

Station #4: The Ku Klux Klan

Founded in 1866 by veterans of the Confederate Army, the Ku Klux Klan's main purpose was to resist Reconstruction. It focused as much on intimidating "carpetbaggers" (migrants from the North) and "scalawags" (white southern Republicans) as on putting down the freed slaves. The KKK quickly adopted violent methods. A rapid reaction set in, with the Klan's leadership disowning violence and Southern elites seeing the Klan as an excuse for federal troops to continue their activities in the South. The organization was in decline from 1868 to 1870 and was destroyed in the early 1870s by President Ulysses S. Grant's vigorous action under the Civil Rights Act of 1871 (also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act). A "Second" KKK emerged in the early twentieth-century. While it continued to harass southern African-Americans, it also targeted immigrants (especially Catholics and Jews).

Document A: Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm Too Long*, 1979

Corrie Calhoun says that where she lives, about thirty miles from here, over in Carolina, the men have a recipe for putting troublesome Negroes out of the way that the Yankees can't get the key to. No two go out together, no one lets another know what he is going to do, and so, when mischievous Negroes are found dead in the woods, nobody knows who killed them.

Document B: Thomas Nast, "The Union as It Was," Harper's Weekly 1874



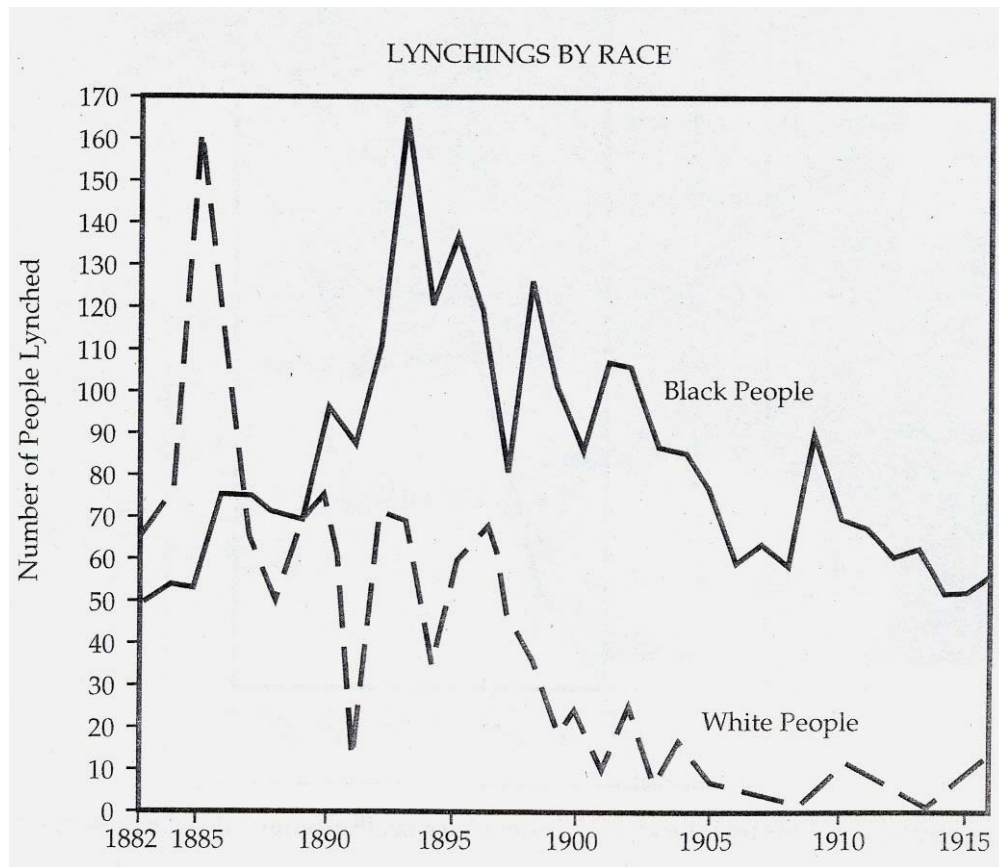
Document C: Petition to the U.S. Congress, March 25, 1871

“...We believe you are not familiar with the description of the Ku Klux Klan riding nightly over the country, going from country to county, and in the county towns, spreading terror wherever they go by robbing, whipping, ravishing, and killing our people without provocation [reason]...

