



Akron Riot of 1900

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

On August 22, 1900, a riot erupted in Akron, Ohio that would live on to be called the “darkest night in Akron’s history.” The cause of the riot occurred the day before, on August 21, 1900, when Louis Peck, an African-American, was arrested for assaulting six year old Christina Maas, who was white. Peck was caught the next morning and confessed to the crime. The local newspapers printed stories of the heinous crime. One paper’s story was published in red ink and exaggerated the story of Peck’s confession, causing extreme anger and malice to spread throughout the city. That evening, a mob started to form in the city streets with the intention of lynching Peck for his crime. City buildings were burned to the ground, two young children were killed in a crossfire of bullets, and the National Guard was eventually called in to restore order to the city. Peck was removed from the city to Cleveland during the riot and was found guilty in record time and sentenced to life in prison. He did not even have any legal representation as no one would defend him. In 1913, Governor Cox pardoned Peck, citing the lack of a fair trial.

Important Dates

- August 20, 1900: Louis Peck assaults Christina Maas.
- August 22, 1900: A riot breaks out after tensions become too high.
- August 23, 1900: Order is restored to the city.
- August 24, 1900: Louis Peck is found guilty of his crime.
- August 27, 1900: The military leaves the city.
- May 6, 1913: Governor Cox pardons Peck, releasing him from the Ohio Penitentiary.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an “all” word search), proximity or as phrases: Louis Peck, Christina Maas, Akron, riot, military, city building, mob, crime, trial.
- Limit your search to just the year 1900 for news about the riot.
- Search newspapers in all states, not just Ohio. This riot made national news.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- [“Confessed to the Awful Crime”](#) *Akron Daily Democrat* (Akron, OH), August 22, 1900, Images 1 & 8, col. 1-5; 5-6.
- [“The Situation Is Well In Hand”](#) *Akron Daily Democrat* (Akron, OH), August 23, 1900, Images 9-11.
- [“Children Murdered”](#) *El Paso Daily Herald* (El Paso, TX), August 23, 1900, Image 1, col. 4-5.
- [“Canton Militia Goes To Akron To Suppress Riot”](#) *Stark County Democrat* (Canton, OH), August 24, 1900, Images 1, 4, & 5, col. 1-6; photo; 1-4.
- [“For Life”](#) *Marietta Daily Leader* (Marietta, OH), August 25, 1900, Image 1, col. 5-6.
- [“Peck Pardoned”](#) *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), May 9, 1913, Image 1, col. 5.