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Manly, Alex [1]

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fl. 1895–98

Alexander Manly, ca. 1870-1890. Image courtesy of the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[2]See also: Manly, Alex [3] (from NC Office of Archives and History); The Wilmington Coup - 1898 [4]

Alex Manly, Black newspaper editor and Republican party [5] leader in Wilmington, published the Wilmington *Daily Record*, which described itself as "the only negro daily in the world." The *Record* covered local as well as national news and championed the interests of the Black community.

Manly is usually remembered for an editorial he published during the violent white supremacy campaign of 1898. The article was in response to a speech by a white supremacist, Rebecca Felton, who charged that Black males were raping white women and needed to be suppressed. Manly countered that the whole Black race should not be blamed for the folly of a few. He also argued that in many cases of so-called rape, the white women were willing participants until the liaison was revealed. In conclusion, he pointed out the hypocrisy of white supremacists who railed against Black "rapists" while overlooking the many whites who were debauching Black women.

Under headings such as "An Insult to the White Women of North Carolina," Democratic newspapers republished Manly's editorial to convince white voters that Black Americans condoned rape and favored interracial relationships. In Wilmington itself, armed white conspirators gathered on the day after the election to denounce "black Republican rule" and issue an ultimatum to the Black community that Manly must leave the city. By this time Manly was already gone, but the white posse, receiving no reply to its demand, sacked and burned the office of the *Daily Record*. In the ensuing campaign of terrorism, several people (mostly Black citizens) were shot (with a death total of about 60 people), the Fusionist-Republican city council was overthrown and replaced by a Democratic one, and many prominent Black citizens of Wilmington were forced into permanent exile. Manly appealed to President William McKinley [6] to reverse this coup d'état, but neither the president nor North Carolina's Republican governor, Daniel L. Russell [7], would take action. Manly moved to Philadelphia, where his later career remains obscure.

References:

J. H. W. and Mary Bonitz Papers [8] (portrait), Thomas W. Clawson Collection [9], and A. M. Waddell Papers [10] (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Helen G. Edmunds, *The Negro in Fusion Politics* (1951).

Harry Hayden, *The Story of the Wilmington Rebellion* (1935). http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/scans/ticketTwo/hayden.pdf [11] (accessed July 29, 2014).

Wilmington *Daily Record*, 18 Aug. 1898.

Wilmington *Messenger*, 8–11 Nov. 1898.

Additional Resources:

"Alex Manly and wife, Carolina Sadgwar Manly." Photograph. 1925. Digital Collections, East Carolina University. http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/4183 [12] (accessed July 29, 2014).

"Milo Manly." Photograph. [undated]. Digital Collections, East Carolina University. http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/4180 [13] (accessed July 29, 2014).

"Alexander Manly." Biographical Sketches, The North Carolina Election of 1898. The North Carolina Collection, UNC University Libraries. http://www2.lib.unc.edu/ncc/1898/bios/manly.html [14] (accessed July 29, 2014).

Image Credit:

“Alexander Manly, ca. 1870-1890.” *UNC Libraries.* Accessed January 23, 2023 at https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/items/show/2267 [2].

Subjects:
Biographies [15]
Black and African American People [16]
Civil Rights [17]
Political leaders [18]
Segregation [19]
Writers, journalists, and editors [20]
Authors:
Miller, Daniel R. [21]
Origin - location:
New Hanover County [22]
Wilmington [23]
Wake County [24]
Raleigh [25]
From:
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1 January 1991 | Miller, Daniel R.

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[1] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/manly-alex-1 [2] https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/items/show/2267 [3] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/manly-alex [4] https://www.ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/wilmington-massacre-1898 [5] https://www.ncpedia.org/republican-party [6] https://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/williammckinley [7] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/russell-daniel-lindsay [8] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Bonitz,John_Henry_William.html [9] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/c/Clawson,Thomas_W.html [10] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/Waddell,Alfred_M.html [11] http://core.ecu.edu/umc/wilmington/scans/ticketTwo/hayden.pdf [12] http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/4183 [13] http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/4180 [14] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/ncc/1898/bios/manly.html [15] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term [16] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/african-americans [17] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/civil-rights [18] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/political-leaders [19] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/segregation [20] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/writer [21] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/miller-daniel-r [22] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal--7 [23] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-39 [24] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont/w [25] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont-0 [26] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no