



## Smithsonian Institution

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

### Extension of the Ku Klux Act

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is one of the means by which prosecutions of the members are defeated."

Observe these reckless assertions, assertions that certainly never ought to be officially made except after the fact had been conclusively proved and established:

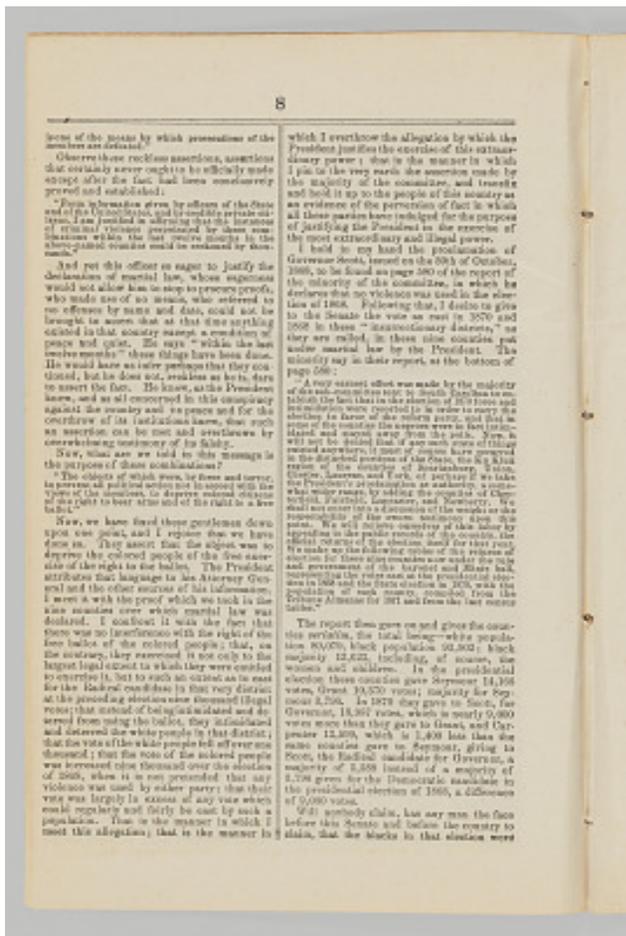
"From information given by officers of the State and of the United States, and by credible private citizens, I am justified in affirming that the instances of criminal violence perpetrated by these combinations within the last twelve months in the above-named counties could be reckoned by thousands".

And yet this officer so eager to justify the declaration of martial law, whose eagerness would not allow him to stop to procure proofs, who made use of no means, who referred to no offenses by name and date, could not be brought to assert that at that time anything existed in that country except a condition of peace and quiet. He says "within the last twelve months" these things have been done. He would have us infer perhaps that they continued, but he does not, reckless as he is, dare to assert the fact. He knew, as the President knew, and as all concerned in this conspiracy against the country and its peace and for the overthrow of its institutions knew, that such an assertion can be met and overthrown by overwhelming testimony of its falsity.

Now, what are we told in this message is the purpose of these combinations?

"The objects of which were, by force and terror, to prevent all political action not in accord with the views of the members, to deprive colored citizens of the right to bear arms and of the right to a free ballot".

Now, we have fixed these gentlemen down upon one point, and I rejoice that we have done so. They assert that the object was to deprive the colored people of the free exercise of the right to the ballot. The President attributes that language to his Attorney General and the other sources of his information. I meet it with the proof which we took in the nine counties over which martial law was declared. I confront it with the fact that there was no interference with the right of the free ballot of the colored people; that, on the contrary, they exercised it not only to the largest legal extent to which they were entitled to exercise it, but to such an extent as to cast for the Radical candidate in that very district at the preceding election nine thousand illegal votes; that instead of being intimidated and deterred from using the ballot, they intimidated and deterred the white people in that district; that the vote of the white people fell off over one thousand; that the vote of the colored people was increased nine thousand over the election of 1868, when it is not pretended that any violence was used by either party; that their vote was largely in excess of any vote which could regularly and fairly be cast by such a population. That is the manner in which I meet this allegation; that is the manner in which I overthrow the allegation by which the President justifies the exercise of this extraordinary power; that is the manner in which I pin to the very earth the assertion made by the majority of the committee, and transfix and hold it up to the people of this country as an evidence of the perversion of fact in which all these parties have indulged for the purpose of justifying the President in the



exercise of the most extraordinary and illegal power. I hold in my hand the proclamation of Governor Scott, issued on the 30th of October, 1868, to be found on page 580 of the report of the minority of the committee, in which he declares that no violence was used in the election of 1868. Following that, I desire to give to the Senate the vote as cast in 1870 and 1868 in these "insurrectionary districts," as they are called, in these counties put under martial law by the President. The minority say in their report, at the bottom of page 580:

"A very earnest effort was made by the majority of the sub-committee sent to South Carolina to establish the fact that in the election of 1870 force and intimidation were resorted to in order to carry the election in favor of the reform party, and that in some of the counties the negroes were in fact intimidated and stayed away from the polls. Now it will not be denied that if any such state of things existed anywhere, it must of course have occurred in the disturbed portions of the State, the Ku Klux region of the counties of Spartanburg, Union, Chester, Laurens, and York, or perhaps if we take the President's proclamation as authority, a somewhat wider range, by adding the counties of Chesterfield, Fairfield, Lancaster, and Newberry. We shall not enter into a discussion of the weight or the respectability of the sworn testimony upon this point. We will relieve ourselves of this labor by appealing to the public records of the country, the official returns of the election itself for that year. We make up the following tables of the returns of the election for these nine counties now under the rule and government of the bayonet and Minie ball, representing the votes cast at the presidential election in 1868 and the State election in 1870, with the population of each county, compiled from the Tribune Almanac for 1871 and from the last census tables."

The report then goes on and gives the counties seriatim, the total being-white population 80,079, black population 93,902; black majority 13,623, including, of course, the women and children. In the presidential election these counties gave Seymour 14,166 votes, Grant 10,370 votes; majority for Seymour 3,796. In 1870 they gave to Scott, for Governor, 18,987 votes, which is nearly 9,000 votes more than they gave to Grant, and Carpenter 13,599, which is 1,400 less than the same counties gave to Seymour, giving to Scott, the Radical candidate for Governor, a majority of 5,388 instead of a majority of 3,796 given for the Democratic candidate in the presidential election of 1868, a difference of 9,000 votes.

Will anybody claim, has any man the face before this Senate and before the country to claim, that the blacks in that election were

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