

APPENDIX J

PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY CORRESPONDENCE, 1898

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MATERIALS
RELATING TO THE 1898 WILMINGTON RACE RIOT
Source: RG 60, General Records of the Department of Justice,
Box 1117A "Year Files," 1887-1904.
File 17743-1898

(Note: The transcription of the letters includes misspellings and irregular punctuation.
No attempt has been made to insert corrections.)

Transcribed
August 2002

Denver, Colorado, Nov. 12th, 1898.

Hon. Wm. McKinley,

President of U. S. Washington, D. C.

Your Honor:-

I am a representative of the negro race which I am very proud of and feel not the least embarrassed in making this appeal to your honor. My race stands loyal to this government and to the Stars and Stripes. When the call came for the negro to pick up arms and go and face a foreign foe, leaving their own country, wives and children, they never faltered but went willingly to the field of battle and have shown to the world that they were no cowards, but fighters and loyal to this government and while these black boys were at Santiago – and some are there yet making a great record for themselves and their race – what is this country in the South doing for their brothers. Is it possible we must leave our homes and go and fight a foreign foe and not get any protection at home by the government we are defending? We see at Wilmington, N. C. and Greenwood, S. C. the negroes shot down like dogs and deprived of the right of ballot. We mourn the loss of our brothers, and appeal to your honor for protection. We feel that it is unjust and inhuman to our people to be treated in this manner.

The manner the negro is treated and deprived of his privileges is only a question of time how long he will be loyal to his government. The outrages of the negro in the South if left to continue will spread to the North and West, and then what is left for us to do but prove disloyal to our government.

In the name of God and humanity lend us a helping hand! Give us some protection or one kind word through the press.

Most respectfully,

Harry Jones,

1223 – 19th St.,

Denver, Colo.

Please send releif as soon as possible.
or we perish.

Wilmington N.C. Nov 13, 1898

W^m M^cKinley: - President of the United States of America,

Hon- Sir,

I a Negro woman of this City appeal to you from the depths of my heart, to do something in the Negro's behalf. The outside world only knows one side of the trouble here, there is no paper to tell the truth about the Negro here, or in this or any other Southern state. The Negro in this town had no arms, (except pistols perhaps in some instances) with which to defend themselves from the attack of lawless whites. On the 10th Thursday morning between eight and nine o'clock, when our Negro men had gone to their places of work, the white men led by Col. A. M. Waddell, Jno. D. Bellamy, & S. H. Fishblate marched from the Light Infantry armory on Market st. to Seventh down seventh to Love & Charity Hall (which was owned by a society of Negroes and where the Negro daily press was.) and set it afire & burnt it up And firing Guns Winchesters. They also had a Hotchkiss gun & two Colt rapid fire guns. We the negro expected nothing of the kind as they (the whites) had frightened them from the polls by saying they would be there with their shot guns. So the few that did vote did so quietly. And we thought after giving up to them and they carried the state it was settled. But they or Jno. D. Bellamy told them — — [illegible words] in addition to the guns they already had they could keep back federal interference. And he could have the Soldiers at Ft. Caswell to take up arms against the United States. After destroying the building they went over in Brooklyn another Negro settlement mostly, and began searching every one and if you did not submit, [you] would be shot down on the spot. They searched all the Negro Churches. And to day (Sunday) we dare not go to our places of worship. They found no guns or amunition in any of the places, for there was none. And to satisfy their Blood thirsty appetites would kill unoffending Negro men to or on their way from dinner. Some of our most worthy [illegible] Negro Men have been made to leave the City. Also some Whites, G. Z. French, Deputy Sheriff, Cheif of police, Jno. R. Melton, Dr. S. P. Wright, Mayor, and R. H. Bunting, united states commissioner. We don't know where Mr. Chadbourn the Post Master is, and two or three others white. I call on you the head of the American Nation to help these humble subjects. We are loyal we go when duty calls us. And are we to die like rats in a trap? With no place to seek redress or to go with our Greiveances?

