

APPENDIX N

TIMELINE

Timeline

1894

Democrats toppled from power by the Fusion coalition of Populists (disgruntled Democrats) and Republicans (69 to 49 in the House, 41 to 9 in the Senate); black Republican voters are important to the political upheaval

1895

Legislature begins dismantling Democratic machine – making government more representative and returning local self-government

1896

More political upheaval – General Assembly: House = 39 Populists, 54 Republicans, 24 Democrats and Senate = 25 Populists, 18 Republicans, 7 Democrats; election of Daniel Russell as first Republican governor since Reconstruction; Democratic control of cities such as Wilmington, Raleigh, Goldsboro, New Bern and Elizabeth City overturned by legislature; law amending Wilmington and New Bern city charters making city elections more democratic with Governor holding power to appoint one alderman from each ward to the Wilmington Board of Aldermen

March 25, 1897

Wilmington municipal election results in Board of Aldermen composed of 6 Republicans, 3 Democrats, 1 Silver party; Republican Silas P. Wright (a carpet-bagger) elected mayor and Board appointed Populist John R. Melton as chief of police; G.Z. French made Chief Deputy Sheriff of New Hanover County

Democrats elected to Board of Aldermen persuaded not to qualify; defeated mayor William N. Harris and six of the Democratic members of his Board of Aldermen challenge the act of 1897 as unconstitutional and the election as invalid; a third group claims to be legitimate Board

April 1897

Court hearing on challenge to act of 1897 by Harris; Judge J.D. McIver ruled act unconstitutional; Wright appealed decision to state Supreme Court

September 1897

Chief Justice William T. Faircloth and Supreme Court reversed Superior Court's decision; Wright and new Fusion Board of Aldermen gain full control of city affairs

6-12 months prior to November 10, 1898

Conspiracy developed by white citizens of Wilmington bent on maintaining white supremacy to perform a political coup, said to have originated with nine influential citizens (the "Secret Nine"); development of a citywide protective campaign to be coordinated with Democrat's statewide white supremacy movement for the 1898 election

1898

White supremacy campaign grew using newspapers to print accusations of corruption and threats of black domination, traveling speakers in circuits designed to rouse crowds of voters to action, and White Government Union clubs and Red Shirt organizations to intimidate black voters and coerce white Republicans and Populists into voting the Democratic ticket

August 1898

News and Observer editor Josephus Daniels enlisted cartoonist Norman Jennett, a native of Sampson County, to launch a sensational cartoon campaign

Alex Manly, mulatto newspaper editor of Wilmington, published an article in response to a speech made by Mrs. Rebecca Felton of Georgia on need to protect poor white farm girls from black rapists in 1897 and reprinted by Democratic presses in 1898. Democrats used Manly's article as rallying point to unite white men in order to protect white women from further outrages against their purity.

Development of a racist labor movement seeking total employment of white labor force at the expense of blacks

26 September 1898

Postmaster James H. Chadburn, Jr. (Republican) as president of Chamber of Commerce, sent letter to Fusionist Senator Jeter C. Pritchard (Republican) contradicting Democrats' allegation of Negro domination; letter printed in newspapers; Chadburn forced to recant in 18 October *Messenger*

5 October 1898

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce declaration against "Negro Domination"

7 October 1898

Meeting in Merchants' Association in the Seaboard Air Line building adopted anti-black labor resolutions

20 October 1898

Large Democratic rally in Fayetteville featured a parade of Red Shirts, White Government Union members and military detachments. Parade ended with series of speeches given by Senator Ben Tillman from South Carolina, Alfred Moore Waddell from Wilmington and other state Democratic Party leaders.

21 October 1898

Confidential letter from Senator Jeter C. Pritchard to President McKinley described intense racial feelings, arming of whites and blacks, fear of trouble, and asked for deputy US Marshals to preserve peace; contents of the letter publicized by Daniels' *News & Observer*, raised Democratic fears of federal intervention

24 October 1898

Attorney Alfred Moore Waddell's speech at Opera House where he proclaimed the need to win the election at all costs – “choke the current of the Cape Fear River” with bodies of blacks

Democratic pressure on Republicans not to nominate a ticket for county office candidates; Redshirt groups intimidate local citizens (even some whippings)

27 October 1898

White labor union organized to cooperate with businessmen of the city to help secure white men to replace black workers; president was Red Shirt/Rough Rider leader Mike Dowling

28 October 1898

Massive Democratic rally and Red Shirt parade in Goldsboro, 8,000 white supremacists assembled; fears of black retaliation in defense of the right to vote an excuse for white armament

