well-being of blacks in the United States. The **Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill**, introduced by Congressman **Leonidas C. Dyer**, would have made participating in a lynch mob a federal crime. The NAACP publicly supported this bill and focused on pressuring the federal government to end lynching.

Since the NAACP was leading an anti-lynching movement and working to increase awareness and distaste for a practice that had become routinely tolerated, the organization determined to take an aggressive stance in the publication of a book on a thirty-year period of lynching. The focus of this historic work was to examine the 3,224 recorded lynchings that had occurred during this period and identify 100 of the most heinous documented lynchings. A three-pronged approach was essential to developing a cohesive summary of each identified lynching. Each documented lynching had to meet the following three criteria: articulate in extreme detail the rationale provided for the justification of the lynching, describe the procedure followed by the lynch mob to assault its victim, and explain the related activities associated with the lynching. Great care was used to ensure that the cases described were extremely disturbing and created an unsettling image for the reader. The purpose of the book was to cause even the most hardened individuals to reconsider their complacency in addressing lynching, which was an extralegal activity that had become routine in many areas of the country.



One of the most disturbing accounts included in the book was that of **Mary Turner** in Valdosta, Georgia. Her husband had been wrongfully lynched when a mob was unable to locate another black man who had allegedly killed a white planter. Ms. Turner publicly protested her husband's wrongful death and was subsequently punished for her outspokenness. Her execution was especially disturbing because she was eight months pregnant at the time. The lynch mob hanged her by her ankles, covered her with gasoline, and burned her alive. However, this did not satisfy the crowd, and during her ordeal, her stomach was cut open. Her unborn child fell to the ground, cried momentarily, and was subsequently stomped to death by onlookers. Other lynchings provided similar gruesome details about the deaths of persons who suffered acts of brutality, and in many cases the perpetrators were never brought to justice. The narration of these atrocities contributed greatly to the NAACP's ability to challenge individuals to examine their role in the promulgation of lynching in the United States.

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*Nia Woods Haydel and Kijua Sanders-McMurtry*

### **Till, Emmett (1941–1955), Lynching of**

Emmett Louis "Bobo" Till was a fourteen-year-old African American teenager from Chicago, Illinois, who was brutally murdered in the Mississippi Delta in the summer of 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman. National and international media attention surrounding the young man's death, his funeral, the trial, and the acquittal of Till's killers was remarkable for drawing attention from both black and white communities to the extent of the continuing racial violence in the United States. The episode had an immediate and ongoing impact in the United States, marking 1955 as the year that launched the modern **civil rights movement**, and continues to be cited as a reminder of the civil rights work still to be accomplished.

Born July 25, 1941, Emmett Till was the son of Mamie Carthan Till Bradley Mobley and Louis Till. Till was primarily raised by his mother, his parents having separated in 1942. Louis Till was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943 during World War II, and was executed by the U.S. Army for raping two Italian women and murdering a third; this information was used to impugn young Till's character after the trial of his murder. Mamie Till Bradley, who held a good-paying job in the Chicago office of the Air Force Procurement Office, sent Emmett and his cousin, Curtis Jones, to Mississippi on vacation to stay with their uncle, Moses Wright. On August 21, 1955, the boys arrived in Money, Mississippi, a small town eight miles north of Greenwood, near the town of Drew, Sunflower County.

There are conflicting reports as to what precisely happened on the afternoon of August 24. One potential pitfall in rehashing the events of August 24 is that doing so potentially serves as justification for the punishment meted out to Till. What is also clear is that the events constituted a racial and sexual transgression that was also marked by North–South tensions, as well as big city–small town conflicts endemic to the United States.

Till apparently joined other teenagers as they went to Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market to get some refreshments after work in the cotton fields. Owned by Roy and Carolyn Bryant, the market mostly catered to the local black sharecropper population. Most accounts emphasize Till's naïveté about North–South differences in attitude regarding appropriate behavior for black Americans. Some accounts claim that Till pulled a picture of a white girl out of his wallet, boasting that she was his girlfriend. The idle bragging by a city boy from the North may have played poorly in the southern town; Till was encouraged to enter the store.

Most accounts indicate that Till spoke to or whistled at Carolyn Bryant; either action would have been considered a serious racial transgression at the time. Bryant, age twenty-one and the mother of two small boys, later stated at the trial that Till had grabbed her at the waist and asked her for a date. She testified that the young man also used “unprintable” words. He had a slight stutter from a childhood polio episode and some have conjectured that Bryant might have misinterpreted what Till said. Some say that he could have been mildly retarded and any unexpected behavior on his part might easily have been misconstrued. Others suggest that Bryant flirted with Till. Several black youths in the store at the time, all under the age of sixteen, reportedly forced him to leave the store for being rowdy.

Roy Bryant, age twenty-four, returned from a road trip three days after the episode; the gossip had spread throughout Tallahatchie County, and Bryant decided that he and his half brother, J.W. Milam, age thirty-six, would “teach the boy a lesson” (Crow). Bryant, Milam, and several others kidnapped Till from his uncle's house at gunpoint at about 2:30 A.M. on August 28. The men drove to a weathered plantation shed in neighboring Sunflower County, where they brutally beat Till, gouging out one eye. A witness heard Till's screams for hours until the men finally ended Emmett Till's life, shooting him with a .45-caliber pistol, then tying a seventy-five-pound cotton gin fan around his neck with barbed wire in an unsuccessful attempt to weigh down the body. They dropped him into the Tallahatchie River near the town of Glendora. A white teenage boy discovered the body three days later. When Till was removed from the river, the boy had been so badly beaten that Moses Wright could identify him only by his father's ring.

Although others were clearly involved, Milam and Bryant were soon under suspicion for Till's disappearance and were arrested on August 29. Both men admitted that they had taken the boy from his uncle's home, but they insisted that they turned him loose the same night. They argued that the body extracted from river was not Till's.

As word spread that Till was missing, two civil rights leaders from the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**—Medgar Evers, the state field secretary, and Amzie Moore, head

of the Bolivar County chapter—disguised themselves as cotton pickers and went into the fields in search of information that would help locate Till. On the basis of the stories they collected, Moore later said that it was apparent that “more than 2,000 families” were murdered and lynched over the years, with their bodies thrown into the Delta’s swamps and bayous, a much larger figure than official estimates (Wikipedia, “Emmett Till”).

### *The Funeral*

When Till’s swollen body emerged from the Tallahatchie River after three days in the water, officials in Sumner County, Mississippi, wanted to bury it right away. Sheriff Harold Strider of Tallahatchie County ordered the body to be buried immediately in Mississippi. But Till’s mother, Mamie Till Bradley, intervened to bring the body home. The Chicago funeral home offered to prepare the body for viewing, but Mamie chose to leave the body in its disfigured state, and to have an open-casket funeral, uttering the statement that has since become famous: “Let the people see what they have done to my boy” (*Pittsburgh Courier*, September 10, 1955). The funeral was held September 3–6, 1955, at the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ. Bradley’s decision to for an open-casket funeral was significant for fueling public knowledge about and sympathy for the victims of hate crimes. The **press coverage** of the murder now became press coverage of the funeral. More than 2,000 people attended the funeral, and a public-address system broadcast the service to the thousands more lining the streets outside the church. The popular black magazine, *Jet*, published a photograph of the body. Emmett Till was buried September 6 in Burr Oak Cemetery in Alsip, Illinois. The same day, Bryant and Milam were indicted in Mississippi by a grand jury.

### *The Trial*

It took fewer than four weeks for the case to go to trial. The trial began on September 19. Scores of reporters descended on the Delta. Television networks chartered a plane to send footage to New York for the nightly news. Stories ran in all major national newspapers and magazines; the case was also an international news story, highlighting troubled U.S. race relations at a time of increasing international scrutiny. Initially, white southerners largely condemned the murder. Local lawyers demanded expensive fees that they knew Milam and Bryant could not afford, so initially, the two had no legal counsel. But as the press began referring to the incident as a **lynching**, white southerners reacted defensively, closing ranks. Local stores collected \$10,000 in countertop jars for Bryant and Milam; all five attorneys from the town of Sumner, Mississippi, agreed to represent “the South” by representing them.

The trial was widely acknowledged to be a show, a false demonstration of justice designed to silence critics of southern **white supremacy**. The circus-like atmosphere of the trial proceedings heightened this sense. Snacks and soft drinks were sold to the crowd. Outside, the international press

jockeyed for photographs and interviews that captured American southern folk ways. Inside, the courthouse echoed Mississippi social structure: a small number of black observers were permitted at a small segregated table; numerous white observers filled the seats; the defendants' families joked openly with prosecutors and jurors; each day, Milam and Bryant ate lunch with the sheriff at a café. Although Tallahatchie County was 63 percent African American, no African Americans were eligible to serve on the jury.

Although brief, the trial is noteworthy in a number of respects. First, Till's uncle, Moses Wright, identified the assailants in court—the first time a black person had testified against a white person in Mississippi. He was forced to leave town, but was later hired by the NAACP for speaking engagements. Second, that the verdict was a foregone conclusion was widely acknowledged; even the federal government failed to intervene to enforce justice. After the trial, the Bryant and the Milam families celebrated on camera, with smiles and cigars.

On September 23, an all-white, all-male jury of twelve acquitted Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam. The trial took only five days; jury deliberations took just sixty-seven minutes; one juror said the jurors took a break to stretch the time to over an hour. The hasty acquittal outraged people throughout the United States and Europe, and energized the nascent civil rights movement. No one else was ever indicted or prosecuted for involvement in the kidnapping or murder.

For eight weeks after the trial, protest rallies and lectures were staged around the country, drawing attention to the continuing injustices faced by African Americans. Numerous civil rights activists and leaders cite the Till murder as a consciousness-raising moment.

In a 1956 article for *Look* magazine, for which they were paid, J.W. Milam admitted that he and his half brother had killed Till. (The rule of double jeopardy, which protects defendants from being charged with the same crime twice, protected them from these admissions.) Milam claimed that their intention had been merely to scare Till by pistol-whipping him and threatening to throw him off of a cliff. But regardless of what they did to Till, he apparently never showed any fear, maintaining an unrepentant and defiant attitude toward them. Thus, the brothers felt they were left with no choice but to make an example of him. But the celebratory enthusiasm of a national magazine profile vanished when the local response to the story was to shun the brothers. Local blacks refused to shop at the store; local banks refused to lend them money; they eventually left Mississippi. Milam died of cancer in 1980, and Bryant died of the same cause in 1990.

Mamie Till Bradley became a crusader for civil rights and a teacher for the Chicago Public Schools. She founded the Emmett Till Foundation and the Emmett Till Players, a youth theater group. In her later years, she fought against the death penalty in Illinois, considering it “legal lynching.” She died at age eighty-one on January 6, 2003. She is buried in a prominent location at Burr Oak Cemetery, Chicago, immediately inside the southeast entrance. That year her autobiography, *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America*, was published.

### ***Federal Investigation***

Till's story is far from over. On May 10, 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice announced that it was reopening the case to determine whether anyone other than Milam and Bryant was involved. They were prompted in part by information from filmmakers who found errors in the original investigation and concluded that several people, some still living, were involved in Till's abduction and killing. The decision was greeted enthusiastically by civil rights campaigners and some politicians.

Stanley Nelson, producer and director of *The Murder of Emmett Till* (2003), states that one witness, never sought by prosecutors, reportedly saw a black employee of Milam's laughing while cleaning Till's blood from the back of Milam's truck. Another said there were other people (in addition to Milam and Bryant) in the truck that took Till to his death. Filmmaker Keith Beauchamp, while making his documentary, *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till* (2004), found more witnesses who did not testify at the trial and had not previously spoken in public—as many as ten more people involved in the murder than were previously indicated—five of whom are still alive today. At least one is believed to be black. Although the statute of limitations prevents charges from being pursued under federal law, they can still be pursued before the state court, and the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** and officials in Mississippi worked jointly on the investigation.

On May 17, 2005, the FBI reported that one copy of the original Emmett Till court transcript had been found. Although in poor condition, its discovery was taken as a positive step, since the transcript had been presumed lost.

On June 1, 2005, Till's body was exhumed; the Cook County coroner conducted the autopsy. The body was reburied by relatives on June 4. On August 26, 2005, it was announced that the exhumed body had been positively identified as that of Emmett Till, thus contradicting the central argument in Bryant and Milam's case. This evidence is crucial to further prosecutions; bullet fragments were found, and DNA tests confirmed the identity of the body.

On September 14, 2005, the U.S. Senate passed the Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Act (known as the "Till Bill"), forming a new federal unit within the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department dedicated to probing and prosecuting unsolved civil rights-era murder cases. On November 23, 2005, the federal investigation was completed, and their findings were turned over to Mississippi officials. Possible defendants in the reopening of the case include Carolyn Bryant Donham, the ex-wife of Roy Bryant, and Henry Lee Loggins, the now eighty-two-year-old former plantation worker and Bryant employee, who is currently living in an Ohio nursing home.

Till's murder has inspired a wide range of artistic responses, including a poem by Langston Hughes; a song by Bob Dylan; the play *Blues for Mister Charlie* by James Baldwin; the novels *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* (1992) by Bebe Moore Campbell; *Wolf Whistle* (1993) by Lewis Nordan; and the rap song "Through the Wire" (2003) by Kanye West. Additional acknowledgements of the boy's murder include the August 2005 renaming of a thirty-eight-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 49 North from Tutwiler, Mississippi, to

Greenwood, Mississippi. In November 2005, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks began considering landmark status for the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, the location of his momentous funeral.

**Further Readings:** Baldwin, James. *Blues for Mister Charlie*. New York: Vintage, 1995. Originally published in 1964; Campbell, Bebe Moore. *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*. New York: Ballantine, 1992; Crow, Chris. "The Lynching of Emmett Till." *The History of Jim Crow*. See [http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/lesson\\_plans/hs\\_es\\_emmett\\_till.htm](http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/lesson_plans/hs_es_emmett_till.htm); Metress, Christopher, ed. *The Lynching of Emmett Till: A Documentary Narrative*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002; *The Murder of Emmett Till*. Directed by Stanley Nelson. PBS, 2003. See <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/>; Norden, Lewis. *Wolf Whistle*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 1993; West, Kanye. *Through the Wire*. Roc-a-Fella, 2004; Whitfield, Stephen. *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till*. New York: Free Press, 1988; Wikipedia. "Emmett Till." See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmett\\_Till](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmett_Till).

Valerie Begley

### Triggs, Clarence (1942–1966)

Clarence Triggs was slain by nightriders in Bogalusa, Louisiana, on July 30, 1966.

Born in 1942, Triggs had just moved to Bogalusa from Jackson, Mississippi, with his wife Emma. He had served in the armed forces and was working as a bricklayer. Triggs had never been active in the **civil rights movement**, but when he came to Bogalusa and saw that it was still a **Jim Crow** town, he joined civil rights marches and attended meetings organized by the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. It was believed that Bogalusa had more **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** members per capita than any other region in the South during the mid-1960s. Triggs was one of the many blacks in the area who supported the movement for equality, yet he was never considered a leader in the movement; in fact, few people knew who he was in Bogalusa. Less than a month after marching at a civil rights demonstration, Triggs was found dead on the side of the road with a bullet wound in his head.

Believing that the police were covering up Triggs' murder—especially since his wife was not allowed to identify her husband's body at the scene—civil rights leaders organized nightly marches until someone was arrested. Two days later, the police arrested two white men, Homer Richard Seale and John W. Copling, Jr., and charged them with murder. Seale was never tried for this crime and a jury deliberated for less than an hour before finding Copling innocent. The motive for the deadly attack was never released and the death of Clarence Triggs remains a mystery.

**Further Reading:** "Civil Rights Memorial." See <http://www.tolerance.org/memorial/memorial.swf>.

Paulina X. Ruf

### Trotter, William Monroe (1872–1934)

A newspaper publisher and militant civil rights activist, as well as a founder of the **Niagara movement** and the **National Association for the**

**Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, William Monroe Trotter revived the black press and the tradition of organized protest as important components of the struggle for African American civil rights.

Born in Chillicothe, Ohio, on April 7, 1872, the son of a local politician and a former slave, Trotter was raised in Boston, where he graduated from Harvard University in 1895. The first African American to be elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, Trotter earned his master's degree before returning to Boston to enter the real estate field. Opening his own firm in 1899, Trotter was soon frustrated by the growing racial discrimination that he experienced in his own business and observed throughout the country, particularly the **segregation, disenfranchisement**, and violence that characterized race relations in the South. In 1901, Trotter and George Forbes founded the *Boston Guardian*, a crusading weekly that, under Trotter's direction, began to fearlessly and articulately demand full and immediate civil rights for African Americans.

Trotter made particular use of his newspaper to vehemently oppose the accommodationist policies of **Booker T. Washington**, whom Trotter believed was naively ignoring the country's worsening racial state. Through his frequent and eloquent editorials, Trotter made white Americans understand that not all black Americans adhered to Washington's conciliatory views. In July 1903, Trotter and a group of friends disrupted a speech that Washington delivered in Boston. By constantly heckling the speaker and shouting embarrassing questions, Trotter and his associates caused an uproar that came to be known as the Boston Riot. As a result of his actions, and at the insistence of Washington's supporters, Trotter was fined \$50 and spent a month in jail, a punishment that Trotter later portrayed as the suffering of a martyr for the cause of civil rights.

In 1905, Trotter, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, and other prominent African Americans concerned with the increasing occurrence of **lynching** and other violence against blacks founded the Niagara movement. Although Trotter helped push Du Bois toward a greater militancy in his approach to civil rights, the two quarreled over tactics, with Trotter insisting that any national civil rights organization be led and financed entirely by African Americans. To this end, Trotter founded the all-black National Equal Rights League in 1908. In 1909, despite his disagreements with Du Bois, Trotter participated in the founding of the NAACP, although he continued to vehemently oppose white involvement in the organization.

A political independent, Trotter supported Democrat Woodrow Wilson for president in 1912. However, when Wilson supported increased segregation in federal offices, Trotter turned against the president, whom he confronted personally on the issue in the White House in November 1914. After forty-five minutes of argument, Wilson declared, "your manner offends me" (Jackson) and promptly ordered Trotter from his office.

In 1915, Trotter organized picket lines and demonstrations in an attempt to mobilize African Americans against **D.W. Griffith's** racist film, *The Birth of a Nation*. In one of the earliest African American protest marches in U.S. history, Trotter, who had been released from jail only two days before, led over 1,000 people in a march on the Massachusetts State House. In

1919, to Wilson's great annoyance, Trotter announced his intention to attend the Versailles Peace Conference to push for inclusion of a racial equality clause in the peace treaty ending World War I. When the U.S. government denied him a visa, Trotter took a job as ship's cook and so secured passage to France. Although he failed to obtain a hearing at Versailles, his trip and his militant editorials in the *Guardian* won worldwide publicity for his cause.

By the 1920s, Trotter was an increasingly isolated voice on the radical edge of the struggle for African American civil rights. Hit hard by the Great Depression, Trotter lost control of the *Guardian* in 1934. He died, an apparent suicide, on his sixty-second birthday, April 7, 1934, when he fell from the roof of a three-story Boston building. *See also* Racism.

**Further Readings:** Fox, Stephen R. *The Guardian of Boston: William Monroe Trotter*. New York: Atheneum, 1970; Jackson, Derrick Z. "About William Monroe Trotter." See the Trotter Group Web site at [www.trottergroup.com](http://www.trottergroup.com).

*John A. Wagner*

**TSU Riot, TSU Police Riot, or TSU Disturbance.** *See* Texas Southern University Riot of 1967

### **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921**

One evening in late April 1921, Henry Sowders, a white man who operated the motion picture machine in the Williams Dreamland Theatre in the black section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, overheard a heated discussion in an adjoining room. He removed the soda bottle that plugged a hole in the wall between the projection booth and a back room so that he could get a better sense of what was being said. Sowders, like the rest of white Tulsa, worried about the radicalism of Tulsa's blacks. Ever since the United States entered World War I in April 1917, blacks had been increasingly adamant in their calls for equal rights. Now, two leaders of Tulsa's black community, A.J. Smitherman, editor of the radical *Tulsa Star* and lawyer and real estate developer J.B. Stradford, who was famous for his opposition to **segregation**, were arguing about a fight between police officers and several black men in nearby Muskogee. The men had shot a police officer as they were freeing a prisoner, John McShane, from custody. The men feared McShane would be lynched.

Now Smitherman and Stradford were discussing the need to get the word out to the community as quickly as possible: another **lynching** has been avoided, through swift action. And once again the refrain was heard at the Dreamland's vaudeville shows, "Don't let any white man run it over you, but fight" (Brophy 2002). The economic success of Tulsa's black section, known as **Greenwood**, fostered ideas of pride and self-protection. In the jazz joints, as well as the illicit bars, Greenwood residents expressed their new freedom as white Tulsans gazed uneasily across the railroad tracks separating black and white Tulsa.

White Oklahomans saw the McShane story very differently, of course. They focused on the injuries the police officer suffered and the lawless





Smoke billowing over Tulsa, Oklahoma, during the 1921 race riot. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

actions of the black men who freed McShane. There were, as *Invisible Man* author and Oklahoma native Ralph Ellison said, separate white and black views of law in Oklahoma around the time of World War I. The white view maintained that blacks must follow the dictates of law enforcement officers (called “laws”) and the discriminatory statutes that left blacks with inferior accommodations on trains, streetcars, and in schools, and left them with little opportunity even to register to vote. Black Oklahomans had an optimism, though, that despite such discriminatory treatment, the Constitution’s equal protection clause offered the promise of equal treatment—and that they were entitled to take action to make sure that vision was realized. In the pages of the Oklahoma City *Black Dispatch*, for example, editor Roscoe Dunjee urged lawsuits to ensure voting rights, equal funding for segregated schools, and the opportunity to live anywhere blacks wanted, not just where the city’s segregation ordinance said they could live.

Other Oklahoma blacks had no faith in the laws. They had ample reason to fear both law enforcement officers and mobs. One dramatic lesson came on the last weekend of August 1920, when two men were lynched in Oklahoma: one in Tulsa and another in Oklahoma City. On August 28, Roy Belton, a white man accused of murdering a taxi driver, was taken from the jail on the top floor of the Tulsa County Courthouse by a mob. The sheriff in charge of the jail gave no resistance. The mob took the man out to Red Fork, a few miles from Tulsa, where a crowd was gathering. John

Gustafson, Tulsa's police chief, was there, as were uniformed police officers, white women, even some African American men were there, set to witness a lynching. The mob hung the man on a telephone post and a few minutes later he was dead. At the suggestion of an undertaker, the mob let the body hang there another fifteen minutes, then he was cut down. Men immediately ran to him to collect souvenirs: a coat button, a piece of rope, a shoe string. One witness, seeing everyone else with some memorial, took a shoe, which he brought back to his rooming house.

The next evening, men in Oklahoma City—not to be outdone by their cross-state rivals in Tulsa—went to the Oklahoma City jail. They cut off the lights, entered the jail, and a few minutes later, exited with Claude Chandler, a young black man accused of killing a white police officer. A few days earlier, police raided the Chandler home, where moonshine was being made. Both Chandler's father and an officer died during a subsequent gun battle. Two hours after Chandler's kidnapping, rumors began circulating in Oklahoma City's black community that Chandler had been taken from the jail. The community, knowing that a lynching was imminent, went into action. Perhaps 1,000 heavily armed black men assembled along Second Street, wondering how they might rescue Chandler. The police in Oklahoma City heard about the assembly. They headed off for Second Street, the heart of Oklahoma City's black district.

Fifty police surrounded a car full of black men that was about to go off to look for Chandler's kidnappers. They pointed riot guns at the car. One black man in the back seat moved to cock his gun. But another man in the car, a cooler head, warned "We are not fighting the police, hold a moment, let's submit, it will come out alright" (Brophy 2002). After a meeting with leaders of the black community and two black policemen, the mayor allowed the unarmed men to chase after Chandler, under the supervision of the two black officers. The mayor would allow the community to take some action to protect itself, but limited their ability to carry guns. They headed off, searched all night north and west of the city, near Chandler's home of Arcadia, trying to find him. At some point, they realized they would not find him alive. Still they searched, but found nothing. Around noon the next day, Claude Chandler's body was found hanging from a tree ten miles west of the city. He had been lynched the evening before, beaten, and shot twice.

Oklahoma City's *Black Dispatch* seized on the Chandler case as an example of how far the realities of life in the black community were from the promises of equal justice and equal protection. How could the jailers have been so easily overcome by three unmasked men, it asked? How could the sheriff have known where to go to find Chandler's body? The *Black Dispatch* highlighted the illegal actions of Oklahoma law enforcement. "And This Is the White Man's Law?" (Brophy 2002) was the incredulous title of the *Black Dispatch* editorial immediately following the lynching.

Chandler's lynching was only the most recent in a long series of nationwide examples of law enforcement denying equal protection to blacks. In the **East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917**, instead of protecting blacks, the police disarmed them. Then, the disarmed blacks "Got . . . a bullet out

of the rifle of the man in uniform who had first disarmed him” (Brophy 2002). Such unequal treatment made people suspicious of law enforcement officers—and taught blacks not give up their arms. It also taught them that law did not mean equal protection for blacks. They did not follow the law, however. There was building tension between black views of justice and white views of law. Across years of editorials, the black press wrote about the myriad ways in which blacks received unequal treatment at the hands of police, in the arbitrary commands of police officers, and in capricious arrests of blacks, while whites insulted and attacked blacks with immunity. The unequal treatment continued in the courts and in the legislature. Oklahoma’s blacks, therefore, developed a systematic, though straightforward interpretation of what *law* ought to mean. It ought to mean equal treatment. That idea, what we call today the equal protection of the law, existed in an intellectual realm, distinct from the harsh reality of life in Oklahoma. For whites, talk of law too often meant black obedience to the white commands and capricious and unequal treatment by the government. Blacks asked whether such unequal treatment actually could be *law*. They argued that something so different from justice and so different from the Constitution’s promise of equal protection could not. There might be something called *law* by the Oklahoma courts; there might be what police officers called *laws*. But those statutes and the dictates of the law enforcement officers were not law. Sometimes the black vision of law won, as when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Oklahoma’s discriminatory voter registration statute in 1915. But, for the most part, the black view of law had to wait for another time, and blacks and whites continued to hold different understandings of what the word *law* meant.

In a series of editorials, A.J. Smitherman of the *Tulsa Star* chastised Oklahoma City blacks for not defending Chandler. Smitherman’s first editorial criticized the Oklahoma City blacks who “got together after Claude Chandler had paid the penalty with his life, and as we are informed, permitted one lone policeman to take their guns away from them, and literally boot them off the street” (Brophy 2002). That failure to take a more aggressive stance was a commentary on the courage (and wisdom) of Oklahoma City’s black community. The *Tulsa Star* maintained that blacks should have taken action sooner: “[T]he proper time to afford protection to any prisoner is before and during the time he is being lynched, and certainly not after he is killed” (Brophy 2002).

Arguments raged over the proper response to Chandler’s lynching. Had the Oklahoma City black community acted with sufficient bravery? Was it proper to give up their guns to the police? Had the men taken the correct, measured steps? Some were willing to advocate direct confrontation with the police, but others were not willing to go so far. A split in opinion appeared between those who would use violence to protect the community members against lynchers and those who would go even further and pitch battle with the police. They thought that Oklahoma City blacks should have mobilized and gone to the jail to protect Chandler. Those radicals thought, despite the protestations that cool heads were needed when a lynching was imminent, that community members should have been more responsive to

the danger to Chandler. Had the community done something, Chandler might still be alive.

The *Tulsa Star* urged aggressive action to combat lynching. It told of the legal right, even duty, to use violence to protect against lynching. "While the boy was in jail and while there was danger of mob violence any set of citizens had a legal right—it was their duty—to arm themselves and march in a body to the jail and apprise the sheriff or jailer of the purpose of their visit and to take life if need be to uphold the law and protect the prisoner" (Brophy 2002). The *Star* further urged that men could arm for self-protection or "to uphold the majesty of the law" (Brophy 2002); and that, in either of those cases, no officer has the right to disarm them and it would be cowardly to give up arms.

The Greenwood Community had experience with such aggressive action, designed to preserve life and—as some phrased it—the majesty of the law. In September 1919, when Jewel Davis, a black man, was arrested in Tulsa, leaders of the Greenwood Community allegedly showed up at the courthouse and demanded assurances that he would be protected. A few months later, in March 1920, Oklahoma blacks again took action to protect an accused man from a lynching. Some men from Shawnee armed themselves and stole a couple of cars to chase the mob that was forming to take a prisoner, Chap Davis (who had recently been convicted of attempted assault on a white teacher) from law enforcement officers. Under the heading "Mob Rule and the Law," the *Tulsa Star* praised the men who acted to avert a lynching as Davis was being transported to the state penitentiary:

As to the Colored men of Shawnee who, it is alleged, stole an auto, armed themselves and went to protect the prisoner, aside from taking the auto which was manifestly wrong, but perhaps not without extenuating circumstances, since their intentions were to uphold the law of our state, they are the heroes of the story. If one set of men arm themselves and chase across the country to violate the law, certainly another set who arm themselves to uphold the supremacy of the law and prevent crime, must stand out prominently as the best citizens. Therefore, the action of the Colored men in this case is to be commended. We need more citizens like them in every community and of both races. (Brophy 2002)

Oklahoma's blacks spoke of law as they justified their armed actions. If the government would uphold the law, there would be no reason (or even justification) for the community to take action. But when the government failed to protect, Greenwood residents told themselves, they had the right—sometimes they even spoke about it as a duty—to take action.

The debate between the *Black Dispatch* and the *Tulsa Star* over Claude Chandler's lynching raised the consciousness of both communities about the need for vigilance. It also demonstrated the complex, sometimes conflicting, ideas that Oklahoma's blacks held about what it meant to uphold the law. Both papers agreed on the need for the community to take an active role in upholding the rule of law, but they disagreed on the steps to take. If the rule of law was going to prevail in Oklahoma, it would be through the actions of blacks, not the law officers.

A few weeks after the McShane incident, at the end of May 1921, the black men of Tulsa faced their own test. Nineteen-year-old Dick Rowland, who worked shining shoes, was arrested on charges that he attempted to assault Sarah Page, a white elevator operator in a downtown office building. When a headline on the front page of the *Tulsa Tribune* declared, “Nab Negro for Assault on White Girl” (Brophy 2002), lynch talk swept through white, as well as black, Tulsa. Soon, people were in Greenwood, talking about their next moves. By 7:00 P.M., people were gathered at the offices of the *Tulsa Star*. Stradford urged calm for the time being, but said he would take action if a lynching were imminent. He told the crowd at the newspaper’s offices, “If I can’t get anyone to go with me I will go single-handed and empty my automatic into the mob and then resign myself to my fate” (Brophy 2002). Getting people to go to the courthouse was no problem that evening. A few hours later, a group of veterans made their way from Greenwood to the courthouse, where Rowland was in jail. They were led, as a white Tulsa paper later reported, by a person named Mann, who had “come back from the war in France with exaggerated notions of social equality and thinking he can whip the world” (Brophy 2002). Those men had been schooled in ideas about democracy and freedom, fought for it on the fields of France, and then returned home. Reading radical literature like **W.E.B. Du Bois’ *The Crisis***, Greenwood residents were reminded that they had closed ranks and helped defeat Germany in the recent war. But now, it was time to put an end to **racism** at home. Du Bois captured the militant stance of Tulsa’s blacks when he observed of the soldiers in the spring of 1919, “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting” (Brophy 2002). The veterans were also reading poetry that urged them to take aggressive action to protect their community and asked the ominous question:

And how can man die better,  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of his fathers  
And the temples of his gods? (Brophy 2002)

Many were about to find out, for within hours, dozens—perhaps hundreds—would be dead. At the courthouse, Mann and his comrades clashed with the **white mob** and the riot began. Within twenty-four hours, thirty-five blocks of Greenwood had been reduced to rubble, testimony to the clash between the ideas of justice motivating the black community and the fear and hatred of the white community.

And so, when there was news that a young black man was sitting in jail in the Tulsa County Courthouse on May 31, amidst charges of attempted rape, the Greenwood Community was electrified. They would not let another lynching happen on their watch. They marched in a body to jail twice that evening. The first time, the sheriff calmed them and told them there would be no lynching. The second time, around 10:00 P.M., ended in violence. As someone tried to disarm the black men, fighting began and all hell broke loose.

In the immediate aftermath of violence, Tulsa Police Chief John Gustafson worked with Mayor T.D. Evans and members of the police force and local units of the National Guard to put down what they believed was a “Negro

uprising" (Brophy 2002). They devised a plan to deputize hundreds of men and provide them with weapons, then disarm the entire black population and take them into "protective custody" (Brophy 2002). They deputized several hundred men, perhaps as many as 250, then told them to each get a gun. Those who did not have access to guns were issued ones that had been confiscated from several sporting shops in downtown Tulsa. Then, throughout the night, the police chief coordinated efforts to take Greenwood residents into custody.

Throughout the night, there was shooting across the railroad tracks that separated Greenwood from the rest of Tulsa. In a lawsuit filed after the riot against insurance companies, one person testified about the violence that evening. He was near the boarder of Greenwood and had heard that the riot had begun:

I ran across the street and there was some white boys on Boston [Avenue] with a light in their hands going toward the old shack that used to be down in there and somebody shot the first one that started and he did not get to the house. Then I ran up the street . . . and on the east side of the street I got behind a telephone pole and then the people began firing, shooting, and I started over there and a guy came back toward me on the street . . . he said, "Let's go in this house and go up stairs, and [we] won't be bothered," and I saw them coming out with another torch and something happened to him before he got there and a third man came out and set the little house afire. (Brophy 2002)

Shooting continued throughout the night and some officers and National Guard units were able to arrest a few people. But around dawn on the morning of June 1, a full-scale assault took place on Greenwood. At the sound of a police bell, hundreds of men—many of them special deputies, some uniformed officers, and many members of a mob—crossed the railroad tracks into Greenwood, amidst fire from Greenwood.

Much of what we know about the riot comes from testimony in several court cases. One case, filed by Native American William Redfearn, sought money from his insurance company. The insurance company refused to pay on his policy because there was a clause in their policy that excluded damage due to riot. But Redfearn sought to show that the damage was caused by police action, not rioters, and thus avoid the exclusion. Redfearn's lawyers introduced testimony that much of the damage arose from the special police officers. In deciding the case, the Oklahoma Supreme Court acknowledged that many of the people doing the burning were wearing deputy police badges. It stated simply, "the evidence shows that a great number of men engaged in arresting the Negroes found in the Negro section wore police badges, or badges indicating they were deputy sheriffs, and in some instances were dressed in soldier's clothes and represented to the Negroes that they were soldiers" (Brophy 2002). (The court, however, went on to deny Redfearn's claim, because the damage happened during a riot.)

The evidence of what happened comes from two sources: those who saw what was happening in white Tulsa and those who saw what was happening in Greenwood. Together the evidence presents a compelling case for the special deputies' involvement. Green E. Smith, a black man who

lived in Muskogee and was in town for a few days to install a cooling system in the Dreamland Theater, testified during the trial about the role of the special deputies in Greenwood. He went to the Dreamland around five in the morning. He planned to install a fan, then catch a train back to Muskogee by nine. After the whistle blew at five, Smith heard shooting and watched out of the window. At one point it “looked like the world was coming to an end with bullets.” By 8:00 A.M., the shooting had decreased in intensity, but it picked up again. By 9:30 A.M., “a gang came down the street knocking on the doors and setting the buildings afire.” Smith did not know the men by face (he knew only the black officers), but they “had on what they call special police and deputy sheriff’s badges.” How could Smith have seen the badges? “They came and taken fifty dollars of money, and I was looking right at them.” He had been close enough to them to “read the badge[s].” He saw “ten or twelve of them. Some *special police*, and others would be *deputy sheriff*. . . . Some had *ribbons* and some of them had *regular stars*” (Brophy 2002). Not all of the approximately fifteen men along Greenwood were wearing badges; some had “home guard” uniforms.

To know about what happened in white Tulsa, one needs to look at two other major sources of evidence: the July 1921 trial of Police Chief John Gustafson for neglect of duty and the lawsuit filed by J.B. Stradford against the American Central Insurance Company in Chicago in September 1921.

The July 1921 trial of Police Chief Gustafson focused on allegations of neglect of duty during the riot. One witness, Judge Oliphant, linked the police and their special deputies to burning, even murder. The seventy-three-year-old Oliphant went to Greenwood to check on his rental property there. He called the police department and asked for help protecting his homes. No assistance came, but shortly after his call, a gang of men—four uniformed officers and some deputies—came along. Instead of protecting property, “[t]hey were the chief fellows setting fires” (Brophy 2002). Oliphant tried to dissuade them from burning. “This last crowd made an agreement that they would not burn that property [across the street from my property] because I thought it would burn mine too and I promised that if they wouldn’t . . . I would see that no Negroes ever lived in that row of houses any more” (Brophy 2002). Gustafson, who had been suspended from duty after the riot, was found guilty of neglect of duty and never returned to office.

According to the testimony of Sheriff McCullough in Stradford’s lawsuit, on the morning of June 1, many men were bent on murder.

I told everyone I saw not to let them burn those houses, to keep them from it if they possibly could. My opinion in regard to the burning of those houses is that they were a bunch of looters and thieves who took part in it and saw a chance to get into the riot, after the shooting at the courthouse the white men who got their guns and did the shooting that night and the next day, the majority of them at least, I do not believe burned any houses. . . . They told me that the police gave everybody a gun who came in there and everybody had guns the next morning. There were a lot of good white men . . . who were out ready to kill every Negro they saw, but that did not set fire to any houses. (Brophy 2002)

McCullough detected the hands of the police in the arrests and disarming that morning. When he heard shooting outside the courthouse, he went out to investigate and found some white men. They told him “We’re hunting Negroes” (Brophy 2002), then added that they were helping the police.

When I went down to the police station about nine o’clock the whole place was full; there was a big crowd; that was about the time the soldiers came and they were loading Negroes into trucks and everyway and making them come out with their hands up, including some old women who couldn’t hurt anyone, and marched them into the police station, all the time with their hands up. (Brophy 2002)

Everyone had guns and the “police seemed to be engineering it” (Brophy 2002).

After the riot, black newspapers (and Greenwood residents suing the city) alleged that the police chief, mayor, and other city officials had planned an attack on Greenwood. An account of Van B. Hurley, who was identified as a former Tulsa police officer, was printed in the *Chicago Defender* in October 1921. Hurley described “the conference between local aviators and the officials. After this meeting Hurley asserted the airplanes darted out from hangars and hovered over the district dropping nitroglycerin on buildings, setting them afire” (Brophy 2002). Hurley said that the officials told their deputies to deal aggressively with Greenwood residents. “They gave instructions for every man to be ready and on the alert and if the niggers wanted to start anything to be ready for them. They never put forth any efforts at all to prevent it whatever, and said if they started anything to kill every b\_ son of a b\_ they could find” (Brophy 2002).

Around 10:00 A.M., units of the National Guard arrived from Oklahoma City and began to restore order. In the process, they killed some white rioters. By about noon on June 1, Greenwood residents were in custody; much of the community was in flames or already reduced to embers. As Tulsa and the nation began to take stock of what had happened, people began to realize that civilization had broken down for a time. Greenwood residents in custody were released only when a white employer or friend vouched for them. Some were released as early as the afternoon of the riot; many were in custody for several days. And when they returned to Greenwood, they saw thirty-five blocks of destruction.

The city began to take stock as well. It convened a grand jury to investigate the riot’s origins and what happened during its course. Its fore-ordained conclusion was stated in the headline of the *Tulsa World*, which said the day after the report was released, “Negroes to Blame for Inciting Race Rioting; Whites Clearly Exonerated” (Brophy 2002). The report blamed the riot in part on “exaggerated notions of social equality” (Brophy 2002). The city passed a new fire ordinance, which required use of fireproof materials in rebuilding Greenwood. That made rebuilding prohibitively expensive. The mayor sought to get more “distance between the races” (Brophy 2002) by encouraging relocating the African American section further north, away from Tulsa. That would also leave Greenwood available for conversion to an industrial site. By the early fall, that ordinance had been



overturned by the Tulsa courts as an interference with the property owners' rights. They ought, the reasoning seemed to go, to be permitted to rebuild what they had. Many others left Greenwood, never to return. Some leaders of the Greenwood Community, like newspaper editor A.J. Smitherman, fled to Boston and then, ultimately, to Buffalo, where he started the *Buffalo Star*. Others, like J.B. Stradford, fled to Chicago to avoid prosecution in Tulsa. He later filed a lawsuit, but it was dismissed when he refused to return to Tulsa to have his deposition taken. And yet others like O.W. Gurley went to Los Angeles. We know virtually nothing of Dick Rowland or Sarah Page, the two people initially at the center of the riot.

But that was one of the few victories in court for Tulsa riot victims. Subsequently, when they attempted to sue the city and insurance companies, they lost. For Oklahoma law was unfavorable to people who were injured by the government at the time. One could not expect the courts to be any more favorable than the mayor or the police chief to riot victims' claims. By the early 1930s, the victims abandoned their lawsuits and the riot was confined largely to the memory of Greenwood residents. A few stories persisted, passed down through the generations until it became impossible to tell fact from fiction. There are persistent stories that airplanes were used to bomb Greenwood. There are contemporary accounts of that in the black press. The white press says the airplanes were used for observation only. Perhaps they were limited to coordinating the attack on Greenwood. It is unlikely we will ever know the full story. And there is another rumor that the *Tulsa Tribune*, which published the front-page story about Dick Rowland's arrest, also had an editorial encouraging a lynching. There is some reason for skepticism about this story. For a few weeks after the riot, the Oklahoma City *Black Dispatch* ran a front-page story titled "The Story That Set Tulsa Ablaze" (Brophy 2002). It reprints the *Tribune's* front-page story, but makes no reference to any other stories, which suggests that there was no other story in the *Tribune*.

For the most part, the riot was forgotten until 1997 when the Oklahoma legislature authorized the **Tulsa Race Riot Commission**. The commission brought the riot back to public attention and later helped place Tulsa in the center of the debate over **reparations** for slavery and **Jim Crow**. See also Greenwood Community (Tulsa, Oklahoma); Tulsa Race Riot Commission.

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### **Tulsa Race Riot Commission**

In 1997, the Oklahoma legislature passed House Joint Resolution 1035, which provided modest funding for the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission

(see **Tulsa [Oklahoma] Riot of 1921**). The commission grew out of the lobbying efforts of state representative Don Ross. Ross, a lifelong resident of Oklahoma and a relative of riot survivors, first heard about the 1921 riot from a high school history teacher. He then made a career out of studying the riot and preserving its memory. In the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Ross wanted to bring attention to the act of terrorism in Tulsa, and so proposed legislation establishing and funding the commission.

The enacting legislation provided for an eleven-member board, appointed in part by the governor of Oklahoma and in part by the mayor of Tulsa. It was composed of riot survivors, local residents, community leaders, and several state legislators. They were to investigate the riot, look for hidden mass graves, and then make recommendations, including ones on **reparations**. The commission began work in 1998 under the direction of Scott Ellsworth, the leading historian of the riot. Dr. Ellsworth, author of the 1982 book *Death in a Promised Land*, the most comprehensive account of the riot, set about filling in some gaps in the historical record, as well as searching for additional sources, such as missing newspaper accounts of the riot (including an alleged editorial in the *Tulsa Tribune*, believed by some to be headlined “Lynch a Negro Tonight”) and missing court records (including the grand jury testimony). The commissioners sought to investigate common beliefs about the riot, including what actually happened on the afternoon of May 30, 1921, in the Drexel Building, where Dick Rowland allegedly assaulted Mary Paige; what had become of Rowland and Paige; the role of the National Guard and local police forces in the riot, whether planes were used to bomb Greenwood (the black section of Tulsa); and how many people died in the riot.

The commission enlisted the help of volunteers throughout the Tulsa community and scholars throughout the nation to address issues of military technology, anthropology, and law. It raised many questions and fueled much discussion in Tulsa and the nation at large about a long-forgotten episode of racial violence and its aftermath. The commission’s historians located the riot in the context of other racial violence in Oklahoma and the Southwest at the time, retold the story of the riot in greater depth than before, and explained the immediate aftermath of the riot, emphasizing the role of the Red Cross and white and black Tulsans in shaping the rebuilding (and sometimes the lack of rebuilding). It emphasized the culpability of the city government in the riot, the role of the *Tulsa Tribune* in stirring racial animosity, and the role of black and white World War I veterans in the riot.

As the commission worked, it steadily gained national attention. By 1999, people throughout the country were following the commission’s deliberations through stories by the Associated Press and in the *New York Times*. At the same time, factions began to emerge on the commission, including those who strongly advocated paying reparations to survivors; those who wanted a more moderate result, such as a state-funded museum and perhaps scholarships for students from Tulsa (one might call them the reconciliation wing); and a final, small group that seemed to oppose reparations in

any form. The latter group may have had only one member—a state senator. But the divisions that were emerging in 1999 and 2000 illustrated the problems the commission's recommendations would have when they reached the state legislature in 2001.

As the commission's historians and affiliated scholars began finishing their reports in 2000, the commission added University of Oklahoma history professor Danny Goble, an expert on Oklahoma history, to write an introduction. Professor Goble faced the task of trying to distill the findings of the commission's historians to arrive at some conclusions on the facts of the riot. His introduction discussed some of the key issues that would never be resolved, including the number of people killed. Much was known about the culpability of local government and the atmosphere of racial hatred, but much was also left unknown.

Following the presentation of the report at the end of February 2001, the focus shifted to the Oklahoma legislature, to see what steps it would take in terms of reparations or other action designed for reconciliation. Legislators feared discussion of reparations. Although the commission had voted to recommend some form of reparations, the Oklahoma legislature went in other directions. They passed a statute acknowledging the tragedy of the riot and authorizing medals for riot survivors. On one side of the medal was an image of the state seal; on the other was an image of burned Greenwood. Moreover, the legislature authorized (but did not fund) scholarships for Tulsa students to attend Oklahoma colleges. Subsequently, the legislature has donated land to be used for a riot museum.

In February 2003, a group of lawyers, including Harvard Law School professor Charles Ogletree, filed a civil rights lawsuit on behalf of Tulsa riot victims. The suit was based in part on the commission report. The suit was dismissed by the federal district court in Tulsa in March 2003, on the grounds that the plaintiffs waited too long. That dismissal was subsequently affirmed by the federal court of appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case. Ogletree and his team of lawyers are continuing to advocate for riot survivors, who now number about 100, before Congress and the Oklahoma legislature. The commission's work continues to be part of reparations discussions throughout the country, such as Brown University's investigation of its connections to slavery. *See also* Greenwood Community (Tulsa, Oklahoma); Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921.

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*Alfred L. Brophy*

**Ture, Kwame.** *See* Carmichael, Stokely

**Turner, Henry McNeal (1834–1915)**

Henry McNeal Turner was a leading proponent of black emigration to Africa as a response to the hostile conditions in the American South during the nineteenth century. Turner was a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, a delegate to the Georgia constitutional convention, a member of the Georgia state legislature, founder and president of Morris Brown College in Georgia, and founder of several newspapers. His life spanned a troubled period—slavery, the Civil War, **Reconstruction**, and the ensuing **Jim Crow** era. In his early years, an optimistic Turner joined the Union Army and was a member of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Republican Party. Rampant violence and **racism**, along with other critical events, caused Turner to launch an anti-America and pro-Africa campaign. Eventually becoming a bitter and disillusioned man, he turned to Africa as the only viable way for blacks to escape the mass violence and debilitating and racist laws in America, and to achieve dignity and self-empowerment.

Turner was born free in 1834 near Abbeville, South Carolina. In his youth, he worked in the cotton fields. After running away from home, he did janitorial work in a law office. Despite laws that forbade education for blacks, the white clerks taught him to read and write. In 1853, he received a preacher's license and evangelized throughout the South for the white-controlled Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church, South. In 1856, he married Eliza Preacher, the first of four wives. Only four of Turner's fourteen children survived into adulthood.

Exasperated by the constraints placed on him by the ME church, South, Turner joined the AME Church in 1858. He preached in St. Louis, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland; and Washington, D.C. While on the East Coast, Turner studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and theology. In 1860, Turner formed the first black army troop from Washington, D.C., and was assigned by President Abraham Lincoln to be its chaplain. Turner was the first black to do so in the nation. He fought valiantly alongside his troops.

After the war, Turner, envisioning a grand future for blacks, accepted President Andrew Johnson's invitation to work with the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia to assist the newly freed slaves. After encountering racism in the bureau, Turner resigned and spent the years from 1865 to 1867 organizing AME churches in Georgia. Turner was not discouraged, despite the escalating violence against blacks across the South during the aftermath of the Civil War. In 1866, the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**, one of many formal and informal **vigilante organizations**, was formed. The Klan terrorized and attacked blacks accused of crimes—or for no reason at all. Also in 1866, riots erupted in **New Orleans**, Louisiana, and **Memphis**, Tennessee. In the same year, Turner gave a roseate speech at the Emancipation Day Anniversary Celebration in Augusta, Georgia, in which he explained jubilantly that their new freedom had released blacks from living in turmoil, fear, and uncertainty, and that, in due time and with honest effort, they could attain equality with whites and eliminate racism.

Despite Turner's initial optimism, life after emancipation was precarious and brutal for blacks, and equality was as intangible as it had been during slavery. The first major event to squash Turner's faith in the future of blacks in the United States occurred in 1868 when whites refused to admit him and other black representatives into the legislature. He responded with a bold, impassioned, and eloquent speech, but to no avail. Turner was devastated. Compounding the situation was the fact that all across the South, white Democrats, abetted by private mobs, were violently seizing back political control, and the federal government was withdrawing Union troops. In 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court did away with seminal Civil Rights Act laws that forbade discrimination in hotels, trains, and other public places.

Infuriated, Turner unleashed a scathing attack on the United States, and on the heinous laws and atrocities inflicted on blacks, through numerous speeches, sermons, letters, and writings. He castigated America—and any individual, black or white—for withholding the protection, rights, and freedoms due to blacks. He lambasted **white mobs** for cruelly **lynching** blacks without due process of law. He discouraged **black self-defense**, since whites often outnumbered and outarmed their victims. He advocated the idea that blacks could only find peace, freedom, self-respect, and equality by establishing their own nation in Africa. He insisted that the American government should make **reparations** for the years blacks had toiled without pay during slavery by financing their emigration to Africa.

In 1893, Turner organized a national convention for blacks in Cincinnati, Ohio. The objective was to address the mob violence, lynchings, and other crimes against blacks, which had intensified. Turner advocated emigration, but the majority of blacks present were not interested in leaving the country to solve the problems that beset them. This was one of the major reasons that Turner's back-to-Africa strategy was not successful. Turner's **Black Nationalism** only interested a small number of poor farmers. It did not attract grand-scale support. Furthermore, blacks, unable to acclimate to life in Africa, often returned to the United States. Nevertheless, Turner was one of the most daring and outspoken black leaders of his time, a man who challenged the ruthless violence and injustices inflicted on blacks. *See also* *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*.

**Further Reading:** Redkey, Edwin S., ed. *Respect Black: Writings and Speeches of Henry M. Turner*. New York: Arno Press, 1971.

*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Turner, Mary (d. 1918), Lynching of**

Mary Turner was herself a victim of **lynching** after protesting the lynching of her husband, Hayes Turner, two days earlier. Turner's death is a popular point of reference for black human rights, and is mentioned in dozens of books and articles, discussed in academic conferences on the black American experience, and is often used to emphasize American **racism** against, and violence toward blacks.

In 1918 in Valdosta, Georgia, Hampton Smith and his wife were murdered by Sidney Johnson, a black field hand who worked on Smith's

plantation to pay off a fine for gambling. After working a significant number of hours beyond what was required, Johnson demanded payment; however, Smith refused. Johnson withheld his services from Smith, who then pursued and physically accosted Johnson. After laying in wait a few days, Johnson shot Smith through his window. Mrs. Smith was also injured, but survived, but Hampton Smith was mortally wounded. After the shootings, a crowd of whites gathered, and giving no concern for who was killed in Johnson's absence, a **white mob** of men kidnapped and lynched two innocent black men, Will Head and Will Thompson. The next day, Hayes Turner was kidnapped and imprisoned. While allegedly being taken to a safe place away from the white mob, Turner, while handcuffed behind his back, was also lynched by the mob. In protest, Turner's wife, Mary, who was eight months pregnant at the time, publicly vowed to report the identities of the murderers to authorities. Members of the white mob kidnapped her, taking her to a densely forested area, where they bound her by the feet, hung her face-down, doused her with motor oil and gasoline, and burned her alive. Miraculously, the burning did not kill her, and while still alive, her clothing was sheared off and her unborn child was barbarically extricated from her womb, only to have its head crushed under the foot of one white person at the base of the tree from which Turner was hung. Finally, Turner was riddled with over 150 bullets. In addition to the lynchings of Head, Thompson, and the Turners during the racial fray, Eugene Rice, Chime Riley, Simon Schuman, and Sidney Johnson were also lynched.

The lynching and disembowelment of Mary Turner and the crushing of her child's head are a case of American racial violence that has reached beyond the original contextual borders, affecting other aspects of black culture and life, including politics, nationalism, and literature. Turner's death lent credibility to the increasing need for **black self-defense** by emphasizing the extreme violence against blacks in the South and the lack of legal redress afforded them, despite the **Fourteenth Amendment**. The details of the Turner lynching have made the Black Nationalist case for self-defense and unification of all Africans in the Diaspora. However, it is within black literature that Mary Turner has had considerable impact, particularly during the Harlem Renaissance.

Angela Grimké's story "Goldie" (the 1920 revised edition of "Blackness") treats the Turner incident, although Margaret Sanger was suspected of publishing the work in *Birth Control Review* to discourage black reproduction. Jean Toomer's *Cane* (Kabnis) also re-creates the death of Turner, changing the circumstances of the death, but not the motive. **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** investigator **Walter White** wrote about the lynching of Turner after his probe into the lynching of blacks in general, and Turner's murder in particular, which was published in *The Crisis* in 1918.

The cruelty and barbarity of the killings of Mary Turner and her unborn child continue to be a reference point in arguments for human rights across the nation. Deleso Alford Washington, co-chair of the Legal Strategies Commission for the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America used Turner's murder to make his argument for H.R. 40, the Commission to

Study Reparations Poposals for African American Act, before Congress in 2005, attesting to the political similarities between her murder and the 1998 lynching of **James Byrd, Jr.**, in Jasper, Texas. In his address to the 2005 audience at the NAACP's convention, Julian Bond discussed the lynching of Turner to bring to the foreground the American government's consistent refusal to pass anti-lynching laws, or to apologize for the treatment of blacks. *See also* Anti-Lynching Bureau; Anti-Lynching League; Black Nationalism; Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill of 1921; Griggs, Sutton; Hose, Sam, Lynching of; Parker, Mack Charles, Lynching of; Racism; Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Reparations; *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*; Till, Emmett, Lynching of; Washington, Jesse, Lynching of.

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*Ellesia Ann Blaque*

# U

## Urbanization

Urbanization is the growth of a population living in urban areas when an increasing proportion of an entire populace lives in cities and their suburbs. In the United States, urbanization has been closely connected with industrialization. Technological advances during the mid-1800s through the early decades of the 1900s shifted the main energy sources from humans and animals to machines. These changes enhanced human productivity and contributed to increased surpluses in both agriculture and industry and, given their condensed layout, cities became ideal places for businesses to locate factories and their workers. Thus, whereas 5 percent of the U.S. population lived in cities at the beginning of the nineteenth century, about 50 percent lived in urban areas by the first decades of the twentieth century. These shifts corresponded with rapid economic changes in the United States, especially those associated with the developing automobile industry, and the transition of technological leadership from Great Britain to the United States. Today about 80 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas.

Urbanization created a rapid change in the economies of local communities as agriculture, traditional local services, and small-scale industry gave way to big industry and related commerce. Industrialization created its own need for resources, particularly cheap human labor, and began drawing from an ever-widening area for its own sustenance. The decline of the agriculture industry in the rural South combined with the rise of the textile industries elsewhere to spawn a growth in urban areas throughout the United States.

In addition, post-Civil War political maneuverings, culminating in the presidential election of 1877, dismantled whatever political and economic gains black citizens enjoyed during the period of **Reconstruction**. Therefore, industrialism attracted poor southern black sharecroppers to urban areas where they believed they would enjoy greater economic opportunities. Significant geographic shifts in black U.S. residential patterns began as early as the late nineteenth century. However, the first two decades of the 1900s saw an increase in black urbanization, as large numbers of black



families left the rural South for cities throughout the Midwest and along the eastern seaboard as part of the **Great Migration**.

Despite their optimism, African Americans found themselves largely concentrated in **ghettos**, subjected to **poverty**, and consigned to second-class citizenship. Unique features of urban life attendant to the growth of U.S. cities exacerbated these conditions and fostered racial tensions. For example, urbanization contributed to the spread of tenement living. Tenements are narrow multiunit buildings that contain few windows, limited plumbing and electricity, and small rooms. Tenements were the main housing available in the segregated areas occupied by multiple black and immigrant families who were forced to live in them because of poverty, **racism**, and, in some instances, law. They were incubators for disease, high infant mortality, and elevated levels of pollution. The hyper-dense living arrangements also fostered volatile social conditions and contributed to the eruption of race riots in major cities throughout the United States.

For example, in 1919 alone there were twenty-six race riots in the United States and in 1921 a **Tulsa**, Oklahoma, race riot resulted in the leveling of thirty-five square blocks in a predominantly black urban enclave and, by some estimations, more than 300 deaths. Both the pre-civil rights period of the 1940s and the post-civil rights period of the 1960s were punctuated by an increase in the number of race riots. Although each period was characterized by problems particular to its respective era, both shared similar social elements attendant to urbanization, immigration, wartime politics, and economic uncertainty.

Urbanization has changed over time, coming to a halt as cities and suburbs have become saturated with people. Changing social patterns and labor relations due to immigration have shifted the United States from an industrial to an information society. In addition, post-industrialism has resulted in massive job losses across the United States that disproportionately impact urban centers. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for example, the expansion of service and high-tech industries resulted in a loss of over 100,000 jobs during the mid-1990s; in New York City, where nine out of ten jobs are currently in the service sector, 350,000 jobs were lost from 1989 to 1993. Changes in the economy have also created new geographic points of major human settlements and activity. Once concentrated around the downtown area of cities, residential areas and places for leisure and entertainment, such as malls, amusement parks, and sports facilities, have increasingly moved to largely white suburbs.

The consequences for urban centers have been severe, as suburbanization has resulted in a shift in tax bases, leaving city social goods, such as schools, hospitals, and local transportation, police and fire departments, understaffed and underfunded. Ironically, even as social changes attendant to post-industrialism have fostered conditions that contribute to racial tension and unrest, so have some of the measures employed to counter the demise of cities. For instance, city governments have provided increasingly generous incentives to lure mostly white professionals into their downtown areas to expand urban tax bases and to weed out blight. As a result, housing costs have skyrocketed and low-rent apartments have been supplanted

by new developments, such as high-priced loft districts, that have displaced existing residents in historically black enclaves like Harlem, New York; Atlanta, Georgia; St. Louis, Missouri; and Oakland, California.

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# V

## Vietnam War and Race Riots

As the Vietnam War progressed, its connection to the **civil rights movement** became more pronounced. Race riots in the United States in the 1960s often reflected combined resentments—a perceived inequality of the impact of the war in Vietnam on African Americans and growing frustrations with discrimination and **racism** at home. Thus, riots and violence ensued among African Americans, both in the army in Vietnam and in the United States (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**).

The home front saw riots both directly and indirectly connected to Vietnam. One of the more famous domestic episodes was the **Jackson State University Incident (1970)**. In the wake of the invasion of Cambodia and the violence at Kent State University, riots erupted at Jackson State University in Mississippi. The conflict at Jackson State was sparked by racial tensions in town and was brought to a head by **antiwar protests**. Two dead and twelve wounded signaled the volatile mix of race, frustration over civil rights, and antiwar agitation.

Racial tensions enveloped not only life at home, but within the armed services itself as the war expanded and became more unpopular in the late 1960s. The interracial violence coupled with Black Power that marked the home front also scarred the military. Discrimination was not alien to the military, and the same polarization that marked many breakdowns in American society was reflected in the rank and file of the armed services as many black soldiers sought to embrace their culture.

War showed strains in the system of military justice as the services tried to weed out what they noted as undesirables; a large number of these were black militants who challenged the system and the war. Because so many blacks served in the military, and were—especially in beginning of war—at a disproportionate number to whites, tensions increased. In addition, those normal stresses seen in society at large were heightened because of the military situation and the war. Punishment often fell more heavily on those categorized as black militants.

As the war expanded after 1965, opposition became an important issue among African American activists. For example, **Martin Luther King, Jr.**,

especially in the last year of his life, broke with President Lyndon Johnson over the war. The riots that coursed through the Watts district of **Los Angeles** in 1965 and in Harlem in 1964 had negative effects on the military, but the widespread violent reaction to the 1968 assassination of King brought the greatest racial turmoil to the armed forces. Growing numbers of blacks were frustrated. Increased impatience with the war and the delays in racial progress in the United States led to race riots on a number of ships and military bases.

On August 30, 1968, the American prisoners in the Long Binh military stockade rioted. Blacks made up nearly 90 percent of the population. The prisoners voluntarily segregated themselves. The prison was incredibly dangerous with inhumane conditions and severe overcrowding that only worsened racial tensions. Prisoners often taunted the mostly white guards with Black Power signs. Racial tensions, combined with allegations of rampant drug use, were the primary causes of the uprising. In the end, one inmate was killed and fifty-eight inmates and five military policemen were injured before the military police used tear gas to break up the riot. Following a quick U.S. Army investigation, the U.S. command announced that racial tensions caused the riot. The command also claimed that most of the inmate injuries were caused by inmates fighting among themselves. Nearly a month later, twelve black inmates were still holding out in a section of the stockade. Eventually, six of the black inmates accused of starting the riot were charged with the murder or conspiracy to commit the murder of the white inmates.

