



SELINUS UNIVERSITY

**A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CHANGES IN WHITE
PERCEPTIONS OF PEOPLE OF COLOR IN LOW
POPULATION COUNTIES SURROUNDING PUBLICIZED
RACIAL INCIDENTS, 1906-1963**

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Supervised by
Dr. Salvatore Fava

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Humanities
Program at Selinus University

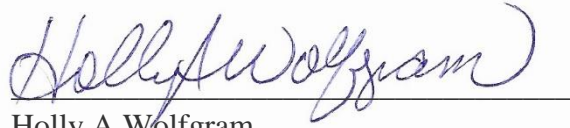
Faculty of Arts & Humanities
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities

2022

Attestation

I do hereby attest that I am the sole author of this project/thesis and that its contents are only the result of the readings and research I have done.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly A Wolfgram". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Holly A Wolfgram
UNISE1179IT

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Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for months of feedback, research assistance, editing, unwavering support and encouragement for this endeavor.

Introduction

The premise of this dissertation is to determine changes in attitude toward people of color in rural American counties where diversity changed over time, specifically attitudes in relation to publicized racial incidents. Of the six counties chosen for this study, only two began the 20th century with minority populations greater than the national average of 12.20%; Cherokee County, Alabama (30.72%) and Elko County, Nevada (17.89%).¹ Every county showed a measurable change in minority numbers by 1970, with some changes being significant. Racism, institutional and individual, was entrenched in the United States; the first incident used in this newspaper occurred 41 years after the effective end of the Civil War,² 24 years after the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted,³ and only 16 years after the Wounded Knee Massacre.⁴

Before the development and widespread use of radio, television, and the internet, newspapers were the primary source of information for local and non-local events. To stay informed about non-local events, newspapers were able to receive articles via the wire service or “wire.” Here they could access Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), and other news service articles which appeared in the country’s major newspapers, such as the *Chicago Daily Tribune/Chicago Tribune*. Access to wire service articles was key to choosing the incidents studied; if the story was not reported through a wire service, it could not be guaranteed the smaller communities were able to access the information. Newspaper editors had discretion about which articles to use, and what parts of an article to use. By tracing the types,

¹ United States Census Bureau, “Population,” part 1, cxv, 529, 548, 565, 568, 571-572.

² “Civil War Timeline,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/historyculture/civil-war-timeline.htm>, (accessed January 9, 2022).

³ “Chinese Exclusion Act (1882),” Our Documents, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47>, (accessed July 27, 2021).

⁴ Hudson, Myles, “Wounded Knee Massacre,” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Wounded-Knee-Massacre>, (accessed October 11, 2021).

frequency, and tone of the articles, one can draw conclusions regarding attitude changes in the chosen counties.

In the United States, the largest cities, particularly along the coasts and in the north, are typically viewed by smaller, more rural areas as being very different, with little commonality, not representative of the makeup of the rest of the country. In other words, they are not perceived as “average”.⁵ The issues which are felt to be of enough consequence to be reported in big city newspapers are not necessarily issues that would resonate throughout the rural, smaller, less dense, and less diverse areas of the country. Part of the premise of this dissertation is to determine if, once these issues are noticed by or affect these small communities, the communities choose to make changes in attitude in response to their increasing diversity and the relevance of the event. In these cases, the treatment of people of color, the community must decide how to react. Will they embrace and support changes or will they reinforce and maintain the status quo? Either choice will directly affect the people of color in their own communities.

Viewing each community over time shows the changes in community diversity and any outside influences which may affect how the community reacts to specific incidents involving people of color. It can then be gauged whether the incidents and the changing diversity had any effect on mainstream (White) attitudes. Centered around two incidents per decade, articles were studied to determine the general attitude toward people of color in the community in conjunction with the reporting of an incident. Also to be considered is the attitude toward different minority groups during the time of the incident. Does racism apply to all minorities or is the incident minority specific, for example does an incident against Chinese people increase the number of

⁵ Parker, Kim, et al. “What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities,” Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/what-unites-and-divides-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/>, (accessed December 7, 2021).

negative portrayals of Black people? What type of incident was required to force a noticeable change in how people of color were viewed? And was change led by the media, forced upon the media by outside events, or was the media responding to changing demands of its readership?

Materials and Methods

The research methods used in this dissertation are a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. Statistical datasets were used to determine locations to research as well as to create graphs to organize the raw data. Qualitative research was used in both the determination of the incidents on which to focus as well as gathering data to explore trends.

U.S. Census data from 1900 through 1970 was used to identify counties meeting the criteria for the scope of the study. Locations were limited to counties with a census report of less than 30,000 total residents by 1970. The counties also had to have more than 4% of the population identify as people of color. Six counties were chosen. Three counties had increases of between 175% and 317% in people of color, and three counties had decreases of between 9% and 70% in people of color. As a control group, Cook County, Illinois was added in order to include the use of the *Chicago Daily Tribune/Chicago Tribune* as a source newspaper. The U.S. population as a whole was used to compare county trends versus national trends. Census data was consistently available for the following breakout of ethnicities: White, Negro, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Other. Mexican as an ethnicity only appeared in the 1930 Census.

The newspapers chosen were the primary newspapers in each county from 1900 to 1970. Cherokee County, Alabama had two newspapers covering this timeframe: the *Coosa River News* and the *Cherokee County Herald*, both weekly newspapers. The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* was the single newspaper covering the entire timeframe for Beltrami County, Minnesota. There were three newspapers covering Pemiscot County, Missouri during this timeframe: the *Pemiscot Argus*, the *Hayti Herald*, and the *Missouri Herald*. These were all weekly newspapers. Geary County, Kansas was covered by the *Daily Union* which became the *Junction City Union*. The

Alliance Times and Herald, becoming the *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, and then the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, was the newspaper in Box Butte County, Nebraska. Elko County, Nevada was served by the *Weekly Independent* and then the *Elko Independent*, both weekly newspapers. As a control newspaper, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* which became the *Chicago Tribune* was used. Every incident must have been reported in the Chicago newspaper to be included in this dataset.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research was used to choose the incidents. The incidents themselves were reported qualitatively, however the number of people involved was quantitative. Two incidents were chosen for each decade with an attempt made that one involve a relatively large number of minority people and the other involve a single person or a very small number of people. While primarily centering on Black people, the fourteen incidents did include two involving Native Americans, one involving Filipinos, and one involving Japanese. Five incidents were perpetrated against individuals or a group of less than five people, while the remaining nine incidents were perpetrated against larger groups of people. Detailed descriptions of each incident are provided using non-contemporary reports, allowing for the discovery of evidence and information that was publicly unavailable at the time of the incidents.

Qualitative research was also used to gauge the level and tone of racism in the selected counties. The local newspaper for each county was used, contemporary with each incident. Research began two weeks prior to each incident and continued for six weeks after each incident. This was to determine not only the extent of racism being reported, but if there was a noticeable change in reporting pre-incident compared to post-incident. Each newspaper was scanned for the following keywords: Negro, Negroes, Colored, Indian, Filipino, Mexican, Japanese, Jap, Chinese, and Chinaman. Qualifying articles were then compiled and read to determine content

and tone. Each article was marked on the following criteria: If it was an article, editorial, anecdote, or picture (including cartoon); if it was a report of a local incident (occurring within the readership area) or an incident in another location; if it was a classified ad or an advertisement; and whether the article was considered (in relation to the minority) negative/anti, positive/pro, a “place reminder” (it portrayed non-Whites in a way that reinforced their inferior place in society), stereotype (defined as a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing¹), if there was a legitimate cultural reference (tradition, religion, custom), or none if there were no articles mentioning any minority in that edition of the newspaper. Then a short note was made of the substance of the article. These are the reference points used in determining the attitude toward people of color in the community and the amount of change occurring over time.

For organizational purposes, this dissertation will devote one chapter to each decade. The chapters are in two parts and include a brief explanation of the incidents for that decade, the names of the newspapers which reported the incident, and any outside events which may have influenced perceptions. Then there will be a presentation and discussion of the data for each incident. Once the data for all incidents has been presented, there will be a discussion of overall results, trends, and findings. Informational charts and a map have been included to help the reader understand the significant amount of information obtained during research.

¹ “Stereotype,” Lexico, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/stereotype>, (accessed December 27, 2021).

Newspaper Data

Table 1¹

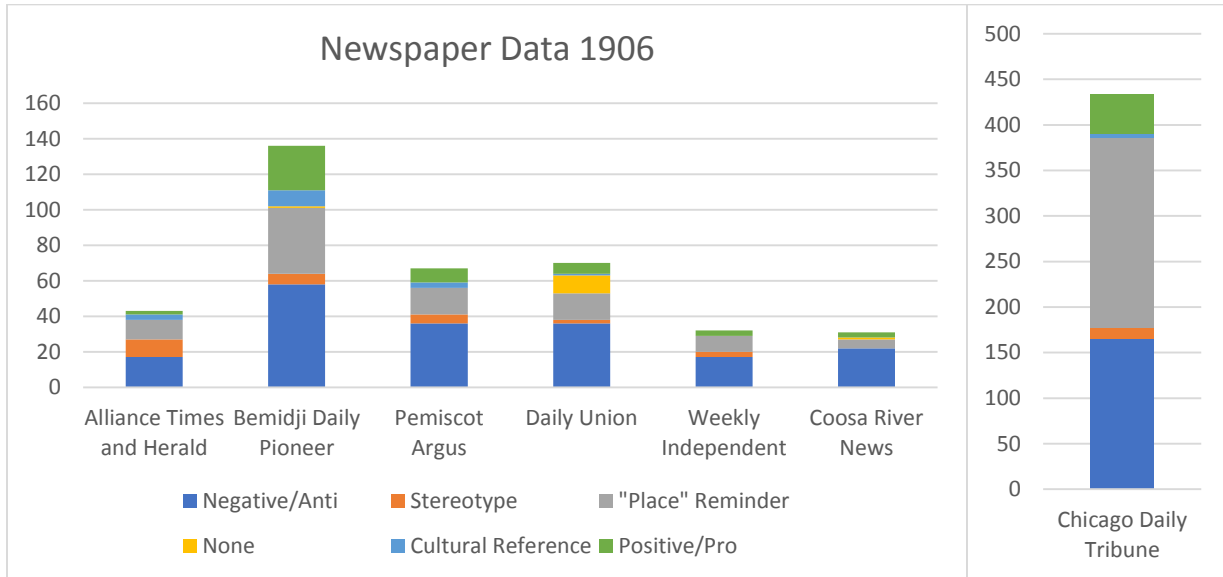
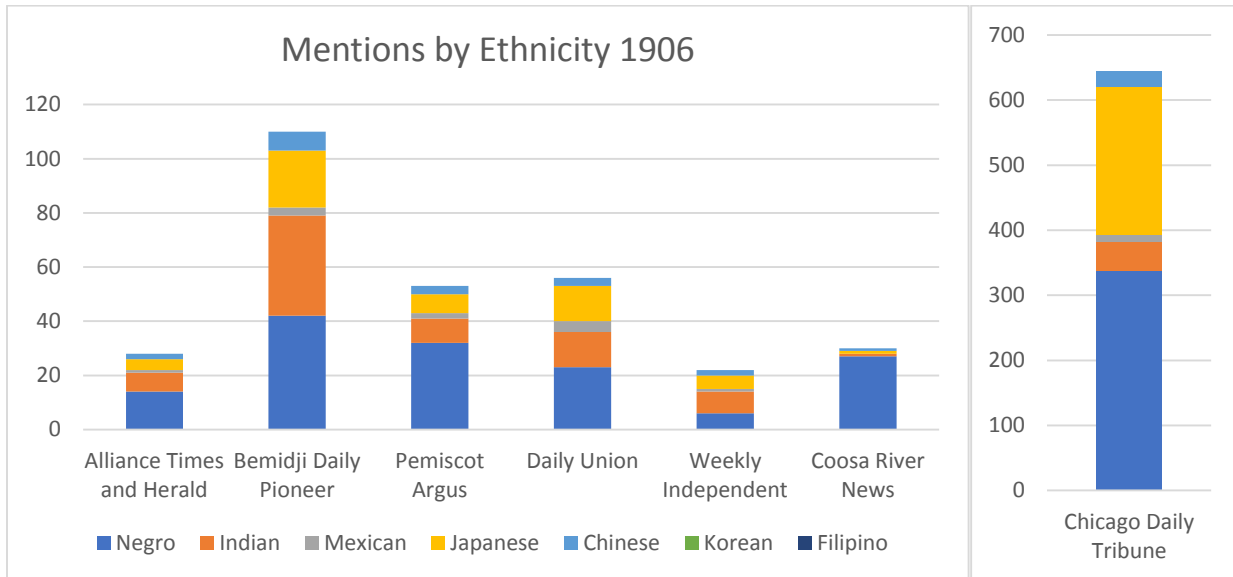


Table 2²



¹ *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, December 1906-1 February 1907; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 12 December 1906-2 February 1907; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 7 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Daily Union* [Junction City, KS], 12 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Pemiscot Argus* [Hayti, MO], 14 December 1906-8 February 1907; *Weekly Independent* [Elko, NV], 14 December 1906-1 February 1907.

² *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, December 1906-1 February 1907; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 12 December 1906-2 February 1907; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 7 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Daily Union* [Junction City, KS], 12 December 1906-1 February 1907; *Pemiscot Argus* [Hayti, MO], 14 December 1906-8 February 1907; *Weekly Independent* [Elko, NV], 14 December 1906-1 February 1907.

Table 3³

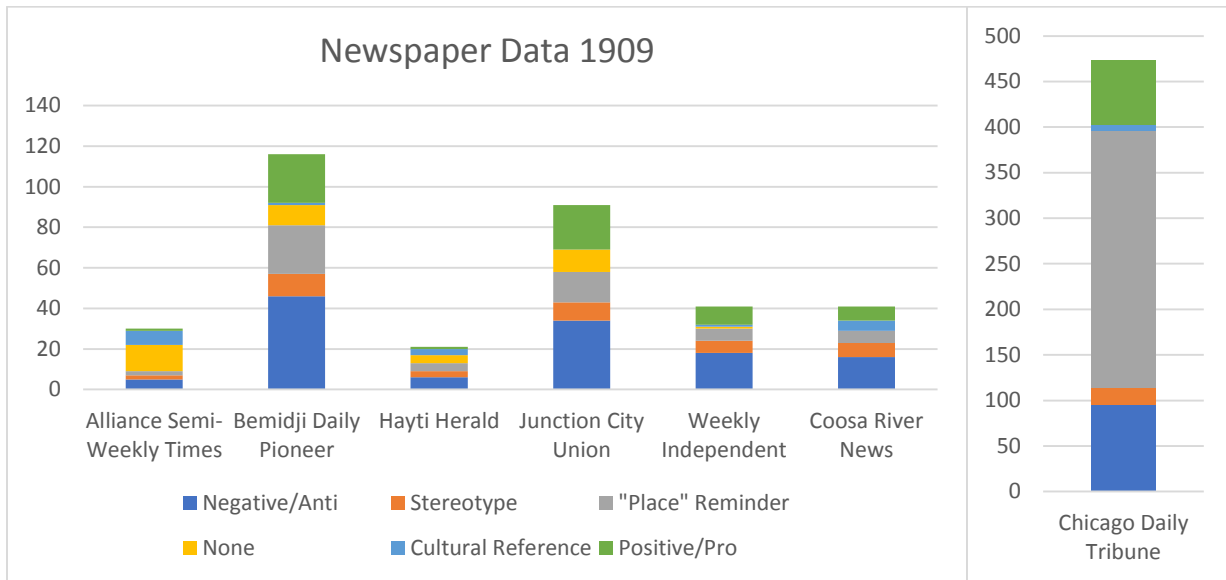
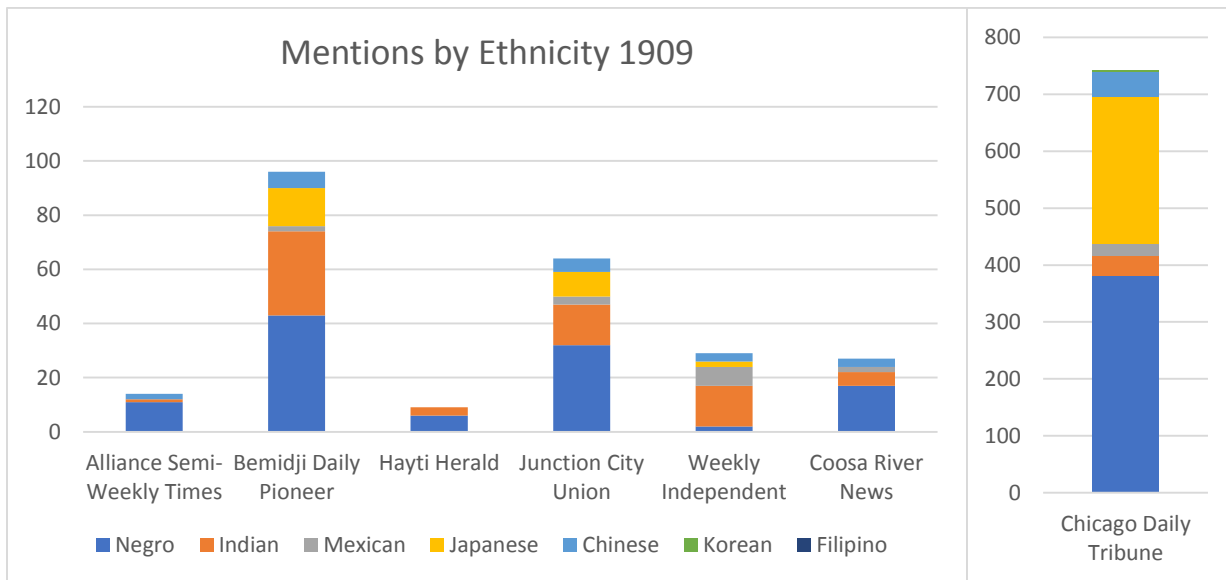


Table 4⁴



³ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 16 April-11 June 1909; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 17 April-12 June 1909; Chicago Daily Tribune, 17 April-12 June 1909; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 9 April-14 June 1909; Hayti Herald, 15 April-17 June 1909; Junction City Union, 17 April-12 June 1909; Weekly Independent [Elko, NV], 9 April-11 June 1909.

