Wilmington Massacre

The conversations surrounding Wilmington in 1898 all correctly recognize the timeline of events that sparked the massacre and coup within the city, the latter being the only one in America's history. The events leading up to the Massacre are very well documented and there are a multitude of scholar-level analyses that provide perspectives that are important to the understanding of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre in its entirety. However, there is an important connection left out of the conversation that is integral to the understanding of what historians recognize as the cause of the Massacre. The cause of the Massacre is understood to have been a interaction between a local black press and a feminist from Georgia around three months before the elections of 1898. The conflict between the press and feminist is generally viewed as a dispute over the legitimacy of a myth that black men raped white women.

However, the myth, called "black rape," was a narrative created in the post-Civil War South that combined class, gender, and race.[1] This was done in order for the narrative to compass all of Southern society. Most conversations surrounding the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre fail to recognize that when analyzing an event that includes the myth of "black rape," all of class, gender, and race must be included in any analysis of the event.

To illustrate the cause of the Massacre fully, there are two questions this paper will be answering: How did white supremacy and "black rape" create roles for women in the south?; How does an understanding of Rebecca Latimer Felton and Ida B. Wells-Barnett shape the conversations about feminism and the 1898 Massacre? A conversation cannot be had about "black rape" that excludes even one of the aformentioned categories due to the nature of the narrative. Furthermore, the origin of the arguments that were at the heart of what caused the

[1] Barbara Omolade, *the rising song of African American Women.* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1994).

historical context surrounding Wilmington in 1898. To go any further, a brief overview of the cause of the Wilmington Massacre and Massacre itself must be illustrated.

The year was 1898. In Wilmington, North Carolina, the tension between whites and blacks was intense. A year-long campaign of white supremacy by the Democratic party[2], considered the party of whites, had been riling up white populations in cities across North Carolina with racist editorials being published consistently in most major newspapers.[3] The campaign sought to unseat a coalition between the Republicans and Populists, considered the party of blacks and the party of the working class respectively. Democrats were unable to pass Jim Crow legislation to disenfranchise blacks because the coalition, called the Fusionists, had a majority of seats in North Carolina's city and state governments. The Democrats protested against the Fusionists to end what they saw as "negro rule."[4]

The sole black-owned newspaper in Wilmington at the time, *The Daily Record*, published an editorial during this period of heightened tensions titled "Mrs. Felton's Speech." Written by Alexander Manly, the owner of *The Daily Record*, "Mrs. Felton's Speech" challenges a speech given by Rebecca Latimer Felton over a year prior in Georgia titled "Women on the Farm." Felton was a prominent white supremacist and feminist and combined both ideologies in her speech.[5] "Women on the Farm" contributed to the increased racial tensions within the South

---

[2] For more information on the tactics used by the Democratic Party in the 1898 elections, see *The Democratic Handbook, 1898.* State Democratic Executive Committee of North Carolina, F.M. Simmons, John W. Thompson (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1898). Handbook, https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/dem1898/dem1898.html. (Accessed February 25, 2022).
[3] David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy* (New York City: Grove Press, 2020).
[4] F. M. Simmons, "WE HAVE NEGRO RULE - Chairman Simmons Propounds Searching Questions to Pritchard." *Asheville Daily Citizen*, November 1898, 6.
[5] LeeAnn Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton and the Wife's Farm: The Class and Racial Politics of Gender Reform." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (1992): 354–72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582540.

ravening beasts, then I say lynch a thousand a week."[6]

Manly took issue with her using white supremacy as a basis for advocacy of feminism and refuted her strategy, emphasizing that feminism and its ideas must be able to be applied to black women as well. Furthermore, Manly asserted that white women were not the sole victim of rape perpetrated by only black men, but that white women naturally attracted to them "as is well known to all."[7] Many scholars regard his refutation of the white supremacist idea that relationships between black men and white women were unnatural and non-consensual as what ignited the population of whites in Wilmington.

As it was the cause of the 1898 Massacre, an important part of understanding the debate between Rebecca Latimer Felton and Alexander Manly is correctly interpreting the historical context driving their conflict. The myth of "black rape" is the main narrative that drove "Women on the Farm," and knowing the history and meaning of the narrative as well as the roles it created for 19th century Southern society will elaborate upon the connections between class, gender, and race in the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre. This section serves to answer the question of how white supremacy and "black rape" created roles for women in the South.