Can we call on any other Nation for help? Why do you forsake the Negro? Who is not to blame for being here. This Grand and Noble Nation who flies to the help of suffering humanity of another Nation? And leave the Secessionists and born Rioters to slay us. Oh, that we had never seen the light of the world. When our parents belonged to them, why, the Negro was all right. Now, when they work and accumalate property they are all wrong. The Negroes that have been banished are all property owners to considerable extent, had they been worthless negroes, we would not care.

Will you for God sake in your next message to Congress give us some releif If you send us all to Africa on we will be willing or a number of us will gladly go. Is this the land of the free and the home of the brave? How can the Negro Sing My Country tis of Thee? For Humanity's

sake help us. For Christ sake do. We the Negro can do nothing but pray. There seems to be no help for us. No paper will tell the truth about the Negro. The Men of the 1st North Carolina were home on a furlough and they took a high hand in the nefarious work also. The Companies from every little town came in to kill the negro. There was not any Rioting Simply the strong slaying the weak. They speak of special police every white Man and boy from 12 years up had a gun or pistol, and the Negro had nothing, but his soul he could not say was his own. Oh, to see how we are Slaughtered, when our husbands go to work we do not look for their return. The Man who promises the Negro protection now as Mayor is the one who in his speech at the Opera house said the Cape Fear should be strewn with carcasses. Some papers I see, say it was right to eject the Negro editor That is all right but why should a whole city full of negroes suffer for Manly when he was hundred of miles away? And the paper had ceased publication. We were glad it was so for our own safety. But they tried to slay us all. To day we are mourners in a strange land with no protection near. God help us. Do something to alleviate our sorrows if you please. I cannot sign my name and live. But every word of this is true. The laws of our state is no good for the negro anyhow. Yours in much distress

Wilmington NC

An Appeal for Justice.

It is an undeniable fact and a grievous wrong that the present condition of the Negroes living in our Southern States which constitute so largely an important part of this great republic ("America") and in the presence of our great American leader, defender, of human rights and priviledges and christian advocate, I beg of you your Excellency the President of the United States of America, to raise your voice in defence of the American Negro citizens of the States of North, and South Carolina who are Simply the targets of all the political diabolical out-rages, wrongs, and barbarous treatment they are receiving from their fellow citizens. As well as political enemies. Sir I beg of you in the face of the unconstitutional wrong, and for the Sake of humanity in the name of God "Who frowns upon all wrongs of whatever kind they may be; I implore you for the sake of Justice to stop this outrageous sin.

If I could reach the hearts of all patriotic, law-abiding, christian citizens, I believe I would have a large concourse of religious, liberty-loving, God fearing Americans agree with me in these shameful menacing environments, that we a part of this great Nation people are constantly subjected to.

Most honored and esteemed Sir; I am an American woman, born under our honored flag and loving all that it teaches, all that it inspires, and all that it enobles; I offer to you Sir, And to my people as well whatever service I can possible render in the defence of these recent, and continued deplorable wrongs.

I would Suggest that special divine service be held in churches of every denomination, imploring divine help from Almighty-God for the liberation of theses poor defenceless, Americans, whose Sons Aided So largely this government in securing and giving to Cuba; the rights and priviledges all people should enjoy, that of Equal Justice, and Independence.

I beseech you to issue a Proclamation that may awaken consciousness in the hearts of white citizens in that Section of this republic to cease these hostilities against the black-Americans living in those States.

I am Respectfully,
And most obediently

Della V. Johnson
Winston N.C.

Temporary address
#1123 first Street N.W.
Washington D. C.
Nov "14th" 1898

Wilmington N.C.
Nov. 15, 1898

Mr. Mc. Kinly

Dear Sir, the poor citens of the colored people of North Carolina are suffering. there is over four hundred women, and children are driven from their home far out into the woods by the dimocrate party. look out for a letter from Wilmington North Carolina and in that letter that it will be the names of the citens but that letter is not true And if you have ever help the colored people, for God Sake help them now that old confradate flage is floating in Wilmington North Carolina. The city of Wilmington is unde the confradate laws. We are over powerd with the rapid fire of the guns, and they had cannons, in wagons, and they set fie to the almost half of the City. I would give you my name but I am afraid. I am afraid to own my name. It is from a colored citens.