⁴ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 16 April-11 June 1909; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 17 April-12 June 1909; Chicago Daily Tribune, 17 April-12 June 1909; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 9 April-14 June 1909; Hayti Herald, 15 April-17 June 1909; Junction City Union, 17 April-12 June 1909; Weekly Independent [Elko, NV], 9 April-11 June 1909.

Table 5⁵

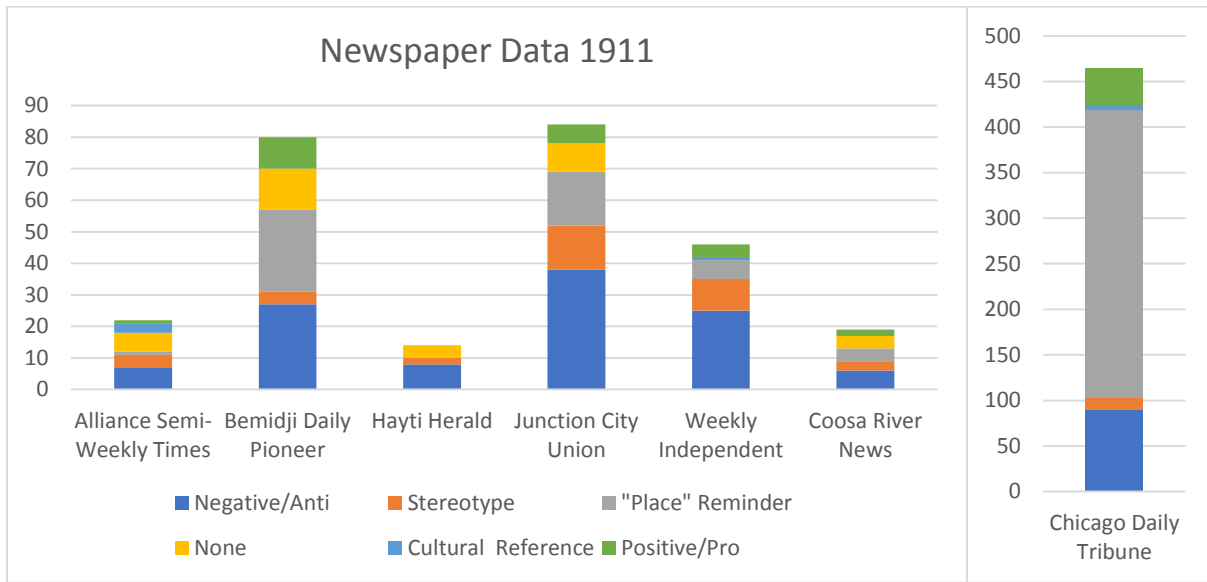
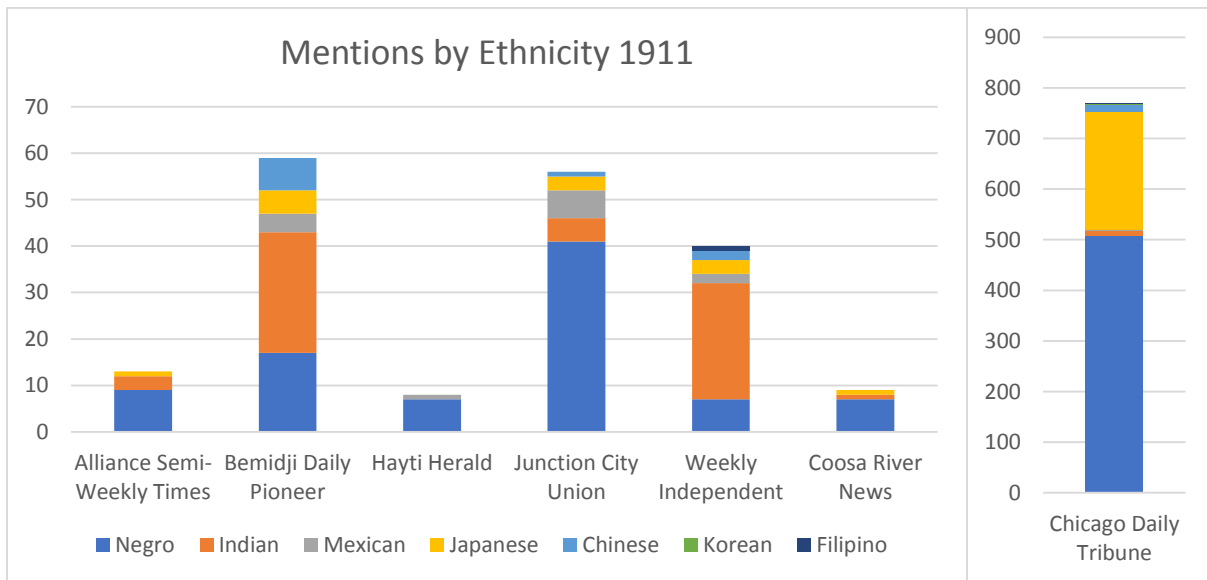


Table 6⁶



⁵ *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, 14 February-4 April 1911; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 10 February-7 April 1911; *Hayti Herald*, 16 February-6 April 1911; *Junction City Union*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Weekly Independent* [Elko, NV], 10 February-7 April 1911.

⁶ *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, 14 February-4 April 1911; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 10 February-7 April 1911; *Hayti Herald*, 16 February-6 April 1911; *Junction City Union*, 13 February-3 April 1911; *Weekly Independent* [Elko, NV], 10 February-7 April 1911.

Table 7⁷

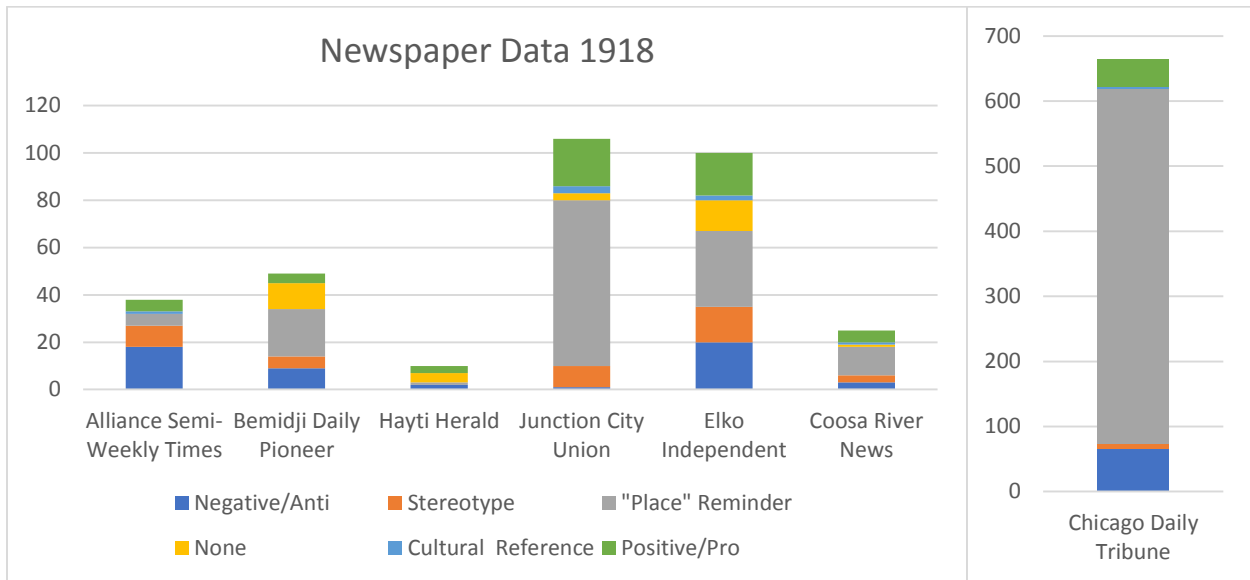
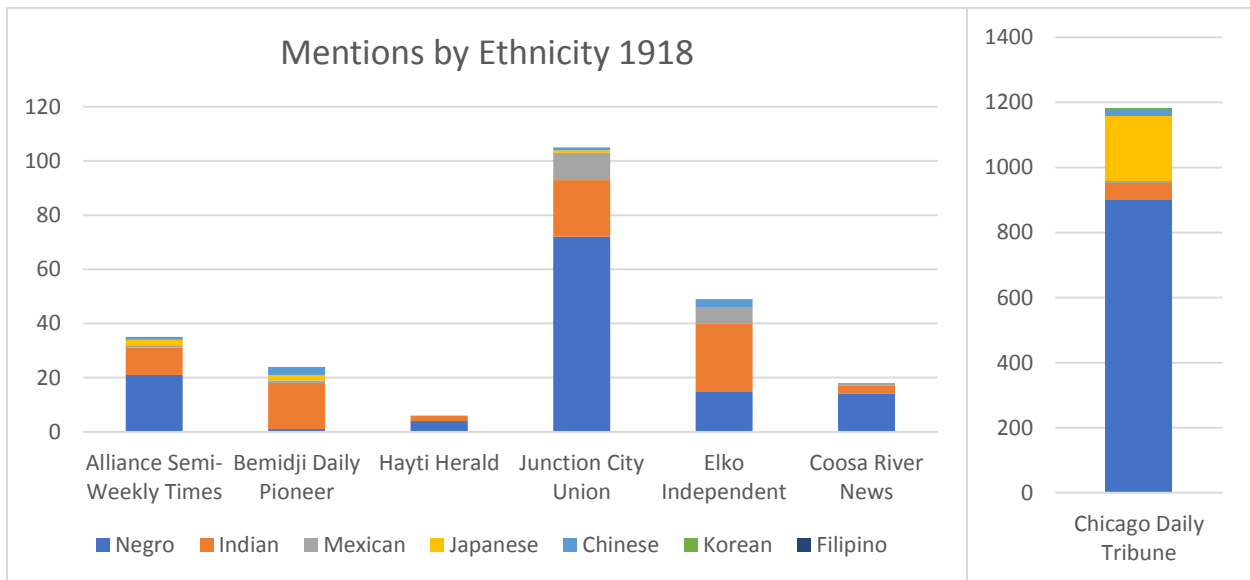


Table 8⁸



⁷ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 7 May-25 June 1918; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 13 May-21 June 1918; Chicago Daily Tribune, 6 May-22 June 1918; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 10 May-21 June 1918; Elko Independent, 7 May-22 June 1918; Hayti Herald, 9 May-27 June 1918; Junction City Union, 6 May-22 June 1918.

⁸ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 7 May-25 June 1918; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 13 May-21 June 1918; Chicago Daily Tribune, 6 May-22 June 1918; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 10 May-21 June 1918; Elko Independent, 7 May-22 June 1918; Hayti Herald, 9 May-27 June 1918; Junction City Union, 6 May-22 June 1918.

Table 9⁹

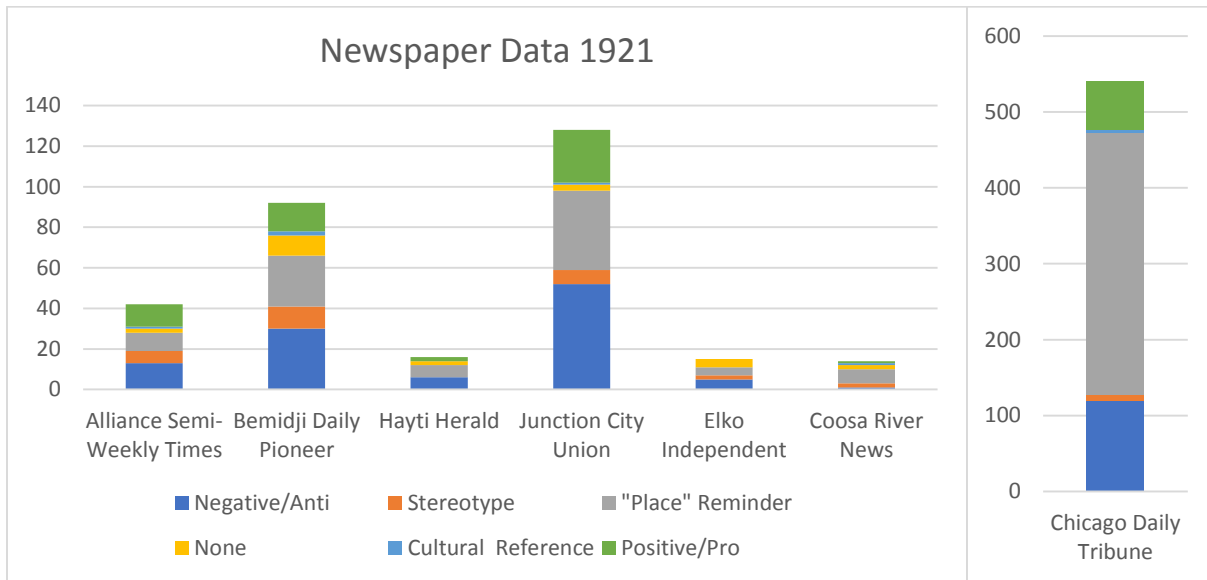
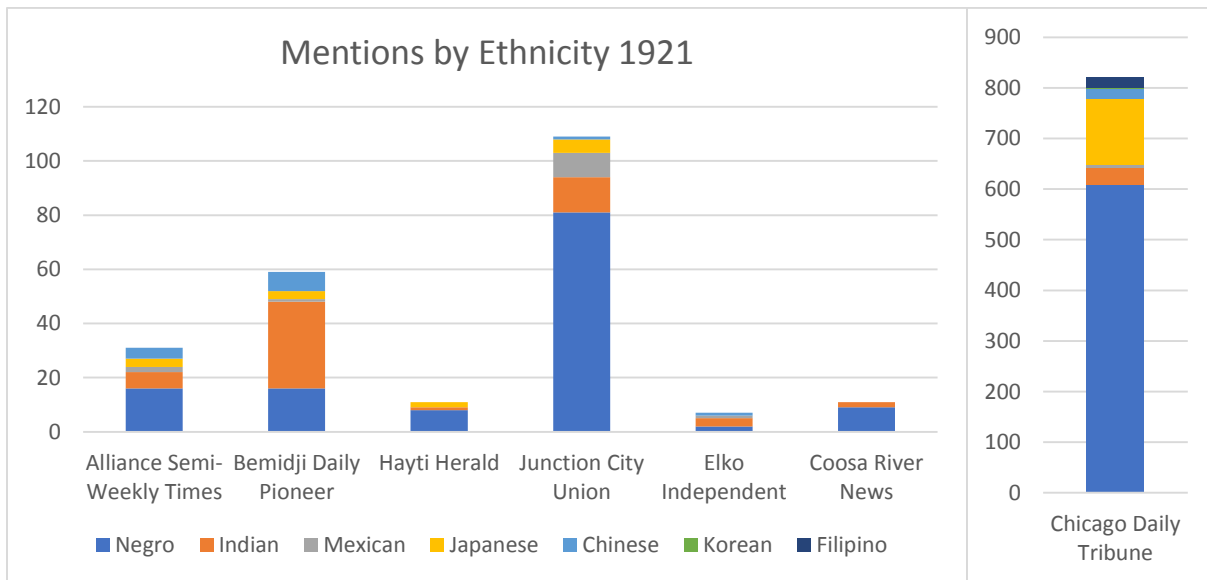


Table 10¹⁰



⁹ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 17 May-12 July 1921; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 17 May-12 July 1921; Chicago Daily Tribune, 17 May-12 July 1921; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 13 May-15 July 1921; Elko Independent, 24 May-21 June 1921; Hayti Herald, 19 May-14 July 1921; Junction City Union, 16 May-12 July 1921.

¹⁰ Alliance Semi-Weekly Times, 17 May-12 July 1921; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 17 May-12 July 1921; Chicago Daily Tribune, 17 May-12 July 1921; Coosa River News [Centre, AL], 13 May-15 July 1921; Elko Independent, 24 May-21 June 1921; Hayti Herald, 19 May-14 July 1921; Junction City Union, 16 May-12 July 1921.