The myth of "black rape" was created by the Ku Klux Klan the same year that the white supremacist terrorist group had found its own inception: 1866. The narrative was crafted as a fictional consequence to the freedom that had been given to blacks during the same era.[8] It alleged that black men were taking advantage of their newly afforded freedoms to rape white women. In order to combat this, white supremacists argued, the rage of white men brought about

---

[6] J. A. Holman, "Mrs. Felton Speaks," *The Weekly Star*, August 1898, 1.
[7] Alexander Manly, "Mrs. Felton's Speech," *The Daily Record*, August 1898.
[8] The 13th Amendment was passed in December of 1865, outlawing slavery except as a punishment for a crime. U.S. Const. amend. XIII (passed 1865).

but also to the idea of white women. Almost always, the black man accused of rape was given no due process in accordance with any accusation brought about him, and was lynched.[9]

The myth of "black rape" restructured Southern society as it was incredibly strategic and all encompassing. One reason why the myth of "black rape" was so effective was because the categories of class, gender, and race were all used to justify the narrative. Every part of society was intertwined in the narrative and there was no way for anybody to escape its effects. The arguments spoken by Felton in "Women on the Farm" reflect the intersections between class, gender, and race in the conversation of "black rape."

In her speech, she argues that the lower class of white women must be afforded the opportunity of a quality education. This must be done, she claims, as most poorer white women in the South were often left alone when their husbands left to work in the fields. When left alone and unprotected, black men were free to break into the house and rape the white woman. If this problem is not remedied, the only way to stop these rapes from happening is to lynch as many black men as needed to deter them from committing rape.[10] Within a single speech, Felton combines arguments about uplifting the lower class, protecting white women, and saving the white race by lynching black men.

Narratives by their nature create roles within the societies that house them, however, Southern society did more than just allow the narrative of "black rape" to gain popularity; it

---

[9] This sentiment is well reflected in "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice." In the video, Edward W. Carmack, a newspaper editor of *Memphis Commercial* who would later become a senator of Tennessee, is mentioned. He wrote in 1892 that "the black sets aside all fear of death for the gratification of his beastial desires." This quote from Carmack provides an enlightening example of how white supremacists viewed blacks in the South. *The American Experience*, season 2, episode 4, "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice," directed/written by William Greaves, aired October 1989 on PBS.

[10] Holman, "Mrs. Felton's Speaks," 3.

object in the eyes of white supremacists. They were idealized as so pure and clean to white men in the South that more often than not, white women were not allowed to have sex except for once every few years.[12] However, white women and the virtuousness brought about by their status as pure objects compounded with the narrative that insisted that they were victim of rape, furthering the need for constant protection of white women in the name of keeping the white race alive.

To cement this need of constant protection of white women in Southern society, white womanhood[13] was made into an institution. Idealized as the utmost symbol of purity and virtue, the institution of white womanhood was a symbol that the South needed to protect itself from anything that could "taint" its reputation. White men now not only had a desire to protect their women, but also to protect the idea of white women from perceived threats and attacks. The role of the antagonist that preyed on the institution of white womanhood was given almost entirely to black men. Through the lens of "black rape," black men were uncivilized beasts that had become audacious after being granted the same rights that white men had such as voting.[14] The fear of an

---

[11] Within societies, there is what is called the collective consciousness: it is defined as a shared set of values or beliefs that people have in a society. For more information about the power of the collective consciousness, see (CITE Durkheim)

[12] Omolade, *the rising song of African American Women*, 1.

[13] White womanhood is defined as the livelihood of white women in the Southern United States and it is personified in the stereotype of the "Southern Belle." For more information on white womanhood and the "Southern Belle," see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "'The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South' by Christie Anne Farnham (Book Review)." *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (1997): 203-211, https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/education-southern-belle-higher-student/docview/1300182057/se-2?accountid=14606.

[14] In Rebecca Latimer Felton's speech, she says "-that so long as your politics takes the colored man into your embraces on election day to control the vote… so long will lynchings prevail, because the causes of it grow and increase." To Felton, voting was one of the main things that affirmed the citizenship of black men. For more information on Felton's views on black voting rights, see Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton," 2.

for and justified with the threat of lynching black men.

As it was created from white mens' projection, the role of white women and the institution of white womanhood was woven with the ideologies of misogyny and white supremacy. Their role served the purpose of continuing to subordinate white women and keep them with white men, which would prevent any possible "tainting" of the purity of white womanhood. For the sake of "protection," the threat of the "black rapist" relieved white women of their autonomy and placed it in the hands of white men. This situation stripped white women of the ability to defend themselves, and made it clear that they would always need the support of white men to go into any situation.

