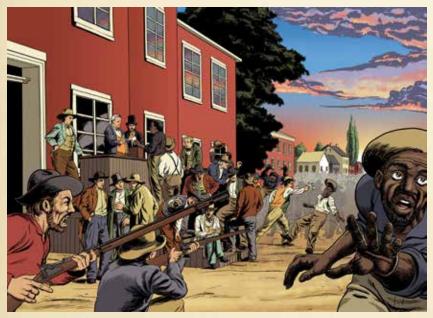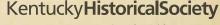# CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS:
LEXINGTON VOTING RIOTS

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Kentucky remained a lawless place after the Civil War. Armed groups did as they wished and the government often ignored the problem.

In cities like Lexington, Frankfort, Versailles, Paris and Harrodsburg, riots frequently kept African Americans from voting, even though black men legally could vote. Lexington's 1871 and 1873 elections were marred by riots, as Democrats instilled the fear of "Negro Rule" in the voting populace.

Democrats feared that if Republicans gained office, they would place African American men in positions of authority and disrupt the race-based hierarchy of the state. Black Kentuckians never lost the legal right to vote, but intimidation and violence were common factors in Kentucky elections throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. Much like those in deeper Southern states, Kentucky's African Americans were disenfranchised, but through extralegal means, not from legislative statute.

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The Kentucky Historical Society is an agency of the
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