Table 11¹¹

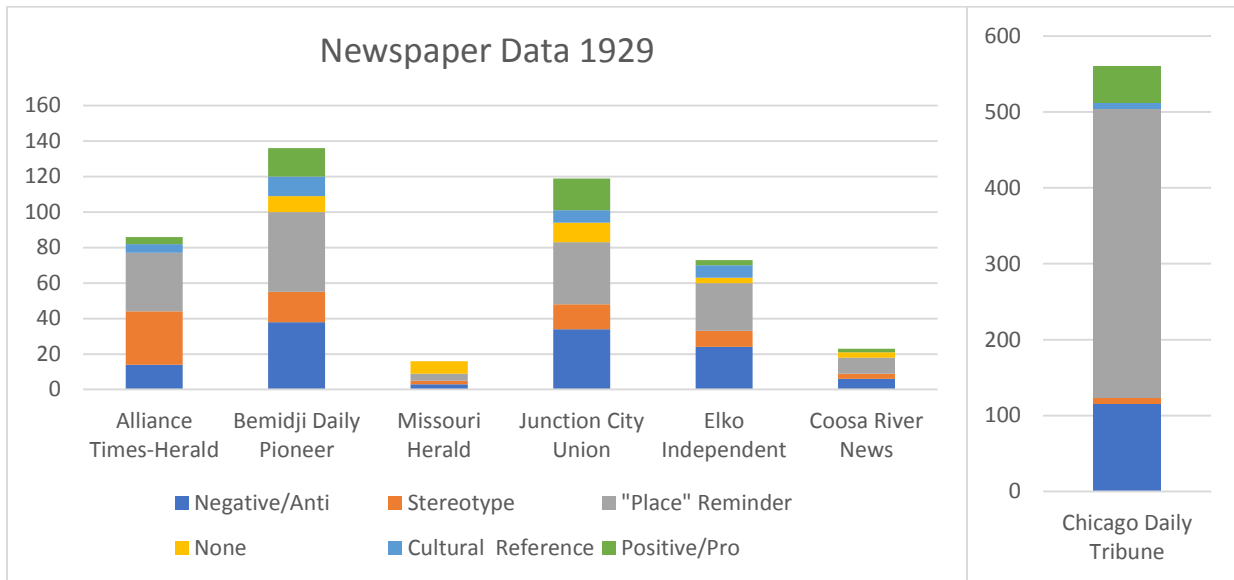
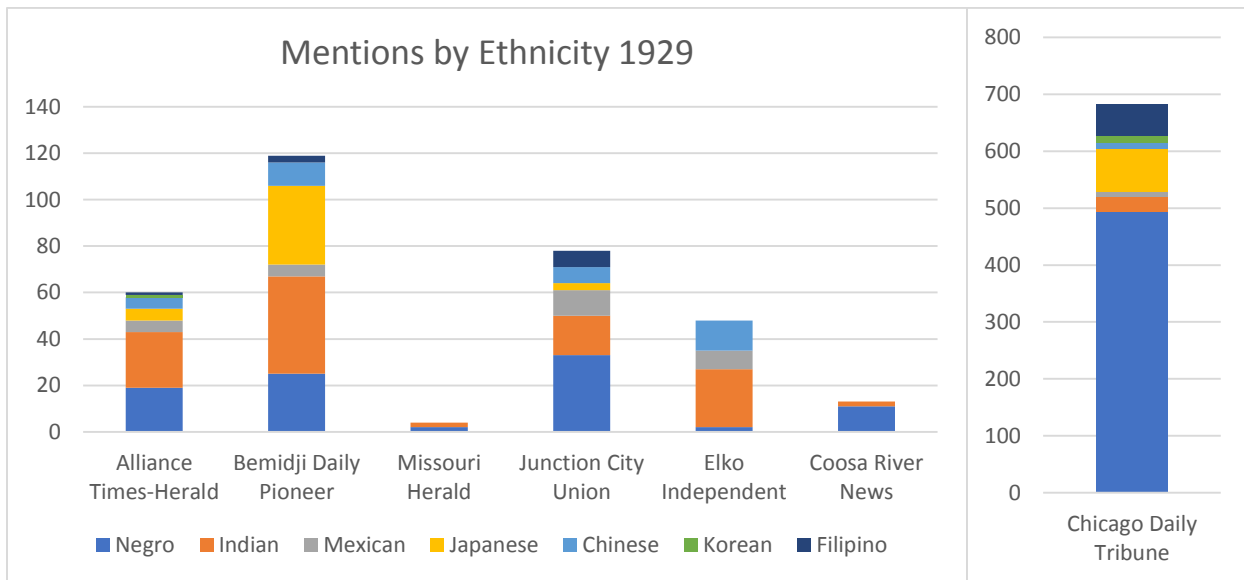


Table 12¹²



¹¹ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 8 October-3 December 1929; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 7 October-2 December 1929; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 October-3 November 1929; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 11 October-6 December 1929; *Elko Independent*, 8 October-5 December 1929; *Junction City Union*, 5 October-30 November 1929; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 11 October-6 November 1929.

¹² *Alliance Times and Herald*, 8 October-3 December 1929; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 7 October-2 December 1929; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 October-3 November 1929; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 11 October-6 December 1929; *Elko Independent*, 8 October-5 December 1929; *Junction City Union*, 5 October-30 November 1929; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 11 October-6 November 1929.

Table 13¹³

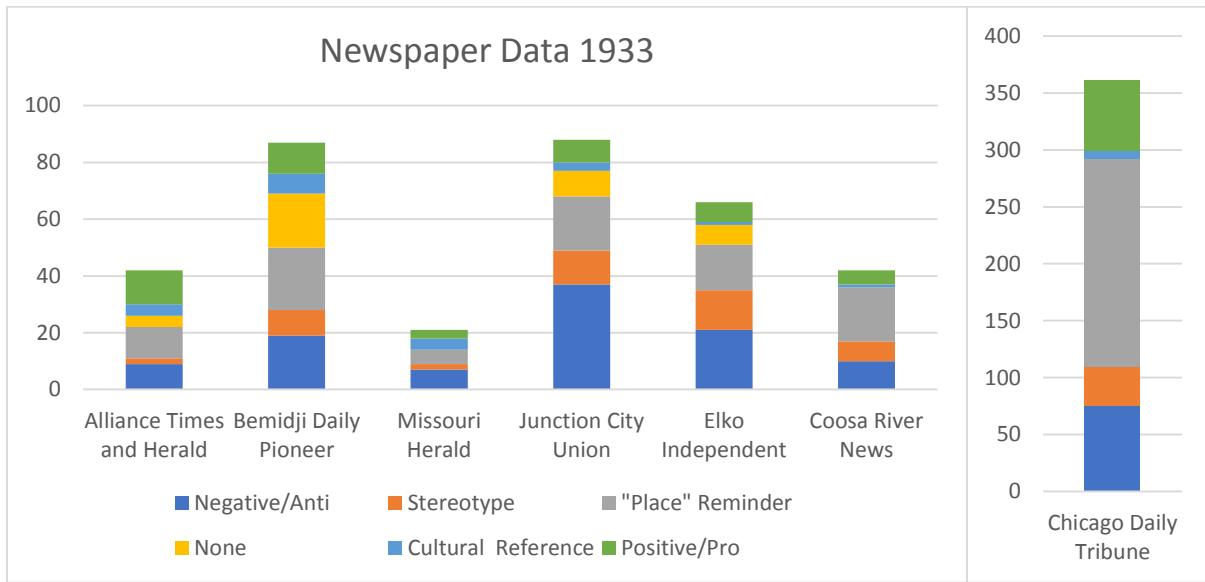
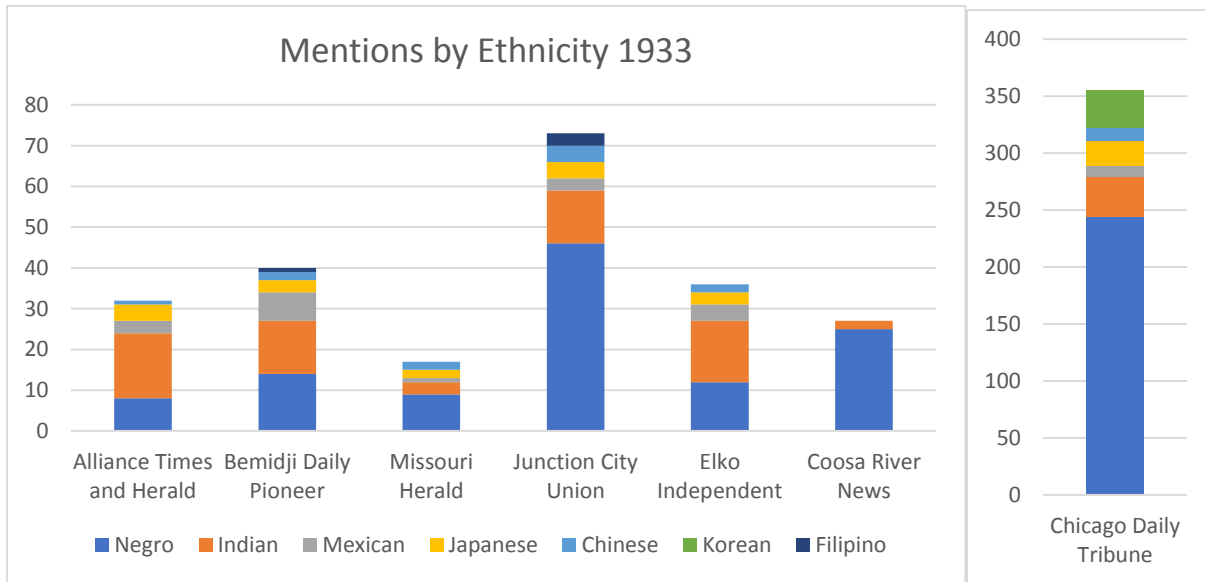


Table 14¹⁴



¹³ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 9 February-4 April 1933; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 1 February-1 April 1933; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 February-1 April 1933; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 11 October-6 December 1929; *Elko Independent*, 3 February-29 March 1933; *Junction City Union*, 6 February-3 April 1933; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 10 February-7 April 1933.

¹⁴ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 9 February-4 April 1933; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 1 February-1 April 1933; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 February-1 April 1933; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 11 October-6 December 1929; *Elko Independent*, 3 February-29 March 1933; *Junction City Union*, 6 February-3 April 1933; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 10 February-7 April 1933.

Table 15¹⁵

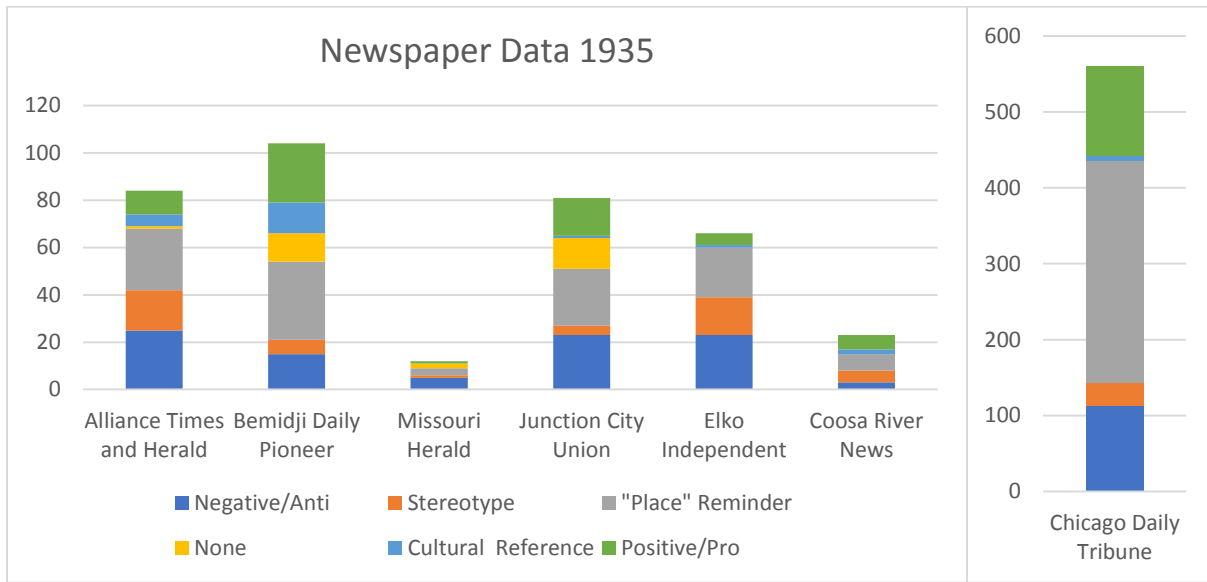
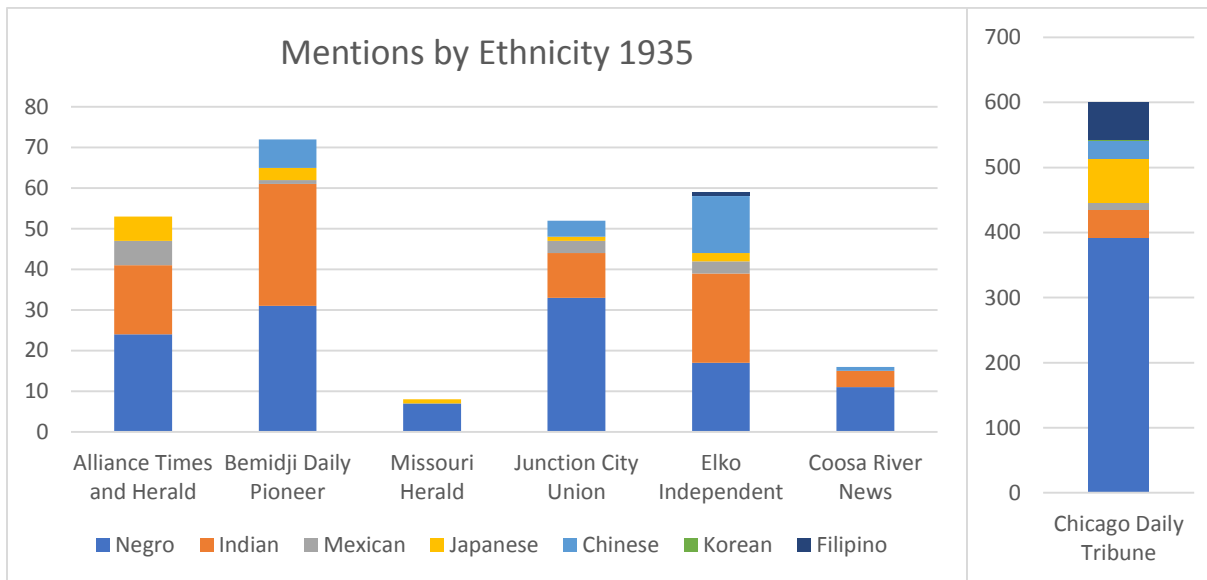


Table 16¹⁶



¹⁵ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 8 March-3 May 1935; *Elko Independent*, 4 March-26 April 1935; *Junction City Union*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 8 March-3 May 1935.

¹⁶ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 8 March-3 May 1935; *Elko Independent*, 4 March-26 April 1935; *Junction City Union*, 5 March-30 April 1935; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 8 March-3 May 1935.

Table 17¹⁷

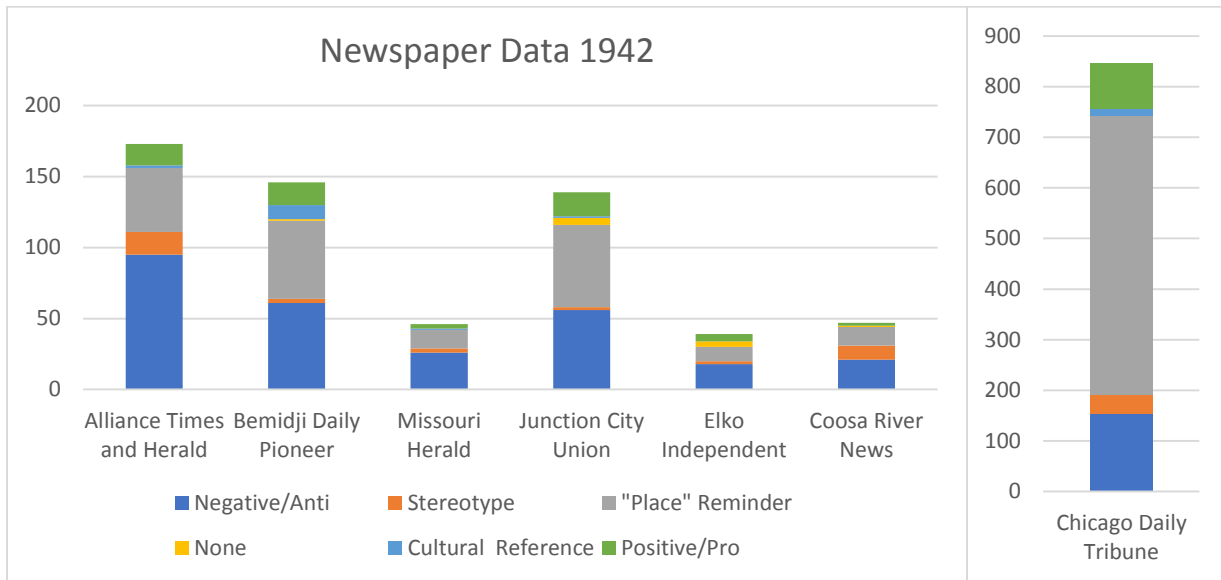
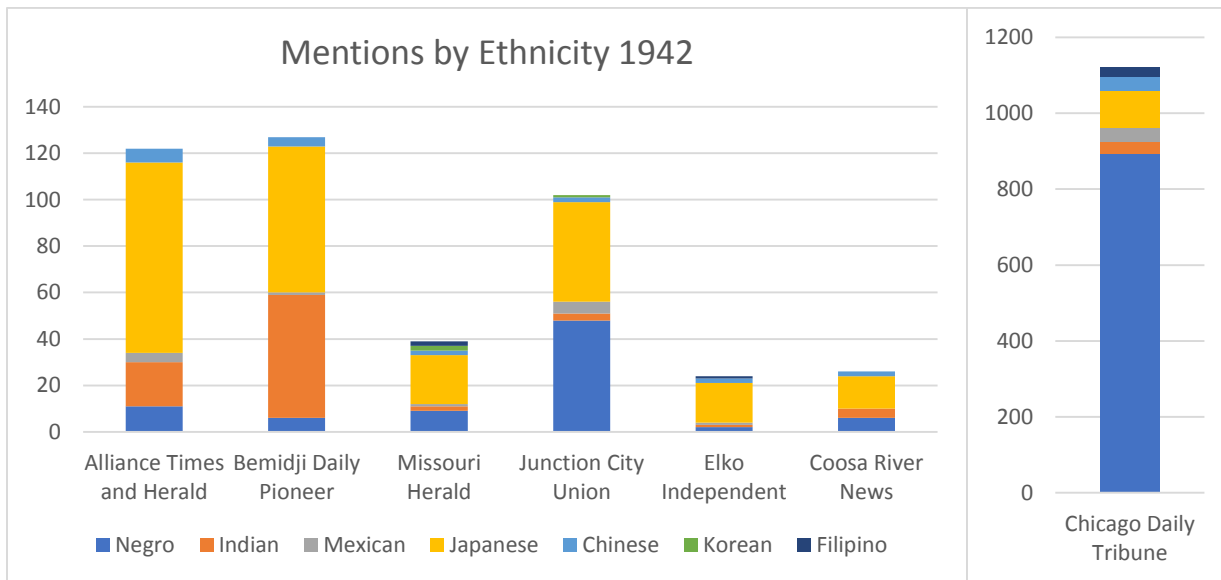


Table 18¹⁸



¹⁷ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 7 January-27 March 1942; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 30 January-3 April 1942; *Elko Independent*, 29 January-23 April 1942; *Junction City Union*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 30 January-3 April 1942.

¹⁸ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 7 January-27 March 1942; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 30 January-3 April 1942; *Elko Independent*, 29 January-23 April 1942; *Junction City Union*, 29 January-26 March 1942; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 30 January-3 April 1942.