Earlier in August, American prisoners in the Marine Corps brig at Danang rioted and set fire to cell blocks. Military police had to use tear gas to quell the riot. Two months later, in response to a weekend of incidents with racial overtones and tension between blacks and whites, the U.S. Navy imposed restrictions on movement in the Danang region.

At the Navy base at Cam Ranh Bay, white sailors donned **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**-like outfits, burned crosses, and raised the Confederate flag. In February 1969, riots at Fort Benning, Georgia, followed when a black soldier awaiting discharge vented frustration over being assigned to menial labor and attacked white troops. That same summer in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, forty-three men were charged when blacks and Puerto Ricans beat up white U.S. Marines. In March 1970, in Goose Bay, in Labrador, Canada, white airmen, apparently angered because local white women danced with blacks, stabbed a black man, thereby triggering random beatings of whites in retaliation.

The services dealt with issues by trying to grant concessions—both real and symbolic. For example, military brass accepted a modified afro, tolerated the Black Power salute, and cracked down on the use of racial epithets and offensive words. But these efforts did not resolve the problems. In October 1972, on the aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk*, a series of incidents occurred that underscored the thin barrier that held back racial tensions. The *Kitty Hawk*, a mostly white ship, experienced trouble onboard after a brawl in an enlisted man's club in Subic Bay. The first confrontation, involving a group of black sailors and a detachment of Marines, was defused by the executive officer, an African American. However, this did not end the

situation, and small groups of five to twenty-five blacks raged through the ship, attacking whites and pulling many sleeping sailors from their berths to beat them with their fists, chains, metal pipes, fire extinguisher nozzles, and broom handles. About 150 armed sailors moved through the ship spreading the hostility. The executive officer followed them and finally managed to end the threat of violence.

Although some men were charged, the *Kitty Hawk* incident, along with the other outbreaks of violence in the armed services, all reflected the fact the military was not immune from the stresses of society. The racial confrontations that raged across the United States were carried to the armed forces and did not subside until the war ended and changes were made. The military repeatedly provided a microcosm of the war's growing effect on race relations at home and how those tensions helped to exacerbate racial antagonism, at times culminating in violence. *See also* King, Martin Luther, Jr., Assassination of; Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965.

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Gary Gershman

## Vigilante Organizations

Vigilante organizations are groups that are formed to extralegally enforce law and order and to protect life, community, and property. Whites established the first vigilante organizations in America in the 1700s. Vigilantism grew more violent and racist with the passage of time. Blacks also organized, both formally and informally, in response to the violence inflicted on them by the vigilantes and by spontaneously formed **white mobs**. Ultimately, white vigilante organizations outmatched blacks in terms of strength, number, influence, and brutality.

The earliest instances of **vigilantism** were not racist by nature. In 1767, white South Carolinians formed the Back Country Regulators. Like hundreds of organizations that followed it, the Regulators sought to provide an effective defense against a growing number of bandits, outlaws, and ne'er-do-wells in the absence of laws and law enforcement. Ostracizing, tarring and feathering, and whipping were initially employed as methods of punishment, but were soon largely replaced by **lynching**.

Vigilante organizations frequently developed elaborate organizational structures and procedures. For example, some organizations developed officers, hierarchical frameworks, constitutions, articles, and a manifesto. Others operated secretly, employing spies and passwords and using disguises to apprehend and execute criminals. In most cases, vigilantes

executed offenders with or without the crude semblance of a trial. Common crimes during this period were the stealing of horses and gold, claim jumping, and shooting.

Vigilante organizations soon directed their wanton fury and vengeance on groups assumed to be inferior, such as sheep herders, Native Americans, immigrant groups, and blacks. Vigilante organizations systematically targeted these groups in response to deeply ingrained prejudices, as well as economic factors such as competition over land and resources. One of the earliest and most notorious vigilante organizations to appear after the Civil War was the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. This organization was patterned after earlier vigilante groups. Numerous organizations similar to the Klan sprang up, including the Men of Justice, the Pale Faces, the Constitutional Union Guards, the White Brotherhood, the Order of the White Rose, and the **White League**.

The Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee. The original members were former Confederates who united to fight against liberal Republicans, black sympathizers, and blacks themselves. They were responsible for a large number of deaths, tortures, and burnings. They were instrumental in helping the conservative Democrats regain political power at the close of **Reconstruction** by subduing black suffrage through violence and intimidation. They also helped enforce the social, economic, and political oppression of blacks.

Klan members, or Clansmen, wore white robes and cone-shaped hoods to hide their identities. The all-white Klan united rich and poor, professional and laborer, landowner and landless against a common enemy. Disguised whites who rode on horses called themselves the Night Riders. The Klan frequently paraded silently through a town and devised mystical languages and disguises as scare tactics. They relied heavily on violence, such as lynching, torture, burning, and even rioting.

The Klan soon became a powerful entity. Despite occasional attempts to put a stop to their lawlessness, their actions went largely unchallenged. After Reconstruction, the federal government withdrew the troops, who had previously subdued such organizations, and no longer interfered in the affairs of the South. Indeed, many members of the government, as well as law enforcers, either supported or were members of the Klan. They helped enforce oppressive ordinances to maintain white domination over blacks. The Ku Klux Klan also incited or played a role in the riots that swept the nation in four major waves between 1866 and 1951, and participated in the violent opposition faced by both black and white protestors during the **civil rights movement**.

The earliest instances of black vigilantism occurred during slavery times. All the blacks who participated in the seven major uprisings and revolts of the eighteenth century, intending to take retribution on slave owners and on whites in general, lost their lives in the process. In response to the growing incidences of anti-abolitionist violence and riots in the North, blacks formed vigilante organizations. The most successful was William Still's Philadelphia Vigilance Association, an interracial organization that was active in the 1840s and 1850s. Their main objective was to aid slaves who had escaped to the North.

For the most part, blacks took a defensive, rather than an aggressive, approach to violence. Informal groups of armed men who patrolled their communities constituted the most common vigilante activity in the North and the South. These loosely organized groups were frequently overwhelmed by white violence, as was the case in the **Greenwood Community** destroyed during the **Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921**. On the other hand, the **Deacons for Defense and Justice** were effective in staving off Ku Klux Klan attacks. When these organizations disbanded, Klan activity returned. Blacks were often murdered or otherwise thwarted when they attempted to confront racial violence. The **Black Panther Party (BPP)** was founded in the 1960s to better the condition of blacks in the **ghettos** and to protect black communities from **police brutality**. The BPP engaged in occasional violent confrontations, but the organization collapsed after the federal government infiltrated it.

Newspapers, both black and white, campaigned against specific vigilante organizations and violence in general. Legal cases, as well as decisive actions by the federal government, led to the elimination of racial violence. *See also* Frontier Justice.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## Vigilantism

Vigilantism is an unlawful process whereby a community is purged of individuals who have allegedly committed crimes or other offenses. This phenomenon was first seen in the American West in 1767, where it was driven by noble intentions to maintain law and order and protect life, community, and property. But by the 1830s, vigilanteism was being systematically used to justify brutal assaults against blacks. The horrendous practice did not end until the 1960s when the cumulative work of predominantly black leaders, the press, organizations, and federal intervention brought it to an end.

Vigilante activities against blacks followed the same patterns throughout the United States. Some whites formed spontaneous mobs or other more formal **vigilante organizations**. These vigilantes often collaborated with local law enforcement and were led or supported by prominent officials and community leaders. Whites, including young children, attending in droves, sometimes participated in the executions. Newspapers advertised impending executions and later printed sensational and gruesome accounts.

Vigilante crimes centered mostly around rioting and **lynching**. Beginning in the 1830s, whites rioted in black urban communities to discourage racial integration, black progress, and abolitionary activities. In the South after **Reconstruction**, whites rioted to regain political, social, and economic power. During the massive black migrations to the North, they also rioted to suppress black advancement and competition for jobs and housing.



Lynching was most frequent in the South but, in fact, it occurred in all but four states. The offenses blacks were alleged to have committed included assault, rape, robbery, and any number of violations of **racial etiquette**. Sometimes whites victimized blacks merely out of unadulterated racial prejudice. Lynching regularly included **castration**, dismemberment, and burning. See also Frontier Justice; Great Migration; Lynching.

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Gladys L. Knight

### Villard, Oswald Garrison (1872–1949)

Journalist, reformer, and pacifist, Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, was born on March 13, 1872, in Wiesbaden, Germany, to U.S. citizens Henry and Helen Francis “Fanny” Garrison Villard on one of the couple’s many foreign excursions. The junior Villard’s philosophy of social justice was fostered by his mother’s uncompromising commitment to equality, women’s suffrage, and world peace; and his father’s experiences as a Civil War battlefield correspondent. In his undergraduate years at Harvard University, Villard had no reputation for early political involvement. In writing for the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation*, publications owned by his father, he wrote relatively conservative stances that assured him a teaching offer at his alma mater. There he received a master’s degree without completing his thesis.

In 1897, Henry Villard arranged a brief, low-paying *Philadelphia Press* apprenticeship. At age twenty-four, the younger Villard refused an editor’s position at the *New York Evening Post*, choosing instead to serve as feature editor to a Saturday supplement guided by anti-imperialist and pacifist editor Edwin L. Godkin, whose lead Villard followed on a variety of issues: condemnation of America’s role in the Philippines and Cuba during the Spanish-American War, support of free trade, labor issues, and the elimination of political corruption. In 1900, Villard was a leader in the third-party movement and an assortment of support organizations for blacks and immigrants.

Having met his future wife, Julie Sanford, a former Kentucky Confederate officer’s daughter, while still at Harvard, the couple produced three children. A fondness for sailing his thirty-five-foot sloop led to the creation of an elite magazine, *Yachting*. Throughout his life he belonged to exclusive New York social clubs and organizations, including the New York Philharmonic Society. In contrast, Villard helped in organizing a successful national conference on the plight of black people, which led to the founding of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** in 1909. He held a position on its board for the rest of his life. His 1910 exposé of state Republican majority leader, Jotham L. Aulds, led to the first graft conviction of a New York legislator.

Villard’s credits as a serious historical scholar resulted from his *John Brown, 1800–1859: A Biography Fifty Years After* (1910) and *Germany Embattled: An American Interpretation* (1940), in which Villard expressed

competing loyalties between pride for his German ancestry and the militarism he so rejected. Respected, at first, by Woodrow Wilson for his isolationist policies, Villard lost favor with the president as World War I preparations escalated and the outspoken journalist criticized U.S. involvement. Villard lost much of his prestige and social standing by 1918 when he sold the parent publication and became editor of *The Nation*. The magazine served as an instrument for conveying Villard's ambitions and unswerving adherence to anti-imperialism, equal rights, opposition to lifetime terms for federal judges, congressional override of U.S. Supreme Court decisions, and establishment of a third political party, among other issues. Support for Socialist leader Eugene Debs' release from jail and bid for the U.S. presidency cemented the editor and the magazine as enemies of right-wing political groups. Villard's criticism of less-than-conclusive murder charges against Italian activists Sacco and Vanzetti, thought to be based on their anarchist viewpoints, prompted an angry Ohio mob of Legionnaires to attack the writer following a speech. He was blacklisted by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

After many years of hard-hitting radical journalism, he was still respected for his first-rate work. Villard suffered a heart attack in 1944, yet completed a lengthy attack on tariff systems. His righteous morality inspired the creation of the American Civil Rights Union, yet his last days of protest against World War II, during which he sided with ultra-conservative isolationists in the American First Committee, left him bitter about unrealized goals for his country. Villard died in 1949.

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*Millicent Ellison Brown*

### **Virден, Pana, and Carterville (Illinois) Mine Riots (1898–1899)**

The Illinois Coal Mine Riots were different incidents in three Illinois mining communities in 1898 and 1899 involving striking miners and black strikebreakers from the South. The Virден Riot occurred when miners and guards of the Chicago-Virден Coal Company exchanged gunfire when a train attempted to unload its black passengers. The Pana Riot occurred after a black strikebreaker and a deputy sheriff exchanged gunfire. The Carterville Riot was the result of black strikebreakers defending themselves against white miners.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, mining companies in Illinois used black strikebreakers with mixed results. Local townspeople generally assumed that blacks coming into their area were strikebreakers. While there was inherent **racism** in most Illinois residents—a carryover from the harsh black laws of the antebellum period—many low-paid workers additionally viewed blacks as an economic threat. The Illinois coal-mining industry illustrated these problems, and the growing discontent against black strikebreakers reached a climax in 1898 and 1899.

Coal miners worked long hours and earned low wages. In 1897, the United Mine Workers (UMW) called for a strike after negotiations between

the union and mining operators broke down. Six months later, the operators agreed to concessions resulting in eight-hour days and six-day weeks. Most importantly, miners received forty cents per ton produced, a 60 percent increase in their pay.

Several mine operators complained that with the increase in pay, they would be unable to sell their coal in the Chicago market. Four operators and the UMW agreed to arbitration, which resulted in a favorable decision for the union. Several mines in Illinois, including the Chicago-Virden Coal Company in Virden; the Penwell Coal Company, the Pana Coal Company, and the Springside Mine in Pana; and the St. Louis and Big Muddy Coal Company in Carterville, decided to disregard the ruling, and the miners continued their strike against the operators. The central Illinois communities of Virden and Pana are twenty miles south and forty-five miles southeast of Springfield, respectively; Carterville is in southern Illinois, sixty miles north of Cairo. In all three communities, the operators recruited non-union labor, but mass picket lines prevented laborers from working in Pana. Finally, the operators decided to bring in black strikebreakers from the South. The mining operators in Virden and Pana sent men to Alabama to recruit men who would receive twenty-five cents per ton. Samuel Brush, the operator in Carterville, secured the service of blacks from Tennessee. Some went north as individuals, and some brought their families.

In Pana, the operators built a stockade around the coal mines to prevent union miners from blocking work. Two hundred blacks arrived in Pana on August 24, 1898. By the beginning of October, nearly 700 blacks had arrived in Pana to work at the coal mine. Most blacks settled near the mines in the Flatham district. The sheriff supported the operators, and despite words and various incidents, most blacks were able to work in the mines with little to no opposition from the striking miners.

One incident caused Gov. John Tanner to call the Illinois National Guard to Pana. As a way to remove blacks from town, union miners attempted to pay train fare to Alabama for blacks who chose to leave. When several miners approached a black man on September 28, 1898, other blacks joined in to resist. A police officer arrested a black worker and began to move him to jail. A group of armed blacks, led by Henry Stevens, challenged the officers and armed miners, and the two groups exchanged gunfire, which injured a few blacks, but no one was seriously hurt. The police arrested Stevens, who received a fine for disturbing the peace and inciting a riot. The presence of the Illinois National Guard probably prevented more incidents from occurring.

In Virden, the situation was different. During the train ride from the Alabama to Virden, black strikebreakers received threats of violence when union miners boarded the train to convince them to return to the South. A small number did leave, but most remained on board. Miners from nearby communities arrived in Virden to prevent the company from bringing in the southern blacks. To protect the incoming black miners, the company built a stockade around the mine and moved other buildings within the stockade. Finally, the company hired ex-policemen and agents from a St. Louis detective agency to act as guards at the stockade.

On September 24, 1898, the first trainload of blacks approached Virden. The engineer noticed a large crowd but continued north to Springfield rather than stopping. In the next few weeks, rumors circulated throughout central Illinois about various trains carrying blacks, all of whom were under suspicion of being strikebreakers. Governor Tanner ordered the Illinois National Guard to move from Pana to Virden to stop any violence from occurring there.

On October 12, 1898, another train rolled into Virden with approximately fifty black coal miners. The company ordered the engineer to stop the train. The company's plan was to provide a guarded pathway for the strikebreakers to get inside the stockade. Once the train stopped in front of the stockade, someone fired a shot, and the guards and the striking miners began shooting at each other. The black strikebreakers crouched below the window-line to avoid the gunshots. After the twenty-minute gunfight, bullet holes covered the train cars, and none of the windows remained intact. The train quickly rolled off toward Springfield, leaving at least thirty wounded and seven dead striking miners, and five wounded and four dead guards. None of the blacks on board the train died, but several had received wounds.

After the riot, there were isolated incidents in which white miners attacked blacks. One black man escaped from the poor temporary housing conditions in Springfield only to be beaten by several whites. Another black man went to Virden to proclaim that he had a right to work as much as any other man, but he too was beaten. No blacks worked in the mines in Virden. Some returned to Birmingham, Alabama, while others settled in Springfield and St. Louis. By the middle of November, the Chicago-Virden Company capitulated, and the striking miners returned to work at the forty-cent-per-ton rate.

In Pana, however, the three coal companies refused to capitulate. In November, a pro-miner sheriff won election over the pro-operator incumbent. Minor skirmishes continued, but by February 1899, local townspeople grew tired of the Illinois National Guard presence. On March 23, 1899, Governor Tanner ordered the withdrawal of troops from Pana.

On April 10, 1899, Henry Stevens wanted to talk with several blacks who had been arrested. When police refused to let him do so and ordered him to leave, Stevens showed his gun. Deputy Sheriff Frank Cheney and Stevens exchanged shots, and Stevens fled as Cheney and other deputies chased him. During the chase, miners took up positions on rooftops to fire at blacks, and blacks took up positions in the stockade to fire at whites. Stevens made it to Penwell's Store, but the deputies continued their pursuit and shot him in the neck. Stevens' wound was not serious, and the police arrested him.

After the shooting, five blacks and two whites were dead, and six blacks and nine whites were wounded. Many of the killed and wounded were innocent bystanders, some of whom were simply working in their homes. Governor Tanner again ordered troops to Pana, and they quickly restored order. On April 13, the troops searched homes for weapons and collected several wagonloads. By June, the troops left Pana, and the mines shut

down, leaving the black strikebreakers unemployed. They appealed to Governor Tanner for funds to return to Alabama, and Tanner responded by providing transportation at a cost of \$1,600. Nearly all of the black strikebreakers left Pana. In October 1899, the Pana operators agreed to the forty-cent-per-ton rate.

In May 1898, Samuel Brush, the general manager of the St. Louis and Big Muddy Coal Company successfully recruited nearly 180 black strikebreakers to work with many of the remaining white miners. Despite the uneasiness between the strikers and strikebreakers, Brush's mine continued to operate without much trouble. The strikebreakers, however, produced less coal, and Brush had to spend additional money on guards and protection. In March 1899, Brush agreed to most of the union's demands, but he refused to recognize the union. At this time, the mine was the last large nonunion mine in the state. When Brush failed to concede to some of the miners' demands, the miners organized and called for a strike in May 1899. Brush knew of the departing strikebreakers from Pana and recruited them to work in Carterville.

On June 30, 1899, the train carrying black strikebreakers from Pana stopped a few miles northwest of Carterville. An armed man boarded the train, telling the conductor not to proceed. The conductor ordered the engineer to start the train, and men hiding in an adjacent field fired at the train, killing the wife of one of the black miners and wounding twenty other people on the train. The black miners on the train fired back into the field, but the train rolled on, preventing any more casualties. The black miners from Pana disembarked at Carterville without incident. Later in the week, the black miners fought back, but no one on either side received serious injuries. Governor Tanner ordered Spanish-American War veteran troops from nearby Carbondale to Williamson County to restore order. With the presence of the troops, there were no incidents for the rest of the summer.

On September 11, 1899, the troops left Carterville. On September 17, some white miners and black strikebreakers exchanged words. Later and unrelated, several black miners and family members walked to the Illinois Central Railroad station for personal business, and an armed group of blacks accompanied them. Believing that the armed black escort was responding to the exchange of words, an armed group of thirty white miners met them at the train station. Rather than face gunfire, the black families and their escorts left the station escaping along the tracks, but the white miners pursued them. One of the black men fired at their pursuers, and the miners responded by returning fire. Five of the blacks died instantly, and several others were injured. The remaining group made it back to the mine, and nearly 200 blacks stormed the mine's storehouse, where there were guns, but Brush's son prevented them from arming themselves. The troops returned shortly and restored peace. Three white men faced trial for the murder of the blacks, but a jury acquitted all three. Brush, who was known as a friend of the blacks, never capitulated to the union, and eventually sold his interest in the mine in 1906.

The Illinois General Assembly responded to the Virden Riot by passing a bill making it an offense for any person or company to induce workmen to

come to Illinois to act as strikebreakers. One of the few dissenting votes was from William L. Martin, a black representative from Cook County. Governor Tanner enthusiastically supported the bill and signed it into law four days after the Pana Riot. In reality, the main purpose of the bill was to prevent black strikebreakers from entering the state.

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*John A. Lupton*



# W

**Waco Horror.** *See* Washington, Jesse, Lynching of

## **War on Poverty**

The War on Poverty was declared by President Lyndon B. Johnson during his first State of the Union address on January 8, 1964, and was a significant component of his Great Society campaign. Before President Johnson declared this metaphorical war, President **John F. Kennedy** had considered making the elimination of **poverty** a focus of his reelection campaign and second administration. In fact, Johnson's Great Society campaign was an extension of Kennedy's New Frontier initiatives, which included federal funding for education, health care for the elderly, as well as ending racial discrimination. Kennedy's initiatives assumed that by expanding access to health care, education, employment, and training opportunities, the poor would also benefit from the growth of the U.S. economy.

Michael Harrington's book *The Other America* (1962), the **civil rights movement**, and the urban unrest of the 1960s further supported the need for legislation that would address the economic and social problems faced by the poor. Certainly, the Watts riot in 1965 further demonstrated the need for such legislation and related programs (see **Los Angeles [California] Riot of 1965**). The War on Poverty involved legislation and social programs that were aimed at reducing or eliminating poverty in the United States, which at the time affected over 35 million people or 25 percent of the population. The War on Poverty speech encouraged the U.S. Congress to pass the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) on August 20, 1964, which provided funds to combat unemployment and poverty. The EOA was the first government-sponsored attempt to include the poor and encourage their active participation in the planning and implementation of programs. The EOA established the since-disbanded Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), which was to administrate the local application of federal funds aimed at poverty reduction. This legislation included several social programs designed to promote health, education, and the welfare of the poor. Further, this legislation was the basis for various initiatives, including: the Job



Corps; Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), which was a domestic version of the Peace Corps; Upward Bound; Head Start; Legal Services, which provided legal services for the poor; the Neighborhood Youth Corps; the Community Action Program (CAP), which called for the establishment of community action agencies throughout the United States to focus on and improve a community's response to the needs of the poor by mobilizing resources and increasing sensitivity to their plight (the most controversial of all initiatives); the college Work-Study Program; Neighborhood Development Centers; small-business loan programs; rural programs; migrant worker programs; and community health care centers.

As part of Johnson's Great Society legislation, other important antipoverty measures included the Revenue Act of 1964, which called for an \$11 billion tax cut; the Food Stamp Act (1964); the Social Security Amendments creating the Medicare and Medicaid programs (1965); the creation of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1965); the Fair Housing Act (1968); various urban renewal projects; the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**; and the Voting Rights Act (1965). The latter two were a significant step for the civil rights movement. Originally introduced by Kennedy, the Civil Rights Act was the most extensive civil rights legislation enacted since **Reconstruction**. The Voting Rights Act eliminated several barriers to registration that had traditionally been utilized, especially in the South, to restrict black voting. After its enactment, black voter registration began a sharp increase, one reason why the Voting Rights Act has been referred to as the most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress.

Johnson's antipoverty programs were quickly the focus of criticism. Some argued that they did not do enough for the poor, while others argued that they did too much. Some argued that these programs demoralized the poor and others argued that they inspired the poor to riot. At the same time, Johnson began to rapidly increase U.S. involvement in Vietnam. By February 1965, U.S. fighter planes began bombing North Vietnam, and U.S. troops increased to more than 180,000 by the end of 1965, and to 500,000 by 1968. Racial tension at home sharpened, resulting in widespread race riots between 1965 and 1968. The racial unrest and the imperfections of some of the Great Society programs, including antipoverty measures, led to Republican gains in the 1966 elections, significantly limiting any hopes for further congressional cooperation with the Johnson administration. As a result, Johnson made two surprising announcements in 1968—he would stop bombing most of North Vietnam and attempt to negotiate an end to the war, and he would not run for reelection. Over the years, many of the War on Poverty programs have weathered attacks and the ill effects of underfunding and remain a significant component of U.S. antipoverty policy. *See also* Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Urbanization; Vietnam War and Race Riots.

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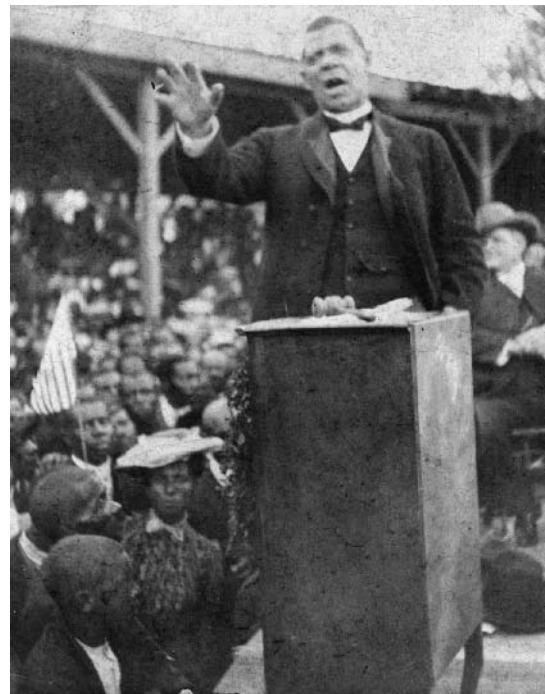
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Paulina X. Ruf

### Washington, Booker T. (1856–1915)

At the height of his power, just after the turn of the century, Booker T. Washington was one of the most famous people in North America and Europe. The United States was a **Jim Crow** society, yet Washington was an icon of progress operating at the highest levels. President Theodore Roosevelt consulted him, his books were best-sellers, universities gave him honorary degrees, and reporters quoted his policy statements. The school he directed, Tuskegee Institute in northeast Alabama, received donations from leading industrialists such as Andrew Carnegie, and the network of teachers, ministers, journalists, and federal workers that he coordinated—the *Tuskegee Machine*—stretched into almost every state. The muckraking writer Ray Stannard Baker observed after touring the South, “Whenever I found a prosperous Negro enterprise, a thriving business place, a good home, there I was almost sure to find Booker T. Washington’s picture over the fireplace” (1908).

His life was a deeply American story. He was born a slave in 1856, just before the Civil War. The barbarities of the “peculiar institution” he downplayed in his remembrances, but the conviction that evil would creep into people’s souls whenever they lived in a system in which some worked and others did not became a central principle in his later thinking. Poor and humble, he made his way to school (Hampton Institute in Virginia), studied intensely, became a teacher, and devised a novel curriculum of vocational training and strict moral conduct. The ethic was a simple one. Hard work, thrifty spending, modest behavior—those were the ingredients of a successful life. For ex-slaves, opportunity was limited and racial passions were high. Best to learn a trade and save some money, he argued, to labor industriously and buy some land. Above all, do not provoke your white neighbors. You haven’t the power to oppose them or the knowledge to outwit them. Because **racism**



Booker T. Washington standing at an outdoor lectern speaking to a large audience in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

is rampant, the best relation to form with whites is a cooperative economic one—employer/employee, client/tradesman—and fulfill your end honorably.

Ambitious and energetic, he refined his gospel of work in lectures and writings. In 1895 came an invitation to speak at the **Cotton States and International Exposition** in Atlanta on September 18. His five minutes on stage in the September heat proved to be one of the landmark orations in U.S. history. It was an unusual occasion, a black man sharing a stage with white leaders in the Deep South. Introduced by Governor Bullock of Georgia as “a representative of Negro enterprise and Negro civilization,” Washington strode forth and outlined a compact proposal of race relations in the United States. “The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly,” he assured the whites in the crowd. Black men and women would be a sound labor pool, starting at the bottom but ready to work cooperatively for mutual benefit. The choices were stark: “we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic.” At the same time, he assured the blacks, “No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized.” American capitalism isn’t color-blind, but it goes a long way toward defusing racial tensions. Anyone who works diligently will find employment; anyone who spends wisely will save money. And “when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world.”

The moment Washington stopped speaking, the onlookers erupted in cheers. Governor Bullock rushed to shake his hand, reporters jammed the stage, and word spread of a new black spokesman with a vision all could embrace. Newspapers echoed his message, and President Grover Cleveland wired him a note of congratulations. From that day forward, Washington was hailed as Leader of His Race, the Wizard of Tuskegee. The next twenty years would be a nonstop series of lecture tours, political meetings, writing assignments, negotiations with donors, secret protests, and public compromises.

But there was one aspect of American life that did not fit into Washington’s design: racial violence. His work ethic might be an answer to illiteracy and vagrancy, and it might help one cope with white racism, but it was no defense against irrational aggression. Appealing to better feelings, or even to greed, may be wise, but white rage was part of the social landscape. Just as Washington was coming to power, a wave of “negrophobia” was sweeping the South. In the 1890s, initiatives to deny black men the right to vote, legalize separate facilities, and stock workhouses and chain gangs sprang up in every state. Worst of all, lynch law became a fact of life. **White supremacy** was the passion of southern politics, and in its ultimate expression took the form of mob rule. In **Wilmington**, North Carolina, in 1898, in **New Orleans** in 1900, and in **Atlanta** in 1906, **white mobs** seized downtown streets and attacked innocent black citizens, killing dozens and wounding thousands. Radical “negrophobes” justified the violence as a legitimate response to Negro crime and degeneracy, spurring further episodes in smaller communities and spreading terror throughout the land.

Washington's private actions were noble. He tried to hire detectives to discover the ringleaders of the outbreaks; he encouraged influential white moderates to speak out against **lynching**; and he lobbied quietly for colored regiments in the militia. But publicly, Washington adopted a conciliatory tone. He accused itinerant blacks of preying on white women, and he blamed vice dens in the city for corrupting black boys and girls. When black militants such as **Monroe Trotter** and fledgling groups such as the **Niagara movement** advocated stronger measures, Washington plotted a smear campaign. In the aftermath of the Atlanta riot, he claimed that the affair would actually improve relations between the races—an interpretation that struck those who endured the mobs as craven appeasement.

Washington's inability to address white violence proved a fatal weakness. In the last years of his life, African American activism shifted away from Tuskegee and toward the newly formed **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and the projects of **Marcus Garvey**. Washington died in 1915. *See also* Accommodationism; The Cotton States and International Exposition (Atlanta 1895); Du Bois, W.E.B.

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*Mark Bauerlein*

### Washington (D.C.) Riot of 1919

The five-day rioting in Washington, D.C., started on July 19, 1919, when a mob of several hundred off-duty white soldiers, sailors, and marines entered a black residential area to avenge the jostling of a white woman by two black men the night before. The jostled woman was described in some accounts as a sailor's wife, but was identified in the *New York Times* as Mrs. Elsie Stephnick, wife of an employee of the U.S. Naval Aviation Department, who had been on her way home from the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. The **white mob** assaulted several black people and vandalized the home of a black family. The next night, white mobs again rampaged, doing even more damage. Several black people were attacked by soldiers at Fifteenth Street and New York Avenue, NW. The third night, July 21, the tide turned, and blacks attacked whites and police. Black men in automobiles drove around the city shooting.

Key officials serving at the time were Chief of Police Major Pullman; Secretary of War Baker; Chief of Staff General March; Marine Corps Commandant Major General Barnett; and Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels. Maj. Gen. William G. Haan commanded 1,000 soldiers, marines, and cavalrymen to bring order. Although it was confirmed that uniformed troops had participated in the riots, General Haan attributed that to the large number of

recently discharged soldiers in the area, and he was sure that no active-duty soldiers participated. With the perpetrators and the peacemakers wearing the same uniforms, stopping the riots was a complicated endeavor.

The rioting ended after four people had been killed, as many as thirty people were hospitalized, and finally, a powerful thunderstorm broke over the city, sending the rioters indoors. Dead were Detective Sergeant Harry Wilson and Kenneth Crall, both white, and Randall Neal and Thomas Armstrong, black. Some of the worst fighting had been at Seventh and T Streets in the black neighborhood, where police and soldiers confronted a large group of black rioters. During the fighting, black women stationed at windows and on rooftops threw bottles and other projectiles at the authorities.

Shortly after the turn of the century, social attitudes in Washington, D.C., had begun to change toward black residents. The city essentially became more southern, adopting **Jim Crow** policies and gradually eliminating black employees and members from the government and organizations. This strengthening of the racial divide flourished under the Wilson administration. Washington, D.C.'s black leadership reacted with a militant stance, achieving a first step in January 1919, when District Commissioner Brownlow established an all-black platoon in the fire department, ensuring promotions for the department's black veterans. This act, and the activism behind it, may have been a factor in the riots.

George E. Haynes, sociologist and founder of the Urban League, was the director of the Division of Negro Economics in the U.S. Department of Labor at the time. Haynes' article "Race Riots in Relation to Democracy" (1919) named four factors at work behind the rioting. Two factors were the new black militancy and the growing separation and antagonism between the races. A third was that the United States had become a world power, so U.S. race relations would now reflect on international relations, particularly regarding nations of color. Finally, the sensational journalism preceding the violence promoted and stoked the fear of black crime, providing the primary motivating undercurrent.

**James Weldon Johnson** agreed, and met with the city editor of the *Washington Post* to explain to him how the *Post* and the other daily newspapers were responsible. The city editor "stood as one struck dumb" (Johnson 1919). The D.C. branch of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** had been active regarding the situation as far back as July 9, when it sent letters to the Washington, D.C., daily papers, telling them that their inflammatory headlines and articles had the potential to provoke a race riot. An article in the socialist black journal *The Messenger* said that the Washington newspapers incited the D.C. riot, U.S. soldiers and sailors started it, and the black people of D.C., determined to resist, finished it, demonstrating that they were not afraid to kill or die for liberty and home.

James Weldon Johnson also met with U.S. senators, including Sen. Charles Curtis from Kansas, asking for a congressional investigation of the riots. Johnson believed that black people had saved Washington by their determination not to run and to defend their lives and their homes. He felt that the

Chicago and D.C. riots marked a turning point in the nation's attitude toward race relations. Senator Curtis did sponsor a resolution requesting an investigation. See also Chicago (Illinois) Riot of 1919; Red Summer Race Riots of 1919.

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Jan Voogd

### Washington (D.C.) Riots of 1968

Following the assassination of Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, civil disorder broke out in nearly 110 U.S. cities. By far, the riot that occurred in Washington, D.C., between April 4 and 8 was the worst, bringing the city to a standstill. Schools closed, 1,000 buildings burned, 1,097 people were injured, 6,100 were arrested, and 12 people lost their lives. Damages exceeded \$27 million.

The first place the rioting occurred was at Fourteenth and U Streets, in the northwest quadrant of the city. This area was at the heart of one of the black neighborhoods. It was a busy hub of activity, serving as a bus transfer point and the home of stores, businesses, theaters, and offices for such civil rights organizations as the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**, and the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)**.

When the news of the assassination was first broadcast over the airways, it was received in stunned silence and utter disbelief. Then it was announced that businesses were asked to close in respect for Dr. King. On Fourteenth and U Streets, a small band of young people, mostly black males, were gathering. They decided that they would go from business to business telling them that they should close. Soon the group was joined by **Stokely Carmichael**, who appeared on the scene. He was the West Indian-born former leader of SNCC who was known as a black activist. When he joined the crowd, it began to grow larger. The mood of the crowd changed. The crowd became angry and menacing. No longer were they asking the business owners to close—they were demanding that they do so. Carmichael left the area when anger turned to violence. Carmichael was well aware that he was being watched closely by local and federal authorities since he was viewed by them as a volatile agitator. But the

violence escalated into breaking windows and widescale looting. Rioters threw rocks at motorists. The windshield of the first police car on the scene was broken in the melee. Eventually, local police quelled the rioters. As they secured the area around Fourteenth and U Streets, trouble erupted in other parts of the city. On the following morning, Walter Washington, the first black mayor of the city, had workers cleaning up the damage. For many in the city, this was presumed to be the end of the trouble. But it was not.

That day, Stokely Carmichael resurfaced and held a news conference in which he boldly declared that "America killed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. last night." He continued, "We have gone full swing into the revolution" (Judge 2005). After the news conference, he went onto the campus of Howard University, which he had formerly attended. There were two activities in progress to commemorate Dr. King. There was a commemoration service in Cramton Auditorium and a rally a few steps away in front of Douglass Hall. At the rally, several speeches were given, including remarks by Carmichael. He drew a pistol, waved it over his head, and predicted that retaliatory action would occur to avenge the King assassination. Someone lowered the American flag and raised a flag of Ujamma. It symbolized a black nationalist student group. A reporter from the *Washington Post* newspaper interpreted the tone of the rally as "vehemently anti-white" (Judge 2005). When the attendees at the rally left and proceeded south on Georgia Avenue, the main street near the university, the crowd clashed with local police. A violent confrontation ensued.

By the afternoon, rioting, looting, and violence again erupted in other parts of the city. This happened mostly in black neighborhoods. In the areas where there was trouble, upwards of thousands of people roamed around with impunity. Stores, businesses, and a few homes were burned. When some storekeepers were forced to leave their stores for their own safety, many made signs that read *Soul Brother* or *I am a Brother*. These signs were displayed prominently in the windows and on doors of businesses owned by all races. They hoped that this would serve as a deterrent to having their businesses looted or burned. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it did not. Children and adults could be seen running up and down the street with clothes, shoes, food, furniture, appliances, liquor, and any other items that were easy to grab and carry away. Some stores had all of their merchandise taken and were then torched. Some rioters were seen using carts and suitcases to carry away their loot. On April 5, the rioters reached within a few blocks of the White House. A mob mentality reigned for nearly three days and nights in some parts of the city. In other parts of the city, where the rioters had not reached, many citizens huddled in their homes in fear that they and their neighborhood might fall victim to what was happening in the troubled neighborhoods. An eerie, smoldering silence fell over the city as the news media described the devastation that continued to mount.

In 1968, the full compliment of the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department was 3,100. Clearly, they were outnumbered and not fully prepared to deal with the rioters. They had never before faced a similar

situation. Also, it was a sensitive matter of race, because the majority of police officers were white and the majority of rioters were black. Again, Mayor Walter Washington and other community leaders walked the streets and spoke through the media, pleading for calm. A curfew was imposed in the city. It began at 5:30 P.M. and ended at 6:30 A.M. President Lyndon B. Johnson issued an executive order to bring in 13,600 federal troops, including national guardsmen. They were immediately deployed to protect the U.S. Capitol, the White House, and various locations around the city. The federal military presence in Washington during the 1968 riots was the largest of any since the Civil War. President Johnson declared Sunday, April 8, 1968, a day of national mourning. Thirty-five years later, many of the areas struck by the riot had not been fully rebuilt. While some movement for rebuilding has begun, there remain scars and blight that can be traced directly to the riot of 1968.

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*Betty Nyangoni*

### **Washington, Jesse (d. 1916), Lynching of**

Jesse Washington, a seventeen-year-old illiterate black farm hand, was lynched in Waco, Texas, on May 15, 1916. Arrested on May 8, 1916, for murdering Robinson, Texas, resident Lucy Fryer, a fifty-three-year-old white woman, Washington confessed to Fryer's rape and murder. Despite the public outrage among whites, Sheriff Samuel S. Fleming safely transferred Washington to Dallas County to await trial. The trial began in Waco, a town of 25,000 located seven miles south of Robinson, on May 15, 1916, at the Fifty-Fourth District Court, Judge Richard I. Munroe presiding. A sea of white faces pushed into the court until it filled to capacity, and hundreds more gathered outside, anxious to render their own justice. Twelve white men served as the jury. After hearing the evidence, they deliberated for less than five minutes and returned with a guilty verdict, which carried with it the death penalty. What happened next became known as the Waco Horror.

The verdict ignited an already incensed court. Shouts rang out for Jesse's immediate execution. Men rushed Jesse, pushing aside security and Jesse's lawyers (who did not resist the onslaught), grabbed the frightened boy, and ripped off his clothes. Some had clubs, others bricks, still others had shovels, guns, and knives. They dragged him outside where they wrapped a chain around his neck. Jesse's plea for mercy did not phase the crazed mob, now 15,000 strong. They swarmed Jesse, the chain tightening around his neck. As they dragged him to the City Square to be hanged, they beat



him, stabbed him, and mutilated him. His fingers were cut off, his ears, his toes—body parts taken as souvenirs.

No matter the verdict, the townspeople had already judged Jesse guilty, evident in their reaction to the verdict and the debris for a bonfire they had built in the City Square outside the courthouse. The boxes and wood that they had piled under a tree were doused in coal oil, as was Jesse. Then the fire was lit, the chain around Jesse's neck was looped over a branch, and Jesse was hoisted up. The onlookers' gaze bespoke anger, pride, and victory as Jesse was lowered into the blaze. His screams fell on the deaf ears of women, children, and men. Indeed, Waco's finest, many donned in their Sunday best, did not flinch at the sight or smell of the burning youth.

In fact, Jesse Washington's **lynching** drew a crowd of everyday, law-abiding, church-attending, educated citizens—Waco's mayor and police officials included. The popularity of lynching between 1880 and 1930 was often captured in photos depicting satisfied mobs smiling and posing with their kill. Waco photographer Fred Gildersleeve took pictures of Jesse's lynching as it was in progress. He photographed scenes of the mob torturing Jesse. Gildersleeve had planned to use the photos as postcards to sell commemorating the event. Although some of the photos were made into postcards, Gildersleeve did not expect his photos to stir a nation to outrage or to shame and tarnish Waco's image as the Athens of Texas. Yet his photographs shone a spotlight on what was sometimes called the New Negro Crime and was instrumental in bringing national attention to the crime of lynching.

The violence against blacks dubbed New Negro Crime emerged primarily to quell the upward mobility blacks gained during **Reconstruction** and reflected the stereotype of white females as prey of black men. Hence, merely accusing a black man of raping a white woman was reason for a black man, any black man, to be hanged. Although the accusations were mostly false, mobs could only be satisfied when a snapped-neck black victim paid with his life. Jesse's guilt was questionable, according to black journalist A.T. Smith. Smith alleged that George Fryer, Lucy Fryer's husband, murdered her, an allegation for which Smith was convicted of criminal libel and silenced.

Nevertheless, the New Negro Crime sealed Jesse's fate. His conviction, torture, mutilation, burning, decapitation; the bagging of his burnt body, dragging it back to Robinson, and hanging it in public as a warning to blacks occurred within an hour of his conviction. No one in the mob was charged. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching.

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*Reginald Bruster*

**Watts Riots.** See Los Angeles (California) Riot of 1965

**Wells-Barnett, Ida B. (1862–1931)**

Ida Bell Wells-Barnett was born July 16, 1862, in Holly Springs, Mississippi, to James Wells, a carpenter, and Elizabeth Warrenton Wells, a cook. She was the eldest of eight children, four girls and four boys, two of whom died in early childhood. Her father was respected as a community leader and was known locally as a *race man* because of his commitment to civil rights, community development, and educational opportunity. Both of her parents offered strong role models for hard work, responsible citizenship, and positive living, and they instilled into their children a keen sense of duty to God, family, and community.

Wells-Barnett attended elementary and high school at Shaw University, later renamed Rust College. She was well on her way to laying a solid foundation for life when both her parents and her youngest brother died suddenly in the yellow fever epidemic that struck her area in 1878. To keep her siblings together and sustain their family, she left school and secured a teaching position in the public schools of rural Mississippi. This career path took her to Shelby County, Tennessee, and to the city of Memphis.

As a teacher in the Memphis area, she interacted with African American people who were centrally involved in creating a brighter day for African Americans, just as her parents had worked to do in Holly Springs. The community took pride generally in being forward-looking and culturally and intellectually vibrant. They worked aggressively to take advantage of opportunities and to function as productive and responsible citizens. Wells-Barnett also continued to be active in her church, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, as well as in others, and she was able to hear and meet many nationally renowned people, including Frederick Douglass, Blanche K. Bruce, **Henry McNeal Turner**, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.

Wells-Barnett also became active in the local literary clubs. Through these activities, she became a contributor and later editor of the *Evening Star* and columnist for the *Living Way*, both periodicals in Memphis. In 1884, she brought a lawsuit against the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad Company for **Jim Crow** practices that resulted in her being physically thrown off a train. She won, but the ruling was overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court. Her first editorial was an invitation from the *Living Way* to write about her ordeal. The editorial was well received by the African American community, and Wells-Barnett was invited to write a column.



Ida B. Wells-Barnett, 1891. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Using the pen name “Iola,” Wells-Barnett was fiercely dedicated to justice and social reform. Her popularity as a journalist grew, and her column was syndicated in several papers across the nation. By 1889, she had left her teaching job and become co-owner of a newspaper, *Free Speech and Headlight*, with Rev. F. Nightingale and J.L. Fleming. In 1891, she and Fleming bought out Nightingale and shortened the name of the paper to *Free Speech*. By this point, Wells-Barnett was firmly established as a successful businesswoman and a highly respected journalist with a well-deserved reputation as a sharp-tongued political observer.

From this springboard, Wells-Barnett fashioned a remarkable career as a political activist and as an investigative journalist, especially with regard to the **lynching** of African American men, women, and children. Her list of accomplishments is long. She made two speaking tours of England, Scotland, and Wales, in 1893 and 1894. She was active over the next decades in several political organizations and movements, including the National Afro-American League, Afro-American Council, National Association of Colored Women (NACW), National Equal Rights League, Ida B. Wells Woman’s Club, National American Woman’s Suffrage Association, the **Niagara movement**, the woman’s suffrage movement, and the international peace movement. She was a cofounder of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** in 1910, and founder of the Negro Fellowship League in 1910 and the Alpha Suffrage Club in 1913. She ran for Illinois state senate in 1930 and lost. She worked arduously until her death as a self-determined crusader for justice and died of uremic poisoning on March 25, 1931 in Chicago.

### *A Time of Challenge*

Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Henry Stewart, three enterprising and well-respected African American men in Memphis, owned and operated a grocery store, the People’s Grocery Company, in a suburban area of the city that was popularly called the Curve because the streetcar line curved sharply at that point (Wells-Barnett, 47–76). Moss, a mail carrier, was the president of the company and worked in the store at night, while his partners operated the business during the day. In this mostly African American neighborhood, their store was able to compete successfully for business with a store that was white-owned and -operated. Before the People’s Grocery, the white-owned store had held a monopoly, and the owner was much agitated by the success of his competition. He became openly hostile.

According to Wells-Barnett in *Crusade for Justice*, one incident that became violent was a quarrel between white boys and African American boys over a game of marbles. A fight ensued between the two groups that escalated into a fight between the fathers of the boys. The African American father won the fight, but the white father, the grocery store owner, swore out a warrant for the arrest of the African Americans. The People’s Grocery owners were drawn into the tense dispute. The case was dismissed with nominal fines, but the victory for the African Americans was met by a threat

that the People's Grocery would be forcibly closed by the white contenders on the next Saturday night.

In the face of such direct threats, Moss, McDowell, and Stewart sought legal counsel and found that, because the Curve was outside of the city limits of Memphis, they would be justified in protecting themselves. They did. They armed several men and stationed them at the rear of the store in preparation for repelling any attack that might occur. As threatened, that Saturday night, armed whites came to the rear of the store. The guards fired on them and wounded three. Others of the attacking group fled. The next morning, Moss, McDowell, and Stewart were dragged from their homes, and they and over 100 other African American men were arrested and jailed.

According to Wells-Barnett, the next morning the white newspaper reported that on the evening before, white law enforcement officers had been wounded while discharging their duty to hunt down criminals who were being harbored in the People's Grocery. Instead of being described as a successful grocery, the store was presented as an unsavory hangout for thieves and thugs who engaged in drinking and gambling. This account and others sensationalized the incident and enflamed **racism**. Groups of white men were permitted throughout the day on Sunday to view the imprisoned African American men, and white men gathered on the streets and in other meeting places to discuss the insurrection and its remedies. Although Memphis had not been a site of lynchings since the Civil War, the African American community became alarmed. Several African American men volunteered to stand guard at the jail to ensure the safety of those incarcerated. By the third night, they thought that the situation had calmed down and that the crisis had ended. They went home.

That night, March 9, 1892, a **white mob** was admitted to the jail. They took Moss, McDowell, and Stewart from their cells, loaded them on a train car that ran in back of the jail, carried the men a mile north of the city limits, and shot them to death. Wells-Barnett explained that the white newspaper reported the following details:

“It is said that Tom Moss begged for his life for the sake of his wife and child and his unborn baby”; that when asked if he had anything to say, told them “tell my people to go West—there is no justice for them here”; that Calvin McDowell got hold of one of the guns of the lynchers and because they could not loosen his grip a shot was fired into his closed fist. When the three bodies were found, the fingers of McDowell's right hand had been shot to pieces and his eyes were gouged out. This proved that the one who wrote that news report was either an eyewitness or got the facts from someone who was. (Wells-Barnett, 50–51)

The deaths of the three men were reported as “by hands unknown,” with no attempt by law enforcement to actually find the killers. The African American community was outraged by both the lynchings and the fact that the men who were lynched were clearly upstanding citizens rather than criminals of any kind. Their agitation fed rumors that spread through the white community indicating that African Americans were congregating at

the Curve. A judge of the criminal court issued an order to the sheriff to “take a hundred men, go out to the Curve at once, and shoot down on sight any Negro who appears to be making trouble” (Wells-Barnett, 51). The white male community responded accordingly. They gathered, obtained weapons, went to the Curve, fired arbitrarily into groups of African Americans, and achieved their objective. They took possession of the People’s Grocery Company and consumed and destroyed its contents at will. In the days that followed, creditors sold the remaining stock at auction, and the rivalry of the People’s Grocery with the white-owned store was summarily ended.

When these incidents occurred, Ida B. Wells-Barnett was in Natchez, Mississippi, on a marketing development trip for her newspaper. By the time she returned home, Moss had already been buried. The death of Moss and his two business partners was quite a blow to Wells-Barnett. Moss and his wife Betty were personal friends, and she was godmother to their daughter Maurine. Wells-Barnett was incensed by the injustice. She wrote editorials against the conditions for African Americans in Memphis and urged African Americans, as Moss had recommended, to “save our money and leave a town which will neither protect our lives and property, nor give us a fair trial in the courts, but takes us out and murders us in cold blood when accused by white persons” (Wells-Barnett, 52). African Americans started leaving Memphis in large numbers, especially with the opening of Oklahoma (Indian Territory) for settlement. When the white backlash to this migration sought to discourage the departures with stories of danger and distress, Wells-Barnett went to Oklahoma to investigate and discover the truth. She sent letters to the *Free Speech* reporting her findings, and the migration continued, drawing people, not only from Memphis, but also Arkansas, Mississippi, and other parts of Tennessee.

In addition to migration as a political strategy, Wells-Barnett also understood the power of economic leverage. She made speeches in local churches and wrote editorials that encouraged a boycott of the streetcar system, a business that benefited greatly from African American patronage. This campaign stands historically as an important precursor of the more contemporary Montgomery bus boycott.

Friends warned Wells-Barnett that such activities were dangerous. Wells-Barnett, however, was unrelenting in her campaign for justice. Instead of modifying her approach, shortly after the three lynchings, she bought a gun. In *Crusade for Justice*, she stated the following:

I expected some cowardly retaliation from the lynchers. I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked. I felt if I could take one lyncher with me, this would even up the score a little bit. But fate decided that the blow should fall when I was away. (Wells-Barnett, 62)

Wells-Barnett continued to write editorials and to conduct investigations, not only on African American settlement in Indian Territory and on the streetcar boycott, but also on lynchings. She paid particular attention to the fact that lynchings were typically not a reaction of whites to the criminal

behavior of African Americans. Instead, she documented that they were acts of terrorism designed to intimidate and oppress African American victims (men, women, and children) who were making political or economic progress. Most provocatively, however, Wells-Barnett also found that lynchings were used, not just for political and economic control, but also for social control. She discovered that several lynchings were the violent reaction of whites to the voluntary romantic liaisons between white women and African American men. Wells-Barnett felt compelled to speak the truth.

Three months after the lynchings of her friends, on May 21, 1892, Wells-Barnett quickly wrote a short editorial before departing for travel to the East. She wrote the following:

Eight Negroes lynched since last issue of the *Free Speech*: one at Little Rock, Ark., last Saturday morning where the citizens broke (?) into the penitentiary and got their man; three near Anniston, Ala.; one near New Orleans; and three at Clarksville, Ga., the last three for killing a white man, and five on the same old racket—the new alarm about raping white women. The same programme of hanging, then shooting bullets into the lifeless bodies was carried out to the letter. Nobody in this section believes the old threadbare lie that Negro men assault white women. If southern white men are not careful, they will over-reach themselves and public sentiment will have a reaction; a conclusion will then be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women. (Royster, 1997, 79)

With this editorial, Wells-Barnett set off a dramatic response from the white community in Memphis that would have significant consequences for her personal safety. However, there was a simultaneous effect. She also set herself on a rising trajectory of public activism that would propel her through the remainder of her life as a local, national, and international leader against lynching and mob violence and in support of general social justice.

### *A Time of Opportunity*

Two days after the editorial appeared, the *Commercial Appeal*, a white newspaper in Memphis, reproduced it and, according to Wells-Barnett, published its own editorial, calling on

the chivalrous white men of Memphis to do something to avenge this insult to the honor of their women. It said, “The Black wretch who had written that foul lie should be tied to a stake at the corner of Main and Madison Streets, a pair of tailor’s shears used on him and he should then be burned at a stake.” (Wells-Barnett, 66)

In other words, Mr. Carmack, whom Wells-Barnett names as the author of the editorial, called for yet another lynching. The white community of Memphis responded accordingly. An extralegal committee was formed and mob violence was again unleashed. On May 27, 1892, the committee ransacked the offices of the *Free Speech* and destroyed all of the equipment, and they had every intention of torturing and killing the owners. They were

foiled in this latter pursuit, however. Wells-Barnett's business partner, J.L. Fleming, received a timely warning from a sympathetic white citizen that he should leave the city. Having been in a similar crisis with an earlier paper, the *Marion Headlight* in Marion, Arkansas, Fleming left immediately, barely escaping before the committee reached the *Free Press* offices.

As indicated above, as the female writer of the editorial rather than the male writer that Carmack presumed her to be, Wells-Barnett was not in Memphis when the attack occurred. She had written the editorial before leaving for her trip East. Her itinerary was in support of multiple interests. Her first stop was Philadelphia, where she attended the annual meeting of the AME Church. At the end of the conference, she went on to New York at the invitation of **T. Thomas Fortune**, editor of the *New York Age*, a paper in which her newspaper column was syndicated. Her Memphis editorial was published during the first leg of her trip.

When Wells-Barnett reached New York, Fortune informed her of the details of the mob violence and the threats of more violence that were occurring in Memphis. He impressed on her that it was not safe for her to return to her home and that the threat was quite specific. After the white leaders of Memphis discovered that Wells-Barnett, not her male partner, was actually the author of the editorial, they let it be known that if she ever set foot in Tennessee again, she would be tortured and killed on sight. In effect, the clear and present danger to Wells-Barnett expressed openly by the white citizens of Memphis forced her into an exile from the South that lasted thirty years.

This exile, however, was not the end of the story. It was the beginning of a provocative new page in Wells-Barnett's career as a journalist, political activist, and community leader. She became a reporter for the *New York Age*, where she told her story of exile in a feature article on June 25, 1892. As she stated in her autobiography,

Having lost my paper, had a price put on my life, and been made an exile from home for hinting at the truth, I felt that I owed it to myself and to my race to tell the whole truth now that I was where I could do so freely. (Wells-Barnett, 69)

After the publication of this article, two African American women, Maritcha Lyon of Brooklyn and Victoria Earle Matthews of New York, hosted a testimonial dinner for Wells-Barnett. Lyon, an educator and writer, was one of the first African American women to be named assistant principal in a Brooklyn public school. Matthews was a fellow journalist who wrote for several newspapers, including the *New York Age*. She was also well known as the founding director of the White Rose Mission, a shelter for the increasing number of African American women and girls who were migrating to northern cities from the South in search of better opportunities. In New York, the White Rose Mission functioned as a community center for women and children, offering educational opportunities focused on self-improvement and Christian living. New and inexperienced in an urban environment filled with danger, especially to women alone, the women were particularly vulnerable to sexual assault and exploitation and to what was

perceived to be lifestyles that were inappropriate for pious and respectable women. The mission helped to keep these southern migrants off the streets, involved with more positive activities, and focused on developing skills that helped them to secure adequate employment.

As women leaders who were active in social reform and experienced in community development activities, both Lyon and Matthews were very much attuned to the need to support Wells-Barnett and to bring attention to the ongoing need across the nation for social justice. On October 5, 1892, at Lyric Hall in New York, they brought together 250 African American women from the New York area, Philadelphia, and Boston. The group included some of the most recognizable and notable African American women leaders of the day. Among them, for example, were Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Gertrude Bustill Mossell, Susan Smith McKinney Steward, and Sarah Smith Garnet.

Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and her husband George were prominent citizens of Boston. He was a lawyer and politician who served as a city councilman, a state legislator, and a municipal judge. Ruffin was noted for her work across racial lines through numerous organizations in Massachusetts, including the Associated Charities of Boston, the Massachusetts State Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Boston Kansas Relief Association, an organization that supported African American migrants. She was also a journalist and a member of the New England Women's Press Association, composed largely of white women.

Gertrude Bustill Mossell developed a national reputation as a writer and journalist, with her articles and columns appearing in newspapers across the nation. Ultimately, she became particularly well known for the publication of *The Work of the Afro-American Woman* (1894). Her family was among the free-black elite of nineteenth-century Philadelphia. For many generations, the female members of the Bustill family had built a remarkable record of social and political activism, as noted by their work as pioneering educators and as leaders of the Female Anti-Slavery Society. Mossell continued this tradition as an educator, activist, and journalist, a career choice that was facilitated by her ongoing affluence in being the wife of physician Nathan F. Mossell.

Susan Smith McKinney Steward and Sarah Smith Garnet were sisters who were also present at the testimonial. They were the daughters of Sylvanus and Ann S. Smith, both active in social and political reform and members of the African American elite of Brooklyn. Steward was a physician, the first African American woman to practice medicine in New York State and the third in the nation. Her highly successful practice was with the Brooklyn Woman's Homeopathic Hospital and Dispensary and with the Brooklyn Home for Aged Colored People. In addition, she served as president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union Number 6 in Brooklyn and was active in various social causes. The widow of clergyman William S. McKinney and later the wife of Theophilus Gould Steward, chaplain of the 25th U.S. Colored Infantry, Steward was also a prolific writer across a range of her professional interests as well as her religious and spiritual interests.

Her sister, Sarah Smith Tompkins Garnet, was a prominent educator, the first African American woman to be appointed principal of a public school



in the borough of Manhattan. She was the widow of James Tompkins, an Episcopal minister, and later married Henry Highland Garnet, a Presbyterian minister, abolitionist, and diplomat. Garnet was an impassioned opponent of discrimination in education and a civil rights advocate. She was a member of many charitable and reform organizations, and she and her sister often served as delegates to national and international meetings.

Many such women of high energy and commitment across three states attended the testimonial for Wells-Barnett and heard her story. They presented her with \$500 to enable her work and a gold, pen-shaped brooch to commemorate the occasion. From this gathering, Wells-Barnett went on two anti-lynching tours in England, Scotland, and Wales; published three pamphlets against lynching (*Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, 1892; *A Red Record*, 1895; *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, 1900), and came to be acknowledged as a steadfast champion of justice. Settling in Chicago, she married Ferdinand L. Barnett, an attorney, and raised a family, but her activism did not end. Wells-Barnett founded a suffrage club for women and a community development organization, ran for public office, and continued to speak and write in support of social justice.

Simultaneously, the New York gathering also firmly planted the seeds of organized political reform at a national, rather than just the local level for African American women in general. The leaders who attended, Wells-Barnett included, went on with like-minded women from across the nation to form in 1896 the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), an organization through which they were able to engage actively in the social and political discourses that surrounded them, nationally and internationally, and to accomplish the vital work of social and political reform. This organized, socially conscious, politically active moment constituted the inception of what has since been named the Black Clubwomen's movement. The point to be emphasized is that the Black Clubwomen's movement was well connected to all of the major social movements of the time: civil rights, women's rights, labor rights, settlement, international peace, and more, and Wells-Barnett was very active in all of them.

The turn of the twentieth century, in fact, was a time in which trials and challenges for the African American community were great, which, in effect, provided even more inspiration for African American women to use their talents and abilities well at every occasion that presented itself for remedy and reform. Wells-Barnett, therefore, was not alone in the energy that she brought to the cause of social justice, but she was, nevertheless, distinctive. In the 1890s, after her Memphis press was destroyed, she rose to national and international fame as the most visible and outspoken African American woman in the world and as the person who sustained the most active of the anti-lynching campaigns of her era, directing attention against lynching and other causes for the next four decades.

### *Coda*

Despite her record of achievements as a journalist and highly visible community activist, historical accounts about this era for most of the twentieth

century were not particularly inclusive of Wells-Barnett's accomplishments. In effect, she almost literally disappeared from the public record and from public consciousness within her own lifetime. Her achievements did not go down in either national lore or in history books. She was not celebrated as the darling of the black press, a central investigator and spokesperson against lynching, or as a courageous crusader across the United States and Great Britain for truth and justice. By the second decade of the twentieth century, her involvement in the public sphere seemed a faint shadow of her earlier prominence.