Wilmington N.C.



Knowlesville, N.Y.
Nov. 17, 1898
His Excellency President McKinley,
Executive Mansion,
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President,

I have been reading in the newspapers about the mobing of the colored people in Wilmington, N.C., South Carolina and Mississippi.

Please do all in your power to stop it, if there needs to be a standing army, please send one there.

Lynching has been going on in the Southern States ever since President Hayes removed the Standing army from the South.

If anything can be done to stop it please inform me by return mail.

Yours Respectfully,
Wm. H. Taylor,
Knowlesville,
Orleans Co.,
N.Y.

Baltimore M.D.
 november 18-1898

Mr. M^ckinley Dear Sir

I am refering to that outrage in north Carolina I think it is a very bad way in which the colord people is treated they have got any privilage at all and no protection and if he makes an affort to protect him self he is thrust in prison. They are citizens of the uninted states. but they are less thought of than the lowest forghener. he is never on equality With the white man untill time of war then he is the black brother and after that if he is arrested for an afence if he is guilty or not he is taken out of prison with out a fare trial and linched Now this is called a civilized coutry and this kind of doings is civilized I would not like to go to one that is not. for this is bad enough and another thing this is the only country that does this lynching any way. it is not the color that makes the man but the pricible and I know that thair is Just God in heaven and if the laws of the land and the government cant put a stop to it God will. for it is an outrage the way the colord people is dealt with in this country and evry thing is a gainst the colord people I am very sorry to say. I think if it is in your power to stop it thair aught to be a stop put to it rite away. for if colord men orginize and begin fight the white men and kill and shoot thair will soon be found out away to stop all of the fuss. you would soon see. I cant see why thair is so much difference made in the two races for thair is colord people in every state Just as cable of holding office as the white is.

I do not me no harm but I am only wrighting what I think and expressing my feelings. they make difference here but can not make any in heaven.

I now Close.
 Mrs. Fredrina Jones
 Baltimore City
 M.D.

Pittsburg, Pa.
Nov. 27 / 98

Pres. McKinley:

Dear Sir

Excuse me for addressing you, concerning the Constitution of the U.S. and being of a female sex. It is a Resolution of mine concerning the lynching of the Negroes in Wilmington N.C. and hope it will be approved by you and also a Title of Nobility granted by you and with consent of Congress we have resolved to organize a Military. I am quite young and have never experienced but two nominations of Presidents Cleveland and yourself McKinley not knowing much of politics but for my judgement I do not think we could find a man of more nobility to wear the hat of Union. I esteem you of such power to impress upon Congress protection for our negroes in South which is stated in the Constitution of the U.S. in Section 3rd he shall from time to time give to Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient. The U.S. shall guarantee to every state in this Union a Republican form of government and shall protect each of them against invasion.

Sec. 151 The rights of citizens of U.S. to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition or servitude. Section 5 – Congress shall have power to enforce by appropriate a legislation.

Trusting in God and following the preamble and specification know as the Declaration of Independence accompanied the resolution of Richard Henry Lee which was adopted by Congress 2nd day of July 1776 and this declaration was agreed to on the 4th. And the transaction is thus recorded in the journal for that day.

Section 6. In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial By an impartial jury of the State and District where in the crime shall have been committed.