Table 19¹⁹

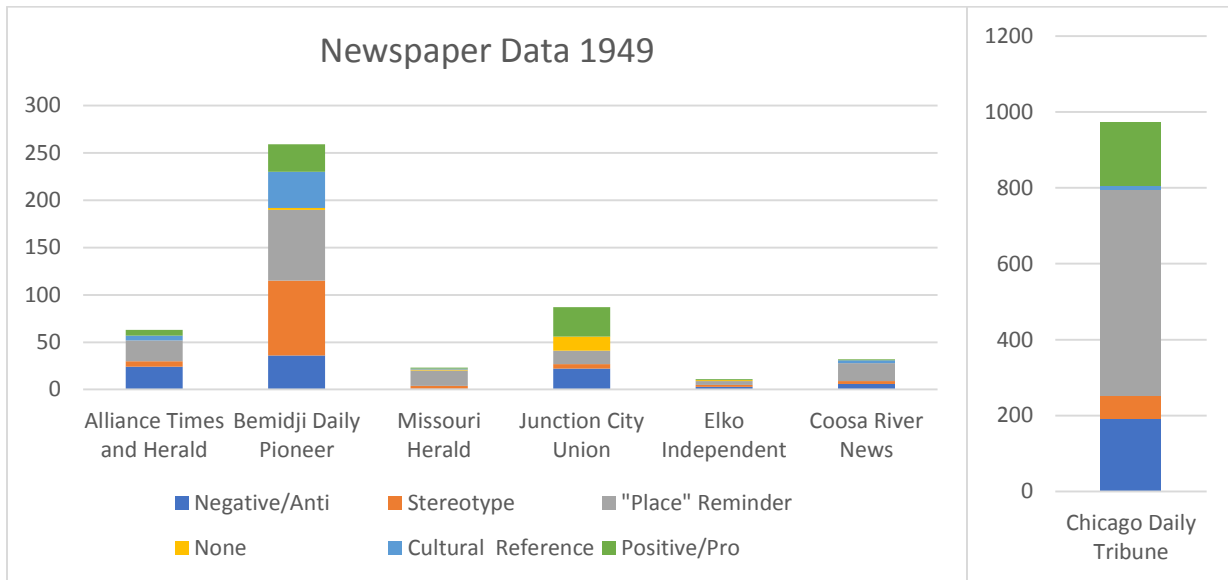
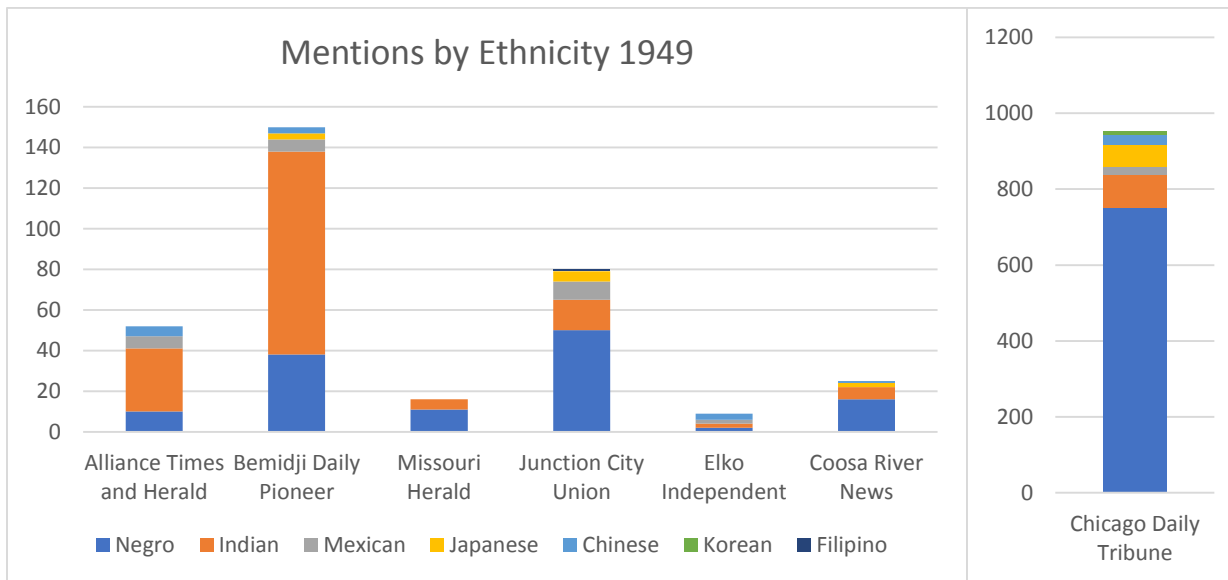


Table 20²⁰



¹⁹ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 17 June-12 August 1949; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 16 June-13 August 1949; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 June-13 August 1949; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 17 June-12 August 1949; *Elko Independent*, 16 June-18 August 1949; *Junction City Union*, 18 June-13 August 1949; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 17 June-12 August 1949.

²⁰ *Alliance Times and Herald*, 17 June-12 August 1949; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 16 June-13 August 1949; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 June-13 August 1949; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 17 June-12 August 1949; *Elko Independent*, 16 June-18 August 1949; *Junction City Union*, 18 June-13 August 1949; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 17 June-12 August 1949.

Table 21²¹

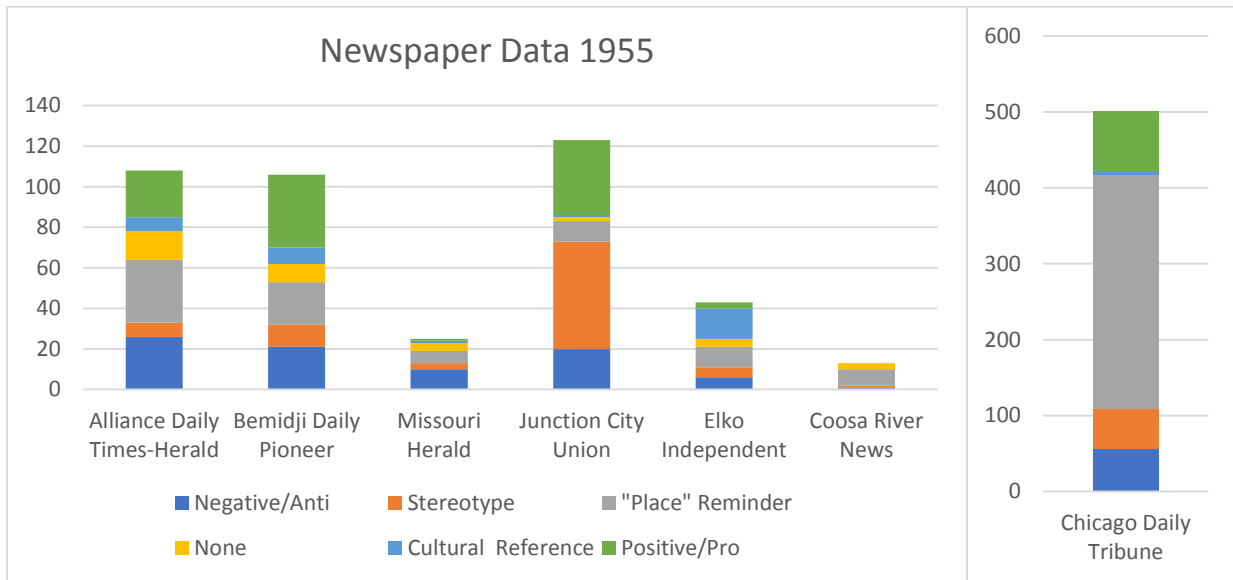
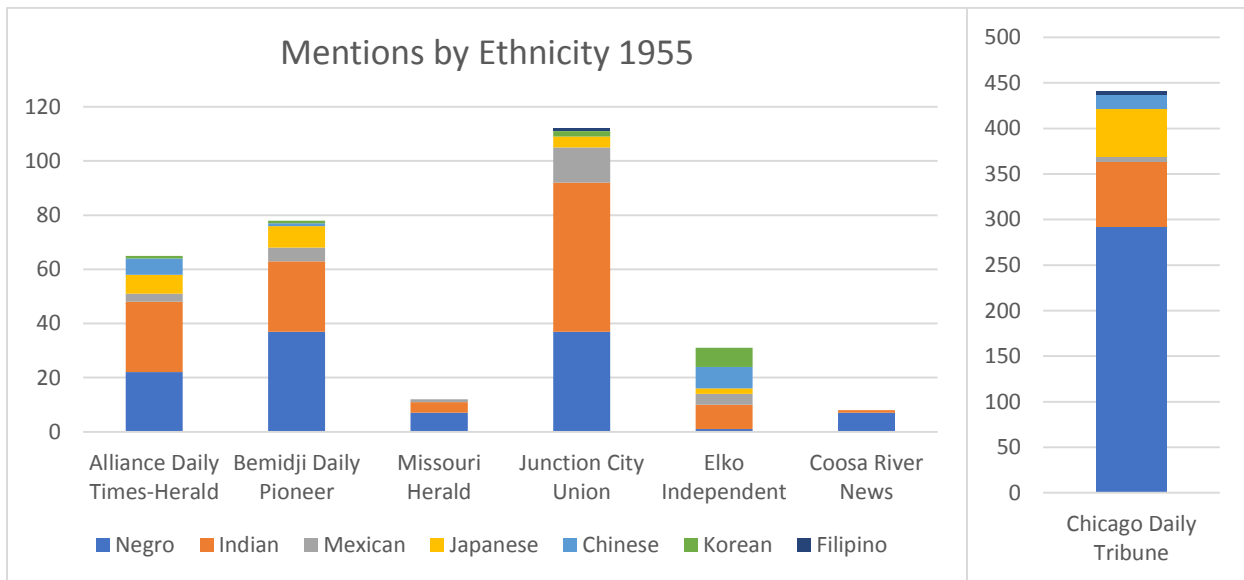


Table 22²²



²¹ *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, 15 August-8 October 1955; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 16 August-8 October 1955; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 August-8 October 1955; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 12 August-14 October 1955; *Elko Independent*, 11 August-8 December 1955; *Junction City Union*, 13 August-10 October 1955; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 12 August-14 October 1955.

²² *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, 15 August-8 October 1955; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, 16 August-8 October 1955; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 August-8 October 1955; *Coosa River News* [Centre, AL], 12 August-14 October 1955; *Elko Independent*, 11 August-8 December 1955; *Junction City Union*, 13 August-10 October 1955; *Missouri Herald* [Hayti, MO], 12 August-14 October 1955.

Table 23²³

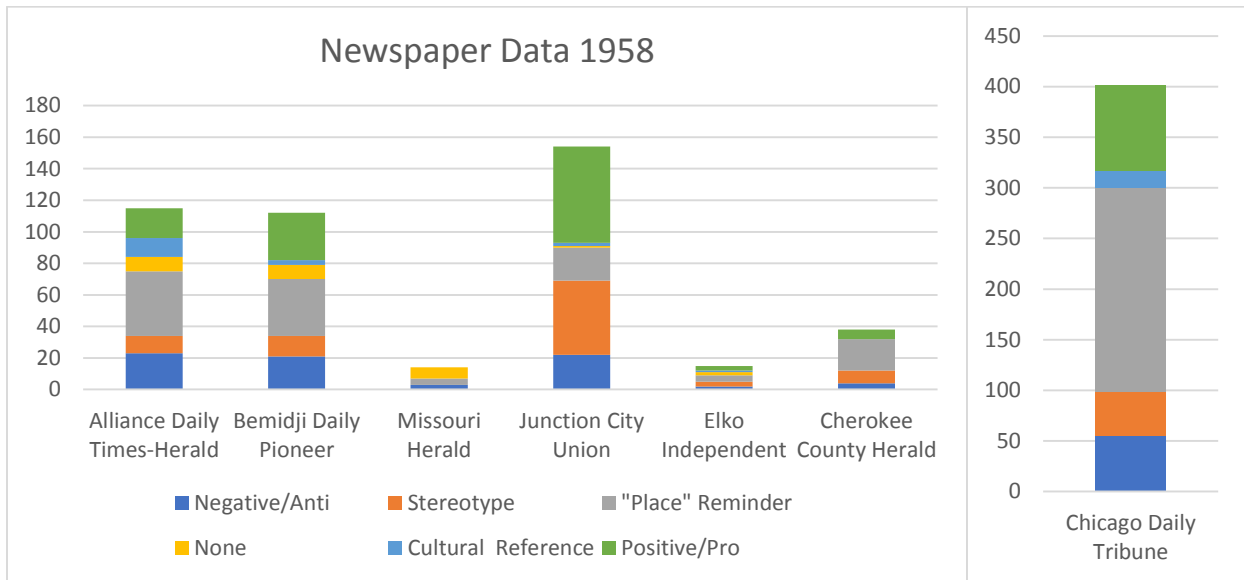
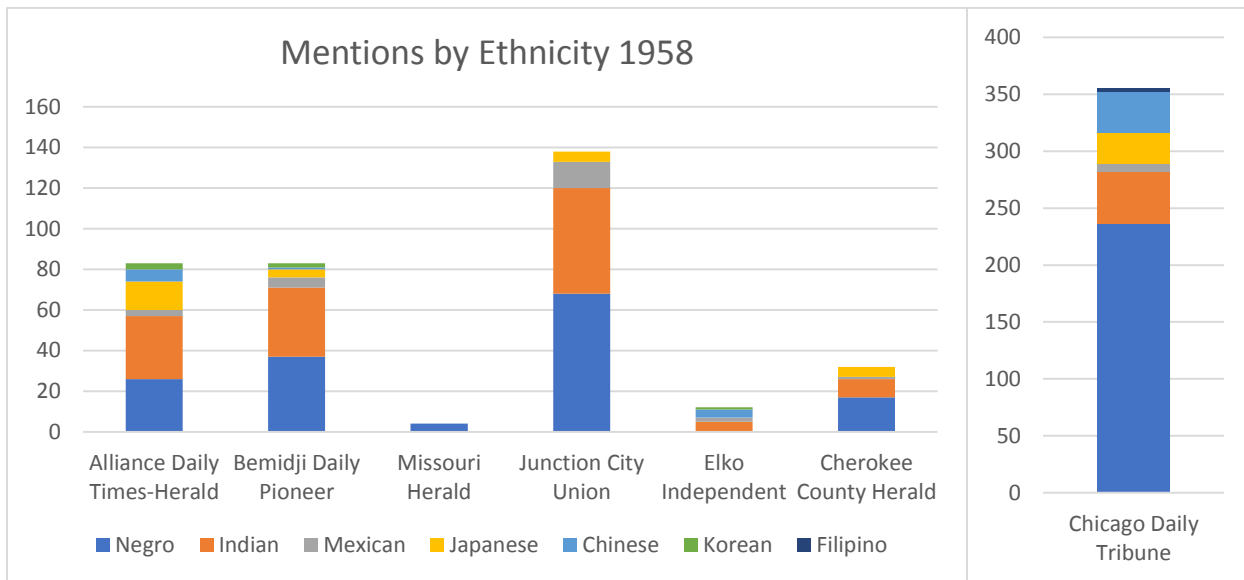


Table 24²⁴



²³ Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 4 January-1 March 1958; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 4 January-1 March 1958; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 1 January-5 March 1958; Chicago Daily Tribune, 4 January-1 March 1958; Elko Independent, 1 January-6 March 1958; Junction City Union, 4 January-1 March 1958; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 27 December 1957-1 March 1958.

²⁴ Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 4 January-1 March 1958; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 4 January-1 March 1958; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 1 January-5 March 1958; Chicago Daily Tribune, 4 January-1 March 1958; Elko Independent, 1 January-6 March 1958; Junction City Union, 4 January-1 March 1958; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 27 December 1957-1 March 1958.

Table 25²⁵

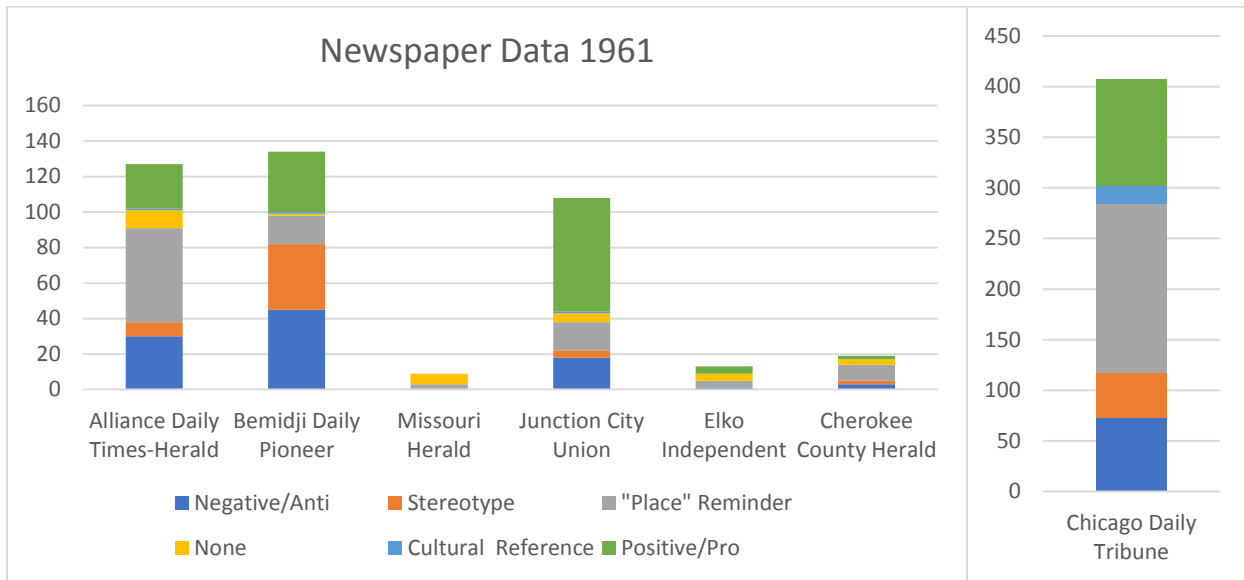
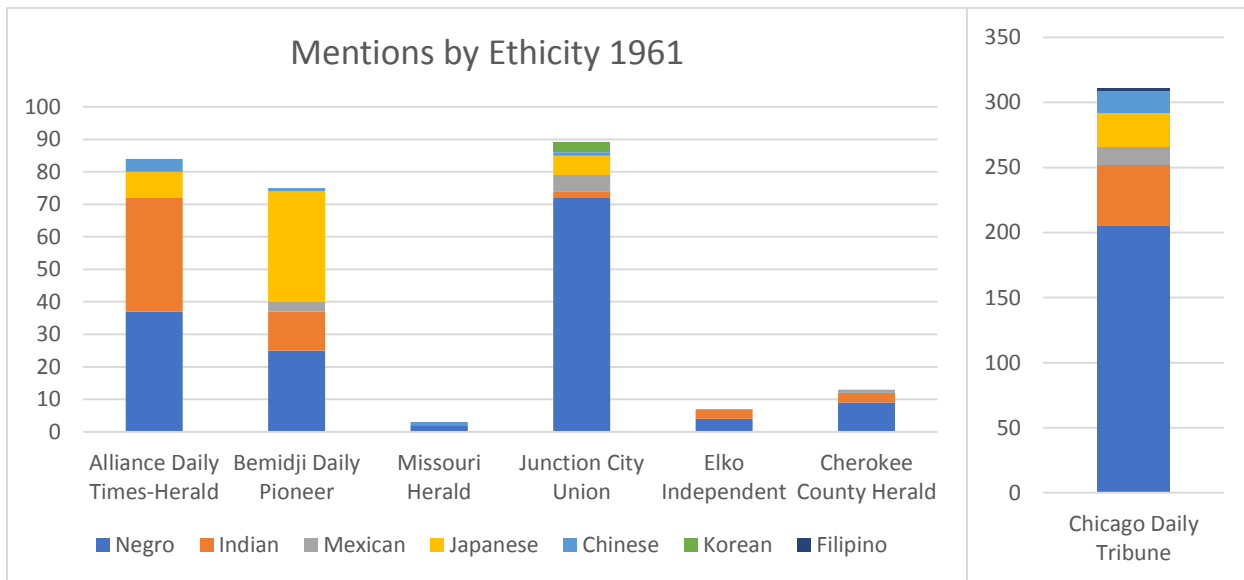


Table 26²⁶



²⁵ Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 29 November 1961-30 January 1962; Chicago Daily Tribune, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Elko Independent, 30 November 1961-30 January 1962; Junction City Union, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 30 November 1961-25 January 1962.