The [state] legislature has adjourned. They refused to enact any laws to suppress [stop] Ku Klux disorder. We regard them [the Ku Kluxers] as now being licensed to continue their dark and bloody deeds under cover of the dark night. They refuse to allow us to testify in the state courts where a white man is concerned. We find their deeds are perpetrated [carried out] only upon colored men and white Republicans. We also find that for our services to the government and our race we have become the special object of hatred and persecution at the hands of the Democratic Part. Our people are driven from their homes in great numbers, having no redress [relief from distress] only [except] the United States court, which is in many cases unable to reach them.

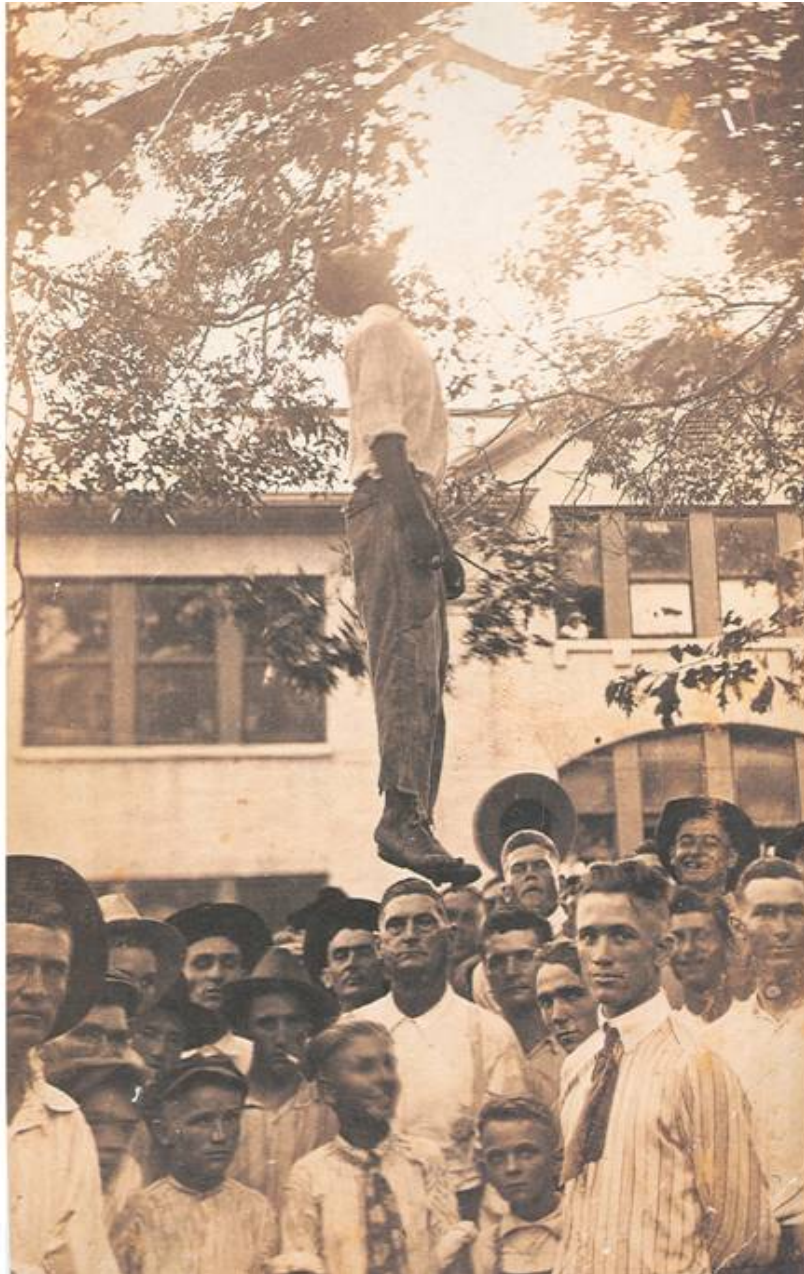
We would state the we have been law-abiding citizens, pay our taxes, and in many parts of the state our people have been driven from the polls, refused the right to vote. Many have been slaughtered while attempting to vote. We ask, how long is this state of things to last?...”

Document D: Lynchings by Race 1882-1916



CAUTION: The reverse side of this document shows a lynching. This is a serious and disturbing image. It is provided because it is important that we remember that these things have happened in U.S. history. You may skip this document if you do not wish to see it.

Document E: Postcard Depicting the Lynching of Lige Daniels, Center, Texas, August 3, 1920



The back reads, "This was made in the court yard in Center, Texas. He is a 16 year old Black boy. He killed Earl's grandma. She was Florence's mother. Give this to Bud. From Aunt Myrtle."

Lynchings were often motivated by economics, or were retaliations for violations of Jim Crow etiquette, with false accusations of murder made in order to justify them.