Our people are abridged of such laws in the southern states by the Democratic party. As I noticed in one of our daily papers that one of our leading white ladies in the Southern states stated Lynch them if it is 50 a day which has not been disapproved by the United States. I being a Southerner myself I know something about the equal rights of them. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime whereof the person shall have been duly convicted shall exist within the U.S. or any place subject to their jurisdiction Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. We are naturalized in the U.S. and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the U. States and the states where in they reside

No state shall make or enforce no law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the U.S. nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or equal rights without due process of law or deny to any person within its jurisdiction on the equal protections of the Laws I hope you will being the President of the U.S. take my resolution into consideration to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them to

It becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another. We hold these truths to be self evident as all men are created equal that they are endowed by their creator by certain enailable rights I hope you will give this your strict attention and I will look for a speedy answer concerning our Negroes in the Southern States The

laws which the Democratic party are imposing upon them which our Constitution of the Union States that Congress has the law to appropriate such treatment our negroes are under We being naturalized citizens of the United States and endowed by the same Creator if we don't speak now in five years to come We may as well hold our peace. Now Mr. McKinley I have stated to you my Resolution hoping there be no offense will you oblige me enough to impress this upon Congress and give me an answer favorable to our negroes in the Southern States In which I shall enclose a two cent stamp for a speedy answer.

Yours Respcty

Rosa Jackson
2832 Smallman Str.
Pittsburg Pa.
Allegheny Co.

Note: The letter below was typed on letterhead stationery from The National Lynch-Law Anti-Mob Association (Incorporated).

Springfield, Ohio, 1898
Nov 29th 1898

Hon. M.A. Hanna
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:- - - The above association desire you to use your influence to have investigated the recent out rages in the Carolinas, such brutal treatment of my race is a disgrace to civilization, The treatment of the Armenians by the Turks and the cruelties of the Spanards is nothing to the willful murders at Wilmington N. C. this happened in a Christain land our civilization is said to be the best in the world yet the world cannot furnish an example of butchery as was done in the Carolinias, The officials at Washington claim they are powerless to do anything in this matter, but we do remember how Grover Cleveland Come to the rescue of Chicago when that great city was threathend with destruction by the [illegible]kers, and [illegible] to without the consent of the Governor of that state. it showed at that time that the Government at Washington was paramount to any state Govrement, when the lives and property of the citizens were in danger of destruction. The Republican party has allways posed as the friend of the Negro, and the Negro has so regarded that party, and he allyed himself with that party, believeing it to be his friend, yet that friend stands by and sees him robed of both his political and civil rights, without makeing a protest Against such treatment, What if some friend of yours would serve you as our friends (The Republican party) has servd us? you would perhaps become suspicious of your friends, this is the predicament of the American Negro today. There can be no excuse this time by the Republicans, as they are in power root and branch.

We have looked upon you as our friend ever since you have been in public life, therefore we implore you to use your best endeavors to have something done [by] this Congress to remedy this Evil which threthens the life of the Government its self.

Hopeing to get an expression from you on this important question
We remain

Yours truly

Samuel E. Huffman Sect.
#503 Lagonda Ave.

Form No. 168.

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THOS. T. ECKERT, President and General Manager. TELEPHONE 1092.

57 P. OY I 88 Paid Sav'g
RECEIVED BRANT HOUSE,
11th AVE. & 12th ST.
Washington, D. C., Nov. 8, '88.

Geo. B. Cortisyan,
Assistant Private Secretary to President McKinley,
On P. R. R. Train No. 8, Altoona, Pa.

Roosevelt elected by at least thirty thousand. Greater New York gives Van Wyck about seventy four thousand majority. All Philadelphia republican congressmen re-elected. Connecticut republican by about fifteen thousand. Stone elected governor of Pennsylvania by large majority. North Carolina solidly democratic. No trouble there. Indications are that the house will

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THOS. T. ECKERT, President and General Manager. TELEPHONE 1092.

RECEIVED at BRANT HOUSE, No. 57. Sheet No. 2.
11th AVE. & 12th ST. DIRECT WIRES.

have a good working majority. Hamilton county, Ohio, gives a republican majority of fourteen thousand five hundred. Massachusetts republican. Chicago city democratic by a small plurality.

Ohas. A. Beynton.

10:13 P.



McKinley monitored the progress of elections in several key states using all resources at his disposal, including private investigators, federal appointees and staff.
Source: William McKinley Papers, National Archives Microfilm

TELEGRAM.
Montgomery:

Sheet 8, A. P.

