

Station 2 - Racism and Segregation

Link Wray: “I was from the poorest part of North Carolina --Dunn, where I was not white and it was not safe. Elvis was brought up poor in Tupelo, Mississippi, but he was still a poor white guy -- and the whites ruled the world down South. My mother was Shawnee down South, right? Ku Klux Klan country. Livin’ among the black people, and they were livin’ in misery, we were livin’ in misery, and the poor whites was livin’ in the same misery. But the only thing about it was the whites were hating us and the blacks.”

“There was a school for whites, and a school for the blacks, and a school for the indians, which was the one I went to.”

“The klan would come with their caps and burning crosses. I seen the sheets come, pull out the black people, tie ‘em to a tree and beat ‘em. We’d hide underneath the bed, hopin’ they wouldn’t come for us. It was just one big hell until my daddy got us outta there and to Portsmouth, Virginia, and that’s where I saw a little better way of life.”

Beth Wray Webb: “You didn’t go around telling everybody you were Native American; everybody hid it because of the way other people looked down on them.”

Link Wray: “I was just out on the porch -- my dad had bought my brother Ray a guitar, and all Ray wanted to do was ride bicycles and go out, he didn’t care about the guitar. So I picked it up. It wasn’t even tuned. I didn’t know what I was doin’. And this here guy comes walkin’ across the street, ‘hey boy, lemme tune your guitar.’ So he tuned it up, started playin’ bottleneck, man, and singin’ the blues. I just fell in love with the music.

“My mom and dad would take me to the circus to see the elephants and the tigers and then I’d say, ‘I wanna see this black guy’--guitar, horns, drums, Hambone played everything. He was like a one-man show. . .I learned a lot from him.”



Ku Klux Klan Rally, 1951