Because of "black rape" and its creation of roles for white women that relieved them of their autonomy, feminism had to not only be appealing to Southern white women, but also convincing enough for Southern white men. This created a problem that would divide the feminist movement: white women, who already held most of the power in the movement, had a sizeable advantage over black women in the fight over its moral ground and where it would find itself in an America that was slowly modernizing.

Going into the 1880s, the answer to how first-wave feminism would progress could no longer be ignored. In order for feminism to gain support within the South, the inclusion of black women within the movement had to be cut out. The large influence of the abysmal state of Southern race relations meant that including issues that faced black women, something only seldom spoken of by white feminists who hardly considered it a priority, actually invalidated their movement in the face of a predominantly white, patriarchal society. Most white feminists came to the conclusion that in order for feminism to find its place within the South, they would

feminists with Rebecca Latimer Felton, who already was a very passionate white supremacist prior to becoming a feminist. Felton felt that by actively combining both ideologies, it could serve as a remedy to the difficulties presented by Southern gender and race relations.

As Rebecca Latimer Felton was at the heart of what caused the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, understanding both her and the aforementioned Alexander Manly's strategies are crucial to creating a complete perspective of the event. Furthermore, it must be understood that Manly derived his strategies and arguments in his editorial about Felton from a black feminist and anti-lynching advocate named Ida B. Wells-Barnett. An understanding of the origin of Manly's arguments and the impact of the person credited with their creation will better illustrate the conversations surrounding feminism in the 1890s. This section serves to answer the question of how an understanding of Rebecca Latimer Felton and Ida B. Wells-Barnett shapes the conversations about feminism and the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre.

The conflict that caused the 1898 Wilmington Massacre found its beginning in the summer of 1897 when Rebecca Latimer Felton gave her speech titled "Women on the Farm." Born in 1835, Felton had owned slaves before the Civil War in 1861 and the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865, which helps solidify the idea that she had already fully internalized the ideology of white supremacy. She had even been married by the 1860s; the man she married was a wealthy congressman within the Democratic party. She used his resources to enter and gain support in the political realm of the South.[15]

Despite being known as a feminist, Felton gained her popularity as an agriculture reformer and white supremacist, and it was not until the late 1880s that Felton joined the

[15] Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton," 2.

Felton was white and middle to upper class and already had a base of which to build off of. As expected of white women of their class status, many white feminists were previously part of church groups and temperance movements, and were able to develop public speaking skills and introduce feminism to these bases. These were just some of the many reasons why white women were at the center of the movement despite having many notable black women[17] within the movement that contributed many ideas and arguments to the cause. White feminists had their whiteness and class position at their disposal, whereas black women faced class, race, and gender oppression.[18]

Felton used her class, whiteness, and the victimhood granted to her by "black rape" as a basis on which she could advocate for feminist reform. In "Women on the Farm" and other speeches, she originally gave an intelligent plea regarding a reformation of women's education and an evolution of the role of women in Southern society. Following this, she then called for the lynching of thousands of black men to protect white women's virtue. As an effect of Felton utilizing the role that "black rape" created for white women, she actually is recreating the conditions of the very same problem that she is attempting to remedy.

The role of white women was one born of misogyny and white supremacy, and using the role, even as a means to make progress, affirms the narrative and continues the cycles of oppression.[19] This is seen in "Women on the Farm," where she says "the crying need of women

---

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Sojourner Truth was a black women's rights activist and gave one of the first notable speeches regarding feminism at a women's convention in 1851, titled "Aren't I A Woman?" Truth's speech highlights the differences in the treatment of white women and black women, and how black women were not given even small privileges that white women had. See Sojourner Truth, "Aren't I A Woman?" (speech, Akron, Ohio, 1851).

[18] Patricia H. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1990).

[19] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 12.

regressed into affirming patriarchal ideologies and institutions. White men were viewed as a necessary protection against the imaginary threat of black men.[20]

There were many white feminists who attempted to use the role given to them via the "black rape" myth as a means to advance the growing first-wave feminist movement. Felton is a good example of this, but even Susan B. Anthony, whom many consider a larger-than-life leader of first-wave feminism, often used the privledge of her whiteness to make progress in the South at the detriment of black women's advancement. Anthony had originally talked about issues that pertained to both black and white women, but her advocacy for the former faltered when it became clear that Southern white women would not listen to her and Southern white men would not support first-wave feminism's legal progression.[21]

Like other white feminists, she determined that the concurrent advancement of black womens' rights was a sacrifice that needed to be given in order to progress the movement into the South. The movement's failure to bring attention to the plight of black women was recognized by the aforementioned Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who was acquainted with Anthony. When Anthony had asked Frederick Douglass to not come to the first Southern suffrage meeting[22] in Georgia in 1892, Wells-Barnett expressed disappointment in her, stating "I felt that although she had made gains for suffrage, she also confirmed white women and their attitude of segregation."[23]

The problem of white feminists affirming the ideology of white supremacy that had been recognized by Wells-Barnett was something Alexander Manly attempted to address in "Mrs.