While Wells-Barnett retained public regard in the city of Chicago and in the state of Illinois, as indicated by the fact that the city of Chicago named a housing project in her honor, her national presence waned, not to be rejuvenated until decades after her death when the research and scholarship of the late twentieth century in women's studies and African American studies reclaimed and reinstated her contributions. Today, she is recognized as a tireless champion against lynching and a stellar exemplar of socially and politically conscious activism despite the racist and sexist conditions that surrounded her. Moreover, her life and work as a community activist and journalist have been instrumental in raising provocative questions about the impact of race, sex, and class on achievement and on how such achievements are publicly acknowledged and valued or not. The effect of this renewal of interest is that justice prevails. Wells-Barnett's contributions in several areas of achievement have been documented, and she is indeed celebrated as an astute businesswoman, a provocative investigative journalist, a passionate proponent of civil and women's rights, a champion of truth and justice, and a national and international leader. *See also* Anti-Lynching League; Lynching; National Association of Colored Women (NACW).

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*Jacqueline Jones Royster*

## White Capping

The term *white capping* refers to the violent intimidation of blacks to rob them of their property. The individuals responsible for this violence were known as White Caps, nightriders named for the distinctive headgear they used to disguise themselves. The term seems to have originated in Indiana in 1887. The stated aim of the White Caps was to regulate the morality of the community, and their most common form of intimidation was whipping.

Between 1900 and 1929, the white capping epidemic reached its peak, chiefly in southern rural areas. In addition to whipping, the White Caps terrorized, beat, and lynched blacks to unlawfully take their land. The phenomenon often occurred during periods when the competition for land was high. At other times, the purpose was to crush prosperous landowning blacks or to simply confiscate desirable property. Between 1887 and 1900, 239 incidences of white capping were reported. Despite the fact that White Caps violated black rights under the **Fourteenth Amendment**, the federal government did little, if anything, to protect blacks or their property.

Exacerbating the phenomenon of white capping was the fact that for blacks to acquire land in the first place was a Sisyphean task. Although rumors abounded of blacks being awarded “forty acres and a mule” after the Civil War, the majority of blacks received no land. In their everyday lives, blacks were forced to surmount gargantuan obstacles—**poverty, racism**, and discrimination—making it nearly impossible for them to eke out the most meager of existences. Nevertheless, blacks did manage to purchase land as a result of their own efforts.

In 1999, steps were taken by organizations such as the Race Relations Institute of Fisk University to address land theft and to locate its victims.

The ultimate goal was to submit these cases to the court system in the hope that **reparations** might be forthcoming. *See also* Lynching.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

### White Citizens' Council

The White Citizens' Council was born in Mississippi in response to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court and the subsequent urgings of Mississippi Circuit Court Judge Thomas Pickens Brady. Acting on Brady's call, Robert Patterson organized the first chapter in Indianola, Mississippi, in July 1954. Membership soared as black challenges to southern **segregation** increased. The Council gave white southerners a way to channel their ire into a new movement organized around opposition to **integration** and the Supreme Court decision. It focused on two main goals: maintaining a segregated school system and preventing southern blacks from exercising their right to vote.

Members of the Council viewed themselves as the "uptown [**Ku Klux**] **Klan [KKK]**" (PBS Online). Although the goals of the two groups were often the same, techniques were different and membership varied. Whereas the Klan was a **vigilante organization** that primarily used violence and terror to accomplish its goals, the council used economic reprisals and manipulation of the law in an effort to intimidate and undermine civil rights activists and supporters. By galvanizing public opinion, the council hoped to stop the **civil rights movement** and preserve the pre-*Brown* southern way of life.

The Council met openly and was seen as a reputable and respectable organization. Rather than the rabble that populated the Klan, the Council was often led by some of the most prominent, responsible, respected, and influential citizens in their respective communities and states. Included on the list of eminent members were national politicians like U.S. Sen. Allen Ellender of Louisiana and Sen. Herman Talmadge of Georgia, and local politicians like George Wallace, governor of Alabama; Marvin Griffin, governor of Georgia; and Ross Barnett, governor of Mississippi.

In some states, the Council almost completely controlled the political process. It secured passage of numerous bills, defeated politicians who refused to cooperate with it, and secured important positions for various members. In Mississippi, where Governor Barnett was seen by many as a front man for the organization, the council acquired quasi-governmental status and received thousands in state funds. This gave the Council a legitimacy that increased when institutions like the State Sovereignty Commission in Mississippi contributed money to council chapters and helped create informal connections between state organizations, like the State Sovereignty Commission, the Klan, and the Council. The staffs of important state agencies often mirrored council membership. As a result, the White Citizens' Council used state agencies like the commission to spread its influence throughout the state government and to work in partnership with the Klan.

The State Sovereignty Commission contributed money and helped fund the council. The commission helped the council accomplish its goals by creating a covert network that tracked blacks and whites, noting which should receive negative treatment. Economic reprisals were common forms of punishment. Blacks who favored integration or were observed attempting to register black voters lost their jobs, their homes, and, in some cases, their lives. White businessmen faced boycotts. Politicians deemed sympathetic to integration of blacks lost votes and hence their jobs. The White Citizens' Council was so successful in places like Mississippi that **desegregation** failed to occur for more than ten years after the *Brown* decision.

The various Council chapters functioned as independent and autonomous units. This, in part, inhibited the organization's ability to establish strong footholds in states like Florida, Virginia, Arkansas, Texas, North Carolina, or Tennessee, although the council still managed to create a regional network of some strength, especially in the Deep South. Despite sporadic attempts to unite the chapters under a single banner, they remained largely independent. Still, unity was promoted in council literature and on television shows and radio programs distributed and broadcast in the South. In the latter case, a fifteen-minute broadcast, sponsored by the Mississippi congressional delegation, was shown on fifty stations. In another case, the Council published a tape of a man, supposedly a black professor at Howard University, giving a highly provocative speech appealing to southerners' deepest fears of social equality and miscegenation.

Despite these apparently peaceful means, the Council's actions often inspired white violence against blacks. Council activity contributed heavily to the violent animosity that permeated the South. The Rev. George Washington Lee, a strong advocate for black suffrage, was shot to death in May 1955. Gus Court, who helped Lee lead voter registration drives, was evicted from his store and was eventually called before a three-member Council committee, where he was questioned about his voter-registration activities, which he refused to stop. After being wounded in a shooting, he eventually left the state for Chicago.

The Council reached its zenith in the late 1950s. In 1956, not a single black voter in Mississippi cast a ballot. However, by the early 1960s, the council's demise began as African Americans openly challenged the Council and its grassroots structure began to crumble as white southerners began to begrudgingly accept desegregation. In addition, as black economic power increased, white businessmen were more reluctant to be associated with a group like the Council. These two events combined to undercut its effectiveness and signaled the end of its reign. Despite an attempt to move its message north, by 1964 it had all but disappeared in peripheral states and was demoralized and in disarray in the Deep South. As its power weakened after 1964, it began to focus on segregated private schools. It still lingers today under such different names as the Council of Conservative Citizens.

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Gary Gershman

## White Flight

White flight originally denoted the post-World War II movement of Caucasian Americans out of inner cities that were predominantly African American and into the homogeneity of white suburbs. The term is synonymous with *white flux*. Although the mobility pattern is commonly believed to be racially based, arguments have been made (Bickford) that issues of wealth and class (not race and ethnicity) may be at the root of this social phenomenon. Other studies (Farley) find substantial **segregation** patterns after adjusting for both educational achievement and income, confirming the hypothesis that suburban segregation cannot be explained by socioeconomic status alone, and may well be based on racial bias.

This massive emigration of whites also had a grave snowball effect on the economy of the inner city. As wealthier residents moved out of the inner city, higher tax dollars and property taxes followed the mobile Caucasian. When this happens on a broad scale, inner cities are eventually left devoid of essential financial resources. Inner-city schools suffer, crime rises, and buildings deteriorate, making it even less desirable for middle- and upper-class residents to remain in the city's core.

As minority affluence rises, the African American family becomes much more economically mobile and is able to migrate from urban, inner-city residential settings into the more lucrative suburbs of the United States. Middle- and upper-class African Americans are able to buy homes in previously all-white neighborhoods.

Closely tied to the term *white flight* are the phrases *racial steering* and **redlining**. Racial steering is a practice used by realtors to direct clients only to homes and neighborhoods of their own perceived racial category. Whites are shown homes in white neighborhoods, blacks are shown homes in all-black neighborhoods, Latinos are shown homes in Hispanic neighborhoods. Redlining occurs when realtors circle in red pen the areas of the city that are considered too risky to provide mortgages for homes, most likely homes of minority populations.

White flight also has an opposing trend surfacing throughout American cities today. **Gentrification** denotes the process by which many cities have put forth extreme efforts and money to revitalize their inner cities and downtown areas. Old buildings are refurbished into elegant apartments. Abandoned storefronts become occupied by high-end stores. A portion of the affluent white population returns to the inner city. Although this process brings higher revenue to the city and improves the aesthetics of the urban area, there are social consequences. Cheap housing is razed and eliminated, driving thousands of economically fragile people into the state of homelessness. Single-room occupancy hotels that once provided substandard,

yet financially affordable housing for the poor are either refurbished into luxury condominiums or leveled to provide space for new high-end residential structures.

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**White Flux.** *See* White Flight

### **White League**

The White League was an all-white paramilitary group that formed during **Reconstruction** in the nineteenth century to remove Republicans from office and restore Democrats to power in states across the South. The league is best known for its role in the political ferment that followed the contentious election of 1872 in Louisiana. It played a significant role in three major disturbances in Colfax, Coushatta, and Liberty Place.

The conditions that gave rise to the formation of the White League were manifold. Soon after the Civil War, white southerners formed militias, ostensibly to protect whites from the threat of black violence and crime. This gave whites opportunity to unlawfully seize property and weapons from blacks and mutilate and murder them. It is out of this tradition that the White League formed, but it directed violence against the black population as a whole, as well as against Republican officials.

In the election of 1872, Louisiana Democrats attempted to usurp power by running John D. McEnery for governor and claiming victory. However, the Republicans claimed that William Pitt Kellogg had won the election, and President Ulysses S. Grant recognized Kellogg as Louisiana's new governor. Trouble followed when, in 1873, Kellogg appointed one white Republican and one black to fill positions previously assigned to white conservatives at the Colfax courthouse. A black militia, sanctioned by Kellogg, formed to protect the Republican officials. A group of whites, including some members of the White League, attacked the courthouse, killing more than sixty-nine people. Participants of the massacre at Colfax were charged with violating the civil rights of those they had murdered and of infringing on the Enforcement Acts. Their case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was decided that the states were responsible for the enforcement of civil rights. Conservative whites interpreted this ruling to mean they were free to terrorize blacks and Republicans at will, as long as they were careful not to provoke the federal government into sending in troops.

In 1874, many conservatives joined the White League. These new members used the local press to recruit members and to brandish threats to the Republicans. They held regular rallies inciting men, women, and even children to participate in acts against the Republicans and blacks. Adding fuel to the sweltering hostility were **rumors**, instigated by the local press, of

black schemes to attack whites (see **Press Instigation of Racial Violence**).

The league threatened to lynch Republicans in Natchitoches, St. Martin, Avoylles, Winn, and elsewhere, effectively vacating seats for the Democrats. In the summer of 1874, violence erupted in Coushatta when league members murdered several blacks who had attacked whites. It was assumed that the league was behind the brutal murders of six white Republicans who had been acquitted of accusations that they had masterminded the black uprisings. In September, federal troops arrived in Shreveport, Louisiana.

On September 14, 1874, 3,500 armed members of the White League faced off against 3,600 police officers and black militia troops in what is known as the Battle of Liberty Place. A one-hour fight ensued, resulting in thirty-eight men killed and seventy-nine wounded. The triumphant White League overran the city hall, the statehouse, and the arsenal, and installed John McEnery as governor. After three days, federal troops arrived in New Orleans and restored Kellogg to power. The league surrendered and dispersed, but not before they had inspired other southern states to engage in similar tactics. In the election of 1876, political violence, intimidation, and fraud secured the Democratic victory and, consequently, brought an end to Reconstruction in Louisiana. *See also* Lynching.

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## White Mobs

White mobs were disorderly crowds that ruthlessly terrorized and victimized blacks and their supporters, particularly between the 1800s and 1960s. Unlike **racist organizations**, white mobs were loosely organized, spontaneous, and ephemeral. Nevertheless, they exhibited similar motives, activities, and characteristics, and were equally frightful. **James Weldon Johnson**, author and activist, aptly described his confrontation with a mob when he said: "On the other side of the fence, Death was standing. Death turned and looked at me and I looked at Death" (Dray, 84).

The motives of white mobs varied throughout history. During the period of growing opposition to the anti-slavery movement, white mobs formed to riot and, if necessary, even kill sympathetic whites and free blacks in the North. After the Civil War, white mobs sporadically formed to attack newly freed blacks and anyone else committed to advancing their cause. White mobs worked independently of, and concurrently with, **vigilante organizations** like the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** to destroy the Freedmen's Bureau's schools, to beat black and white teachers, and to intimidate and kill Republican politicians during **Reconstruction** in the South.

Between the 1880s and 1930s, numerous blacks were lynched. White mobs were largely responsible for these **lynchings**, as well as for the anti-black riots that occurred. Violence was to the mob a tool to enforce the racist and discriminatory **Jim Crow** laws, to maintain **white supremacy** and



black oppression, and to thwart black resistance. White mobs attacked any black person who violated Jim Crow or **racial etiquette** or threatened the status quo. White mobs, feeding off their fear that black men were a threat to white women, lynched numerous black men on hearing accusations of gazing at, speaking to, touching, and assaulting white women. Sometimes they created rumors of rape to create an opportunity to destroy prosperous black communities. Many, if not most, of the rape accusations were unfounded and untried in a court of law. Due to rampant **racism** in the judicial court system and biased all-white juries, just trials were an anomaly.

In the 1940s, white mobs rioted in black communities as a result of competition for housing and employment opportunities. In the 1950s and 1960s, white mobs were responsible for the violent opposition to the forced integration of formerly all-white schools and to the demonstrations of the **civil rights movement**. The motives of the white mobs often stemmed from a deep and unsatiated racial animosity toward blacks. This racial hatred was what unified and solidified the white mobs.

White mobs employed an assortment of violent methods, which frequently resulted in death. Specific targets rarely survived to tell their tales. Hence Johnson's fear as he faced a white mob, though he was one of the few who escaped unharmed. When a white mob was on the rampage, it targeted any available black men, women, and children. White mobs were known to lynch the elderly as well as pregnant women. When the black community at large was the target, homes and property were seized or destroyed, and more than a few lives were lost. The common methods of violence between the 1860s and 1930s were beating, shooting, burning, and lynching. Sometimes the lynchings involved all the above. During the civil rights movement, white mobs were notorious for pelting objects at demonstrators and bombing.

White mobs had common characteristics. They were generally male-dominated (with more female involvement during the mid-twentieth century) and were not necessarily affiliated with a racist organization. The size of the mob ranged from a dozen to several thousand and comprised a mixture of economic backgrounds. Most of the participants lived next door to the black community they targeted and brazenly pursued their victims without disguises. Sometimes, men from outside the community were enlisted or willingly participated without invitation. Although many mobs formed spontaneously, others were organized several days, weeks, or months prior to the culminating activity. Furthermore, most mob activities were not isolated, self-sustaining affairs.

Although formal racist organizations and white mobs sometimes worked privately and in disguise, a number of mobs relied heavily on outside sources and unabashedly acted out their crimes. On several occasions, mob activities were not random, spontaneous events, but deliberate plots devised by whites with economic, social, or political power. During Reconstruction, conservative Democrats often masterminded white mob activities. In the **Memphis (Tennessee) Riot of 1866**, the affluent whites of the neighborhood manipulated and controlled the middle-class white rioters. State and local officials rarely challenged white mob violence. By neglecting

to act, they allowed the mob to carry out its will without fear of penalty. Some officials even encouraged anti-black violence, just as police and elected officials would later warn white mobs of impending black demonstrations and permitted their violent attacks during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. In this atmosphere of tolerance and approval, white mobs assaulted blacks openly and shamelessly.

The press also helped fuel the activities of white mobs by providing an effective means of communicating imminent lynchings to the local community and beyond. Whites traveled from afar on trains and set up camps in anticipation of the event. As many as several thousand people were known to attend a single lynching. Food was served; children played; photos were taken, and the press stood ready with pen and paper to report the events. The audience, usually (but not necessarily) all white, often participated in the chilling torture and death of the victim. Men, women, and children were known to stab or beat the victims. After the death of the victim, the community sometimes rushed on the body and severed fingers, toes, organs, or any other part of the body for a keepsake. Afterward, the mob, and sometimes members of the community, small children included, posed proudly beside the ravaged body for the camera. *See also* Rape, as Provocation for Lynching; Vigilante Organizations.

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*Gladys L. Knight*

## White Supremacy

White supremacy is an ideology of racial and cultural superiority according to which people of European, Christian, and mainly Anglo-Saxon heritage, as well as ethnicity, are superior to all others. It is important to focus on the intellectual history of white supremacy as a concept to properly situate and understand not only the various forms it has assumed for close to a millennium, but also what motivates its adherents and promoters. Next, one can discuss the modern expressions—obvious and otherwise—of this powerful ideology that has shaped our current world.

White supremacy is informed by ideas of genetic and cultural purity and religious and spiritual exclusivity. Its vision of the world is often apocalyptic, intolerant, triumphalist, and hegemonic. It has had ardent, charismatic, and articulate promoters who have organized themselves into political parties and pressure groups to advance their causes. In Nazi Germany, white supremacist ideology actively promoted the concept of *Herrenvolk*, or master race. This ideology held that people of Nordic and Germanic heritage exemplified a pure race, and that all others were congenitally inferior. It also proclaimed the right of the master race to dominate the world. *Herrenvolk* itself is a product of nineteenth-century racial theories of Count Arthur de Gobineau, who, in his book, *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853–1855), categorized the peoples of the world into a hierarchy of



Klan members marching in Nazi uniforms, circa 1940. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

black, white, and yellow races. Gobineau argued that cultures become degenerate when these distinct races intermingle. He also viewed this racial mixing as a form of contamination, which he called “semiticization,” because he believed that Semitic peoples were a hybrid race resulting from the mixing of the three distinct races. Thus, Gobineau saw Semitic peoples as an impure, polluted version of the white race. He placed southern Europeans, Jews, and Arabs at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, while white Europeans were at the top. Other white supremacists have placed black people and indigenous Australians at the bottom of this racial ladder. It must be noted that today’s white supremacists’ vehement opposition to any form of racial interaction, such as mixed marriages, ethnic diversity, and multiculturalism can be traced to this almost pathological fear of racial contamination or impurity.

Before Gobineau, white supremacy seems to have been part of the Western Christian heritage. It arguably goes back to the Middle Ages when white Christians from Western Europe waged war against Moslems to stop Islam, which had been gaining ground since the seventh century on the southern and eastern borders of Europe. The ultimate goal was to recapture

the Holy Land. Although this was a war between two competing religions, it was also motivated by attitudes of white supremacy, which were fueled by false **rumors** already widespread in Christendom about peoples of Arab-Islamic identity. For example, in 1095, Pope Urban II castigated Moslems as a godless, inferior race utterly alienated from God. In his book *The First Crusade: Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, August C. Krey quotes the pope as describing the Moslems as “a barbaric fury [that] has deplorably afflicted and laid waste the churches of God in the regions of the Orient” (42–43). Urban accused the Moslems of seizing the churches of Jerusalem, mutilating Christians, and desecrating churches by spreading blood on altars. Urban used these rumors to demonize Arabs and other Moslems of color and to rally Europeans for the First Crusade.

For African Americans, white supremacy has its roots in the *Romanus Pontifex* issued by the Vatican in 1455. This document authorized the Portuguese monarchy to subdue, enslave, or conquer any “pagan or Muslim people” to convert them to Christianity. By the mid-1500s, the Church gave full moral and spiritual support to the enslavement of black peoples along the west coast of Africa by crusading Spanish and Portuguese monarchists who were focused on creating what Anthony Pagden

calls the *Monarchia Universalis*, or a universal Christian empire. Millions of Africans were uprooted from their homes and sold as slaves in the Americas. Accompanying the slavers were missionaries from Spain, Britain, France, and Portugal who went to foreign lands with the belief that theirs was a superior culture that brought a superior faith and civilization to the new lands. Here again, religion and notions of racial superiority informed centuries of Western European domination of peoples of color.

Slavery was followed by a period of massive colonization, plunder, and the violent destruction of indigenous cultures in Africa, Asia, and the Americas by imperialist Western European nations such as Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and Germany. Although discovery and exploration constituted the primary rationale for Western Europe's intrusion into these lands, an ideology of racial superiority was the driving force behind it, fueled by Christian-inspired white supremacy. Through their writings, prominent philosophers and thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as G.W.F. Hegel, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and John Locke, among others, provided the moral, intellectual, and political justifications for white supremacy. They encouraged ideas of the racial superiority of white people. For example, Montesquieu, the French political philosopher and contributor to Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* project, described Africans as physically gifted, but unintelligent. In his *Spirit of the Laws* (book 15, chapter 5), Montesquieu remarked about the spiritual and physical inferiority of blacks: "These creatures are all over black, and with such a flat nose that they can scarcely be pitied. It is hardly to be believed that God, who is a wise Being, should place a soul, especially a good soul, in such a black ugly body."

These thinkers used all manner of scientific and pseudo-scientific theories to reinforce notions of white supremacy and non-white inferiority. For example, Hegel gave justifications for colonialism and imperialism that will astound today's readers. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, he questioned the very humanity of Africans:

It is characteristic of the blacks that their consciousness has not yet even arrived at the intuition of any objectivity, as for example, of God or the law, in which humanity relates to the world and intuits its essence.... He [the black person] is a human being in the rough. (Hegel, 138)

Furthermore, Hegel gave justifications for colonialism (especially in India) and imperialism that will astound today's readers. The attitudes of these thinkers were clearly influenced mainly by travelers' stories, geographical location, and utter ignorance of other cultures besides their own. By the same token, Kant and Hume portrayed Africans as genetically inferior to whites.

In the twentieth century, white supremacy found legitimacy as a political expression in Nazism, which became the most egregious form of white supremacy. It is responsible for the deaths of over six million Jews, most sent to die in gas chambers. White supremacy under Adolf Hitler became Germany's state policy and identity. The ultimate goal was to build an Aryan

master race. Right after the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, South Africa became the next country where white supremacy was state policy and identity. *Apartheid*, or racial **segregation**, was practiced for almost half a century; close to 90 percent of South Africa's population was denied legal and political rights during these decades. Just like Nazi Germany, legislation was promulgated making racial discrimination official state policy. Mixed marriages and interracial sex were banned. Every individual was classified by race. The Group Areas Act of 1950 became the heart of the apartheid system because efforts were made to geographically separate the racial groups. The Separate Amenities Act created, among other things, separate beaches, buses, hospitals, schools, and universities. Blacks and Coloreds were forced to carry identity documents to be able to move around within the country. The resistance efforts of Nelson Mandela, among others, and those of the international community, eventually ended this white supremacist régime.

In the United States, white supremacy played a major role in the Civil War of 1861–1865 because the institution of slavery, which had been the economic backbone of the South, was threatened by the election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860. The end of this war did not end white supremacy. Several organizations arose in the southern states with the sole aim of returning to antebellum enslavement of black people because they were considered inferior—fit only to be bought, sold, and used as beasts of burden on sugar and cotton plantations. The most prominent white supremacist organization was the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)**. It was established in Tennessee in 1866, barely a year after the end of the Civil War. Most Klan leaders were former members of the Confederate Army. For several years, Klansmen wearing masks, white cardboard hats, and white sheets, tortured, maimed, and killed African Americans and sympathetic whites in orgies of racial hatred. From 1868 to 1870, the Ku Klux Klan was mainly responsible for restoring white rule in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. The key goal of white supremacist groups was to perpetuate the denial of civil and political rights to recently freed black people.

In the modern United States, white supremacist groups continue to proliferate. They are very militaristic and violent in outlook. They do not hesitate to use force and violence to achieve their ends. Just as Hitler had his Gestapo and stormtroopers, groups like the KKK, Skinheads, and Aryan Nation have hundreds of white youth in gangs whose sole purpose is to do bodily harm to people of color, either as the expression of their hatred, or out of loyalty to white supremacy. Targets of their hatred also include Jews who, with black people, are called *mud people* by these modern American white supremacists.

Sociologists and other scholars have studied what propels individuals to support these supremacist groups. Members are candid in expressing their belief that the American political system is being controlled by a Jewish cabal led by the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG), whose aim is to create a one-world government intent on curtailing the rights of white Americans. They tend to see Jewish or multiculturalist conspiracies in

almost every action taken by the government. They are also highly suspicious of international multilateral organizations such as the United Nations.

Michael Barkun, in his *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (1996), discusses a particularly frightening white supremacist group that uses all elements previously described—ideology of racial superiority, ultra-conservative Christian fundamentalism, intolerance, militarism, and violence—to achieve the ultimate goal of a white homeland. The group is called Christian Identity. It is opposed to cultural diversity, affirmative action, and other government policies that its members label as *liberal* or *leftist*. According to Barkun, Christian Identity groups trace their origins to an obscure nineteenth-century religious movement in England known as British-Israelism. This movement claimed Britons as the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Through some linguistic sleight-of-hand, they managed to establish their connection to the Jews to claim as theirs the heritage of a chosen people. However, the original British-Israelist movement was neither anti-Semitic nor racist. Indeed, the latter actually recognized a kinship with Jews.

For scholars of American politics, Christian Identity supremacist groups have been quite successful in co-opting and dominating the political right. They have seductively and insidiously spread their message and ideology—even among groups not even distantly linked to them—by using the discourse and rhetoric of conservatism, such as family values, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and patriotism. Christian Identity is also believed to have been rather adept in strategically using the current political system to put in office, and in policy-making positions, people sympathetic to its vision of society, but who do not necessarily espouse white supremacist ideas.

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‘BioDun J. Ogundayo

### White, Walter (1893–1955)

Walter Francis White, a civil rights leader, authority on American race riots and **lynchings**, and writer who published his first works during the Harlem Renaissance, was born on July 1, 1893, in Atlanta, Georgia.

White was one of seven children born to George White, a postman, and his wife, Madeline (nee Harrison) White, a schoolteacher. The family lived on the border between the African American and white neighborhoods. After graduating from the high school located on the Atlanta University campus, White matriculated at Atlanta University and graduated in 1916. In the summer of 1915, White began working at Standard Life Insurance Company, where he accepted full-time employment after earning his college degree.

In 1916, White became secretary of the newly formed Atlanta branch of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, which was founded in response to the Atlanta school board’s recent decisions to eliminate the seventh and eighth grades in African American schools to provide more funding for white schools. The first president of the Atlanta NAACP was Harry Pace, who was an officer at Standard Life. In 1918, White accepted **James Weldon Johnson’s** offer to become assistant secretary of the NAACP’s New York office, and, in 1929, White succeeded Johnson as the NAACP’s executive secretary.

In addition to White’s work as a preeminent civil rights leader, he was a prolific author. White wrote two novels—*Fire in the Flint* (1924) and *Flight* (1926)—which focus on lynching and “passing” for white, respectively, and a non-fiction work about lynching, *Rope and Faggot: The Biography of Judge Lynch* (1929). White also helped promote the work of other Harlem Renaissance writers such as poets Countee Cullen and **Claude McKay** as well as of such novelists as Rudolph Fisher, Nella Larsen, and Dorothy West. After the Harlem Renaissance, White wrote three additional book-length works: *A Rising Wind: A Report on the Negro Soldier in the European Theatre of War* (1945); *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (1948); and *How Far the Promised Land?* (1955), which was published posthumously and chronicles African American achievement. White, who contributed articles to such publications as *The Crisis*, *American Mercury*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Reader’s Digest*, was a war correspondent for the *New York Post* from 1943 to 1945, and a columnist for the *Chicago Defender*. White continued his work as executive secretary of the NAACP and as a writer until he suffered a heart attack and died at his New York home on March 21, 1955. At his funeral four days later, 1,500 individuals filled St. Martin’s Protestant Episcopal Church to capacity, and an additional crowd of 1,500 people listened to the service on loudspeakers outside the church.

White, who was arguably the leading expert on American race riots and lynchings during the first half of the twentieth century, retained boyhood memories of the 1906 **Atlanta** riot. When he was thirteen, White rode with his father as he performed his postal duties. They reached Peachtree Street where one of the establishments was The Crystal Palace, a barbershop that catered to a non-black clientele and was owned by Alonzo Herndon, a prominent African American. White and his father saw a lame African American employee from The Crystal Palace try in vain to outrun a mob of white men. After the mob caught the man, he was beaten with clubs and fists and left dead on the street in a pool of blood. As White and his father continued riding through the streets of Atlanta, the mail cart and their light skin protected them; the mob was not bold enough to attack the cart, which was government property, and the rioters assumed that the cart's driver and passenger were white. The mail cart then collided with a carriage from which clung three African Americans, while the white driver lashed both the horses and the rioters who pursued the carriage. After White and his father kept their cart from turning over, they rescued an elderly African American woman who was being chased by the mob; White's father handed the reins to him as he lifted the lady into the cart, and White lashed the horse to run faster.

The next day, friends of White's father warned him that the rioters were going to march from Peachtree Street to Houston Street, where the Whites lived. That night, the rioters stood outside White's home with torches. The son of the Whites' grocer identified their residence as the home of "that nigger mail carrier" and urged the mob to burn the house down because it was "too nice for a nigger to live in!" (White, 11). White and his father, possessing firearms, waited for the men to step onto their lawn. As the rioters moved to the front of the lawn, White, with his light skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes, claimed his identity as an African American. White writes, "In that instant there opened up within me a great awareness; I knew then who I was. I was a Negro, a human being with an invisible pigmentation" (White, 11). Friends of White's father, who were barricaded in a nearby building, fired shots at the mob, causing the rioters to retreat.

Twelve years after the Atlanta riot, White moved to New York to become the NAACP's assistant secretary, and twelve days after he began working at the civil rights organization where he performed clerical and office tasks, a racial crime diverted his attention away from his office work. Jim McIlherron, an African American sharecropper, who defended himself when his employer physically attacked him, was slowly burned to death by a mob in Estill Springs, Tennessee. White and the other NAACP officials realized that if they sent a telegram protesting the lynching to the governor of Tennessee, it would have minimal effect. White then volunteered to travel to Tennessee to investigate the incident. According to David Levering Lewis, "With his eyes and hair, refined accent, and nervous energy, he looked and behaved far more the Wall Street broker than a man destined to be director of the nation's principal civil rights organization" (131). Posing as a white man interested in buying farmland, White gained the trust of the Estill Springs residents who admitted that McIlherron's employer was not justified in



beating him, yet they asserted that McIlherron had to be murdered because he hit a white man, and they had to keep other African Americans from getting out of hand. White returned to New York and published his findings.

The Estill Springs lynching marked the first of more than forty lynchings as well as eight race riots that White personally investigated between 1918 and 1929, and it established a pattern that he followed in subsequent investigations. White traveled to the troubled areas; passed as a white reporter, land speculator, etc.; gained the confidence of white individuals who spoke candidly about the horrific racial events; and then returned to New York to publish his findings. White, who took a pay cut when he gave up his job at Standard Life Insurance to work with the NAACP, sacrificed his comfortable lifestyle to put himself in harm's way during his undercover investigations. After three members of the Lowman family were murdered near Aiken, South Carolina, White's investigation revealed that the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** was responsible for the lynchings of the young woman and two men. When several local newspapers criticized the lynchers, the sheriff's response was to announce his intention to request that the grand jury indict White for "bribery and passing for white" (White, 59). On other occasions, White received death threats from the Klan.

In 1919, race riots occurred in such places as **Washington**, D.C.; **Chicago**, Illinois; **Omaha**, Nebraska; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and **Elaine**, Arkansas. The Chicago riot taught White that when a **white mob** is out of control, a northern city could be as dangerous as a southern town such as Estill Springs. The Chicago violence also taught him not to assume that he was well known by other African Americans. Although appearing white proved to be an advantage for him when he was among whites, his light complexion nearly ended his life when an African American, assuming he was white, shot at him.

In October 1919, White traveled to Phillips County, Arkansas, after a meeting held by African American sharecroppers at a local church erupted into chaos as an armed mob and some of the sharecroppers exchanged gunfire. After more than 200 African Americans were killed, many black men, women, and children fled the county. The rest were placed in stockades and awaited their appearance before a kangaroo court. White arrived in Phillips County and introduced himself to the governor of Arkansas as a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* who had little knowledge of African Americans. The governor, assuming White was white, welcomed him; the politician, who described White as brilliant, gave him a letter of recommendation to use in case he ran into trouble in Phillips County. As White was conducting his investigation, an African American man warned him that white men were after him. White quickly boarded a train. As the conductor collected White's fare, he told him that he was leaving "just when the fun is going to start" (White, 51) because the lynching of a man who was passing for white was imminent. When White's train arrived in Memphis later that evening, he heard that he had been lynched in Arkansas that afternoon. Among the tributes to White's work as an investigator are the Spingarn Medal, which he received in 1937, and the *Ballad of Walter White*, a poem by Langston Hughes.

Although White became too well known to continue conducting his undercover investigations, he continued to seek justice for the victims of lynchings and riots. White also attempted to help restore law and order to the troubled areas. When the local and state officials did not halt the rioting in **Detroit** in 1943, White asked the governor of Michigan to request federal troops. Noticing Gov. Harry Kelly's reluctance, White contacted the War Department in Washington and was told that a Michigan official would have to contact the commanding general of the area, who was stationed in Chicago. After White shared that information with Kelly, the governor finally requested the federal troops, and order was restored after thirty hours of rioting. During that period, 34 people were killed, and more than 600 were injured.

White was a peacemaker during the Harlem Riot in August 1943 (see **New York City Riot of 1943**). The riot was the result of a rumor that an African American soldier died after he had been shot in the back by a white police officer. White rode with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia through the streets of Harlem before he convinced the mayor to allow well-known African Americans to ride through Harlem in sound trucks. As objects were thrown at them, White and at least two other prominent black men rode through Harlem proclaiming that the soldier was only slightly injured and urging the residents to return to their homes; eventually the crowd dispersed.

During Walter White's tenure with the NAACP, he worked diligently to end racial discrimination in education, employment, and voting, as well as in the arts and military. Armed with courage and tenacity, White sought justice for the victims of hate crimes and equal rights for African Americans. His deeds as assistant secretary and executive secretary of the NAACP during the first half of the twentieth century helped pave the way for subsequent victories in the **civil rights movement**.

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*Linda M. Carter*

## Whiteness

Whiteness is a concept designed to emphasize the socially constructed nature of race as a category that organizes daily life and society. Critical white studies, a subdivision of critical race studies, traces the historical development of concepts such as "white" and "black," and interrogates the function of those concepts in the historical and contemporary United

States, ultimately seeking to denaturalize these concepts as a means toward the end of racial justice. Furthermore, critical race studies seek to destabilize the intellectual hegemony, or centrality, of white consciousness. Such efforts are directed toward ending racially based injustices by revealing the socially constructed nature of categories of social organization that are typically imagined to be *natural*.

*White* and *black*, like the terms *race* and *gender*, seem to point to fixed, stable biological attributes. But cultural studies and critical theory teach us to interrogate these seemingly natural conditions and reveal them to be in fact socially and culturally constructed, produced, and maintained in a wide variety of ways, from the language that we use to the images that we see daily and accept as normal or natural. It is our generally uncritical acceptance and use of categories of difference that perpetuate their value and sustain their seeming normalcy, obscuring the historical processes by which such ideas have developed. Whiteness, then, is not a stable category, but a product of specific historical and ideological conditions, and hence, social effects. Terms such as *race* refer not to skin color, but to sets of practices that reveal the differential relations of power and experience that are frequently, though not necessarily, connected to biological and anatomical attributes. It is this seeming connection to the biological that provides the ongoing essentialist justification for the naturalness of ideas such as *white*. By critically interrogating social categories considered natural, we can examine the many ways in which societies rely on these categories to distribute their goods and privileges, usually in a disproportionate manner.

Whiteness, like other racial categories, is a fluid category, falsely homogenizing, and implies a reified set of privileges. That is, whiteness seems to be something fixed and real, and therefore something automatically conferred on anyone who looks white. To say that race categories are not natural is not to say that they are not real; they are real in their effects, and in the way we experience them. But the meaning of whiteness changes throughout time and place, and the privileges of whiteness are unevenly distributed, particularly at the intersection of race and class—the economically disadvantaged tend to experience whiteness differently than the wealthy do. An elitist category, it offers benefits and power to those who can claim its mantle; therefore the category's boundaries undergo frequent struggle to expand or strengthen the category and its meanings.

Critical race theory shares assumptions and methods with interdisciplinary work in sociology, legal theory, history, and literary and cultural studies (see Crenshaw et al. and Omi and Winant; for literary treatments of the concept, see Wonham; for a study of the concept in film history, see Cripps). Ignatiev, Jacobsen, and Roediger have examined the historical adoption of white identities by immigrant ethnic groups as compensation for economic and political exclusion from power. Feminist and critical race theorists have developed increasingly detailed understandings of the ways in which **racism** and racial ideologies enable white women to negotiate their subordinated social, political, and economic positions (see Frankenberg, Hill, and Ware).

Contemporary ethnic studies have relied on theories of whiteness in order to emphasize the diversity and complexity of ethnic identities within

and between ethnic groups; to examine the ways in which such identities are unwillingly mapped onto social subjects; to examine the ways in which ethnic groups have adopted and shaped whiteness as compensation for economic and political exclusion from power; to challenge ethnocentric perspectives on immigration; interrogate models of ethnic assimilation; and open up for examination areas of political and economic contest previously unexamined under the weight of assimilationist theories (see Romero et al.; Scott-Childress; and Yans-McLaughlin).

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Valerie Begley

### Wilkins, Roy (1901–1981)

Roy Wilkins was a prominent leader in the **civil rights movement**. He remained a staunch supporter of **nonviolence** in the face of white retaliatory violence and the rise of black militancy during the 1960s. His reaction to the uprisings that were endemic to the urban black communities of the time illustrate the magnitude of his sympathy toward oppressed blacks and his unwavering resolve to attack injustice through peaceable means.

Wilkins was born on August 30, 1901, in St. Louis, Missouri. He obtained a degree in sociology and worked as a journalist at the *Minnesota Daily* and as the editor of *St. Paul Appeal* and *Kansas City Hall*. In 1929, he married a social worker named Amanda “Minnie” Badeau. In 1963, he served as the executive secretary of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and replaced **W.E.B. Du Bois** as the editor of *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, when the latter left the organization. Wilkins was more conservative than his predecessor, who eventually migrated to Ghana, West Africa, so disillusioned was he with the United States.



Roy Wilkins displays a hangman's noose sent to the NAACP's national headquarters from Florida, circa 1959. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Among Wilkins' numerous accomplishments were his testimonials at Congressional hearings, his influence with U.S. presidents, such as **John F. Kennedy**, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon, and his prominent role in such civil right triumphs as *Brown v. Board of Education* and the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. As a result of these victories, Wilkins strongly believed "that if you pushed the government long enough, hard enough, and in enough of the right places, change could be accomplished" (Wilkins, 127). Wilkins picketed on several occasions and did not limit himself to behind-the-scenes activism.

Wilkins was not only concerned with ending **segregation**; he also tackled the issue of white violence against blacks. In the 1930s, he and other NAACP members attempted unsuccessfully to encourage

Franklin D. Roosevelt to support anti-lynching legislation. Although he supported the **Freedom Rides**, because of the dangers they would inevitably meet in the Deep South, he called the riders' strategy "desperately brave" and "reckless" (Wilkins, 283). While the freedom riders indeed met with violence at the hands of the **Ku Klux Klan (KKK)** and **white mobs**, Wilkins convinced President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy**, to provide federal protection for the riders. Wilkins realized that the whites who attacked the activists afforded him an opportunity to press for greater involvement from the Kennedy administration, which had previously believed that there was no immediate need for civil rights.

But the brutality against blacks continued: at the University of Mississippi, where whites opposed the registration of **James Meredith**; in Birmingham, Alabama, where demonstrators were met with vicious dogs and **police brutality**; and in Jackson, Mississippi, where protestors encountered truculent whites. Following these events, when Kennedy gave a televised speech announcing his support for immediate social change, Wilkins finally received the affirmation he had so longed to hear. On the following day, Wilkins received a phone call telling him that **Medgar Evers**, whom Wilkins described as "one of the bravest, most selfless men ever to throw in his lot with the N.A.A.C.P." had been murdered (Wilkins, 290). A week later, Kennedy informed the nation of his impending civil rights legislation.

But the violence continued and manifested in unexpected ways. On November 22, 1963, Kennedy was assassinated. President Johnson, Kennedy's former vice president, signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The youthful members of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** and the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, with whom Wilkins had collaborated, became increasingly disheartened after each episode of violence and with the plodding or nonexistent response from the local

and federal government. They eventually succumbed to the militant and separatist ideologies of **Black Power**. To Wilkins' horror, the erstwhile non-violent civil rights organizations began to advocate violence. He believed this ideology was detrimental to the cause of civil rights and further widened the gulf between blacks and whites.

Early in 1967, a bomb exploded in the car of Wharlest Jackson, the former treasurer of the NAACP. Wilkins asserted that "through the murder, God had offered the United States Senate a second chance to enact a civil rights bill allowing the federal government to punish such assassins," but Congress continued to hold up essential legislation (Wilkins, 324). In the summer of 1967, the New York Police Department told Wilkins that the **Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)** was plotting to assassinate him and other civil rights leaders who promoted passive resistance and cooperation with whites and their institutions. The militants planned to blame whites for the murders to incite violence in the black **ghettos**. Guards were immediately assigned to Wilkins, who was accustomed to being intimidated by whites, but was bewildered that members of his own race would threaten his life. Soon after, RAM members were incarcerated for planning the assassinations.

Throughout that summer and after, black ghettos throughout the nation went up in flames as a result of riots triggered largely by incidences of police brutality and injustice (see **Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967**). But the origins of the violence were far more deeply rooted and included such issues as **racism**, unemployment, **poverty**, lack of opportunities, and alienation. Although Wilkins strongly opposed violence as a means of protest, he sympathized with the black rioters, as illustrated in the following excerpt from his autobiography, which was written with Tom Matthews:

The change of the early sixties had come perilously late. In those months after the Harlem and Watts ghettos went up in flames, the ordinary ghetto dweller elsewhere could see little improvement in his daily life. The new laws passed by Congress applied mostly to the South and meant very little to him. It was easy for him to feel that he had been abandoned by his government and his country, that he was isolated, of no importance in the United States. Nobody could stand those feelings. So he leaned over, picked up a rock, and heaved it at the biggest plate-glass window he could see. (326)

Wilkins died in New York on September 8, 1981.

**Further Reading:** Wilkins, Roy, with Tom Matthews. *The Autobiography of Roy Wilkins: Standing Fast*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

*Gladys L. Knight*

### **Williams, Robert F. (1925–1996)**

Robert Franklin Williams was born on February 26, 1925, in Monroe, North Carolina. One of his early memories was witnessing the violent beating and arrest of a black woman by "Big" Jesse Alexander Helms, a white policeman and father of U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms. Five years later, Williams and a friend enrolled in a National Youth Administration job training program

near Monroe, where he organized a protest of unequal training curriculum and segregationist camp policies that activated a **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** file in his name. The next year, he witnessed the northern face of race violence when, while living in Detroit with his brother Edward and working briefly for the Ford Motor Company, he was caught up with his brother and sister-in-law in a racial fight at Belle Isle during the Detroit race riot (see **Detroit [Michigan] Riot of 1943**).

Returning to Monroe, Williams graduated from Winchester Street High School in 1944 and served eighteen months as an Army draftee at the end of World War II, where his exposure to the fears and weaknesses of his fellow white soldiers disabused him of any notion that whites had any well-organized or powerful superiority to blacks. Williams received weapons training and took a creative writing course that developed the two major icons—the gun and the pen—that became his signature weapons. He spent much of his Army time in the brig for a variety of acts of defiance, including failure to obey orders, disrespect toward officers and being AWOL several times.

His political career began in 1956 when he was elected president of the Monroe branch of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, a group that at the time had only six members. Williams recruited furiously from the working and poor classes of Monroe's African American community, swelling the branch membership to over 250. That same year, he organized the Black Militia, an armed self-defense group, in response to threats he had received as a consequence of efforts to integrate local recreational facilities and in defense of Dr. Albert E. Perry, a local physician and leader.

In 1958, Williams advocated on behalf of eight-year-old David Exell “Fuzzy” Simmons and ten-year-old James Hanover Grissom Thompson, who had been found guilty and sent to reform school for playing a kissing game with white girls. Williams' work clearing the boys' names and bringing national and international attention to what became known as the Kissing Case embarrassed the U.S. government and was followed by the branch's protest of the acquittal of Louis Medlin, a white Monroe resident charged in 1959 with assaulting and intending to rape a black woman who was eight months pregnant. Williams argued that African American women and men would defend themselves with arms if necessary in the wake of the acquittal, saying, “If it's necessary to stop **lynching** with lynching, then we must be willing to resort to that method” (Mayfield 1961). This led to his suspension and subsequent expulsion from the national NAACP, but endeared him to many in the radical left as well as to those drawn to the more confrontational politics of voices such as **Malcolm X**. He was reelected to his position as president of the Monroe NAACP branch.

In 1961, the freedom riders came to Monroe, and Williams assisted them, although he refused to accept the philosophy of **nonviolence** that they observed (see **Freedom Rides**). When a **white mob** began to attack them, African Americans—some armed—rose to their defense. In the resulting conflict and turmoil, a white couple was given refuge in the Williams home. As a result, local law enforcement charged Williams with kidnapping and used the incident to raid the homes of other African Americans, disarming

them as a consequence. To escape the trumped-up charge, Williams, his wife Mabel, and their two sons (John and Franklin) fled Monroe, then the country.

The Williams family took up residence in Cuba, where, over the course of the next five years, they broadcast *Radio Free Dixie*, a music, news, and commentary show advocating armed self-defense and black self-determination; published *The Crusader* (a newsletter Williams had started in 1959); and networked with an international coterie of revolutionaries, theoreticians, and activists. During their first year there, Williams published his signature manifesto, *Negroes with Guns*, which detailed the Monroe movement and the philosophy that had grown out of it. **Black Panther Party (BPP)** cofounder **Huey P. Newton** credited the book with having a great influence on his political philosophy. After his ongoing differences with Fidel Castro caused him to move his family to Mao Tse Tung's China in 1966, Williams spent three years touring Asia and Africa from his base there. Considering himself a "militant revolutionary nationalist" ("In Memory"), Williams was made chairman of Max Stanford's **Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)** and president-in-exile of Milton and Richard Henry's Republic of New Africa (RNA). His legacy lies in the impact his philosophy of self-determination and self-defense had on groups such as RAM, the RNA, the **Deacons for Defense and Justice**, and the Black Panthers, among others.

In 1969, after negotiations with the U.S. government, Williams returned from exile, settling in Baldwin, Michigan. Seven years later, after a protracted struggle to avoid extradition to North Carolina, the kidnapping charges against him were dropped. He spent the last decade and a half of his life as an elder statesman, college and community lecturer, and local activist with groups such as Baldwin's People's Association for Human Rights. Williams died of Hodgkin's Disease on October 15, 1996. His papers are housed at the University of North Carolina. *See also* Black Power; Black Self-Defense; Lynching.

**Further Readings:** Freedom Archives, ed., and Robert F. Williams. *Robert F. Williams: Self Respect, Self Defense and Self Determination (An Audio Documentary as Told by Mabel Williams)*. Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 2005; "In Memory of Robert F. Williams: A Voice for Armed Self-Defense and Black Liberation." *Revolutionary Worker* 882, November 17, 1996. See <http://rwor.org/a/firstvol/882/willms.htm>; Mayfield, Julian. "Challenge to Negro Leadership." *Commentary* 31, no. 4 (April 1961); Tyson, Timothy. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999; Williams, Robert F. *Negroes with Guns*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998. Originally published in 1962.

*Gregory E. Carr*

### Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898

The Wilmington (North Carolina) Riot of 1898 was a violent coup d'état engineered by the North Carolina Democratic Party, resulting in the death





A nineteenth-century depiction of scenes from the Wilmington Riot. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

of hundreds of African American residents of Wilmington, the forceful expulsion of thousands of others, and the removal of a democratically elected government of black and white Republicans and Fusionists. The ultimate goal of this **white supremacy** rebellion was to reverse the political and economic progress African Americans had made since **Reconstruction** (1865–1877).

The broad context of the riot is to be found in the post-Reconstruction period that started in 1877 when the federal army pulled out of the South, giving southern legislatures the opportunity to start a steady course of disenfranchising the newly freed black population. During Reconstruction, a number of legal tools had given hope to African Americans, notably the Thirteenth, **Fourteenth**, and **Fifteenth** Amendments to the U.S. Constitution that respectively abolished slavery, gave citizenship and equal protection of the law to African Americans, and extended the right to vote to black men. In addition, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Force Acts of 1870 and 1871, and the Civil Rights Act of 1875, among other laudable efforts, sought to protect African Americans against the increasing violence of white supremacist groups in the South and the general discrimination and **segregation** that followed the end of the Civil War. Reconstruction had seen a number African Americans occupying positions of power in elected office. On the other hand, post-Reconstruction was characterized by a relentless effort on the part of southern legislatures to disenfranchise the

black population, especially the elected officials and professionals. The grandfather clause, literary tests, poll taxes, **sharecropping** (a reconfiguration of the plantation system), and violence were some of the strategies used by white **vigilante organizations** to defraud the promises of the three amendments and prevent African Americans from enjoying the rights and privileges conferred by citizenship, including the right to vote and hold office. In a revealing decision, in 1883 the U.S. Supreme Court pronounced the Civil Right Act of 1875 unconstitutional, thus legalizing discrimination and segregation against blacks in transportation and public facilities. The 1896 Supreme Court decision known as *Plessy v. Ferguson* further consolidated the **Jim Crow** laws of the South and thus sanctioned the segregationist and discriminatory principle of separate but equal. The **lynching** of African Americans in the last two decades of the nineteenth century reached the thousands. It is in this context of violence, white supremacy rule, and political **disenfranchisement** of blacks that the Wilmington, North Carolina, race riot has to be understood.

The immediate cause of the riot is found in the result of the 1894, 1896, and 1898 elections in Wilmington, which white democrats lost to Republicans and Fusionists, a relatively large number of whom were black. As a result of these democratic elections, blacks were appointed to various positions in the administration of the city, leading white Democrats to cry foul over what they called *Negro domination*. If a number of African Americans had achieved real economic and political power, this constituted a threat to white supremacists, who could not tolerate such a rise to power. This was a tradition inherited from a long period of slavery, in which the only suitable position for the supposedly inferior blacks was to serve the superior white man. Thus, the idea of a black man in power summoning a white man, giving orders to a white man, or inspecting a white man's home, or simply questioning a white man, was an affront to the ideology of white supremacy. A contemporary novelist, Charles Chesnutt, dramatized the coup d'état of 1898 in Wilmington, in his 1901 novel *The Marrow of Tradition*.

The North Carolina newspapers played a critical role in the campaign to disenfranchise African Americans in Wilmington. For example, the *Raleigh News and Observer* and the *Wilmington Messenger* ran a ruthless campaign demeaning African Americans in general but reserving the most severe disparagement for black civil servants and professionals. In the months leading to the 1898 elections, newspapers were saturated with articles that depicted lawlessness, black self-assertion and takeover, and sexual crimes by blacks, a favorite pretext for white supremacists to start mass violence against blacks in the post-Reconstruction South. In the days leading to the 1898 election, Alex Manly, the mixed-race editor of a local black-owned newspaper, the *Wilmington Daily Record*, claimed that "poor white men [were being] careless in the matter of protecting their women," further claiming that "our experience among poor white people in the country teaches us that women of that race are not any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men than the white men with the colored women" (August 18, 1898). Manly's editorial was a reaction to a speech delivered the previous year by Rebecca Latimer Felton, the first

woman ever to become a U.S. senator, in which she forcefully sanctioned the lynching of black men to protect white women from black men, whom she referred to as “ravening human beasts” (quoted in Sundquist, xvii). In reality, Manly’s editorial condemned lynching and the ideology of white supremacy and its deceptive and violent ways bent on galvanizing racial strife. Manly also condemned the hypocrisy of white supremacists, who did not hesitate to ruin the morality of black women but cried foul at the idea of a black man being intimate with a white woman. The Democratic newspapers seized on what they fanatically characterized as an attack against white womanhood to mount a campaign aimed at provoking race tensions. In doing so, they deliberately focused on one aspect of Manly’s editorial, namely the fact that white women were attracted by black men whose own fathers were white. For white supremacists, it was inconceivable to condone the sin of amalgamation. The irony was that many blacks in the Wilmington population were descendants or sons and daughters of such relationships through rape (in the period of slavery) or even love. Instead of lynching Manly for his editorial, the white supremacists calculated to use it for political purpose: to forcibly remove the interracial coalition of black and white Republicans and Fusionists from power.

On November 9, 1898, the day after the election that the Democrats had lost to Republicans and Fusionists, the Secret Nine at the forefront of the violence presented what they called the “White Declaration of Independence,” rejecting the black man’s right to vote and hold office and calling for the government to be given to the white population paying most of the taxes. For the Secret Nine, only whites had the right to a job in the city. They also reiterated their earlier condemnation of Manly’s editorial for its affront on white womanhood and they demanded his expulsion from the city. Alfred Moore Waddell, a former Confederate officer and congressman, along with a committee he headed, brought the declaration to thirty-two black leaders in Wilmington and requested a reply the next day, with the expectation of submission to total white control. Mailed, instead of being carried in person, the reply missed the November 10 deadline.

When a mob of armed white men from Wilmington and surrounding towns and farms gathered on November 10 at 8:00 A.M., Waddell led them to offices of the *Daily Record*. From 500 white men, the group quickly grew to 2,000 men as the mob progressed through town. The office was ransacked and fire broke out, burning the office down. In an act that speaks of the spectacle-like nature of race riots, the mob had a picture taken in front of the building.

The riot spread within hours, and because of superior weapons, ample supply of guns and ammunition, and the help of the state militia, the white supremacy mobs defeated the blacks who had resolved to defend themselves. The rioters quickly spread their criminality throughout the city. The white Republican mayor of the city, Dr. Silas P. Wright, and the city council members of both races were forced to resign. Waddell, with the support of the prominent members of the city, proclaimed himself mayor. Alexander Manly and other blacks, who were expecting violence to erupt, had already left town. The **white mob** was intent on driving the blacks in general, but specifically black jobholders and professionals, out of town.

The white Democrats, who took over the reigns of government after overthrowing the democratically elected Republicans and Fusionists, put the death toll to twelve or fourteen, but more objective estimates put the death toll in the hundreds. Another result of this mass violence against blacks led to many leaving the city, and to property being illegally seized. The Wilmington race riot of 1898 made national headlines, but neither Congress nor the president intervened to protect the black population of Wilmington, North Carolina, as indeed both branches of government generally did little or nothing against the violence that accompanied the Jim Crow laws, in spite of the Fourteenth Amendment's promise of "equal protection of the laws."

The Wilmington, North Carolina, race riot was dramatized in a number of fictional works, including Celia Bland's *The Conspiracy of the Secret Nine*, Philip Gerard's *Cape Fear Rising*, and Charles W. Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition*. Chesnutt's 1901 novel is a complex commentary on white violence, the undying galvanizing power of race, and the virulent segregation and discrimination that characterized the post-Reconstruction South, all of which produced tense racial relations that contemporaries of Chesnutt, such as **W.E.B. Du Bois** in his *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), also chastised in their own works.

In a way of commenting on Manly's editorial, Chesnutt complicates the situation by exploring the entangled family history of the leading white supremacist in the novel, the white newspaper editor General Carteret. His wife Olivia learns that she is the sister of Janet Miller, wife of a prominent black doctor in the city (named Wellington in the novel). Olivia's father fathered Janet with a black woman. Through this sub-story, Chesnutt's work avoids the easy taxonomy of race by showing the complexity of race relations in the South as complicated by white-black sexual relations, including the rape of black women by white slave owners, but also free love affairs between the two races, thus reaffirming the truthfulness of Manly's editorial. As the story of Olivia Carteret and Janet Miller shows in *The Marrow of Tradition*, this was a reality that the white supremacists were not ready to accept when they overthrew the government of the interracial political coalition of black and white Republicans and Fusionists. Chesnutt's novel also highlights the class issue that the mob mentality of the 1898 race riot obfuscates. While the riot was the work of a white mob that resulted in the triumph of white supremacy and the disenfranchisement of African Americans in both the real riot and the novel, in both cases the class issue is an important part of the process. In the real riot, it is the political elite of the North Carolina Democratic Party that engineered the riot, while in the novel, Carteret and Belmont are the brains of the riot; McBane, whom the two aristocrats despise because of his low class, follows in the name of white supremacy.

All in all, the Wilmington, North Carolina, race riot of 1898 was the culmination of the ideology of white supremacy. It disenfranchised the black population of the city, thus betraying the promises of both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The riot definitely established the Jim Crow tenets of **racism**, separation, and discrimination in North Carolina, and these would prevail until the civil and voting rights acts were enacted by Congress in the 1960s.

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*Aimable Twagilimana*

# Y

## **York (Pennsylvania) Riots of 1969**

The race riots during the late 1960s engulfed cities and towns throughout the United States. In November 1967, this pandemic prompted hearings before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Investigation of the Committee on Government Operations. According to “Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders,” a document generated during the hearings, race riots were endemic to both large and small cities and each localized riot appeared to start for a combination of unique reasons. There are different versions of what ignited the race riots in York, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1969. However, the bouts of violence in York streets left 2 people killed, over 100 residents injured, dozens arrested, and several homes and businesses damaged or destroyed. Local and state officials declared a state of emergency before it was all over.

To date, most written accounts suggest that a false **rumor** concocted by a black teenager, Clifford Green, caused the York race riots. On July 17, 1969, Green told York police and blacks in the community that members of a local white gang, the Girarders, doused and burned him with gasoline. Consequently, many black youth retaliated against the Girarders. Later, it was revealed that Green had accidentally burned himself playing with lighter fluid. Even though many sources pinpoint Green’s fabrication as the impetus, other factors contributed heavily to racial violence that summer as well. York mayor, John D. Snyder and other authorities had ignored discriminatory practices surrounding housing, recreational facilities, education, employment, and police abuse in the black community for some time. Officials paid little attention to warnings and recommendations from community leaders to help improve the social and economic climate in York to head off rising tensions.

### ***Factors Contributing to Racial Tensions***

During the winter of 1967, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) released its findings from the investigatory hearings. The report indicated that there was racial—black versus white—polarization and tension in the city of York. The **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**

had informants in the black and white communities and was also aware of the social unrest in York. Several factors contributed to the climate. According to the 1960 census, 4,747 blacks, or 8.8 percent of York's population, lived in **ghettos**. **Segregation** and unwritten real estate practices (see **Red-lining**) relegated blacks to rudimentary houses in unpaved alleyways and side streets, such as Newberry Street, Mason Alley, or Cherry Lane. York's blacks lived in rodent- and roach-infested shacks. Some houses had no shower, bathtubs, or hot water. Despite available recourse, city officials did little to address the housing situation. As one of few cities statewide to have a full-time housing inspector and an assistant, the supposed oversight yielded only one fine for violating building codes during that time period. The mayor even refused to accept federal monies to assist the poor in rehabilitating homes and to enable redevelopment.

The dilapidated communities occupied by blacks were also not allocated funds by York officials for recreational facilities, and unfair restrictions were placed on black gatherings. The Crispus Attucks Community Center, the Three-Ten (3:10) Club, and Freddy's, a combination grocery store and restaurant, were popular black teenage hangouts. Black youth also congregated in Penn Commons, a park located on the south end of the city. It was common for white youth to loiter a few blocks away in downtown York. Police illegally imposed a 9:15 P.M. curfew for black youth at the park. On the other hand, white youth could remain on the town square until midnight.

Such biased treatment was also evident in educational practices. Like many northern cities, schools in the York Public School District were racially integrated. However, traceable racial discrimination existed via the de facto segregation practices. According to the *Investigatory Hearing Report* (1968) published by the PHRC, York High School's administrators subscribed to strict disciplinary practices that treated black students unfairly. It was reported that there was "frequent recourse to corporal punishment of students. Instances wherein this corporal punishment was a reflection of a racist attitude on the part of teacher(s)." Likewise, instead of encouraging post-secondary education, white guidance counselors recommended general or vocational-track programs for black male students and business or clerical-track programs for black female students. They also advised black students to enlist in the armed services. Overall, educational neglect often left black youth unprepared to meet the needs of employers after graduation.

This lack of preparedness, in addition to unfair employment practices, made it difficult for York blacks to secure jobs. According to a study conducted by the York County Council for Human Relations, blacks did not have the same job opportunities as their white counterparts. The report also indicated that the majority of York's white employers did not have any black employees. Employers that did not have black employees indicated that they would not hire blacks or were reluctant to do so. Therefore, many blacks filled domestic services and unskilled labor positions and earned one-third the wage paid to white laborers.

Existing hostilities in the community born from employment, housing, recreational, and educational disparities were further agitated by what the

PHRC reported as harassment and excessive force by police toward blacks. Even though local officials refused to address legitimate concerns of **police brutality** in the black community, Mayor Snyder did create a K-9 unit to handle York's "Negro problem." The K-9 unit was commonly used to instill fear and to disperse crowds of juveniles. The police unfairly used canines to arrest non-white citizens.

On Friday, July 19, 1963, police arrested two black men, James Padgett and McCoy Moore. While Padgett and Moore were in the custody of the police, the officers allowed their canines to maul the two men. Outraged by the brutal attack, approximately 250 black community members protested at City Hall. Black community leaders submitted a petition with 800 signatures, which demanded that the arresting officer be relieved of duty, the K-9 unit be disbanded, and a police oversight board be created. To counter the efforts of to the blacks, some white citizens circulated a petition that supported the police officers and called for an expansion of the K-9 unit. The result was that Mayor Snyder suspended both officers involved for five days, eventually expanded the K-9 unit, and refused to create an oversight board.