Executive Mansion,
Washington.



Athens, November 7, - The Cabinet has resigned, its members considering that the exceptional circumstances under which they have assumed office have expired.

St-Louis, Mo., November 7, - Col. William J. Bryan, Third Nebraska Volunteers, passed through St-Louis to-day from Savannah, Georgia, on his way home.

In response to a request for an interview, Colonel Bryan said:

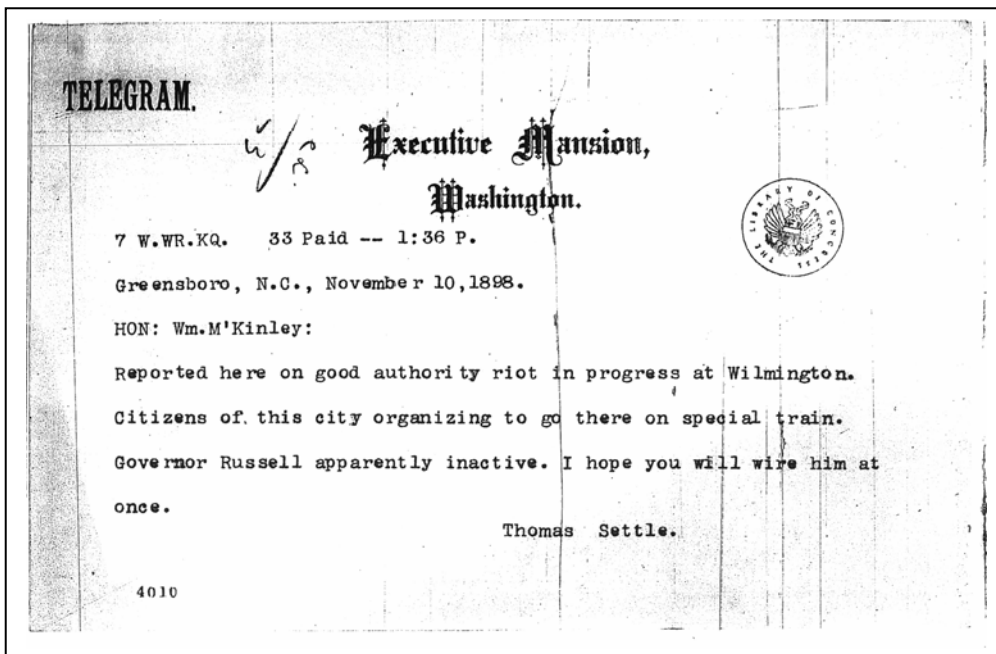
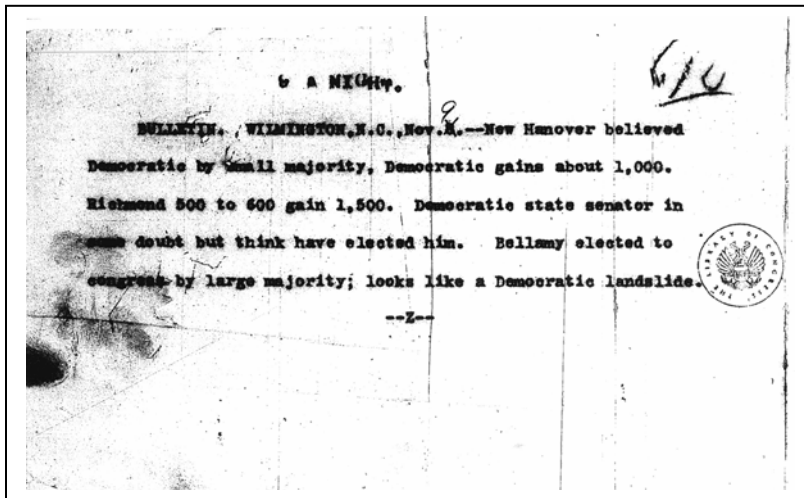
"Don't ask me to discuss the political situation. Don't intimate an inquiry as to prevailing conditions in the army. Why? Because I have military lock-jaw".