---

[20] For a more in-depth analysis of this observation of her affirmation of racism and the patriarchy, see Whites, "Rebecca Latimer Felton," 2.
[21] "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice," William Greaves, 6.
[22] *Ibid.* Up until this point in 1892, Frederick Douglass had attended every women's convention.
[23] *Ibid*., William Greaves.

hypocrites; in fact you cry aloud for the virtue of your women while you seek to destroy the morality of ours."[24] A majority of what Manly is arguing in his editorial is deploring Felton's lack of advocacy for black women as a symptom of her using white supremacy as a base for her feminist reform. This is reflected when he mentions Felton's call for a reform of women's education, saying "Mrs. Felton's Speech begins well, for she admits that education will better protect the girls on the farm from the assaulter. This we admit and it should not be confined to the white any more than to the colored girls."[25]

Manly intentionally made the point that Felton's argument can and should apply to black women as well, and later expressed that black women are more often the victim than white women but are not given the same privilege of recognition. A common theme throughout "Mrs. Felton's Speech," many of Manly's arguments focus on a recognition of black womens' issues. This is directly the result of him paraphrasing arguments created by a black woman: the woman whom Manly took inspiration from was Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Born into slavery in 1863, Wells-Barnett was the author of *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892) and *The Red Record* (1895) as well as pioneer of investigative journalism and black women's activist. Her two publications were the first documentation of lynchings and the first collection of lynching statistics in the United States, respectively, and both have been cited in this paper as each provide informative illustrations of incidents of lynchings and the history behind them.

To say the work done by Wells-Barnett is paramount to understanding the political landscape of the Southern United States in the 1890s would be an understatement. Her two previously mentioned publications as well as her work at *The Chicago Tribune* within the same

---

[24] Manly, "Mrs. Felton's Speech," 3.
[25] *Ibid.*

rape." In relation to the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, many of the points Wells-Barnett made within *Southern Horrors*, *The Red Record*, and her work for *The Chicago Tribune* can be found in an altered and contextualized state within Manly's "Mrs. Felton's Speech." In *The Red Record* for example, Wells-Barnett writes in regard to rape that, "-colored women have always had far more reason to complain of white men in this respect than ever white women have had of Negroes."[26] Furthermore, she also documented cases of black women being raped with no punishment being dealt upon the white rapist in a section titled "Color Line Justice" later in the same book: the inclusion of black women and conflicts with the narrative of "black rape" can be seen in the theme of many of her works.

If Manly had not taken inspiration from Wells-Barnett, there would be little reason for him to have argued for the recognition of the experiences of black women. Wells-Barnett herself noted that when black men took on issues of civil rights, their advocacy often did not extend to the inclusion of black women despite the relation of their race.[27] Similarly, she recognized that when white women rose to the call for feminist advocacy, their advocacy rarely acknowledged black women as well depsite their relation of gender.

The lack of inclusion despite relation of either gender or race is evidenced by the fact that Wells-Barnett herself faced many challenges during her involvement with both civil rights and anti-lynching movements due to her uncompromising attitude towards strategies for advocacy and the inclusion of black women within the conversations surrounding each movement. She fought against this failure with black civil rights activists and white women's feminism from her entrance into the political realm in the 1880s until her death in 1931. Due to this failure of black

[26] Wells-Barnett, *The Red Record*, 7.
[27] Thomas C. Holt, "The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Struggle for Black Leadership," *Black Leaders of the 20th Century* (1982): 39-63.

very least, positively reflect a similarity of arguments between him and Wells-Barnett.

