

# Florida Black Codes

Shortly after the Civil War, the Florida state legislature passed laws that severely impacted the lives of newly freed slaves, called freedmen. For instance, freedmen were prohibited from owning guns, and Florida legislators ignored organizations and individuals who argued that was a violation of their second amendment rights. In courts, African Americans could not serve on juries and could only testify against other African Americans, not white Americans.

*“ . . . A Florida Supreme Court justice told the legislature which passed the black codes: We have a duty to perform – the protection of our wives and children from threatened danger, and the prevention of scenes which may cost the extinction of an entire race. . . ”*

*“ . . . Provisional Governor Marvin believed that if the convention abolished slavery and guaranteed the “protection an security of the former slaves, Florida would be readmitted to the Union. He expressed the hope that with progress, improved intelligence, and civilization the freedmen might in the future become “the best free agricultural peasantry in the world. To ensure that they would be good laborers, Marvin suggested making vagrancy punishable by temporary servitude. . . ”*

*“ . . . Special punishments for freedmen were also created. When they law called for line and imprisonment, there was super added the alternative of thirty-nine lashes, standing in the pillory, or both. The discrimination, the legislature claimed, was based on the difference in the two races. ‘To degrade a white man’ by whipping would make a bad member of society; to fine and imprison a Negro, on the other hand, would punish the state rather than the individual. Furthermore, to imprison a Negro petty offender would mean his withdrawal from the plantation, but whipping meant a speedier return to work. . . ”*

*“ . . . Four types of offenses were made punishable by death: inciting an insurrection, administering poison, burglary, and rape of a white female. . . ”*

Court Cases from Lake City, Florida 1866			
Number of defendants	Race	Offense	Punishment
<b>2</b>	<b>Black</b>	Stealing two boxes of goods from a railroad company	Fined \$500 (about \$10,000 in 2023). Their inability to pay the money resulted in them working for whoever bid the highest for their labor.
<b>1</b>	<b>White</b>	Unprovoked murder of an African American man	Fined \$225 (about \$4,200 in 2023) and sentenced to <b>one minute</b> in prison.
<b>3</b>	<b>Black</b>	Violating work contract	Public whipping, all wages forfeited, required to pay all court costs
<b>1</b>	<b>White</b>	Assaulting a freedwoman (African American woman)	Fined five cents (95 cents in 2023)

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Native born citizens, trained in the national schools, sons and heirs of the men who built up the nation, are on the whole better interpreters of national thought and purposes, and better fitted to rule the country, than are the people of alien blood, traditions and training. Their interpretations are more American than the aliens interpretation who do not hesitate to share in the advantages, and protection of our constitution. Who owes allegiance foreign to ours. The ideal American should be restored and then preserved and developed to the America of old, fundamental ideas on which the nation was founded and which have made it great, and provide for the greatest continuing growth of the Anglo-Saxon Civilization. Limitations of self-preservation of the white race should and will be, (when the American people awake) abolished in order that we as a white people will gain self respect and world recognition among the other white nations of the world, and above all, the dark nations. This is only possible if we Christian Americans turn to Christian American leadership who respect racial purity, free Christian thought, liberty under law with full regard for the right of others, and a complete and unselfish acceptance of the duties and burdens of citizenship as well as its privileges and a spirit of democracy which considers the good of the nation as a whole instead of merely the interest of a certain class, race, religious group or foreign element whatsoever or any other special and limited body under any name.

Why is America in the shape it's in today? Most important of all, it is because Americans have neglected their public duty. Almost every Native born American takes freedom for granted. It is time that American Citizens are educated to the responsibilities as well as to the privileges of American Citizenship. No greater duty nor greater responsibility could be accepted by the American people, than the assurance to our self and our posterity than these principles and development of an educational program of enlightenment to all America. As far as the negro is concerned America must face the fact that God Almighty never intended racial equality for negroes and whites. The negro is the problem of America; not the problem of the (communist) and we should give him (the negro) all privileges we can, but never in a million years should we give our white daughters, and we as white people should face squarely the issue that intermarriage and a racial equality is impossible in the north or in the south.

