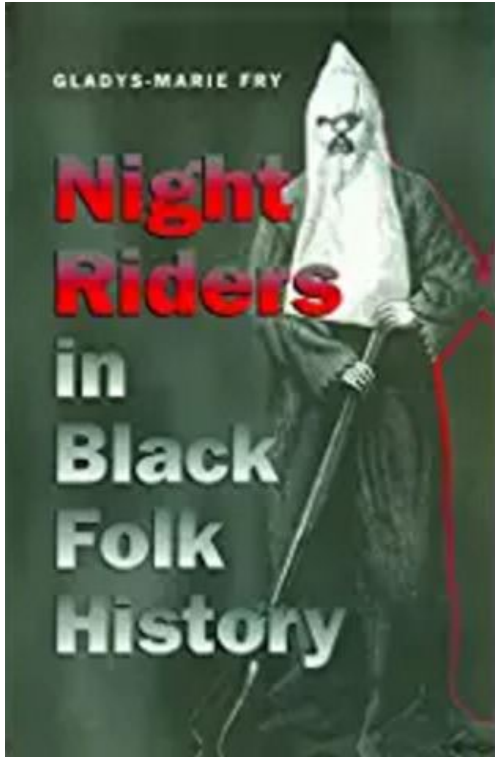


During and after the days of slavery in the United States, one way in which slaveowners, overseers, and other whites sought to control the black population was to encourage and exploit a



feared of the supernatural. By planting rumors of evil spirits, haunted places, body-snatchers, and night doctors--even by masquerading as ghosts themselves--they discouraged the unauthorized movement of blacks, particularly at night, by making them afraid of meeting otherworldly beings. Blacks out after dark also risked encounters with patrollers (mounted surveillance patrols) or, following the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan. Whatever their guise, all of these night riders had one purpose: to manipulate blacks through terror and intimidation.

First published in 1975, this book explores the gruesome figure of the night rider in black folk history. Gladys-Marie Fry skillfully draws on oral history sources to show that, quite apart from its veracity, such lore became an important facet of the lived experience of blacks in America. This classic work continues to be a rich source for students and teachers of folklore, African American history, and slavery and post emancipation studies