

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, *October 27, 1871.*

ABRAM COLBY (colored) sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. State your age, where you were born, and where you now live?

Answer. I am fifty-two years old. I was born in Greene County and it is my home now when I can live there.

Question. Were you a slave before the war?

Answer. Yes, sir; I was raised by my father, and I was a slave of his.

Question. Were you living with him at the time of the emancipation?

Answer. No, sir; he was dead then. He left me free when he died.

Question. How many years have you been free?

Answer. About twenty years.

Question. What was your occupation before the war?

Answer. I used to be a barber.

Question. Did you take any part in the politics of the country after the war was over and reconstruction had commenced?

Answer. Yes, sir, I did, after the war was over.

Question. What part did you take?

Answer. I took the republican part.

Question. You acted with the republican party?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. You took a prominent and active part?

Answer. I think so.

Question. Have you held any office or position?

Answer. I was elected to the legislature.

Question. Which legislature?

Answer. In 1868.

Question. To which house?

Answer. To the lower house.

Question. Were you one of those who were expelled?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. And then reinstated?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Are you a member of the next house?

Answer. Yes, sir; I was elected to the next legislature.

Question. Tell us whether at any time you have had any violence offered to you; and if so, tell us what it was.

Answer. On the 29th of October, 1869, they came to my house and broke my door open, took me out of my bed and took me to the woods and whipped me three hours or more and left me in the woods for dead. They said to me, "Do you think you will ever vote another damned radical ticket?" I said, "I will not tell you a lie." They said, "No; don't tell a lie." I thought I would not tell a lie. I supposed they would kill me anyhow. I said, "If there was an election to-morrow, I would vote the radical ticket." They set in and whipped me a thousand licks more, I suppose.

Question. With what did they whip you?

Answer. With sticks and with straps that had buckles on the ends of them.

Question. How many were engaged in that?

Answer. Sixty-five came to my house and took me out; only twenty-five whipped me, so I understood after they thought I was dead.

Question. Were they disguised?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Did you know any of them?

Answer. I think so.

Question. How many?

Answer. Ten or fifteen.

Question. Give their names?

Answer. Doctor John E. Walker, William Lawrence, Jim Williams, Henry Johnson, Mr. Black—I do not know his given name, but he was a poor fellow—Mr. Barnwell, John Dunn, William Turnell, Mr. Saunders—a young man, I forget his first name—Albert Tunison, a young fellow, Tom Robinson, and Henry Jackson. I can swear to those names, and there are others I can name, some two or three I think I knew, but I will not tell any except I can swear to them.

Question. Where was this done?

Answer. In Greene County, about two miles from Greensborough. I live in the country.

Question. Was that before you had been expelled from the legislature?

Answer. No, sir; it was after, and before I was seated again.

Question. What is the character of those men who were engaged in whipping you?

Answer. Some of them are the first-class men in our town. One is a lawyer, one a doctor, and some are farmers; but among them some are not worth the bread they eat. I have heard a great many names since, but I did not know them that night.

Question. Did they have any talk with you before they took you out?

Answer. No, sir. They broke my door down. I was asleep. They called out, "Surrender!" I said, "Of course I surrender." They had their pistols, and they took me in my night-clothes and carried me a mile and a quarter from home. I may say that they hit me five thousand blows. I told President Grant the same that I tell you now.

After they thought I was dead, Doctor Walker came up to feel my pulse. Finding my wrist all wet and bloody, he did not feel my pulse, but said, "He is dead." Tom Robinson was commanding the crowd. Two of them said, "Captain, we have not struck him a lick." He said, "Yes, all of you have." They said, "Only twenty-three of us have whipped him." He said, "Go on and lick him; he is a dead man." One of them came up and struck me. I counted his licks. At that time they did not hurt me a bit, except about the neck. He struck me two hundred licks. They gave me four or five hundred before they commenced counting. They told me to take off my shirt. I said, "I never do that for any man." They tried to knock me down with their sticks, but they could not do it. My drawers fell down about my feet, and they took hold of them and pulled them, and tripped me up. They then pulled my shirt up over my head. They said I had voted for Grant, Bullock, and Blodgett.

Question. You had voted in the legislature for Foster Blodgett, and had voted at the polls for Bullock and Grant?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. And that was the reason they gave for whipping you?

Answer. Yes, sir; and they said I had influence with the negroes of other counties, and had carried the negroes against them. About two days before they whipped me they offered me \$5,000 to turn and go with them, and said they would pay me \$2,500 cash if I would turn and let another man go to the legislature in my place. I told them that I would not do it if they would give me all the county was worth; that Foster Blodgett had always been a true man to me and to my party. One of them laughed and said, "You have a son named Foster Blodgett." I said, "Yes, I have." That night when they whipped me, they said, "You named a little son of yours Foster Blodgett; we will give you a hundred more for that;" and they did so. The worst thing about the whole matter was this: My mother, wife, and daughter were in the room when they came there and carried me out. My little daughter came out and begged them not to carry me away. They drew up a gun and actually frightened her to death. She never got over it until she died.

Question. How long did she live?

Answer. About a year.

Question. Had she ever been sick before?

Answer. No, sir; that was the part that grieves me the most about the whole thing. I was at my house a week ago, but I staid in the woods that night; they were around there looking for me.

Question. Have you property down there?

