

# THE NASHVILLE HISTORICAL

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Celebrating Tennessee Black History

February 2021

## In Spite of the First U.S. Supreme Court Awarded Stay of Execution of an African American Frenzied Mob, Bent Upon Lynching, Storms Jail, Lynches Innocent Ed Johnson

**"GOD BLESS YOU ALL"  
"I AM INNOCENT"**

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**Ed Johnson's Last Words  
Before Being Shot To  
Death By A Mob  
Like A Dog**

**MAJESTY OF THE LAW  
OUTRAGED LYNCHERS**

**Mandate of the Supreme  
Court of the United States  
Disregarded and Red Riot  
Rampant**

**Terrible and Tragic  
Vengeance Bows City's  
Head In Shame**

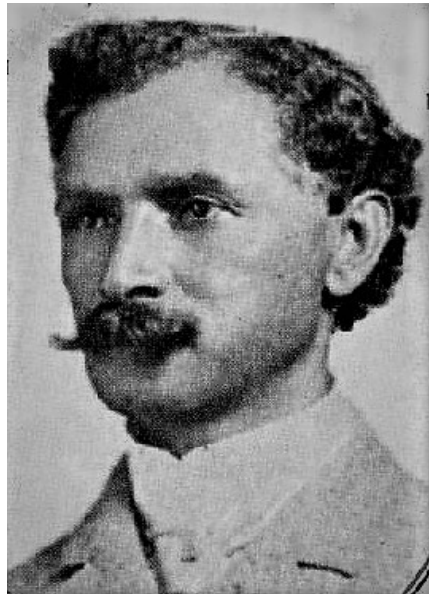
**Johnson Taken From County  
Jail Last Night. Marched to  
County Bridge and Hung While  
Red Rioters Complete Their  
Hideousness By Riddling Body  
With Bullets.**

**Night of Wickedness and Woe**

**Practically No Resistance  
Offered the Lynchers Who  
Numbered Less Than One  
Hundred Men**

**Only The Night Jailer Present  
When the Mob Makes the  
Onslaught on the County  
Prison**

*As headlined, in the Chattanooga  
Daily Times..Tuesday, March 20,  
1906*



NOAH PARDEN, Atty.



STYLES HUTCHINS, Atty.

**U.S Supreme Court Orders  
First Stay of Execution of  
an African American in the  
United States**

Chattanooga African American attorneys Noah Parden and Styles Hutchins along with Lewis Shepherd, a white attorney and former judge fought to overturn the conviction and execution of Ed Johnson before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ed Johnson of Chattanooga, a young African American male was accused of the rape of Nevada Taylor, a white woman and convicted by an all white prejudiced jury.

Due to attempts had been made by an angry white mob to storm the jail where Johnson was incarcerated, Parden along with Hutchins tried to get the Chattanooga and State of Tennessee to overturn the conviction due to Mr. Johnson was unable to receive a fair and impartial jury and court system.

There wasn't any concrete evidence linking to Johnson to the crime of which he was accused. Parden and Hutchins filed a petition for a writ of habeus corpus with the U.S. Federal Court in Knoxville, citing the Habeus Corpus Act of 1867.

*Continuation of story next column*

U. S. SUPREME COURT COULDN'T STOP A LYNCHING



Photo March 1906 Chattanooga Times Free Press

The Habeus Corpus Act allowed defendants in state court cases to seek relief from federal courts if they believe their Constitutional Rights had been violated. Although the court rejected the attorneys argument.

Judge Clark did allow a stay of execution until the attorney's were allowed to appeal their case before the U.S. Supreme Court. On March 17, 1906, Parden and Hutchins presented the appeal petition before Justice John Harlan, arguing that Johnson's Constitutional Rights had been violated. The U.S. Court ruled in Johnson's favor, but the following day after the ruling the angry mob stormed the jail, lynched and riddled Johnson's body with bullets from the Walnut Street Bridge in Chattanooga.