However, the connection between Manly and Wells-Barnett goes deeper than just a similarity of arguments. Wells-Barnett had an near-death incident of her own regarding a refutation of a claim of "black rape" and the destruction of her press in 1892, six years prior to Manly's publication of "Mrs. Felton's Speech" and the following attack of his press at the beginning of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre. In May of 1892, Wells-Barnett wrote an editorial in *Free Speech* of Memphis, Tenessesee that debunked a case of "black rape" that occured at the beginning of the year. In her editorial, she wrote that "Nobody in this section of the country believes the old threadbare lie that Negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful, they will overreach themselves and public sentiment will have a reaction; a conclusion will then be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women."[28]

Following the publication of Wells-Barnett's editorial, the white newspapers of Memphis became enraged, publishing editorials that called for her lynching and claiming that she had attacked the virtue of white women. Only a few days after she wrote her editorial, she had to flee the city of Memphis in fear of her life and a white mob destroyed her press.[29] The similarities of the experiences between Manly and Wells-Barnett are even more striking when one acknowledges the fact that *Free Speech* was the only black owned press within Memphis at the time, just as *The Daily Record* was the only black owned press within Wilmington in 1898.

As proved above, the works and experiences of Wells-Barnett during the 1890s are not only directly connected to the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, but are crucial to understanding the conversation of feminism and its relation to the Massacre. Her influence in the

[28] The information regarding the publication date of Wells-Barnett's editorial, its publisher, as well as the quote are found within *The Red Record*. See Wells-Barnett, *The Red Record*, 7.
[29] "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice," William Greaves, 6.

Felton and Manly, and both Wells-Barnett and Manly suffered almost identical reactions from white supremacists. The experiences of Wells-Barnett in 1892 were a prelude to what would occur in 1898, and the fact that the same actions were taken by seperate white supremacist mobs six years apart illustrate that Manly's experiences were not an outlier.

When analyzing the debate between Felton and Manly, the experiences, ideas, and works of Wells-Barnett must be taken into account as she greatly influenced the arguments in Manly's editorial. Furthermore, the inference that the origin of Manly's arguments in "Mrs. Felton's Speech" came from Wells-Barnett means that a perspective that fleshes out the actual strategies of the debate between Felton and Manly that caused the 1898 Wilmington Massacre can be better articulated and understood in a way that is rarely seen.

Even though the last section has acknowledged the origin of the arguments and strategies within the debate that caused the 1898 Wilmington Massacre and how they are important to the understanding of the Massacre, there are greater connections that can be drawn. It can be argued that because Alexander Manly drew inspiration from Ida B. Wells-Barnett when writing "Mrs. Felton's Speech," the debate that caused the Massacre was actually between Rebecca Latimer Felton and Wells-Barnett.[30]

Concurrently, the fact that it was a debate between two women's rights activists solidifies the idea that feminism was at the heart of the debate. This changes the conversation around the cause of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre as many analyses fail to recognize the large presence of feminism within it and the origins and strategies of the conflicting feminist theories. To better understand these connections, this section will serve to answer the question of what "Mrs.

[30] Going forward, the interaction between Alexander Manly and Rebecca Latimer Felton will be recognized as an interaction between the latter and Ida B. Wells-Barnett and referred to as such when relevant for the purposes of this paper.

Wilmington Massacre.

The debate between Felton and Wells-Barnett is often misunderstood in many ways by scholars analyzing both the debate and the Massacre. The consensus of most scholars is that the cause of the Wilmington Massacre was an editorial written by Manly that protested against the hate speech given by Felton and an attempted refutation of the "black rape" myth that had been widely propagated by the Democratic campaign that was sweeping through North Carolina. However, "Mrs. Felton's Speech" is more than just a refutation of Felton's accusations of "black rape" and her attempts of legitimizing it; it is also a conflict over Felton's strategies in her advocacy for feminism and the evolution of the role of white women in the South.

In his editorial, Manly assertively challenged Felton's strategies, stating "Mrs. Felton must begin at the fountain head if she wishes to purify the stream. Teach your men purity… Don't ever think that your women will remain pure while you are debauching ours."[31] He intentionally directed his frustration at the absence of any acknowledgement regarding the abuse of black women towards white men and the white women that they supported.

Furthermore, Manly took his own advice and "began at the fountainhead" so to speak: he narrowed in on the root of Felton's misplaced basis for feminist advocacy as she relied heavily on the patriarchy and white supremacy. He also accused that her malicious cries for recognition of a hoax that supposedly threaten white women contributed to the ignorance of the actual abuse that black women endured. To him, it was evident that her affinities with the ideologies of white supremacy and patriarchy had blinded her to the widespread and evident patterns of violence enacted by white men against black women.