Answer. Yes, sir; I have a small plantation, and I could make as comfortable a living there as anywhere in the world if they would leave me alone. I cannot live there.

Question. Have any of those men been punished for this transaction?

Answer. No, sir. I would have come before the court here last week, but I knew it was no use for me to try to get Ku-Klux condemned by Ku-Klux, and I did not come. Mr. Saunders, a member of the grand jury here last week, is the father of one of the very men I knew whipped me. What was the use of my going before that grand jury? Several tried to get me to come, but I said, "I will not go before that court if I never get them punished; for I know that court will never punish them."

Question. Why have you not brought a civil action for damages against them?

Answer. I did not see that I could get anything; that is the reason why I have not done it.

By Mr. SCOFFIELD:

Question. You would be the only witness to prove who they were?

Answer. My old mother-in-law thinks she knew one of the men who came into the house; but I have never called his name, for I do not think I knew him.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. How long before you recovered from the effects of this treatment?

Answer. I have never got over it yet. They broke something inside of me, and the doctor has been attending to me for more than a year. Sometimes I cannot get up and down off my bed, and my left hand is not of much use to me. I can use it better now than I could a while ago. I cannot do any work now, though I always made my living before in the barber-shop, hauling wood, &c.

Question. You spoke about being elected to the next legislature?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. How was that managed; did you go into the county?

Answer. Yes, sir; but they run me off during the election. I came off the morning of the last day of election.

Question. How did they run you off?

Answer. They got after me, and swore they would kill me if I staid there. My colored friends were afraid they would kill me, and wanted me to come up here; but still they continued voting for me. The Saturday night before the election I went to

church; when I got home my dogs out in the yard began barking. One of my boys opened the door, and just as he did so a bullet came through the door and went into the ceiling. I took my gun and ran up stairs, and thought I could shoot through the window. They heard me going up stairs, and they just peppered all that side of the house with shot and bullets.

Question. Did you vote at the election?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Did they make any objection to your voting?

Answer. No, sir. Last year I went home repeatedly; this year they are trying to keep me away so as to contest my seat in the legislature, on the ground of my being a non-resident. That is the idea, I am told by the leading men of the county, both white and colored.

Question. What sort of an election did you have there last year?

Answer. We had a pretty fair election. At the beginning of the election, on the first day, we had some United States soldiers there. They got them drunk, and they changed the tickets of some of the colored people. I saw them doing it, one of them.

Question. A soldier did that?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. What kind of a man was he?

Answer. He was an Irishman. I saw one of them change a ticket that a colored man had, and I went to him and said, "You must not do that." They gave the colored man a ticket for Mr. Saunders, who ran against me. He was the father of one of the men who beat me.

Question. How much majority did you get?

Answer. Between seven and eight hundred, I think.

Question. Were those men disguised who treated you in the way you have stated?

Answer. Yes, sir; they were all disguised.

Question. Were they what are known as Ku-Klux?

Answer. Yes, sir; if they are not Ku-Klux, then there are not any. They had on white gowns that came down below their knees, masks on their faces, and their heads were covered up with white caps, or something of the kind; a mask and a cap on too, I think. I knew the voices of those men whose names I have given, as well as I knew my own. I was with them every day. There were several there who did not speak at all; but I knew some of them by the boots they had on their feet; and they had two negroes with them.

Question. Did the negroes whip you?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. Did you know who they were?

Answer. Yes, sir; Green Lawrence was one. I forgot to give his name just now.

Question. Who was the other?

Answer. Joe Bonner. He is dead, and there is no use to give his name.

Question. Were those negroes unfriendly to you?

Answer. Yes, sir; they voted the democratic ticket from the start.

Question. What number of colored people vote the democratic ticket there?

Answer. I do not think we lose over fifty colored votes in the whole county, and I do not think we would lose them if we could get a chance to talk with them, but we are not allowed to go away from town.

Question. Why not?

Answer. If I was to go into the country five miles I would not be allowed to go back again.

Question. Are there any white republicans in the county?

Answer. Very few; they cannot go to the polls and show it.

Question. How do they treat white men there who are friendly to the colored people?

Answer. They scorn them, and call them Yankees. We have had several school-teachers there that they have run off. They took a teacher named Gladdon, a northern man, and walked him all over town one night and then carried him to a fish pond, and told him that if he was there in the morning they would do something to him. He came to me the next morning.

Question. What did they tell him they would do if he staid there?

Answer. They said they would kill him.

Question. Was he teaching a colored school or a white school?

Answer. A colored school.

Question. Are there any colored schools there now?

Answer. One.

Question. Who is teaching it?

Answer. A colored man.

Question. Did they interfere with him?

Answer. They have not yet, he says; he has only been there a month.

Question. Do you know anything about any colored people having been killed there?

Answer. I know of several having been killed.

Question. Do you recollect the names of any?

Answer. Allen Jackson and Bob Lewis were killed; I think about six or seven have been killed. There was a yellow man killed there, but I cannot think of his name, though I knew him very well.

Question. Do you know of any cases of whipping there?

Answer. There is no use in talking about whipping; they whip them whenever they want to, in my county. I would have had several of them up here now, but they are afraid to come.

By Mr. SCOFIELD:

Question. Do they burn any of your school-houses and churches?

Answer. They fired our school-house one night, but it was near our house, and my wife and I put the fire out. I do not know whoever to lay that to, whether white people or colored people. They would run off every teacher we had.