**TENNESSEE  
Historical Lynchings  
1872 - 1892**

1. David Jones was taken out of his jail cell and lynched by a mob on the public square in Nashville. Accused of murdering Henry Murray (1872)

2. Joseph Reed was taken out his jail cell by an unmasked mob and hanged on a suspension bridge in Nashville. Accused of killing a police officer (1875)

3. Bill Gilmer was accused of shooting attorney Tom Wood who had whipped Gilmer for using offensive language near his wife. Lynched in Memphis (1879)

4. Eliza Wood was taken from the jail, stripped naked, hanged in the courthouse area and her body riddled with bullets and left exposed to view. Accused of supposedly poisoning her employer. Lynched in Jackson (1886)

5. Amos Miller was taken during trial and lynched on the balcony railings. Accused of assaulting a white woman. Lynched in Franklin (1888)

6. Jim Taylor was taken from jail by a mob and lynched on Murfreesboro Road. Accused of shooting a policeman. Lynched in Franklin (1891)

7. Thomas Moss and two employees were shot and killed by a mob, white grocer was unhappy about losing business to the black store owner. Memphis (1892)

8. Ephraim Grizzard was taken out of prison and lynched in front of 10,000 onlookers. Accused of assaulting two white women. Lynched in Nashville (1892)

## Letter From The Publisher

**The "Mob Mentality" Attack That Took Place At Our U.S. Capitol On January 6, 2021**

*On January 6, 2021, our United States Capitol was attacked by an angry mob of extremists who felt that it was their obligation to storm into the Capitol. Thousands of these so called flag totting patriots, hypocritical Christians, racists, bigoted, Nazi extremist with rage and blood in their eyes, made a massive attack to seek out the leaders that represent our country. We have all seen the sadness of the police officer being attacked and mobbed inside of a doorway. We have also seen on television the officer, that was beaten with an American Flag and these are the same people that are upset that Black Americans are taking a knee for social equality. Hundreds of rioters and looters walking the hallways chanting "Hang Mike Pence "*

*Five people died which included a Capitol Hill police officer and many others injured. The American Flag was desecrated, hanging gallow was created with a noose, Senate offices were looted and ransacked. Documents, podium and laptops were stolen. The Senate Chambers was under siege, the battle Confederate Flag was flouncing around in the U.S. Capitol and last but not least our leaders of this great country was being hunted down.*

*When I started to write and publish this issue of, THE NASHVILLE HISTORICAL, I had a whole different line of stories that I wanted to share until the sadness of the January 6th insurrection caused me to look back over history and illustrate how history has repeated itself in the year of Twenty Twenty One.*

***The parallels of the type of mob mentality in Black History Lynchings and the U.S. Capitol***

- 1. Storm into a building*
- 2. Where there is a mob, there is a noose somewhere*
- 3. Guns, Sticks and anything that you can use to cause harm or damage*
- 4. Hunting for an individual(s)*
- 5. Ready to do bodily harm*

***Black History Reminds Us That The Incident That Occurred At The U.S. Capitol Isn't New !***

*Over 4,000 documented African Americans were lynched and killed in the United States by an angry mob, with the same type of blood thirsty mentality that took place on January 6th. That doesn't include the number of Black people that were killed and unreported. Unfortunately, for Black Americans in this country it was much worse. Being falsely accused of crimes and not receiving a fair trial, not obeying your employer for whatever they wanted you to do, not moving over on the other side of a walkway when you pass a white person, being a successful black business person, using profanity in front of a white person. Did you know that in our country that there were a thousand ways that allowed a black person to be lynched and killed ? I read the book and it was astonishing.*

*Let's not ever forget that many and I mean many, White Americans died for equal justice for Black Americans, who suffered the cruelties, as one would say, " Guilt by association " .*

*As I look over the history of Tennessee lynchings, I couldn't help but write about the the story of Ed Johnson, young 24 year old black male from Chattanooga, who was accused of assaulting a white woman. The sad thing about it was, Mr. Johnson wasn't anywhere near the incident. Two great Chattanooga attorneys Noah Parden and Style Hutchins went before the U.S. Supreme Court and won a Stay of Execution. But it didn't matter, because theses angry racist mobs lynched and killed him the day after the Supreme Court Ruling. When you get a chance read the story of Ed Johnson.*