---

[31] Manly, "Mrs. Felton's Speech," 3.

conversation of the racism within the feminist movement during the 1890s, of which Felton's "Women on the Farm" would easily find itself. Wells-Barnett was fully aware of the misplaced motivations of white feminists[32] and her works provided Manly with the tools necessary to dissect the root of the problem. Her arguments within *Southern Horrors* and *The Red Record* illustrate the reasons behind white mens' desire to protect white women and punish black men as something borne from their own abuse and rape of black women which was prevalent in the lower and middle classes.[33]

When white feminists were affirming the myth of "black rape," they were unknowingly recreating the cycles of their own oppression by replenishing a narrative that not only was simply a projection of poor white mens' mistreatment of women, but also one that demanded their autonomy in exchange for protection. Understanding this failure by white feminists provides reason for why Felton's speech was so riddled with affirmations of the patriarchy, and why she believed that calling for the lynching of thousands of black men would serve to confirm her status as an upper class white woman, improve the status of lower class white women, and lower the status of all black men.

By unabashedly confronting the root of the problem within white feminists like Felton, Manly's editorial was able to strike a nerve with the white supremacists of Wilmington, North Carolina. He told its white population, whom were already invigorated over cries of perceived attacks against white women created by the Democratic campaign, that white men had to confront their past abuse and rape of black women before the pleas of white women would ever be taken seriously. Keeping in line with Wells-Barnett's argument that white men were actually

---

[32] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 12.
[33] Christine Stansell, "The Politics of Mothers," *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present* (2011): 126-127.

Wilmington projected their frustration over Manly's assertion onto white women. This is reflected in the records of the newspapers throughout North Carolina that defamed "Mrs. Felton's Speech," as many retaliatory editorials claimed that Manly was attacking white women.

The events of the 1898 Wilmington Massacre only proved Manly's point, as the white men of Wilmington felt justified in burning a black man's press down in reaction to a perceived attack on white women brought upon by the embarrassment of white men. Due to the justifications of "acting in defense of white women" being presented by the white mob in their "White Declartation of Independence" on November 10th, 1898, the Massacre itself can reasonably be considered a lynching on a city-wide scale.

The processes in which a black man is lynched are recounted countless times within *The Red Record*, and there are no difficulties in finding similarities that exist between the fate of Manly and the fate of the innocent black men who were put to death amidst false accusations of attacks on white women. In fact, if the circumstances that would encounter Manly between August and November of 1898 were laid out within Wells-Barnett's extensive list of lynching documentations, one would be hard pressed to determine that it did not belong.

Despite her impressive record and relevant personal experiences, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and her works are largely forgotten and rarely referenced in the conversations that surround the 1898 Wilmington Massacre. This is part of a broader issue regarding the lack of recognition given to black women activists within academics[34], and many of the sources that are cited in this paper reflect this very issue. While each source takes a different approach when discussing the cultural politics and ideologies of particular debates that surround the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, there is one similarity present in each source's analysis: almost all authors mostly

[34] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 12.

done by the black women within the spheres of academia and activism during the same time period.

This oversight limits the scope of conversations surrounding the 1898 Wilmington Massacre as the works of Wells-Barnett provide keen observations of issues that directly relate to the cause of the Massacre. Her ideas and observations are both informative and relevant to debates around the Massacre, particularly because of the fact that the systems of oppression that Wells-Barnett criticized in her work were the very systems that she personally had to navigate and survive in order to achieve her academic status in the first place.[35]

In order for her to become an activist that was able to dismantle the systems of oppression that punished her existence, Wells-Barnett had to become an academic in order to understand the systems of oppression that she was fighting against. Otherwise, she could not defend her class status as an academic, fight against the subordination of her race, or advocate for her right to be treated as an equal to men. A reflection of the intersections of class, gender, and race that black women commonly endured[36], neither Wells-Barnett's status as an activist nor her status as an academic could survive without each other as they were inextricably linked.

When black women are denied the recognition they have proven themselves to deserve within the realm of academia, historical events like the 1898 Wilmington Massacre lose important perspectives that can fully illustrate the complexities of the event. *Southern Horrors, The Red Record* and other works by Wells-Barnett provide the exact tools necessary to dissect the historical event that was the Massacre. The only reason that this very paper doesn't already

---

[35] Omolade goes more into depth regarding the effects of white feminism on the recognition of black women in academics, as well as the socioeconomic status of black women during the 19th century and early 20th century that contributed to their subordinated status. See Omolade, *The Rising Song of African American Women*, 1.