In July 1965, police arrested a black woman, Mary Brown, and two black men. During the arrest, Brown was beaten in the face with a club and a police dog mauled one of the men. Over 100 members of the black community protested the officer's mistreatment, but to no avail—nothing happened.

On November 11, 1965, two days after police arrested Carl Williams, his body was found near Smalls Athletic Field. A police blackjack was discovered near Williams' bloodied and swollen corpse. The arresting officers in the case lied about detaining Williams and falsified police records. York City Council found the two officers guilty of misconduct and neglect of duty; however, the officers retained their jobs.

Tension between blacks and white authorities continued to intensify on July 11, 1968, when Officer Wayne Toomey fired his service revolver while chasing two black youths. Conflicting testimonies were presented during city council investigation. Officer Toomey and white witnesses indicated that shots were fired but they went over the heads of the assailants. On the other hand, blacks testified that the shots were fired directly at the black youths. Again, both the black and white communities rallied and circulated respective petitions in the case. Six months after the incident, Toomey was reprimanded but remained on the force.

Blacks were not only terrorized by members of the York Police Department; white residents also tormented blacks in York. On August 4, 1968, Chester Roach fired shots at black youths from his apartment window above Hoffman's Meat Market on South Penn Street, a predominantly black neighborhood. During the melee on Penn Street, Roach inflicted gunshot injuries to ten blacks while the blacks hurled bricks and bottles through Roach's second-story apartment window. Police did not arrest Roach when they responded to the disturbance; instead, they rescued Roach's wife and permitted the fracas to continue. After the police failed to apprehend Roach, black youths torched the meat market in order to smoke out the



sniper. Finally, out on the street, black residents confiscated Roach's weapons. Three days later, police arrested Roach and charged him with aggravated assault with intent to kill and aggravated assault and battery. After the Roach incident, Hoffman, the white store owner, told the black youths in the area that they could take what they wanted from the debris. However, as the police arrived to investigate, Cpl. Peter Chantiles fired his weapon to scare away black children. After an outcry from the black community, Chantiles was suspended for ten days.

In the early 1960s, black leaders in York attempted to work with the city's governing structure to curb racial tensions. Maurice Peters, former leader of the local chapter of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and the Peaceful Committee for Immediate Action, challenged individuals, institutions, and systems that sanctioned **racism** toward blacks. Peters suggested that "if the situation does not improve, there will be many a long, hot summer. . . . Negroes will find ways to make their plight known public" (Rappold, "1966").

Peters' prophecy came closer to reality during the mid-1960s. A group led by Theodore Holmes established the local chapter of the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**. Conservative Negroes and whites perceived CORE as a militant organization. Despite this, the local branch played a vital role instilling a sense of pride in black youth. CORE also attracted blacks who grew frustrated with conservative organizations that did not address the issues. Theodore Holmes, cochairman of the York Chapter of CORE, offered, "We've been beating our drum, asking for police review boards, more jobs, better housing, and being accepted" (Rappold, "Militancy").

Shortly after the establishment of CORE, some members splintered to form the Black Unity Movement (BUM). The organization sponsored a conference in York with workshops on self-defense, guerilla warfare, and black history. The organization was modeled after the **Black Panther Party (BPP)** and encouraged blacks not to talk to police if questioned and to defend each other by any means necessary. Young militants stressed that patience, reasoning, and nonviolence did nothing to address the so-called Negro problem. In *Crisis in Black and White*, author Charles Silberman agreed. He wrote that white people were not troubled by the justice denied to black people. Instead, whites were concerned that their peace was being shattered and their business interrupted.

### ***The Summer That Changed York, Pennsylvania***

While the debate continues over what ignited the riots in York, several reports confirm that both white and black youths engaged in gang warfare after 11:00 P.M. on July 17, 1969. On the first night of the riots, youths hurled rocks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails in the predominantly white North Newberry Street neighborhood. A few blocks away, near the corner of Philadelphia Street and Pershing Avenue, plainclothes detective George Smith stopped two black youths about curfew violations. While the detective questioned the youths, John Washington and Taka Nii Sweeney, the youths were hit by sniper fire. It was later discovered that Robert

Messersmith fired the shots. Black and white retaliatory violent measures occurred after the incident.

On July 18, police attempted to seal off areas of the city where violence was reported. To prevent blacks from entering the white neighborhood, the police blockaded the intersection of Philadelphia and Newberry Streets. In addition, the police barricaded six intersections surrounding York's southwest black community. To protect themselves from sniper fire, police kenneled their canines and wore bulletproof vests. Police patrol cruisers were abandoned for bank delivery vans with gun ports on the sides. In the makeshift armored vehicles, police patrolled troubled neighborhoods and exchanged gunfire with blacks. During a shoot-out, a black gunman fired a high-powered Krag .30-.40-caliber rifle at the armored van. The bullet pierced the 1/8-inch steel-plated van and injured rookie policeman Henry C. Schaad inside. Thirteen days later, Schaad died. In response to the Schaad shooting, police opened fire on the homes suspected in the shooting.

By July 19, 1969, every member of the ninety-six-man police unit was ordered into emergency duty. Mayor Snyder declared a state of emergency. Snyder imposed a strict curfew for youths. He also restricted the sale of guns, ammunition, and gasoline, and closed liquor stores and malt shops. Thirty-five state troopers were called in to reinforce York police.

It was firebomb attacks from both sides that caused the York riots to further escalate. The Myers, a black family that lived on Cottage Hill Road in an all-white neighborhood near North Newberry Street, had their home frequently firebombed by members of the Newberry Street Boys (NSB).

The next day, in broad daylight, James and Sherman Spells confronted NSB gang leader Bobby Messersmith on his porch for firebombing black residences. Resolute, the Spells brothers threatened to return to Newberry Street and wreak havoc if the firebombing did not stop. Later that day, while police manned the barricade at the intersection of Philadelphia and Newberry Streets, a group of black young men in a gray Cadillac breached the white neighborhood through a side alleyway. As the white gang members confronted the carload of blacks, the driver opened the trunk and a gunman sprung out and hailed gunfire at the white youth. Caught off guard, the white gang members scattered. The carload of blacks escaped the white neighborhood without sustaining injuries.

After the surprise attack, Messersmith gathered several local white gangs—Newberry Street Boys, Swampers, Girarders, and Yorklyns—at a White Power rally at Farquhar Park. Prior to this meeting, the white gangs fought one another over turf. Messersmith convinced the rival gang members that militant blacks were a common enemy. White police officers also attended the rally. As Officer Schaad lay dying, police stepped up their efforts and made allegiances with white gangs in York.

The rally organizers and police told the attendees to bring all of their weapons to Newberry Street. The Messersmith family, led by Robert's father John, coordinated the effort to protect the neighborhood from the black insurgency. Armed white youth congregated at the Messersmith home for ammunition and instructions. The senior Messersmith strategically placed young gunmen on balconies, rooftops, and back alleys surrounding the

Newberry Street neighborhood. A few gang members were posted on the corner of Philadelphia and Newberry Streets, where police stationed a barricade, to signal when blacks approached. In addition to signalers, the senior Messersmith monitored his own police scanner. Several people called police about the overwhelming presence of young people with guns, but officers did nothing to interfere with Messersmith's operation.

On the evening of July 21, 1969, police permitted a black family in a white Cadillac to pass through the barricade. The unsuspecting family was attempting to take the Newberry Street shortcut to JM Fields grocery. Officers at the barricade dispatched a message over the radio that a carload of blacks in a light-colored Cadillac entered Newberry Street. Even though the streetlights were blown out, the driver, Hattie Dickson, was able to see snipers on roofs as well as armed white youths on the street ahead. As the Cadillac crossed the railroad tracks at Newberry Street and Gay Avenue, Dickson attempted to turn the vehicle around and flee. During the U-turn, Dickson stalled the Cadillac on the railroad tracks. In an attempt to get her family out of harm's way, unarmed backseat passenger Lillie Belle Allen decided to take over the wheel. Immediately after Allen got out of the car, the armed white youths launched a barrage of gunfire. The defenseless passengers crouched below the window line as the Cadillac was riddled with bullets. However, outside the vehicle, Allen was blown out of her sneakers. On a family visit from Aiken, South Carolina, Allen was the first civilian casualty in the York race riots. As police arrived on the murder scene, young, armed vigilantes dispersed and avoided arrest.

Unable to control the situation in York, Public Safety Director Jacob W. Hose requested assistance from the Pennsylvania National Guard. On Tuesday, July 22, 1969, at 2:05 A.M., Gov. Raymond Shafer declared a state of emergency in York. Over 200 national guardsmen in tanks, trucks, and jeeps moved into York. The presence of the heavily armed troops, as well as the torrential rainfall, restored calm to the city.

On Wednesday, July 23, 1969, Elmer Woodyard, one of six black officers on the force, resigned from the York Police Department. Woodyard referred to an incident during the riots where officers inside armored vehicles fired recklessly in an attempt to damage and destroy black property. He also claimed that some white officers' hatred toward blacks superseded their responsibility to protect and serve.

During the next few days, the police and National Guard seized guns and ammunition. The fighting dramatically decreased. On July 24, 1969, Governor Shafer and Mayor Snyder relaxed the curfew for all residents from 11:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. The governor and mayor assessed the situation in York and prepared to pull the national guardsmen out of York. By July 26, the first 100 troops departed from York. The next day, Governor Shafer lifted the state of emergency over York. No longer under martial law, York remained calm. The last of the state troopers and national guardsmen retreated from York on July 28, 1969. According to FBI files, the police made 108 arrests: 78 curfew violations, 7 disorderly conduct charges, 2 furnishing false information charges, and 11 violations of the uniform firearms act. In addition, \$30,625 of property damage was reported.

**Further Reading:** Rappold, R. Scott. "Militancy Grows in City's Slums: Black, White Leaders Under Fire in '66-67." *York Dispatch*. See [http://www.yorkdispatch.com/yorkriots/beforetheriots/ci\\_00011203700](http://www.yorkdispatch.com/yorkriots/beforetheriots/ci_00011203700); Rappold, R. Scott. "1966: The First Long, Hot Summer: Police Issues Fester for York's Black Community; Violence Breaks Out." *York Dispatch*. See [http://www.yorkdispatch.com/yorkriots/beforetheriots/ci\\_00011201150](http://www.yorkdispatch.com/yorkriots/beforetheriots/ci_00011201150); Silberman, Charles. *Crisis in Black and White*. New York: Random House, 1964; "York City Riots Investigation." *York Dispatch* (2005). See [www.yorkdispatch.com/riotsinvestigation](http://www.yorkdispatch.com/riotsinvestigation).

*Dwayne Wright*



# PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

## 1. Excerpts from the Report of the Select House Committee on the Memphis Riots of May 1866, July 25, 1866

Reproduced below are excerpts from the report of the House Select Committee charged with investigating the Memphis, Tennessee, race riots of 1866. The passages contain eyewitness testimony regarding the atrocities committed during the Memphis violence.

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### **RAPE**

The crowning acts of atrocity and diabolism committed during these terrible nights were the ravishing of five different colored women by these fiends in human shape, independent of other attempts at rape. The details of these outrages are of too shocking and disgusting a character to be given at length in this report, and reference must be had to the testimony of the parties. It is a singular fact, that while this mob was breathing vengeance against the Negroes and shooting them down like dogs, yet when they found unprotected colored women they at once "conquered their prejudices," and proceeded to violate them under circumstances of the most licentious brutality.

### **FRANCES THOMPSON**

The rape of Frances Thompson, who had been a slave and was a cripple, using crutches, having a cancer on her foot, is one to which reference is here made. On Tuesday night, seven men, two of whom were policemen, came to her house. She knew the two to be policemen by their stars. They were all Irishmen. They first demanded that she should get supper for them, which she did. After supper the wretches threw all the provisions that were in the house which had not been consumed out into the bayou. They then laid hold of Frances, hitting her on the side of the face and kicking her. A girl by the name of

**LUCY SMITH**

about sixteen years old, living with her, attempted to go out the window. One of the brutes knocked her down and choked her. They then drew their pistols, and said they would shoot them and fire the house if they did not let them have their way. The woman, Frances Thompson, was then violated by four of the men, and so beaten and bruised that she lay in bed for three days. They then took all the clothes out of the trunk, one hundred dollars in greenbacks belonging to herself, and two hundred dollars belonging to another colored woman, which had been left to take care of her child, besides silk dresses, bed-clothing, &c. They were in the house nearly four hours, and when they left they said they intended "to burn up the last God damned nigger, and drive all the Yankees out of town, and then there would be only some rebel niggers and butternuts left." The colored girl, Lucy Smith, who was before the committee, said to be sixteen or seventeen years old, but who seemed, from her appearance, to be two or three years younger, was a girl of modest demeanor and highly respectable in appearance. She corroborated the testimony of Frances Thompson as to the number of men who broke into the house and as to the policemen who were with them. They seized her (Lucy) by the neck and choked her to such an extent that she could not talk for two weeks to anyone. She was then violated by one of the men, and the reason given by another for not repeating the act of nameless atrocity was, that she was so *near dead he would not have anything to do with her*. He thereupon struck her a severe blow upon the side of the head. The violence of these wretches seemed to be aggravated by the fact that the women had in their room some bed-covering or quilting with red, white, and blue, and also some picture of Union officers. They said, "You niggers have a mighty liking for the damned Yankees, but we will kill you, and you will have no liking for anyone then." This young girl was so badly injured that she was unable to leave her bed for two weeks.

Another case is that of

**REBECCA ANN BLOOM**

who was ravished on the night of the 2nd of May. She was in bed with her husband, when five men broke open her door and came into her house. They professed to have authority to arrest Mr. Bloom, and threatened to take him to the station house unless he should pay them a forfeit of twenty-five dollars. Not having the money, he went out to raise it, and while absent one of the men assaulted the wife and threatened to kill her if she did not do as he wished. Brandishing his knife, and swearing she must submit to his wishes, he accomplished his brutal purpose. This is from the testimony of Mrs. Bloom, taken before the Freedmen's Bureau commission, and is corroborated by the testimony of Elvira Walker, taken before the committee, and also by Mrs. Bloom's husband, Peter Bloom.

Another case is that of

**LUCY TIBBS**

A party of seven men broke into her house on Tuesday night and demanded to know where her husband was. She had with her two little children of the ages of five and two years, respectively. She implored them not to do anything to her, as she was just there with her "two little children." While the others of the party were plundering the house, one man threatened to kill her if she did not submit to his wishes; and although another man, discovering her situation, interfered, and told him to let that woman alone—that she was not in a situation for doing that, the brute did not desist, but succeeded in violating her person in the presence of the other six men. She was obliged to submit, as the house was full of men, and she thought they would kill her, as they had stabbed a woman the previous night in her neighborhood.

**WHAT LUCY TIBBS SAW**

This woman lived in the immediate neighborhood, and was in the situation to see, and did see, a great deal that transpired during the riotous proceedings. This witness was intelligent and well-appearing, and the committee was strongly impressed with the truth and fairness of her testimony. She saw two colored soldiers shot down on Tuesday night, not ten rods apart. One of the men, she states, was killed by John Pendergrast, who keeps a grocery in her neighborhood. She was looking right at him when he shot the man. After being shot, the soldier made an effort to get up the bayou, and Pendergrast went to a policeman, got another pistol and shot him in his mouth. This man had no sooner been killed by Pendergrast—the witness being within a few feet at the time—than another colored man came in sight. *They beat him and kept him down until they loaded their pistols then they shot him three times, burst his head open and killed him.* She knew of four colored people being killed, their bodies lying within two hundred yards of her house for two days and nights, beside the body of Rachel Hatcher, to whom allusion is made in another part of this report. She testifies to other matters, and particularly to the conduct of Policeman Roach, one of the most murderous of them all, and who is understood still to be in Memphis. She testifies also to the shooting of a colored man by a white man of the name of Galloway, and of another colored man by the name of Charley Wallace, being shot by a Mr. Cash. Her brother, Robert Taylor, a member of the 59th Regiment, was killed on Tuesday afternoon. He had \$300 in possession of his sister, the witness, of which she was robbed. She states further, in regard to a man who lives in the next house to her, that he was called outside of his house and shot down. They shot him three times and then said, "Damn you, that will learn you how to leave your old master and mistress," and took \$25 from his pocket. His name was Fayette Dickerson. The white men she knew in this crowd of murderers and robbers were the old man Pendergrast and his two sons, Mr. Cash, a boy called Charley Toller, and also a wretch by the name of



Charley Smith, who professed to have belonged to the Union army, and who had been teaching a school of colored people, but who had now joined these other men in their robberies and murders. Another case of rape is that of

#### **HARRIET ARMOR**

On Wednesday morning, in open day, two men came into her room. One of them, by the name of Dunn, living on South street, under the pretext of hunting for arms, entered and barred the door, and both of them violated her. This outrage was attended with circumstances of too disgusting and shocking a character to be mentioned except by the most distant allusion. The testimony of this witness is substantially corroborated by other witnesses.

#### **SHOOTING AND BURNING OF RACHEL HATCHER**

The shooting and burning of a colored girl by the name of Rachel Hatcher was one of the most cruel and bloody acts of the mob. This girl Rachel was about sixteen years of age. She was represented by all to be a girl of remarkable intelligence, and of pure and excellent character. She attended school, and such had been her proficiency that she herself had become a teacher of the smaller scholars. Her mother, Jane Sneed, testified before the committee that on Tuesday night the mob came to her house, took a man out, took him down to the bridge and shot him. They then set fire to the house of an old colored man by the name of Adam Lock, right by the house of the witness. Her daughter, Rachel, seeing the house of a neighbor on fire, proposed to go and help get the things out. While in the house, enraged in an act of benevolent heroism, the savages surrounded the burning building, and with loaded revolvers threatened to shoot her. In piteous tones she implored them to let her come out; but one of the crowd—the wretched Pendergrast—said, “No; if you don’t go back I will blow your damned brains out.” As the flames gathered about her, she emerged from the burning house, when the whole crowd “fired at her as fast as they could.” She was deliberately shot and fell dead between the two houses. Her clothes soon took fire and her body was partially consumed, presenting a spectacle horrible to behold. The mother of Rachel was, in the meantime, inside her own house trying to get out a man who was wounded that night, and who she was afraid would be burnt up. When she came back, she saw the dead body of her daughter, the blood running out of her mouth. There was an Irishman about her house at this time by the name of Callahan, with the largest pistol in his hand she had ever seen. He demanded that her husband should come out until he could shoot him. But his life was saved at that moment by the appearance of two regulars, who told them to go to the fort.

#### **CALLAHAN AND M’GINN**

Among the parties who robbed the houses of Sneed and Adam Lock were Callahan, one George McGinn, and a young man whose name witness did not know. Callahan was seen to go off with a feather-bed on one arm and a pistol in the other hand, and the young man was seen to have the hoop skirt and the Balmoral skirt of the girl Rachel who was killed the night before.

These facts are testified to by a German woman of the name Garey, whose husband was a confectioner. At the time these things were carried off, a large crowd ran into Callahan's store, and he came out with bottles and things and treated them. The crowd was very noisy, and made a great many threats. They said the next night they wanted to kill there "d—d Yankee niggers"—calling such people as this German witness "Yankee niggers."

#### **OTHER BURNINGS AND SHOOTINGS**

Witnesses testified as to the circumstances of other burnings and shootings. A house containing women and little children was set on fire, and was then surrounded by armed men. Scorched by the extending flames the terrified inmates rushed out, but only to be fired upon when fleeing from their burning dwelling. It was reported that the arm of a little child was shot off. A woman and her little son were in a house which was fired. She begged to be permitted to come out, but the murderer (Pendergrast) shot at her. She got down on her knees and prayed him to let her out. She had her little son in there with her. They told her that if she did not go back they would kill her. McGinn was in this crowd, and the scene moved even his adamant heart to mercy. He said, "This is a very good woman; it is a pity to burn her up. Let her come out." She came out with her boy; but it happened he had on *blue clothes*. That seemed to madden them still more. They pushed him back and said, "Go back, you d—n son of a b—h." Then the poor heart-broken mother fell on her knees and prayed them to let her child out; *it was the only child she had*; and the boy was finally permitted to escape from the flames. Pendergrast went into a grocery and gave ammunition to a policeman to load his pistol. They then started up a Negro man who ran up the bayou, and told him to come to them. He was coming up to them, when they put a pistol to his mouth, shot his tongue off, killing him instantly. This man's name was Lewis Robertson.

#### **ATTEMPT TO BURN LUCY HUNT**

One Chris. Pigeon, an Irishman, went with others to the house of Lucy Hunt, a colored woman, and threatened if they could not get in they would burn them all up. They did set fire to the house in which Lucy lived, and when she attempted to come out they pushed her back into the fire three or four times. One of them caught her by the throat and said he was going to burn her up. One of the gang put his pistol to her head and said, "G—d d—n you, if you leave I will shoot you." She thinks she owes her life to the appearance of some soldiers. They broke open her trunk and robbed her of \$25, the proceeds of sixteen months' work at the fort, where she had been cooking for a company of soldiers. And they not only robbed her of her money, but of all her clothes, and everything she had, leaving her nearly naked and penniless.

#### **MARY BLACK AND MARIA SCOTT**

They also broke into the house of Mary Black on Wednesday night. This same Pigeon was in the crowd. They poured turpentine on the bed and set

the house on fire. There was in the house opposite Mary Black, at the time, a little girl twelve years old, and an old colored woman by the name of Maria Scott. After they had set fire to the house, they attempted to keep them in, and when asked to let them out they replied, they intended to burn them up. Witness had no doubt they would have done so had it not been for the appearance of the regulars.

#### **SHOOTING OF JOSEPH WALKER**

Among the instances of shooting and killing was that of Joseph Walker, a colored man who was returning home from his work during the riotous proceedings, and going round by way of the Tennessee and Mississippi railroad depot. The depot agent, a man by the name of Palmer, ordered him to halt, while Palmer's brother, from the top of a car called out, "Shoot the d—n son of a b—h." He thereupon pulled out his pistol and shot at him three times, but hit him only once. The ball was in the body of witness at the time he was before the committee, the doctor having been unable to extract it. He was so badly injured that he has been unable to work since. He has a wife, sister, mother, brother and child, all of whom are dependent on him for support. The ruffians who shot this man hold responsible positions under the Tennessee and Mississippi Railroad Company, and the attention of the others of that company is called to that fact, so that if the laws cannot be vindicated in bringing them to punishment, it may be seen whether they will be employed by a railroad company that seeks support from the public. The testimony is, that after Joseph Walker had escaped from these men they went after another black man whom they saw dodging round the bayou.

#### **THE KILLING OF BEN. DENNIS**

Perhaps there is nothing that can more fully illustrate the feeling in the city of Memphis than the impunity with which the most brutal and dastardly crimes were committed upon white persons also, and upon those not even remotely connected with the riotous proceedings than the murder of Dennis on Thursday, after the riots were substantially at an end. It seems that Dennis was a man of respectable connections, and of a good disposition, who had served a year in the rebel army; that he went into a saloon to take a drink, and while there met a colored barber, who was an old acquaintance, and spoke to him in a kind and friendly manner. At this time an Irishman was sitting behind a screen, eating his dinner, and when he heard the kind words of Dennis to the Negro he rushed out and demanded to know how Dennis dared to talk that way to a Negro. Dennis made some reply, then the Irishman deliberately shot him. He fell on the floor and died in ten minutes. The murderer was escorted to the station-house, and according to the testimony of the station-keeper was retained there for a term of *five or ten minutes*, and no one appearing against him, he was set at liberty. The statement is, though not in proof, that while at the station-house, someone made the remark that he had "only shot a nigger," and that was no cause for his detention. No further effort has been made to bring this murderer to justice.

**ATTEMPT TO BURN MARY JORDAN AND HER CHILDREN**

There are but few acts of the mob which equal in barbarism that of the outrage committed upon Mary Jordan. She had just lost her husband, and was in her house with her three children, the youngest of which being seven months old and very sick. They had been shooting down colored people in her neighborhood, and she was very much frightened, expecting that she would herself be shot down. While she and her three children, the oldest of which being only sixteen years, were in her house, the mob set fire to a house adjoining, and the flames communicated to her dwelling. They refused to allow her or her children to come out. She started out, and told her children to follow her. Her eldest daughter said, "Mother, you will be shot." She replied she had rather be shot than burned. While she was escaping from the flames into the streets it was raining, and she could get no shelter. Her child got wet, and afterwards died. She states there were policemen in that crowd, as she knew them by the stars they wore. She lost everything she had. When, however, the house was all in flames, she ran out with her little children, with her baby in her arms. They fired at her, the bullets coming all around her, and she would have been hit had she not ran around the corner of the house and got out of the way. While running away with her baby in her arms a man put a pistol to her breast and asked her what she was doing. She told him she was trying to save her baby.

**THE MURDER OF LONG**

Scarcely a more brutal murder was committed than that of Shade Long. He with his wife and two children were in their house while a mob of twenty or thirty men came to it and demanded admittance. Long was very sick, and had been in bed for two weeks. They broke into the house, and told him to get up and come out, that they were going to shoot him. He told them he was very sick. They replied that they did not "care a d—n." They took him out of doors, and told him that if he had anything to say, to "say it very quick;" that they were going to kill him. They asked him if he had been a soldier. He replied that he had not, but had been in the employ of the government. Then one of them stepped back and shot him, putting a pistol to his head and firing three times. He scuffled about a little and looked as if he was trying to get back to the house, when they told him that if he did "not make haste and die" they would shoot him again. Then one of them kicked him, and another shot him after he was down. They shot him through the head every time. They then robbed the poor woman of fifty-five dollars in paper money and fifteen dollars in silver, and went away.

**THE SHOOTING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

The shooting of Rachel Hatcher and the subsequent burning of her body has already been alluded to in detail. Adeline Miller, a colored girl, about twenty years old, on the first evening of the mob was standing at the door of a family grocery kept by an Italian named Oicalla. She seems to have been discovered by some person in the mob at a distance, who deliberately fired at her, the ball taking effect and killing her instantly.

Rhoda Jacobs, a young girl twenty years old, lived with her mother, who had three other young children living with her. On one night during the riots a gang of five or six men came to the door and demanded admittance. They pretended to be looking for some man. One of the ruffians pulled out his pistol and told the mother that if she did not light the candle quick he would shoot her brains out. The light disclosed that there was somebody in a bed behind the door, and it turned out to be this girl Rhonda, with her little sister, who was eight years old. Seeing the man with the pistol she screamed out, "O! I am a woman! I am a woman! Don't shoot!" But that did not stay the hand of the assassin, who deliberately fired into the bed. The witness was before the committee, and in answer to the question, "Where did he shoot you?" says, "The ball came into my arm, grazed two of my fingers, went through between the lips of my little sister lying in bed with me, entered my breast, *and the bullet is right there now.*"

This girl could not identify any of the parties. She looked at the pistol in the hands of a man and said she was so afraid they would shoot her mother that she did not think of herself at all; that he had his pistol at her mother's head, and had it cocked. The little girl was not much hurt, the ball only grazing her lips. After accomplishing this brilliant feat they left the house. The mother then describes the scene as follows:

I looked at my daughter and thought that death was upon her. The ball had gone through her arm, had hit her fingers, and shot into her breast, and, what I did not see till afterwards, the ball had glanced the child's lips. I fixed up my daughter's wounds by the *light of the burning house* on the other side of the street, and put them all to bed. I put out my lamps for fear they would come back again. It was a fuss all the time, and I dared not put my head out. . . .

A gang consisting, among others, of Mike Cotton, S. D. Young, and Billy Barber, together with a policeman, went to the house of Richard Lane, colored man, in which he kept a salon. They demanded a light, and while Mrs. Lane was getting one they asked her husband for arms, and upon his denying that he had any they deliberately shot him through the shoulder, the ball being afterwards cut out below in his back. As they were going out one of the fiends deliberately shot their little girl through the right arm. In the language of the mother, the little child "screamed dreadfully and bled awfully, and looked just as though she had been dipped in a tub of blood." The mother seeing her husband and child thus wounded and bleeding, commenced screaming, whereupon the crowd left.

Jane Goodloe testified before General Stoneman's commission that the mob shot into her house on the evening of that first of May and wounded her in the breast.

#### **ATTEMPTS TO BURN WHITE CHILDREN**

The vindictive and revengeful feelings of the mob were not limited to the colored people, but they extended to such white people as had

manifested particular friendship to the colored race by interesting themselves in their schools and churches, and in their welfare generally. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper were English people; they had put up a building, a portion of which was to be let for a colored school, which was to be taught by a Mr. Glasgow, who had been a soldier in the Union Army. Mr. Cooper was called an "abolitionist," because they said he was doing too much for the colored people, and spoke occasionally in their chapel. A gang of policemen and citizens came into the neighborhood in a threatening attitude. Being appealed to by Mrs. Cooper to know what they were going to do, they said they were going to kill her husband and Mr. Glasgow, for they would have no abolitionists in the South. While they were talking to her, at some distance from her house, and assuring her that they would not hurt her or her children, the house, with her four little children in it, was deliberately set on fire, and while her husband and Mr. Glasgow attempted to put it out the mob fired at them several times. A policeman headed this crowd of incendiaries, whose intention, Mrs. Cooper thinks, was to burn up her children. The building and all the furniture was burned, and Mr. Cooper fled from the city to save his life.

#### **TEACHERS OF COLORED SCHOOLS**

The most intense and unjustifiable prejudice on the part of the people of Memphis seems to have been arrayed against teachers of colored schools and against preachers to colored people. They would not teach the colored people themselves, and seemed to think it a reflection upon them that benevolent persons and societies outside should undertake the work. The preachers seemed to be men of earnest piety and sincere convictions, and to be actuated by the highest and best motives. Many of the teachers of the schools were young ladies from the northern states, graduates of the best northern schools, of intelligence, of education, and of the most unblemished characters, and who, responding to convictions of duty, had, at the call of benevolent individuals and societies, left their homes, gone to Memphis, and entered upon the task of educating and elevating a down-trodden and oppressed race. In the face of scorn and obloquy they proceeded, even at the peril of their own lives, to the work assigned them; and with consciences so void of offense and lives so pure and blameless, that while subject to persecution and insult, neither hatred nor calumny was ever able to stain their reputations or to blacken their characters; and yet these people, guilty of no crime, engaged in a work of benevolence and Christianity, were themselves obliged to flee from the city for personal safety; and as they left, they were guided in their pathway by the light reflected from their burning school-houses.

#### **THE SCHOOLS**

At the breaking out of the riots the number of schools was twelve, and the number in attendance was about 1,200, taught by twenty-two teachers. The superintendent of these schools was a Mr. Orin E. Waters, whose testimony was taken by the committee, and is hereby referred to. The teachers

were employed by the American Baptist Missionary Association, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, the American Missionary Associations, two or three independent associations, and two or three were established independent of any associations. Twelve school-houses, or places where schools were taught, were burned during the riot, and the value of each was estimated at \$2,500, besides the apparatus, furniture, &c. Mr. Waters testifies as to the teachers leaving on account of the threats of the mob that they would burn them out and kill them. Their offense was that they were teaching colored children; and although these schools had been going on for three years, there had never been a single instance in which any difficulty had been created on the part of any person connected with them, and the character and conduct of the scholars had been uniformly good. The progress of the scholars in their studies was said to be remarkable. The colored children evinced very great eagerness and interest in their studies. As an instance of the low prejudice against the teachers, your committee quote the following anonymous communication which was sent three or four days after the riots:

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, May 6, 1866.

To — — :

You will please to notice that we have determined to rid our community of Negro fanatics and philanthropic teachers of our former slaves. You are one of the number, and it will be well for you are absent from the city by the 1st of June. Consult you safety.

ANONYMOUS.

It might also be stated that the mob were not satisfied with burning school-houses and churches, but they burned also a building belonging to the government, used by the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission as a store-house for supplies for freedmen. The total amount of stores destroyed, and of property belonging to that commission was \$4,597.35. Your committee were glad to learn that, to supply the place of the school-houses burned by the mob, Major General Fisk had, on behalf of the Freedmen's Bureau, with commendable energy, built a large school-house for the use of colored schools.

#### **THE CHURCHES BURNED**

Four churches were burned during the riots. One was a large brick building; another was a large frame structure, with a brick basement, and two others were used as churches and school-houses. And although all the churches and places of worship of the colored people were destroyed by the mob, no effort whatever seems to have been made by the people of Memphis to supply, even temporarily, the want created. So far as your committee were able to ascertain, no church within the control of the white people was open for their worship. . .

#### **THE CAUSE OF THE RIOT—THE NEWSPAPERS**

As has been stated in this report, the riotous proceedings had their immediate cause in a difficulty between Irish police and colored soldiers. The more remote cause may be found in the prejudice which has grown up

between the two races. The feelings of hatred and revenge toward the colored race, which have been fostered by the Irish and by large numbers of people in the south, seem to have been intensified since the Negro became free. The colored race have been subject to great abuse and ill-treatment. In fact, they have no protection from the law whatever. All the testimony shows that it was impossible for a colored man in Memphis to get justice against a white man. Such is the prejudice against the Negro that it is almost impossible to punish a white man by the civil courts for any injury inflicted upon a Negro. It was in the testimony before the committee that several months prior to their arrival in Memphis a Negro was most brutally and inhumanly murdered publicly in the streets by a policeman by the name of Maloney. The officer in command at Memphis, Major General John E. Smith, knowing full well that Maloney would not be punished through the civil tribunals, had him tried by a military commission, by which he was found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment in Nashville. It appears that afterwards the murderer Maloney was brought before United States Judge Trigg, at Nashville, on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and the judge, without giving any notice whatever to General Thomas, that there might be a fair hearing of the question, made haste to discharge him from imprisonment, and he is now at large, "unwhipt of justice." There can be no doubt that the feeling which led to the terrible massacres at Memphis was stimulated by the disloyal press of that city. Judge Hunter states that he has no doubt but that the mob was stimulated by the newspapers. Reverend Mr. Tade says the effect of the press was to incite the riotous proceedings; and expresses the opinion that the Irish have been used as mere cat's-paws; that the papers published there had every day incited them to the deeds of violence which they committed. He states that the *Avalanche* is the worst, and that the *Argus* and *Ledger* are echoes of it. Witness believed that much of the ill-feeling against men of northern birth, entertaining what are called "radical sentiments," is due to the conduct of the press. Out of the seven daily papers there, five were controlled, in a greater or less degree, by men who have been in the rebel army. He states that the *Avalanche*, which is the most violent, vindictive, and unscrupulous of all the papers there, and which has done the most to exasperate the people against the Negroes and northern people, claims to have the largest circulation and most patronage of any paper in the city, and to most truly represent the sentiments and opinions of the mass of the people. Your committee caused extracts to be made from these papers, which they have carefully read over. Many of the articles were characterized by a bitter hostility to the government, and by appeals to the lowest and basest prejudices against the colored population; by bitter personal attacks upon northern people residing in Memphis; and, in fact, the whole tenor of the disloyal press was a constant incitation to violence and ill-feeling.

#### **CONDUCT OF THE COLORED SOLDIERS**

As great efforts had been made to justify the massacre of the colored people on account of the conduct of the colored soldiers who have been so long



stationed at Fort Pickering, your committee deemed it their duty to take much testimony on this subject in order to satisfy themselves as to the facts in the case. That there was bad conduct on the part of some of the soldiers there can be no doubt, and the riotous and lawless conduct of a portion of them on the evening of the 1st of May is without excuse. General Stoneman, in answer to the question as to how these colored troops compared with white troops under similar circumstances, answered as follows:

“I must say, in justice to the colored troops, that their conduct compared very favorably with that of the same number of white troops under similar circumstances.”

Lieutenants Garrett and Hastings, and others, who had been officers in the colored regiment stationed at Fort Pickering, testified as to their general good conduct, and it was testified that there was no disposition on the part of the colored soldiers to maltreat white people, or to attack them in any way, and that whenever it became necessary for them to make arrests of white citizens it was done in an orderly and proper manner.

The testimony of Captain Thomas J. Dornin, of the 16th regular infantry, is referred to as being particularly full and explicit in regard to the character and conduct of the colored soldiers. He was in Fort Pickering with them during the days of the riot, and was in a position to know the facts in regard to which he testified. The behavior of these colored men under the trying circumstances in which they were placed, seeing their families murdered and their dwellings burned, was such as to extort admiration from all the officers in the fort. With the exception of a feeble attempt on the part of a few to seize some arms to defend their families from the butcheries of the mob, there was the most complete subordination among them, although they had been in point of fact mustered out of the service. In answer as to what he had seen in regard to the riotous conduct of these soldiers, Captain Dornin states:

I never saw any riotous act among them, and one thing I will say for them, that there is no number of white soldiers that I ever saw that could be held in such subjection as they were when their houses were being burned as they were. I could not have expected it; never could have believed it could be done.

In speaking of this matter, Captain Dornin, with the instincts which belong to the true soldier, states that he sympathized with the colored people, and was sorry that the men could not get their arms to defend their wives and families. He said he “sympathized with them as things were going, for they could not defend themselves, and it seemed like a brutish laughter on the part of the mob.” Captain D. further states that there were policemen leading the mob and shooting down the colored people, and he himself saw them engaged in carrying off everything they could lay their hands on, and inciting others to do the same.

Captain Allyn, of the sixteenth regular infantry, commanding the post at Memphis, testified before the committee, and gave a very full and detailed account of the riotous proceedings, and the operations of the force under

him. His report to the general commanding will be found in the appendix. Captain A. seems to have made the best and most judicious use of the small forces under his command. He states, in regard to the conduct of the colored soldiers, that if his own regiment had been there he does not think it would have been possible to keep them from interfering in favor of the negroes with their arms; and if the negroes had been a regiment of regulars, they would have rushed out unless it could have been prevented by previous knowledge, and by placing a heavy guard over it. Speaking his feelings, he said he should not have blamed them.

### THE FEELING TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT

General Stoneman states, in answer to a question as to what was his opinion of the loyalty of the people of Memphis toward the United States, that if the desire to be restored to the Union was considered loyal, he should consider a large majority of the people of Memphis loyal, that far; but if a love of the Union and the flag was considered loyal he would look *upon a large majority of the people of Memphis as not being loyal*. He said there was not that disposition now on the part of the people of Tennessee to recognize existing facts that there was six months previous; that, so far as he could get at it from the press and from the meetings of the people for various purposes, he did not consider them as loyal, if loyalty was to be defined as love for the Union, *as they were six months ago, and that it was growing worse and worse every day*. He states that he knows of only three points where the United States flag is displayed—one at his own headquarters, another at the Freedmen's Bureau, and another is in front of the building used as the printing office for the Memphis Post. He had never seen it displayed at public meetings or places of amusement or theatres, and only sometimes on steamboats coming down the river. Information was conveyed to the general that at the theatre such national airs as "Hail Columbia," "Star-spangled Banner," and "Yankee Doodle" were hissed by the audience, and that the rebel airs were received with applause; he was obliged to write to the manager of the theatre that if national airs were to be met with disapprobation, and the "so-called confederate national airs" should be received with applause by the audience, it would compel him to interfere.

Mr. Stanbrough says that he would no more have raised the United States flag over his mill than he would think of putting a match to his property to burn it up; that he would not for his life think of taking the American flag and marching down Main Street with it; that if a band should go through the streets playing the national airs it would be received with a hiss and a groan. Everybody residing in Memphis knew the flag of our country was not respected, and that while national airs are hissed, when "Dixie" is struck up there is always a shout, and if played for the twentieth time, for every time there is a shout; but there is no "Yankee Doodle" or "Hail Columbia" in Memphis. He says there is not a bit more love for the laws, the Constitution of the United States, or the Union in Memphis than there was in the hottest days of the rebellion, and that the fires of hate burn as hot and as deep down as ever.

General Runkle, of the Freedmen's Bureau, speaks of having seen pictures of rebel generals in all the shop-windows, but of never having seen those of such men as Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, or Farragut displayed, nor even the picture of the name printed in gold letters on the sign-board; that such was the feeling there the people hated the sight of the uniform of a Union officer, and he would not consider it safe for him to be on the streets alone at night in his uniform.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

From the testimony taken by your committee, from personal observation and from what they could learn in regard to the state of feeling in Memphis, and, indeed, through that entire section of the country, they are of opinion that there is but little loyalty to the government and flag. The state of the things in the city of Memphis is very much now as it was before the breaking out of the rebellion. Many of the same newspapers published there then are published now, and by many of the same men—by who, during the war, were in the rebel armies fighting for the overthrow of the government. Professing to accept the situation, they seem inspired with as deadly hatred against the government as ever, and are guilty of the same incitation to violence, persecution, and oppression toward the men holding opinions obnoxious to them, that they were towards the men who were well disposed toward the Union men in 1861. Your committee say, deliberately, that, in their judgment, there will be no safety to loyal men, either white or black, should the troops be withdrawn and no military protection afforded. They believe that the riots and massacres of Memphis are only a specimen of what would take place throughout the entire south, should the government fail to afford adequate military protection. There is everywhere too much envenomed feeling toward the blacks, particularly those who served in the Union armies, and against northern men and Union people generally who love the government, and who desired to see it sustained, its authority vindicated, and who believe that treason is a crime that should be punished. There is no public sentiment in the south sufficiently strong enough to demand and enforce protection to Union men and colored people. The civil-rights bill, so far as your committee could ascertain, is treated as a dead letter. Attorney General Wallace, in flagrant violation of his oath and duty, whose name has been heretofore alluded to in this report, has, according to the newspapers, proclaimed that he will utterly disregard the law.

The hopes based upon this law that the colored people might find protection under it are likely to prove delusive; for, where there is no public opinion to sustain law, but, on the other hand, that public opinion is so overwhelmingly against it, there is no probability of its being executed. Indeed, your committee believe the sentiment of the south which they observed is not a sentiment of full acquiescence in the results of the war, but that there is among them a lingering hope that their favorite doctrine of succession may yet be vindicated. It is the same idea that Jeff. Davis expressed. When he was seeking safety in flight, a traveler remarked to him that the cause was lost. Davis replied: *"It appears so; but the principle for*

*which we contended is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time, and in another form.*" (Pollard's Southern History of the War, vol. 2, page 582.) They believe in the principle and doctrine of succession. Though they have been beaten by arms, they assert and maintain that the principle is the same, and hope for its vindication hereafter in some way. Recognizing the friendship to them of what was called the "democratic party" in the north during the war, and their efforts to embarrass the government in the prosecution of the war against them, they hope, by combining with them in their political movements, finally to secure by the ballot what they dialed to achieve by arms.

The fact that the chosen guardians of the public peace, the sworn executors of the law for the protection of the lives, liberty, and property of the people, and the reliance of the weak and defenseless in time of danger, were found the foremost in the work of murder and pillage, gives a character of infamy to the whole proceeding which is almost without a parallel in all the annals of history. The dreadful massacre of Fort Pillow, which excited the horror of the country and of the civilized world, was attempted to be palliated on the ground that the garrison was taken after the most desperate resistance, and after having been repeatedly summoned to surrender; that the blood of the assailants had been heated to such a degree and their passions so aroused that there was no controlling them, though it is alleged that some of their officers vainly attempted to do so. But no such ground of palliation can be advanced in the case of the Memphis massacres. After the first troubles on the first evening, there was no pretense of any disturbance by the colored people, or any resistance to the mob, calculated to excite their passions, and what subsequently took place was the result of a cool and mature deliberation to murder and destroy the colored people. Like the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Memphis massacre had the sanction of official authority; and it is no wonder that the mob, finding itself led by officers of the law, butchered miserably and without resistance every negro it could find, and regretting that death had saved their victims from further insult, exercised on their dead bodies all the rage of the most insensate cruelty.

In view of the fact that the state of public sentiment is such in Memphis that is it conceded that no punishment whatever can be meted out to the perpetrators of these outrages by the civil authorities, and in view of the further fact that the city repudiates any liability for the property, both of the government and individuals, destroyed by the mob, your committee believe it to be the duty of the government to arrest, try, and punish the offenders by military authority; and also by the same authority levy a tax upon the citizens of Memphis sufficient to cover the losses for all property destroyed.

SOURCE: "Memphis Riots and Massacres." U.S. House of Representatives, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 101, Report of the Select Committee on the Memphis Riots. Washington, D.C., 1866, pp. 13–21, 30–34.



## 2. Report of the Federal Grand Jury on the Activities of the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina, 1871

The activities of the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina in the years 1868–1871 were so notorious as to lead President Ulysses Grant to suspend the right of habeas corpus in nine South Carolina counties in October 1871. The military was sent in to arrest perpetrators and a grand jury was convened in Columbia, South Carolina, to investigate Klan activities and Klan organization throughout these counties. Below is an excerpt of the grand jury's report to the judges of the U.S. Circuit Court. *See also the entry* Ku Klux Klan.

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In closing the labors of the present term, the grand jury begs leave to submit the following presentment.

During the whole session we have been engaged in investigations of the most grave and extraordinary Character—investigations of the crimes committed by the organization known as the Ku Klux Klan. The evidence elicited has been voluminous, gathered from the victims themselves and their families, as well as those who belong to the Klan and participated in its crimes. The jury has been shocked beyond measure at the developments which have been made in their presence of the number and character of the atrocities committed, producing a state of terror and a sense of utter insecurity among a large portion of the people, especially the colored population. The evidence produced before us has established the following facts:

1. That there has existed since 1868, in many counties of the state, an organization known as the “Ku Klux Klan,” or “Invisible Empire of the South,” which embraces in its membership a large proportion of the white population of every profession and class.
2. That this Klan is bound together by an oath, administered to its members at the time of their initiation into the order, of which the following is a copy:

### Obligation

I [name], before the immaculate Judge of Heaven and Earth, and upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, do, of my own free will and accord, subscribe to the following sacredly binding obligation:

1. We are on the side of justice, humanity, and constitutional liberty, as bequeathed to us in its purity by our forefathers.
2. We oppose and reject the principles of the Radical Party.
3. We pledge mutual aid to each other in sickness, distress, and pecuniary embarrassment.
4. Female friends, widows, and their households shall ever be special objects of our regard and protection.

Any member divulging, or causing to be divulged, any part of the foregoing obligations, shall meet the fearful penalty and traitor's doom, which is Death! Death! Death!

That, in addition to this oath, the Klan has a constitution and bylaws, which provides, among other things, that each member shall furnish himself with a pistol, a Ku Klux gown, and a signal instrument. That the operations of the Klan were executed in the night, and were invariably directed against members of the Republican Party by warnings to leave the country, by whippings, and by murder.

3. That in large portions of the counties of York, Union, and Spartanburgh, to which our attention has been more particularly called in our investigations during part of the time for the last eighteen months, the civil law has been set at defiance and ceased to afford any protection to the citizens.
4. That the Klan, in carrying out the purposes for which it was organized and armed, inflicted summary vengeance on the colored citizens of these counties by breaking into their houses at the dead of night, dragging them from their beds, torturing them in the most inhumane manner, and in many instances murdering them; and this, mainly, on account of their political affiliations. Occasionally, additional reasons operated, but in no instance was the political feature wanting.
5. That for this condition of things, for all these violations of law and order and the sacred rights of citizens, many of the leading men of those counties were responsible. It was proven that large numbers of the most prominent citizens were members of the order. Many of this class attended meetings of the Grand Klan. At a meeting of the Grand Klan held in Spartanburgh County, at which there were representatives from the various dens of Sparatanburgh, York, Union, and Chester Counties, in this state, besides a number from North Carolina, a resolution was adopted that no raids should be undertaken or anyone whipped or injured by members of the Klan without orders from the Grand Klan. The penalty for violating this resolution was 100 lashes on the bare back for the first offense; and for the second, death.

This testimony establishes the nature of the discipline enforced in the order, and also the fact that many of the men who were openly and publicly speaking against the Klan, and pretending to deplore the work of this murderous conspiracy, were influential members of the order and directing its operations, even in detail.

The jury has been appalled as much at the number of outrages as at their character, it appearing that 11 murders and over 600 whippings have been committed in York County alone. Our investigation in regard to the other counties named has been less full; but it is believed, from the testimony, that an equal or greater number has been committed in Union, and that the number is not greatly less in Spartanburgh and Laurens.

We are of the opinion that the most vigorous prosecution of the parties implicated in these crimes is imperatively demanded; that without this there

is great danger that these outrages will be continued, and that there will be no security to our fellow citizens of African descent.

We would say further that unless the strong arm of the government is interposed to punish these crimes committed upon this class of citizen, there is every reason to believe that an organized and determined attempt at retaliation will be made, which can only result in a state of anarchy and bloodshed too terrible to contemplate.

SOURCE: 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, House Report No. 22, Pt. 1, pp. 48–49.



### **3. Excerpts from Ida B. Wells' Exposé on Lynching, *The Red Record*, 1895**

Noted anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells published *The Red Record* in 1895. The book, as shown in the excerpt reproduced below, not only provided statistics on lynching, which were mainly gathered from mainstream press accounts, but also offered a detailed overview of the history of lynching in the United States since the Civil War.

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#### **Offenses Charged for Lynching**

Suspected arson, 2; stealing, 1; political causes, 1; murder, 45; rape, 29; desperado, 1; suspected incendiarism, 1; train wrecking, 1; enticing servant away, 1; kidnapping, 1; unknown offense, 6; larceny, 1; barn burning, 10; writing letters to a white woman, 1; without cause, 1; burglary, 1; asking white woman to marry, 1; conspiracy, 1; attempted murder, 1; horse stealing, 3; highway robbery, 1; alleged rape, 1; attempted rape, 11; race prejudice, 2; introducing smallpox, 1; giving information, 1; conjuring, 1; incendiarism, 2; arson, 1; assault, 1; no offense, 1; alleged murder, 2; total (colored), 134.

#### **Lynching States**

Mississippi, 15; Arkansas, 8; Virginia, 5; Tennessee, 15; Alabama, 12; Kentucky, 12; Texas, 9; Georgia, 19; South Carolina, 5; Florida, 7; Louisiana, 15; Missouri, 4; Ohio, 2; Maryland, 1; West Virginia, 2; Indiana, 1; Kansas, 1; Pennsylvania, 1.

#### **Lynching by Month**

January, 11; February, 17; March, 8; April, 36; May, 16; June, 31; July, 21; August, 4; September 17; October, 7; November, 9; December, 20; total colored and white, 197.

#### **Women Lynched**

July 24, unknown woman, race prejudice, Sampson County, Miss.; March 6, unknown, woman, unknown offense, Marche, Ark.; Dec. 5, Mrs. Teddy Arthur, unknown cause, Lincoln County, W.Va.

## Chapter X. The Remedy

It is a well-established principle of law that every wrong has a remedy. Herein rests our respect for law. The Negro does not claim that all of the one thousand black men, women and children, who have been hanged, shot and burned alive during the past ten years, were innocent of the charges made against them. We have associated too long with the white man not to have copied his vices as well as his virtues. But we do insist that the punishment is not the same for both classes of criminals. In lynching, opportunity is not given the Negro to defend himself against the unsupported accusations of white men and women. The word of the accuser is held true and the excited bloodthirsty mob demands that the rule of law be reversed and instead of proving the accused to be guilty, the victim of their hate and revenge must prove himself innocent. No evidence he can offer will satisfy the mob; he is bound hand and foot and swung into eternity. Then to excuse its infamy, the mob almost invariably reports the monstrous falsehood that its victim made a full confession before he was hanged.

With all military, legal and political power in their hands, only two of the lynching States have attempted a check by exercising the power which is theirs. Mayor Trout, of Roanoke, Virginia, called out the militia in 1893, to protect a Negro prisoner, and in so doing nine men were killed and a number wounded. Then the mayor and militia withdrew, left the Negro to his fate and he was promptly lynched. The businessmen realized the blow to the town's financial interests, [and] called the mayor home. The grand jury indicted and prosecuted the ringleaders of the mob. They were given light sentences, the highest being one of twelve months in State prison. The day he arrived at the penitentiary, he was pardoned by the governor of the State.

The only other real attempt made by the authorities to protect a prisoner of the law, and which was more successful, was that of Gov. McKinley, of Ohio, who sent the militia to Washington Courthouse, O., in October, 1894, and five men were killed and twenty wounded in maintaining the principle that the law must be upheld.

In South Carolina, in April, 1893, Gov. Tillman aided the mob by yielding up to be killed, a prisoner of the law, who had voluntarily placed himself under the Governor's protection. Public sentiment by its representatives has encouraged Lynch Law, and upon the revolution of this sentiment we must depend for its abolition.

Therefore, we demand a fair trial by the law for those accused of crime, and punishment by law after honest conviction. No maudlin sympathy for criminals is solicited, but we do ask that the law shall punish all alike. We earnestly desire those that control the forces which make public sentiment to join with us in the demand. Surely the humanitarian spirit of this country which reaches out to denounce the treatment of the Russian Jews, the Armenian Christians, the laboring poor of Europe, the Siberian exiles and the native women of India—will no longer refuse to lift its voice on this subject. If it were known that the cannibals or the savage Indians had burned three human beings alive in the past two years, the whole of Christendom



would be roused to devise ways and means to put a stop to it. Can you remain silent and inactive when such things are done in our own community and country? Is your duty to humanity in the United States less binding?

What can you do, reader, to prevent lynching, to thwart anarchy and promote law and order throughout our land?

1st. You can help disseminate the facts contained in this book by bringing them to the knowledge of every one with whom you come in contact, to the end that public sentiment may be revolutionized. Let the facts speak for themselves, with you as a medium.

2d. You can be instrumental in having churches, missionary societies, Y.M.C.A.'s, W.C.T.U.'s and all Christian and moral forces in connection with your religious and social life, pass resolutions of condemnation and protest every time a lynching takes place; and see that they are sent to the place where these outrages occur.

3d. Bring to the intelligent consideration of Southern people the refusal of capital to invest where lawlessness and mob violence hold sway. Many labor organizations have declared by resolution that they would avoid lynch infested localities as they would the pestilence when seeking new homes. If the South wishes to build up its waste places quickly, there is no better way than to uphold the majesty of the law by enforcing obedience to the same, and meting out the same punishment to all classes of criminals, white as well as black. "Equality before the law," must become a fact as well as a theory before America is truly the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

4th. Think and act on independent lines in this behalf, remembering that after all, it is the white man's civilization and the white man's government which are on trial. This crusade will determine whether that civilization can maintain itself by itself, or whether anarchy shall prevail; whether this Nation shall write itself down a success at self government, or in its deepest humiliation admit its failure complete; whether the precepts and theories of Christianity are professed and practiced by American white people as Golden Rules of thought and action, or adopted as a system of morals to be preached to heathen until they attain to the intelligence which needs the system of Lynch Law.

5th. Congressman Blair [Henry W. Blair, a New Hampshire Republican] offered a resolution in the House of Representatives, August, 1894.<sup>9</sup> The organized life of the country can speedily make this a law by sending resolutions to Congress endorsing Mr. Blair's bill and asking Congress to create the commission. In no better way can the question be settled, and the Negro does not fear the issue. . . .

The belief has been constantly expressed in England that in the United States, which has produced Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, James Russell Lowell, John G. Whittier and Abraham Lincoln there must be

<sup>9</sup> Blair's Resolution would have authorized and funded a Department of Labor inquiry into all alleged assaults of males upon females in the preceding 10 years, as well as into all acts of organized violence perpetrated during the same period on anyone accused of such crimes.

those of their descendants who would take hold of the work of inaugurating an era of law and order. The colored people of this country who have been loyal to the flag believe the same, and strong in that belief have begun this crusade.

SOURCE: Ida B. Wells. *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892–1893–1894*. Chicago: The Author, 1895.



#### 4. Thomas Dixon's Preface to His Novel, *The Clansman*, 1905

Published in 1905, Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*, which was both a novel and a play, became the basis for the pro-Klan view displayed in the second part of D.W. Griffith's controversial 1915 film, *The Birth of a Nation*. That viewpoint is amply illustrated in Dixon's Preface to *The Clansman*, which is reprinted here. Through *The Clansman*, Dixon hoped to support the continuance of racial segregation, which he viewed as vital to the maintenance of stable race relations. *See also the entries The Birth of a Nation; The Clansman; Griffith, D.W.; Ku Klux Klan.*

#### TO THE READER

"THE CLANSMAN" is the second book of a series of historical novels planned on the Race Conflict. "The Leopard's Spots" was the statement in historical outline of the conditions from the enfranchisement of the Negro to his disfranchisement.

"The Clansman" develops the true story of the "Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy," which overturned the Reconstruction régime.

The organization was governed by the Grand Wizard Commander-in-Chief, who lived at Memphis, Tennessee. The Grand Dragon commanded a State, the Grand Titan a Congressional District, the Grand Giant a County, and the Grand Cyclops a Township Den. The twelve volumes of Government reports on the famous Klan refer chiefly to events which occurred after 1870, the date of its dissolution.

The chaos of blind passion that followed Lincoln's assassination is inconceivable to-day. The Revolution it produced in our Government, and the bold attempt of Thaddeus Stevens to Africanize ten great states of the American Union, read now like tales from "The Arabian Nights."

I have sought to preserve in this romance both the letter and the spirit of this remarkable period. The men who enact the drama of fierce revenge into which I have woven a double love-story are historical figures. I have merely changed their names without taking a liberty with any essential historic fact.

In the darkest hour of the life of the South, when her wounded people lay helpless amid rags and ashes under the beak and talon of the Vulture, suddenly from the mists of the mountains appeared a white cloud the size

of a man's hand. It grew until its mantle of mystery enfolded the stricken earth and sky. An "Invisible Empire" had risen from the field of Death and challenged the Visible to mortal combat.

How the young South, led by the reincarnated souls of the Clansmen of Old Scotland, went forth under this cover and against overwhelming odds, daring exile, imprisonment, and a felon's death, and saved the life of a people, forms one of the most dramatic chapters in the history of the Aryan race.

Thomas Dixon, Jr.  
Dixondale, Va., December 14, 1904.

SOURCE: Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1905.



### **5. Excerpts from Various Newspaper Accounts of Disorders Following the Jack Johnson–James Jeffries Fight, July 4, 1910**

When African American boxer Jack Johnson, then current heavyweight champion, defeated former white champion Jim Jeffries in Reno, Nevada, on July 4, 1910, news of the decision caused racial disorders to erupt in almost a dozen cities across the country as both blacks, proud of their fighter's victory, and whites, angry at their fighter's defeat, responded to the outcome and to each other. *See also the entry* Johnson–Jeffries Fight of 1910, Riots Following.

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#### **Baltimore**

Seventy negroes, half the number women, were arrested tonight in the "black belt" of this city for disorderly celebration of Johnson's victory. One negro was badly cut by another, and two other negroes were assaulted and severely injured by whites in arguments over the big fight.

SOURCE: "Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson." *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 2.

#### **Bluefields, West Virginia**

Negroes are boisterous at Keystone, W. Va., tonight and are said to be in possession of the town, the police being powerless.

SOURCE: "Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson." *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 2.

#### **Little Rock, Arkansas**

Although there have been a number of fights in Little Rock in which whites and blacks clashed, with the latter receiving the worst of the argument in practically all cases, following the announcement of the result of the Jeffries–Johnson fight, no fatalities have occurred ... Several fights

between whites and negroes started at a local theater, where fight returns were received, but were quickly stopped.

SOURCE: "Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson." *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 2.

### **Mounds, Illinois**

One dead and one mortally wounded is the result of an attempt by four negroes to shoot up the town in honor of Jack Johnson's victory at Reno tonight. A negro constable was killed when he attempted to arrest them.

SOURCE: "Eight Killed in Fight Riots." *The New York Times*, July 5, 1910, p. 4.

### **Philadelphia**

The announcement of Johnson's victory over Jeffries was followed by numerous clashes in this city between colored men and crowds of white men and boys. In some cases, the blacks, exulting the victory, were the aggressors, but in other cases inoffensive colored men were attacked by riotous whites . . . Lombard Street, the principal street in the negro section, went wild in celebrating the victory, and a number of fights, in which razors were drawn, resulted. In the suburb of Germantown a crowd of negroes paraded the streets and there were several clashes with white men.

SOURCE: "Race Clashes in Many Cities." *The Washington Post*, July 5, 1910, p. 11.

### **Pittsburgh**

Less than half an hour after the decision of the fight was announced here three riot calls were sent into two police precincts in the negro hill district. Street cars were held up and insulting epithets were hurled at the passengers. The police beat the crowds back with their clubs to permit the passage of street cars. Patrolmen have been summoned to this district from all sections of the city.

SOURCE: "Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson." *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 1.

### **Roanoke, Virginia**

Six negroes with broken heads, six white men locked up and one white man, Joe Chockley, with a bullet wound through his skull and probably fatally wounded, is the net result of clashes here tonight following the announcement that Jack Johnson had defeated James J. Jeffries. The trouble started when a negro, who had just heard the news from Reno, said: "Now I guess the white folks will let the negroes alone." A white man replied: "No!" and the two clashed.

SOURCE: "Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson." *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 2.

**St. Joseph, Missouri**

S.I. Sawyer, a white man who took the part of a negro when the latter was struck by another white man, was mobbed by a crowd of whites immediately following the Johnson–Jeffries fight. Sawyer was rescued by a policeman, and charges that the latter struck him in the face and broke his nose.

SOURCE: “Racial Clashes Follow Victory of Jack Johnson.” *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1910, p. 2.

**St. Louis**

Rioting in a negro section of St. Louis, at Market Street and Jefferson Avenue, followed quickly upon the announcement that Jack Johnson was the victor in the Reno prize fight. The eighth district police responded to a riot call, but were powerless to cope with the negroes who were blocking traffic and making threats. A second call to the Central district brought out a score of policemen. The negroes were clubbed into submission and dispersed.

SOURCE: “Eleven Killed in Many Race Riots.” *The Chicago Tribune*, July 5, 1910, p. 4.