²⁶ Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 29 November 1961-30 January 1962; Chicago Daily Tribune, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Elko Independent, 30 November 1961-30 January 1962; Junction City Union, 30 November 1961-25 January 1962; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 30 November 1961-25 January 1962.

Table 27²⁷

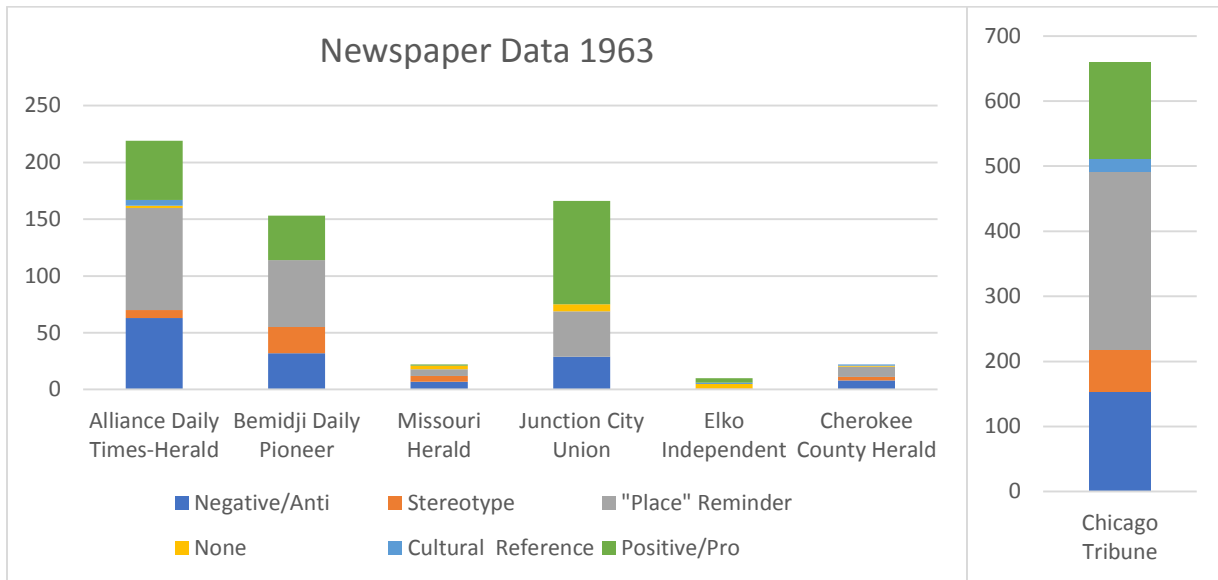
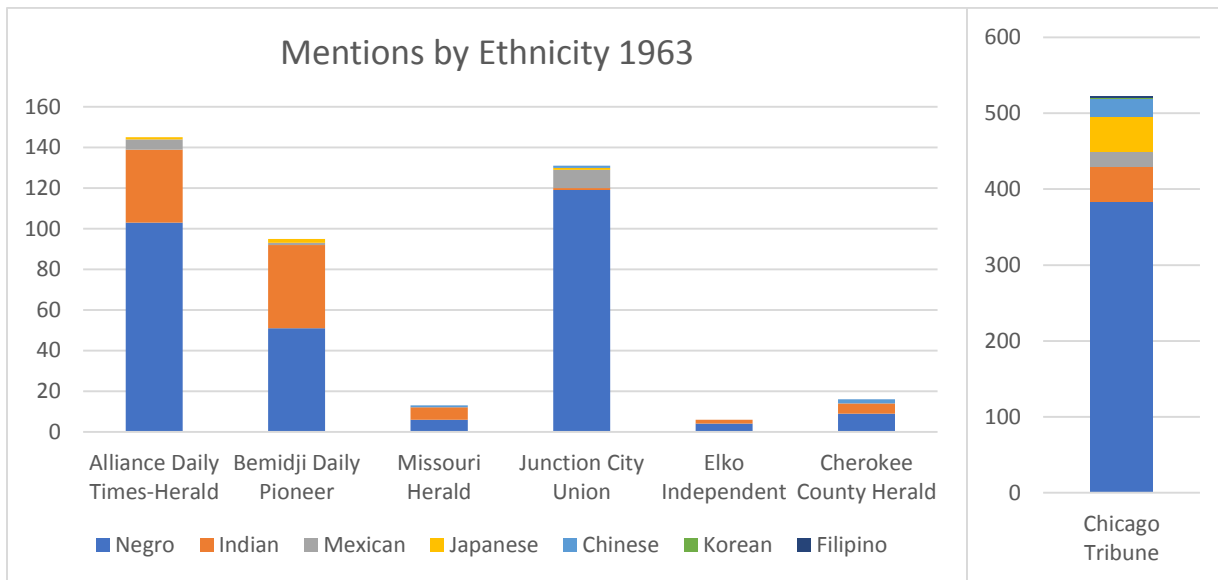


Table 28²⁸



²⁷Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 2 September-1 November 1963; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 3 September-26 October 1963; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 4 September-30 October 1963; Chicago Tribune, 2 September-26 October 1963; Elko Independent, 5 September-31 October 1963; Junction City Union, 2 September-26 October 1963; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 5 September-31 October 1963.

²⁸Alliance Daily Times-Herald, 2 September-1 November 1963; Bemidji Daily Pioneer, 3 September-26 October 1963; Cherokee County Herald [Centre, AL], 4 September-30 October 1963; Chicago Tribune, 2 September-26 October 1963; Elko Independent, 5 September-31 October 1963; Junction City Union, 2 September-26 October 1963; Missouri Herald [Hayti, MO], 5 September-31 October 1963.

Population Data

Table 29¹

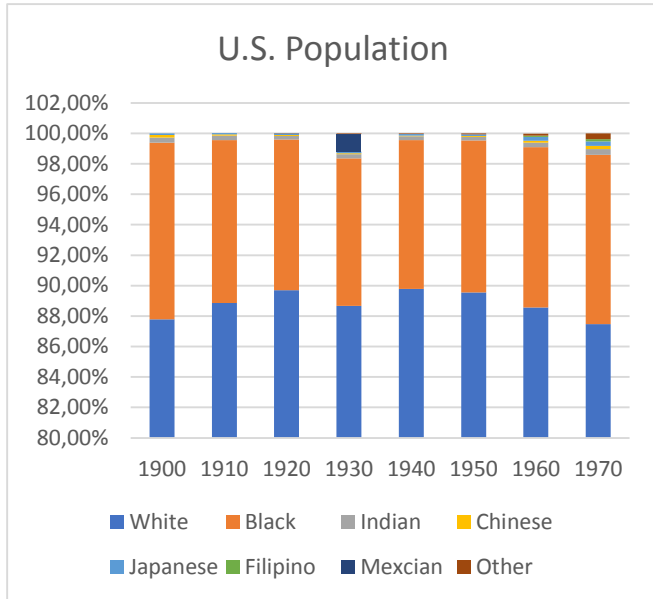


Table 30²

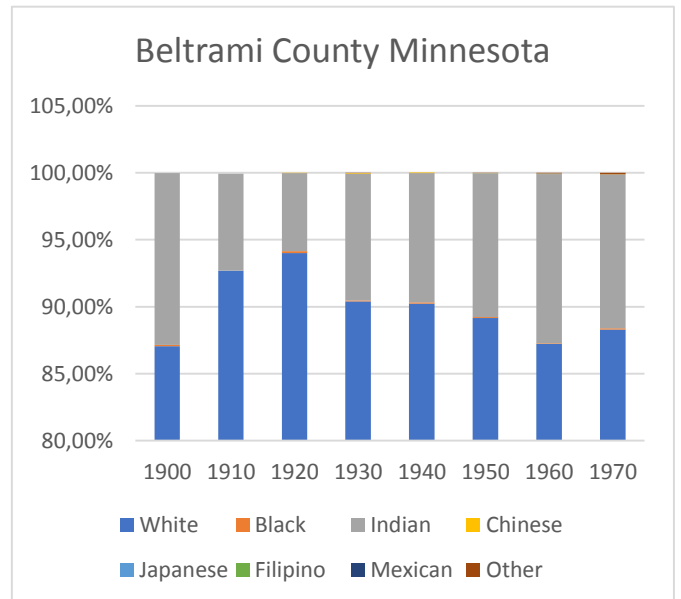


Table 31³

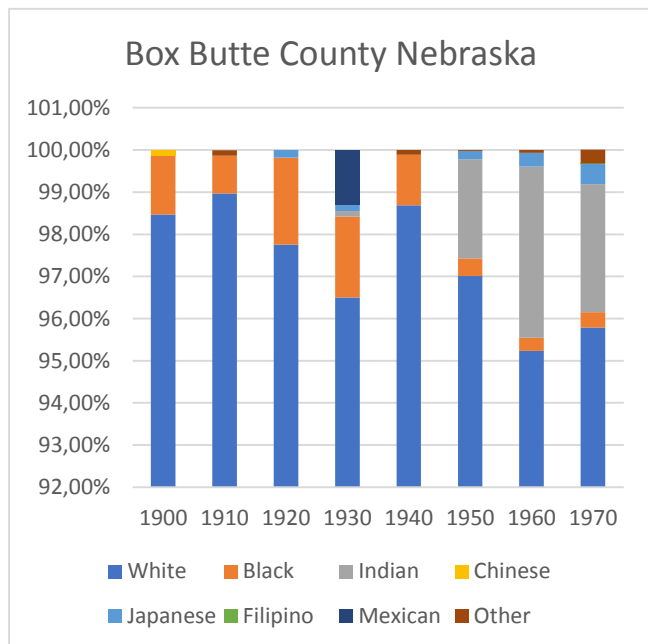


Table 32⁴

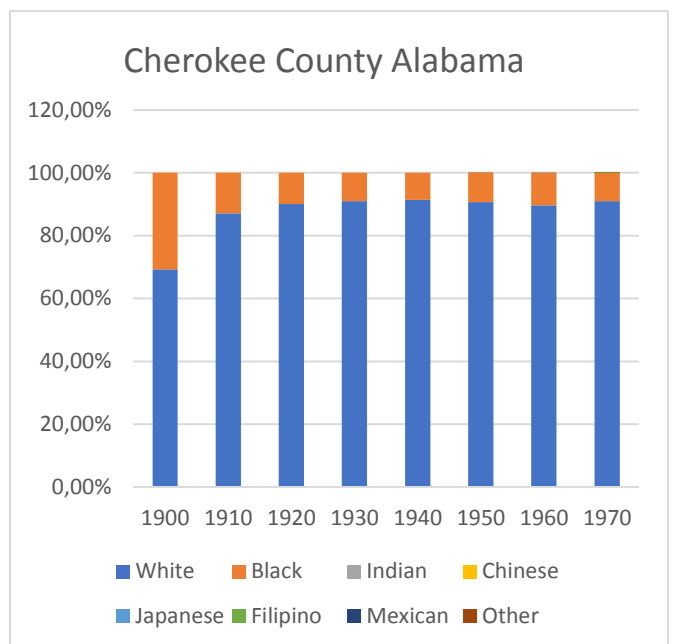


Table 33⁵

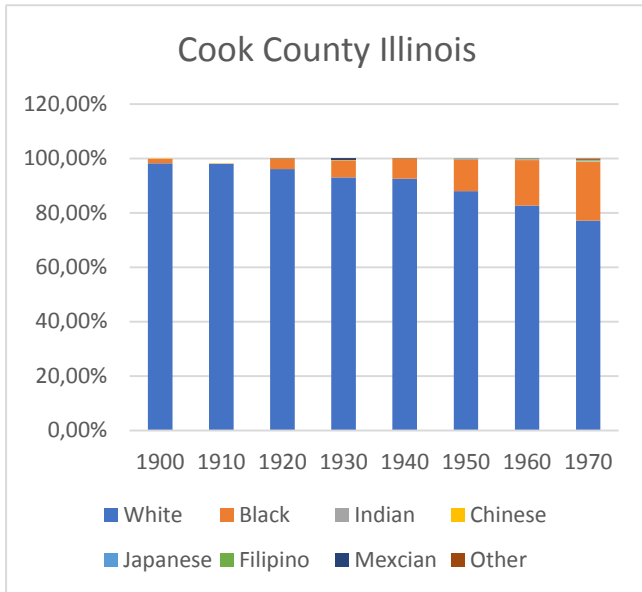


Table 34⁶

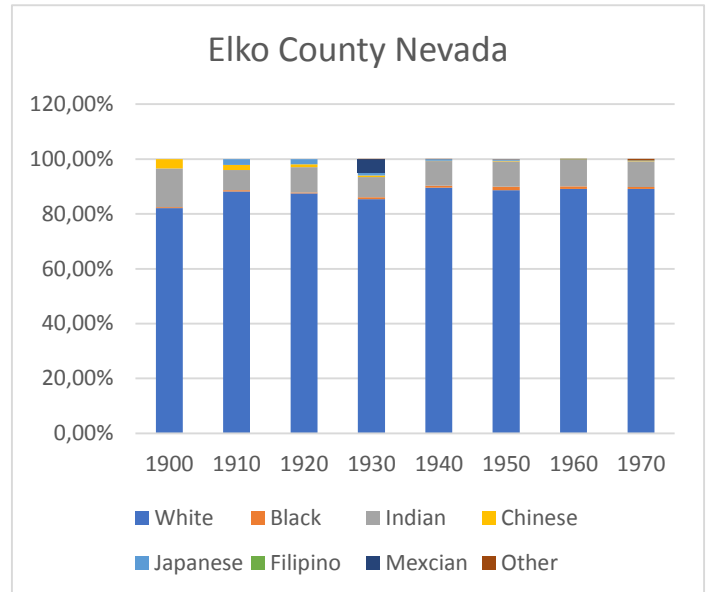


Table 35⁷

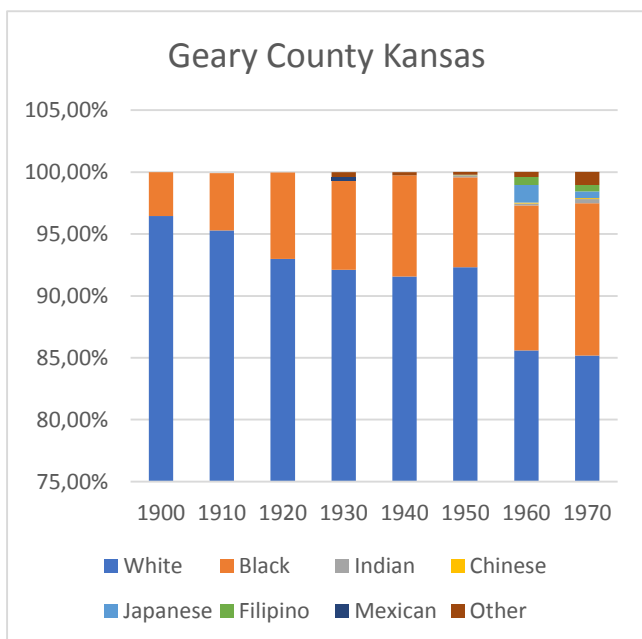
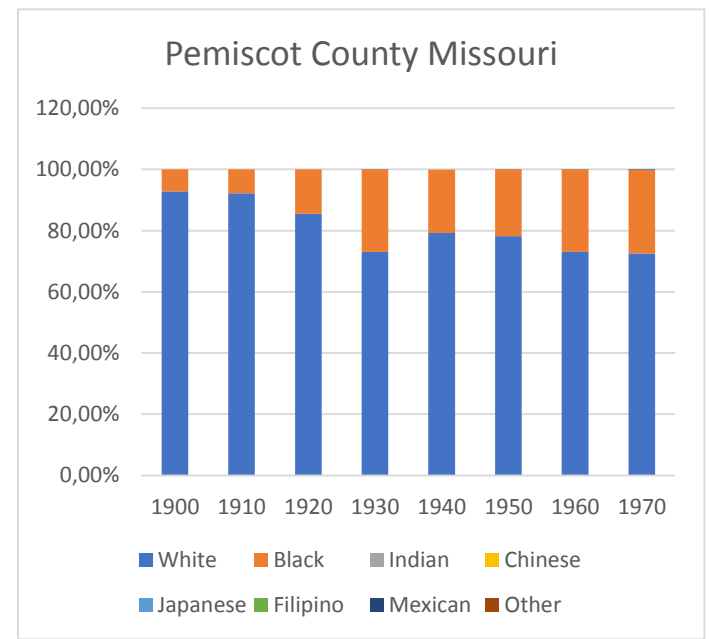