[36] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 12.

this paper to make this point and understand the connections provided earlier is because the main sources researched include perspectives and applications of historical analysis both created by and centered on black women. In fact, many of the connections drawn within this paper were able to be made by using the tools of analysis contained within the aforementioned sources, both of which contain lots of sociological theory. Had these sources already been cited in a conversation around Wilmington in 1898, there would probably be a paper that existed that would have already made these connections.

The failure of sources that observe historical events from the time period surrounding 1898 can be considered a consequence one of the very things that has been discussed within this paper; the failures of the advocacy of white feminists like Felton has led to the large discrepancies between the amount of recognition given to white and black women in academics. As elaborated upon earlier, white feminists that utilized white supremacy and the patriarchy to try and make progress in feminism recreated the very systems of oppression they were working against. The consequences of refreshing these cycles is that the possibility of actually dismantling the systems of oppression they claimed to fight is pushed farther away in exchange for short-term success that only affirmed their status as upper-class white women

When reviewing the history of the feminist movement, this problem is evident: white feminists made relatively substantial progress within the first half of the 20th century, while a feminist movement that fought for the equality of black women and centered their experiences did not come into fruition until the 1980s.[37] At the very least, this paper serves to spark conversations surrounding the role of women such as Wells-Barnett and Felton, as well as each

[37] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 12.

be had is the reason conversations like these don't exist in the first place.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Asheville Daily Citizen. "Burned the 'Record' Office." *Asheville Daily Citizen*, November 10, 1898, 1-2. https://www.proquest.com/hnpnorthcarolinacollection/pagelevelimagepdf/2112114802/pagelevelImagePDF/1286C4EA18F4098PQ/1?t:lb=t&accountid=14606. (Accessed February 15, 2022).

Asheville Daily Citizen. "The Wilmington Resolutions." *Asheville Daily Citizen*, November 11, 1898, 1-2. https://www-proquest-com.liblink.uncw.edu/hnpnorthcarolinacollection/docview/2112114692/FADA12B327644A69PQ/150?accountid=14606. (Accessed February 16, 2022).

Balfour, Lawrie. "Ida Wells and 'Color Line Justice': Rethinking Reparations in Feminist Terms." *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 3 (2015): 680–96. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43867349. (Accessed March 24, 2022).

bell hooks: Cultural Criticism & Transformation. 61 minutes. Media Education Family, Northampton, 1997. (Accessed January 19, 2022).

Brockwell, Gillian. "Tulsa isn't the only race massacre you were never taught in school. Here are others." The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/06/01/tulsa-race-massacres-silence-schools/. (Accessed February 2, 2022).

Cardyn, Lisa. "Sexualized Racism/Gendered Violence: Outraging the Body Politic in the Reconstruction South." *Michigan Law Review* 100, no. 4 (2002): 675–867. https://doi.org/10.2307/1290425. (Accessed March 2, 2022).

Chesnutt, Charles W. *The Marrow of Tradition*. Edited by Nancy Bently, Sandra Gunning. Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

Collins, Patricia H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1990.

and 20th, 1848. Proceedings and Declaration of Sentiments. Rochester: North Star Office, 1848

Edwards, Laura F. "The Disappearance of Susan Daniel and Henderson Cooper: Gender and Narratives of Political Conflict in the Reconstruction-Era U.S. South." *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1996): 363. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/disappearance-susan-daniel-henderson-cooper/docview/1295923149/se-2?accountid=14606. (Accessed March 13, 2022).

Equal Justice Initiative. "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror", Equal Justice Initiative. https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/. (Accessed February 10, 2022).

Ezzell, Matthew B. "'Barbie Dolls' on the Pitch: Identity Work, Defensive Othering, and Inequality in Women's Rugby." *Social Problems* 56, no. 1 (2009): 111–131. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.1.111. (Accessed March 25, 2022).

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "'The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South' by Christie Anne Farnham (Book Review)." *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (1997): 203-211. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/education-southern-belle-higher-student/docview/1300182057/se-2?accountid=14606.

Gilmore, Glenda E. "Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus," *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, 73-94. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Holman, J. A. "Mrs. Felton Speaks." *The Weekly Star*, August 26, 1898, 1. https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn84026538/1898-08-26/ed-1/seq-1/. (Accessed February 12, 2022).

Holt, Thomas C. "The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Struggle for Black Leadership," *Black Leaders of the 20th Century*, edited by John H. Franklin, August Meier, 39-63. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982.

Honey, Michael. "Class, Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy," *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, 163-184. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America," *The Arena*, January 1, 1900, 15-24. https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2017/03/21/lynch-law-in-america-january-1900/. (Accessed March 19, 2020).