**Shreveport, Louisiana**

L.E. Roberts, a conductor of the Iron Mountain railroad is dead; John Anderson, a negro, is dead; his son, Henry Anderson, is dead; an unknown negro woman is dying, shot through the head; one or two negroes are injured, and a race riot is imminent. The authorities have no control over the situation in Madison and East Carroll parishes, and posses are scouring the whole country tonight.

SOURCE: “Eleven Killed in Many Race Riots.” *The Chicago Tribune*, July 5, 1910, p. 4.

**Wilmington, Delaware**

A serious race riot occurred here tonight as the result of an argument over the victory of Johnson. Michael Brown, a white man, was attacked by a gang of negroes and severely injured about the head and cut with a razor. A mob of whites then chased the negroes several blocks. One of the negroes, Benjamin White, fled into a negro apartment house. The mob of whites, which by this time numbered several thousand, bombarded the place with stones.

SOURCE: “Race Clashes in Many Cities.” *The Washington Post*, July 5, 1910, p. 11.

**6. Account of the Riots in East St. Louis, Illinois, July 1917**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) commissioned W.E.B. Du Bois and Martha Gruening to investigate and report on the riots that had convulsed East St. Louis during the summer of

1917. The following excerpts from their report, which was published in *The Crisis*, summarize eyewitness accounts of the horrible atrocities perpetrated on the African American residents of East St. Louis by the white rioters. *See also the entries* Du Bois, W.E.B.; East St. Louis (Illinois) Riot of 1917; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

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A Negro, his head laid open by a great stone-cut, had been dragged to the mouth of the alley on Fourth Street and a small rope was being put about his neck. There was joking comment on the weakness of the rope, and everyone was prepared for what happened when it was pulled over a projecting cable box, a short distance up the pole. It broke, letting the Negro tumble back to his knees, and causing one of the men who was pulling on it to sprawl on the pavement.

An old man, with a cap like those worn by street car conductors, but showing no badge of car service, came out of his house to protest. "Don't you hang that man on this street," he shouted. "I dare you to." He was pushed angrily away, and a rope, obviously strong enough for its purpose, was brought.

Right here I saw the most sickening incident of the evening. To put the rope around the Negro's neck, one of the lynchers stuck his fingers inside the gaping scalp and lifted the Negro's head by it, literally bathing his hand in the man's blood.

"Get hold and pull for East St. Louis!" called a man with a black coat and a new straw hat, as he seized the other end of the rope. The rope was long, but not too long for the number of hands that grasped it, and this time the Negro was lifted to a height of about seven feet from the ground. . . .

A Negro weighing 300 pounds came out of the burning line of dwellings just north and east of the Southern freight house. His hands were elevated and his yellow face was speckled with the awful fear of death.

"Get him!" they cried. Here was a chance to see suffering, something that bullets didn't always make.

So a man in the crowd clubbed his revolver and struck the Negro in the face with it. Another dashed an iron bolt between the Negro's eyes. Still another stood near and battered him with a rock.

Then the giant Negro toppled to the ground. "This is the way," cried one. He ran back a few paces, then ran at the prostrate black at full speed and made a flying leap.

His heels struck right in the middle of the battered face. A girl stepped up and struck the bleeding man with her foot. The blood spurted onto her stockings and men laughed and grunted.

No amount of suffering awakened pity in the hearts of the rioters. . . . A few Negroes, caught on the street, were kicked and shot to death. As flies settled on their terrible wounds, the gaping-mouthed mobsmen forbade the dying blacks to brush them off. Girls with blood on their stockings helped to kick in what had been black faces of the corpses on the street.

The first houses were fired shortly after 5 o'clock. These were back of Main Street, between Broadway and Railroad Avenue. Negroes were "flushed" from the burning houses, and ran for their lives, screaming and begging for mercy. A Negro crawled into a shed and fired on the white men. Guardsmen started after him, but when they saw he was armed, turned to the mob and said:

"He's armed, boys. You can have him. A white man's life is worth the lives of a thousand Negroes."

A few minutes later matches were applied to hastily gathered debris piled about the corner of one of the three small houses 100 feet from the first fired. These were back of the International Harvester Company's plant. Eight Negroes fled into the last of the houses and hid in the basement. When roof and walls were about to fall in, an aged Negro woman came out. She was permitted to walk to safety. Three Negro women followed and were not fired upon. Then came four Negro men, and 100 shots were fired at them. They fell. No one ventured out to see if they were dead, as the place had come to resemble No Man's Land, with bullets flying back and forth and sparks from the fires falling everywhere.

A Negro who crawled on hands and knees through the weeds was a target for a volley. The mob then burned back to Main Street and another Negro was spied on a Main Street car. He was dragged to the street and a rioter stood over him, shooting.

The crowd then turned to Black Valley. Here the greatest fire damage was caused. Flames were soon raging and the shrieking rioters stood about in the streets, made lurid by the flames, and shot and beat Negroes as they fled from burning homes.

They pursued the women who were driven out of the burning homes, with the idea, not of extinguishing their burning clothing, but of inflicting added pain, if possible. They stood around in groups, laughing and jeering, while they witnessed the final writhings of the terror and pain wracked wretches who crawled to the streets to die after their flesh had been cooked in their own homes.

Mrs. Cox saw a Negro beheaded with a butcher's knife by someone in a crowd standing near the Free Bridge. The crowd had to have its jest. So its members laughingly threw the head over one side of the bridge and the body over the other.

A trolley-car came along. The crowd forced its inmates to put their hands out the window. Colored people thus recognized were hauled out of the car to be beaten, trampled on, shot. A little twelve-year-old colored girl fainted—her mother knelt beside her. The crowd surged in on her. When its ranks opened up again Mrs. Cox saw the mother prostrate with a hole as large as one's fist in her head.

SOURCE: W.E.B. Du Bois and Martha Gruening. "Massacre at East St. Louis." *The Crisis*, XIV, 1917, pp. 222–238.



### 7. A Southern Black Woman's Letter Regarding the Recent Riots in Chicago and Washington, November 1919

The Washington riot gave me the thrill that comes once in a lifetime. I was alone when I read between the lines of the morning paper that at last our men had stood like men, struck back, were no longer dumb, driven cattle. When I could no longer read for my streaming tears, I stood up, alone in my room, held both hands high over my head and exclaimed aloud: "Oh, I thank God, thank God!" When I remember anything after this, I was prone on my bed, beating the pillow with both fists, laughing and crying, whimpering like a whipped child, for sheer gladness and madness. The pent-up humiliation, grief and horror of a life time—half a century—was being stripped from me. Only colored women of the south know the extreme in suffering and humiliation.

We know how many insults we have borne silently, for we have hidden many of them from our men because we did not want them to die needlessly in our defense; we know the sorrow of seeing our boys and girls grow up, the swift stab of the heart at night to the sound of a strange foot-step, the feel of a tigress to spring and claw the white man with his lustful look at our comely daughters, the deep humiliation of sitting in the Jim Crow part of a street car and hear the white man laugh and discuss us, point out the good and bad points of our bodies. God alone knows the many things colored women have borne here in the South in silence.

And, too, a woman loves a strong man, she delights to feel that her man can protect her, fight for her, if necessary, save her.

No woman loves a weakling, a coward, be she white or black, and some of us have been near to thinking our men cowards, but thank God for Washington colored men! All honor to them, for they first blazed the way and right swiftly did Chicago men follow. They put new hope, a new vision in their almost despairing women.

God grant that our men everywhere refrain from strife, provoke no quarrel, but that they protect their women and homes at any cost.

A Southern Colored Woman

I'm sure the editor will understand why I cannot sign my name.

SOURCE: *The Crisis*, XIX, November 1919, p. 339.



### 8. Excerpts from the NAACP Report *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*, 1919

Published by the NAACP in 1919, the report *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918* was an important part of the organization's strenuous ongoing effort to eradicate the crime of lynching by educating the public to the frequency and brutality of the crime. Written by Martha Gruening and Helen Boardman, *Thirty Years of Lynching* presents facts, figures, and anecdotes on lynching collected by the NAACP. The two excerpts



below offer statistics on the types of crimes that were given as reasons for lynchings and the opening of the section from newspaper accounts describing 100 lynchings that had occurred between 1894 and 1918. *See also the entries* Lynching; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*.

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### **Alleged Offenses Which Appear as “Causes” for the Lynchings**

Table No. 6 sums up the known facts regarding the alleged offenses committed by the men and women lynched. It is to be remembered that the alleged offenses given are pretty loose descriptions of the crimes charged against the mob victims, where actual crime was committed. Of the whites lynched, nearly 46 per cent were accused of murder; a little more than 18 per cent were accused of what have been classified as miscellaneous crimes, *i.e.*, all crimes not otherwise classified; 17.4 per cent were said to have committed crimes against property; 8.7 per cent crimes against the person, other than rape, “attacks upon women,” and murder; while 8.4 per cent were accused of rape and “attacks upon women.”

Among colored victims, 35.8 per cent were accused of murder; 28.4 per cent or rape and “attacks upon women” (19 per cent of rape and 9.4 per cent of “attacks upon women”); 17.8 per cent of crimes against the person (other than those already mentioned) and against property; 12 per cent were charged with miscellaneous crimes and in 5.6 per cent of cases no crime at all was charged. The 5.6 per cent, classified under “Absence of Crime,” does not include a number of cases in which crime was alleged but in which it was afterwards shown conclusively that no crime had been committed. Further, it may fairly be pointed out that in a number of cases where Negroes have been lynched for rape and “attacks upon white women,” the alleged attacks rest upon no stronger evidence than “entering the room of a woman” or brushing against her. In such cases as these latter the victims and their friends have often asserted that there was no intention on the part of the victim to attack a white woman or to commit rape. In many cases, of course, the evidence points to *bona fide* attacks upon women.

### **The Story of One Hundred Lynchings<sup>†</sup>**

To give concreteness and to make vivid the facts of lynching in the United States, we give below in chronological order an account of one hundred lynchings which have occurred in the period from 1894 to 1918. These “stories,” as they are technically described in newspaper parlance, have been taken from press accounts and, in a few cases, from the reports of investigations made by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Covering twenty-five years of American history, these accounts serve to present a characteristic picture of the lynching sport, as was picturesquely defined by Henry Watterson.

The last of the stories describes one of the rare events in connection with lynchings, that of the conviction of members of a mob involved in such affairs. In this case no lynching was consummated, it having been

**Table No. 6**

	Murder	Rape	Attacks upon Women*	Other Crimes Against the Person	Crimes Against Property	Miscellaneous Crimes	Absence of Crime†	Total
Total	1,219	523	250	315	331	438	148	3,224
White	319	46	13	62	121	135	6	702
Per cent. of total whites lynched	45.7	6.6	1.8	8.7	17.4	18.1	1.4	100.0
Negro	900	477	237	253	210	303	142	2,522
Per cent. of total Negroes lynched	35.8	19.0	9.4	9.5	8.3	12.0	5.6	100.0

\*This classification includes all cases in which press accounts state that attacks upon women were made, but in which it was not clear whether rape was alleged to have been consummated or attempted.

†Under this heading are listed such causes as "testifying against whites," "suing whites," "wrong man lynched," "race prejudice," "defending himself against attack," etc.

prevented by the prompt and public-spirited action of the mayor of the city (Winston-Salem, North Carolina), and members of the "Home Guard" and Federal troops who defended the jail against the mob.

#### **Alabama, 1894**

Three Negroes, Tom Black, Johnson Williams and Tony Johnston, were lynched at Tuscumbia, Alabama. They were in the local jail, awaiting trial on the charge of having burnt a barn. A mob of two hundred masked men entered the jail, after having enticed away the jailer with a false message, took the keys from the jailer's wife and secured the three prisoners. They were carried to a near-by bridge. Here a rope was placed around the neck of each victim, the other end being tied to the timbers of the bridge, and they were compelled to jump.

SOURCE: *New York Tribune*, April 23, 1894.

‡ One hundred *persons* lynched, not one hundred occasions on which lynching occurred.

SOURCE: NAACP. *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States*. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1919, pp. 9, 10, 11, 36.



### **9. Excerpts from the "Anti-Lynching" Hearings Held before the House Judiciary Committee, January 1920**

Reproduced below are excerpts of testimony given before the House Judiciary Committee in January 1920. Responding to the many serious race riots that had erupted over the previous three years, and especially during the "Red Summer" of 1919, the committee heard testimony regarding the need for anti-lynching legislation to protect African Americans from the growing racist violence being offered them throughout the country. The hearings accompanied the House's consideration of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, which was introduced into the House in 1918 by Congressman Leonidas Dyer, a Republican from a heavily black district in St. Louis. Although passed by the House in January 1922, the Dyer bill, which made participation in a lynch mob a federal crime, was defeated in the Senate shortly thereafter. No federal anti-lynching legislation was ever passed by Congress. *See also the entries* Anti-Lynching Legislation; Dyer, Leonidas C.

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#### **Statement of Mr. Neval H. Thomas**

Mr. Thomas. In the first place, I am representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Locally we have 7,000 members whom I am representing, and nationally we have 100,000 members in 310 branches, which are organized to oppose just such a recommendation as has been presented here to-day. I do not know where this man comes from—

Mr. Dyer. He says he comes from St. Louis. How long have you lived in St. Louis, Mr. Madden?

Mr. Madden. About two years: I came there from Oklahoma.

Mr. Dyer. I thought so.

Mr. Thomas. I am acquainted with the leaders of thought among colored people all over this country, and I never even heard of this man before. He represents nothing but himself. Beware of any Negro who comes recommending a segregation scheme to you: he is simply seeking to be head of the group if we are segregated. When Woodrow Wilson became President, there were some venal Negro politicians who asked him to segregate the colored clerks in one department, and at the same time everyone presented an application for the leadership of that department; so pay no attention to them. The masses of the colored people are unalterably opposed to segregation. Civilization has been spread and prejudices softened by the contact of peoples with each other. Even President Wilson is on record as saying that you can not hate a man whom you know, although he has segregated men to keep them from knowing, so that they can hate.

We recognize, in the first place that every man is lord of his castle; complete master of his own home. We seek no association, but cooperation with the white people of this country in the up-building of the things which belong to us all. When we go upon a common carrier, we are not seeking contact with the other people, we simply want to travel from place to place; we do not even expect another passenger to say "Good morning" to us. This is an ordinary civil right. The common carrier, like all other institutions, belongs to all of us alike. They are supported by our taxes, protected by the police power of our State, and every one is a taxpayer because the ultimate consumer is the taxpayer. The owner of property does not pay the taxes. He charges enough rent to make a profitable return on his investment, plus the insurance, water rent, and all other expenses, and the tenant pays it. The owner of the property is simply a messenger through whom the tenant sends his taxes to the taxgatherer. Therefore, we have equal rights to all public places, such as the common carrier, the theaters, restaurants, and hotels, and we will never cease to clamor for our rights until we gain admission. What we want the Congress to do, and also the Department of Justice, is to enforce the thirteenth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth amendments to the Constitution. Even the thirteenth amendment, forbidding slavery and involuntary servitude, is violated in the Southern States by the infamous system of peonage. We demand the ballot, for in a Government where men vote the voter is king, and the disfranchised man is the victim of the man who does vote. We demand the abolition of the infamous "Jim-Crow" car, which was simply made to insult us. We demand admission to all public places, in fact, we demand equality of treatment everywhere, and equality before the law. Again, I say that segregation keeps men apart and is opposed to all sound principles of Government. My own experience in this country and Europe with white people has taught me how segregation works against my people. I have met people in this country and in Europe who were surprised that I could write; that I knew history; that I knew what I was traveling for; could explain a painting or a

piece of sculpture or a great work of architecture. They had lived side by side with me for all these years, the segregation had kept them from knowing me. Suppose there were no prejudices in this country, the races would mingle and discover their common humanity, and learn that color is the least of differences among men, and we would have no resulting friction. There are people living right in Boston who have gone over Boston Common, the most historic park in this country, where there is a statue of Crispus Attucks, a Negro, the first to shed his blood in the American Revolution. Nearby is the famous Robert Gould Shaw statue, dedicated to the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth regiments of Negroes in the Civil War, who died like men at Fort Pillow for the preservation of the Union, and yet have never looked up to find how much the colored men of this country have done for it. The system of segregation prevents that mutual interest that should exist between the races; we are all opposed to segregation. The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the largest institution among the Negroes, with 700,000 members. This church issued a declaration of 14 points, the number of which is in imitation on the President's 14 points, and the strongest point in it is a declaration against segregation. This church supports 24 institutions in the South and collects from the pockets of washerwomen \$350,000 every year for the education of the Negro youth, and this is in addition to the expense to which colored people are put for education of their own in the South because all the people are taxpayers.

As this great church is against segregation, so are the Baptists and other denominations. The great organization for which I am talking to-day is opposed to it. We are all opposed to it, and this man is simply seeking his own personal gain. The gentleman from Oklahoma asked if we were willing to leave this country and said he believed three-fourths of us would not leave. No. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand would not leave. This man has falsely stated that this is a white man's country. He knows nothing of the history of his people. The Negro came here when the white man did, and he has contributed to the upbuilding of this country by this labor, by his suffering, by his sacrifices and blood. There are none of the highest callings he has not entered. In art, the highest calling of man, the greatest name is Henry O. Tanner, a Negro, whose paintings the French Government seeks and purchases and puts in her great art galleries as soon as they are painted. So it is foolish to talk about Americans, and we are not going to leave in spite of our sufferings, but we are going to work out our destiny right here in our own land. We have almost enough law in this country. What we want is enforcement of the law. We have a Constitution with 19 amendments, and with its imperfections, it is the greatest political document that has ever come from the hand of man. What we want Congress to do is to enforce it. Think of it: even the House of Representatives has closed its public restaurants to Negroes, where we have been going for 50 years without friction. This was done at the very time that brave black boys were dying in the trenches in France. This is a new reward to give the returning black soldier for his heroic sacrifices in every part of far-off France. . . .

**Statement of Prof. George William Cook, Howard University,  
Washington, D.C.**

Mr. Cook. I have been coming to the Capitol appearing before committees for nigh onto 20 years. I must say that I have never been before a committee where the occasion was of such vast and deep importance as this appearance to-day. You may read it through the inference or read where the inference is given, or you may read it out of the logic of events, that this committee representing the judiciary of the United States in Congress assembled is to-day challenged. The presentation of facts and conditions here to-day are such that if the committee does not take a very serious consideration of it it is scarcely up to the level of its own duty.

We did not come here to-day simply for the purpose of talking to you. We came here to convince you as we know it, and as we hope to show it to you that this awful carnage of lynching and injustice in so many different ways must be stopped or we have our backs to the wall. My family is broken to-day and let me give you the circumstances. As my wife and I motored from Washington last July, we heard in Baltimore that there was a race riot in Washington. It was Tuesday after Monday the last day of the riot. We hastened here because we had one son, our only child, a young boy whom we found home, and I asked him. "Where were you, George?" "I was in it." "Why were you in it?" "You can not take me out and shoot me like a dog. I am going to die fighting if I have to die." There is an 18-year-old boy. He contemplated that thing, and he said finally, "Papa, I am not going to stay here." He is somewhat of a law unto himself. I said, "Where are you going?" "I am going out of the country." "Where do you propose to go first?" "I think that I will go to Canada and go to school." He went to Canada. These holidays he returned to Washington on a visit and he was not home two days before he said, "I smelt it as soon as I reached Baltimore and I am going away again."

Now, you may consider that as an isolated case or you may consider it trivial. I have been teaching young colored men for 40 years. I have tested the opinion and growing conviction. I want to say if you want to drive out a pure unadulterated loyalty that has existed in the colored man, just allow this lynching to continue. You are all men of spirit and courage and belong to the Anglo-Saxon race. You would not stand it. You did not stand taxation without representation with very little personal violence attached to it and you were right, and I want to say here as far as I can gauge my people they are loyal to the backbone, they want no disturbance, and they will accept none until forced to. This is our position in the matter.

Why did I speak of that boy? Do you want to drive citizens who are loyal from your shores? You have sent away the undesirables. We are not undesirable; no. You want the labor, but we are going to say and can say that along with that response and the giving of labor we are going to ask for our God-given rights, and it is our duty as far as possible to demand them.

There was a question raised this morning as to loyalty. There seems to be some little idea that possibly the Negro is not quite as loyal as he used to be. The Attorney General of the United States shows that in 30 pages, I

read almost all of it night before last and there are some in the South who feel the same way.

Mr. Summers. Just a moment. I made the statement that there was no evidence. I made the statement that there was no general evidence of disloyalty on the part of the colored man toward the Government. I made that upon my own responsibility.

Mr. Cook. I meant simply the question that came before us. I want to say now, sir, that the colored man is loyal. He is loyal in secret and he is loyal openly, and there is but one way to shake that loyalty. He sings, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," with all the luster and all of the sincerity that you sing, and there is now but one way to shake that, and that is to continue the lawlessness against him, and when you find him raising his hand in defense it is against the mob. He never voluntarily raises his hand against the Government, never has, never was an assassin, political assassin or menace, never was a traitor, there is not one that betrayed the confidence in all of the wars, and in all you have had he has engaged. There never was one. Therefore, I appeal to you now to help us because we are a weak people, financially, economically, but with all the opposition we have had we are stronger that we were 50 years ago, and it is not only in strength that we would come and ask you, we would come and ask you in our helplessness, that we, as American citizens, in the Thomas Jefferson declaration sense, are willing to die rather than continue our serfdom.

It is only necessary to be a little honest. You gentlemen who have studied the Elaine case understand it. These four brothers were not in the riot. They were out hunting when that treacherous gang came to them and told them they had better go home because they might get into trouble, and "let us have your guns in order that you will not be considered in the mob." They got their guns and then shot them to death. They had not done anything and did not even know a riot was going on in the town. I appeal to every man on this committee and I am sorry they are not here to hear these other gentlemen speak. I am only taking up the raveled ends and appeal to you upon pure justice first, and then on the lower ground of political necessity, to give us our rights. Do not allow your communities to deny the colored man an accounting when he has given his sweat toward the cultivation of the crop. Let him have an accounting and treat him fairly.

We bring this general proposition to you and we can support every one of them by cases upon cases. The most horrible thing of it all in that lynching, when they shot these four brothers to death, that they scarcely knew for what they were being shot. That was a lynching. Now, it is too late, and I am glad to see by the public press, the white press, that the white man is half ashamed of bringing attacks upon women as the great cause for lynching. The record has been too well kept by the *Chicago Tribune* and by *The Crisis*. We know why it is. Men have been lynched for nothing else but wearing the uniform of the United States Government. It was but yesterday that a young man in my class in commercial law said to me: "I will tell you something." I went to him when I came out of the classroom. He said: "I was simply standing in the street down in South Carolina talking when a young white man came up and said, 'What are you doing with this on?' He

says, "I just came out of the Army." "Well, you can not wear that down here." Can not wear the uniform of the United States Government down there? Just a few feet away they brought up another one and he left for nothing but wearing the uniform. He said he went to the post office for his father's mail and the postmaster said to him, "Do you want the package that is here?" He said, "No, I can not carry that, I will wait for the car to come in." This young man said, "What did you say to me?" I said, "No, I will not take that now." He said, "I want you to know you can not talk that way to me. You must say 'sir' to me, if you propose to stay about here," and started to come out to him. He talked up and said, "If you come after me on a charge like that, one or both of us will report to God to-day."

That is just yesterday. Do you blame the man for saying it. No security from attack upon a colored man even though he had the uniform of the United States Government upon him; this young man in the post office assuming to chastise a man who had given his all for the life of the Government, offered his all, for the protection of the flag of the United States. He said his father said to him, "You had better go. They might take out revenge on me and burn us out." He was not wrong in telling that young man to go away. The other young men had gone away. These cases are not imaginary cases. These have happened.

Now, there are two points I wanted to make. One is will you continue to teach the younger element of 12,000,000 people to ask the question, Is loyalty worth while? One you have driven out of the country. We are bereft of our son, as I have told you. He made up his mind that he would not die like a dog and that he would get out of it. Are you anxious to lose loyal citizens? If the economic condition of the Negro was such, hundreds of them, would migrate upon economic grounds, you may say, and go out as pioneers, but we have been chained down in America for over 300 years, the sweat of our brow has gone into the wealth of the Nation; it is undeniable because the statistics of your own department records will show it. What we ask now is protection under the flag that we have fought to keep aloft in as many wars as you have engaged in. Well might we repeat what Carney said when he returned at Fort Wagner, "The old flag never touched the ground," you have never heard of a Negro color bearer of the United States going to the rear unless ordered there. That is a sample of the feeling of the colored people.

We are born here. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," I sing. You will find some few colored people, and probably with just convictions, who will not sing it. I sing it. Why? It is my country. Born here, my mother and father before me and my grandmother and grandfather. And what they added in honest industry went to help build up this Nation and to make it strong. It is my country. I will not forsake it. Why? I will treat it very much as I will a leaking house. I will repair the roof. I will not abandon it. The United States to the black man has a leaky roof, and we are here to-day to ask you to repair that roof in order that we may live in comfort and in peace, and the challenge that I spoke of to you was a challenge to you who have not thought the matter out to think it out and come on the side of justice. Let no man go out of here and say the Negroes are arguing for social equality. What



some people call social equality we call disdain. I want my company and I never seek other company, which does not want me, and so it is with every self-respecting colored man, but I tell you what else I want, whether you want me or not, I want my civic political rights, and if you call that social equality, I say that you have made a misrepresentation and you give a wrong distinction. For me to be driven to travel from here to New Orleans and forced to ride and sit in a dirty car is what I protest against. I do not protest for social equality. I protest for civil rights, for civic privileges, for a discharge of the contract on the part of the railroad people to give me what I have paid for, and when you allow, as was done Sunday night, a man to step up and put a pistol to the body of an attorney of the District of Columbia and say to him, "You get out of this car or I will shoot you," when you allow that, gentlemen, you are only inviting the downfall of the Republic, because not only will the 12,000,000 finally be affected by that, but the whole Nation will be affected.

Some people speak of the unrest of the Negro. The Negro has always been the most quiet man in the United States. There are a few criminals who are among us, naturally, just like the white criminals, but the unrest in this Nation is not only with Negroes, and I pray to Almighty God that when the time comes for you to put down unrest in the form of anarchy, that the 12,000,000 of Negroes will have a just cause to be on the side of the United States, and if that is not realized, then may God help, for my country is lost. Do not misunderstand us. We are here to ask you to attempt to do something, even though there is a doubt as to the constitutionality of it. Don't I remember when I walked down to pay my income tax? There were men who said it was unconstitutional before you passed it, and you put it up to the Supreme Court of the United States, and you remember there was some little juggling up there and finally it was declared unconstitutional. Somebody changed. The inveighed against it because there was some doubt. They all said let us do it, and to-day what have you? An amendment to the Constitution for an income tax to be operated. Now, let us for the hope of our common good and of justice to all and for a fair understanding, let us pass some bill that will look toward stopping the greatest crime that you have in the land, that of lynching.

SOURCE: "Anti-Lynching Hearings." Hearings Before the Judiciary Committee, House of Representatives, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, on House Judiciary Resolution 75; House Resolutions 259, 4123, and 11873, Serial No. 14. January 14 and 29, 1920. Part II, Anti-Lynching. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920, pp. 8-10, 72-75.



#### **10. Excerpt from the Cook County Coroner's Report Regarding the 1919 Chicago Race Riots, 1920**

Reproduced below is an excerpt from one of several reports by the Cook County Coroner's Office on the causes and results of a series of race riots that occurred in Chicago in 1917, 1918, and 1919. The passage given here

is from the report of the Coroner's Jury investigating the particularly serious riot of July and August 1919. The jury finds the main causes of the riot to be criminal activity on the part of both whites and African Americans, as well as, to a lesser extent, the friction created by a greater mixing of the races resulting from a great influx of African Americans from the South, who came North during the World War I seeking work.

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The true facts regarding the race riots in the City of Chicago in July and August, 1919, should be presented to set at rest the many grossly exaggerated tales and rumors and the misrepresentations which have been broadcast throughout the City of Chicago and the United States. The number of lives lost, the manner of losing the same, the causes of the riots, and all known facts attending the dark and frightful days beginning July 27, 1919, are matters of vital interest to all orderly citizens who live and work in Chicago and for Chicago. That these facts may become known and studied and analyzed is the purpose of this report.

Five days of terrible heat and passion let loose cost the people of Chicago thirty-eight lives, wounded and maimed several hundred, destroyed property of untold value, filled thousands with awful fright, blemished the good name of our City, and left in its wake fear and apprehension for the future.

Race feeling and distrust reaches far back into the history of the past. While new, perhaps, to Chicago, other cities and communities have tasted of its frightfulness, and yet race antagonism in itself rarely gets beyond bound and control. The real danger lies with the criminal and hoodlum element, white and colored, who are quick to take advantage of any incipient race riot conditions to spread the firebrands of disorder, thieving, arson, lust and murder—and under the cover of large numbers, to give full sway to cowardly animal and criminal instincts.

The riot jury was impaneled July 28, 1919, and our investigations and inquiry have proceeded continuously through one form and another, to the present time.

We have visited hospitals, undertakers, and scenes of the rioting, received statements from the relatives and friends of the victims, attended the exhumation of one body at Lincoln Cemetery for fuller confirmation as to the course of the bullet wound; have held seventy day sessions and twenty night sessions on inquest work, examining approximately four hundred and fifty witnesses, the testimony taken amounting to fifty-five hundred and eighty-four folio pages, typewritten. Twenty men were held to the Grand Jury for murder or manslaughter, one held to court martial for murder. There were seven cases of justifiable homicide. Recommendation that unknown rioters be apprehended and punished was made in eighteen cases. One Police Officer was killed, three men were killed by Police Officers. One case—that of Joseph Lovings, a colored man—is still under investigation.

Homicides, due to the riots, occurred in widely separated localities, on the south, southwest and west sides of the city.

Particularly atrocious and cruel murder was committed on the persons of Morris Parel, Walter Parejko, Eugene Temple, David Marcus, Morris Lazzeroni and George L. Wilkins (white men), and Robert Williams, B.F. Hardy, John Mills, William H. Lozier, Oscar Lozier, Louis Taylor, Paul Hardwick and Joseph Lovings (colored men). . . .

We have no thought of, or desire, to criticize any of the city officials, the State's Attorney or the Police Department. In the grave emergency and riot conditions, we believe they all did their duty, as we conscientiously tried to do ours; nor do we believe that politics, so-called, or catering to the white or colored vote, had much if anything to do with the production of race rioting.

The riots began on the afternoon of July 27, 1919, when Eugene Williams, a colored boy, was drowned at the 29th street bathing beach, having been prevented from landing by stones thrown by a mob of white men and boys. Prior to that afternoon, this beach had been used exclusively by white people. The colored people contested the right of the white people thereto, and a pitched battle was fought with stones thrown between two mobs, the drowning of Williams being the result. The report of his death spread with great rapidity through the colored residence district, and the report was in general that he had been stoned to death in the water. Evidence disclosed that no stones struck the boy, that an attempt was made to stone him and stones were thrown in his direction. He was drowned—probably by reason of exhaustion due to the inability to land. However, the reports caused a white heat of passion and desire for reprisal among a large proportion of the colored population, and the riot spread.

July 27, 2 men were killed or sustained injuries causing death.

July 28, 17 men were killed or sustained injuries causing death.

July 29, 11 men were killed or sustained injuries causing death.

July 30, 5 men were killed or sustained injuries causing death.

July 31, 1 man was killed or sustained injuries causing death.

One George R. Fleming, white, was slain by a soldier, white, August 5th.

By August the 1st, the riots had subsided, the situation being well under control of the police and the soldiery, normal conditions being in part restored.

Incomplete police reports covering the five days of the rioting, show that one police officer was killed and thirty-nine wounded or injured; twenty-three colored men and fourteen white men killed; two hundred and ninety-one white and colored citizens wounded or injured. We have no report of white or colored women outraged and but few women were mistreated during the rioting. No evidence of drunkenness was presented.

To review the circumstances of all the thirty-eight homicides would be tiresome to the reader and serve no good purpose. As illustrating all of them we will review briefly the cases of Eugene Temple, a white man, and Joseph Lovings, a colored man. All verdicts rendered are on record in the Coroner's Office.

Eugene Temple, a reputable citizen and proprietor of the Columbia Laundry, located at 3642 South State Street, stepped from the doorway of his

place of business, accompanied by his wife and another lady, and was thus upon the sidewalk about to enter his automobile. He was leisurely approached by three colored men, who grabbed him, one on either side, at his back. While securely held by two of the men, the third man lifted up Mr. Temple's left arm and plunged a sharp and long knife, evidently a stiletto, through his heart. Then they as leisurely walked away, leaving their victim dead upon the sidewalk. Apparently, this was a cold blooded, calculated murder, without the element of race passion. There was evidence that some attempt had been made to rob him at the same time. These men have not been apprehended and presumably are walking the streets of Chicago, a constant and continual menace.

The slaying of Joseph Lovings, colored, was an atrocious, savage crime. He, a defenseless man, caught like a rat in a trap, by a surrounding mob, was dragged from his place of concealment and refuge, beaten, skull fractured, and shot fourteen times—left lying a bruised and broken semblance of a man, on the grass plot in front of a city home in the heart of the west side. This crime has not a single redeeming feature. It particularly illustrates the savage animal nature of a mob. To hunt down, apprehend and punish the dastardly criminals who killed this man, is the duty, not alone of the Police Department, but of every citizen who values the security of life. No wonder that reports of this crime grew to large proportions as it spread. It was published by the press of this and other large cities that he had been sprayed with gasoline and burned alive. Comments were made in Congress at Washington regarding the rumor. It gives us satisfaction to say that this rumor, from our investigation, is false and unsubstantiated—but the subtraction of this rumor mitigates the crime but a very slight degree.

Persistent reports have been circulated that the total number of deaths far exceeded thirty-eight. Intelligent citizens have approached the Coroner and members of this jury and gave their opinion that the number of deaths was far in excess of the number found. These reports were freely handed about and believed.

We have made a thorough investigation to verify or disprove these reports. Bubbly Creek has been the favorite cemetery for the undiscovered dead, and our inquiry has been partly directed to that stream. In our inquiry we have been assisted by the Stock Yard officials and workers, by adjacent property owners and residents, by private detective bureaus, the Police Department, Department of Health, State's Attorney's Office, by observing and intelligent colored citizens, and by other agencies, and we are firmly of the opinion that these reports, so widely circulated, are erroneous, misleading and without foundation in fact, the race riot victims numbering thirty-eight, and no more, nor are there any colored citizens reported to us as missing.

It has been said that the importation of colored labor from the South, congesting the south side residence district, caused ill feeling and friction, and was one of the causes of the rioting. The labor situation was a war condition; at the same time taking thousands of young men from the factory and shop for war service. Labor was needed, and employers turned to the South as their source of supply. Neither the Government, the employer nor

the southern laborer is to be criticized for that condition. And while some friction was produced, we doubt very much whether it was in any considerable measure productive of the rioting.

Nevertheless, it was unfortunate that negroes in large numbers, and unacquainted with northern ways, were induced to come or did come to the City of Chicago without adequate steps being taken to properly house and care for them. Naturally they gathered in the south division, where others of their race were to be found, and where there was congestion, abominable housing, and bad sanitary conditions. This, with the inadequate transportation facilities, notably in the rush hour, which resulted daily in the mixing of white and colored in the overcrowded street cars and elevated trains, tending to friction and bad feeling, can be readily understood.

These conditions can and should be changed. We believe that a representative committee of white and colored people, working together, could suggest and bring about the necessary and advisable changes.

The movement of the southern negro to the North, and mainly to the large northern cities, has brought the race problem to the North. It is serious indeed, but not necessarily a great danger, unless we allow it to become so. The problem is new to the North and must be solved by northern people. This problem is so large and entails such serious consequences that this jury feels itself powerless to do more than suggest its seriousness to the civilized thinking people of the North, both white and colored, in the hope that the initiative may be taken in the solution of the race problem, which is here now and here to stay.

In our investigations, numerous visits were made to the home district of the colored population, and we observed the housing conditions of which we had heard much.

Overcrowded and unmistakably bad living conditions were found, and we were impressed with the fact that the colored people justifiably for cleanliness and health had moved in considerable numbers to the east of Michigan Avenue and to the south of 39th Street, encroaching on the residence districts of the white people. The streets mentioned have been the boundaries voluntarily accepted by the colored population to within the past few years. The inrush of colored labor from the South caused congestion and resulted in a movement of considerable extent into the white neighborhoods where homes were purchased or leased.

Unquestionably this movement was encouraged by unscrupulous dealers in real estate, both white and colored, who were interested solely in the profits to be derived.

In our opinion the situation described was not a vital or material cause of the riot, but the rioting certainly awakened the public to the changing conditions of the south side residence district, and thoughtful men must consider that unless some remedy is found and applied, the situation is fruitful of unsettled and inharmonious relations in the future.

SOURCE: Cook County (Illinois) Coroner. *The Race Riots: Biennial Report 1918-1919 and Official Record of Inquests on the Victims of the Race Riots of July and August, 1919, Whereby Fifteen White Men and Twenty-three Colored*

*Men Lost Their Lives and Several Hundred Were Injured.* Chicago, 1920, pp. 19–22.



### 11. Final Report of the Grand Jury on the Tulsa Race Riot, June 25, 1921

In this excerpt from their final report, the grand jury charged with investigating the causes of the 1921 Tulsa riot places full blame for the violence on African Americans and completely exonerates whites of any part in starting the disorders. *See also the entries* on Tulsa (Oklahoma) Riot of 1921; Tulsa Race Riot Commission.

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To the Honorable Judge Valjean Biddison, of the District Court, Tulsa County:

We, the grand jurors summoned by you to make an investigation of the cause of the recent riot, and other violations of the law in Tulsa and Tulsa County, beg leave to submit to you the following report, in addition to indictments and accusations which are already in your hands.

We first desire to state that we have examined a great many witnesses in our effort to arrive at the facts; we have advertised that we desired the full information of every citizen who knew facts: We have heard every one who requested to be heard in addition to the many who were summoned to appear; we have weighed the evidence impartially; we have sought to do justice to every individual and to carry out the instructions of the honorable court.

We find that the recent race riot was the direct result of an effort on the part of a certain group of colored men who appeared at the courthouse on the night of May 31, 1921, for the purpose of protecting one Dick Rowland then and now in the custody of the sheriff of Tulsa County for an alleged assault upon a young white woman. We have not been able to find any evidence either from white or colored citizens that any organized attempt was made or planned to take from the sheriff's custody any prisoner; the crowd assembled about the courthouse being purely spectators and curiosity seekers resulting from rumors circulated about the city. There was no mob spirit among the whites, no talk of lynching and no arms. The assembly was quiet until the arrival of armed negroes, which precipitated and was the direct cause of the entire affair.

While we find the presence of the armed negroes was the direct cause of the riot, we further find that there existed indirect causes more vital to the public interest than the direct cause. Among these were agitation among the negroes of social equality, and the laxity of law enforcement on the part of the officers of the city and county.

We find that certain propaganda and more or less agitation had been going on among the colored population for some time. This agitation resulted in the accumulation of firearms among the people and the storage of quantities of ammunition, all of which was accumulative in the minds of the negro which led them as a people to believe in equal rights, social

equality and their ability to demand the same. We are glad to exonerate the great majority of the colored people who neither had knowledge of or part in either the agitation or the accumulation of arms or ammunition, and recognize the possibility of such a fact as even in as public a place as a church without the rank and file of the people having knowledge of the same. We have sought to ascertain the names of the particular parties who took part and the indictments returned show our findings.

SOURCE: *Tulsa World*, June 26, 1921, pp. 1, 8.



**12. Excerpts from the Transcripts of *Bee Publishing Company v. State of Nebraska* Regarding a Lynching That Occurred in Omaha in September 1919, November 17, 1921**

Filed on November 17, 1921, *Bee Publishing Company v. State of Nebraska* concerns an appeal by the publisher of the *Omaha Bee* of his conviction for constructive contempt of court in publishing an article that allegedly attempted to sway public opinion on behalf of a *Bee* reporter who was awaiting trial on charges of arson. The charges against the reporter arose from his alleged activities during a September 1919 riot that concluded with the lynching of a black man being held on a rape charge and the subsequent burning of the courthouse from which he was taken by the mob. The excerpts from the trial transcripts that are reproduced below describe the riot and the events following that led to the arrest of the *Bee* reporter and the publication of the offending article.

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On November 11, 1919, the Bee Publishing Company, a corporation, Victor Rosewater, and John H. Moore, defendants, were jointly informed against by the county attorney for Douglas County, under Section 8236, Rev. St. 1913, and charged with a willful attempt to obstruct the proceedings and hinder the due administration of justice in a suit, then lately pending and undetermined, by the publication of a certain article in the *Omaha Sunday Bee*, November 9, 1919. Moore was acquitted, but the Bee Publishing Company and Rosewater were both found guilty of contempt and were each separately fined \$1,000 and costs. They have brought the case here for review.

The exhibits and the evidence tend to show that the facts out of which this suit arose, and which form the basis of the newspaper story in question, are substantially these:

On the afternoon and night of Sunday, September 28, 1919, the Douglas County courthouse in Omaha was beset by a riotously assembled mob made up of several thousand persons who came together for the unconcealed purpose of lynching an inmate of the jail, who was suspected of having made an attempt to commit a heinous offense against a defenseless woman. The mob overpowered the police force and other of the city officials, all of whom were assisted by many law-abiding citizens, but to no avail, in an endeavor to restore order. The object of the mob's fury was seized and

lynched, the courthouse was fired and in large part destroyed, and with it most of its contents, before the mob dispersed. Within a short time after the fire, namely, November 6, 1919, John H. Moore, a *Bee* reporter, was indicted by a grand jury specially called by the district court to inquire into the facts leading up to and connected with the riot and the fire. The indictment charged Moore with conspiring with others to commit arson. Two boys, named Morris and Thorpe, were suspected of being implicated in the riot and were arrested. While under arrest they testified before the grand jury and informed that body that they saw Moore, on the afternoon of the riot, leading a gang of boys to the courthouse, carrying gasoline and oils for the purpose of aiding in the conflagration. It was mainly on this evidence that the indictment against Moore was based.

Subsequently, and while the Moore case, pursuant to the indictment, was pending and undetermined in the district court, Morris and Thorpe furnished affidavits which in effect stated that their testimony before the grand jury with respect to Moore was false, and that it was obtained by coercion and intimidation practiced upon them, while under arrest, by certain members of the Omaha police force, and by promise of immunity from prosecution. The article that is set out in the information and that appears as an exhibit in the *Omaha Bee* of Sunday November 9, 1919, and other like exhibits, purport to give an account of some of the circumstances attending the fire and the alleged unfair methods under which the testimony that implicated Moore was obtained. The article, or newspaper story in question, covers about two columns of the newspaper exhibit of Sunday, November 9, and about six pages of legal cap in the information. It is too extended to be fully reproduced in this opinion.

The following headlines that precede the article that is incorporated in the information are in large display type:

**Boys Disclose the Frame-up—Promised Freedom by Police—Captain Haze Offered Liberty to Prisoners for False Testimony Before Grand Jury, They Declare in Affidavits—Rotten Police Methods Laid Bare by Youths—Admit They Never Saw Bee Man They Testified Against Until After Case Had Been Framed by Detectives.**

The excerpts in ordinary brevier type follow:

Captain of Police Henry P. Haze "framed up" the malicious and false testimony submitted to the grand jury upon which J. Harry Moore, reporter for the *Bee*, was indicted Friday, on a charge of conspiracy to commit arson in connection with the riot of September 28th. This statement was made to a reporter for the *Bee*, in the county jail yesterday by Ernest Morris and Harold Thorpe, confessed members of the mob, upon whose evidence the indictment against the reporter was returned. Both Morris and Thorpe made affidavits to the effect that Haze prevailed upon them to perjure themselves in order to convict Moore, whose investigations as a newspaper man have resulted in sensational and startling revelations against the Omaha police department, upon a



promise that they would not be required to serve their full sentences in jail for rioting. They were told they would be released from jail as soon as the reporter had been tried and sent to the penitentiary. When the boys told Captain Haze they never had laid their eyes on the Bee reporter, the policeman replied that he would arrange it so they could see the man.

The article goes on to say that the boys changed their minds, and that Morris informed a reporter that after they got to thinking about it in jail they agreed they "did not want to be a party to a frame-up on an innocent man," and decided to "expose Captain Haze and the other detective." The writer of the article then observed that the other witness who testified against reporter Moore before the grand jury was a notorious bootlegger and a former policeman. Then follow the affidavits of Morris and Thorpe, that were printed as a part of the objectionable article, that purport to substantiate the foregoing statements, and many other statements of like import that appear in the article in question. Besides the foregoing excerpts, the article elsewhere, as it appears in the information, proceeds to vilify the police department generally, and the police officers who testified before the grand jury, and who would of necessity be witnesses at the coming trial against Moore in the district court. It proceeds to say that whether the police commissioner or the chief of police "had a hand in the frame-up on the reporter (Moore) Morris and Thorpe were unable to say." Continuing, the article observed that the commissioner always approved of Captain Haze's methods, and that the chief of police was known to have offered to promote a certain police officer if he succeeded in "getting" the Bee reporter.

Taylor Kennerly was the managing editor of the *Bee* when the objectionable article was published, and as the head of the editorial department he directed the news policy of the paper. He said that Rosewater never gave him any orders with respect to his work, and if he, the witness, was absent the city editor or the news editor determined what articles should appear. He testified that as a general proposition a communication or a reporter's story, before publication, was edited by one of six or seven men called copy readers, day editors, night editors, or telegraph editors.

It plainly appears that the article seriously reflected upon the integrity of the witnesses who appeared before the grand jury and who would in all probability testify in the district court. It took sides as between the state and the defendant, and opinions in respect of the merits were expressed. Violent comment was indulged in respecting the evidence, and the innocence of the accused was declared. Upon its face it is apparent that a bold attempt was made to mold public opinion favorable to Moore in advance of his trial, the Bee having an extensive circulation, not only throughout the state, but in the city and in Douglas County as well, the vicinity from which the jurors would be drawn and before whom Moore would be subsequently tried. Clearly an inflammatory harangue, in the locality where the trial was to be had, so worded, would tend to hinder the due administration of justice. That a publication so worded and so circulated, under the circumstances that prevailed at the

place of its publication, constitutes constructive contempt of court is well settled.

SOURCE: *Bee Publishing Company v. State of Nebraska*; *Victor Rosewater v. State of Nebraska*, Nos. 21314, 21315, Supreme Court of Nebraska, 107 Neb. 74; 185 N.W. 339 (1921).



### 13. Excerpts of Testimony from *Laney v. United States* Describing Events During the Washington, D.C., Riot of July 1919, December 3, 1923

Decided on December 3, 1923, *Laney v. United States* involved an appeal by William Laney, an African American man convicted of manslaughter in the death of a white man during the July 1919 riots in Washington, D.C. Laney sought a new trial based on the trial court's refusal to allow him to assert a defense based on self-defense. The excerpts of testimony reproduced below include Laney's description of what happened on the night of July 21, 1919, as well as the supporting statement of his lady friend, Mattie Burke. The appeals court refused to overturn Laney's conviction, believing that he could have escaped without further incident, but instead deliberately exposed himself to the crowd to provoke further violence.

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VAN ORSDEL, Associate Justice. This appeal is from a verdict and judgment of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, adjudging appellant, defendant below [William Laney], guilty of the crime of manslaughter. The indictment charged the defendant with the crime of murder in the first degree, growing out of the killing of one Kenneth Crall, during a race riot in Washington on July 21, 1919.

The defense interposed was self-defense, and a large number of assignments of error are based upon the refusal of the court to grant certain prayers offered by the defendant relating to the law of self-defense. The court instructed the jury on this subject, but we think it will be unnecessary for us to consider the assignments of error in relation to the prayers offered, since in our opinion, viewing the evidence in the most favorable aspect, self-defense does not enter into the case.

Defendant testified as follows:

On the night of the 21st of July, 1919, I went to the theater with Mattie Burke, and came back and went up on Seventh Street at the request of Teresa Dobbins, to get Florence and Garfield Wood. On my return to 617 Massachusetts Avenue, as I got to the corner where the Home Savings Bank is located, a large crowd that was there started to yelling "Catch the nigger!" and "Kill the nigger!" and started to chase me. I ran ahead of them down Massachusetts Avenue. When I got near to 617 Massachusetts Avenue, I pulled out my gun and the crowd stopped chasing me. I went into the back yard, and while trying to fix the safety on my gun it went off. I then put the gun in my pocket

and went to the front again, intending to go back to my place of employment. The mob was attacking a house across the street, and were coming both ways on Massachusetts Avenue, from the direction of Sixth and from the direction of Seventh Street. While I was in the areaway between 617 and 619, the mob came across from the south side of the street, firing and hollering "Let's kill the nigger!" The mob was firing at me, and I shot in the direction towards Seventh Street. I fired to protect my life. I fired three shots. My pistol had eight bullets in it at first. There were four bullets in it when it was taken by the officials; three bullets having been fired in the front yard and one in the back yard.

The witness Mattie Burke testified, in relation to the movements of the defendant, as follows:

Later he came running back, with a mob chasing him, throwing sticks and stones at him, hollering "Catch the nigger!" I think Mr. Laney had his gun in his hand while he was running, but I did not see him do anything with it. He ran into the areaway between 615 and 617. The crowd, consisting of 100 or more men, then started after a house on the opposite side of the street. At that time William Laney went into the back yard and tried his gun. I was with him in the back yard at the time. Then we came out to the front again. After attacking the house on the opposite side of the street, the mob gathered in the car track as though they were coming toward 617, and then Laney fired his gun. After Laney had escaped through the back way, the crowd began to break into the house, and then I escaped myself over the back fence, and I did not see any more.

It is clearly apparent from the above testimony that, when defendant escaped from the mob into the back yard of the Ferguson place, he was in a place of comparative safety, from which, if he desired to go home, he could have gone by the back way, as he subsequently did. The mob had turned its attention to a house on the opposite side of the street. According to Laney's testimony, there was shooting going on in the street. His appearance on the street at that juncture could mean nothing but trouble for him. Hence, when he adjusted his gun and stepped out into the areaway, he had every reason to believe that his presence there would provoke trouble. We think his conduct in adjusting his revolver and going into the areaway was such as to deprive him of any right to involve the pleas of self-defense. Of course, the extent to which a person assailed may go, under a given state of facts involving self-defense, is always a question of fact for the jury; but whether or not self-defense can be invoked under the evidence adduced is a question of law for the court to determine. If the facts, in the judgment of the court, are not such as to admit of this defense, the issue should not be left to the mere speculation of the jury.

SOURCE: *Laney v. United States*, No. 4000, Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, 54 App. D.C. 56; 294 F. 412 (1923).



#### 14. Excerpts on “Sex and Lynching” from Walter White’s *Rope and Faggot*, 1929

The following excerpt from “Chapter 4: Sex and Lynching” of Walter White’s 1929 book, *Rope and Faggot*, explores the reasons why sex was such a big factor in the prevalence of lynching in the American South. The book was based on information gathered by White, whose light skin enabled him to pass for white, during the investigations of numerous lynchings and race riots that he undertook for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). White became executive director of the NAACP in 1929.

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With the most intransigent Negrophobe it is possible to conduct a conversation on certain phases of the race question and do so with a measured calmness of manner. But when one approaches, however delicately or remotely, the question of sex or “social equality,” reason and judicial calm promptly take flight. Berserk rage usually seizes one’s conversational *vis-à-vis*. One can count with mathematical certainty upon the appearance of the fiercely challenging: “How should *you* like to have your daughter marry a nigger?” as the answer to any attempt at sane discussion of this phase of the race question. It is of no avail to point out that there is but a tenuous connection between sex relations or intermarriages on the one hand and ordinary justice and decency on the other. Sex with all its connotations so muddies the waters of reason that it is impossible to bring the conversation back to its more unimpassioned state.

Of all the emotional determinants of lynching none is more potent in blocking approach to a solution than sex, and of all the factors, emotional or otherwise, none is less openly and honestly discussed. Even the most fair-minded Southerner keeps away from the topic, fearing the tempest which follows its introduction as a topic of discussion. As a result, this element in the race problem and specifically in lynching is distorted by the conspiracy of semi-silence into an importance infinitely greater than the actual facts concerning it would justify. From the time of its introduction as a defense of lynching, which, as we shall see, was simultaneous with the elevation of cotton through inventions to one of the premier crops of the world, sex and alleged sex crimes have served as the great bulwark of the lyncher. . . .

This Southern excitability over so universal a fact as sex has many causes. It is impossible to trace them all to their source. But a few of them can be separated from the fabric of many patterns and weavings which is the race problem. Perhaps statement of these may serve to bring some light where there has been little but heat.

There are at least a half-dozen reasons why sex harasses the South, and especially the rural South and the anti-Negro South. The first is one that is common to most regions which are predominantly rural—the dullness of life and the lack of such diversions as theatres, moving-pictures, parties, concerts, shop-windows, and the like, which in the city leave less time for

concupiscent desires and thoughts. The South has suffered more than other sections because of the fact noted in the preceding chapter—the preponderance of Methodists and Baptists to whom such diversions as card-playing, dancing, and theatre attendance are forbidden. In many parts of the South this circumstance has elevated attendance at church, sex escapades, and lynching into the principal escapes from the grim and sordid reality of work.

A second reason for over-emphasis on sex in the lynching states is that the creation of the bogey of sex crimes as a defense of lynching has made the South the terrified victim of the fears of its own conjuring. Despite the evidence of the figures showing that only a small percentage of lynched Negroes were even accused of rape, the vast majority of whites in the states where lynchings are most frequently staged really believe that most mob murders are the results of sex crimes. Having created the Frankenstein monster (and it is no less terrifying because it is largely illusory), the lyncher lives in constant fear of his own creation and, at the same time, has by means of his creation caused more crimes against the women of his race than there would have been in a more sane and normal environment.

The vast amount of advertising which lynchings have given to allegations of sex crimes has induced subnormal Negroes to attempt crimes of rape, the power of suggestion being as potent as it is. Such an aftermath to lynchings has been noted in certain instances—the idea of successfully consummating sex crimes having been implanted by the news of a lynching. The mentally deficient individual who would thus be impregnated with the thought of being able to escape punishment would obviously not be deterred by fear of a horrible death in expiation of his crime. Thus it is not at all improbable that lynching has added to sex crimes or attempts at such crimes. There is some foundation for such a surmise when one considers how infrequently Negroes are charged with such crimes in the states where lynchings have been very infrequent.

Third in the list of causes of sex-obsession in the South is the Southern white woman's proneness to hysteria where Negroes are concerned; and this is an aspect of the question of lynching which needs investigation by a competent psychologist. It is appropriate here only to report observations and conclusions based upon a fairly extensive experience with the statistics and literature of lynching. My own experience in investigating forty-one lynchings and the study of several thousand others reveals that in the great majority of cases where rape or attempted rape was alleged, the women can be divided into four classes: young girls ranging from the ages of twelve or thirteen to nineteen or twenty years of age, passing through the difficult period of adolescence; second (and this includes a considerable percentage of the alleged victims of attacks), women who range in age from the middle forties upwards; third, women who have been married for many years and usually to rather unattractive husbands; fourth, spinsters.

Fourth among the reasons is the intense religiosity of the lynching states and the primitiveness of their religion. Psychologists have long since established the intimate relation between the emotions of sex and of religion, and that the more primitive the religion, the greater is the part played by

sex. Critics of the American scene from Frances Trollope to H.L. Mencken have observed in the frenzy of Methodist revivals what comes dangerously close to being a species of sex indulgence. Certainly one can find in many parts of the South numerous counterparts, male and female, white and Negro, of the woman William James describes in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* who could induce a state of rapture by dwelling upon the thought that “she could always cuddle up to God.”

It is also a familiar phenomenon that the sex instinct figures in religious ecstasy in somewhat the same proportions that illiteracy and ignorance afflict the religious-minded. Given an elaborate system of taboos that label as “sinful” even relatively innocent diversions, which would absorb at least a part of the time otherwise given to erotic thoughts and desires, subjected to the explosive experiences attendant upon religious experiences, deprived by ignorance, geographical isolation, and poverty from books and other intellectual releases, and victims of a bogey of the Negro as a *bête noire*—all these handicaps reveal vividly the state of mind which turns devout Christians into lynchers, especially when sex enters the equation. . . .

A fifth reason for preoccupation with sex in the lynching states is the traditional attitude towards colored women and the price now being paid for that attitude. For two and a half centuries of slavery slave women had no control over or defense of their bodies. As chattels, their bodies were their own only in so far as their owners were men of moral integrity. In codes and practices these owners ranged from those who permitted neither themselves, their overseers, nor male members of their families to tamper with the persons of their female slaves, down to owners who deliberately used slave women as breeders of half-white slaves—combining, as it were, pleasure with business. Midway between these poles of conduct were those who permitted and even urged their sons to take Negro mistresses and thus protect the chastity of white women, a somewhat analogous practice to that of ancient Rome when Solon caused female slaves “to be brought to the city and exposed to save other women from assaults on their virtue.”

Whatever may be the current interpretation of virtue, it is axiomatic that an individual or society cannot maintain for any great length of time dual standards of personal conduct which are diametrically opposed to each other. The man who attempts to maintain a fixed respect towards one group of women and indulges meanwhile in all manner of immoralities with another group may seek ever so hard to maintain such a balanced dual standard. Inevitably and imperceptibly he finds it impossible, to the detriment of his respect for the first group. And that is precisely what has happened to the South, the white South, both male and female. For more than two hundred years this moral deterioration has affected the Southern states, and from that decay arises the most terrifying of all the aspects of the race problem to the white man.

SOURCE: Walter White. *Rope and Faggot*. Reprint ed. New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1969, pp. 54–59, 62–63. Originally published 1929.



### 15. Excerpts from the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, 1935

In response to the race riots that erupted in Harlem in March 1935, New York Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia appointed a commission to investigate the cause of the violence. Including among its members the distinguished African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, the commission dismissed the notion that communists and other outside agitators had started the riots, and concluded instead that the main causes of the disorders were racial discrimination, unemployment, and police brutality. Because Mayor LaGuardia refused to release the report, it was first made public by the *New York Amsterdam News*, a leading African American newspaper.

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At about 2:30 on the afternoon of March 19, 1935, Lino Rivera, a 16-year-old colored boy, stole a knife from a counter in the rear of E.H. Kress and Company on 125th Street. He was seen by the manager of the store, Jackson Smith, and an assistant, Charles Hurley, who were on the balcony at the time. Mr. Hurley and another employee overtook the boy before he was able to make his escape through the front door. When the two men took the knife from Rivera's pocket and threatened him with punishment, the boy in his fright tried to cling to a pillar and bit the hands of his captors. Rivera was finally taken to the front entrance, where Mounted Patrolman Donahue was called. The boy was then taken back into the store by the officer, who asked the manager if an arrest was desired. While Mr. Smith, the manager, instructed the officer to let the culprit go free—as he had done in many cases before—an officer from the Crime Prevention Bureau was sent to the store.

This relatively unimportant case of juvenile pilfering would never had acquired the significance which it later took on had not a fortuitous combination of subsequent events made it the spark that set aflame the smoldering resentments of the people of Harlem against racial discrimination and poverty in the midst of plenty. Patrolman Donahue, in order to avoid the curious and excited spectators, took the boy through the basement to the rear entrance on 124th Street. But his act only confirmed the outcry of a hysterical Negro woman that they had taken "the boy to the basement to beat him up." Likewise, the appearance of the ambulance which had been summoned to dress the wounded hands of the boy's captors not only seemed to substantiate her charge, but, when it left empty, gave color to another rumor that that the boy was dead. By an odd trick of fate, still another incident furnished the final confirmation of the rumor of the boy's death to the excited throng of shoppers. A hearse which was usually kept in a garage opposite the store on 124th Street was parked in front of the store entrance while the driver entered the store to see his brother-in-law. The rumor of the death of the boy, which became now to the aroused Negro shoppers an established fact, awakened the deep-seated sense of wrongs and denials and even memories of injustices in the South. One woman was heard to cry out that the treatment was "just like down south where they lynch us." The deep sense of wrong expressed in this remark was echoed in the rising

resentment which turned the hundred or more shoppers into an indignant crowd.

The sporadic attempts on the part of the police to assure the crowd within the store that no harm had been done the boy fell upon unbelieving ears, partly because no systematic attempt was made to let representatives of the crowd determine the truth for themselves, and partly because of the attitude of the policemen. According to the testimony of one policeman, a committee of women from among the shoppers was permitted to search the basement, but these women have never been located. On the other hand, when the crowd became too insistent about learning the fate of the boy, the police told them that it was none of their business and attempted to shove them towards the door. This only tended to infuriate the crowd and was interpreted by them as further evidence of the suppression of a wronged race. At 5:30 it became necessary to close the store.

The closing of the store did not stay the rumors that were current inside. With incredible swiftness the feelings and attitude of the outraged crowd of shoppers was communicated to those on 125th Street and soon all of Harlem was repeating the rumor that a Negro boy had been murdered in the basement of Kress' store. The first sign of the reaction of the community appeared when a group of men attempted to start a public meeting at a nearby corner. When the police ordered the group to move from the corner, they set up a stand in front of Kress' store. A Negro who acted as chairman introduced a white speaker. Scarcely had the speaker uttered the first words of his address to the crowd when someone threw a missile through the window of Kress' store. This was the signal for the police to drag the speaker from the stand and disperse the crowd. Immediately, the crowd reassembled across the street and another speaker attempted to address the crowd from a perch on a lamp-post. He was pulled down from his post and arrested along with the other speaker on a charge of "unlawful assemblage"... the extreme barbarity which was shown towards at least one of these speakers was seemingly motivated by the fact that these policemen who made derogatory and threatening remarks concerning Negroes were outraged because white men dared to take the part of Negroes... These actions on the part of the police only tended to arouse resentment in the crowd which was increasing all the time along 125th Street. From 125th Street the crowds spread to Seventh Avenue and Lenox Avenue and the smashing of windows and looting of shops gathered momentum as the evening and the night came on...