Table 36⁸

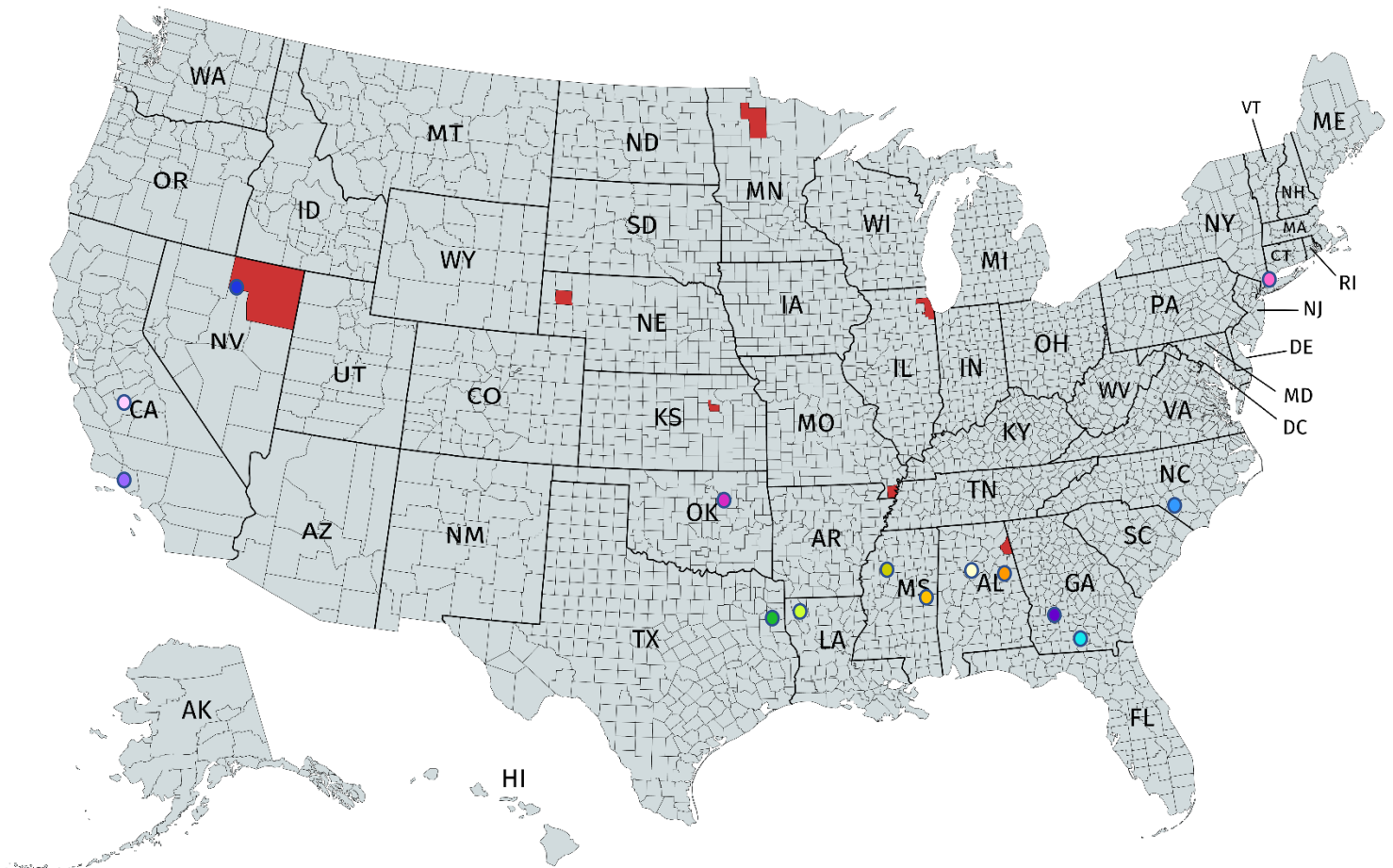


- ¹ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables LX, LXI, 1901, cxiii-cxv; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: General Report and Analysis," vol I, table I, 1913, 125; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: General Report and Analytical Tables," vol II, table 1, 1922, 29; United States Census Bureau, "Population: General report Statistics by Subject," vol II, table 1, 1932, 25; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 4, 1943, 19; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 36, 1953, 1-88; United States Census Bureau, "General Population Characteristics: United States Summary," vol I, table 44, 1964, 1-144; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 61, 1973, 7-294; United States Census Bureau, "American Indians," table II, June 1973, xi; United States Census Bureau, "Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States," table 1, 16, 31, July 1973, 1, 60, 119.
- ² Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 544, 567, 571; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol II, table 9, 14, 1913, 995, 996; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 507, 509; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt. 1, table 13, 17, 1932, 1205, 1220; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 25, 1943, 38, 75; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 23-99, 23-122; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 25-162; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 25-160.
- ³ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 547, 572; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol III, table 9, 15, 1913, 49-50; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 593, 595; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 2, table 13, 17, 1932, 83, 97; United States Census Bureau, "Population," Vol II Table 21, 25, 1943, 608, 648; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 27-74, 27-99; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 29-110; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 29-102.
- ⁴ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 529, 565, 571; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol II, table 9, 14, 1913, 45, 48; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 1922, 60; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 1, table 13, 1932, 99; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 1943, 236; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 2-85, 2-105; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 2-92; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 193, 1973, 2-107.
- ⁵ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 535, 571; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol III, table 9, 15, 1913, 482, 486; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 247, 252; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 1, table 13, 17, 1932, 615, 636; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 1943, 500, 545; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 13-160, 13-185; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 15-203; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 15-252.
- ⁶ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 548, 568, 572; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol III, table 9, 15, 1913, 86, 88; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 615, 616; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 2, table 13, 1932, 140, 144; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 25, 1943, 746, 753; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 28-36, 28-41; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 30-40; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 30-51.

⁷ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 539, 566, 571; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol II, table 9, 15, 1913, 672, 680; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 341, 347; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 1, table 13, 17, 1932, 843, 858; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 25, 1943, 39, 83; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 16-91, 16-117; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 18-136; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 18-127.

⁸ Tables were created using data collected from United States Census tables. United States Census Bureau, "Population," tables 19-21, 1901, 546, 567, 571; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1910: Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities and Other Civil Divisions," vol II, table 9, 14, 1913, 1099, 1114; United States Census Bureau, "Population 1920: Composition and Characteristics of the Population by States," vol III, table 7, 9, 1922, 558; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol III, pt 1, table 13, 17, 1932, 1344, 1358; United States Census Bureau, "Population," vol II, table 21, 25, 1943, 340; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 47, 1953, 25-117, 25-143; United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population: 1960," vol I, table 28, 1964, 27-151; United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population," vol I, table 34, 1973, 27-155.

United States Map by County¹



Created with mapchart.net

- Wahalak and Scooba Race Riot, 1906
- Mose, Hill, and Chase Lynching, 1909
- Shoshone Mike Massacre, 1911
- Mary Turner lynching, 1918
- Tulsa Race Riot, 1921
- Exeter Incident, 1929
- Lynching of Nelson Nash, 1933
- Harlem Race Riot, 1935
- Terminal Island Incident, 1942
- Aerial Hit and Run Murder of John Hall, 1948
- Murder of Emmett Till, 1953
- Battle of Hayes Pond, 1958
- Freedom Riders and Protests, 1961
- The 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing, 1963

¹ "USA Counties Map," Mapchart, <https://mapchart.net/usa-counties.html>, (accessed August 11, 2021).

Chapter 1 1900-1909

Wahalak and Scooba Race Riot

On December 24, 1906, a conductor on the Mobile & Ohio train near Scooba, Mississippi attempted to stop a disturbance by a Black man. During the altercation the Black man reportedly cut the conductor badly. The conductor opened fire, killing two other Blacks. A third Black escaped, a posse quickly forming to give chase. The posse caught up to the man less than ten miles away in Wahalak, Mississippi, where he had allegedly killed a constable who was attempting to arrest him. The posse lynched the man, then his two sons, and then two more Black men. A riot broke out in Wahalak which lasted several days, resulting in burned buildings and a dozen people killed. The governor sent the state militia to restore order.¹

This incident was reported in the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Pemiscot Argus*, the *Daily Union*, the *Coosa River News*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. At this same time, the country was grappling with two issues relating to minorities. The first involved a “gentleman’s agreement” with Japan which ultimately led to a serious conflict regarding school districts in the state of California and the decision to refuse admission to Japanese as students. The second was an incident in Brownsville, Texas allegedly involving a few men from a Black Army unit. The result was President Roosevelt ordering the dishonorable discharge from service of every Black man in the unit without due process, but not their White officers.² These two incidents, based on

¹ “Whites in Race War Kill Blacks Blindly,” New York Times on the Web, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/national/race/122606race-ra.html>, (accessed September 2020).

² Bustillos, Samantha, “The Brownsville Affair (1906),” University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, https://utrgv.libguides.com/SCA/brownsville_affair, (accessed January 9, 2022).

the newspaper reporting at the time, must be considered as a backdrop to the Wahalak and Scooba incident, creating a predisposition to show minorities in a negative light.

The first report of the Wahalak and Scooba riot appeared in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on Christmas Day, an article dated the previous day out of Meridian, Mississippi. Rather than opening with the incident information, it begins with a description of “negroes for miles around” congregating in Wahalak and “threatening vengeance to the whites.” It then gave a very short description of the incident on the train. According to the article “scarcely more than twenty-five white persons” live in Wahalak, yet the state militia stationed in the city of Meridian, fifty miles to the south, was given orders to protect them from the gathering Blacks. The militia arrived heavily armed, including a gatling gun. The second portion of the article reports the rumor of a race clash in Scooba as a result of this incident, qualifying it was unverified. It did go into more detail of the incident and related the posse killing of one Black man, reportedly named Spencer, who allegedly shot and killed the deputy attempting to arrest him.³

On December 26, the newspaper printed a follow-up article on the incident. It was titled “Mississippi Sees Race War Carnage” with a subtitle of “White Men Are Slain.” This article reported the same information as the previous article, nearly word for word, but also added that at least two Whites and two Blacks had been killed, reported rumors of dead Black people across the countryside, and that a non-related incident between a Black man and White man with wagons on a narrow road resulted in a fight between Blacks and Whites in Wahalak. It also reported the rumor that three men had been lynched just before troops arrived, although the reporter points out the town’s citizens refused to admit to that, saying the men were “lost in the swamp while on their way to town.” The first state militia detachment sent to Wahalak was not

³ “Act to Stop Race Clash,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 25, 1906, 4.

needed and returned home, however as soon as they left more trouble began. Five Blacks who had allegedly participated in the “troubles” were massacred, which caused a second Black uprising resulting in the death of two White men and four more Black people. The local Blacks gathered two miles outside of town, reportedly threatening to burn the town if they were forced out. The Whites in the area armed themselves, and a group of “fifty armed persons” reportedly arrived from Columbus, fifty miles to the north. The governor once again ordered troops to the area.⁴ A follow up article on December 27 reported the situation had calmed considerably, troops were in the area to keep order, and the Blacks, while agitated, were not threatening, gathering in groups only out of fear for their own safety.⁵

The last article on this incident published on December 28 reassured readers the trouble had ended. The militia was leaving the area. For the first time, the article reported on the “careful investigation” of the incident. Twelve Blacks were killed, and several Black homes were burned. “In every case the negroes were killed by a mob made up of the worst White element in this neighborhood.” It went on to describe an incident that resulted in the killing of a well-respected Black man and the burning of his home by the mob for no reason, which then whet appetites for more destruction.⁶

Written by a reporter in Mississippi, the original articles appear to be a reflexive, panicked reaction to what was initially an isolated incident. It wasn’t until the fourth article the reporter clearly blames Whites for the problems and states reaction to the incident was overblown. During the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the newspaper published over three hundred fifty articles portraying minorities in a negative or stereotypical way with less than

⁴ “Mississippi Sees Race War Carnage,” *Ibid.*, December 26, 1906, 1.

⁵ “Vardaman as Dove of Peace Goes to Stop Race Trouble,” *Ibid.*, December 27, 1906, 3.

⁶ “All Quiet in Mississippi,” *Ibid.*, December 28, 1906, 5.

fifty articles showing them in a positive manner.⁷ At this time the percentage of people of color in Cook County was less than 2% of its total population.⁸ The publishing of pieces that were clearly unsubstantiated yet presenting the specter of large groups of Blacks threatening and fighting against a very small group of “innocent” White people seems to have little purpose other than to perpetuate the belief that Blacks, particularly in groups, are dangerous, unruly, and any trouble must be dealt with swiftly and forcefully, hence the state militia. Clearly fear-mongering, when in the end the mobs were all White and there was no evidence Blacks started any incident beyond the incident on the train.

The *Coosa River News*, representing Cherokee County, Alabama with a 30% Black population,⁹ reported this story in a mostly positive manner, primarily due to the selective publication of information. As a county nestled in the Deep South with a relatively high percentage of Blacks, it was not surprising to find the newspaper ignored the first two articles which reported the groups of threatening Blacks and the threats to burn the town. It focused on the last two articles, pointing out the incident was blown out of proportion and while Blacks gathered, it was for their protection, and they were not threatening. It did, however, publish the article where the governor called for the arrest of the Whites who killed one man and burned his home. It did not mention any effort to find justice for any of the other eleven Blacks killed during this incident.¹⁰ The second article, published in the same edition, gave a brief description of the incident and listed an estimate of the dead. It attributed the events to “actions of a reckless mob,” no mention of a posse, armed men from other cities arriving, or of early “threatening” behavior reportedly shown by the Blacks. It did point out that two companies of militia were in

⁷ Table 1.

⁸ Table 33.

⁹ Table 32.

¹⁰ “Vardaman Means Business,” *Coosa River News*, January 4, 1907, 2.

the area in case there were further problems, and their presence was wholeheartedly supported by the Whites.¹¹ In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, this newspaper had three articles showing Blacks in a positive light (two of which were about this incident) but had twenty-seven mentions of Blacks in a negative or stereotypical manner.¹² The one other positive article was a report about a funeral for a Black man, deemed “extraordinary” due to his high reputation and decades of church service. Around one thousand people, both Black and White, attended.¹³ While it may seem at odds this newspaper showed Blacks in a more positive light, it must be considered that it was more important to hide reports alluding to Black people attempting any type of organized resistance.

The *Pemiscot Argus* in Pemiscot County, Missouri, never reported the incident directly. However, if one read the newspaper closely a short filler sentence noted the situation. The one sentence, “A white man dining a negro has brought on the opening incidents of a race war”¹⁴ was all that was needed to sum up the perception of this incident in this county. With just over a 7% minority population, all Black,¹⁵ apparently this county did not wish to publish information that might encourage or incite the local minorities. This one sentence not only acknowledged the reaction to the originating incident had been overblown, but also denied the legitimacy of any Black anger toward what had happened. This is not surprising when viewing the eight weeks surrounding this incident. With over one hundred ten instances of negative or stereotypical reporting, there were only a dozen positive references to minorities, and only half of these referred to Blacks.¹⁶

¹¹ “Vardaman on Scene,” *Ibid.*, January 4, 1907, 2.

¹² Table 1.

¹³ “Remarkable Negro Funeral,” *Coosa River News*, December 7, 1906, 1.

¹⁴ *Pemiscot Argus*, December 28, 1906, 1.

¹⁵ Table 36.

¹⁶ Table 1.

Geary County, Kansas also had an all-Black minority population at the time, however it accounted for less than 4% of the total population.¹⁷ Yet the *Daily Union* chose to report this incident in a much different manner than the Alabama and Missouri newspapers. The column in the newspaper titled “Those Race Riots” is composed of four articles regarding the incident. Noticeably different was the subtitle for this article, “Climate in Certain Portions of Mississippi Becomes Unhealthful for Dark Complemented Persons.” These articles appeared on December 26, with no follow-up articles in subsequent days. While the first article merely reported a telephone message that there was an incident, the next two articles provided the same information seen in the other newspapers; a recitation of the incident, troops were called, White people were killed, and a follow up incident regarding a White man, a Black man, two wagons, and a narrow road. The third article, however, from the same source on the same day, provided information not seen in any other article in this dataset. Here was the report of the lynching, which other newspapers reported, but unlike the others this article also included the lynching of the man’s two sons. There was also a list of the killed and injured with as much information as available, Black and White, including a soldier wounded by accidental discharge of his own pistol. And importantly, there was a comment by the colonel in charge of the state militia companies which had been sent, saying the militia was ready to help, but there should be a real need apparent before they were called.¹⁸ The only other newspaper reporting this comment was the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

From the beginning the Kansas newspaper chose to treat this incident as an overblown reaction to a minor incident, with panicked Whites begging for the state militia. This appears to be a much more sympathetic leaning toward the Black people who were victims rather than reinforce the pervading attitude of dangerous Blacks threatening Whites. Although there were

¹⁷ Table 35.

¹⁸ “Those Race Riots,” *Daily Union*, December 26, 1906, 1.

over forty portrayals of minorities in a negative or stereotypical manner in the eight weeks surrounding this incident and only seven positive reports, the vast majority of stories involving Blacks revolved around the Brownsville incident. There were as many negative articles on Japanese and Native Americans as Blacks, which was interesting since neither one of those other minorities resided in the county at the time.¹⁹

Beltrami County, Minnesota had a minority population similar to the U.S. as a whole at just under 13%, but only 0.1% were Black.²⁰ In this area the most populous minority was Native American. Despite what may have been a lack of relevance, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* reported on the incident three days in a row. The first article was the original report, with Blacks gathering and threatening violence, a very small group of Whites threatened, and the heavily armed state militia being sent.²¹ The article published on day two was very different. The entire article was about how White people had overreacted, the area was calm, the militia was not needed, and everything was back to normal. Now the information in the article was qualified with the term “indefinite reports.”²² The third day’s article had a clearly sympathetic headline for at least four of the Black victims. “Guilty of No Crimes: Negro Victims of White Mobs in Mississippi Men of Excellent Reputation.” This article did not appear in other newspapers in this dataset, and it explained prominent White men were identified as the murderers and would be prosecuted. While some of the other newspapers noted the state was investigating possible prosecution, none reported the forcefulness of the government response the same way as the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. It even reported that the “mob element among the whites has mostly fled

¹⁹ Table 2, 35.