2 November 1898

Wilmington Red Shirts parade through town ending with rally and speakers in Hilton Park

5 November 1898

Waddell speaks at the Opera House again; hints of lynching Manly

Editor Thomas Clawson of the *Messenger* sends warning to the Manlys to get out of Wilmington

Blacks attempt unsuccessfully to purchase weapons locally or order them from the North for defense; only a few blacks have old Army muskets or pistols

Many white families sent away from Wilmington before election; rumors of assassination plans for Governor Daniel Russell

5 November 1898

Board of Aldermen pass an ordinance banning sale of intoxicating drinks between 11:30 PM on November 5th and 6 PM on November 10

7 November 1898

Governor Russell issues a circular informing blacks they would be allowed to vote for a state senator, the only Republican candidate running

8 November 1898

Election Day, Red Shirts intimidate black voters; most black voters stay home; irregularities at polls; Governor Russell barely escapes with life from a Red Shirt mob on his return to Raleigh after voting in Wilmington

9 November 1898

Newspapers announce Democratic victory; *Messenger* calls for meeting of all white men at the courthouse at 10 AM; 800-1000 men attend; Waddell reads "White Declaration of Independence" written by Secret Nine containing eight resolutions concerning white political domination and white labor and banning publication of the *Record* and the banishment of Manly;

additional resolutions target Mayor Silas P. Wright and Board of Aldermen and call for the resignations; a committee of 25 led by Waddell appointed to carry out the resolutions

Committee meets at 3:30 at the Merchants Association to plan how to carry out objectives; prominent blacks summoned to meet committee at 6 PM at the old Cape Fear Club to hear white demands; blacks told to reply to Waddell before 7:30 AM the next day; blacks met at David Jacobs' barber shop on and drafted a reply; Armond Scott sent to deliver reply to Waddell's home, but he mailed it instead because of the roving bands of armed whites in his way

10 November 1898

8 AM white men with rifles and pistols gather at the armory of the Wilmington Light Infantry on Market Street

8:30 AM Waddell and the Committee of 25 lead march toward the Manly press

9 AM Marchers reach press building, ransack the interior and set it on fire

Rumors spread in white community that blacks are assembled and ready to march on the city
Rumors spread in black community that the Red Shirts had killed one or more black men

Standoff at Sprunt's cotton compress between unarmed workers and armed whites

11 AM Whites and blacks clash at the intersection of Fourth and Harnett Streets in Brooklyn. Shots are fired and both sides claim the other opened first; several black men die at the intersection of Fourth and Harnett

A running fight in all directions ensues, with blacks pursued by whites; some blacks fire back; other armed whites rush to the scene

William Mayo (white) wounded near Fourth and Harnett; whites retaliate with additional murders

Shots heard throughout Brooklyn with multiple deaths of black men

Dr. B. C. Moore, owner of a drugstore at the northwest corner of Fourth and Harnett streets, telephoned Wilmington Light Infantry and Wilmington Division of the NC Naval Reserves and reported fighting

Redshirts, Rough Riders, military and citizens committee descent on the poorly armed black community of Brooklyn

11 AM Colonel Walker Taylor receives telegram from Governor's office with orders to use troops to preserve peace; Wilmington Light Infantry marches toward fighting from Armory

2:30 PM Taylor institutes martial law and military is in control of city; Captain William R. Kenan in charge of squad that operated the machine gun of the Secret Nine; T. C. James in charge of foot troops armed with rifles; former Confederate officer and Klansman Colonel Roger B. Moore in charge of citizens patrols and turned "control" of the citizen brigades over to Walker Taylor

Military cross Fourth Street bridge into Brooklyn, James lines up men and orders them shoot to kill; military encounters occasional sniper fire from behind barns, fences, trees, houses

Rumor spreads that black churches are stocked with men, guns and ammunition; detachment sent to search black churches; cannons aimed at church doors in case pastors refused; search of all churches yields no guns or ammunition

Shots fired whites near Manhattan Park; numerous armed men and the military rush to scene; military fire cuts planks in half and pits walls of dance hall; a black man running from the dance hall is killed by 15-20 bullets; soldiers use axes to hack down fence and burst open door of hall; six frightened black men are arrested; one is encouraged to run and is killed by a hail of bullets, the others are taken to jail

Whites target and murder two black men, Josh Halsey and Daniel Wright

12:50 PM mayor and board meet with Mayor Wright presiding, five aldermen present: Andrew J. Hewlett, John G. Norwood (black), H. C. Twining, D. J. Benson, W. E. Yopp; absent were Benjamin Keith, Andrew J. Walker (black), and Elijah M. Green (black); other two members (one black) unaccounted for; board fails to declare a state of emergency or telegraph Governor Russell for help, instead it enacted a prohibition ordinance.