From its inception, as we have pointed out, the outbreak was a spontaneous and unpremeditated action on the part, first, of women shoppers in Kress' store and, later, of the crowds on 125th Street that had been formed as the result of the rumor of a boy's death in the store. As the fever of excitement based upon this rumor spread to other sections of the community, other crowds, formed by many unemployed standing about the streets and other on-lookers, sprang up spontaneously. At no time does it seem that these crowds were under the direction of any single individual or that they acted as a part of a conspiracy against law and order. The very susceptibility which the people in the community showed towards this rumor—which



was more or less vague, depending on the circumstances under which it was communicated—was due to the feeling of insecurity produced by years of unemployment and deep-seated resentment against the many forms of discrimination which they had suffered as a racial minority.

While it is difficult to estimate the actual number of persons who participated in the outburst, it does not seem, from available sources of information, that more than a few thousand were involved. These were not concentrated at any time in one place. Crowds formed here and there as the rumors spread. When a crowd was dispersed by the police, it often reformed again. These crowds constantly changed their make-up. When bricks thrown through store windows brought the police, the crowds would often dissolve, only to gather again and continue their assaults upon property. Looting often followed the smashing of store windows. The screaming of sirens, the sound of pistol shots and the cracking of glass created in many a need for destruction and excitement. Rubbish, flowerpots, or any objects at hand were tossed from windows into the street. People seized property when there was no possible use which it would serve. They acted as if there were a chance to seize what rightfully belonged to them, but had long been withheld. The crowds showed various needs and changed their mood from time to time. Some of the destruction was carried on in a playful spirit. Even the looting, which has furnished many an amusing take, was sometimes done in the spirit of children taking preserves from a closet to which they have accidentally found the key. The mood of these crowds was determined in many cases by the attitude of the police toward their unruly conduct. But, in the end, neither the threats nor the reassurances of the police could restrain these spontaneous outbursts until the crowds had spent themselves in giving release to their pent-up emotions.

SOURCE: Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem. *The Negro in Harlem: A Report on the Social and Economic Conditions Responsible for the Outbreak*. New York, 1935.



#### **16. Lyrics to Billie Holiday's Anti-Lynching Song *Strange Fruit*—First Performed 1939**

Although often misattributed to Billie Holiday, an inaccuracy that she fostered, the words and music to *Strange Fruit* were written in the mid-1930s by Abel Meeropol writing under the pseudonym "Lewis Allan." Horrified by the brutality and frequency of lynchings, particularly in the South, Meeropol wanted to draw attention to the crime and thereby spur passage of a federal anti-lynching law. Meeropol brought the song to Holiday, who first performed it at Café Society, New York's only integrated nightclub, in 1939. So powerful was Holiday's rendition of the song, a British journal later described it as "one of the ten songs that changed the world." See also the entries Holiday, Billie; *Strange Fruit*.

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### Strange Fruit

Southern trees bear strange fruit,  
 Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
 Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,  
 Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,  
 The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,  
 Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,  
 Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,  
 For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,  
 For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,  
 Here is a strange and bitter crop.

SOURCE: Words by Lewis Allan (Abel Meeropol) and first published in *New Masses*, 1937.



### 17. Excerpts from the Moynihan Report, March 1965

In March 1965, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the undersecretary of labor policy planning in the Johnson administration, published a study titled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. The study, which was informally known as the Moynihan Report, looked at the potential for social advancement available to contemporary African Americans and found that the social and familial structures of African Americans were weak and highly dependent on white society. The following excerpts from the Moynihan Report look at what Moynihan and his researchers saw as the causes of the problem and some possible means for improvement. *See also the entries* Moynihan, Daniel Patrick; *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*.

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The United States is approaching a new crisis in race relations.

In the decade that began with the school desegregation decision of the Supreme Court, and ended with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the demand of Negro Americans for full recognition of their civil rights was finally met.

The effort, no matter how savage and brutal, of some State and local governments to thwart the exercise of those rights is doomed. The nation will not put up with it—least of all the Negroes. The present moment will pass. In the meantime, a new period is beginning.

In this new period the expectations of the Negro Americans will go beyond civil rights. Being Americans, they will now expect that in the near future equal opportunities for them as a group will produce roughly equal results, as compared with other groups. This is not going to happen. Nor will it happen for generations to come unless a new and special effort is made.

There are two reasons. First, the racist virus in the American blood stream still afflicts us: Negroes will encounter serious personal prejudice for at least another generation. Second, three centuries of sometimes unimaginable mistreatment have taken their toll on the Negro people. The harsh fact is that as a group, at the present time, in terms of ability to win out in the competitions of American life, they are not equal to most of those groups with which they will be competing. Individually, Negro Americans reach the highest peaks of achievement. But collectively, in the spectrum of American ethnic and religious and regional groups, where some get plenty and some get none, where some send eighty percent of their children to college and others pull them out of school at the 8th grade, Negroes are among the weakest.

The most difficult fact for white Americans to understand is that in these terms the circumstances of the Negro American community in recent years has probably been getting worse, not better.

Indices of dollars of income, standards of living, and years of education deceive. The gap between the Negro and most other groups in American society is widening.

The fundamental problem, in which this is most clearly the case, is that of family structure. The evidence—not final, but powerfully persuasive—is that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling. A middle-class group has managed to save itself, but for vast numbers of the unskilled, poorly educated city working class the fabric of conventional social relationships has all but disintegrated. There are indications that the situation may have been arrested in the past few years, but the general post-war trend is unmistakable. So long as this situation persists, the cycle of poverty and disadvantage will continue to repeat itself.

The thesis of this paper is that these events, in combination, confront the nation with a new kind of problem. Measures that have worked in the past, or would work for most groups in the present, will not work here. A national effort is required that will give a unity of purpose to the many activities of the Federal government in this area, directed to a new kind of national goal: the establishment of a stable Negro family structure.

This would be a new departure for Federal policy. And a difficult one. But it almost certainly offers the only possibility of resolving in our time what is, after all, the nation's oldest, and most intransigent, and now its most dangerous social problem. What Gunnar Myrdal said in *An American Dilemma* remains true today: "America is free to chose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity."

### **CHAPTER III. THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM**

#### **Slavery**

The most perplexing question about American slavery, which has never been altogether explained, and which indeed most Americans hardly know exists, has been stated by Nathan Glazer as follows: "Why was American slavery the most awful the world has ever known?" The only thing that can be said with certainty is that this is true: it was.

American slavery was profoundly different from, and in its lasting effects on individuals and their children, indescribably worse than, any recorded servitude, ancient or modern. The peculiar nature of American slavery was noted by Alexis de Tocqueville and others, but it was not until 1948 that Frank Tannenbaum, a South American specialist, pointed to the striking differences between Brazilian and American slavery. The feudal, Catholic society of Brazil had a legal and religious tradition which accorded the slave a place as a human being in the hierarchy of society—a luckless, miserable place, to be sure, but a place withal. In contrast, there was nothing in the tradition of English law or Protestant theology which could accommodate to the fact of human bondage—the slaves were therefore reduced to the status of chattels—often, no doubt, well cared for, even privileged chattels, but chattels nevertheless.

Glazer, also focusing on the Brazil–United States comparison, continues.

In Brazil, the slave had many more rights than in the United States: he could legally marry, he could, indeed had to, be baptized and become a member of the Catholic Church, his family could not be broken up for sale, and he had many days on which he could either rest or earn money to buy his freedom. The Government encouraged manumission, and the freedom of infants could often be purchased for a small sum at the baptismal font. In short: the Brazilian slave knew he was a man, and that he differed in degree, not in kind, from his master.

[In the United States,] the slave was totally removed from the protection of organized society (compare the elaborate provisions for the protection of slaves in the Bible), his existence as a human being was given no recognition by any religious or secular agency, he was totally ignorant of and completely cut off from his past, and he was offered absolutely no hope for the future. His children could be sold, his marriage was not recognized, his wife could be violated or sold (there was something comic about calling the woman with whom the master permitted him to live a “wife”), and he could also be subject, without redress, to frightful barbarities—there were presumably as many sadists among slaveowners, men and women, as there are in other groups. The slave could not, by law, be taught to read or write; he could not practice any religion without the permission of his master, and could never meet with his fellows, for religious or any other purposes, except in the presence of a white; and finally, if a master wished to free him, every legal obstacle was used to thwart such action. This was not what slavery meant in the ancient world, in medieval and early modern Europe, or in Brazil and the West Indies.

More important, American slavery was also awful in its effects. If we compared the present situation of the American Negro with that of, let us say, Brazilian Negroes (who were slaves 20 years longer), we begin to suspect that the differences are the result of very different patterns of slavery. Today the Brazilian Negroes are Brazilians; though most are poor and do the hard and dirty work of the country, as Negroes do in the United States, they are not cut off from society. They reach into its highest strata, merging there—in smaller and smaller numbers, it is true, but with complete acceptance—with other Brazilians of all kinds. The relations between Negroes and whites in Brazil show nothing of the mass irrationality that prevails in this country.

Stanley M. Elkins, drawing on the aberrant behavior of the prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, drew an elaborate parallel between the two institutions. This thesis has been summarized as follows by Thomas Pettigrew:

Both were closed systems, with little chance of manumission, emphasis on survival, and a single, omnipresent authority. The profound personality change created by Nazi internment, as independently reported by a number of psychologists and psychiatrists who survived, was toward childishness and total acceptance of the SS guards as father-figures—a syndrome strikingly similar to the “Sambo” caricature of the Southern slave. Nineteenth-century racists readily believed that the “Sambo” personality was simply an inborn racial type. Yet no African anthropological data have ever shown any personality type resembling Sambo; and the concentration camps molded the equivalent personality pattern in a wide variety of Caucasian prisoners. Nor was Sambo merely a product of “slavery” in the abstract, for the less devastating Latin American system never developed such a type.

Extending this line of reasoning, psychologists point out that slavery in all its forms sharply lowered the need for achievement in slaves... Negroes in bondage, stripped of their African heritage, were placed in a completely dependent role. All of their rewards came, not from individual initiative and enterprise, but from absolute obedience—a situation that severely depresses the need for achievement among all peoples. Most important of all, slavery vitiated family life... Since many slaveowners neither fostered Christian marriage among their slave couples nor hesitated to separate them on the auction block, the slave household often developed a fatherless matrifocal (mother-centered) pattern.

### **The Reconstruction**

With the emancipation of the slaves, the Negro American family began to form in the United States on a widespread scale. But it did so in an atmosphere markedly different from that which has produced the white American family.

The Negro was given liberty, but not equality. Life remained hazardous and marginal. Of the greatest importance, the Negro male, particularly in the South, became an object of intense hostility, an attitude unquestionably based in some measure of fear.

When Jim Crow made its appearance towards the end of the 19th century, it may be speculated that it was the Negro male who was most humiliated thereby; the male was more likely to use public facilities, which rapidly became segregated once the process began, and just as important, segregation, and the submissiveness it exacts, is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality. Keeping the Negro “in his place” can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone.

Unquestionably, these events worked against the emergence of a strong father figure. The very essence of the male animal, from the bantam rooster to the four-star general, is to strut. Indeed, in 19th century America, a

particular type of exaggerated male boastfulness became almost a national style. Not for the Negro male. The “sassy nigger [sic]” was lynched.

In this situation, the Negro family made but little progress toward the middle-class pattern of the present time. Margaret Mead has pointed out that while

In every known human society, everywhere in the world, the young male learns that when he grows up one of the things which he must do in order to be a full member of society is to provide food for some female and her young.

This pattern is not immutable, however: it can be broken, even though it has always eventually reasserted itself.

Within the family, each new generation of young males learn the appropriate nurturing behavior and superimpose upon their biologically given maleness this learned parental role. When the family breaks down—as it does under slavery, under certain forms of indentured labor and serfdom, in periods of extreme social unrest during wars, revolutions, famines, and epidemics, or in periods of abrupt transition from one type of economy to another—this delicate line of transmission is broken. Men may flounder badly in these periods, during which the primary unit may again become mother and child, the biologically given, and the special conditions under which man has held his social traditions in trust are violated and distorted.

E. Franklin Frazier makes clear that at the time of emancipation Negro women were already “accustomed to playing the dominant role in family and marriage relations” and that this role persisted in the decades of rural life that followed.

### **Urbanization**

Country life and city life are profoundly different. The gradual shift of American society from a rural to an urban basis over the past century and a half has caused abundant strains, many of which are still much in evidence. When this shift occurs suddenly, drastically, in one or two generations, the effect is immensely disruptive of traditional social patterns.

It was this abrupt transition that produced the wild Irish slums of the 19th Century Northeast. Drunkenness, crime, corruption, discrimination, family disorganization, juvenile delinquency were the routine of that era. In our own time, the same sudden transition has produced the Negro slum—different from, but hardly better than its predecessors, and fundamentally the result of the same process.

Negroes are now more urbanized than whites.

Negro families in the cities are more frequently headed by a woman than those in the country. The difference between the white and Negro proportions of families headed by a woman is greater in the city than in the country.

The promise of the city has so far been denied the majority of Negro migrants, and most particularly the Negro family.

In 1939, E. Franklin Frazier described its plight movingly in that part of *The Negro Family* entitled "In the City of Destruction":

The impact of hundreds of thousands of rural southern Negroes upon northern metropolitan communities presents a bewildering spectacle. Striking contrasts in levels of civilization and economic well-being among these newcomers to modern civilization seem to baffle any attempt to discover order and direction in their mode of life.

In many cases, of course, the dissolution of the simple family organization has begun before the family reaches the northern city. But, if these families have managed to preserve their integrity until they reach the northern city, poverty, ignorance, and color force them to seek homes in deteriorated slum areas from which practically all institutional life has disappeared. Hence, at the same time that these simple rural families are losing their internal cohesion, they are being freed from the controlling force of public opinion and communal institutions. Family desertion among Negroes in cities appears, then, to be one of the inevitable consequences of the impact of urban life on the simple family organization and folk culture which the Negro has evolved in the rural South. The distribution of desertions in relation to the general economic and cultural organization of Negro communities that have grown up in our American cities shows in a striking manner the influence of selective factors in the process of adjustment to the urban environment.

Frazier concluded his classic study, *The Negro Family*, with the prophesy that the "travail of civilization is not yet ended."

First, it appears that the family which evolved within the isolated world of the Negro folk will become increasingly disorganized. Modern means of communication will break down the isolation of the world of the black folk, and, as long as the bankrupt system of southern agriculture exists, Negro families will continue to seek a living in the towns and cities of the country. They will crowd the slum areas of southern cities or make their way to northern cities where their family life will become disrupted and their poverty will force them to depend upon charity.

In every index of family pathology—divorce, separation, and desertion, female family head, children in broken homes, and illegitimacy—the contrast between the urban and rural environment for Negro families is unmistakable.

Harlem, into which Negroes began to move early in this century, is the center and symbol of the urban life of the Negro American. Conditions in Harlem are not worse, they are probably better than in most Negro ghettos. The social disorganization of central Harlem, comprising ten health areas, was thoroughly documented by the HARYOU report, save for the illegitimacy rates. These have now been made available to the Labor Department by the New York City Department of Health. There could hardly be a more

dramatic demonstration of the crumbling—the breaking—of the family structure on the urban frontier.

### **Unemployment and Poverty**

The impact of unemployment on the Negro family, and particularly on the Negro male, is the least understood of all the developments that have contributed to the present crisis. There is little analysis because there has been almost no inquiry.

Unemployment, for whites and nonwhites alike, has on the whole been treated as an economic phenomenon, with almost no attention paid for at least a quarter-century to social and personal consequences.

In 1940, Edward Wight Bakke described the effects of unemployment on family structure in terms of six stages of adjustment. Although the families studied were white, the pattern would clearly seem to be a general one, and apply to Negro families as well.

The first two stages end with the exhaustion of credit and the entry of the wife into the labor force. The father is no longer the provider and the elder children become resentful.

The third stage is the critical one of commencing a new day-to-day existence. At this point two women are in charge:

Consider the fact that relief investigators or case workers are normally women and deal with the housewife. Already suffering a loss in prestige and authority in the family because of his failure to be the chief bread winner, the male head of the family feels deeply this obvious transfer of planning for the family's well-being to two women, one of them an outsider. His role is reduced to that of errand boy to and from the relief office.

If the family makes it through this stage Bakke finds that it is likely to survive, and the rest of the process is one of adjustment. The critical element of adjustment was not welfare payments, but work.

Having observed our families under conditions of unemployment with no public help, or with that help coming from direct [*sic*] and from work relief, we are convinced that after the exhaustion of self-produced resources, work relief is the only type of assistance which can restore the strained bonds of family relationship in a way which promises the continued functioning of that family in meeting the responsibilities imposed upon it by our culture.

Work is precisely the one thing the Negro family head in such circumstances has not received over the past generation.

The fundamental, overwhelming fact is that Negro unemployment, with the exception of a few years during World War II and the Korean War, has continued at disaster levels for 35 years.

Once again, this is particularly the case in the northern urban areas to which the Negro population has been moving.



The 1930 Census (taken in the spring, before the Depression was in full swing) showed Negro unemployment at 6.1 percent, as against 6.6 percent for whites. But taking out the South reversed the relationship: white 7.4 percent, nonwhite 11.5 percent.

By 1940, the 2 to 1 white-Negro unemployment relationship that persists to this day had clearly emerged. Taking out the South again, whites were 14.8 percent, nonwhites 29.7 percent.

Since 1929, the Negro worker has been tremendously affected by the movements of the business cycle and of employment. He has been hit worse by declines than whites, and proportionately helped more by recoveries.

From 1951 to 1963, the level of the Negro male unemployment was on a long-run rising trend, while at the same time following the short-run ups and downs of the business cycle. During the same period, the number of broken families in the Negro world was also on a long-run rise, with intermediate ups and downs.

[The data reveal] that the series move in the same directions—up and down together, with a long-run rising trend—but that the peaks and troughs are 1 year out of phase. Thus unemployment peaks 1 year before broken families, and so on. By plotting these series in terms of deviation from trend, and moving the unemployment curve 1 year ahead, we see the clear relation of the two otherwise seemingly unrelated series of events; the cyclical swings in unemployment have their counterpart in increases and decreases in separations.

The effect of recession unemployment on divorces further illustrates the economic roots of the problem. The nonwhite divorce rates dipped slightly in high unemployment years like 1954–55, 1958, and 1961–62...

Divorce is expensive: those without money resort to separation or desertion. While divorce is not a desirable goal for a society, it recognizes the importance of marriage and family, and for children some family continuity and support is more likely when the institution of the family has been so recognized.

The conclusion from these and similar data is difficult to avoid: During times when jobs were reasonably plentiful (although at no time during this period, save perhaps the first 2 years, did the unemployment rate for Negro males drop to anything like a reasonable level) the Negro family became stronger and more stable. As jobs became more and more difficult to find, the stability of the family became more and more difficult to maintain.

This relation is clearly seen in terms of the illegitimacy rates of census tracts in the District of Columbia compared with male unemployment rates in the same neighborhoods.

In 1963, a prosperous year, 29.2 percent of all Negro men in the labor force were unemployed at some time during the year. Almost half of these men were out of work 15 weeks or more.

The impact of poverty on Negro family structure is no less obvious, although again it may not be widely acknowledged. There would seem to be an American tradition, agrarian in its origins but reinforced by

attitudes of urban immigrant groups, to the effect that family morality and stability decline as income and social position rise. Over the years this may have provided some consolation to the poor, but there is little evidence that it is true. On the contrary, higher family incomes are unmistakably associated with greater family stability—which comes first may be a matter for conjecture, but the conjunction of the two characteristics is unmistakable.

The Negro family is no exception. In the District of Columbia, for example, census tracts with median incomes over \$8,000 had an illegitimacy rate one-third that of tracts in the category under \$4,000.

### **The Wage System**

The American wage system is conspicuous in the degree to which it provides high incomes for individuals, but is rarely adjusted to insure that family, as well as individual needs are met. Almost without exception, the social welfare and social insurance systems of other industrial democracies provide for some adjustment or supplement of a worker's income to provide for the extra expenses of those with families. American arrangements do not, save for income tax deductions.

The Federal minimum wage of \$1.25 per hour provides a basic income for an individual, but an income well below the poverty line for a couple, much less a family with children.

The 1965 Economic Report of the President revised the data on the number of persons living in poverty in the United States to take account of the varying needs of families of different sizes, rather than using a flat cut off at the \$3,000 income level. The resulting revision illustrated the significance of family size. Using these criteria, the number of poor families is smaller, but the number of large families who are poor increases, and the number of children in poverty rises by more than one-third—from 11 million to 15 million. This means that one-fourth of the Nation's children live in families that are poor.

A third of these children belong to families in which the father was not only present, but was employed the year round. In overall terms, median family income is lower for large families than for small families. Families of six or more children have median incomes 24 percent below families with three. (It may be added that 47 percent of young men who fail the Selective Service education test come from families of six or more.)

During the 1950–60 decade of heavy Negro migration to the cities of the North and West, the ratio of nonwhite to white family income in cities increased from 57 to 63 percent. Corresponding declines in the ratio in the rural nonfarm and farm areas kept the national ratio virtually unchanged. But between 1960 and 1963, median nonwhite family income slipped from 55 percent to 53 percent of white income. The drop occurred in three regions, with only the South, where a larger proportion of Negro families have more than one earner, showing a slight improvement.

Because in general terms Negro families have the largest number of children and the lowest incomes, many Negro fathers literally cannot support their families. Because the father is either not present, is unemployed, or makes such a low wage, the Negro woman goes to work. Fifty-six percent of Negro women, age 25 to 64, are in the work force, against 42 percent of white women. This dependence on the mother's income undermines the position of the father and deprives the children of the kind of attention, particularly in school matters, which is now a standard feature of middle-class upbringing.

### **The Dimensions Grow**

The dimensions of the problems of Negro Americans are compounded by the present extraordinary growth in Negro population. At the founding of the nation, and into the first decade of the 19th century, 1 American in 5 was a Negro. The proportion declined steadily until it was only 1 in 10 by 1920, where it held until the 1950's, when it began to rise. Since 1950, the Negro population has grown at a rate of 2.4 percent per year compared with 1.7 percent for the total population. If this rate continues, in seven years 1 American in 8 will be nonwhite.

These changes are the result of a declining Negro death rate, now approaching that of the nation generally, and a fertility rate that grew steadily during the postwar period. By 1959, the ratio of white to nonwhite fertility rates reached 1:1.42. Both the white and nonwhite fertility rates have declined since 1959, but the differential has not narrowed.

Family size increased among nonwhite families between 1950 and 1960—as much for those without fathers as for those with fathers. Average family size changed little among white families, with a slight increase in the size of husband-wife families balanced by a decline in the size of families without fathers.

Negro women not only have more children, but have them earlier. Thus in 1960, there were 1,247 ever children born per thousand ever-married nonwhite women 15 to 19 years of age, as against only 725 among white women, a ratio of 1.7:1. The Negro fertility rate overall is now 1.4 times the white, but what might be called the generation rate is 1.7 times the white.

This population growth must inevitably lead to an unconcealable crisis in Negro unemployment. The most conspicuous failure of the American social system in the past 10 years has been its inadequacy in providing jobs for Negro youth. Thus, in January 1965 the unemployment rate for Negro teenagers stood at 29 percent. This problem will now become steadily more serious.

During the rest of the 1960's the nonwhite civilian population 14 years of age and over will increase by 20 percent—more than double the white rate. The nonwhite labor force will correspondingly increase 20 percent in the next 6 years, double the rate of increase in the nonwhite labor force of the past decade.

As with the population as a whole, there is much evidence that children are being born most rapidly in those Negro families with the least financial resources. This is an ancient pattern, but because the needs of children are

greater today it is very possible that the education and opportunity gap between the offspring of these families and those of stable middle-class unions is not closing, but is growing wider.

A cycle is at work; too many children too early make it most difficult for the parents to finish school. (In February, 1963, 38 percent of the white girls who dropped out of school did so because of marriage or pregnancy, as against 49 percent of nonwhite girls.) An Urban League study in New York reported that 44 percent of girl dropouts left school because of pregnancy.

Low education levels in turn produce low income levels, which deprive children of many opportunities, and so the cycle repeats itself.

## CHAPTER V. THE CASE FOR NATIONAL ACTION

The object of this study has been to define a problem, rather than propose solutions to it. We have kept within these confines for three reasons.

First, there are many persons, within and without the Government, who do not feel the problem exists, at least in any serious degree. These persons feel that, with the legal obstacles to assimilation out of the way, matters will take care of themselves in the normal course of events. This is a fundamental issue, and requires a decision within the government.

Second, it is our view that the problem is so inter-related, one thing with another, that any list of program proposals would necessarily be incomplete, and would distract attention from the main point of inter-relatedness. We have shown a clear relation between male employment, for example, and the number of welfare dependent children. Employment in turn reflects educational achievement, which depends in large part on family stability, which reflects employment. Where we should break into this cycle, and how, are the most difficult domestic questions facing the United States. We must first reach agreement on what the problem is, then we will know what questions must be answered.

Third, it is necessary to acknowledge the view, held by a number of responsible persons, that this problem may in fact be out of control. This is a view with which we emphatically and totally disagree, but the view must be acknowledged. The persistent rise in Negro educational achievement is probably the main trend that belies this thesis. On the other hand our study has produced some clear indications that the situation may indeed have begun to feed on itself. It may be noted, for example, that for most of the post-war period male Negro unemployment and the number of new AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] cases rose and fell together as if connected by a chain from 1948 to 1962. The correlation between the two series of data was an astonishing .91. (This would mean that 83 percent of the rise and fall in AFDC cases can be statistically ascribed to the rise and fall in the unemployment rate.) In 1960, however, for the first time, unemployment declined, but the number of new AFDC cases rose. In 1963 this happened a second time. In 1964 a third. The possible implications of these and other data are serious enough that they, too, should be understood before program proposals are made.

However, the argument of this paper does lead to one central conclusion: Whatever the specific elements of a national effort designed to resolve this problem, those elements must be coordinated in terms of one general strategy.

What then is that problem? We feel the answer is clear enough. Three centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American. At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right.

In a word, a national effort towards the problems of Negro Americans must be directed towards the question of family structure. The object should be to strengthen the Negro family so as to enable it to raise and support its members as do other families. After that, how this group of Americans chooses to run its affairs, take advantage of its opportunities, or fail to do so, is none of the nation's business.

The fundamental importance and urgency of restoring the Negro American Family structure has been evident for some time. E. Franklin Frazier put it most succinctly in 1950:

As the result of family disorganization a large proportion of Negro children and youth have not undergone the socialization which only the family can provide. The disorganized families have failed to provide for their emotional needs and have not provided the discipline and habits which are necessary for personality development. Because the disorganized family has failed in its function as a socializing agency, it has handicapped the children in their relations to the institutions in the community. Moreover, family disorganization has been partially responsible for a large amount of juvenile delinquency and adult crime among Negroes. Since the widespread family disorganization among Negroes has resulted from the failure of the father to play the role in family life required by American society, the mitigation of this problem must await those changes in the Negro and American society which will enable the Negro father to play the role required of him.

Nothing was done in response to Frazier's argument. Matters were left to take care of themselves, and as matters will, grew worse not better. The problem is now more serious, the obstacles greater. There is, however, a profound change for the better in one respect. The President has committed the nation to an all out effort to eliminate poverty wherever it exists, among whites or Negroes, and a militant, organized, and responsible Negro movement exists to join in that effort.

Such a national effort could be stated thus:

The policy of the United States is to bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship. To this end, the programs of the Federal government bearing on this objective shall be designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family.

SOURCE: *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, Office of Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor (March 1965), [www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/history/webid-meynihn.htm](http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/history/webid-meynihn.htm).



### **18. Excerpt from the Governor's Commission Report on the Watts Riots, December 1965**

Reproduced here is an excerpt from the report, titled *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?* compiled by the Commission appointed by California Governor Edmund G. Brown to investigate the causes and course of the riots that erupted in the Watts district of Los Angeles in August 1965. The governor also charged the Commission, which was chaired by John A. McCone, with developing recommendations for how to avoid similar violence in the future. The following excerpt describes how the riot started and grew.

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#### **144 HOURS IN AUGUST 1965**

##### **The Frye Arrests**

On August 11, 1965, California Highway Patrolman Lee W. Minikus, a Caucasian, was riding his motorcycle along 122nd Street, just south of the Los Angeles City boundary, when a passing Negro motorist told him he had just seen a car that was being driven recklessly. Minikus gave chase and pulled the car over at 116th and Avalon, in a predominantly Negro neighborhood, near but not in Watts. It was 7:00 P.M.

The driver was Marquette Frye, a 21-year-old Negro, and his older brother, Ronald, 22, was a passenger. Minikus asked Marquette to get out and take the standard Highway Patrol sobriety test. Frye failed the test, and at 7:05 P.M., Minikus told him he was under arrest. He radioed for his motorcycle partner, for a car to take Marquette to jail, and a tow truck to take the car away.

They were two blocks from the Frye home, in an area of two-story apartment buildings and numerous small family residences. Because it was a very warm evening, many of the residents were outside.

Ronald Frye, having been told he could not take the car when Marquette was taken to jail, went to get their mother so that she could claim the car. They returned to the scene about 7:15 P.M. as the second motorcycle patrolman, the patrol car, and tow truck arrived. The original group of 25 to 50 curious spectators had grown to 250 to 300 persons.

Mrs. Frye approached Marquette and scolded him for drinking. Marquette, who until then had been peaceful and cooperative, pushed her away and moved toward the crowd, cursing and shouting at the officers that they would have to kill him to take him to jail. The patrolmen pursued Marquette and he resisted.

The watching crowd became hostile, and one of the patrolmen radioed for more help. Within minutes, three more highway patrolmen arrived.

Minikus and his partner were now struggling with both Frye brothers. Mrs. Frye, now belligerent, jumped on the back of one of the officers and ripped his shirt. In an attempt to subdue Marquette, one officer swung at his shoulder with a night stick, missed, and struck him on the forehead, inflicting a minor cut. By 7:23 P.M., all three of the Fries were under arrest, and other California Highway Patrolmen and, for the first time, Los Angeles police officers had arrived in response to the call for help.

Officers on the scene said there were now more than 1,000 persons in the crowd. About 7:25 P.M., the patrol car with the prisoners, and the tow truck pulling the Frye car, left the scene. At 7:31 P.M., the Fries arrived at a nearby sheriff's substation.

Undoubtedly the situation at the scene of the arrest was tense. Belligerence and resistance to arrest called for forceful action by the officers. This brought on hostility from Mrs. Frye and some of the bystanders, which, in turn, caused increased actions by the police. Anger at the scene escalated and, as in all such situations, bitter recriminations from both sides followed.

Considering the undisputed facts, the Commission finds that the arrest of the Fries was handled efficiently and expeditiously. The sobriety test administered by the California Highway Patrol and its use of a transportation vehicle for the prisoner and a tow truck to remove his car are in accordance with the practices of other law enforcement agencies, including the Los Angeles Police Department.

### **The Spitting Incident**

As the officers were leaving the scene, someone in the crowd spat on one of them. They stopped withdrawing and two highway patrolmen went into the crowd and arrested a young Negro woman and a man who was said to have been inciting the crowd to violence when the officers were arresting her. Although the wisdom of stopping the withdrawal to make these arrests has been questioned, the Commission finds no basis for criticizing the judgment of the officers on the scene.

Following these arrests, all officers withdrew at 7:40 P.M. As the last police car left the scene, it was stoned by the now irate mob.

As has happened so frequently in riots in other cities, inflated and distorted rumors concerning the arrests spread quickly to adjacent areas. The young woman arrested for spitting was wearing a barber's smock, and the false rumor spread throughout the area that she was pregnant and had been abused by police. Erroneous reports were also circulated concerning the treatment of the Fries at the arrest scene.

The crowd did not disperse, but ranged in small groups up and down the street, although never more than a few blocks from the arrest scene. Between 8:15 P.M. and midnight, the mob stoned automobiles, pulled Caucasian motorists out of their cars and beat them, and menaced a police field command post which had been set up in the area. By 1:00 A.M., the outbreak seemed to be under control but, until early morning hours, there were sporadic reports of unruly mobs, vandalism, and rock throwing. Twenty-nine persons were arrested.

### **A Meeting Misfires**

On Thursday morning, there was an uneasy calm, but it was obvious that tensions were still high. A strong expectancy of further trouble kept the atmosphere tense in the judgment of both police and Negro leaders. The actions by many individuals, both Negro and white, during Thursday, as well as at other times, to attempt to control the riots are commendable. We have heard many vivid and impressive accounts of the work of Negro leaders, social workers, probation officers, churchmen, teachers, and businessmen in their attempts to persuade the people to desist from their illegal activities, to stay in their houses and off the street, and to restore order.

However, the meeting called by the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission, at the request of county officials, for the purpose of lowering the temperature misfired. That meeting was held beginning about 2:00 P.M. in an auditorium at Athens Park, eleven blocks from the scene of the arrest. It brought together every available representative of neighborhood groups and Negro leaders to discuss the problem. Members of the press, television, and radio covered the meeting. Various elected officials participated and members of the Los Angeles Police Department, Sheriff's Office and District Attorney's Office were in attendance as observers.

Several community leaders asked members of the audience to use their influence to persuade area residents to stay home Thursday evening. Even Mrs. Frye spoke and asked the crowd to "help me and others calm this situation down so that we will not have a riot tonight." But one Negro high school youth ran to the microphones and said the rioters would attack adjacent white areas that evening. This inflammatory remark was widely reported on television and radio, and it was seldom balanced by reporting of the many responsible statements made at the meeting. Moreover, it appears that the tone and conduct of the meeting shifted, as the meeting was in progress, from attempted persuasion with regard to the maintenance of law and order to a discussion of the grievances felt by the Negro.

Following the main meeting, certain leaders adjourned to a small meeting where they had discussions with individuals representing youth gangs and decided upon a course of action. They decided to propose that Caucasian officers be withdrawn from the troubled area, and that Negro officers in civilian clothes and unmarked cars be substituted. Members of this small group then went to see Deputy Chief of Police Roger Murdock at the 77th Street Station, where the proposals were rejected by him at about 7:00 P.M. They envisaged an untested method of handling a serious situation that was rapidly developing. Furthermore, the proposal to use only Negro officers ran counter to the policy of the Police Department, adopted over a period of time at the urging of Negro leaders, to deploy Negro officers throughout the city and not concentrate them in the Negro area. Indeed, when the proposal came the police had no immediate means of determining where the Negro officers on the forces were stationed. At this moment, rioting was breaking out again, and the police felt that their established



procedures were the only way to handle what was developing as another night of rioting. Following those procedures, the police decided to set up a perimeter around the center of trouble and keep all crowd activity within that area.

### **An Alert Is Sounded**

About 5:00 P.M. Thursday, after receiving a report on the Athens Park meeting, Police Chief William H. Parker called Lt. Gen. Roderic Hill, the Adjutant General of the California National Guard in Sacramento, and told him that the Guard might be needed. This step was taken pursuant to a procedure instituted by Governor Brown and agreed upon in 1963 and 1964 between the Los Angeles Police Department, the Governor and the Guard. It was an alert that the Guard might be needed.

Pursuant to the agreed-upon procedure, General Hill sent Colonel Robert Quick to Los Angeles to work as liaison officer. He also alerted the commanders of the 40th Armored Division located in Southern California to the possibility of being called. In addition, in the absence of Governor Brown who was in Greece, he called the acting Governor, Lieutenant Governor Glenn Anderson, in Santa Barbara, and informed him of the Los Angeles situation.

The Emergency Control Center at Police Headquarters—a specially outfitted command post—was opened at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday. That day, one hundred and ninety deputy sheriffs were asked for and assigned. Between 6:45 and 7:15 P.M., crowds at the scene of the trouble of the night before had grown to more than 1,000. Firemen who came into the area to fight fires in three overturned automobiles were shot at and bombarded with rocks. The first fire in a commercial establishment was set only one block from the location of the Frye arrests, and police had to hold back rioters as firemen fought the blaze.

Shortly before midnight, rock-throwing and looting crowds for the first time ranged outside the perimeter. Five hundred police officers, deputy sheriffs and highway patrolmen used various techniques, including fender-to-fender sweeps by police cars, in seeking to disperse the mob. By 4:00 A.M. Friday, the police department felt that the situation was at least for the moment under control. At 5:09 A.M., officers were withdrawn from emergency perimeter control.

During the evening on Thursday, Lt. Gov. Anderson had come to his home in suburban Los Angeles from Santa Barbara. While at his residence, he was informed that there were as many as 8,000 rioters in the streets. About 1:00 A.M. Friday, he talked by phone to John Billett of his staff and with General Hill, and both advised him that police officials felt the situation was nearing control. About 6:45 A.M., at Lt. Gov. Anderson's request, Billett called the Emergency Control Center and was told by Sergeant Jack Eberhardt, the intelligence officer on duty, that "the situation was rather well in hand," and this information was promptly passed on to Anderson. Anderson instructed Billett to keep in touch with him and left Los Angeles at 7:25 A.M. for a morning meeting of the Finance Committee of the Board

of Regents of the University of California in Berkeley, and an afternoon meeting of the full Board.

### **Friday, the 13th**

Around 8:00 A.M., crowds formed again in the vicinity of the Frye arrests and in the adjacent Watts business area, and looting resumed. Before 9:00 A.M., Colonel Quick called General Hill in Sacramento from the Emergency Control Center and told him riot activity was intensifying.

At approximately 9:15 A.M., Mayor Sam Yorty and Chief Parker talked on the telephone, and they decided, at that time, to call the Guard. Following this conversation, Mayor Yorty went to the airport and boarded a 10:05 flight to keep a speaking engagement at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. Mayor Yorty told our Commission that "by about 10:00 or so, I have to decide whether I am going to disappoint that audience in San Francisco and maybe make my city look rather ridiculous if the rioting doesn't start again, and the mayor has disappointed that crowd." The Mayor returned to the City at 3:35 P.M.

The riot situation was canvassed in a Los Angeles Police Department staff meeting held at 9:45 A.M. where Colonel Quick, of the California National Guard, was in attendance, along with police officials. At 10:00 A.M., according to Colonel Quick, Chief Parker said, "It looks like we are going to have to call the troops. We will need a thousand men." Colonel Quick has said that Chief Parker did not specifically ask him to get the National Guard. On the other hand, Chief Parker has stated that he told Colonel Quick that he wanted the National Guard and that Quick indicated that he would handle the request.

In any event, at 10:15 A.M., Colonel Quick informed General Hill by telephone that Chief Parker would probably request 1,000 national guardsmen. General Hill advised Colonel Quick to have Chief Parker call the Governor's office in Sacramento. At 10:50 A.M., Parker made the formal request for the National Guard to Winslow Christian, Governor Brown's executive secretary, who was then in Sacramento, and Christian accepted the request.

By mid-morning, a crowd of 3,000 had gathered in the commercial section of Watts and there was general looting in that district as well as in adjacent business areas. By the time the formal request for the Guard had been made, ambulance drivers and firemen were refusing to go into the riot area without an armed escort.

### **Calling the Guard**

At approximately 11:00 A.M., Christian reached Lt. Gov. Anderson by telephone in Berkeley and relayed Chief Parker's request. Lt. Gov. Anderson did not act on the request at that time. We believe that this request from the chief law enforcement officer of the stricken city for the National Guard should have been honored without delay. If the Lieutenant Governor was in doubt about conditions in Los Angeles, he should, in our view, have confirmed Chief Parker's estimate by telephoning National Guard officers in Los Angeles. Although we are mindful that it was natural and prudent for the

Lieutenant Governor to be cautious in acting in the absence of Governor Brown, we feel that, in this instance, he hesitated when he should have acted.

Feeling that he wished to consider the matter further, Lt. Gov. Anderson returned to Los Angeles by way of Sacramento. A propeller-driven National Guard plane picked him up at Oakland at 12:20 P.M., and reached McClellan Air Force Base, near Sacramento, at 1:00 P.M. Anderson met with National Guard officers and civilian staff members and received various suggestions, ranging from advice from Guard officers that he commit the Guard immediately to counsel from some civilian staff members that he examine the situation in Los Angeles and meet with Chief Parker before acting. Although Anderson still did not reach a decision to commit the Guard, he agreed with Guard officers that the troops should be assembled in the Armories at 5 P.M., which he had been told by General Hill was the earliest hour that it was feasible to do so. Hill then ordered 2,000 men to be at the armories by that hour. Anderson's plane left Sacramento for Los Angeles at 1:35 P.M. and arrived at 3:35 P.M.

At the time Lt. Gov. Anderson and General Hill were talking in Sacramento, approximately 856 Guardsmen in the 3rd Brigade were in the Long Beach area 12 miles to the south, while enroute from San Diego, outfitted with weapons, to summer camp at Camp Roberts. We feel it reasonable to conclude, especially since this unit was subsequently used in the curfew area, that further escalation of the riots might have been averted if these Guardsmen had been diverted promptly and deployed on station throughout the riot area by early or mid-afternoon Friday.

Friday afternoon, Hale Champion, State Director of Finance, who was in the Governor's office in Los Angeles, reached Governor Brown in Athens. He briefed the Governor on the current riot situation, and Brown said he felt the Guard should be called immediately, that the possibility of a curfew should be explored, and that he was heading home as fast as possible.

Early Friday afternoon, rioters jammed the streets, began systematically to burn two blocks of 103rd Street in Watts, and drove off firemen by sniper fire and by throwing missiles. By late afternoon, gang activity began to spread the disturbance as far as fifty and sixty blocks to the north.

Lieutenant Governor Anderson arrived at the Van Nuys Air National Guard Base at 3:35 P.M. After talking with Hale Champion who urged him to call the Guard, Anderson ordered General Hill to commit the troops. At 4:00 P.M., he announced this decision to the press. At 5:00 P.M., in the Governor's office downtown, he signed the proclamation officially calling the Guard.

By 6:00 P.M., 1,336 National Guard troops were assembled in the armories. These troops were enroute to two staging areas in the rioting area by 7:00 P.M. However, neither the officials of the Los Angeles Police Department nor officers of the Guard deployed any of the troops until shortly after 10:00 P.M. Having in mind these delays, we believe that law enforcement agencies and the National Guard should develop contingency plans so that in future situations of emergency, there will be a better method at hand to assure the early commitment of the National Guard and the rapid deployment of the troops.

The first death occurred between 6:00 and 7:00 P.M. Friday, when a Negro bystander, trapped on the street between police and rioters, was shot and killed during an exchange of gunfire.

### **The Worst Night**

Friday was the worst night. The riot moved out of the Watts area and burning and looting spread over wide areas of Southeast Los Angeles several miles apart. At 1:00 A.M. Saturday, there were 100 engine companies fighting fires in the area. Snipers shot at firemen as they fought new fires. That night, a fireman was crushed and killed on the fire line by a falling wall, and a deputy sheriff was killed when another sheriff's shotgun was discharged in a struggle with rioters.

Friday night, the law enforcement officials tried a different tactic. Police officers made sweeps on foot, moving en masse along streets to control activity and enable firemen to fight fires. By midnight, Friday, another 1,000 National Guard troops were marching shoulder to shoulder clearing the streets. By 3:00 A.M. Saturday, 3,356 guardsmen were on the streets, and the number continued to increase until the full commitment of 13,900 guardsmen was reached by midnight on Saturday. The maximum commitment of the Los Angeles Police Department during the riot period was 934 officers; the maximum for the Sheriff's Office was 719 officers.

Despite the new tactics and added personnel, the area was not under control at any time on Friday night, as major calls of looting, burning, and shooting were reported every two to three minutes. On throughout the morning hours of Saturday and during the long day, the crowds of looters and patterns of burning spread out and increased still further until it became necessary to impose a curfew on the 46.5 square-mile area on Saturday. Lieutenant Governor Anderson appeared on television early Saturday evening to explain the curfew, which made it a crime for any unauthorized persons to be on the streets in the curfew area after 8:00 P.M.

### **The Beginning of Control**

Much of the Saturday burning had been along Central Avenue. Again using sweep tactics, the guardsmen and police were able to clear this area by 3:30 P.M. Guardsmen rode "shotgun" on the fire engines and effectively stopped the sniping and rock throwing at firemen. Saturday evening, road blocks were set up in anticipation of the curfew. The massive show of force was having some effect although there was still riot activity and rumors spread regarding proposed activity in the south central area.

When the curfew started at 8:00 P.M., police and guardsmen were able to deal with the riot area as a whole. Compared with the holocaust of Friday evening, the streets were relatively quiet. The only major exception was the burning of a block of stores on Broadway between 46th and 48th Streets. Snipers again prevented firemen from entering the area, and while the buildings burned, a gun battle ensued between law enforcement officers, the Guard, and the snipers.

During the day Sunday, the curfew area was relatively quiet. Because many markets had been destroyed, food distribution was started by

churches, community groups, and government agencies. Governor Brown, who had returned Saturday night, personally toured the area, talking to residents. Major fires were under control but there were new fires and some rekindling of old ones. By Tuesday, Governor Brown was able to lift the curfew and by the following Sunday, only 252 guardsmen remained.

Coordination between the several law enforcement agencies during the period of the riot was commendable. When the California Highway Patrol called for help on Wednesday evening, the Los Angeles Police Department responded immediately. When the situation grew critical Thursday evening, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office committed substantial forces without hesitation. Indeed, the members of all law enforcement agencies—policemen, sheriff's officers, highway Patrolmen, city Marshals—and the Fire Departments as well—worked long hours, in harmony and with conspicuous bravery, to quell the disorder. However, the depth and the seriousness of the situation were not accurately appraised in the early stages, and the law enforcement forces committed and engaged in the several efforts to bring the riots under control on Thursday night and all day Friday proved to be inadequate. It required massive force to subdue the riot, as demonstrated by the effectiveness of the Guard when it moved into position late Friday night and worked in coordination with the local law enforcement units.

#### **Other Areas Affected**

As the word of the South Los Angeles violence was flashed almost continuously by all news media, the unrest spread. Although outbreaks in other areas were minor by comparison with those in South Central Los Angeles, each one held dangerous potential. San Diego, 102 miles away, had three days of rioting and 81 people were arrested. On Friday night, there was rioting in Pasadena, 12 miles from the curfew zone. There, liquor and gun stores were looted and Molotov cocktails and fire bombs were thrown at police cars. Only prompt and skillful handling by the police prevented this situation from getting out of control.

Pacoima, 20 miles north, had scattered rioting, looting, and burning. There was burning in Monrovia, 25 miles east. On Sunday night, after the curfew area was quiet, there was an incident in Long Beach, 12 miles south. About 200 guardsmen and Los Angeles police assisted Long Beach police in containing a dangerous situation which exploded when a policeman was shot when another officer's gun discharged as he was being attacked by rioters. Several fires were set Sunday night in the San Pedro-Wilmington area, 12 miles south.

#### **Was There a Pre-established Plan?**

After a thorough examination, the Commission has concluded that there is no reliable evidence of outside leadership or pre-established plans for the rioting. The testimony of law enforcement agencies and their respective intelligence officers supports this conclusion. The Attorney General, the District Attorney, and the Los Angeles police have all reached the conclusion that there is no evidence of a pre-plan or a pre-established central

direction of the rioting activities. This finding was submitted to the Grand Jury by the District Attorney.

This is not to say that there was no agitation or promotion of the rioting by local groups or gangs which exist in pockets throughout the south central area. The sudden appearance of Molotov cocktails in quantity and the unexplained movement of men in cars through the areas of great destruction support the conclusion that there was organization and planning after the riots commenced. In addition, on that tense Thursday, inflammatory handbills suddenly appeared in Watts. But this cannot be identified as a master plan by one group; rather it appears to have been the work of several gangs, with membership of young men ranging in age from 14 to 35 years. All of these activities intensified the rioting and caused it to spread with increased violence from one district to another in the curfew area.

### **The Grim Statistics**

The final statistics are staggering. There were 34 persons killed and 1,032 reported injuries, including 90 Los Angeles police officers, 136 firemen, 10 national guardsmen, 23 persons from other governmental agencies, and 773 civilians; 118 of the injuries resulted from gunshot wounds. Of the 34 killed, one was a fireman, one was a deputy sheriff, and one a Long Beach policeman.

In the weeks following the riots, Coroner's Inquests were held regarding thirty-two of the deaths. The Coroner's jury ruled that twenty-six of the deaths were justifiable homicide, five were homicidal, and one was accidental. Of those ruled justifiable homicide, the jury found that death was caused in sixteen instances by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department and in seven instances by the National Guard.

The Coroner's Inquest into one of the deaths was canceled at the request of the deceased's family. There was no inquest into the death of the deputy sheriff because of pending criminal proceedings.

A legal memorandum analyzing the procedures followed in the inquests, which was prepared at the request of the Commission, has been forwarded to the appropriate public officials for their consideration.

It has been estimated that the loss of property attributable to the riots was over \$40 million. More than 600 buildings were damaged by burning and looting. Of this number, more than 200 were totally destroyed by fire. The rioters concentrated primarily on food markets, liquor stores, furniture stores, clothing stores, department stores, and pawn shops. Arson arrests numbered 27 and 10 arson complaints were filed, a relatively small number considering that fire department officials say that all of the fires were incendiary in origin. Between 2,000 and 3,000 fire alarms were recorded during the riot, 1,000 of these between 7:00 A.M. on Friday and 7:00 A.M. on Saturday. We note with interest that no residences were deliberately burned, that damage to schools, libraries, churches and public buildings was minimal, and that certain types of business establishments, notably service stations and automobile dealers, were for the most part unharmed.

There were 3,438 adults arrested, 71% for burglary and theft. The number of juveniles arrested was 514, 81% for burglary and theft. Of the adults

arrested, 1,232 had never been arrested before; 1,164 had a “minor” criminal record (arrest only or convictions with sentence of 90 days or less); 1,042 with “major” criminal record (convictions with sentence of more than 90 days). Of the juveniles arrested, 257 had never been arrested before; 212 had a “minor” criminal record; 43 had a “major” criminal record. Of the adults arrested, 2,057 were born in 16 southern states whereas the comparable figure for juveniles was 131. Some of the juveniles arrested extensively damaged the top two floors of an auxiliary jail which had been opened on the Saturday of the riots.

Those involved in the administration of justice—judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, and others—merit commendation for the steps they took to cope with the extraordinary responsibility thrust on the judicial system by the riots. By reorganizing calendars and making special assignments, the Los Angeles Superior and Municipal Courts have been able to meet the statutory deadlines for processing the cases of those arrested. Court statistics indicate that by November 26, the following dispositions had been made of the 2,278 felony cases filed against adults: 856 were found guilty; 155 were acquitted; 641 were disposed of prior to trial, primarily by dismissal; 626 are awaiting trial. Of the 1,133 misdemeanor cases filed, 733 were found guilty, 81 were acquitted, 184 dismissed and 135 are awaiting trial.

The Police and Sheriff’s Department have long known that many members of gangs, as well as others, in the south central area possessed weapons and knew how to use them. However, the extent to which pawn shops, each one of which possessed an inventory of weapons, were the immediate target of looters, leads to the conclusion that a substantial number of the weapons used were stolen from these shops. During the riots, law enforcement officers recovered 851 weapons. There is no evidence that the rioters made any attempt to steal narcotics from pharmacies in the riot area even though some pharmacies were looted and burned.

Overwhelming as are the grim statistics, the impact of the August rioting on the Los Angeles community has been even greater. The first weeks after the disorders brought a flood tide of charges and recriminations, Although this has now ebbed, the feeling of fear and tension persists, largely unabated, throughout the community. A certain slowness in the rebuilding of the fired structures has symbolized the difficulty in mending relationships in our community which were so severely fractured by the August nightmare.

SOURCE: Governor’s Commission on the Los Angeles Riots. *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?* Los Angeles: The Commission, 1965.



### **19. Excerpts from Cyrus R. Vance’s Report on the Riots in Detroit, July–August 1967**

Cyrus R. Vance, a special assistant to the secretary of defense, was sent to Detroit by the Johnson administration in July 1967 to coordinate the federal response to the riot with state and local authorities. The following excerpts

from Vance's official report on his activities describe the actions taken by authorities to quell the disorders; it is not a description of the disorders themselves or an attempt to determine the causes of the riot. After three years of what would be known as the Long Hot Summer Riots (1965–1967), Vance's purpose was to gather information that could help the government respond more effectively to similar urban disorders in the future.

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## **I. Introduction**

This report covers the Federal activities connected with the riots in Detroit, Michigan, during the period 23 July through 2 August 1967. Its purpose is to recount the sequence of events, to summarize the experience gained, and to focus upon the problems encountered, both resolved and unresolved, for consideration in planning for or conducting future operations of a similar nature. This report does not treat with the underlying causes of the loss of law and order in Detroit, which required Federal intervention.

My participation commenced shortly after 1100 on Monday, 24 July. The facts with respect to the period prior to my participation have been taken from the records of the Department of Justice and the Department of Defense.

## **II. Narrative of Events**

The first contact between city and state officials in Detroit and Attorney General Clark occurred Sunday night, 23 July at 2355. Mayor Cavanagh, who was with Governor Romney at the time, called the Attorney General at his home and said a very dangerous situation existed in the city. The Attorney General promptly relayed this information to Secretary of the Army Resor.

At 0240 on Monday, Governor Romney called the Attorney General at his home and said he thought he might need Army troops to quell the rioting. Mr. Clark said he would begin the alert so that the Army could make preparations and be ready promptly if needed. Immediately upon the completion of this conversation, the Attorney General again called Secretary Resor to inform him of the situation and of the need for the Army to commence preparations.

The Attorney General called the President, at about 0300, to advise him of the disorders in Detroit.

At 0340 the Attorney General called Governor Romney, who reported that the situation was about the same and that he still might need help from the Army. The Attorney General said the Army could be present by late morning, if necessary.

At this point, the Attorney General proceeded to his office, where he called Secretary Resor at 0420. The Army Secretary stated that General Moore, of the Michigan National Guard, believed the Guard could handle the situation. Secretary Resor also said that the Army could place troops in Detroit before noon, if necessary.



The Attorney General called Secretary Resor at 0450 to review the situation and again at 0500. On this latter occasion, Secretary Resor said General Simmons, the Commanding General of the 46th Infantry Division, Michigan National Guard, had toured the riot area and believed that the Guard could handle the situation. Secretary Resor said he was informed that 2,000 Guardsmen were in the area, 3,000 more would be there by noon and another 3,000 were not yet called from a reserve force. The Secretary also reported again that General Moore believed the Guard could handle the situation. He reported that Inspector Gage of the Detroit Police was of the same view.

Attorney General Clark called Governor Romney at 0515 and relayed the information that General Simmons, General Moore and Inspector Gage felt the situation was under control and could be handled locally. The Governor replied that rather than take any chance, he should get Federal help. He said he had just told the press that Federal troops were requested. The Attorney General said that a written request for Federal troops would be desirable before their commitment. He advised the Governor that he would have to exhaust his resources and be prepared to say that there was a state of insurrection in Michigan or that there was domestic violence he was unable to suppress. The Governor replied that he would talk to General Simmons and advise the Attorney General later of his decision. He said the situation at that time was not as bad as it had been in Watts or Newark. He also said he appreciated the assistance he had been given.

The Attorney General called Secretary Resor at 0535 to report this conversation with Governor Romney. At 0550 Secretary Resor called the Attorney General to say that 2,400 troops from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and 2,400 from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, were in a position to move into Selfridge Air Base, Michigan, by noon, if ordered to do so within the next 10 or 15 minutes. At 0640 the Secretary informed Mr. Clark that 2,190 National Guardsmen were in Detroit and it was estimated 5,000 would be there by noon.

Governor Romney called the Attorney General at 0650 to say that major looting continued and new fires were breaking out. He stated that no one could say whether the situation was contained or not. He said he was going out to look the situation over and would call back in an hour. The Attorney General told Governor Romney that if Federal troops were used, it would probably be necessary to Federalize the National Guard. The Attorney General went on to say that the Governor should not ask for the troops unless they were needed. He also stated that the Army had troops in a state of readiness to move and that the Governor would need to decide within three hours to ask for the troops if they were to arrive in daylight.

Mr. Clark called Secretary Resor at 0700 to report his conversation with Governor Romney.

At 0855 the Governor called the Attorney General and read a statement *recommending* the use of Federal troops. Mr. Clark replied that, under the Constitution and other laws, it would be necessary for the Governor to *request* the use of Federal troops, and to give assurances that a full commitment of State resources had been made and that he was unable to suppress

the violence. Governor Romney answered that he understood and would get in touch with the Attorney General as soon as he could.

At 0915 Secretary Resor informed Mr. Clark that General Throckmorton would be in command of the Army troops if they were to be used.

At 0935 the Attorney General briefed the President.

At 0945 Governor Romney called the Attorney General and read a draft of a telegram to the President requesting troops. The Attorney General said the telegram was adequate and that if the Governor decided to send it, he should do so quickly. The Governor said a decision would be made promptly.

Mr. Clark relayed the gist of this conversation to Secretary Resor at 1000 and then to the President at 1010. The President instructed the Attorney General to tell Secretary Resor to move full speed ahead. Mr. Clark did so at 1015.

At 1046 Governor Romney sent the President the telegram he had read to the Attorney General. The telegram was received by the President at 1056 and he replied at 1105 with a wire informing Governor Romney that he was dispatching Federal troops.

At 1155 the Attorney General, then at the White House, reached Governor Romney and read the President's telegram to him. The Governor said it was very helpful. The Attorney General informed him that I would be in charge of the Federal operations. Thereupon I took the phone and talked briefly with the Governor.

At approximately 1100 I had received a telephone call at home from Secretary McNamara who said that he was at the White House with the President and wished to know whether it would be possible for me to go to Detroit in connection with the riots which had started on Sunday. I replied affirmatively, and told him that I would come to the White House as soon as possible.

I arrived at the White House at about 1150 and went to the Cabinet Room where a meeting was in progress. Among those present at the meeting were the President, Secretary McNamara, Attorney General Clark, Deputy Attorney General Christopher, Assistant Attorney General Doar and Mr. Wilkins, the Director of the Department of Justice Community Relations Service.

Secretary McNamara summarized the situation and gave me two telegrams to read. One was from Governor Romney; the second was the response from the President. . . . Governor Romney's telegram stated that as Governor of the State of Michigan he was officially requesting the immediate deployment of Federal troops into Michigan to assist state and local authorities in re-establishing law and order in the City of Detroit. His telegram stated "there is reasonable doubt that we can suppress the existing looting, arson and sniping without the assistance of Federal troops. Time could be of the essence." The President's telegram stated that he had directed the troops, which had been requested by the Governor, to proceed at once to Selfridge Air Force Base. The President's telegram further stated that these troops would be available for immediate deployment as required to support and assist city and state police and Michigan National Guard

forces. The telegram also stated that I was being sent as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense to confer with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanaugh and to make specific plans for providing such support and assistance as might be necessary.

At 1155, as reported above, Attorney General Clark read to Governor Romney over the telephone the text of the telegram from the President which had been dispatched. I spoke briefly to Governor Romney and told him I would be catching a special military aircraft as soon as possible, and hoped to be in Detroit within 1½ to 2 hours. I asked if he could have a car available at Selfridge Air Force Base to take me to downtown Detroit immediately to meet with him and Mayor Cavanaugh. He said he would arrange this.

The President made it very clear to me that he was delegating to me all the responsibility which he could under the Constitution and laws enacted by the Congress and that I should take such action as I believed necessary after I evaluated the situation in Detroit. He asked that I keep Secretary McNamara informed. Secretary McNamara then asked me to designate the individuals whom I wished to take with me to Detroit. I designated Mr. Christopher, Mr. Doar, Mr. Wilkins, Mr. Fitt, General Counsel of the Army; Mr. Henkin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs; and Colonel Elder.

At approximately 1220 I reached General Throckmorton by telephone at Fort Bragg, and told him to commence as soon as possible the deployment of the already alerted and waiting troops from Fort Bragg, and Fort Campbell, to Selfridge Air Force Base, approximately 25 miles outside of Detroit. I asked General Throckmorton to meet me at Selfridge, and told him we would then proceed together to meet with the Governor and Mayor and their staffs in downtown Detroit.

At 1335, as soon as we could assemble our team, the other members and I departed National Airport for Selfridge. On the plane, we reviewed the facts which were then available and the mission that had been assigned to us. Specific assignments were made to each member of the team for the collection of detailed information which would be needed to form the basis of an objective, comprehensive and independent appraisal of the situation in Detroit and of the Federal support and assistance which might be required. Members of my team present at this time included Mr. Christopher, Mr. Doar, Mr. Wilkins, Mr. Henkin, Mr. Fitt, and Colonel Elder.

I arrived at Selfridge at 1510 and was met by General Throckmorton, who had arrived shortly before from Fort Bragg. We conferred briefly and agreed to put all incoming troops on a 30-minute alert so they would be able to move instantly into Detroit if required. We also confirmed that the necessary transportation was being assembled to move the troops rapidly into the city should they be needed. This transportation consisted primarily of city buses which had been hired by the Fifth Army. We placed a telephone call to find out where Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanaugh were located. I was informed that they were at the Detroit Police Headquarters in downtown Detroit. General Throckmorton changed into civilian clothes

and we immediately proceeded by police car to that building, arriving at about 1625.

We met at Police Headquarters with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh; Detroit Commissioner of Police Girardin; Colonel Davids of the Michigan State Police; Major General Simmons, Commanding General of the 46th National Guard Division; and Major General Schnippke, Adjutant General of the State of Michigan, and other members of the Governor's and Mayor's staffs.