²⁰ Table 30.

²¹ “Troops on the Scene,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, December 26, 1906, 4.

²² “Troops Not Needed,” *Ibid.*, December 27, 1906, 4.

toward the Alabama state line” while “negroes in terror” gathered in town for protection.²³ This final article was clearly much more sympathetic to the Black population, showing them as victims rather than aggressors.

The newspapers in Nebraska and Nevada chose not to report this incident at all. Box Butte County, Nebraska, with a minute minority population of just over 1.5%,²⁴ is not surprising in its omission. Elko County, Nevada, however had a large minority population of nearly 18%, the highest outside of the Deep South state of Alabama. The fact that over 14% were Native American may have been a factor in the choice not to report.²⁵ This does not mean, however, that these areas were accepting of minorities. The *Alliance Times and Herald* in Box Butte County, Nebraska was similar in its negative or stereotypical references to the *Weekly Independent*,²⁶ however, as noted, it had a significantly lower population of people of color. The *Weekly Independent* in Elko, Nevada, published over two dozen negative or stereotypical references to people of color.²⁷ These included nearly all the search groups – Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Negro, including one anecdote referring to a Black man as “darky.”²⁸ In this case they were publishing articles and perpetuating stereotypes for populations with which they had no contact, merely parroting the attitudes of an outside majority population.

Mose, Hill, and Chase Lynching

On April 30, 1909, a mob in Marshall, Texas lynched three Black men. “Creole” Mose, “Pie” Hill, and Matt Chase were being held in the local jail after being indicted for the murder of

²³ “Guilty of No Crimes,” *Ibid.*, December 28, 1906, 4.

²⁴ Table 31.

²⁵ Table 34.

²⁶ Table 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ “Befo (sic) Circuses,” *Weekly independent*, December 28, 1906, 3.

a deputy sheriff during a raid of their “crap” (dice) game. Guarded by the state militia for three days, once indictments were handed down the sheriff felt the lynching danger was gone and dismissed the state militia when their shift ended at 1:30 a.m. Shortly thereafter, a mob formed. It proceeded to remove the men from their cell and hanged them.²⁹ The report of this incident in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* differed slightly, reporting the men’s names as Matt Chase, Mose Hill, and Jesse Jefferson. The article also claimed that only Matt Chase and Mose Hill were hanged, Jesse Jefferson was left in the jail cell, as the mob did not believe Jefferson had been involved in the shooting of the deputy.³⁰ This version was not able to be corroborated, all other sources listed three men as having been lynched.

The only newspaper in this dataset reporting this incident was the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Despite the brazen acts of a mob clearly working outside the civil justice system, no other newspaper bothered to report on the murder of these men. Was it not deemed important since lynchings were so common they weren’t worth reporting, were the reports so appalling that editors did not wish to subject their readership to such accounts of violence, or was a refusal to report such incidents a way to deny legitimacy or possibly provide tacit approval to those committing these deeds?

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* had one article reporting the lynching of these men. The date on the article was April 30, the same day as the lynchings. The article repeatedly pointed out the mob was unopposed, no shots were fired, no resistance was met, and made it clear the lynched men had been indicted for their crime by a grand jury prior to the lynchings.³¹ This could be construed as a tacit approval of the actions taken and an attempt to legitimize it, or a subtle

²⁹ “Lynching of “Creole” Mose,” *Lynchings in Texas*, <https://www.lynchingintexas.org/items/show/275> (accessed September 2020).

³⁰ “Mob Sacks Jail in Texas; Three Negroes Lynched,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1909, 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*

indictment of the law enforcement in the area. The newspaper has no other article or editorial addressing the morality of this action.

No other newspaper reported on this incident, despite the fact that several areas had relatively large minority populations. One would assume an area with a large minority population would publish articles relevant to that population. The *Hayti Herald* in Missouri did not report the lynching; however, it did report other negatively framed minority incidents, which is not unexpected considering its minority population of just over 7%.³² One might also consider that non-reporting may have been de facto approval of the lynchings. In Alabama, the *Coosa River News* also had more positive mentions than surrounding the 1906 incident with seven, but there were nearly thirty negative or stereotypical mentions.³³ The fact this incident was not reported is only surprising in that the newspaper seemed to have missed an opportunity to show Black people receiving the justice White people felt they deserved. Considering the newspaper published an article on the “night riders,” a White supremacist movement, in a less than negative manner,³⁴ one would think they would publish articles portraying minorities as criminals deserving of harsh punishment. The *Junction City Union* had more positive mentions at this time than it had surrounding the 1906 incident with twenty-three, but still had over sixty negative or stereotypical mentions.³⁵ With just over a 3.5% minority population at the time,³⁶ the editors may have felt this article was not of interest to its readers. In the eight-week period surrounding this incident, the *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times* in Box Butte County, Nebraska had thirteen of the

³² Table 36.

³³ Table 1, 3.

³⁴ *Coosa River News*, May 21, 1909, 2.

³⁵ Table 1, 3.

³⁶ Table 35.

seventeen issues published with no mention of any minority at all. This is only slightly surprising, considering the small minority population in the county.³⁷

The *Weekly Independent* only published two articles in the eight weeks surrounding this incident referring to Blacks, focusing more on Native Americans and Mexicans.³⁸ This is not surprising when one considers that of the nearly 18% minority population in Elko County, only 0.3% were Black.³⁹ One could easily argue that this particular incident would not be of interest to the majority of their readers. Beltrami County, Minnesota had a similar situation with minorities in the area, with only 0.11% of their minority population identifying as Black.⁴⁰ Yet the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* published over eighty negative or stereotypical mentions as opposed to only twenty-seven positive mentions.⁴¹ While the range of minorities mentioned was broad, Black and Native American mentions were approximately equal,⁴² an interesting fact when one compares the number of each ethnic group in the county.⁴³ It appears as if the reporting on minorities was just a reinforcement of stereotypes with no actual knowledge of the minority in question.

³⁷ Table 3, 31.

³⁸ Table 4.

³⁹ Table 34.

⁴⁰ Table 30.

⁴¹ Table 3.

⁴² Table 4.

⁴³ Table 30.

Chapter 2 1910-1919

Shoshone Mike Massacre

The press called it “The Last Indian Uprising.” In reality, it was a posse killing of nearly an entire family unit. A dozen Native American adults and children lived a nomadic life off reservation in Nevada. This was the family of Shoshone Mike (also called Indian Mike) and consisted of his wife, four adult children, two adolescents, and four children. While the men did farm labor at times, they also killed a few cattle to help sustain the group. In late January 1911, four sheep ranchers rode into a canyon. Mike and his family may have believed they were being hunted as cattle rustlers, but for whatever reason Mike and his two sons allegedly ambushed the four men, killing them. The family then fled east. The bodies of the ranchers were not discovered until February 11, and a posse was formed to track the killers. The posse caught up with Mike’s family on February 26, to find them singing and chanting. It is believed they knew they were being followed and realized it was only a matter of time before the posse found them. The posse began firing during the ceremony, and the band of Natives returned fire with the two black powder rifles they possessed. Mike and his sons were killed, leaving the women to fight with bows, arrows, and spears. When the fighting stopped, eight Native Americans and one posse member were dead. One of Mike’s daughters, sixteen-year-old Snake, one ten-year-old boy, a toddler, and an infant survived. The Native Americans were buried on site in a mass grave blasted into the frozen ground.¹

¹ Hickson, Howard, “Last Indian Uprising?” Howard Hickson’s Histories, <https://www.gbcnv.edu/howh/ShoshoneMike.html>, (accessed September 2020).

Only two of the seven newspapers in this dataset reported this incident, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the *Weekly Independent*. Based on the 1910 census, Cook County had no Native American residents at this time.² The one article on the incident was written the day of the event and published the following day. It is filled with inaccuracies and negative stereotypes. The victims were referred to as “bucks,” “squaws,” and “papooses” in the article subtitle. It was also called a “sequel of a massacre,” implying the Native Americans massacred Whites, but this massacre of the Native Americans was not referred to as such. The main title, “Indians Killed at War Dance,” was clearly drawing attention to a stereotypical perception of danger, suggesting this was a group preparing to go on a violent killing spree. The reports are so conflicting it is difficult to say they were holding a war dance; in fact, the first line of the article is that they were “chanting a weird death song.” It also implied they had strayed from the reservation to steal cattle, not that they had been off the reservation for many years and did rustle some cattle over that time. The recitation of the initial murder of the ranchers was stated as factual, even though there were no witnesses with the possible exception of the surviving Native Americans, which consisted of one teenager and three children. It also implied the Natives immediately began firing when the posse arrived, even though they were reportedly in the middle of a ceremony and only had two guns against the eighteen-person posse. The newspaper reported two women and two children remained alive, but force was needed to capture them, with one woman “fighting fiercely to the last.” It is unclear why force was needed to subdue a toddler. The article concludes with mentioning wagons being sent to retrieve the dead; however this must have been only for the one White posse member since the Native Americans were buried on site.³

² Table 33.

³ “Indians Killed at a War Dance,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 28, 1911, 6.

The *Weekly Independent* was clearly more interested in this incident, obviously due to the proximity of the events to their area. The newspaper published a total of sixteen articles pertaining to this incident over the course of four weeks. Elko County, Nevada had a Native American population at this time of almost 7.5%, with a total minority population of nearly 12%.⁴ Four of the articles were published prior to the incident as readers were kept abreast of the posse's search for the band of killers. On February 17, a page one article described the sheep ranchers' murder scene, and noted the area was the "stomping ground of a roving band of thieving Modoc Indians."⁵ An article deeper in the newspaper went into much more detail of what was believed to have happened when the four sheep ranchers were murdered. It then went on to describe the preparations for the search. At this point it was not known who the murderers were, but the outcome was assured. "So intense is the feeling here against the murderers that it is said they may never reach a jail if taken alive."⁶ The following week, two more articles on the incident reported the perpetrators were believed to be Native Americans, however the governor denied asking for federal help as he believed the posse was close catching the group.⁷ The Washoe County Sheriff stated there was no doubt they were looking for Shoshones and should come upon them within a few days. Again, a satisfactory outcome from the White point of view was encouraged. "Let us hope that none of the posse will be injured in their attempt to rid the country of this murderous band of Indian cutthroats."⁸

By the third week of reporting, Shoshone Mike's band had been killed. Seven articles on the incident were published in that week's newspaper. The first article on page one was a

⁴ Table 34.

⁵ "Four Reno Stockmen Murdered," *Weekly Independent*, February 17, 1911, 1.

⁶ "The Murdered Stockmen," *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷ "Salmagundi From Thursday's Daily," *Ibid.*, February 24, 1911, 3.

⁸ "On a Hot Trail," *Ibid.*

detailed account of the incident, with the title giving away the ending. Titled “They Are Good Indians” can only refer to the adage “the only good Indian is a dead Indian.” It was a “battle to the death,” and the Native Americans, “contrary to the Indian nature,” fought back shot for shot and fought like “veritable demons.” The author seemed to relish portraying the Native Americans as stereotypical bloodthirsty savages, even implying it was their choice to engage in the gunplay.⁹ A related article, clearly written for this weekly newspaper at an earlier date, also graced page one and gave an update on how close the posse was to catching the band of Native Americans.¹⁰ Further into the newspaper was another article detailing the battle with Shoshone Mike’s band. This article claimed the two women and two children who died were killed accidentally, being caught in the line of fire. After the shooting, items from the murdered sheep ranchers were reportedly found among the Native Americans’ belongings, which was taken as proof that they were guilty of the original killing.¹¹ A second article on the same page gave more details of the “battle.” This article stated one of the posse members had ridden out to speak to the Natives, but all save for Mike immediately ran. Mike stood his ground and shot at the man, and the “old savage” was killed. The rest of the Natives fled the area, with the posse following in what reportedly became a three-hour running gunfight. Realistically this does not seem probable, when one considers the Natives had only two black powder rifles, or possibly just one if Mike had one with him when he was killed, which seems to be the case. This article included the only rendition of the event told by one of the Paiute trackers in the posse. His version claimed he shot at but did not kill Mike, then Mike took a shot at one of the posse members, and that posse member may have killed him. This article also stated the “captured squaw” admitted

⁹ “They Are Good Indians,” *Ibid.*, March 3, 1911, 1.

¹⁰ “The Indian Murderers,” *Ibid.*

¹¹ “Indian Mike’s Bunch Wiped Out,” *Ibid.*, 2.

their group had killed the four sheep ranchers plus another man in the area the prior year. To this she also added the killings of three other Whites and a Chinese man, which brought the total to nine deaths, although no evidence was provided to substantiate these claims.¹² This woman was reportedly sixteen years old, had just seen her family murdered, and was then brought to jail. One must wonder at her mental state at the time of these confessions, and if she even spoke English. The remaining articles were solely to congratulate the men who had tracked down the group and braved the “cold of a Nevada winter in their relentless pursuit of this murderous bunch.”¹³ There were also two articles on a second posse who had been searching in a different area and were not at the incident scene. They were congratulated on their effort and the group thanked the people along their route for the outpouring of assistance.¹⁴

The last of the four weeks of reporting saw four more articles on this incident. This included the coroner’s report on the posse member who was killed, resulting in the young woman survivor being accused of complicity.¹⁵ A second article reported a knife found at the original sheep rancher’s murder site was engraved with initials that did not fit any of the dead men. It then speculated this may have belonged to another victim of the Native Americans.¹⁶ The last two articles were about the “plunder” brought in from the Native American camp. They had the saddle and camping supplies of the Natives and personal effects of the ranchers, including watches, checkbooks, and money.¹⁷ One item received its own article, and it was quite curious. The article described an “ingenious” vice made from two large bull’s horns. It went on to describe how the item worked and that it was so unique even the local Natives did not know

¹² “More Particulars of Sunday’s Battle,” Ibid, 2.

¹³ “Give Credit to All,” Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ “Salmagundi from Thursday’s Daily,” Ibid., 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., March 10, 1911, 3.

¹⁶ “Who Owned the Knife,” Ibid., 2.

¹⁷ “Brought in the Plunder,” Ibid., 1.

what it was. However, despite that, the article concludes with “[i]t was one of the many articles made by Shoshone Mike’s band indicating their extremely primitive nature. They were real savages, unmixed of blood, who had carried into these days of civilization all the savagery of the days before the white man’s coming.”¹⁸ Reading the article prior to this point, it would be easy to argue that the exact opposite of this statement was true. This was a group capable of creating tools unique to its own situation, not tied down by its “primitive nature.”

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* did not report on this incident despite the fact they had a Native American population nearly identical to that of Elko County, Nevada. They did have fewer overall minorities.¹⁹ Based on the articles published in the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the people in Beltrami County were more interested in keeping liquor out of the hands of Native Americans, as shown by eighteen articles on the topic out of fifty-seven articles mentioning minorities.²⁰ None of the remaining newspapers reported on the incident. It may have been due to the fact that none of the other counties had a Native American population according to the 1910 U.S. Census.²¹ Pemiscot County, Missouri’s *Hayti Herald* published eleven articles during the eight weeks surrounding this incident on minorities, all with negative or stereotypical portrayals.²² The *Coosa River News* in Alabama had mostly negative or stereotypical mentions, but they did manage two that were positive in nature.²³ The *Junction City Union* only mentioned Native Americans in articles five times. Overall, they had sixty-nine negative references to minorities and only six positive references.²⁴ The *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times* only had three mentions of Native Americans, with only thirteen mentions of minorities in

¹⁸ “Curious Relic of the Fight,” *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁹ Table 30.

²⁰ Tables 5-6.

²¹ Tables 31-32, 35-36.

²² Table 5.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

the eight-week period.²⁵ It is clear that Native Americans did not elicit the same reaction as other minorities. One could imagine a much wider incidence of reporting had this been a Black family. This entire incident fit very well into preconceived notions of the Native American as a ruthless, uncivilized warrior; the actions of the Native Americans and the result seemed to be expected.

Mary Turner Lynching

Lynching was all too frequent after the Civil War. There is no “humane” lynching, each is horrific – terror, violence, brutality, mutilation. This was never justice; these actions were not sentences determined by a court system after a fair trial. The lynching of Mary Turner in May 1918 in Georgia was one of the most horrific. Mary’s husband had been lynched for allegedly being part of a “conspiracy” in the death of a White plantation owner who had been shot and killed by one of his workers. The day after the lynching of her husband, Mary, who was eight months pregnant, publicly threatened to go to law enforcement to swear out warrants on those who lynched her husband. A mob formed, took Mary to a bridge, and lynched her. She was hung by her ankles from a tree, doused in gasoline and burned alive. Allegedly one member of the mob cut open her stomach causing the baby to drop out. The child was stomped to death by the crowd. Mary’s body was then riddled with gunfire. She was 33 years old. At least twelve Black people were murdered in connection with the death of the White plantation owner.²⁶

The only newspaper in this dataset reporting on this lynching was the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. The United States was involved in fighting World War I, including the use of its

²⁵ Table 25.

