

DOCUMENT 1: Louisiana Black Codes Reinstate Provisions of the Slave Era, 1865

Section 1. Be it therefore ordained by the board of police of the town of Opelousas. That no negro or freedman shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town of Opelousas without special permission from his employers, specifying the object of his visit and the time necessary for the accomplishment of the same....

Section 2. Be it further ordained, That every negro freedman who shall be found on the streets of Opelousas after 10 o'clock at night without a written pass or permit from his employer shall be imprisoned and compelled to work five days on the public streets, or pay a fine of five dollars.

Section 3. No negro or freedman shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within the limits of the town under any circumstances, and any one thus offending shall be ejected and compelled to find an employer or leave the town within twenty-four hours....

Section 4. No negro or freedman shall reside within the limits of the town of Opelousas who is not in the regular service of some white person or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said freedman....

Section 5. No public meetings or congregations of negroes or freedmen shall be allowed within the limits of the town of Opelousas under any circumstances or for any purpose without the permission of the mayor or president of the board....

Section 6. No negro or freedman shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people without a special permission from the mayor or president of the board of police.... to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons, within the limits of the town of Opelousas without the special permission of his employer, in writing, and approved by the mayor or president of the board of police....

Section 7. No freedman who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons, within the limits of the town of Opelousas without the special permission of his employer, in writing, and approved by the mayor or president of the board of police....

Section 8. No freedman shall sell, barter, or exchange any articles of merchandise or traffic within the limits of Opelousas without permission in writing from his employer or the mayor or president of the board....

Section 9. Any freedman found drunk within the limits of the town shall be imprisoned and made to labor five days on the public streets, or pay five dollars in lieu of said labor.

Section 10. Any freedman not residing in Opelousas who shall be found within the corporate limits after the hour of 3 p.m. on Sunday without a special permission from his employer or the mayor shall be arrested and imprisoned and made to work....

Section 11. All the foregoing provisions apply to freedmen and freedwomen....

E. D. ESTILLETTE,

President of the Board of Police.

JOS. D. RICHARDS, Clerk.

Official copy: J. LOVELL, Captain and Assistant Adjutant General.

Condition of the South, Senate Executive Document No. 2, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 92–93.

DOCUMENT 2

Lucy McMillan, a Former Slave in South Carolina, Testifies About White Violence, 1871

SPARTANBURGH, SOUTH CAROLINA, July 10, 1871.

LUCY McMILLAN (colored) sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Q UESTION . Where do you live?

A NSWER . Up in the country. I live on McMillan's place, right at the foot of the road.

Q UESTION . How far is it?

A NSWER . Twelve miles.

Q UESTION . Are you married?

A NSWER . I am not married. I am single now. I was married. My husband was taken away from me and carried off twelve years ago....

Q UESTION . How old are you now?

A NSWER . I am called forty-six. I am forty-five or six.

Q UESTION . Did the Ku-Klux come where you live at any time?

ANSWER . They came there once before they burned my house down. The way it was was this: John Hunter's wife came to my house on Saturday morning, and told they were going to whip me. I was afraid of them; there was so much talk of Ku-Klux drowning people, and whipping people, and killing them. My house was only a little piece from the river, so I laid out at night in the woods. The Sunday evening after Isham McCrary was whipped I went up, and a white man, John McMillan, came along and says to me, "Lucy, you had better stay at home, for they will whip you anyhow." I said if they have to, they might whip me in the woods, for I am afraid to stay there. Monday night they came in and burned my house down; I dodged out alongside of the road not far off, and saw them. I was sitting right not far off, and as they came along the river I know some of them. I know John McMillan, and Kennedy McMillan, and Billy Bush, and John Hunter. They were all together. I was not far off, and I saw them. They went right on to my house. When they passed me I run further up on the hill to get out of the way of them. They went there and knocked down and beat my house a right smart while. And then they all got still, and directly I saw the fire rise. Excerpt from Testimony Taken by the Joint

QUESTION . How many of these men were there?

ANSWER . A good many; I couldn't tell how many, but these I knew. The others I didn't.

QUESTION . Were these on foot or on horseback?

ANSWER . These were walking that I could call the names of, but the others were riding. I work with these boys every day. One of them I raised from a child, and I knew them. I have lived with them twelve years.

QUESTION . How were they dressed?

ANSWER . They had just such cloth as this white cotton frock made into old gowns; and some had black faces, and some red, and some had horns on their heads before, and they came a-talking by me and I knew their voices.

QUESTION . How far were you from where they were?

ANSWER . Not very far. I was in the woods, squatted down, and staid still until they passed; but then I run further up the hill.

QUESTION . Have you any family with you there?

ANSWER . I had one little daughter with me. I had one grown daughter, but my grown daughter had been up the country to my mother's staying, and my little girl was staying there with me.

QUESTION . Had you your little girl out with you?

ANSWER . Yes, sir; I could not leave her there.

QUESTION . What was the reason given for burning your house?

ANSWER . There was speaking down there last year and I came to it. They all kept at me to go. I went home and they quizzed me to hear what was said, and I told them as far as my senses allowed me.

QUESTION . Where was the speaking?

ANSWER . Here in this town. I went on and told them, and then they all said I was making laws; or going to have the land, and the Ku-Klux were going to beat me for bragging that I would have land. John Hunter told them on me, I suppose, that I said I was going to have land....

SOURCE:

Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States (Washington, 1872), printed in Dorothy Sterling. ed., Trouble They Seen: The Story of Reconstruction in the Words of African Americans. New York: Da Capo Press, 1994.