*The saddest part of it all was his last words.... "God Bless You All " "I Am Innocent "*

*But when all is said and done, there are many more wonderful people in this society that will never allow their soul and spirit to be guided by hate, lies, prejudices and fear; but only guided by love for all mankind.*

*Lastly, the year 2020 was daunting for so many of us due to the pandemic, we also lost some truly wonderful individuals that kept the movement going and allowed us to be a part of that vision to pass on to the next generation. Dr. Reavis Mitchell (Fisk Historian and Professor), thank you for your inspiration, Kwame Lillard (Civil Rights Activist), thank you for your activism, Rep. John Lewis (Fisk alum, National Civil Rights Leader and Politician), thank you for your courage. All of these men were dedicated and believed in something greater than themselves.*

*Thank you for allowing me to share these stories that has long been forgotten*

*Cassandra Easley  
Publisher and Journalist*

## KELLY MILLER SMITH SR.

National Civil Rights Leader  
Activist..Minister..Educator..Author



Photo Times Free Press

Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr. played a pivotal and major role in the Nashville Sit-Ins during the late 1950's, during that time a young John Lewis, student at Fisk University became a part of the non violent movement under the leadership of Smith.

Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, spoke about Smith's great organizational skills and leadership. According to King, the Nashville Sit-Ins were the example of the most organized movement in the South. During the funeral of John Lewis, Civil Rights Activist and friend James Lawson spoke about Kelly Miller Smith and how he made it possible for a young John Lewis and many others to be a part of the Non Violent Movement.

In 1951, Smith moved to Nashville where he became the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. Later in 1956, he became the president of the Nashville NAACP. While a pastor in 1958, Smith founded the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC). Through his organization, he was able to organize a successful non violent approach movement that led to the end of segregation at the lunch counters in Nashville.

*Continuation next column*



Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, Thurgood Marshall,  
Z.Alexander Looby and A.Z.Kelley  
Photo mnps.org, Credit: NPL archives

Smith was a man of integrity, credibility, intelligence and charisma which allowed him to be able to be a major voice in the city of Nashville.

Kelly Miller Smith Sr. was born on October 28, 1920 in Mound Bayou, Mississippi. He attended Tennessee State University from 1938 to 1940, he attended and graduated from Morehouse College with a double major in religion and music. He also received a Master of Divinity degree from Howard University. In 1969, Smith became Assistant Dean at the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, where he was the first African American faculty member at the Divinity School. He married Alice Smith, they had four children and a foster daughter. His son, Dr. Kelly Miller Smith Jr, is the pastor of First Baptist Church, Capital Hill which is the same church his father was once a minister.

Kelly Miller Smith Sr. passed away on June 3, 1984. His legacy has been honored by renaming the Jefferson Street Bridge to the Kelly Miller Smith Memorial Bridge and Kelly Miller Smith Towers. Vanderbilt University Library has a collection of his papers, sermons and other documentations. Vanderbilt University Divinity School honored him by instituting the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies, the institute embodies the historical beliefs and practices of Rev. Kelly Miller Smith.

## Leatrice McKissack

Internationally Known Trailblazer for  
Entrepreneurial American Women



Are you aware that McKissack and McKissack is the first and oldest African American architectural and engineering firm in the United States. In 1905, brothers Moses and Calvin McKissack, who were natives of Pulaski, Tennessee, built an architectural empire from their humble beginnings of building houses across the region including building homes along West End Avenue, Belle Meade and Nashville in a Colonial Revival style. The brothers were also commissioned to design and implement different educational institutions requests such as Vanderbilt, Fisk and other institutions in the city and across the nation. Fast forward to the 1980's. Leatrice McKissack was married to William DeBerry McKissack, the youngest son of Moses McKissack III. When her husband suffered a stroke, she succeeded her husband and took over as CEO of the firm. With multi-million dollar contracts that had to be taken care of and her need to act fast. She made a decision and acted on it. It was her strong will, tenacity, educational smarts with a Bachelor's degree in Math and Psychology, along with continuing the family legacy and to make sure that her children were a major part of this historic treasure. She has received numerous honors and awards including Entrepreneur of the Year by President George Bush and the Presidential Design Award from President Bill Clinton. Leatrice is an example for all of us to understand the power within us all.