Mayor Cavanagh reported that there had been 483 fires with 23 still burning on the west side and 6 on the east side; that 1,800 arrests had been made and that detention facilities were being strained. He said that between 800 and 900 Detroit policemen were on the streets at that time (3,000 of the Detroit Police Force normally being assigned to street duty, all shifts). Mayor Cavanagh further stated that he believed local forces were inadequate to cope with the situation, and that there had been intelligence reports that there would be attacks on Monday night on the homes of middle-class Negroes, and that they, in turn, were arming themselves.

Governor Romney asked General Simmons to brief me on the deployment of the Michigan National Guard. General Simmons reported that a substantial number of Guardsmen had not been deployed into the streets and that they were awaiting instructions. I asked him what they were waiting for, and was informed that they were waiting for us. General Throckmorton and I recommended that they immediately deploy additional Guard units into the streets. General Simmons left the room to take such action.

Governor Romney further indicated there were 730 State Police available in Detroit. He said that he felt Federal troops would be necessary to quell the riots. I asked Governor Romney whether he was stating that there was a condition of insurrection or domestic violence which state and local law enforcement forces could not control. Governor Romney replied that he was not prepared to so state but had said "there was reasonable doubt" as to whether the situation could be controlled by state and local law enforcement agencies. He said that he did not wish to state that there was an insurrection because he had been advised that such action might result in the voiding of insurance policies. I pointed out that the commitment of Federal troops to the streets presented grave legal issues and that it was necessary, under the law, to have a finding that a condition of insurrection or domestic violence existed and that local law enforcement agencies could not control the situation prior to the commitment of Federal troops. He did not state that either of those conditions existed. I then requested that space be made available for our headquarters and that it be as close as possible to offices being used by the Mayor and the Police Commissioner. This request was filled immediately.

Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh suggested that we take a tour of the city with them to assess the situation. I concurred in this suggestion and said that I wished to make a personal evaluation of the situation on the ground in the riot-torn areas of the city.

At about 1730, Governor Romney, Mayor Cavanagh, General Throckmorton, Mr. Christopher, Mr. Doar and I departed on an automobile tour of

the areas of the city which had suffered the most from the rioting, looting and burning. This tour covered a period of about an hour and three-quarters. Our tour took us through all the hardest-hit areas.

In a few areas, fires were burning but they appeared to be coming under the control of fire fighting equipment on the scene. Furthermore, there were large areas of the city where only an occasional window was broken or store burned out. In the downtown business district there was no evidence of lawlessness. The only incident during our tour of the city was a flat tire.

Upon our return to Police Headquarters, I received preliminary reports from the local Federal agencies (i.e., the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Community Relations Service) and the members of my party.

These reports indicated that the situation was much quieter than the preceding day. The information available at this time was fragmentary and in oral form, and left much to be desired. Colonel Elder soon thereafter began to assemble data from all sources—principally the local police—on the number of incidents, both current and for the period prior to our arrival, in order to provide a sounder basis for our subsequent assessments of the situation. This compilation proved invaluable.

I was informed that there was a delegation of community leaders who wished to meet with Governor Romney, Mayor Cavanagh and me. We met with this group at about 1930. The group consisted of approximately 15 community leaders, including Congressman Diggs and Congressman Conyers. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Damon Keith, a lawyer and Chairman of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Mr. Keith stated at the outset of the meeting that time was short and that the fundamental issue on which the community leaders wished to express their views was the question of whether Federal troops should be deployed in the city. To the best of my recollection, about eight of those present spoke. Congressman Diggs was the first to speak, stating he believed the situation demanded immediate deployment of Federal troops into the city. Congressman Conyers then spoke, saying he did not believe the situation was sufficiently critical to justify the deployment of Federal troops at that time, and that he felt the deployment of Federal troops into the city might inflame rather than quiet the situation. He also said that he believed the rioting had passed its peak and was on the downturn. Of those who spoke, the majority were in favor of the immediate deployment of troops and the remainder were opposed. I closed the meeting by thanking the community leaders for the expression of their views on this critical question and stated that while I tended to agree with Congressman Conyers, I had not finally made up my mind and wished to meet briefly with my staff to review all available evidence prior to making a decision.

General Throckmorton and I and the members of my staff, after reviewing the available evidence, concluded unanimously that there was an insufficient basis at that time to justify the deployment of Federal troops into the city. We gave special weight to two points. First, the incident rate as reflected in the figures now available was about one-third of what it had been the previous day and was holding approximately level. . . . Second,

there were now three times as many National Guard troops in the city as on the previous day and it was not clear that law and order could not be re-established with this additional force.<sup>1</sup>

At approximately 2015 Governor Romney, Mayor Cavanagh and I held a joint press conference. I stated publicly that I had just met with a group of community leaders and also had completed a tour of the city with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh. I said with respect to the evening we hoped very much that the situation would quiet down and that by tomorrow morning people would be able to return to work. I told the newsmen that Federal troops were moving into Selfridge Air Force Base and that we hoped it would not be necessary for them to be used. I said that the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan had an excellent police force and National Guard. I noted that these forces were on the streets at the present time, and said I was hopeful that it would be possible to contain the situation during the night without the necessity of using Federal troops. I further said the Governor, the Mayor and I would continue to follow the situation throughout the entire night and that I would take whatever action might be required.

Governor Romney then stated that he thought the situation was more hopeful that night as a result of these basic facts—number one, the Army was at Selfridge and available to give assistance if necessary; number two, the effort throughout the community, including the police and National Guard, was better organized than the night before; number three, about three times as many National Guardsmen were available for duty in the streets as the night before; and, number four, the fire fighting organization, including units from adjacent communities, unlike the preceding night, was . . . available to deal with that aspect of the situation. He also cited a rising desire on the part of people throughout the community to see the disorder and lawlessness ended. The Governor urged everyone in the community to work for the restoration of law and order and the reestablishment of community life on a peaceful basis, and suggested it might be possible the next day to lift the emergency bans. Mayor Cavanagh stated that although he saw some hopeful signs that didn't exist yesterday, he would still like to see the Federal troops committed at this point.

Following the news conference, we returned to our headquarters room, which was located immediately adjacent to the Press Room and to the Police Commissioner's office, from which Mayor Cavanagh was operating. Governor Romney had an office a few doors away on the same floor. Shortly after the press conference at about 2030, Governor Romney came into my office and stated privately that it would soon be dark and that he felt strongly that Federal troops should be deployed into the city before nightfall. I told him that I was still not satisfied that the situation could not be controlled by the local law enforcement agencies but that we would follow the matter on a continuous basis as the evening developed. General Throckmorton and I continued to follow the reports of incidents, both by type and number, on a one-half hour basis as reports were received from the police and other sources. Between this time and 2100, the incident rate data began to climb.<sup>2</sup> . . . Most of the incidents, as reported over the police net, were cases of arson or

looting. As the incident rate continued to increase, General Throckmorton and I decided at about 2130 that we should move three battalions of paratroopers to the Fairgrounds within the Metropolitan area of Detroit so they might be more readily available in case they should have to be deployed into the streets. General Throckmorton gave the necessary orders to implement this decision. During the next hour and one-half the incidents throughout the city, as reported over police radio, continued a steady rise. Just before 2300, General Throckmorton and I, after further consultation with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh, determined that the local law enforcement agencies could not control the situation. The Governor and the Mayor both now informed me that they had committed all available police and National Guard forces. At approximately 2310, I recommended to the President, with the concurrence of all of the members of my team, that Federal troops be deployed into the streets.

At 2320, the President signed the Proclamation and Executive Order authorizing the use of Federal troops in the City of Detroit and Federalizing the Army and Air National Guard of the State of Michigan. I made a public statement at a news conference about 2325 announcing the action which was being taken; General Throckmorton immediately took command of all the military forces. He ordered the deployment of Regular U.S. Army forces into the eastern half of the city, with the responsibility for the western half assigned to the Michigan National Guard. The rules of engagement issued to all troops under Federal control were to use the minimum force necessary to restore law and order. Specifically the troop commanders were instructed to apply force in the following order of priority:

- a) Unloaded rifles with bayonets fixed and sheathed
- b) Unloaded rifles with bare bayonets fixed
- c) Riot control agent CS—tear gas
- d) Loaded rifles with bare bayonets fixed

Immediately after the President signed the Executive Order, General Throckmorton called Major General Simmons to inform him that he was under General Throckmorton's command and requested him to stand by at his headquarters for a visit, and to send a liaison officer to General Throckmorton's office at Police Headquarters. General Throckmorton then drove to the Fairgrounds where he contacted Major General Seitz, Commander of the Federal troops (Task Force 82) and instructed him to assume responsibility from the 46th Division (National Guard) for the restoration of law and order in the eastern half of the city—east of Woodward Avenue. The time of changeover would be mutually agreed upon by the commanders concerned.

From the Fairgrounds, General Throckmorton preceded to the 46th Division CP at the Artillery Guard Armory where he issued instructions to General Simmons, relieving him of responsibility for the east side of town and charged him with retaining responsibility for the west side. Prior to General Throckmorton's departure from the 46th Division CP, General Seitz arrived to coordinate with General Simmons.

During the inspection tour which we had taken with the Mayor and Governor commencing at 1730, we visited three areas which had been harder hit by the disturbances than any others. These were in the 2d Precinct along Grand River Avenue, the area around 12th Street north of Grand River Avenue in the 10th Precinct and the area around Mack Avenue in the 5th Precinct in the eastern part of the city. . . . Of the three areas, 12th Street had been the hardest hit; however, as it became dark the incidents in the eastern half of the city began to increase over those in the western part of the city. Thus, at the time the decision was made to assign TF 82 to the eastern portion of the city, it appeared that the Regular troops were taking over the most active sector. Other factors influencing the decision to assign the eastern portion to TF 82 were the closer proximity of eastern Detroit to Selfridge and the proximity of the 46th Division CP to western Detroit.

At 0410 on Tuesday, 25 July, TF 82 completed relief of the 46th National Guard Division elements in that portion of the city east of Woodward Avenue, and the remainder of the Federal troops were moved from Selfridge to the Fairgrounds. . . .

At 0225, General Throckmorton and I made a statement to the press outlining the situation and delineating the areas of responsibility of the Federal and National Guard troop units. General Throckmorton and I made another tour of the city beginning at 0330. On our return we held another press conference at 0520 at Police Headquarters. Our objective was to keep the public fully informed of all developments connected with the restoration of law and order to Detroit.

Based on the situation as I saw it then, I proposed to Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh that a joint announcement be made to the effect that Detroit industrial plants, businesses and offices should be reopened that day. They concurred and such a statement was released at 0703.

Throughout the morning of Tuesday, 25 July, the members of my group and I participated in a series of discussions with state and city officials and community leaders concerning health and medical problems; food distribution; emergency shelter needs, processing, confinement and disposition of persons in arrest; and other matters which required consideration at once in order to begin and expedite the return to normal.

Early Tuesday morning, on the basis of a deteriorating situation in other parts of Michigan, Governor Romney requested the release of 250 National Guard troops for use outside of the Detroit area. He said he also wanted to remove 250 State Police for use elsewhere in the State. These actions were taken. Throughout Tuesday and Wednesday further releases of National Guard and police to State control were made. Adjustments also were made in troop dispositions within the city to take account of changes in the situation in Detroit and nearby areas.

The incident rate on Tuesday during daylight hours ran at about half the rate for Monday. Although it rose sharply again in the evening, the peak rate at 2300 was only 166 per hour versus 231 at the same hour on Monday. There were 11 deaths between noon on Tuesday and daylight Wednesday and about 60 fires were reported between 2100 and midnight, a rate well above normal.



On Wednesday night, Mayor Cavanagh, Governor Romney and I all agreed that it was essential that we assure the leadership of the city that law and order was being re-established and that we urge the leadership to mobilize to take the necessary steps to begin to rebuild the city. A list of those to be invited to attend a meeting on Thursday was prepared by the staffs of the Mayor and the Governor and telegrams were sent out asking them to attend a meeting on Thursday at 1500.

In view of the improved situation which existed early Thursday morning, the first steps of restoring full responsibility for the maintenance of law and order to the state and local authorities were initiated. As an initial step, General Throckmorton and I agreed that an order should be issued that bayonets be sheathed and ammunition removed from the weapons of the Regular Army and National Guard troops. This was done. An announcement of the lifting of the curfew and the easing of gasoline restrictions was made by the Governor at 1000 Thursday, 27 July. The lifting of curfew, however, was withdrawn later that day by the Governor because of the congestion caused by "spectators, gawkers and photographers" in the damaged areas.

On Thursday, additional attention was given to the definition of the tasks that needed to be performed to get the stricken city moving again. The meeting of several hundred community leaders was held at 1615 that day for the purpose of discussing how best to organize to meet this challenge. General Throckmorton and I gave brief situation reports on the status of law and order and on Federal actions being taken to provide for emergency food, health and safety needs. Following remarks made by a number of participants, Governor Romney announced the appointment of Mr. Joseph L. Hudson, Jr. to head a broadly based committee of community leaders to proceed with the development of recovery plans for the city.

By Friday morning, the situation had improved sufficiently so that, after coordination with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh, the first steps could be taken in the withdrawal of Federal troops from Detroit. Units of TF 82 were withdrawn from the First, Seventh and Thirteenth Precincts and were assembled at City Airport and the Fairgrounds. Their sectors were taken over by National Guard troops of the 46th Infantry Division. The 5th precinct remained under the responsibility of the Regular U.S. Army forces.

I met with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh on Friday morning, in accordance with the President's telegram of 27 July to discuss further the emergency health, food and safety needs of the citizens of Detroit. At 1200 we announced results of these discussions at a joint press conference. These matters are discussed further in a later section of the report.

At 1230, Mr. Christopher, Mr. Doar and I met with Governor Romney, Mayor Cavanagh and state, city and county legal and judicial authorities to review the problems associated with the large numbers of persons in custody and awaiting disposition. These matters are discussed in some detail later in the report.

On Saturday morning, 29 July, I returned to Washington to report to the President and to attend the first meeting of the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

Following my meeting with the Commission, a news conference was held at which I announced the Small Business Administration's declaration of Detroit as a disaster area. This declaration had the effect of authorizing low interest (3%) long-term (30 year) loans for repairing or replacing small businesses, homes and personal property destroyed or damaged by the riots.

I returned to Detroit at 2040 that night and met with my group to discuss further plans. Deputy Attorney General Christopher returned to Washington upon my arrival in Detroit.

On Sunday, I met with Mr. Phillips, Regional Director of the SBA with responsibility for the Detroit area, to discuss the actions needed to carry out the previous day's SBA declaration of Detroit as a disaster area. Mr. Phillips agreed to open a temporary office in the riot-torn 12th Street area, to consider opening an additional office in the most heavily damaged area on the east side, to supplement his personnel in the Detroit area, and to hold a press conference with me in Police Headquarters on Monday morning to announce the special arrangements which had been made. These arrangements were completed on Sunday and an announcement was made at 0935 on Monday morning. On Wednesday, 2 August, Mr. Moot, Administrator designate of the SBA, visited Detroit with members of his staff for further discussions of the SBA program and its potential contribution to the city's recovery.

During Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Federal troops were withdrawn progressively from the Detroit area and the TF 82 sectors were taken over by the 46th Division. On Monday, the last units of TF 82 were withdrawn from the streets of Detroit and three battalions were moved to Selfridge Air Force Base with the remaining four held in assembly areas at the City Airport and the Fairgrounds. On Tuesday, four battalions were airlifted to their home stations at Fort Campbell and all remaining battalions were assembled at Selfridge Air Force Base from which they were airlifted to Fort Bragg on Wednesday. The 46th National Guard Division was de-Federalized and returned to the control of the State of Michigan (to operate under the State Police Director) at 1200 on Wednesday, 2 August, as the last units of TF 82 were being returned home.

The curfew was relaxed concurrently with the withdrawal of Federal troops; the effective period was 2400 to 0530 on Monday night–Tuesday morning and it was discontinued entirely on Wednesday. Liquor sales, which had been suspended, were resumed outside curfew hours beginning on Monday. The return of the control of the city to the National Guard and local authorities, and the relaxation of curfew and the restriction on liquor sales, did not result in any increase in incident rates. These rates had lessened each day, reaching a low of 280 incidents in 24 hours on Tuesday, 1 August.

On Monday, 31 July, I met with Mr. Crook, Director of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and Mr. Brabson, VISTA Program Officer, to review the VISTA program in support of Detroit's recovery. . . .

My principal activities and those of my staff on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 31 July–2 August, were to meet and talk with as wide a segment of the citizens of Detroit as possible in order to gain additional insights into the problems which had caused the riots and those which had

grown from them. Although these meetings proved highly productive, they did not lead me to any simple conclusions with respect to the problems which Detroit must meet and overcome; they convinced me anew of the tangled economic, sociological, and psychological origins of the riots and of the enormity of the related tasks to be performed.

At 0935 on Wednesday, 2 August, General Throckmorton and I held a final press conference in the Police Headquarters press room. At that time we announced that "law and order have been restored to Detroit . . . responsibility for maintaining law and order in Detroit will be returned at noon to state authorities."

At 2110 I departed from Detroit, arriving in Washington with my mission completed at 2310. . . .

### Notes

1. Some uncertainty now exists regarding the deployment status of the Michigan National Guard during the afternoon of Monday, 24 July. There are several accounts.

First is the account given to us at the initial conference at about 1625 by General Simmons, the Commander of the 46th National Guard Infantry Division. His report stated that approximately half of the Guard units were not deployed at that time. Governor Romney stated that these deployments were being held up pending arrival of the Federal troops.

Second is the report given to Colonel Elder by Colonel Phillips, Chief of Staff of the 46th National Guard Infantry Division, at about 1915. According to this account, the division had about 7,000 troops then in the Detroit area with another 700 (2 tank battalions and a Signal unit) enroute from Camp Grayling. Of the 7,000 in Detroit, 2,240 were in the Central High School area and 1,810 were in the Southeast High School area; 85% of both groups were reported deployed. Of the approximately 2,950 remaining, 300 were beginning to be sent out to accompany the fire department to provide security and the remainder were overhead, in reserve, resting or feeding.

Other accounts are based on a reconstruction of events after the fact. One was developed between the staffs of Task Force Detroit and the 46th Division on 31 July and 1 August through a detailed survey of journals, morning reports and other available documents. According to this account, there were 2,725 troops deployed under the 2d Bde, 46th Div (headquarters at Central High School), 1,319 deployed under the 3d Bde, 46th Div (headquarters at Central High School), 905 allocated or functioning, as guards to accompany fire trucks, 392 involved in command and support tasks, 1,900 in reserve or being prepared for commitment, 713 in rear detachments at Camp Grayling, and 243 enroute (at Flint). . . .

It is clear from the above accounts that at 1630 on 24 July there were between 2,000 and 3,000 additional Army National Guard troops available for deployment into Detroit's streets. In addition, none of the Air National Guard units were being used to control the riots. The total strength of the Michigan Air National Guard was 2,137 of which 660 were deployed after the National Guard was federalized.

2. The incident rate data must be used with caution. Although an incident was at all times described as "an event requiring police action," a review of the specific incidents logged reveals a wide range of variation and apparent validity. Substantial numbers of individual incidents which were surveyed did not bear any relation to the riot. Hence, these data may be useful to identify trends, and were used in that way, but should not be considered an absolute indicator.

SOURCE: *Final Report of Cyrus R. Vance, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Concerning the Detroit Riots, July 23 through August 2, 1967*, pp. 1–27. See <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/oralhistory.hom/Vance-C/DetroitReport.asp>.



## 20. Excerpts from the Kerner Commission Report, 1968

In July 1967, President Lyndon Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, an eleven-member commission chaired by Illinois governor Otto Kerner, Jr., and thus known as the Kerner Commission. The Commission was charged with explaining why race riots had erupted in major American cities every summer since 1964 and with offering recommendations for avoiding such disorders in the future. Published in 1968, the Kerner Report concluded that the country was dividing into “two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” In the two report excerpts reprinted here, the Commission lists what it sees as the basic causes of the disorders, and assesses the role of the news media in the riots. *See also the entries* Kerner Commission Report (1968); Kerner, Otto; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967.

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### Excerpt from the Report Summary

#### PART II—WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

##### *Chapter 4—The Basic Causes*

In addressing the question “Why did it happen?” we shift our focus from the local to the national scene, from the particular events of the summer of 1967 to the factors within the society at large that created a mood of violence among many urban Negroes.

These factors are complex and interacting; they vary significantly in their effect from city to city and from year to year; and the consequences of one disorder, generating new grievances and new demands, become the causes of the next. Thus was created the “thicket of tension, conflicting evidence and extreme opinions” cited by the President.

Despite these complexities, certain fundamental matters are clear. Of these, the most fundamental is the racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans.

Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively; it now threatens to affect our future.

White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II. Among the ingredients of this mixture are:

*Pervasive discrimination and segregation* in employment, education and housing, which have resulted in the continuing exclusion of great numbers of Negroes from the benefits of economic progress.

*Black in-migration and white exodus*, which have produced the massive and growing concentrations of impoverished Negroes in our major cities,

creating a growing crisis of deteriorating facilities and services and unmet human needs.

*The black ghettos*<sup>1</sup> where segregation and poverty converge on the young to destroy opportunity and enforce failure. Crime, drug addiction, dependency on welfare, and bitterness and resentment against society in general and white society in particular are the result.

At the same time, most whites and some Negroes outside the ghetto have prospered to a degree unparalleled in the history of civilization. Through television and other media, this affluence has been flaunted before the eyes of the Negro poor and the jobless ghetto youth.

Yet these facts alone cannot be said to have caused the disorders. Recently, other powerful ingredients have begun to catalyze the mixture:

*Frustrated hopes* are the residue of the unfulfilled expectations aroused by the great judicial and legislative victories of the Civil Rights Movement and the dramatic struggle for equal rights in the South.

*A climate that tends toward approval and encouragement of violence* as a form of protest has been created by white terrorism directed against nonviolent protest; by the open defiance of law and federal authority by state and local officials resisting desegregation; and by some protest groups engaging in civil disobedience who turn their backs on nonviolence, go beyond the constitutionally protected rights of petition and free assembly, and resort to violence to attempt to compel alteration of laws and policies with which they disagree.

*The frustrations of powerlessness* have led some Negroes to the conviction that there is no effective alternative to violence as a means of achieving redress of grievances, and of "moving the system." These frustrations are reflected in alienation and hostility toward the institutions of law and government and the white society which controls them, and in the reach toward racial consciousness and solidarity reflected in the slogan "Black Power."

*A new mood* has sprung up among Negroes, particularly among the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to "the system."

*The police are not merely a "spark" factor.* To some Negroes police have come to symbolize white power, white racism and white repression. And the fact is that many police do reflect and express these white attitudes. The atmosphere of hostility and cynicism is reinforced by a widespread belief among Negroes in the existence of police brutality and in a "double standard" of justice and protection—one for Negroes and one for whites.

To this point, we have attempted to identify the prime components of the "explosive mixture." In the chapters that follow we seek to analyze them in the perspective of history. Their meaning, however, is clear:

In the summer of 1967, we have seen in our cities a chain reaction of racial violence. If we are heedless, none of us shall escape the consequences.

#### Note

1. The term "ghetto" as used in this report refers to an area within a city characterized by poverty and acute social disorganization, and inhabited by members of a racial or ethnic group under conditions of involuntary segregation.

### **Excerpt from the Commission's Assessment of Media Coverage of the Riots Coverage of the 1967 Disturbances**

We have found a significant imbalance between what actually happened in our cities and what the newspaper, radio and television coverage of the riots told us happened. The Commission, in studying last summer's disturbances, visited many of the cities and interviewed participants and observers. We found that the disorders, as serious as they were, were less destructive, less widespread, and less a black-white confrontation than most people believed.

Lacking other sources of information, we formed our original impressions and beliefs from what we saw on television, heard on the radio, and read in newspapers and magazines. We are deeply concerned that millions of other Americans, who must rely on the mass media, likewise formed incorrect impressions and judgments about what went on in many American cities last summer.

As we started to probe the reasons for this imbalance between reality and impression, we first believed that the media had sensationalized the disturbances, consistently overplaying violence and giving disproportionate amounts of time to emotional events and "militant" leaders. To test this theory, we commissioned a systematic, quantitative analysis, covering the content of newspaper and television reporting in 15 cities where disorders occurred. The results of this analysis do not support our early belief. Of 955 television sequences of riot and racial news examined, 837 could be classified for predominant atmosphere as either "emotional," "calm," or "normal." Of these, 494 were classified as calm, 262 as emotional, and 81 as normal. Only a small proportion of all scenes analyzed showed actual mob action, people looting, sniping, setting fires, or being injured, or killed. Moderate Negro leaders were shown more frequently than militant leaders on television news broadcasts.

Of 3,779 newspaper articles analyzed, more focused on legislation which should be sought and planning which should be done to control ongoing riots and prevent future riots than on any other topic. The findings of this content analysis are explained in greater detail in Section I. They make it clear that the imbalance between actual events and the portrayal of those events in the press and on the air cannot be attributed solely to sensationalism in reporting and presentation.

We have, however, identified several factors which, it seems to us, did work to create incorrect and exaggerated impressions about the scope and intensity of the disorders.

First, despite the overall statistical picture, there were instances of gross flaws in presenting news of the 1967 riots. Some newspapers printed "scare" headlines unsupported by the mild stories that followed. All media reported rumors that had no basis in fact. Some newsmen staged "riot" events for the cameras. Examples are included in the next section.

Second, the press obtained much factual information about the scale of the disorders—property damage, personal injury, and deaths—from local officials, who often were inexperienced in dealing with civil disorders and

not always able to sort out fact from rumor in the confusion. At the height of the Detroit riot, some news reports of property damage put the figure in excess of \$500 million.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent investigation shows it to be \$40 to \$45 million.<sup>2</sup>

The initial estimates were not the independent judgment of reporters or editors. They came from beleaguered government officials. But the news media gave currency to these errors. Reporters uncritically accepted, and editors uncritically published, the inflated figures, leaving an indelible impression of damage up to more than ten times greater than actually occurred.

Third, the coverage of the disorders—particularly on television—tended to define the events as black-white confrontations. In fact almost all of the deaths, injuries and property damage occurred in all-Negro neighborhoods, and thus the disorders were not “race riots” as that term is generally understood.

Closely linked to these problems is the phenomenon of cumulative effect. As the summer of 1967 progressed, we think Americans often began to associate more or less neutral sights and sounds (like a squad car with flashing red lights, a burning building, a suspect in police custody) with racial disorders, so that the appearance of any particular item, itself hardly inflammatory, set off a whole sequence of association with riot events. Moreover, the summer’s news was not seen and heard in isolation. Events of these past few years—the Watts riot, other disorders, and the growing momentum of the civil rights movement—conditioned the responses of readers and viewers and heightened their reactions. What the public saw and read last summer thus produced emotional reactions and left vivid impressions not wholly attributable to the material itself.

Fear and apprehension of racial unrest and violence are deeply rooted in American society. They color and intensify reactions to news of racial trouble and threats of racial conflict. Those who report and disseminate news must be conscious of the background of anxieties and apprehension against which their stories are projected. This does not mean that the media should manage the news or tell less than the truth. Indeed, we believe that it would be imprudent and even dangerous to downplay coverage in the hope that censored reporting of inflammatory incidents somehow will diminish violence. Once a disturbance occurs, the word will spread independently of newspapers and television. To attempt to ignore these events or portray them as something other than what they are, can only diminish confidence in the media and increase the effectiveness of those who monger rumors and the fears of those who listen.

But to be complete, the coverage must be representative. We suggest that the main failure of the media last summer was that the totality of its coverage was not as representative as it should have been to be accurate. We believe that to live up to their own professed standards, the media simply must exercise a higher degree of care and a greater level of sophistication than they have yet shown in this area—higher, perhaps, than the level ordinarily acceptable with other stories.

This is not “just another story.” It should not be treated like one. Admittedly, some of what disturbs us about riot coverage last summer stems from

circumstances beyond media control. But many of the inaccuracies of fact, tone and mood were due to the failure of reporters and editors to ask tough enough questions about official reports, and to apply the most rigorous standards possible in evaluating and presenting the news. Reporters and editors must be sure that descriptions and pictures of violence, and emotional or inflammatory sequences or articles, even though “true” in isolation, are really representative and do not convey an impression at odds with the overall reality of events. The media too often did not achieve this level of sophisticated, skeptical, careful news judgment during last summer’s riots.

### **The Media and Race Relations**

Our second and fundamental criticism is that the news media have failed to analyze and report adequately on racial problems in the United States and, as a related matter, to meet the Negro’s legitimate expectations in journalism. By and large, news organizations have failed to communicate to both their black and white audiences a sense of the problems America faces and the sources of potential solutions. The media report and write from the standpoint of a white man’s world. The ills of the ghetto, the difficulties of life there, the Negro’s burning sense of grievance, are seldom conveyed. Slightings and indignities are part of the Negro’s daily life, and many of them come from what he now calls “the white press”—a press that repeatedly, if unconsciously, reflects the biases, the paternalism, the indifference of white America. This may be understandable, but it is not excusable in an institution that has the mission to inform and educate the whole of our society.

### **Ghetto Reactions to the Media Coverage**

The Commission was particularly interested in public reaction to media coverage; specifically, what people in the ghetto look at and read and how it affects them. The Commission has drawn upon reports from special teams of researchers who visited various cities where outbreaks occurred last summer. Members of these teams interviewed ghetto dwellers and middle-class Negroes on their responses to news media. In addition, we have used information from a statistical study of the mass media in the Negro ghetto in Pittsburgh.<sup>8</sup>

These interviews and surveys, though by no means a complete study of the subject, lead to four broad conclusions about ghetto, and to a lesser degree middle-class Negro, reactions to the media.

Most Negroes distrust what they refer to as the “white press.” As one interviewer reported:

The average black person couldn’t give less of a damn about what the media say. The intelligent black person is resentful at what he considers to be a totally false portrayal of what goes on in the ghetto. Most black people see the newspapers as mouthpieces of the “power structure.”

These comments are echoed in most interview reports the Commission has read. Distrust and dislike of the media among ghetto Negroes encompass



*all* the media, though in general, the newspapers are mistrusted more than the television. This is not because television is thought to be more sensitive or responsive to Negro needs and aspirations, but because ghetto residents believe that television at least lets them see the actual events for themselves. Even so, many Negroes, particularly teenagers, told researchers that they noted a pronounced discrepancy between what they saw in the riots and what television broadcast.

Persons interviewed offered three chief reasons for their attitude. First, they believed, as suggested in the quotation above, that the media are instruments of the white power structure. They thought that these white interests guide the entire white community, from the journalists' friends and neighbors to city officials, police officers, and department store owners. Publishers and editors, if not white reporters, supported and defended these interests with enthusiasm and dedication.

Second, many people in the ghettos apparently believe that newsmen rely on the police for most of their information about what is happening during a disorder and tend to report much more of what the officials are doing and saying than what Negro citizens or leaders in the city are doing and saying. Editors and reporters at the Poughkeepsie conference acknowledged that the police and city officials are their main—and sometimes their only—source of information. It was also noted that most reporters who cover civil disturbances tend to arrive with the police and stay close to them—often for safety, and often because they learn where the action is at the same time as the authorities—and thus buttress the ghetto impression that police and press work together and toward the same ends (an impression that may come as a surprise to many within the ranks of police and press).

Third, Negro residents in several cities surveyed cited as specific examples of media unfairness what they considered the failure of the media:

- To report the many examples of Negroes helping law enforcement officers and assisting in the treatment of the wounded during disorders;
- To report adequately about false arrests;
- To report instances of excessive force by the National Guard;
- To explore and interpret the background conditions leading to disturbances;
- To expose, except in Detroit, what they regarded as instances of police brutality;
- To report on white vigilante groups which allegedly came into some disorder areas and molested innocent Negro residents.

Some of these problems are insoluble. But more first-hand reporting in the diffuse and fragmented riot area should temper any reliance on police information and announcements. There is a special need for news media to cover "positive" news stories in the ghetto before and after riots with concern and enthusiasm.

A multitude of news and information sources other than the established news media are relied upon in the ghetto. One of our studies found that 79 percent of a total of 567 ghetto residents interviewed in seven cities<sup>9</sup>

first heard about the outbreak in their own city by word of mouth. Telephone and word of mouth exchanges on the streets, in churches, stores, pool halls, and bars, provide more information—and rumors—about events of direct concern to ghetto residents than the more conventional news media.

Among the established media, television and radio are far more popular in the ghetto than newspapers. Radios there, apparently, are ordinarily listened to less for news than for music and other programs. One survey showed that an overwhelmingly large number of Negro children and teenagers (like their white counterparts) listen to the radio for music alone, interspersed by disc jockey chatter. In other age groups, the response of most people about what they listen to on the radio was “anything,” leading to the conclusion that radio in the ghetto is basically a background accompaniment.

But the fact that radio is such a constant background accompaniment can make it an important influence on people’s attitudes, and perhaps on their actions once trouble develops. This is true for several reasons. News presented on local “rock” stations seldom constitutes much more than terse headline items which may startle or frighten but seldom inform. Radio disk jockeys and those who preside over the popular “talk shows” keep a steady patter of information going over the air. When a city is beset by civil strife, this patter can both inform transistor radio-carrying young people where the actions is [sic], and terrify their elders and much of the white community. “Burn, baby, burn,” the slogan of the Watts riot, was inadvertently originated by a radio disc jockey.

Thus, radio can be an instrument of trouble and tension in a community threatened or inundated with civil disorder. It can also do much to minimize fear by putting fast-paced events into proper perspective. We have found commendable instances, for example, in Detroit, Milwaukee, and New Brunswick, of radio stations and personalities using their air time and influence to try to calm potential rioters. In Section II, we recommend procedures for meetings and consultations for advance planning among those who will cover civil disorders. It is important that radio personnel, and especially disc jockeys and talk show hosts, be included in such pre-planning.

Television is the formal news source most relied upon in the ghetto. According to one report, more than 75 percent of the sample turned to television for national and international news, and a larger percentage of the sample (86 percent) regularly watched television from 5 to 7 P.M., the dinner hours when the evening news programs are broadcast.

The significance of broadcasting in news dissemination is seen in Census Bureau estimates that in June 1967, 87.7 percent of nonwhite households and 94.8 percent of white households had television sets.

When ghetto residents do turn to newspapers, most read tabloids, if available, far more frequently than standard size newspapers and rely on the tabloids primarily for light features, racing charts, comic strips, fashion news and display advertising. . . .

### **Negroes in Journalism**

The journalistic profession has been shockingly backward in seeking out, hiring, training, and promoting Negroes. Fewer than 5 percent of the people employed by the news business in editorial jobs in the United States today are Negroes. Fewer than 1 percent of editors and supervisors are Negroes, and most of them work for Negro-owned organizations. The lines of various news organizations to the militant blacks are, by admission of the newsmen themselves, almost nonexistent. The complaint is "We can't find qualified Negroes." But this rings hollow from an industry where, only yesterday, jobs were scarce and promotion unthinkable for a man whose skin was black. Even today, there are virtually no Negroes in positions of editorial or executive responsibility and there is only one Negro newsman with a nationally syndicated column.

News organizations must employ enough Negroes in positions of significant responsibility to establish an effective link to Negro actions and ideas and to meet legitimate employment expectations. Tokenism—the hiring of one Negro reporter, or even two or three—is no longer enough. Negro reporters are essential, but so are Negro editors, writers and commentators. Newspaper and television policies are, generally speaking, not set by reporters. Editorial decisions about which stories to cover and which to use are made by editors. Yet, very few Negroes in this country are involved in making these decisions, because very few, if any, supervisory editorial jobs are held by Negroes. We urge the news media to do everything possible to train and promote their Negro reporters to positions where those who are qualified can contribute to and have an effect on policy decisions. . . .

### **The Negro in the Media**

Finally, the news media must publish newspapers and produce programs that recognize the existence and activities of the Negro, both as a Negro and as part of the community. It would be a contribution of inestimable importance to race relations in the United States simply to treat ordinary news about Negroes as news of other groups is now treated.

Specifically, newspapers should integrate Negroes and Negro activities into all parts of the paper, from the news, society and club pages to the comic strips. Television should develop programming which integrates Negroes into all aspects of televised presentations. Television is such a visible medium that some constructive steps are easy and obvious. While some of these steps are being taken, they are still largely neglected. For example, Negro reporters and performers should appear more frequently—and at prime time—in news broadcasts, on weather shows, in documentaries, and in advertisements. Some effort already has been made to use Negroes in television commercials. Any initial surprise at seeing a Negro selling a sponsor's product will eventually fade into routine acceptance, an attitude that white society must ultimately develop toward all Negroes.

In addition to news-related programming, we think that Negroes should appear more frequently in dramatic and comedy series. Moreover, networks and local stations should present plays and other programs whose subjects are rooted in the ghetto and its problems.

## Notes

1. As recently as February 9, 1968, an Associated Press dispatch from Philadelphia said "damage exceeded \$1 billion" in Detroit.

2. Michigan State Insurance Commission Estimate, December, 1967. See also *Meeting the Insurance Crisis of Our Cities*, a Report by the President's National Advisory Panel on Insurance in Riot-Affected Areas, January, 1968.

8. The Commission is indebted, in this regard, to M. Thomas Allen for his document on *Mass Media Use Patterns and Functions in the Negro Ghetto in Pittsburgh*.

9. Detroit, Newark, Atlanta, Tampa, New Haven, Cincinnati, Milwaukee.

SOURCE: United States. Kerner Commission. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968.



## 21. Progress Report of the Presidential Task Force on Los Angeles Recovery, May 1992

Reproduced below is the initial progress report of the task force of cabinet undersecretaries and other federal officials appointed by President George H.W. Bush to assess how the federal government could best assist the recovery process in Los Angeles in the first weeks following the 1992 riots. Released barely two weeks after the end of the riots, this report mainly describes conditions in the riot zone immediately after the disorders ended and the first steps taken by federal, state, and local officials to begin the economic recovery of the affected areas.

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### Members of the Task Force:

David T. Kearns, Co-chairman  
Deputy Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C.

Delbert Spurlock  
Deputy Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
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Alfred A. DelliBovi, Co-chairman  
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U.S. Department of Housing and  
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Arnold Tompkins  
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Oscar Wright  
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Linda Peterson  
Regional Administrator  
Office of Personnel Management  
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Jay Lefkowitz  
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The White House  
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William Medigovich  
Federal Coordinating Officer  
Federal Emergency Management  
Agency  
Los Angeles, California

Earl Fields  
Chairman  
Federal Executive Board  
Long Beach, California

Gretchen Pagel  
Office of National Service  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Presidential Task Force on Los Angeles Recovery  
May 12, 1992

The President  
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

On Monday, May 4, 1992, in response to the civil unrest in the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, California, you directed that a task force of Cabinet Deputy Secretaries and other key Federal officials be sent immediately to Los Angeles to assist in the recovery process.

Attached is a progress report on what that task force has accomplished in the past eight days. We hope that our efforts to date have assisted in easing the effects of this tragedy, and in ensuring the prompt delivery of Federal, state, county, and city services.

We have been struck in conducting our work by the genuine desire for prompt recovery, and by the cooperative spirit that has sprung from the ashes of the Los Angeles fires.

The work of this task force is ongoing and will continue. We will report again to you in the weeks and months ahead. While our work has been focused on process and implementation issues, we would be pleased to give you and your Cabinet impressions and input as you develop programs and legislation to assist large urban centers. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this important mission.

Respectfully,  
Alfred A. DelliBovi  
Co-chairman

David T. Kearns  
Co-chairman

## Progress Report of the Presidential Task Force on Los Angeles Recovery

### I. OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

On Monday, May 4th, the President established a task force of Cabinet Deputies and other key Federal officials to assist in the recovery of Los Angeles. The purpose of the task force was limited and straightforward: to knock down barriers to the speedy delivery of services to the citizens of greater Los Angeles who suffered as a result of the disturbances there, and to bring quickly to the area those Federal resources and programs which could help address the immediate problems facing the affected area.

The Federal role represented by the task force was not to supplant state and local efforts to rebuild Los Angeles, but rather to ensure a coordinated response and to make the Federal government a helpful partner—assisting in every way possible the state, county, and city governments, and the private sector, in rebuilding their community.

Examples of the work accomplished by the task force include:

- Assisting in the establishment of 7 Disaster Application Centers (DACs) to provide “one-stop shopping” for residents and businesses in need of disaster assistance and Federal, state, or local services. As demand for the services grew, the task force helped arrange for a mobile facility to expand the space available at one DAC and for the opening of an eighth DAC in an area in need.
- Removing roadblocks to the provision of FEMA and SBA assistance to those who suffered fire or looting losses due to the disturbance.
- Cutting red tape and providing special assistance to small businesses in the provision of SBA disaster loans. The task force brought in minority business specialists to help small businesses prepare loan applications and IRS personnel to assist in the prompt recovery of tax returns. The task force helped create a special expedited process at the Treasury Department for clearing SBA loan checks, and removed a hurdle for very small businesses by creating a much simplified test of the requirement that they seek credit elsewhere before applying to the SBA.
- Responding to the language problem which naturally arises in a diverse community such as Los Angeles. The task force helped arrange for the hiring of about 60 bilingual aides to assist applicants. When a shortage of Spanish-speaking assistants arose, ten were hired on the same day.
- Helping to speed the delivery of a full array of Federal services to the Los Angeles area, including rental assistance for those who were displaced from their homes, unemployment assistance for those who lost their jobs, food for those in areas with shortages, emergency funds for those who did not receive Social Security checks, and crisis counseling for those affected by the disturbance. On Monday, May 11th, three days after the opening of the application centers, FEMA mailed the first disaster housing assistance checks to applicants.

## II. THE MISSION OF THE TASK FORCE

One might think of the Federal response to the civil unrest that occurred in Los Angeles as encompassing three phases. One phase was the restoration of peace and the rule of law in the immediate term. A second phase is the provision of necessary assistance and services to those who suffered losses or disruption of services as a result of the disturbance. A third phase is the crafting of a long-term policy strategy for addressing the underlying problems facing urban America.

The work of this task force has been focused on the second phase. The task force did not participate in or direct any law enforcement activities, although in the aftermath of the disturbance, the task force leadership has worked closely with Robert Mueller, the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, and with Governor Wilson to coordinate appropriately with law enforcement. Nor is the task force a policy-making body.

This task force has sought to work with the state, county, and city governments, as well as private sector and non-profit entities, in speeding the delivery of services to the people of Los Angeles. The task force worked to bring quickly to the Los Angeles area those programs which the Federal government can deliver right now, under existing statutory authority and using existing funds, to help those victimized by the violence.

Most importantly, the mission of the task force has been to knock down any extraneous barriers to the efficient delivery of services to the people of Los Angeles city and county. Too often, the processes and paperwork of the Federal government are a source of frustration to citizens who confront them. The goal of this task force was to ease that frustration in every way possible—and to deliver assistance to the people who need it in record time.

## III. THE PROCESS

### Meeting Schedule

Upon arrival in Los Angeles on Monday night May 4th, members of the task force met with Governor Pete Wilson and his staff. Governor Wilson also met with the full task force on Tuesday morning May 5th to offer his assessment of the situation. At that meeting, he designated the State of California's Director of Emergency Services, Richard Andrews, as liaison with the task force.

Also on Tuesday morning, task force representatives met with Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley and Deputy Mayor Linda Griego. Bradley appointed Deputy Mayor Griego as liaison and she met with the full task force on Tuesday to identify specific problems the city had encountered that could be addressed by task force actions.

The task force coordinated by telephone on Tuesday with Los Angeles County Chief Administrative officer Richard Dixon, who designated Sheriff's Lieutenant Ben Nottingham as the County's liaison with the task force. On Wednesday, May 6th, representatives of the task force met with the Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Deane

Dana, Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block, Supervisor Michael Antonovich, Mr. Dixon, and other representatives of the county.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 5th, the task force met with Mr. Peter Ueberroth, who had been appointed by Mayor Bradley and Governor Wilson to chair Rebuild L.A., a long-term effort to promote recovery by encouraging private sector investment in affected areas of greater Los Angeles.

On Friday, May 8th, at the invitation of its President, Councilman John Ferraro, representative of the task force presented a briefing to the Los Angeles City Council, and subsequently met with various members of the Council.

Throughout the week, members of the task force took the opportunity to meet with members of the community, including the mayors of Compton, Inglewood, Long Beach, and Linwood, City of Los Angeles Superintendent of Schools Bill Anton, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Stuart Godholt, President of the Los Angeles Urban League John Mack, various members of the clergy, representatives of the police and firefighting forces, and affected businessmen and women. In addition, members of the task force toured affected areas and neighborhoods at various times throughout the week.

The task force briefed the President on two occasions: upon his arrival in Los Angeles on Wednesday night, May 6th, and again on Thursday evening, May 7th. Also in attendance at one or both of these briefings was Governor Wilson, Mayor Bradley, U.S. Senator John Seymour, Supervisor Dana, Councilman Ferraro, Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp, and Administrator of the Small Business Administration Patricia Saiki.

### **Coordination Mechanisms**

The task force has coordinated its activities closely with the state, county, and city governments. Since Tuesday, May 5th, senior task force representatives have participated in a daily conference call with officials of the state, city, county, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and FEMA. This conference call has made possible an immediate, coordinated response, on a daily basis, to problems that are occurring in the field. This daily conference call will continue for the foreseeable future.

For the past week in Los Angeles, the task force met at the beginning and at the end of each working day.

## **IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN LOS ANGELES**

While the greater Los Angeles community sustained significant damage as a result of the rioting, the task force was impressed by the pervasive signs of hope that have arisen in the wake of this tragedy. Every member of the task force was struck by the genuine desire, at every level of government and throughout the community, to cooperate in working toward the quick recovery of Los Angeles.



The nature of the damage which resulted from the thousands of fires set during the rioting was different from that sustained in Watts, Detroit, and other riots in the 1960s. While the damage was extensive and indeed staggering, relatively few residences were burned: HUD estimates that approximately 250–300 families lost their homes as a result of fires related to the disturbance.

The principal physical damage sustained during the rioting was the destruction and/or looting of several thousand businesses. Preliminary estimates by city and county building and safety experts are that 5,000 structures in the greater Los Angeles area were either damaged or destroyed. The businesses housed in these structures provided essential services to the citizens of South Central, Crenshaw, Koreatown, Compton, Inglewood, Long Beach and other areas of greater Los Angeles. The task force believes that an urgent priority is to encourage re-investment in these neighborhoods.

Because many of the businesses which were destroyed or looted were small, family-owned businesses, without the staff or facilities for extensive recordkeeping, the task force recognized that these businesses might encounter special difficulties in completing the paperwork necessary to apply for SBA disaster loans and FEMA disaster assistance.

Further, given the emotionally charged nature of the disaster and the attendant tensions in the community, the task force was eager to minimize any additional frustration which might result from delays in processing and receiving disaster assistance. Two key objectives of the task force were therefore to assist in the application process and to streamline the approval process for these types of assistance.

The record-keeping problems of small business had the potential to be exacerbated by language barriers in the culturally diverse community of Los Angeles. The languages spoken by affected business owners ranged from English to Korean to Spanish to Persian to Armenian to Thai to Mandarin Chinese. Throughout the week, the task force worked to surmount this barrier by marshalling the resources necessary to provide effective translation services.

## **V. DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

On Saturday, May 2nd, in response to a request from Governor Wilson on that same date, the President declared that a major disaster exists in the County and City of Los Angeles. This declaration made Federal disaster-related funding available for individuals, businesses' and local governments who had suffered as a result of the civil disturbance.

Specifically, as a result of the President's declaration, SBA is making available direct, low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, businesses and non-profit organizations who suffered losses. These include physical disaster loans to help rebuild and replace uninsured property, and economic industry loans to provide small businesses with the working capital to replace inventory and otherwise resume normal operations.

FEMA is providing temporary housing and grants to individuals and families whose homes and property were damaged in the disaster, and who cannot

qualify for SBA loans. In addition, FEMA provides grants to local governments to cover the costs of repairing public buildings and facilities and the overtime salaries of state and local workers who had to respond to the disaster.

This SBA and FEMA assistance constitutes the lion's share of the Federal assistance made available to respond to urgent, short-term recovery needs. In the past, the application and approval process for these programs has been the source of some frustration. The task force was and is committed to removing any unnecessary bureaucratic barriers to the efficient functioning of this process. The specific goal of the task force is to provide this FEMA and SBA assistance in record time.

To aid in the task of minimizing confusion for a local population already under stress, the task force worked with the state, county, and city governments to establish centers that would provide all key services under one roof. Under this "one stop shopping" approach, a citizen could find information on and make application for SBA loans; FEMA grants; emergency food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance; individual and family grants; tax assistance; and crisis counseling—all at one location.

On Friday, May 8th, seven DACS were opened throughout the affected areas of greater Los Angeles to provide this "one-stop shopping" service. One measure of the success of the task force is this: on Monday, May 11th, three days after the opening of the application centers, FEMA mailed its first disaster housing assistance checks to victims of the disturbance.

### **Breaking Down Language Barriers**

The task force recognized that language differences could constitute an important barrier to the efficient delivery of services in such a culturally diverse community as Los Angeles. As a result, FEMA, SBA, and the task force worked to tap a range of resources to provide sufficient numbers of linguistic specialists in the DACS. FEMA and SBA enlisted the services of Korean-speaking assistants to aid the many Korean-American business owners affected by the disaster. On Friday, May 8th, it became clear that a shortage of Spanish-speaking assistants existed at the Ardmore DAC site. FEMA redeployed several assistants to that site, and hired ten additional Spanish speaking aides that day.

In total, approximately 60 bilingual aides have been hired to date to ease the language problem.

In order to minimize the time between the actual disaster and the receipt of disaster assistance, the task force took several actions to reduce red tape and assist applicants.

### **Speeding Delivery of SBA Disaster Assistance Loans**

Many of the businesses affected by the rioting were small businesses without extensive records. In order to receive disaster assistance loans, businesses must furnish tax returns from the past three years; an itemized list of losses; proof of operation of a business at a particular location, such as a copy of a deed, lease, or mortgage; a brief history of the business; and financial statements for the past three years.

For many of the businesses in the affected areas of Los Angeles, it is difficult to meet these requirements. To help such applicants, the task force:

- Arranged for the placement of specialists from the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) in each of the DACS. These specialists are providing technical assistance to businesses in preparing such required items as the business history and the profit and loss statements from the past three years. MBDA arranged to have its services provided in several languages.
- Arranged for the placement of representatives of the IRS in each of the DACS, to speed the process of recovering tax returns from IRS headquarters in those cases in which the applicants' copies of the tax returns are missing or destroyed. In addition, the task force worked with the IRS headquarters in Washington to ensure that expedited treatment is given to any request to retrieve tax returns in cases related to the situation in Los Angeles.

Another requirement of the SBA for disaster loan applicants is that they demonstrate that they sought and were unable to secure credit elsewhere. In the case of many of the small businesses in South Central and other affected areas of Los Angeles, it is safe to assume that availability of credit was a major difficulty for them even prior to the disturbance—that they would be unable to secure such credit. In response, the task force:

- Developed through SBA a simplified “credit elsewhere” test. This is a major time saver in the application process, which for thousands of businesses will cut weeks from the time it takes to receive an SBA disaster loan.

The length of time required to process SBA disaster loan applications and actually provide checks to affected businesses has been a source of frustration in past disasters. To reduce that frustration, the task force:

- Established a special expedited process with the U.S. Treasury Department to speed approval of check writing for the Small Business Administration.

### **Delivering FEMA Assistance Fairly and Efficiently**

The city and state governments expressed concern that, due to the wording of the disaster declaration, FEMA and SBA might be in the position of providing disaster assistance to those who had suffered losses or damage due to fire, but not to those who had suffered losses or damage due to looting. The task force:

- Worked with FEMA to clarify the interpretation of the President's disaster declaration. Under the clarification, FEMA declared that, “Fires during a period of civil unrest means all *fire-related damages or hardships* which occurred during the major disaster.” (emphasis added) Further, FEMA stated that “where it is not feasible to differentiate

among the causes of civil unrest . . . or where it appears that damages or hardships may be in any way the effect of fires or fire-related circumstances, all damage is considered to be related to fires.” This interpretation should allow agencies to provide assistance to all those who suffered damages as a result of the civil disturbance.

### **Creating Additional DACs**

The task force has sought to be flexible in accommodating the demand for assistance in the community and to reduce undue waiting time in the DACs.

When indications of long waiting times at the Ardmore Recreation Center DAC in Koreatown arose on Friday, May 8th, the task force:

- Worked with FEMA and the state government to move a mobile DAC to the site, expanding the available space by 720 square feet.

When the need for additional application facilities in the Crenshaw area was identified during the first weekend of operations of the DACs, the task force:

- Worked to establish a new DAC site at 4030 Crenshaw Boulevard in Los Angeles. This new DAC was opened at 10:00 am on Monday, May 11th.

The task force is prepared to remain flexible as new demand for disaster recovery services arises.

## **VI. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES**

In addition to FEMA and SBA, other Federal agencies have worked to provide quickly a range of other services and types of assistance in response to the disturbance in Los Angeles. Some examples follow.

### **Agriculture**

In response to spot shortages of food in certain neighborhoods, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sent over 27,000 boxes of cereal, over 58,000 cans of infant formula, over 1,500 six-pound boxes of nonfat dry milk, and other foodstuffs to Los Angeles area food banks.

A USDA survey revealed that private sector donations to food banks soared in the wake of Los Angeles disturbance, and that distribution outlets in the area had been increased, thanks to the participation of churches and other non-profit institutions in the community.

The USDA survey revealed that there was no marked increase in food stamp demand in the wake of the disturbance. Nevertheless new requests from individuals affected by the disturbances will be put on a special fast track. Because several outlets authorized to accept food stamps were closed or destroyed, red tape was cut so that new food stamp authorization applications from retail outlets are being processed in one day.

At least fifty stores authorized to receive vouchers in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program were closed or destroyed. In response, USDA issued instructions to allow WIC coupons to be valid at any authorized vendor.

### **Commerce**

The Department of Commerce has provided both business and economic development assistance in the wake of the Los Angeles disturbance.

In addition to placing its representatives in the DACs to assist in the preparation of applications by small minority businesses, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) operates two Minority Business Development Centers in the Los Angeles areas.

The Commerce Department is in the process of making available approximately \$25 million in Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds to assist in the recovery process. Six to ten million dollars will be made available to the county and city governments for bridge loans to businesses to be used for purposes such as cleanup, demolition, and restoration of inventory, machinery and equipment, or building structures.

Another \$2 to 3 million is expected to be provided to Rebuild LA, chaired by Peter Ueberroth, to help set up and operate this non-profit organization, whose mission is to assist in the economic recovery of greater Los Angeles by attracting job-creating private sector investment.

Approximately \$1 to 2 million is expected to be provided to the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, to help reinvigorate international tourism to the Los Angeles area. This is the second largest industry in the area, employing 360,000 southern Californians, eighty percent of whom are minorities.

Finally, EDA is discussing \$5.5 million in defense adjustment grants for Los Angeles County, to assist areas where defense contracts were terminated. Some of these grants could be used for seed capital for technology companies which are spinoffs from defense-related companies.

### **Education**

The Department of Education is taking steps to speed the availability of approximately \$1.2 billion in formula grants to the State of California, and to work with the state to optimize the suballocation of these grants in order to address conditions related to the disturbances.

Education is working with college student aid administrators to allow them to use "special condition" procedures in the Pell Grant program to take into account any loss of family income due to the disturbances.

In addition, a special desk has been set up at Education's Federal Student Aid Information Center to handle inquiries from Los Angeles students on how to apply for student aid or how to reflect loss of assets or income due to the disturbances in the application. This desk will be serviced by an "800" phone number.

### **Health and Human Services**

Within 24 hours of the disturbance, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Social Security Administration, ordered the use of emergency check-writing authority to make payments of up to \$200 for those elderly poor or low income, disabled children whose Supplemental Security Income (SSI) checks were not received as a result of the

disturbance. HHS also put in place procedures to speed the replacement of any welfare or disability check lost as a result of the disturbance.

HHS dispatched experts from the National Institute of Mental Health to assess mental health assistance needs and requirements. Mental health and crisis counseling is available in the DACS. Epidemiologist from the Centers for Disease Control were brought in to investigate the health effects of the disturbance—including those related to environmental safety (chemical and biohazards), health control (sanitation and clean water), and other questions.

### **Housing and Urban Development**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) immediately made available Section 8 rental assistance vouchers to those families who have been displaced by fires related to the disturbance.

HUD is also making available 32 HUD-owned homes, with a dollar value of \$2.3 million, for use in the affected areas. These homes will be leased to the city for one dollar per month. HUD issued a new rule this past week to provide priority contracting for businesses that are at least 51 percent resident owned. This means that a higher proportion of contracts for work performed for HUD will go to businesses which are representative of the area in which the work is to be performed.

On Wednesday, May 6th, HUD announced that it will approve requests to allow the early release of over \$92 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the city and County of Los Angeles that were scheduled to be released on July 1st.

On Thursday, May 7th, HUD signed an interagency memorandum of understanding with the Department of Labor to better coordinate Labor's job training efforts with HUD's HOPE and other public housing initiatives.

On Friday, May 8th, HUD announced the availability of \$1.5 million in Technical Assistance program grants for low- and moderate-income young people (between the ages of 14 and 21) to help them acquire the skills and knowledge they need to start and operate successful small businesses.

The Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) has made available to HUD a list of properties available in the affected area of Los Angeles. HUD has been working to match these properties to local needs, and leases could be signed later this week.

### **Labor**

The Department of Labor provided \$2 million in emergency grants to hire and pay the wages of workers who were dislocated as a result of the disturbance.

Labor also launched a demonstration project to use unemployment insurance benefit payments to support entrepreneurship efforts by unemployment insurance claimants.

Labor also provided about \$2 million for several types of training assistance. One grant would establish "one-stop shopping" skill centers to provide vocational training and employment-related assistance to affected areas. Another would finance an expansion of a program operated by the Community Youth Gang Services which allows area youth to participate in

community service projects as an alternative to incarceration. A third would finance youth apprenticeship model programs for African-American and Hispanic males. And a fourth would provide training funds to supplement local economic development efforts.

### **Office of Personnel Management**

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) authorized the conduct of a special Combined Federal Campaign effort among Federal employees in the Los Angeles area to help generate contributions to non-profit organizations involved in the recovery effort. OPM has also taken steps in the past week to increase job opportunities and to provide job counseling and stress counseling in the Los Angeles area.

## **VII. CONTINUATION OF THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE**

The work of the task force will continue beyond the efforts of this first week. The task force is committed to implementing fully the President's directive to work with the state, county, and city, and with the private sector, to ensure the swift delivery of needed assistance and services to the people of Los Angeles.

The task force has established a structure and a set of processes to see that this directive is carried out in the weeks and months ahead.

With the return of most Deputy Secretaries to Washington, the conference calls with State, county, city, and on-site Federal representatives are nevertheless continuing. Deputy Secretary DelliBovi has returned to Los Angeles this week. Deputy Secretary Schnabel will arrive later in the week. The task force co-chairs, Deputy Secretaries Kearns and DelliBovi, plan to continue alternate visits to Los Angeles for as long as such visits are helpful.

Each of the agencies represented on the task force has stationed a representative to remain in Los Angeles. Some of these representatives will be moved to the site of the current Federal/State/Local coordinating office in Pasadena to ensure maximum coordination.

The task force co-chairmen are now in the process of identifying a task force leader to lead the task force in Los Angeles on a day-to-day basis. This leader will report regularly to the co-chairmen.

In six weeks, the task force has agreed to reconvene in Los Angeles to assess the state of the recovery effort, to meet again with state, local, and private sector officials, and to determine what additional actions are necessary.

The task force will work diligently to support state, county, city, and private sector efforts to help Los Angeles recover, and to make sure that the Federal government is a constructive partner in that recovery.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

Throughout greater Los Angeles, members of the task force witnessed inspiring signs of hope in the wake of the tragic violence. Store owners whose shops had been looted only days earlier rushed to replace inventory, placed plywood over their shattered windows, and proudly painted "Open for Business" in bold letters on their newly installed plywood facades.

Volunteers poured into the affected areas from all over the city—indeed from all over the country. Mayor Bradley estimated that 50,000 volunteers had assisted in the cleanup of Los Angeles in the days following the disturbances.

On one street corner in South Central, against a backdrop of a burned out shopping center, a man opened a flower stand, in one first small step of hope and recovery.

One firefighter who had served 27 years earlier in combating the fires of Watts, predicted and observed “a much quicker recovery” than that which followed the Watts disturbances, because, he said, of “the total commitment to cleanup and recovery on the part of the local people.”

From the ashes of this recovery, the members of the task force found blossoming a springtime of hope. Its most important feature was a near-consensus on the types of measures that are needed not only to restore Los Angeles but to make its neighborhoods stronger than they were before this incident happened.

While there is much about which to be encouraged, the task force found that this is a *very* tough situation. It is estimated that unemployment in the affected area *prior* to the disturbance was far higher than the national average, perhaps more than triple the national rate. Mayor Bradley estimates that many thousands of jobs were lost as a result of the disturbance—some permanently.

Virtually everyone the task force spoke to believed that private sector investment in these neighborhoods, investment which can create jobs in the community, was the most urgent priority. Virtually everyone the task force spoke to believed that residents of these affected areas must be given a greater equity stake in success—the opportunity to accumulate assets without penalty—from the welfare system, the opportunity to own and manage their own homes, the opportunity to live in neighborhoods free from crime and drugs. What the Federal government can provide is incentives to encourage investment that will create jobs and build local assets.

The members of the task force believe that in this emergent consensus lie the seeds of a truly complete recovery for Los Angeles, and for all of America’s cities.

SOURCE: Los Angeles—A City in Stress Web Site: <http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/cityinstress/>.



