

COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI, November 17, 1871.

WASHINGTON WILLIS (colored) sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN :

*Question.* Where do you live ?*Answer.* Monroe County, near Aberdeen.*Question.* Were you present at the time Alexander Willis was whipped by the Ku-Klux ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Where were you posted at the time so as to know ?*Answer.* Well, sir, when I first heard them Saturday night we were at the meeting-house. When we first heard the reports we all went to the road, and I heard them coming up the road, and I just got over the fence and laid down in the corner of the fence until they passed me; and after they passed me I got in the road and followed on behind them to see where they were going, and they went up to Miss Lavinia Willis's place—Widow Willis's place—and they went to get this boy out, and I reckon they bring him in about fifty yards of the road and commenced whipping him.*Question.* How many were there ?*Answer.* Well, sir, there was a good many. I can't tell you how many, but some particular ones I knew.*Question.* About how many would you think ?*Answer.* Well, sir, it looked like there was about sixty-five or seventy of them.*Question.* Were they all disguised ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Did they come there on horseback ?*Answer.* Yes, sir; they were all on horseback.*Question.* Were their horses all disguised ?*Answer.* Only six of the horses were disguised.*Question.* Go on and state what occurred in reference to the whipping.*Answer.* While they were whipping him some one commenced shooting at them, and then they run out of the clothes they had on—run out of the disguise.*Question.* Who commenced shooting ?*Answer.* Some clubbing party commenced shooting at them while they were whipping this boy.*Question.* Do you mean Loyal League, or what do you mean by club ?*Answer.* Yes, sir; the club we had. They commenced shooting at them, and they pulled off their clothes, and they said we must break ranks or we will be surrounded.*Question.* How many were engaged in firing into the Ku-Klux gang ?*Answer.* There were three of them that night engaged at that.*Question.* Did they hit any of them ?*Answer.* I don't know whether any of them were hit or not. I couldn't swear, but I know some of them that were in the company that night were dead by the next Saturday night.*Question.* What did they do with their disguises ?*Answer.* Kept them with them. They took them off and kept them with them.*Question.* What time was this ?*Answer.* It was in March. I don't know exactly what time. It was on a Saturday night.*Question.* Last March ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Did you know any of the men ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Who were they ?*Answer.* I know Barbour Quarles, William Butler, Plummer Willis, John Willis, Pope Mayes, and Jonny Roberts.*Question.* How did you know them ?*Answer.* When they commenced pulling off the clothes I was right by. They had to come right along by me, and when they came along I knew them just as good as I knew myself, because they all came together right along by me.*Question.* Have any of these since been indicted in the courts for this ?*Answer.* Yes, sir; they have all been taken to Oxford.*Question.* Were you a witness against them ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Do you know what they whipped Willis for ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* What ?*Answer.* For suing a man by the name of McNiece.*Question.* Is he a planter ?*Answer.* Yes, sir.*Question.* Does he own a plantation near here ?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; he lived up towards Athens, and this fellow worked up there with him a year. When he came away he wouldn't pay him, and he sued him for it, and that night they whipped him.

*Question.* Did they tell him that?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; they told him they would learn him how to sue a white man; but colored men were with them, one named Jefferson Willis.

*Question.* With whom?

*Answer.* With them men that night. One was named Jefferson Willis and the other Burril Willis.

*Question.* How came these colored men to be with the Ku-Klux?

*Answer.* I don't know.

*Question.* Were you ever asked to join the Ku-Klux?

*Answer.* Yes, sir, I was asked to join them.

*Question.* By whom?

*Answer.* By my young master.

*Question.* What is his name?

*Answer.* Barbour Quarles.

*Question.* Was it before that night or after that night?

*Answer.* It was before they ever rode the first time.

*Question.* What did he say to you?

*Answer.* He told me—he asked me—some one had killed a young heifer of mine, and taken my cotton, and he asked me didn't I want to join them and stop them; to whip them; to make them stop it. I told him him no, sir. I didn't know anything about it. I didn't care to join, because I didn't know who it was done it. It was done, and I didn't know who done it. He said I could find out. They had protection to whip all people that did such as that; protection to whip them to make them stop it.

*Question.* Did he tell you who he had protection from?

*Answer.* Yes, sir; he called several names he said they had for protection.

*Question.* Whom did he name?

*Answer.* Well, he named a man by the name of Mr. Blair, from Missouri, and a General Forrest, and a man by the name of Mr. Lynch, he said they had for protection.

*Question.* Did you join?

*Answer.* No, sir.

*Question.* Have you been back there since you gave evidence before the court at Oxford?

*Answer.* Yes, sir.

*Question.* To live?

*Answer.* No, sir; I have been living here all the time

*Question.* Are you afraid to go back there?

*Answer.* No, sir.

*Question.* Did these Ku-Klux create a good deal of alarm among the colored people while they were riding through the country?

*Answer.* Yes, sir, they did. I reckon some of them didn't stay in their houses for months.

*Question.* Have you heard of a good many whippings that have been administered to colored people?

*Answer.* No, sir; not since March. They whipped a right smart of them around there before March.

*Question.* But not much since?

*Answer.* No, sir; I haven't heard of any one whipped since.