

## **Southern Resistance**

### **The View of Southerners against the Civil Rights Bill of 1875**

Throughout Reconstruction, Southern whites felt threatened by legislation to provide rights for former slaves. The Civil Rights Bill of 1875 was the last rights bill passed by Congress during Reconstruction. It protected all Americans' access to public accommodations, like trains. This document was written in the *Atlanta News* on September 10, 1874 and it urged Southerners to resist the Civil Rights Bill.

Let there be White Leagues formed in every town, village, and hamlet of the South, and let us organize for the great struggle which seems inevitable. If the October elections which are to be held at the North are favorable to radicals, the time will have arrived for us to prepare for the very worst. The radicalism of the Republican Party must be met by the radicalism of white men. We have no war to make against the United States Government, but against the Republican Party our hate must be unquenchable, our war interminable [endless] and merciless. By brute force they are endeavoring to force us into acquiescence [agreement] to their hideous programme. We have submitted long enough, and it is time to meet brute-force with brute-force. Every Southern State should swarm with White Leagues, and we should stand ready to act the moment Grant signs the civil-rights bill. It will not do to wait till radicalism has fettered us to the car of social equality before we make an effort to resist it. The signing of the bill will be a declaration of war against the southern whites. It is our duty to ourselves, it is our duty to our children, it is our duty to the white race...to take the gage of battle the moment it is thrown down. ...It is time for use to organize. We have been temporizing [waiting to act] long enough. Let northern radicals understand that military supervision of southern elections and the civil-rights bill mean war; that war means bloodshed....

*Source: Documental History of Reconstruction by Walter Fleming (1907) available at [http://www.archive.org/stream/documentaryhist02unkngoog/documentaryhist02unkngoog\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/documentaryhist02unkngoog/documentaryhist02unkngoog_djvu.txt)*

#### Question to consider while reading:

- How did the newspaper writer encourage white Southerners to respond to the Civil Rights Bill?
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## **Violence towards African Americans**

In the years after the Civil War, violence towards former slaves increased. Beatings and murders were committed by organized groups like the Ku Klux Klan, out-of-control mobs, and individual white Southern men. During Reconstruction, white Southerners had limited governmental power, so they used violence to control African Americans. During Reconstruction, the Freedmen's Bureau recorded all of the assaults and murders of African Americans in the South. On the following page is a list of murders committed in Alabama in 1866.

#### Questions to consider while reading:

- Do you see any patterns to who was murdered or the circumstances around the crimes? Do you think that this list included all of the murders of former slaves in Alabama in 1866?

## Records of the Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama, 1866

### List of Murders in the Dist. of Alabama 1866

1. Freedman killed in Sumter County, January.
2. Freedman killed in Russell County, February.
3. Freedman killed near West Point, March.
4. Freedman killed with an axe in Butler County. Three freedmen killed by two brothers in Shelby County, April.
5. Freedman killed in Montgomery County, April. Freedman & freedwoman killed, thrown into a well in Jefferson Co., April.
6. Freedman killed for refusing to sign a contract, Sumter Co., May. Freedman killed in Butler Co., clubbed, April.
7. Freedman found hung by a grapevine in woods near Tuscaloosa, May.
8. Freed girl beaten to death by two white men near Tuscaloosa, July.
9. Freedman murdered between Danville & Somerville.
10. Freedman shot dead while at his usual work, near Tuscaloosa, Sept.
11. Freedman killed in Pike County, Sept.
12. Negro murdered near Claiborne, Alabama, June.
13. Freedman brought to hospital in Montgomery, shot through the head by unknown parties - died in few hours, Dec.
14. Freedman murdered in Montgomery City, Jan. '67.

### District of Alabama, 1866

**Jan. 4** - Bob Foreman cut at Union Springs.

**Jan. 2** - Alfred killed in Sumter County.

**Febry. 14** - Richard killed in Russell County near Columbus, Ga.

**March** - Freedman killed near West Point.

**March** - Bradley killed freedwoman with an axe. Montgy.

**March** - Guard fired on & driven off when attempting to arrest the murderer, Butler Co.

**April 3** - Woman taken by three men out of her house in middle of night to swamp & badly whipped - beaten on head with pistol &c.

**April** - Freedman killed near Saw Mill near Montgomery.

**April 27** - Freedman shot by Confed. Soldier wantonly near Livingston, Sumter Co.

**May 7** - Moore taken to woods & hung till nearly dead to make him tell who robbed a store, at Tuscaloosa.

**May 29** - Colored man killed by Lucian Jones for refusing to sign contract, in upper part of Sumter Co.

**May 30** - Mulatto hung by grapevine near roadside between Tuscaloosa & Greensboro.

**May 29** - Richard Dick's wife beaten with club by her employer. Richard remonstrated - in the night was taken from his house and whipped nearly to death with a buggy trace by son of the employer & two others.

**June 16** - Mr. Alexander, colored preacher, brutally beaten & forced to leave his house at Auburn, Ala.

**July** - Band armed men came to house of Eliz. Adams, threatened to kill her & her sister if they did not leave the county, abused & beat them. (illegible) Franklin & (illegible) started to report outrage, not heard from afterward.

**July 16** - Black girl beaten to death by Washington and Greene McKinney, 18 miles west of Tuscaloosa.

**July 23** - White man named Cook murdered a Negro between Danville & Somerville.

**Sept. 14** - Black man picking fodder in a field shot dead -- & another who had difficulty with a white man abducted & supposed to have been murdered near Tuscaloosa.

**Sept. 3** - Murderous assault upon returned black Union soldier in Blount Co.

**Sept. 12** - Assault & firing upon a freedman in Greenville.

**Dec. 18** - R. S. Lee of Butler Co. brutally assaulted a freedwoman of Sumner.

**Dec. 18** - Same man assaulted with intent to kill Peter Golston, freedman.

**Dec. 18** - Wm. Lee, son of above shot Morris Golston on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

**Dec. 17** - Enoch Hicks & party burned school house in Greenville in Sumner - assaulted Union soldier &c. Judge Bragg & son mercilessly beat wife & daughter of James, freedman & drew pistol on James. Kell Forrest beat wife of colored man George.

**14 more entries are listed for this year.**

*Source: The Freedmen's Bureau Online at <http://freedmensbureau.com/alabama/alaoutrages.htm>*