**BLACK HISTORY**  
**What Do You Know ?**

1. Where was Black Bottom located in Nashville Tennessee ?
2. When was the National Baptist Publishing Board established in Nashville?
3. What year did One Cent Savings Bank change it's name to Citizen's Savings Bank ?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was the highest ranking African American firefighter in the country.
5. Ida B. Wells attended which university in Nashville, Tennessee ?
6. Who was the first African American to receive a Ph.D from Harvard ?  
( This individual attended Fisk University )
7. Is Hadley Park the first public park for African Americans ? True or False
8. Where was the Millie Hale Hospital located ?
9. President William Taft appointed (African American) \_\_\_\_\_ as Register of the Treasury ?
10. Who was the American composer and musician that is considered as the "Father of Blues" ?
11. What is Fisk professor Aaron Douglas nationally known for artistically?
12. Where was the Ritz Thetare first located in Nashville and who owned the



Share your personal stories of history with your family, inform the youth and educate anyone who would like to know why history books didn't tell the many stories of and about African Americans and their contribution to the world.

**Historical Landmarks To Remember**

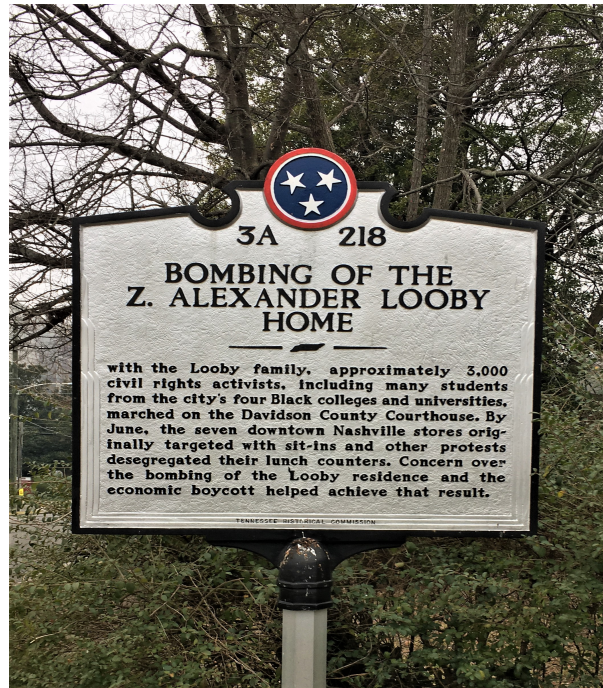


Photo by Cassandra Easley 2021

**Z. Alexander Looby's Meharry Boulevard Home Bombed**



Prominent Civil Rights attorney Z. Alexander Looby talking to a Metro Police officer shortly after the April 19th, 1960 bombing of his home on Meharry Boulevard. Fortunately, him nor his wife were harmed. During the Civil Rights Movement Looby was a prominent advocate and activist attorney who was part of the national legal minds fighting for the civil rights of the oppressed.

**Motivating Inspirational Quotes**

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"How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life, you will have been all of these . "

- George Washington Carver

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere ". - Martin Luther King

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. " - Harriet Tubman

" Hate is to great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated. " - Coretta Scott King

" You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it. "

- Malcom X

" Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave. " - Frederick Douglass

" The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them. "

- Ida B. Wells - Barnett

**Sarah Estell**

**Nashville Ice Cream Parlor Owner**  
*Early 1830s to mid 1860s*

Sarah Estell was a successful business owner in Nashville, Tennessee. She started out early in her ice cream making business, configuring different ways to create her own custard ice cream which was considered a desert delicacy. She perfected her ice cream so well, that politicians, statesman and the wealthy enjoyed her home made flavoured ice creams. By, the mid 1950's she had started her own catering service. She was doing so well that she opened a boarding house along with her catering service. Her business was located 89 North Cherry, which is now Fourth Avenue.

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