

DEATH TO THE WILLIE LYNCH SPEECH, PART 2

By Manu Ampim



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Since my first essay on the fictional “Willie Lynch” speech in the previous issue of *Nex Generation*, there has been an overwhelming response to my analysis of this prevailing myth among Black people in the Western hemisphere.

There have been three main responses to my “Willie Lynch” essay, and 90% of these responses fall into the first two groups.

The first group of responses are from those people who were very thankful to read my work because they knew the “Willie Lynch” speech was fake, but they had no real proof.

Before reading the evidence presented in my essay, this group either ignored this fake speech, or they argued against its authenticity without the ammunition that my critique provides.

The second group of people also responded to my essay very favorably. However, this group initially assumed that the alleged speech was authentic and thus shared it with many people in their network. They simply never thought to ask themselves whether or not the speech was legitimate. Since reading my analysis of the Lynch speech, this group now sees it as a modern hoax and have indicated that they are going back to their networks to announce that the Will Lynch speech is a modern fake. I have the utmost respect for this group, because they have a high degree of integrity to admit that they had made a mistake and was now going back to make corrections.

The final group represents about 10% of the responses to my Lynch essay, and most of these people suffer from a complete lack of critical thinking skills. Many of them claim that "even if the speech is fake it is still true!" Their position is essentially that "the speech is important to me, and I don't care that it is probably fake, I still believe it is true." Some of these people have stated that they go so far as to meditate on the speech every day or every week! This group vows to continue using the Willie Lynch speech because they believe it to be an important "wake up" call for Black people. However, they fail to realize that the fake speech is only concerned with what a white slave-owner supposedly said, and there is no agenda or program for Black people to act upon. Also, they fail to understand that few people would consider trusting someone who they know will openly lie when it serves their interests.

In fact, a more dramatic "wake-up" call for Black people than the fake Lynch speech was the 1977 TV miniseries "Roots." Roots graphically introduced millions of viewers throughout the world to the brutality of American slavery, and yet this powerful "wake up" call didn't help us to solve any of our major problems. In fact, today 1/3 of Black children in America still live in poverty, and since the Roots miniseries there are now more African American men in prison than there is in college. Lastly, there are some people in this 10% group who have a particular interest in promoting the Lynch myth, because they want an excuse to continue sitting on their behind and do nothing to help solve problems in our communities. They claim that Willie Lynch (who they promote as a powerful white god) gave a single speech 300 years ago and this is why Black people can't come together to solve our problems today!

If the Willie Lynch speech supporters are sincere and want to learn about influential and prominent pro-slavery advocates in the 1700s and 1800s, then they should read the recent book by Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South*

(*A Brief History with Documents*) (2003). Of course, of all the most influential people noted in this study neither "Willie Lynch" nor his alleged speech are mentioned in this work.

Negative Effects of the 20th Century

As I indicated in Part I, there is absolutely no record of a 1712 Willie Lynch speech or any of the Lynch tactics being used in the 18th century, or referred to by any historians, pro-slavery advocates, or anti-slavery abolitionists in the 18th or 19th century. There is no doubt that the fake Lynch document is of late 20th century origin, and thus far it cannot be traced back before 1993. The problem with believing silly internet fairy tales is that if we don't know the origin of a problem then it is impossible to create a solution, because the ideas are based on false information. Black people will never be respected as an intelligent people or solve any of our major problems by believing in kindergarten internet myths.

Many of the problems that Black people are facing today developed in the 20th century during and after the great African American migrations around World War I and World War II. When we actually look at the negative effects of these *migrations, urbanization, and later integration*, then it becomes clear that many of the problems that we are faced with today have no direct connection to slavery (eventhough slavery was a vicious institution). Rather, these problems arose as Black people migrated from the southern region of the U.S. in the 20th century and loss the connection to our cultural values. It is well known that the social harmony within the African American community still existed well into the 20th century. In fact, all older Black people from the South know this from their own experience, and the experience or their parents and grandparents, as there were largely positive marriage and family relations, respect for eldership, and general social harmony. Yet, many people ignore this fact of Black social harmony in the early-to mid-20th century in order to believe the Willie Lynch fairy tale. This fake speech is a serious distraction because rather than addressing the real sources of our problems, many people continue to falsely believe that "everything" comes from slavery and that "Willie Lynch" was a white god who gave a single speech that somehow controls 40 million Black people 300 years later!