Waddell's Committee of 25 meet at the Seaboard Air Line Building to select a mayor and Board of Aldermen; committee issued a mandate to Mayor Wright and his board to meet in City Hall

3 PM all blacks on street searched by white sentinels at each corner; some whites accompany blacks to protect them, help blacks escape from city, or give them sanctuary in their homes

Waddell's and Committee of 25 assembles at the Merchants' Association Building; the group heads to City Hall where Waddell orders Wright to call a special meeting of Aldermen

4 PM Mayor Wright presides over special meeting of board of aldermen; by wards, each alderman and then the mayor resign; each vacancy filled by a person nominated by the Committee of 25 until all positions held by Democrats; Hugh McRae and Taylor declined to qualify as aldermen until two days later so they could be free to act independently for Secret Nine; Police force, beginning with chief, forced to resign.

Elitist whites withdrew from active participation in the riot; some tried to prevent further disorder; Waddell issued proclamation of his commitment to peace and order

By Nightfall Shooting subsides, streets dotted with fallen blacks; ambulance from city hospital drives through black community and driver examines fallen for signs of life; survivors taken to hospital; other wounded men die in hiding

J. Alan Taylor of the Secret Nine had given Walker Taylor a list of prominent Republicans, white and black, to be permanently banished from Wilmington; by dusk, men earmarked for banishment who could be found lodged in jail for safekeeping

Coroner David Jacobs (black barber) had some dead removed to D. C. Evans Funeral home

Shooting heard periodically in Brooklyn far into the night; whites in Brooklyn found shelter at guarded churches and schools; black men, women and children fled to the woods and swamps for two days in cold November rain

10:30 PM picket of 60 troops placed on duty to protect the jail from mob

11 November 1898

White leaders give some affluent middle-class blacks 12 hours to get out of town

AM crowd gathers around jail and line street leading to railroad station; blacks leave jail first guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets under the command of Lieutenant Commander George L. Morton walk on each side of 6 men escorted to a northbound train and placed in a special car with a guard under orders to see them out of the state

Wilmington riot reported in major national newspapers, led by *New York Times* and *Washington Post*

Attorney General John W. Griggs confers with President McKinley, whose cabinet speculates on federal intervention; no official communication is sent from Governor Russell to the President; state and federal governments fail to respond

2 PM leading white Republicans banished; larger crowd assembles, soldiers without fixed bayonets escort 5 men; George French nearly lynched; exiled men arrive at New Bern via the Atlantic Coastline Railroad but are refused asylum; at 6 PM they are escorted to the steamer *Neuse* bound for Elizabeth City, word sent there to keep them moving out of state

3 PM Mayor Waddell called a special meeting to reorganize the Police Department; new chief is Edgar Parmele plus four regular policemen; Walker Taylor offered assistance of military; they agree to keep martial law in effect

12 November 1898

Board of Aldermen solidify control of municipal government.

Exiles including arrive in Washington, DC and call on US Department of Justice and seek interview with President McKinley; no conference with president is given

Black Coroner David Jacobs holds inquest – verdict: death by gunshot wounds inflicted by persons unknown

13 November

The Reverend Peyton H. Hoge of the First Presbyterian Church said, "We have taken a city"; black sermons in churches preach accommodation of white demands although a black woman writes President McKinley that blacks dare not go to church that day

14 November

Visiting troops march to depot to strains of "Dixie" cheered by crowd; Della V. Johnson (black) of Wilmington writes President McKinley asking for help in the face of constitutional wrongs

15 November

Letter from anonymous woman of Wilmington to President McKinley asking for help

Black national leaders protest, and blacks in urban cities hold mass meetings and rallies in protest (Washington, DC; Asbury Park and Elizabeth, NJ; Mount Vernon, NY; Pittsburgh, PA; Chicago and Saint Louis, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Denver, CO); National Anti-Mob and Lynch Law Association asks for investigation by Republican Party

26 November

Collier's Weekly runs front-page editorial on Wilmington, "The North Carolina Race War, by Alfred M. Waddell" actually written by Charles Francis Bourke

3 December 1898

U.S. Attorney General John Griggs continues investigation

25 December 1898

R. H. Bunting and John R. Melton send letter to President McKinley

10 March 1899

Municipal election held and legitimized Waddell's administration

1900 –

Racial violence, disenfranchisement of black voters, lynchings increase across South, Jim Crow era in place