

**MOB RULE IN NORTH CAROLINA** The widespread efforts of white southerners to strip blacks on their civil rights was violently illustrated in the thriving coastal port of Wilmington, North Carolina, then the largest city in the state, with about twenty thousand residents. In 1894 and 1896, black voters, by then a majority in the city, elected a coalition of Republicans and Populists to various municipal offices. That blacks had come to control the electoral process infuriated the city's white elite. "We will never surrender to a ragged raffle of Negroes," warned a former congressman and Confederate colonel named Alfred Waddell, "even if we have to choke the Cape Fear River with [black] carcasses." It was not an idle threat.

On the morning of November 10, 1898, some two thousand well-armed white men and boys rampaged through the streets of Wilmington. They first destroyed the offices of *The Daily Record*, the city's black-owned newspaper. The vigilantes then moved into the black neighborhoods, indiscriminately shooting African Americans and destroying homes and businesses. Scores, perhaps a hundred, all black, were killed. The white mob then stormed the city hall, forced the white mayor and his board of black and white aldermen to resign, and declared that Colonel Waddell was the new mayor. The racist mob next forced the African American business leaders and elected officials to board northbound trains, taking them out of the state. The new

self-appointed, all-white city government issued their own "Declaration of White Independence" that stripped blacks of their voting rights and their jobs. Desperate black residents appealed for help to the governor as well as to President William McKinley, but they did nothing.

The Wilmington Insurrection marked the first time in history that a lawfully elected municipal government had been overthrown in the United States. Two years later, in the 1900 statewide elections, white supremacist Democrats vowed to cement their control of the political process. The night before the election, Colonel Waddell urged supporters to use any means necessary to suppress black voting: "You are Anglo-Saxons. You are armed and prepared and you will do your duty. . . . Go to the polls tomorrow, and if you find the negro out voting, tell him to leave the polls and if he refuses, kill him, shoot him down in his tracks. We shall win tomorrow if we have to do it with guns." The Democratic party won by a landslide.

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What was the "white mob" in Wilmington upset about?

② In your own words, what types of actions

did the whites take to regain power?

\* Write in complete sentences on your own paper!