Ingram, Hunter. "*Cape Fear Unearthed: Unearthing 1898, Parts 1-3"*. Read by Chris E. Fonvielle Jr, Christopher Everett, Cynthia Brown, David Cecelski, David Zucchino,

5, 2022).

Jiménez-Placer, S. M. “Outside the Magic Circle of White Male Supremacy in the Jim Crow South: Virginia Foster Durr’s Memoirs.” *Text Matters: A Journal of Literature, Theory and Culture*, 8 (2018): 296–319. https://doi.org/10.1515/texmat-2018-0018. (Accessed February 25, 2022).

Kantrowitz, Stephen. “The Two Faces of Domination in North Carolina, 1800-1898,” *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, 95-112. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Kirshenbaum, Andrea M. "'The vampire that hovers over North Carolina': gender, white supremacy, and the Wilmington race riot of 1898." *Southern Cultures* 4, no. 3 (1998): 6+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A21227225/LitRC?u=wilm99594&sid=summon&xid=fa018a88. (Accessed March 4, 2022).

Manly, Alexander. "Mrs. Felton's Speech.” *The Daily Record*, August 18, 1898. https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/wilmington-record-editorial. (Accessed March 24, 2022).

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *THE CONDEMNATION of BLACKNESS: RACE, CRIME, AND THE MAKING OF MODERN URBAN AMERICA*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2010.

News and Observer. “The White Declaration of Independence.” *News and Observer*, November 10, 1898. http://people.uncw.edu/schmidt/Misc/1898/1898WhiteDec.html (Accessed May 3, 2022).

Omolade, Barbara. *the rising song of African American Women.* Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1994.

Prather Sr., H. Leon. “We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay,” *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, 15-42. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Prenshaw, Peggy W. *Composing Selves: Southern Women and Autobiography*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011.

Rutter, Emily R., Jones, Derrick C. “‘The rights and privileges all people should enjoy’: Reflections on Archival Collaboration and Black Women's Epistolary Resistance." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 40, no. 1 (2021): 151-159. https://muse-jhu-edu.liblink.uncw.edu/article/793630. (Accessed March 5, 2022).

Simmons, F. M. “WE HAVE NEGRO RULE - Chairman Simmons Propounds Searching Questions to Pritchard.” *Asheville Daily Citizen*, November 4, 1898, 6. https://www.proquest.com/hnpnorthcarolinacollection/pagelevelimagepdf/2112114802/pa

February 20, 2022).

Stansell, Christine. “The Politics of Mothers,” *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present*, 126-127. New York: Modern Library, 2011.

Star-News. A mob stands outside the Black-owned The Daily Record newspaper building after burning it during the Wilmington coup of 1898. 1898. Photograph. *Star-News*, August 19, 2020. https://www.starnewsonline.com/picture-gallery/news/2020/08/19/photos-the-images-of-wilmington-1898/113350820/. (Accessed February 24, 2022).

State Democratic Executive Committee of North Carolina. *The Democratic Handbook, 1898.* F.M. Simmons, John W. Thompson. Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1898. Handbook, https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/dem1898/dem1898.html. (Accessed February 25, 2022).

The American Experience, season 2, episode 4, “Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice,” directed/written by William Greaves, aired October 24, 1989 on PBS.

The Negro and his white allies. Raleigh: [publisher not identified], 1900. https://archive.org/details/negrohiswhiteall00unse/page/2/mode/2up. (Accessed February 24, 2022).

The New York Times. “NINETEEN NEGROS SHOT TO DEATH.” *The New York Times*, November 11, 1898, 1. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1898/11/11/102569600.html?pageNumber=1. (Accessed February 23, 2022).

Tyson, Timothy B. *THE GHOSTS OF 1898: WILMINGTON'S RACE RIOT AND THE RISE OF WHITE SUPREMACY*. Raleigh: The News & Observer, 2006.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. New York: New York Age Print, 1892.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States*. Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1895.

White, Deborah G. *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985.

Whites, LeeAnn. “Love, Hate, Rape, Lynching: Rebecca Latimer Felton and the Gender Politics of Racial Violence,” *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, 143-162. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Whites, LeeAnn. “Rebecca Latimer Felton and the Wife’s Farm: The Class and Racial Politics of Gender Reform.” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (1992): 354–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582540. (Accessed March 20, 2022).

American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 77(3-4), 751–788. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12249. (Accessed February 23, 2022).

Zucchino, David. *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy*. New York City: Grove Press, 2020.