Wilmington, N. C., November 7, - Outwardly the situation here is quiet but apprehensions of trouble have not entirely disappeared. The great fight in this county will be on the State Senatorial ticket. Republican and Populist leaders including Governor Russell and the two State chairmen, are making a desperate effort to get the negroes to the polls in the hope of electing the Senator. They seem to care for nothing else in this county. Democrats think they will elect the Senator and this adds excitement to the closing hours of the campaign. Both sides claim the State and the Legislature, but there is no reasonable doubt that the democrats will have both.

X.V.P. 7.2 book (1/2) 12*

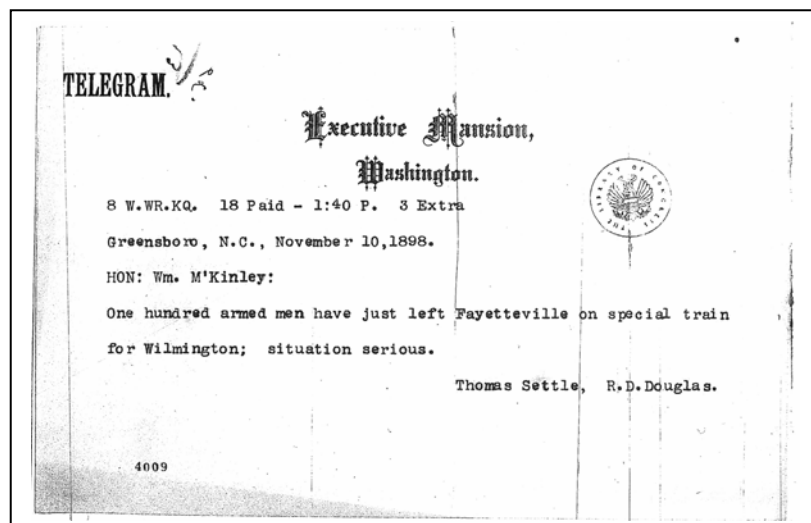
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Intelligence Report, November 7, 1898
William McKinley Papers, National Archives Microfilm



McKinley
Correspondence, 1898

William McKinley
Papers, National
Archives Microfilm



TELEGRAM.

Executive Mansion,
Washington.



I D. ND. KQ. 296 Paid.

Washington, D. C., November 12, 1898.

President M'Kinley:

Passing this morning through Washington, I see from the reports in the POST that you are contemplating sending troops into South Carolina. Don't do it. I am a Liberty-loving North Carolinian. I refer you to Hon: James E. Boyd, Assistant Attorney General, as to who I am. I make no apologies for being a Southern Democrat. It is the lawless vicious, bad element on the negro race that is being suppressed. The government can not afford to shoot down the associates of Bagley, Blum and Hobson, because the property owners and the tax-payers will not submit to the domination of the vicious element of the black race.

If you knew the situation as I know it you would say AMEN? Enquire of Bishop Hurst, of the Northern Methodist Church, whether I would make you a false statement. I am at the 5th. Avenue Hotel, New York City, for the next few days. If I can aid you in solving the question, you have only to wire to me, and I will most gladly return to see you. I am only a private citizen, wishing peace and prosperity to all sections of our beloved country. I give employment to one thousand men, largely colored and they would die for me. Listen to me? I am proud to be in position to answer for the South, and especially North Carolina. If I can be of service wire me, please, to the 5th. Avenue Hotel, New York.

JULIAN S. CARR,

President 1st National Bank, Durham;
Pres. Blackwell's Durham Tob. Co;

(Received 10:20 a.m.)

4320

(I pay the government \$1,000 taxes every day in the year including Sundays; this you can verify on enquiry tobacco dept. Treasury dept, so you will see in a moment that no one is more interested in good stable government).

Julian S. Carr of Durham to McKinley, November 12, 1898
William McKinley Papers, National Archives Microfilm