## **22. Excerpts from the Preliminary and Final Reports of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, 2000, and 2001**

Formed in 1997, the Tulsa Race Riot Commission was charged with determining exactly what happened during the May 1921 riot that devastated the African American Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Commission undertook both an historical and an archeological analysis of the event and, as indicated below in the cover letter to its preliminary report released in 2000, recommended that reparations be paid to survivors of the riot. Also



reproduced below are excerpts of the final report of the Commission, which was compiled by Danney Goble and released in 2001.

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**Letter Introducing the Commission's Preliminary Report,  
February 7, 2000**

The Honorable Frank Keating  
Governor of the State of Oklahoma  
State Capitol Building  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Governor Keating:

The Tulsa Race Riot Commission, established by House Joint Resolution No. 1035, is pleased to submit the following preliminary report.

The primary goal of collecting historical documentation on the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 has been achieved. Attachment A is a summary listing of the record groups that have been gathered and stored at the Oklahoma Historical Society. Also included are summaries of some reports and the full text of selected documents to illustrate the breadth and scope of the collecting process. However, the Commission has not yet voted on historical findings, so these materials do not necessarily represent conclusions of the Commission.

At the last meeting, held February 4, 2000, the Commission voted on three actions. They are:

1) The Issue of Restitution

Whereas, the process of historical analysis by this Commission is not yet complete,

And Whereas, the archeological investigation into casualties and mass burials is not yet complete,

And Whereas, we have seen a continuous pattern of historical evidence that the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 was the violent consequence of racial hatred institutionalized and tolerated by official federal, state, county, and city policy,

And Whereas, government at all levels has the moral and ethical responsibility of fostering a sense of community that bridges divides of ethnicity and race,

And Whereas, by statute we are to make recommendations regarding whether or not reparations can or should be made to the Oklahoma Legislature, the Governor of the State of Oklahoma, and the Mayor and City Council of Tulsa,

That, we, the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission, recommend that restitution to the historic Greenwood Community, in real and tangible form, would be good public policy and do much to repair the emotional as well as physical scars of this most terrible incident in our shared past.

2) The Issue of Suggested Forms of Restitution in Priority Order

The Commission recommends

- 1) Direct payment of reparations to survivors of the Tulsa Race Riot

- 2) Direct payment of reparations to descendants of the survivors of the Tulsa Race Riot
  - 3) A scholarship fund available to students affected by the Tulsa Race Riot
  - 4) Establishment of an economic development enterprise zone in the historic area of the Greenwood District
  - 5) A memorial for the reburial of any human remains found in the search for unmarked graves of riot victims
- 3) The Issue of an Extension of the Tulsa Race Riot Commission

The Commission hereby endorses and supports House Bill 2468, which extends the life of the Commission in order to finish the historical report on the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921.

We, the members of the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, respectfully submit these findings for your consideration.

COMMISSIONERS:

Currie Ballard, Coyle  
 Dr. Bob Blackburn, Oklahoma City  
 Joel Burns, Tulsa  
 Vivian Clark, Tulsa  
 Rep. Abe Deuschendorf, Lawton  
 Eddie Faye Gates, Tulsa  
 Jim Lloyd, Tulsa  
 Sen. Robert Milacek, Waukomis  
 Jimmie L. White, Jr., Checotah

CHAIRMAN:

T. D. "Pete" Churchwell, Tulsa

SPONSORS:

Sen. Maxine Horner, Tulsa  
 Rep. Donn Ross, Tulsa

ADVISORS:

Dr. John Hope Franklin, Durham NC  
 Dr. Scott Ellsworth, Portland OR

**Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921**

Compiled by Danney Goble

The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission originated in 1997 with House Joint Resolution No. 1035. The act twice since has been amended, first in 1998, and again two years later. The final rewriting passed each legislative chamber in March and became law with Governor Frank Keating's signature on April 6, 2000.

In that form, the State of Oklahoma extended the commission's authority beyond that originally scheduled, to February 28, 2001.

The statute also charged the commission to produce, on that date, "a final report of its findings and recommendations" and to submit that report "in writing to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Mayor and each member of the City Council of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma." This is that report. It accounts for and completes the work of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission.

A series of papers accompanies the report. Some are written by scholars of national stature, others by experts of international acclaim. Each addresses at length and in depth issues of expressed legislative interest and matters of enormous public consequence. As a group, they comprise a uniquely special and a uniquely significant contribution that must be attached to this report and must be studied carefully along with it.

Nonetheless, the supporting documents are not the report, itself. The scholars' essays have their purposes; this commission's report has another. Its purpose is contained in the statutes that first created this commission, that later extended its life, and that each time gave it the same set of mandates. That is why this report is an accounting, presented officially and offered publicly, of how Oklahoma's 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission has conducted its business and addressed its statutory obligations.

Its duties were many, and each presented imposing challenges. Not least was the challenge of preparing this report. Lawmakers scheduled its deadline and defined its purpose, and this report meets their requirements. At the same time, four years of intense study and personal sacrifice surely entitle commission members to add their own expectations. Completely reasonable and entirely appropriate, their desires deserve a place in their report as well.

Together, then, both the law's requirements and the commissioners' resolves guide this report. Designed to be both concise and complete, this is the report that law requires the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission to submit to those who represent the people. Designed to be both compelling and convincing, this also is the report that the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission chooses to offer the people whom both lawmakers and the commissioners serve.

***The Commission shall consist of eleven (11) members . . .***

The legislative formula for commission membership assured it appropriate if unusual composition. As an official state inquiry, the state's interest was represented through the executive, legislative, and administrative branches. The governor was to appoint six members, three from names submitted by the Speaker of the House, three from nominees provided by the Senate President Pro Tempore.

Two state officials—the directors of the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and of the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS)—also were to serve as ex officio members, either personally or through their designees.

Reflecting Tulsa's obvious interest, the resolution directed the city's mayor to select the commission's final three members. Similar to the gubernatorial appointments, they were to come from names proposed by Tulsa's City Commission. One of the mayor's appointees had to be "a survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot incident"; two had to be current residents of the historic Greenwood community, the area once devastated by the "incident." The commission began with two ex officio members and ended with two others. After Gracie Monson resigned in March 2000, Kenneth Kendrick

replaced her as OHRC's interim director and its representative to the commission. Blake Wade directed the historical society until Dr. Bob Blackburn succeeded him in 1999. Blackburn had been Wade's designated representative to the commission anyway. In fact, the commission had made him its chairman, a position he would hold until June 2000.

Governor Frank Keating's six appointees included two legislators, each from a different chamber, each from an opposite party, each a former history teacher. Democrat Abe Deutschendorf's participation in the debate over the original house resolution echoed his lingering interest in history and foretold his future devotion to this inquiry. As a history teacher, Robert Milacek had included Tulsa's race riot in his classes. Little did he know that he, himself, would contribute to that history as a Republican legislator, but he has.

Governor Keating turned to metropolitan Tulsa for two appointees. T.D. "Pete" Churchwell's father serviced African-American businesses in the Greenwood district, and Churchwell has maintained concern for that community and with the 1921 riot that nearly destroyed it. He was Blackburn's replacement as chairman during the commission's closing months. Although born in Oklahoma City, Jim Lloyd and his family moved to Turley (the community just north of Greenwood) when he was three. Raised in Tulsa, he graduated from Nathan Hale and the University of Tulsa's College of Law. He now practices law in Sand Springs and lives in Tulsa.

The governor's other appointees entered the inquiry less with geographical than with professional connections to Tulsa and its history. Currie Ballard lives in Coyle and serves neighboring Langston University as historian-in-residence. Holding a graduate degree in history, Jimmie White teaches it and heads the social science division for Connors State College.

Tulsa Mayor Susan Savage appointed the commission's final three members. If only five in 1921, Joe Burns met the law's requirement that one mayoral appointee be a survivor of the 1921 "incident." He brought the commission not faint childhood memories but seasoned wisdom rooted in eight decades of life in the Greenwood community and with Greenwood's people.

As the resolution specified, Mayor Savage's other two appointees live in contemporary Greenwood, but neither took a direct route to get there. Eddie Faye Gates's path began in Preston, Oklahoma, passed through Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, and crisscrossed two continents before it reached Tulsa in 1968. She spent the next twenty-four years teaching its youngsters and has devoted years since researching and writing her own memoirs and her community's history. Vivian Clark-Adams's route took nearly as many twists and turns, passing through one military base after another until her father retired and the family came to Oklahoma in 1961. Trained at the University of Tulsa, Dr. Vivian Clark-Adams serves Tulsa Community College as chair of the liberal arts division for its southeast campus.

In the November 1997, organizing meeting, commissioners voted to hire clerical assistants and expert consultants through the OHS. (The legislature had added \$50,000 to the agency's base appropriations for just such purposes.) They then scheduled their second meeting for December 5 to

accommodate the most appropriate and most eminent of all possible authorities.

John Hope Franklin is the son of Greenwood attorney B.C. Franklin, a graduate of Tulsa's Booker T. Washington High School (Fisk and Harvard, too), and James B. Duke Professor of History Emeritus at Duke University. Recipient of scores of academic and literary awards, not to mention more than a hundred honorary doctorates, Franklin came back for another honor. He received the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award on December 4 and stayed to meet and help the commission on the fifth.

Commissioners were delighted to learn that Franklin was anxious to serve, even if he confessed the contributions limited by age (he was eighty-two at the time) and other obligations. They enthusiastically made John Hope Franklin their first consultant, and they instantly took his advice for another. Dr. Scott Ellsworth, a native Tulsan now living in Oregon, was a Duke graduate who already had written a highly regarded study of the riot. Ellsworth became the second consultant chosen; he thereafter emerged first in importance.

As its work grew steadily more exacting and steadily more specialized, the commission turned to more experts. Legal scholars, archeologists, anthropologists, forensic specialists, geophysicists—all of these and more blessed this commission with technical expertise impossible to match and unimaginable otherwise. As a research group, they brought a breadth of vision and a depth of training that made Oklahoma's commission a model of state inquiry.

Ten consultants eventually provided them expert advice, but the commissioners always expected to depend mostly on their own resources, maybe with just a little help from just a few of their friends. Interested OHS employees were a likely source. Sure enough, a half-dozen or so pitched in to search the agency's library and archives for riot-related materials.

That was help appreciated, if not entirely unexpected. What was surprising—stunning, really—was something else that happened in Oklahoma City. As the commission's work attracted interest and gathered momentum, Bob Blackburn noticed something odd: an unusual number of people were volunteering to work at the historical society. Plain, ordinary citizens, maybe forty or fifty of them, had asked to help the commission as unpaid researchers in the OHS collections.

At about that time, Dick Warner decided that he had better start making notes on the phone calls he was fielding for the Tulsa County Historical Society. People were calling in, wanting to contribute to the inquiry, and they just kept calling. After two months, his log listed entries for 148 local calls. Meanwhile, Scott Ellsworth was back in Oregon, writing down information volunteered by some of the three hundred callers who had reached him by long distance.

Most commission meetings were in Tulsa, each open to any and all. Oklahoma's Open Meetings Law required no less, but this commission's special nature yielded much more. It seemed that every time the commissioners met at least one person (usually several) greeted them with at least something (usually a lot) that the commission needed.

Included were records and papers long presumed lost, if their existence had been known at all. Some were official documents, pulled together and packed away years earlier. Uncovered and examined, they took the commission back in time, back to the years just before and just after 1921. Some were musty legal records saved from the shredders. Briefs filed, dockets set, lawsuits decided—each opened an avenue into another corner of history. Pages after pages laid open the city commission's deliberations and decisions as they affected the Greenwood area. Overlooked records from the National Guard offered overlooked perspectives and illuminated them with misplaced correspondence, lost after-action reports, obscure field manuals, and self-typed accounts from men who were on duty at the riot. Maybe there was a family's treasured collection of yellowed newspaper clippings; an envelope of faded photographs; a few carefully folded letters, all hand written, each dated 1921.

One meaning of all of this is obvious, so obvious that this report pauses to affirm it.

Many have questioned why or even if anyone would be interested now in events that happened in one city, one time, one day, long ago. What business did today's state lawmakers have in something so old, so local, and so deservedly forgotten? Surely no one cares, not anymore.

An answer comes from hundreds and hundreds of voices. They tell us that what happened in 1921 in Tulsa is as alive today as it was back then. What happened in Tulsa stays as important and remains as unresolved today as in 1921. What happened there still exerts its power over people who never lived in Tulsa at all.

How else can one explain the thousands of hours volunteered by hundreds of people, all to get this story told and get it told right? How else can one explain the regional, national, even international attention that has been concentrated on a few short hours of a mid-sized city's history? As the introductory paper by Drs. Franklin and Ellsworth recounts, the Tulsa disaster went largely unacknowledged for a half-century or more. After a while, it was largely forgotten.

Eventually it became largely unknown. So hushed was mention of the subject that many pronounced it the final victim of a conspiracy, this a conspiracy of silence.

That silence is shattered, utterly and permanently shattered. Whatever else this commission has achieved or will achieve, it already has made that possible. Regional, national, and international media made it certain. The *Dallas Morning News*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, National Public Radio (NPR), every American broadcast television network, cable outlets delivering Cinemax and the History Channel to North America, the British Broadcasting Corporation—this merely begins the attention that the media focused upon this commission and its inquiry. Many approached it in depth (NPR twice has made it the featured daily broadcast). Most returned to it repeatedly (the *New York Times* had carried at least ten articles as of February 2000). All considered it vital public information.

Some—including some commission members—thought at least some of the coverage was at least somewhat unbalanced. They may have had a point, but that is not the point.

Here is the point: The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission is pleased to report that this past tragedy has been extensively aired, that it is now remembered, and that it will never again be unknown.

***The Commission shall undertake a study to [include] the identification of persons...***

No one is certain how many participated in the 1921 riot. No one is certain how many suffered how much for how long. Certainty is reserved for a single quantifiable fact. Every year there remain fewer and fewer who experienced it personally.

Legislation authorizing this commission directed that it seek and locate those survivors.

Specifically, it was to identify any personable to “provide adequate proof to the Commission” that he or she was an “actual resident” of “the ‘Greenwood’ area or community” at the time of the riot. The commission was also to identify any person who otherwise “sustained an identifiable loss . . . resulting from the . . . 1921 Tulsa Race Riot.” Some considered this the commission’s most difficult assignment, some its most important duty, some its most compelling purpose. They all were right, and had Eddie Faye Gates not assumed personal and experienced responsibility for that mandate, this commission might have little to report. Because she did, however, it principally reports what she and those who worked with her were able to accomplish in the commission’s name.

Commissioner Gates’s presence gave this commission a considerable and welcomed head start. She already had included several riot victims among the early pioneers whom she had interviewed for *They Came Searching: How Blacks Sought the Promised Land in Tulsa*. The book finished, she had an informal list of survivors, but the list kept changing.

Death erased one name after another. Others appeared. Many were of old people who had left Oklahoma years, even decades, ago; but she heard about them and patiently tracked them down. As lawmakers were authorizing this inquiry, the count stood at thirteen, nineteen if all the leads eventually panned out. No one presumed that even nineteen was close to final, but no one knew what the accurate total might be either.

At its very first organizing meeting on November 14, 1997, this commission established a “subcommittee on survivors,” headed by Commissioner Gates and including Commissioner Burns and Dr. Clark-Adams. From that moment onward, that subcommittee has aggressively and creatively pursued every possible avenue to identify every possible survivor.

Letters sent over Dr. Ellsworth’s signature to *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines urged readers to contact the commission if they knew of any possibilities. From *Gale’s Directory of Publications*, Commissioner Gates targeted the nation’s leading African-American newspapers (papers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*), appealing publicly for survivors or to

anyone who might know of one. The commission's website, created and maintained by the Oklahoma Historical Society, prominently declared a determination to identify and register every survivor, everywhere. For affirmation, it posted the official forms used as the subcommittee's records, including instructions for their completion and submission.

An old-fashioned, intensely personal web turned out to be more productive than the thoroughly modern, entirely electronic Internet.

Like historical communities everywhere, modern Greenwood maintains a rich, if informal, social network. Sometimes directly, sometimes distantly, it connects Greenwood's people, sometimes young, sometimes old. Anchoring its interstices are the community's longest residents, its most active citizens, and its most prominent leaders.

One quality or another would describe some members of this commission. After all, these are the very qualifications that lawmakers required for their appointments. Others share those same qualities and a passion for their community's history as well. Curtis Lawson, Robert Littlejohn, Hannibal Johnson, Dr. Charles Christopher, Mable Rice, Keith Jemison, Robert and Blanchie Mayes—all are active in the North Tulsa Historical Society, all are some of the community's most respected citizens, and all are among this commission's most valuable assets.

The initial published notices had early results. Slowly they began to compound upon themselves. The first stories in the national and international media introduced a multiplying factor. Thereafter, each burst of press attention seemed to increase what was happening geometrically. People were contacting commissioners, some coming forward as survivors, more suggesting where or how they might be found. Names came in, first a light sprinkle, next a shower, then a downpour, finally a flood.

Old city directories, census reports, and other records verified some claims, but they could confirm only so much. After all, these people had been children, some of them infants, back in 1921. After eighty years, could any one remember the kind of details—addresses, telephone numbers, property descriptions, rental agreements, business locations—someone else could verify with official documents? Not likely. In fact, these were exactly the kind of people most likely to have been ignored or lost in every public record. Officially, they might have never existed.

Except that they did, and one who looked long enough and hard enough and patiently enough could confirm it—that is, if one knew where to look and whom to ask.

That is what happened. Name-by-name, someone found somebody who actually knew each person. In fact, that is how many names surfaced: a credible figure in the community knew how to find older relatives, former neighbors, or departed friends. Others could be confirmed with equal authority. Maybe someone knew the claimant's family or knew someone that did. If a person claimed to be kin to someone or offered some small detail, surely someone else knew that relative or remembered the same detail as well. Some of those details might even be verified through official documents.



It was a necessary process but slow and delicate, too. As of June 1998, twenty-nine survivors had been identified, contacted, and registered. (The number did not include sixteen identified as descendants of riot victims.) It took another fourteen months for the total to reach sixty-one. It would have been higher, except that three of the first twenty-nine had died in those months. This deadline had an ominous and compelling meaning.

Work immediately shifted through higher gears. In March 2000, the identification process finished for forty-one survivors then living in or near Tulsa. Just a few more still needed to be contacted. The real work remaining, however, involved a remarkable number of survivors who had turned up outside of Oklahoma. Following a recent flurry of media attention, more than sixty out-of-state survivors had been located. They lived everywhere from California to Florida, one in Paris, France! All of that work is complete. As the commission submits its report, 118 persons have been identified, contacted, and registered as living survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. (Another 176 persons also have been registered as descendants of riot victims.) The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission thereby has discharged the mandate regarding the identification of persons.

***The Commission shall . . . gather information, identify and interview witnesses . . . , preserve testimony and records obtained, [and] examine and copy documents . . . having historical significance***

Whatever else this commission already has achieved or soon will inspire, one accomplishment will remain indefinitely. Until recently, the Tulsa race riot has been the most important least known event in the state's entire history. Even the most resourceful of scholars stumbled as they neared it for it was dimly lit by evidence and the evidentiary record faded more with every passing year.

That is not now and never will be true again.

These few hours—from start to finish, the actual riot consumed less than sixteen hours—may now comprise the most thoroughly documented moments ever to have occurred in Oklahoma. This commission's work and the documentary record it leaves behind shines upon them a light too bright to ignore.

The Oklahoma Historical Society was searching its existing materials and aggressively pursuing more before this commission ever assembled. By the November 1997, organizing meeting, Bob Blackburn was ready to announce that the society already had ordered prints from every known source of every known photograph taken of the riot. He was contacting every major archival depository and research library in the country to request copies of any riot-related materials they might hold themselves. Experienced OHS professionals were set to research important but heretofore neglected court and municipal records.

This was news welcomed by commission members. It assured early momentum for the job ahead, and it complemented work that some of them were already doing. Eddie Faye Gates, for one, had pulled out every

transcript of every interview that she had made with a riot witness, and she was anxious to make more. Jim Lloyd was another. Lloyd already had found and copied transcripts from earlier interviews, including some with Tulsa police officers present at the riot. He also had a hunch that a fellow who knew his way around a court house just might turn up all sorts of information.

That is how it began, but that was just the beginning. In the months ahead, Larry O'Dell and other OHS employees patiently excavated mountains of information, one pebble at a time, as it were. They then pieced together tiny bits of fact, carefully fitting one to another.

One by one, completed puzzles emerged. Arranged in different dimensions, they made magic: a vision of Greenwood long since vanished.

Master maps, both of the community on the eve of the riot and of the post-riot residue, identified every single piece of property. For each parcel, a map displayed any structure present, its owner and its use. If commercial, what firms were there, who owned them, what businesses they were in. If residential, whether it was rented or owned. If the former, the landlord's name. If the latter, whether it was mortgaged (if so, to whom and encumbered by what debt). For both, lists identified each of its occupants by name.

It was not magic; it was more. Larry O'Dell had rebuilt Greenwood from records he and other researchers had examined and collected for the commission. Every building permit granted, every warranty deed recorded, every property appraisal ordered, every damage claim filed, every death certificate issued, every burial record maintained—the commission had copies of every single record related to Greenwood at the time of the riot.

Some it had only because Jim Lloyd was right. Able to navigate a courthouse, he ran across complete records for some 150 civil suits filed after the race riot. No one remembered that they even existed; they had been misplaced for thirty-five years. When Jim Lloyd uncovered and saved them, they were scheduled for routine shredding.

The commission gathered the most private of documents as well. Every form registering every survivor bears notes recording information taken from every one of 118 persons. With Kavin Ross operating the camera, Eddie Faye Gates videotaped interviews with about half of the survivors. Each is available on one of nine cassettes preserved by the commission; full transcripts are being completed for all. Sympathetic collectors turned over transcripts of another fifty or more. Some had been packed away for twenty, even thirty years.

Others, including several resourceful amateur historians, reproduced and gave the commission what amounted to complete documentary collections. There were sets of municipal records, files from state agencies, reports kept by social services, press clippings carefully bound, privately owned photographs never publicly seen.

People who had devoted years to the study of one or more aspects of the riot supplied evidence they had found and presented conclusions they had reached. Beryl Ford followed the commission's work as a Tulsan legendary for his devotion to his city and its history. William O'Brien attended

nearly every commission meeting, sometimes to ask questions, sometimes to answer them, once to deliver his own full report on the riot. Robert Norris prepared smaller, occasional reports on military topics.

He also dug up and turned over files from National Guard records. Others located affidavits filed with the State Supreme Court. The military reports usually had been presumed lost; the legal papers always had been assumed unimportant.

Commissioners were surprised to receive so much new evidence and pleased to see that it contributed so much. They were delighted to note that so much came from black sources, that it documented black experiences and recorded black observations.

It had not always been that way. Too many early journalists and historians had dismissed black sources as unreliable. Too few early librarians and archivists had preserved black sources as important. Both thereby condemned later writers and scholars to a never ending game of hide-and-go-seek, the rules rigged so no one could win.

This commission's work changes the game forever. Every future scholar will have access to everything everyone ever had when the original source was white. In fact, they will have a lot more of it. They also will have more from sources few had before when the original source was black.

Because they will, the community future scholars will behold [that] the property they will describe was a community of black people, occupied by black people. The public records they will examine involved black people and affected black people. Objects they will touch came from black people. Interviews they will hear and transcripts they will read were recorded from black people. The evidence they will explore reveals experiences of black people.

Consider what so much new information and what so many new sources can mean for future historians. Consider what it already has meant for one.

Read closely Scott Ellsworth's accompanying essay, "The Tulsa Riot," a rather simple title, as titles go. Much more sophisticated is the title he gave the book he wrote in 1982, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*.

It is fair that they have different titles. They tell somewhat different stories in somewhat different ways. The chief difference is that the one titled so simply tells a tale much more sophisticated.

For one thing, it is longer. The report attached here filled 115 typed pages in the telling; the comparable portion of the book prints entirely in 25 pages. The report has to be longer because it has more to report, stories not told in the first telling. It offers more because it draws upon more evidence. The report packs 205 footnotes with citations for its story; 50 did the job for the first one.

Within that last difference is the difference that causes every other difference. To write this report, Scott Ellsworth used evidence he did not have—no one had it—as recently as 1982. He cites that new evidence at least 148 times. He had information from black sources accessible now because of this commission.

That knowledge contributed to Scott Ellsworth's citations from black newspapers, black interviews, or black writings. He cites black sources at least 272 times.

No wonder the two are different. From now on, everything can be different. They almost have to be.

Before there was this commission, much was known about the Tulsa race riot. More was unknown. It was buried somewhere, lost somewhere, or somewhere undiscovered. No longer.

Old records have been reopened, missing files have been recovered, new sources have been found. Still being assembled and processed by the Oklahoma Historical Society, their total volume passed ten thousand pages some time ago and well may reach twenty thousand by the time everything is done.

The dimensions of twenty thousand pages can be measured physically. Placed side-by-side, they would reach across at least ten yards of library shelving, filling every inch with new information. The significance of these twenty thousand pages has to be gauged vertically and metaphorically though. Stacked high, they amount to a tower of new knowledge. Rising to reach a new perspective, they offer visions never seen before.

The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission thereby has discharged the mandate to gather and preserve a record of historical significance.

***The Commission shall . . . develop a historical record of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. . .***

The commission's first substantive decision was to greet this obligation with a series of questions, and there was compelling reason why.

Eighty years after the fact, almost as many unresolved questions surround the race riot as did in 1921—maybe even more. Commissioners knew that no "historical record" would be complete unless it answered the most enduring of those questions—or explain why not. That was reason enough for a second decision: Commissioners agreed to seek consultants, respected scholars, and other experts to investigate those questions and offer answers.

Their findings follow immediately, all without change or comment, each just as the commission received it. Accompanying papers present what scholars and others consider the best answers to hard questions. The reports define their questions, either directly or implicitly, and usually explain why they need answers. The authors give answers, but they present them with only the confidence and exactly the precision they can justify. Most retrace the route they followed to reach their positions. All advance their positions openly. If they sense themselves in hostile territory, some stake their ground and defend it.

The commissioners harbor no illusion that every reader will accept their every answer to every question. They know better. Why should everyone else? None of them do. All eleven have reservations, some here, some there. Some dispute this point; some deny that one. Some suggest other possibilities. Some insist upon positions squarely opposite the scholars'.

None of that matters. However they divide over specifics, they also are united on principles. Should any be in need, they endorse and recommend the route they took to reach their own consensus. The way around an enraged showdown and the shortest path to a responsible solution is the line that passes through points ahead. Each point marks a big question and an important answer. Study them carefully.

What was the total value of property destroyed in the Tulsa race riot, both in 1921's dollars and in today's? Larry O'Dell has the numbers. Any one of them could be a little off, probably none by very much. Could a lawyer argue, and might a judge decree, that citizens living now had a duty to make that good, had to repay those losses, all because of something that happened eighty years ago? Alfred Brophy can make the case, and he does.

Over eight decades, some Tulsans (mostly black Tulsans) have insisted that whites attacked Greenwood from the air, even bombed it from military airplanes. Other Tulsans (mostly white Tulsans) have denied those claims; many have never even heard them. In a sense, it is a black-or-white question, but Richard S. Warner demonstrates that it has no black-or-white answer.

He proves it absolutely false that military planes could have employed military weapons on Greenwood. He also proves it absolutely true that civilian aircraft did fly over the riot area. Some were there for police reconnaissance, some for photography, some for other legitimate purposes.

He also thinks it reasonable to believe that others had less innocent use. It is probable that shots were fired and that incendiary devices were dropped, and these would have contributed to riot-related deaths or destruction. How much? No one will ever know: History permits no black-or-white answer.

Can modern science bring light to old, dark rumors about a mass grave, at least one, probably more, somewhere in Tulsa? Could those rumors be true? If true, where is one? Robert L. Brooks and Alan H. Witten have answers. Yes, science can address those rumors. Yes, there are many reasons to believe that mass graves exist. Where? They can point precisely to the single most likely spot. They can explain why scientists settle on that one—explain it clearly enough and completely enough to convince non-scientists, too. Without making a scratch on the ground, they can measure how deep it has to be, how thick, how wide, how long. Were the site to be exhumed and were it to yield human remains, what would anyone learn? Quite a bit if Lesley Rankin-Hill and Phoebe Stubblefield were to examine them.

How many people were killed, anyway? At the time, careful calculations varied almost as much as did pure guesses—forty, fifty, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, maybe more. After a while, it became hard to distinguish the calculations from the guesses. By now, the record has become so muddled that even the most careful and thorough scientific investigation can offer no more than a preliminary possible answer.

Clyde Collins Snow's inquiry is just as careful and just as thorough as one might expect from this forensic anthropologist of international reputation, and preliminary is the word that he insists upon for his findings. By

the most conservative of all possible methods, he can identify thirty-eight riot victims, and he provides the cause of death and the burial site for each of them. He even gives us the names of all but the four burned beyond recognition.

That last fact is their defining element. Thirty-eight is only the number of dead that Snow can identify individually. It says nothing of those who lost their lives in the vicious riot and lost their personal identities in records never kept or later destroyed. An accurate death count would just begin at thirty-eight; it might end well into the hundreds. Snow explains why as many as 150 might have to be added for one reason, 18 more for an other reason. What neither he nor anyone can ever know is how many to add for how many reasons. That is why there will never be a better answer to the question of how many died than this: How many? Too many.

For some questions there will never be answers even that precise. Open for eighty years and open now, they will remain open forever because they are too large to be filled by the evidence at hand.

Some of the hardest questions surround the evidence, itself. Evidence amounting to personal statements—things said to have been seen, heard, or otherwise observed—raises an entire set of questions in itself. Surely some statements are more credible than others, but how credible is that? Most evidence is incomplete; it may be suggestive but is it dispositive? Evidence often inspires inference, but is the inference reasonable or even possible? Evidence is usually ambiguous, does it mean this or does it mean that? Almost every piece of evidence requires an interpretation, but is only one interpretation possible? Responsibilities will be assigned, decisions will be evaluated, judgments will be offered—on what basis?

These are not idle academic musings. On the contrary: This small set of questions explains why so many specific questions remain open. They explain how people—reasonable, fair-minded, well-intended people—can disagree so often about so much.

Consider a question as old as the riot itself. At the time, many said that this was no spontaneous eruption of the rabble; it was planned and executed by the elite. Quite a few people—including some members of this commission—have since studied the question and are persuaded that this is so, that the Tulsa race riot was the result of a conspiracy. This is a serious position and a provable position—if one looks at certain evidence in certain ways.

Others—again, including members of this commission—have studied the same question and examined the same evidence, but they have looked at it in different ways. They see there no proof of conspiracy. Selfish desires surely. Awful effects certainly. But not a conspiracy. Both sides have evidence that they consider convincing, but neither side can convince the other.

Another nagging question involves the role of the Ku Klux Klan. Everyone who has studied the riot agrees that the Klan was present in Tulsa at the time of the riot and that it had been for some time. Everyone agrees that within months of the riot Tulsa's Klan chapter had become one of the

nation's largest and most powerful, able to dictate its will with the ballot as well as the whip.

Everyone agrees that many of the city's most prominent men were klansmen in the early 1920s and that some remained klansmen through out the decade. Everyone agrees that Tulsa's atmosphere reeked with a Klan-like stench that oozed through the robes of the Hooded Order.

Does this mean that the Klan helped plan the riot? Does it mean that the Klan helped execute it? Does it mean that the Klan, as an organization, had any role at all? Or does it mean that any time thousands of whites assembled—especially if they assembled to assault blacks—that odds were there would be quite a few Klansmen in the mix? Does the presence of those individuals mean that the institution may have been an instigator or the agent of a plot? Maybe both? Maybe neither? Maybe nothing at all? Not everyone agrees on that.

Nor will they ever. Both the conspiracy and the Klan questions remain what they always have been and probably what they always will be. Both are examples of nearly every problem inherent to historical evidence. How reliable is this oral tradition? What conclusions does that evidence permit? Are these inferences reasonable? How many ways can this be interpreted? And so it must go on. Some questions will always be disputed because other questions block the path to their answers. That does not mean there will be no answers, just that there will not be one answer per one question. Many questions will have two, quite a few even more. Some answers will never be proven. Some will never be disproved. Accept it: Some things can never be known.

That is why the complete record of what began in the late evening of May 31 and continued through the morning of June 1 will never quite escape those hours, themselves. They forever are darkened by night or enshrouded by day.

But history has a record of things certain for the hours between one day's twilight and the next day's afternoon. These things:

- Black Tulsans had every reason to believe that Dick Rowland would be lynched after his arrest on charges later dismissed and highly suspect from the start.
- They had cause to believe that his personal safety, like the defense of themselves and their community, depended on them alone.
- As hostile groups gathered and their confrontation worsened, municipal and county authorities failed to take actions to calm or contain the situation.
- At the eruption of violence, civil officials selected many men, all of them white and some of them participants in that violence, and made those men their agents as deputies.
- In that capacity, deputies did not stem the violence but added to it, often through overt acts themselves illegal.
- Public officials provided firearms and ammunition to individuals, again all of them white.

- Units of the Oklahoma National Guard participated in the mass arrests of all or nearly all of Greenwood's residents, removed them to other parts of the city, and detained them in holding centers.
- Entering the Greenwood district, people stole, damaged or destroyed personal property left behind in homes and businesses.
- People, some of them agents of government, also deliberately burned or otherwise destroyed homes credibly estimated to have numbered 1,256, along with virtually every other structure—including churches, schools, businesses, even a hospital and library—in the Greenwood district.
- Despite duties to preserve order and to protect property, no government at any level offered adequate resistance, if any at all, to what amounted to the destruction of the neighborhood referred to commonly as "Little Africa" and politely as the "Negro quarter."
- Although the exact total can never be determined, credible evidence makes it probable that many people, likely numbering between one and three hundred, were killed during the riot.
- Not one of these criminal acts was then or ever has been prosecuted or punished by government at any level, municipal, county, state, or federal.
- Even after the restoration of order it was official policy to release a black detainee only upon the application of a white person, and then only if that white person agreed to accept responsibility for that detainee's subsequent behavior.
- As private citizens, many whites in Tulsa and neighboring communities did extend invaluable assistance to the riot's victims, and the relief efforts of the American Red Cross in particular provided a model of human behavior at its best.
- Although city and county government bore much of the cost for Red Cross relief, neither contributed substantially to Greenwood's rebuilding; in fact, municipal authorities acted initially to impede rebuilding.
- In the end, the restoration of Greenwood after its systematic destruction was left to the victims of that destruction.

These things are not myths, not rumors, not speculations, not questioned. They are the historical record.

The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission thereby has discharged the mandate to develop a historical record of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot.

***The final report of the Commission's findings and recommendations ... may contain specific recommendations about whether or not reparations can or should be made and the appropriate methods. . . .***

Unlike those quoted before, these words give this commission not an obligation but an opportunity. Nearly every commissioner intends to seize it.

A short letter sent to Governor Frank Keating as a preliminary report in February, 2000 declared the majority's view that reparations could and



should be made. "Good public policy," that letter said, required no less. This report maintains the same, and this report makes the case.

Case, reparations—the words, themselves, seem to summon images of lawyers and courtrooms, along with other words, words like culpability, damages, remedies, restitution. Each is a term used in law, with strict legal meaning.

Sometimes commissioners use those words, too, and several agree—firmly agree—that those words describe accurately what happened in 1921 and fit exactly what should happen now.

Those, however, are their personal opinions, and the commissioners who hold them do so as private citizens. Even the most resolute of its members recognizes that this commission has a very different role. This commission is neither court nor judge, and its members are not a jury.

The commission has no binding legal authority to assign culpability, to determine damages, to establish a remedy, or to order either restitution or reparations. In fact, it has no judicial authority whatsoever.

It also has no reason or need for such authority. Any judgments that it might offer would be without effect and meaning. Its words would as well be cast to the winds. Any recommendations that it might offer neither have nor need judicial status at all. Statutes grant this commission its authority to make recommendations and the choice of how—or even if—to exercise that authority.

The commission's majority is determined to exercise its discretion and to declare boldly and directly their purpose: to recommend, independent of what law allows, what these commissioners believe is the right thing to do. They propose to do that in a dimension equal to their purpose. Courts have other purposes, and law operates in a different dimension. Mistake one for the other—let this commission assume what rightly belongs to law—does worse than miss the point. It ruins it.

Think of the difference this way. We will never know exactly how many were killed during the Tulsa race riot, but take at random any twenty-five from that unknown total. What we say of those we might say for everyone of the others, too.

Considering the twenty-five to be homicides, the law would approach those as twenty-five acts performed by twenty-five people (or thereabouts) who, with twenty-five motives, committed twenty-five crimes against twenty-five persons. That they occurred within hours and within a few blocks of each other is irrelevant. It would not matter even if the same person committed two, three, ten of the murders on the same spot, moments apart. Each was a separate act, and each (were the law to do its duty) merits a separate consequence. Law can apprehend it no other way.

Is there no other way to understand that? Of course there is. There is a far better way.

Were these twenty-five crimes or one? Did each have a separate motive, or was there a single intent? Were twenty-five individuals responsible, those and no one else? The burning of 1,256 homes—if we understand these as 1,256 acts of arson committed by 1,256 criminals driven by 1,256 desires, if we understand it that way, do we understand anything at all? These were

not any number of multiple acts of homicide; this was one act of horror. If we must name the fires, call it outrage, for it was one. For both, the motive was not to injure hundreds of people, nearly all unseen, almost all unknown. The intent was to intimidate one community, to let it be known and let it be seen. Those who pulled the triggers, those who struck the matches—they alone were law breakers. Those who shouted encouragement and those who stood silently by—they were responsible.

These are the qualities that place what happened in Tulsa outside the realm of law—and not just in Tulsa, either. Lexington, Sapulpa, Norman, Shawnee, Lawton, Claremore, Perry; Waurika, Dewey, and Marshall—earlier purges in every one already had targeted entire black communities, marking every child, woman, and man for exile.

There is no count of how many those people numbered, but there is no need to know that. Know that there, too, something more than a bad guy had committed something more than a crime against something more than a person. Not someone made mad by lust, not a person gripped by rage, not a heartbroken party of romance gone sour, not one or any number of individuals but a collective body—acting as one body—had coldly and deliberately and systematically assaulted one victim, a whole community, intending to eliminate it as a community. If other black communities heard about it and learned their lessons, too, so much the better; a little intimidation went a long way.

All of this happened years before, most fifteen or twenty years before Dick Rowland landed in jail, but they remained vivid in the recent memories of Greenwood's younger adults.

This, or something quite like it, was almost always what happened when the subject was race.

Here was nothing as amorphous as racism. Here were discrete acts—one act, one town—each consciously calculated to have a collective effect not against a person but against a people.

And is that not also the way of Oklahoma's voting laws at the time? The state had amended its constitution and crafted its laws not to keep this person or that person or a whole list of persons from voting. Lengthen that list to the indefinite, write down names to the infinite—one still will not reach the point. For that, one line, one word is enough. The point was to keep a race, as a race, away from the polls.

Jim Crow laws—the segregation commands of Oklahoma's statutes and of its constitution—worked that way, too. Their object was not to keep some exhausted mother and her two young children out of a "white car" on a train headed somewhere like Checotah and send them walking six miles home. (Even if John Hope Franklin could recall that about his own mother and sister and himself as he accepted the Helmerich Award some three-quarters of a century afterwards.) No, the one purpose was to keep one race "in its place." When Laura Nelson was lynched years earlier in Okemah, it was not to punish her by death. It was to terrify the living. Why else would the lynchers have taken (and printed and copied and posted and distributed) that photograph of her hanging from the bridge, her little boy dangling beside her?

The lynchers knew the purpose; the photographer just helped it along. The purpose had not changed much by 1921, when another photographer snapped another picture, a long shot showing Greenwood's ruin, smoke rising from fires blazing in the background. "RUNING THE NEGRO OUT OF TULSA" someone wrote across it, candor atoning for misspelling. No doubt there. No shame either.

Another photograph probably was snapped the same day but from closer range. It showed what just days before must have been a human being, maybe one who had spent a warm day in late May working and talking and laughing. On this day, though, it was only a grotesque, blackened form, a thing, really, its only sign of humanity the charred remains of arms and hands forever raised, as if in useless supplication.

Shot horizontally, that particular photo still turns up from time to time in the form of an early use: as a postcard. People must have thought it a nice way to send a message.

It still sends a message, too big to be jotted down in a few lines; but, then, this message is not especially nice either. The message is that here is an image of more than a single victim of a single episode in a single city. This image preserves the symbol of a story, preserves it in the same way that the story was told: in black-and-white.

See those two photos and understand that the Tulsa race riot was the worst event in that city's history—an event without equal and without excuse. Understand, too, that it was the worst explosion of violence in this state's history—an episode late to be acknowledged and still to be repaired. But understand also that it was part of a message usually announced not violently at all, but calmly and quietly and deliberately.

Who sent the message? Not one person but many acting as one. Not a "mob"; it took forms too calculated and rational for that word. Not "society"; that word is only a mask to conceal responsibility within a fog of imprecision. Not "whites," because this never spoke for all whites; sometimes it spoke for only a few. Not "America," because the federal government was, at best, indifferent to its black citizens and, at worse, oblivious of them. Fifty years or so after the Civil War, Uncle Sam was too complacent to crusade for black rights and too callous to care. Let the states handle that—states like Oklahoma.

Except that it really was not "Oklahoma" either. At least, it was not all of Oklahoma. It was just one Oklahoma, one Oklahoma that is distinguishable from another Oklahoma partly by purpose. This Oklahoma had the purpose of keeping the other Oklahoma in its place, and that place was subordinate. That, after all, was the object of suffrage requirements and segregation laws. No less was it the intent behind riots and lynchings, too. One Oklahoma was putting the other Oklahoma in its place.

One Oklahoma also had the power to effect its purpose, and that power had no need to rely on occasional explosions of rage. Simple violence is, after all, the weapon of simple people, people with access to no other instruments of power at all. This Oklahoma had access to power more subtle, more regular, and more formal than that. Indeed, its ready access to such forms of power partially defined that Oklahoma.

No, that Oklahoma is not the same as government, used here as a rhetorical trick to make one accountable for the acts of the other. Government was never the essence of that Oklahoma. Government was, however, always its potential instrument. Having access to government, however employed, if employed at all—just having it—defined this Oklahoma and was the essence of its power.

The acts recounted here reveal that power in one form or another, often several. The Tulsa race riot is one example, but only an example and only one. Put along side it earlier, less publicized pogroms—for that is what they were—in at least ten other Oklahoma towns. Include the systematic disfranchisement of the black electorate through constitutional amendment in 1910, reaffirmed through state statute in 1916.

Add to that the constitution's segregation of Oklahoma's public schools, the First Legislature's segregation of its public transportation, local segregation of Oklahoma neighborhoods through municipal ordinances in Tulsa and elsewhere, even the statewide segregation of public telephones by order of the corporation commission. Do not forget to include the lynchings of twenty-three African-Americans in twelve Oklahoma towns during the ten years leading to 1921. Stand back and look at those deeds now.

In some government participated in the deed.

In some government performed the deed.

In none did government prevent the deed.

In none did government punish the deed.

And that, in the end, is what this inquiry and what these recommendations are all about.

Make no mistake about it: There are members of this commission who are convinced that there is a compelling argument in law to order that present governments make monetary payment for past governments' unlawful acts. Professor Alfred Brophy presses one form of that argument; there doubtless are others.

This is not that legal argument but another one altogether. This is a moral argument. It holds that there are moral responsibilities here and that those moral responsibilities require moral responses now.

It gets down to this: The 1921 riot is, at once, a representative historical example and a unique historical event. It has many parallels in the pattern of past events, but it has no equal for its violence and its completeness. It symbolizes so much endured by so many for so long. It does it, however, in one way that no other can: in the living flesh and blood of some who did endure it.

These paradoxes hold answers to questions often asked: Why does the state of Oklahoma or the city of Tulsa owe anything to anybody? Why should any individual tolerate now spending one cent of one tax dollar over what happened so long ago? The answer is that these are not even the questions. This is not about individuals at all—not anymore than the race riot or anything like it was about individuals.

This is about Oklahoma—or, rather, it is about two Oklahomas. It must be about that because that is what the Tulsa race riot was all about, too. That riot proclaimed that there were two Oklahomas; that one claimed the right to push down, push out, and push under the other; and that it had the power to do that.

That is what the Tulsa race riot has been all about for so long afterwards, why it has lingered not as a past event but lived as a present entity. It kept on saying that there remained two Oklahomas; that one claimed the right to be dismissive of, ignorant of, and oblivious to the other; and that it had the power to do that.

That is why the Tulsa race riot can be about something else. It can be about making two Oklahomas one—but only if we understand that this is what reparation is all about. Because the riot is both symbolic and singular, reparations become both singular and symbolic, too.

Compelled not legally by courts but extended freely by choice, they say that individual acts of reparation will stand as symbols that fully acknowledge and finally discharge a collective responsibility.

Because we must face it: There is no way but by government to represent the collective, and there is no way but by reparations to make real the responsibility.

Does this commission have specific recommendations about whether or not reparations can or should be made and the appropriate methods? Yes, it surely does.

When commissioners went looking to do the right thing, that is what nearly all of them found and what they recommended in last year's preliminary report. To be sure they had found the right thing, they have used this formal report to explore once more the distant terrain of the Tulsa race riot and the forbidding territory in which it lies. Now, they are certain. Reparations are the right thing to do.

What else is there to do? What else is there to find?

SOURCE: Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 at <http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/trrc/freport.htm>.



### **23. Excerpt from the Draft Report of the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission, December 2005**

Created by the North Carolina Legislature in 2000 to initiate and review research on the causes and course of the race riot that occurred in Wilmington in November 1898, the Wilmington Race Riot Commission issued its 600-page draft report on December 15, 2005. The excerpt from that report reproduced below describes the initial violence that occurred on November 10, 1898. The thirteen-member Commission concluded that the riot was not a spontaneous event, but was instead fomented by white businessmen and Democratic leaders who sought to overthrow the political power local blacks had won in the elections of 1894 and 1896, when an alliance between local Republicans and local Populists had broken the political

dominance the Democrats had exercised in the town since the end of Reconstruction. Democrats had won the election held on November 8, two days before the disorders began, by stuffing ballot boxes and keeping African Americans from the polls through intimidation. The riots only sealed the return to power of white supremacist forces.

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### **Eye of the Storm—Fourth and Harnett Streets**

The bloodshed began when black workers from the waterfront industrial yards and Brooklyn residents confronted with armed whites. The point where the peace was fractured was at the corner of Fourth and Harnett Streets in Brooklyn, a mixed race neighborhood on the edge of the predominantly black section of Wilmington.

A group of blacks were gathered on the southwest corner of Fourth and Harnett near Brunje's Saloon in George Heyer's store when armed whites returned to the neighborhood. A streetcar also entered the area loaded with men direct from burning the Record. As the groups exchanged verbal assaults from opposite street corners, whites and blacks alike sought to calm fellow citizens.

Norman Lindsay encouraged his fellow blacks to go home: "For the sake of your lives, your families, your children, and your country, go home and stay there!" After Lindsay's plea, the group of blacks moved to the opposite corner at W.A. Walker's store while the whites took up a position between Brunje's store and St. Matthew's English Lutheran Church. Aaron Lockamy, a newly deputized white police officer, also tried to diffuse the problem by going between the two groups and trying to get them to disperse. He recalled that, while serving as a special policeman during the aftermath of the election, he was stationed in Brooklyn to ensure that the opening of two bars on Fourth Street would be peaceful. Instructed not to arrest anyone by Chief Melton, Lockamy asked the blacks to disperse and go home for their own safety. They refused but moved as a group a bit further away from the corner. Lockamy's inability to disperse the crowd angered the white men at the opposite corner. Lockamy felt he had done all he could in the turf war and went back to his post on Fourth near Brunswick. From this point forward, gunshots rang throughout the city for the next several hours.

White and black witnesses of the activities at the intersection of Fourth and Harnett both claimed that the other side was the responsible party for firing the first shots. There are conflicting viewpoints on first shots and an affidavit, probably taken by Rountree [Attorney George Rountree] was used in the newspapers to counter accounts from black witnesses such as George H. Davis, a black man wounded at Fourth and Harnett and interviewed by reporter Thomas Clawson for the *Wilmington Messenger*. Lockamy went back and forth between the clusters of whites and blacks on opposing corners at Fourth and Harnett at least two times and later said that the only people on the corner that were armed were whites. Notwithstanding the point of origin, once the first shot was fired, whites launched a fusillade of bullets towards the blacks near Walker's store. Several black

men fell injured but most were able to get up and run away from the scene. Most accounts agree that three men died instantly at Walker's while two injured men ran around the corner into a home at 411 Harnett. One of these men by the surname of Bizzell died in the house while the other, George H. Davis, was later taken to the hospital on the 11th and survived his wounds. Davis apparently lived at the residence and was wounded in his left thigh and had a bullet lodged between his shoulders. He was found in the house along with a dead black man and three women by reporter Clawson and taken to the hospital on the eleventh. Although Davis recovered, Clawson recalled that after he sent for a white doctor, W.D. McMillan, and a black doctor, T.R. Mask, he thought that "it appeared impossible for one so desperately wounded ever to recover." The rest of the men fled west on Harnett, reportedly firing at whites as they ran. Although it was difficult for black men to purchase weapons in the weeks and months just prior to the election, many already owned weapons for hunting or personal safety. Men identified in papers as wounded at Fourth and Harnett intersection: Alfred White, William Lindsay, Sam McFarland. Men identified as dead at Fourth and Harnett: John Townsend (Townsell?), Charles Lindsay (aka Silas Brown), William Mouzon, John L. Gregory. Whites identified as being at the scene: S. Hill Terry (armed with double-barrel shot gun loaded with buck shot), Theodore Curtis, N.B. Chadwick (armed with a 16-shot Colt or Remington rifle), Sam Matthews (armed with a .44 caliber Navy rifle), and George Piner.

After the first shots were fired, a streetcar entered the business section in downtown from Brooklyn and the conductor told men gathered there that blacks had shot into the car. Men crowded into the car bound for Brooklyn at the stop on Fourth and Harnett. One of the "first responders" was Captain Donald MacRae of Company K, fresh from the tense situation at Sprunt's Compress [Sprunt's Cotton Compress, where a standoff between whites and blacks had occurred earlier in the day]. MacRae recalled that once he arrived in Brooklyn after hearing reports of fighting, he began to establish a skirmish line with other white men in the area. He was stopped by another man because he was still a Captain of Company K in the U.S. Army and white leaders thought that he should not be involved in case the President investigated the participants.

Having feared the worst in the weeks prior to the election, leaders Roger Moore and Walker Taylor had developed a strategy for quelling violence by stationing contacts throughout the city with instructions to notify Taylor and Moore if trouble ignited. The contact in the Fourth Street area near Harnett was Bernice Moore at his drug store at 901 North Fourth Street. Moore was instructed by J. Alan Taylor of the Secret Nine to sound the "riot alarm" to alert the WLI [Wilmington Light Infantry] and Naval Reserves in the event of violence. As soon as shots were heard, Moore called the armory to inform the leaders there that shots were being fired in Brooklyn. Once the "riot alarm" was sounded, as leader of the WLI, Walker Taylor declared martial law and the WLI and the Naval Reserves began to make their way into the Brooklyn neighborhood.

Taylor had authority to take control because just before Moore's call for backup was received at the armory, a telegram arrived from Governor Russell through the state's Adjutant General that instructed Taylor to "take command of Captain James' company . . . and preserve the peace."

Before the Governor's telegram arrived, Commander George Morton of the Naval Reserves sought approval from a city official to grant the military authority to take over but claimed he could not locate the mayor or police officer. Instead, Morton's men found Deputy Sheriff G.Z. French in his room at the Orton Hotel and requested permission to march his men from his headquarters in Brooklyn. French complied, possibly under duress, and wrote out an order instructing Morton to "use all force at your disposal to quell the existing violation of the peace in this city."

Morton then sent a telegram to the Governor informing him of his plan of action as well as notifying Walker Taylor of his intentions. The Governor later ordered Morton to place his men under the command of Taylor although the transfer of power had already taken place by the time the telegram was received. Morton's men, equipped with Lee magazine rifles and a Hotchkiss rapid firing gun, assembled at the corner of Third and Princess.

As soon as the first shots were fired, a "running firefight" erupted on Harnett, with scores of men, black and white, running in all directions from the intersection, some firing at the opposite side as they ran. William Mayo, a white man who lived at 307 Harnett, was seriously wounded by a stray bullet.

Mayo's wounding presented a rallying point for the whites who then began to retaliate. Because of Mayo, whites fired in unison into a group of black men and another five or six died near the intersection of Harnett and Fourth Streets. Mayo was taken to a nearby drug store for treatment by Dr. John T. Schonwald who lived close to the scene. Mayo's injury was serious but since he received quick care, he survived an otherwise life-threatening injury. Additionally, two other white men, Bert Chadwick and George Piner, were injured and treated alongside Mayo. Mayo's wounding rallied the white men involved in the first scuffle and they began to avenge Mayo as they aimed for any blacks that came into sight. The whites also sought to identify the individual who shot Mayo, perhaps as a means to stop random shootings. Later in the afternoon they pointed to Daniel Wright, who lived nearby at 810 North Third, as the culprit responsible for shooting Mayo as well as shooting George Piner. A manhunt was launched for Wright.

As large groups of white men gathered in the vicinity of Fourth and Harnett—milling about, angry and eager to avenge Mayo's shooting—Wright was identified by a "half breed Indian" who told J. Alan Taylor that he knew who had shot Mayo. Taylor was shown a house where he was told Wright was hiding and that he could be identified by "a missing thumb on his right hand and the possession of an outmoded rifle with a large bore." Captain MacRae remembered the incident with the Indian, saying that he felt the man had a grudge against local blacks. Taylor then sent a group of men led by John S. Watters to capture and identify Wright. Once his house was surrounded, white witnesses claimed Wright went into the attic and shot into the approaching crowd, wounding Will Terry and George Bland.



Wright's home was set afire and he tried to escape but was captured while his wife watched from the street. Once captured, Wright was marched into the street and hit in the head with a length of gas pipe. When he stood back up, someone in the crowd suggested that Wright be hanged from a nearby lamp post. Before a rope could be found, a member of the Citizen's Patrol drove up and suggested that Wright be given the chance to run for his freedom. Wright was given this opportunity but, after he ran about fifty yards, "at least forty guns of all descriptions turned loose on him." Wright was left in the street bleeding and severely wounded with about thirteen gunshot wounds, five of which entered through his shoulders and back, for about a half hour before he was picked up and carried to the hospital. Doctors at the hospital observed that they had never seen anyone with as many gunshot wounds live for as long as Wright did. He held onto life until early the next morning and his body was handed over to undertaker Thomas Rivera for burial after a formal inquest by coroner David Jacobs.

More shots rang throughout the area as more and more whites and blacks filtered into the Brooklyn area. Among the white onlookers was attorney George Rountree. Having just mediated the safety of blacks at Sprunt's Compress, Rountree went to investigate so that if a governmental inquiry took place, he would be prepared to answer questions. Rountree is probably the person responsible for filing the sworn affidavit of William McAllister that was published repeatedly in local and statewide newspapers indicating that a black man was responsible for firing the first shots. Rountree recalled that he and several others attempted to "quiet the situation and to prevent any further shooting," but acknowledged that "at this time I had no influence whatever with the rioters" and was pleased that the arrival of the military "quieted the matter down as quickly as possible."

SOURCE: Wilmington 1898 Race Riot Commission Web site at <http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/1898-wrrc/report>.

## APPENDIX: A SELECT HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RACE RIOTS

The modern study of rioting began with the application of social science to the new social history of the 1960s, including African American studies and, within that field, racial violence. Otto Dahlke (1952) posited a hypothesis of rioting that black assaults on the color line drew white backlash. Expanding on this premise, Allen D. Grimshaw (1959) produced an in-depth study of urban riots since the Civil War, advancing topologies of disorder and theories of suppression. Grimshaw's work (*see also* 1969, 1999) affected everyone after him, notably Elliott M. Rudwick, author of the first modern study, *Riot in East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (1964), which combined primary documents and comparative analysis of riots in 1919 Chicago and 1943 Detroit. With the 1960s disorders, Grimshaw's work took on new significance, particularly for scholars assisting federal endeavors to deal with the violence, including Rudwick and August Meier (1983) and Morris Janowitz (1983). Their studies for the National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence remain among the best on "rhetoric and retaliation" and patterns of racial violence. Other influential analyses include Robert M. Fogelson, *Violence as Protest* (1972); Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn, *Ghetto Revolts* (1973); Terry A. Knopf, *Rumors, Race, and Riot* (1975); and Russell Dynes and E.L. Quarantelli, "What Looting in Civil Disturbances Really Means" (1968). Leonard L. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing* (1971) addressed pre-Civil War anti-abolition rioting.

Meanwhile, drawing from this body of work, including that of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, William M. Tuttle, Jr., penned his classic *Race Riot* (1970). His inspired writing, with an emphasis on ordinary people, dissection of riot conditions, sociopsychological analysis, and comparison of Chicago's outburst in 1919 with those of the 1960s is the model of scholarship that benefited a generation of riot studies, including those by Christina S. Haynes (1976), Dominic J. Capeci, Jr. (1977/1981), and Scott Ellsworth (1982). In 1989, Sidney Fine closed this era with a detailed account of the 1967 Detroit riot.

Thereafter, riot scholars began addressing new queries and using class and gender theory, sampling methods, and oral and legal history. For example, Iver Bernstein (1990) placed the New York draft riots within the Civil War, party politics, and class antagonisms. Roberta Senechal (1990) focused on participants and victims in the Springfield, Illinois, riot of 1908, stressing the outburst's class dimension, while Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson (1991) established similarities between those white rioters and their counterparts in the Detroit riots of 1943 and 1967. They provided the only sample of black male, white male, and black female participants and victims, including white women victims, for any riot, challenging the stereotype of rioters as largely riffraff and criminals. Gail Williams O'Brien (1997) demonstrated in the Columbia, Tennessee, riot of 1946 the reconfiguration of extralegal violence and its limitations in the postwar era; police replaced the mob in white attacks on blacks and avoided federal prosecution, while black arrestees avoided state prosecution. She indicated, too, that, ultimately, lynching declined as both races departed the rural South, and legal protection for African Americans reemerged in the civil rights era. And, for the pre-Civil War years, David Grimstead (1998) compared 600 northern and southern riots.

Significantly, historians, lawyers, and officials in the 1990s also revisited the 1920s pogroms in Rosewood and Tulsa, linking them to the reparation issue. Their findings appeared in the studies of Michael D'Orso (1996) and Alfred L. Brophy (2002). The subject of memory and history for the Tulsa pogrom was addressed by James S. Hirsch (2002), while the Philips County, Arkansas, pogrom was examined by Grif Stockley (2001) and Nan Elizabeth Woodruff (2003). Given the revelations of wholesale slaughter and scholarship on holocausts, Tuttle, speaking at the Mid-America Conference on History (2004), considered these pogroms acts of genocide and called upon historians to reinvestigate racial violence from 1917 to 1923 with "fresh lenses," undertake studies in comparative racism, and "reconceptualize the field." He also contended that previous riot scholarship should be analyzed.

Almost simultaneously, Charles Tilly (2003) rethought his earlier analysis of uprisings in the 1960s (1975), concluding that looters possessed grievances, but were hardly protesters. He deemed their actions opportunism, and omitted "riot" from his refashioned typology of interpersonal violence worldwide because it connotes "a political judgment rather than an analytical distinction"; authorities use the term disapprovingly, while participants never use it.

Although the contrasting theories of Tuttle and Tilly refer to different types and periods of rioting, they draw on international comparisons and signal that the study of collective racial violence—including lynching—is at a crossroads similar to the 1960s. Building on data compiled by anti-lynching organizations and analytical studies published by Walter F. White (1929), James H. Chadbourn (1933), and Arthur E. Raper (1933), among others, lynching scholarship experienced a renaissance in the mid-1970s. It began with three works on the anti-lynching crusade by Donald L. Grant (1975), Jacquelyn Dowd Hall (1979), and Robert L. Zangrando (1980). These were followed by Hall's seminal article on rape and racial violence (1983) and by

James R. McGovern's and Howard Smead's respective monographs on the lynching of Claude Neal (1982) and Mack Charles Parker (1986). In 1990, George C. Wright published his insightful study of racial violence in Kentucky.

Thereafter, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Stewart E. Tolnay, and E.M. Beck, energized the field further. Brundage (1993, 1997) published his model study of lynching in Georgia and Virginia, while Tolnay and Beck (1995) produced the most accurate lynching database compiled for ten southern-border states from 1882 to 1930. Two years later, Brundage edited a book on new lynching perspectives. Since then, many scholars have expanded upon them, including Grace Elizabeth Hale on whiteness and spectacle lynching and legal precedent (1998), Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., on the Cleo Wright lynching and legal precedent (1998), James Allen on lynching photography (2000), Dora Apel on lynching photography and protest (2004), and Jonathan Markovitz on lynching and memory (2004).

Christopher Waldrep (2002) recently questioned the definition of lynching, its use historically and by scholars, as well as the tendency to ignore the subject outside the South. To this, Michael J. Pfeifer (2004) responded in his study of lynching in several regions over nearly seventy-five years. Thus lynching and rioting scholarship have entered new stages of debate that continue to advance our understanding of collective racial violence.

To date, however, the standard syntheses of racial violence that provide incisive analyses and bibliographies beyond each encyclopedic entry remain: Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence* (1975); Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response* (1988); and Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (1996). Brown's work includes reports for the National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence (1968), *No Duty to Retreat* (1991), and "Overview of Violence in the United States" (1999). Shapiro plans a second volume on the civil rights era and aftermath. Gilje also wrote *The Road to Mobocracy* (1987). Further information appears in reference books, the most useful companion to this is an edited work by Ronald Gottesman, *Violence in America: An Encyclopedia* (1999).

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