The negro is separated from the white race by a racial barrier of his color (given him by God) and he has remained black for many centuries while in contact with the white race and civilization. His color completely bars any thought of social equality and the mental development of the nigroid race can never be overcome by communism. We dare not risk the destruction of our civilization, here in America, which will come if ever the negroes got full control, and our nation falls in their hands. America has been threatened very definitely by the negrophiles of our present regime, and there is an immediate need to organize people whose sympathies are not foreign to us and our people in order that we may preserve our present constitution and meet the danger. It is, I suppose a matter of opinion whether one prefers to endure the amalgamaters a little longer until it grows worse, or to take a firm stand in order to prevent a violent and disruptive war which will be devastating. Violent methods are never justifiable, not even when the ordinary offices of our law enforcements have failed as they have at this time. Violent measures should never be used, instead, corrective measures applied to individuals by duly authorized officers of the law. When elected officers are corrupt it is time that the people take a firm hand and oust them, in a legal method or at the polls. What we accomplish will depend on how clearly we see the vision, and on how loyal each American remains and strives toward the goal by placing America on the elevated plain of white supremacy, where it rightfully belongs. We cannot falter at any stage and turn back. Other fellow Americans will gaze upon us, ready to applaud if we are victorious, still more ready to scorn and ridicule if we fail.

Remember that segregation is not discrimination but the law of God. Jude 7: Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for example, suffering vengeance of eternal fire. God segregated the earth to his liking and tells us to segregate in the Bible (even the negro knows that, just ask him), yet the supreme court is not educated to the point of knowledge that God alone is supreme. The Jewish amalgamaters in this country are out to destroy us. We will not sell our free white American birthright for what little they have to offer. Stand up and fight for your God given rights and stay free, white and a civilized people, intergration will only take place after the grave and only then if is the will of God. The hour of decision has all but passed and the darkness is drawing near. Some Americans can give the clarion call, but the decision is up to you. If you prefer to flee from reality and nurse the delusion that all is right with the nation, neither God nor man can save you. America marches on to victory or death.

Give us the right to challenge to a duel under the barbaric law and we will free America of the barbarians.

# Colored Man Taken to Woods, Whipped; Warned Not to Vote

E. J. M. Saunders, for many years principal of the colored schools in Tarpon Springs, was taken to a point on the Odessa road, shortly before ten o'clock last night, stripped and beaten so badly with a strap that he is unable to stand this morning. He was then ordered to walk more than six miles back to town, but was picked up on the way and taken to his house on Hibiscus st. He was warned to not vote today in the city election by the white men he alleges beat him.

Sunday night shortly after nine o'clock, Saunders and his wife were returning to their house, following their attendance at the colored M. E. Church. A block from their house Saunders was called to a car standing beside the curb. As he approached the car, he was yanked into it with the words, he states, "we have a warant for you." His wife jumped on the running board of the car, screaming and states that she was pushed off with pistols in the hands of the occupants. She was carried hysterical into her house and Dr. Albaugh summoned, who treated her.

The car containing Saunders, an open Chevrolet, and containing four white men, according to witnesses, turned over to Eagle street and then north over the Anclote river bridge. One of the men was recognized as a Tarpon Springs man, the others from a town to the north of here. According to Saunders' story, a sack was pulled over his head, and he was beaten in the car by his assailants, who searched his pockets, yelling

they wanted the list of colored voters that he carried. Saunders states that he replied that he had no list of voters, and was not interesting himself in the election for any candidate in any way, except to urge all colored men to register and vote for some one, as all citizens should.

The car containing Saunders was joined by another car on the way, according to his story, which contained two men. They took him to a spot off of the Odessa road, just beyond Elfers, where the cars were parked and he was taken into the woods. There he states he was stripped of his clothing and given about thirty lashes with a heavy leather strap, on the bare body. He was then taken to the road, and after being warned not to remove the sack from his head until they were gone, was left there. Through the sack he states he could see the lights of one car toward Tarpon Springs, while the Chevrolet turned around and returned to Elfers.

Saunders states that the men told him that they were K. K. K.'s, and that Tarpon Springs was a "white man's town". That they wanted to clean up the town in today's election and that no nigger had better vote.

Saunders was picked up a couple of miles out by Ernest Meres and Harry McCreary. He was limping his way back to town when found. Meres went out looking for the man, on solicitation of Mrs. Meres, for whom Saunders' wife cooks, and who had been telephoned of his being carried away. He was taken to his