As I indicated in my first essay, there are many first-hand slavery accounts that give more important insight as to what happened to Black people than the fake Will Lynch speech. In order to gain correct knowledge of our historical experience, we have to study our history from the *primary sources*, and study the works of professional sociologists and historians such as Benjamin Quarles, Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Blassingame, Eugene Genovese, Herbert Gutman, and Robert Staples. These

authors clearly demonstrate that African American social harmony survived throughout slavery and into the 20th century. The Black political and cultural resistance to enslavement never ceased and indeed prevented the forces of slavery from destroying the Black sense of community sharing and caring, as is falsely asserted by the dwindling number of Lynch speech supporters.

In the early 20th century, there was a fundamental shift that occurred in the situation of African Americans when for the first time there was a major migration of Black people away from the southern U.S., during and after World War I (1914-1918). Before this great migration, 90% of African Americans lived in the South. According to the U.S. census figures between 1910-1920, there were several hundred thousand Black people who left the South searching for a better way of life, and migrated to northern cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, St. Louis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Gary, and Columbus and Akron, Ohio. These northern cities were dramatically transformed within one to two generations into areas which housed growing impoverished Black populations. These Black migrants had to squeeze into low-rent districts in the inner-cities, which eventually turned into black slums. The Black migrants left their southern rural problems only to be met with a new set of urban problems in northern (and southern) cities, which were anything but "a land of promise," as many of them had hoped. There were racial tensions with white citizens in these cities, who did not welcome this wave of Black immigrants. Whites feared that this new Black presence would ruin their neighborhoods and take their jobs. As a result, white mobs instigated race riots in numerous cities during this era, most notably East St. Louis (1917), Houston (1917), Chicago (1919), Elaine, Arkansas (1919), Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921), and Rosewood, Florida (1923).

The second major 20th century migration was during and after World War II (1939-1945). There was a massive wave of African Americans who again left the southern U.S., but this time they migrated to the western U.S. cities in California and elsewhere. Thus in 1910, African Americans were predominantly rural and southern; approximately 75% lived in rural areas and 90% lived in the South. A half-century later African Americans were mainly an urban population, as almost three-fourths of them lived in cities. Within a few decades after the first migration many northern cities area were transformed into black slum areas. In addition, the introduction of drugs into inner-city urban communities by U.S. government forces has also had a devastating impact on Black life.

Although both the *migrations* and the *urbanization* had a negative impact on black life and social harmony which existed in the southern rural communities, it was the third major factor of integration that caused the greatest rift among African Americans. After the pivotal 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision, which outlawed the Jim Crow

racial segregation in U.S. public schools, Black people began to attend all-white schools, learn white values, live in white neighborhoods, and spend money in white stores. Integration dealt a devastating blow to Black unity and sense of community. Dr. Oba T'Shaka at a recent February 15, 2006 presentation at Merritt College (Oakland, Calif.) mentioned the main premise of his book, *Integration Trap, Generation Gap*, that there are now more divisions among Black people since 1968, than there was during the entire period of more than three hundred years between 1619 to 1968. He argues that integration has been nothing more than a trap to destroy Black unity.

There is no question that since the late 1960s and early 1970s Black people have suffered from the loss of independent schools and businesses, and have faced the onslaught of street gangs, crack-cocaine, homicides, the incarceration of young black men, a high divorce rate and single-parent households, the rape of women, and the disrespect of elders, etc. None of these problems were significant issues before the 20th century *migrations, urbanization, and the integration trap*. In the early 20th century, Black social harmony was a basic reality and caring and sharing was a fundamental characteristic of virtually every Black community. The greatest issue for Black people has been the loss of the African-centered system of ethics and values, which linked Black people together and allowed us to survive the vicious system of slavery and later Jim Crow (characterized by racial segregation and anti-Black violence).

Future of the “Lynch Speech”

If we study the origins of the negative factors of *migrations, urbanization, and integration*, then we will not only understand how problems developed among African Americans in the 20th century, but of course there would be no need for misinformed people to continue promoting a fake speech given by a mythical slave-owner.

The death of the “Willie Lynch speech” is imminent as more people see through the superficial attempt to “wake up” Black people with a fake document, while ignoring the real sources of Black problems. The internet has undoubtedly been the main avenue to spread false information, and some have made money by promoting their Lynch books and speeches, but it is the minority of college instructors who should also be questioned for misleading students with the bogus Lynch “document.” Rather than introducing students to first-hand sources and teaching them critical thinking skills, these instructors are contributing to the spread of ignorance. However, these instructors should be on notice that many of their students now doubt what they have learned in their classes, because they realize that they have already been misled to believe in a modern internet hoax.

In the arena of serious scholarship and primary (first-hand) research, the standing rule is that *"documentation beats conversation."* There is a fundamental difference between proof and propaganda, between evidence and ideology, and between knowledge and mere belief. In the next five years the Lynch speech will likely be a forgotten myth of the past.

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*See *Nex Generation Magazine* (Spring 2006) for the publication of this essay with images.