²⁶ “The Story of Mary Turner & the Lynching Rampage of 1918,” The Mary Turner Project, <https://www.maryturner.org/>, (accessed September 2020).

segregated military. The country was in war production mode, so all able-bodied men were needed in some way for the war effort, and all people were expected to do their part.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* published one short article on this entire incident. It is clear this was a first report, and there were no follow-up articles in the subsequent six weeks. A total of twelve Black people were lynched in connection with this incident, but at the time of publication the article only stated four Blacks were lynched. The article's causality for the lynching was that the "mob" learned the original murder plot had allegedly been planned at the Turner home. There was no reference to any type of law enforcement involvement, and clearly stated "citizens" were searching for another person who was involved. There was just an assumption of guilt, and acceptance it was a conspiracy plot rather than the actions of one man. It did not go into any detail regarding the actual lynching of Mary, nor did it mention she was pregnant, however it did say she reportedly had the murdered man's pocket watch on her when caught.²⁷ This seems to be a questionable claim, for in the midst of lynchings and speaking out about them, dangerous for Blacks in and of itself, why would she carry an item that would link her directly to the crime? The way this article was written may be the reason none of the other newspapers chose to publish it. It was presented as yet another lynching of a clearly guilty person; the information was presented in a very factual way. The details which showed how horrific this lynching was never were reported. There was no room for questions of guilt or questioning of methods since it seemed a very straightforward case. This was a time of rapid Black growth in Cook County, from less than 0.2% in 1910 to nearly 4% in 1920.²⁸ The reports on minorities in the eight weeks surrounding this incident are not focused heavily on direct negativity at sixty-five mentions, but the number of mentions that appear to remind minorities of

²⁷ "Four Negroes Lynched for Georgia Murder," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1918, 1.

²⁸ Table 33.

their “place” in the social strata is nearly five hundred fifty.²⁹ There appears to be significant concern about this in Cook County even though the minority population was still quite small. In a war economy, however, it would be likely that minorities were spreading into working and living areas previously not open to them.

The combination of the focus on the war effort and the abbreviated article on the incident published in the Chicago newspaper may be the reason none of the other newspapers picked up this story. More than likely, they did not wish to emphasize racial inequities at a time when the country needed to present a united front to end the war as quickly as possible. The country needed increased manufacturing, increased food production, and increased military involvement. It could not do this without the labor of minorities. Despite not reporting Mary Turner’s lynching, the *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times* out of Box Butte County, Nebraska, still overwhelmingly reported on minorities in a negative manner. Thirty-four mentions in thirty-six articles were negative, with only six positive mentions.³⁰ Many of these articles had to do with the war effort; primarily men failing to register for the draft or draft announcements. Black men were always listed separately, another of the “place” reminders. One of the more interesting articles spotlighting the place of Black people was published on June 21. The article reported some men failing to register for the draft were doing so because they were unsure of their age. “Colored women of the south are often careless about recording the exact birth of their children.” The article also claimed, “the medical profession can determine a man’s age just as easily as a horseman can call the turn on a horse.”³¹ Which of course is not true, only an approximation can be made. The assumed ignorance of Black people was being used to force compliance. It could

²⁹ Table 7.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Have Trouble With the Colored Men,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, June 21, 1918, 1.

be argued that White women in rural, particularly poorer, areas would also not register births accurately, but apparently that issue was not discussed.

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* was also focused on the war effort, with articles about creating support among the Native Americans.³² At this time Native Americans were not citizens of the United States and therefore not subject to the draft. They were not required to serve in the military; however, the government spent a lot of time and effort convincing Natives to volunteer for service and support the war effort. To readers in Beltrami County, Minnesota, Mary Turner's death might have appeared to be warranted based on the *Chicago Daily Tribune* article, and the incident happened far from readers' homes. Clearly unity was a more important theme during this time.

The *Hayti Herald*, which for the eight weeks surrounding the 1911 incident had only negative articles on minorities,³³ had a change in 1918 likely due to the war effort. In the eight weeks surrounding Mary Turner's lynching, there were only three negative mentions and three positive mentions of minorities, quite a change in less than ten years. Only six articles mentioned minorities, even though by 1920 the Black population in Pemiscot County, Missouri would be over 14%.³⁴ It may be the editors decided that focusing on incidents such as this lynching would not be helpful in keeping the unity needed for the war effort, and in this case, unity equated to White hegemony. It could be assumed there was also a reluctance to encourage any discontent among the Black population. In a war economy it would be unwise to expend resources on policing an agitated section of the population.

³² "Major Yost Talks to Indians at Red Lake Reservation," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 3, 1918, 1; "The Call of the Tribe," *Ibid.*, June 8, 1918, 2.

³³ Table 5.

³⁴ Table 36.

Geary County, Kansas is unique among the counties in the dataset in that it is the only county housing an Army base, Fort Riley. While the military was not integrated at this time, there were Black divisions housed at this base. The segregation policies of the United States military were reflected in the town, and of one-hundred-four articles mentioning minorities in the *Junction City Union*, there were one-hundred negative mentions, primarily “place” reminders.³⁵ These numbers may be less than actual. Due to segregation, Blacks were in separate units. The newspaper did not need to report a person was Black if it was reported in which unit the person served. It would have been common knowledge in the area which units were Black. Minorities who were in the military did not receive better treatment by the townsfolk than civilian Black people. Blacks in World War I were relegated to support roles, so reporting on a twelve-person lynching would have had the potential to create agitation among the military minority population. The decision to not report this story may have been made in an attempt to prevent a race incident in an area with a relatively large, concentrated, and armed, Black population.

The *Elko Independent* was a bit different. With a large Native American population,³⁶ there were less articles on Black people overall, which may be part of the reason the lynching of Mary Turner was not reported. There were only two positive mentions of Black people, one having to do with a servant using her life savings to buy a war bond, and another about a “genuine negro song” used by troops, albeit only Black troops.³⁷ Clearly there is a focus on unity during wartime. The *Coosa River News* was no different. Although the Cherokee County, Alabama’s minority population would drop from nearly 13% in 1910 to less than 10% in 1920,³⁸

³⁵ Table 7.

³⁶ Table 34.

³⁷ “Buy \$100 Bond? Oh No, Cook Rebels, Takes \$1000,” *Elko Independent*, May 7, 1918, 2; “Long, Tall Cairo Brown Makes Kaiser Lay Weapon Down,” *Ibid.*, May 21, 1918, 1.

³⁸ Table 32.

and the newspaper had fewer directly negative comments on minorities, this was counterbalanced by an increase in subtle “place” reminders, more than it had surrounding any of the previous incidents.³⁹ This appears to be an attempt to show a united front at home while still striving to keep minorities from being treated equally. It is rather surprising that a Deep South county with a fairly large Black minority would not have published at least the basic lynching information, as a deterrent if nothing else. There was an editorial published, however, on the need to do something about common drinking facilities due to Black people with “venereal diseases” and “white men with consumption” drinking from the common fountain as everyone else.⁴⁰ Unity might be the theme of the time, but unity is not to be confused with equality. A mostly unified populace was needed to successfully harness the necessary resources to fight the war, however this is not equality. In fact, this would not be an optimal time to make any type of significant social change. It must be taken into consideration that information on this incident was suppressed at its source, which would be another reason few newspapers reported it. If the *Chicago Daily Tribune* was unable or unwilling to obtain accurate, detailed information, it is not surprising other newspapers did not pick up the story. It was reported as yet another instance of vigilante justice, yet there was no question of guilt of the victims.

³⁹ Tables 1-4.

⁴⁰ “Said-in-Passing,” *Coosa River News*, June 21, 1918, 1.

Chapter 3 1920-1929

The Tulsa Race Riot

Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, known by the locals as Black Wall Street, was home to an affluent Black community; a thriving business district surrounded by a residential area. On May 30, 1921, a Black man named Dick Rowland rode in an elevator with a White woman in downtown Tulsa. Details of what occurred vary, but the following day the man was under arrest and an investigation began. A Tulsa newspaper published an article about the situation which inflamed the Whites.¹ The Sheriff barricaded Rowland inside the courthouse for his protection. Black and White mobs surrounded the courthouse; the Black mob fearing a lynching and hoping to prevent it, and the White mob, smaller than the Black mob at first but growing quickly, incensed by what they believed had occurred. As violence erupted against the Blacks, they fled back to the Greenwood District followed by the White mob. Whites burned and looted the area in the early morning hours of June 1. The governor called in the National Guard who assisted in protecting the Greenwood District, both its property and people. The protection of the people involved rounding up Blacks, some taken from the hands of the White mob, and interning them at the local fairgrounds. Over six thousand Blacks were confined there, some for as long as eight days, for their own protection. Others fled the area entirely. The violence lasted twenty-four hours. The result of the White rampage was thirty-five city blocks burned, over twelve hundred homes destroyed, along with churches, schools, businesses, a

¹ Walker, Malea, "Tulsa Race Massacre: Newspaper Complicity and Coverage," Library of Congress, <https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/05/tulsa-race-massacre-newspaper-complicity-and-coverage/>, (accessed February 15, 2022).

hospital, and a library. There has never been an accurate count of dead and injured, and estimates range from one hundred to three hundred dead. The Blacks detained by the National Guard needed an affidavit sworn to by a White person to be released. No one was ever held accountable for these actions, there was not one single prosecution. After the event, all charges against Rowland were dismissed. This event was so significant that it is still being investigated today.²

Four newspapers in this dataset reported on this incident: the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Hayti Herald*, the *Junction City Union*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. It is rather surprising that an incident resulting in the deaths of at least one hundred people would not have been covered, at least minimally, by every newspaper.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* first reported this incident on June 1. It was the front-page headline: “3 Die in Riot; Call Troops.” This initial article was written on May 31 during the incident, so information was incomplete. The article reported two White and one Black persons killed, with many injured, admitting many casualties had not yet been reported and armed groups were still marching through the streets. The article stated the cause of the disturbance being the arrest of a Black man accused of attacking a White girl, which led to “automobiles filled with armed Negroes” heading for the courthouse. There were “approximately 200 Negroes,” “several armed white men,” and “curious crowds.” There is no mention of the White mob following the dispersing Blacks into Greenwood District, in fact this first article showed the incident as an isolated, relatively small incident.³

² “1921 Tulsa Race Massacre,” Tulsa Historical Society and Museum, <https://www.tulsa-history.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/#flexible-content>, (accessed September 2020).

³ “3 Die in Riot; Call Troops,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 1, 1921, sec 1, 1.

The articles appearing on June 2 were much more informative and began to show the scale of the damage. The headline on this day read “Soldiers Subdue Big Race Riot; 77 Known Dead.” The article’s subtitle claimed hundreds were hurt and thirty blocks were burned, with the loss estimated at one and a half million dollars. The second subtitle, however, changed the tone of the incident. “Patrols Guard 6,000 Negro Prisoners.” Prisoners. These were the same Blacks the National Guard forced to the fairgrounds for their own protection. The article reported eight Whites known dead and listed their names. Greenwood District, an affluent Black community, was referred to as the “Negro district” where “hardly a Negro shanty” was still standing. The reporter gave a detailed picture of the destruction of the area which was said to have housed fifteen thousand Black people. Whites had armed themselves with weapons from hardware and sporting goods stores. As the Black mob near the courthouse dispersed, Whites followed them but were “held at bay” until dawn, when they “began the invasion” of the Greenwood District. Once the fires began, Blacks were shot as they tried to escape. Thankfully, “the whites were lenient to women and children.” There was no reason given as to why the Whites had chosen to follow a dispersing mob and invade the Greenwood District. They were clearly the aggressors in the situation, but apparently it was accepted they had the right to do this. The article continued, describing the overwhelming of relief agencies and the suddenly missing victim from the original attack, here alleged to have been an attempted rape. But it still referred to six thousand Blacks “under custody and heavy guard” in makeshift internment camps, although it generously said “most” of the dispossessed Blacks were innocent. When the National Guard arrived the “entire male Negro population of Tulsa had been swept from the burning Black belt by early afternoon.” “Colored refugees streamed northward from the city in every available conveyance and afoot, many carrying their household belongings on their backs.” Despite this “[b]y dusk the

city was completely dominated by the heavily armed white citizenship, reinforced by every available police officer, militiaman and ex-serviceman within a radius of 250 miles.” This rather begs the question of what was being protected, where was the threat? The men were rounded up and detained, the “refugees” were fleeing the city carrying their few rescued possessions, and dozens if not hundreds were dead or wounded. Blacks were in no condition to organize any type of resistance.⁴ The Black population of Cook County had more than doubled between 1910 and 1920 but was still only about 6%.⁵ Were articles such as these written out of fear of minorities because of the rapid increase in their population? Or were they just reflecting the general racism of the country as a whole?

The June 3 article had an entirely different tone. The first part of the article was an editorial which lamented the incident and asked for help for the victims. The newspaper itself pledged one thousand dollars for the newly homeless in Tulsa. In the following section the newspaper reported a Grand Jury inquiry would be held focused on the actions of law enforcement during this incident. However, it also reported only thirty as a total death count, with three hundred injured and at least four thousand homeless. But it still attempted to blame the Blacks. Stating that it was not all racial but partially economic, the article claimed Blacks were disgruntled with employment discrimination and had been arming for months, and then said many of the Blacks are well-to-do and this caused jealousy among the Whites. So, while the Blacks were victims, they were not because in some way they brought this upon themselves.⁶

There was an interesting editorial on June 3 claiming racial hatred was not the real issue. Races lived and worked side by side, and while there may have been inequities and minor

⁴ “Soldiers Subdue Big Race Riot; 77 Known Dead,” *Ibid*, June 2, 1921, sec 1, 1, 3.

⁵ Table 33.

⁶ “Tulsa Plans Half Million Building Fund,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 3, 1921, sec 1, 1-2.

discrimination, there was not hatred. The real cause of race riots was an alliance between politics and the criminal elements on the edges of society. Without those, race riots would not occur. This is a simplistic explanation that allowed Whites to refuse responsibility for any racial incidents. The problem is the result of outside influences upsetting the status quo, rather than the racism and inequalities deeply imbedded into American society.⁷

The last two articles were published on June 4 and 6. The June 4 edition of the newspaper provided a full-page layout with photos, and an article that had Blacks blaming other Blacks for the incident. Again, just a few troublemakers were the problem, totally discounting the invasion and torching of an entire district by White people. Hundreds of Blacks killed, just a handful of Whites, but Blacks were responsible for the destruction of their homes and businesses. “Agitation by a few irresponsible and radical Negroes was blamed today for the part of the Negroes in the race war in statements by several prominent Negroes and Police Commissioner J.M. Adkinson.”⁸ The final article is a short piece providing casualty totals. A week after the incident the known dead were reported as nine Whites and twenty-six Blacks, with sixteen severely injured and sixty-three slightly injured Whites. There were seventy-two severely injured Blacks and one hundred sixty-three slightly injured.⁹ Based on subsequent investigations, these numbers were grossly underreported, implicating a widespread cover-up by those in power.

The *Hayti Herald* and the *Junction City Union* both reported on this incident, albeit very differently. Missouri and Kansas border the state of Oklahoma, so it would make sense they would report on an incident of this magnitude. The *Hayti Herald* published only one article on

⁷ “The Lesson of Tulsa,” *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸ “Martial Law at Tulsa Ends; City to Atone in Full,” *Ibid.*, June 4, 1921, sec 1, 3.

⁹ “Casualties at Tulsa Are 35 Killed, 314 Wounded,” *Ibid.*, June 6, 1921, sec 1, 4.

this incident. This article left out most details, and squarely placed the blame on Blacks. It began with the curfew imposed by the National Guard to keep the peace. The entire incident was laid at the feet of Rowland, the Black man accused of the original act, here listed as “attempted criminal assault.” It is important to note here the newspaper reported the man’s name incorrectly, referring to him as Dick Howard. Due to his “desperate acts” eleven Whites and ninety Blacks were dead, and over three hundred wounded. The Blacks rounded up by the National Guard were again referred to as prisoners. It also reported a rumor of a large, armed band of Blacks headed toward Tulsa from Muskogee, fifty miles away, but hypothesized it would not materialize. The article then concluded with a statement about a large area damaged by fire and rioters.¹⁰ There was no mention of White mobs, a potential lynching, fleeing residents, or the true devastation in the Greenwood District. Pemiscot County had a minority population of over 14.5% at this time, all Black.¹¹ And while Missouri shares a short border with Oklahoma, there are more than four hundred miles between Pemiscot County and Tulsa. It does not appear that this incident would cause any immediate negative response by Blacks in Pemiscot County, yet the newspaper downplayed the severity of the situation, and firmly blamed Blacks for it. One must consider if this was an attempt to keep control over their own minority population.

In 1920 Geary County, Kansas had a minority population of 7.01%, lower than the national average yet a significant increase from its 4.72% in 1910.¹² Kansas shares its entire southern border with the state of Oklahoma, but Geary County is still nearly three hundred miles from Tulsa. Despite the distance, the *Junction City Union* published five articles over four days

¹⁰ International News Service, “11 Whites, 90 Negroes Die in Riots,” *Hayti Herald*, June 3, 1921, 1.

¹¹ Table 36.

¹² Table 35.

regarding this incident. Two page one articles brought this story to the public. One was just a small note on a police statement that estimated the number of dead at one hundred seventy-five, most burned to death in the fires.¹³ The second was a two-column article which gave many details of the situation. The first part of the article described the fire, still in progress, and the destruction it caused. There was also concern that it may be threatening White neighborhoods. It reported the situation seemed to be calming, and the National Guard was taking control, “rounding up the negroes and segregating them in the jail, convention hall, baseball park and other places which had been turned into prison camps.” No explanation as to why these people needed to be in prison camps. The next section of the article was written later in the day and led with stating nine White men dead and estimating sixty-five Black deaths. The “negro quarter” was in ruins, with losses into the thousands. There was no acknowledgement the Greenwood District was the affluent Black area, meaning the housing and businesses lost would have a higher value. The third portion of this article provided a detailed description of the riots which occurred at dawn. It was learned “60 or 70 motorcars filled with armed white men” completely encircled the Greenwood District. It was also mentioned for the first time that half a dozen airplanes were circling the district and estimated five hundred Whites facing off with one thousand Blacks. It is important to note that the five hundred Whites had traveled to this area, while the one thousand Blacks lived there; they were defending their homes. Pointing out this detail would have changed the tone of the article. The article continued, providing the same information as printed in other newspapers. It did state “a party of white riflemen was reported shooting at all negroes they saw and firing into the houses. The negroes were returning the fire.”

¹³ “Latest News of the Day,” *Junction City Union*, June 1, 1921, 1.

The article repeated the Muskogee rumor and made sure the reader knew the Blacks were armed and threatening.¹⁴

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* reported on this incident in four issues. While the overall percentage of minorities in Beltrami County, Minnesota dropped from 1910 to 1920, in actual numbers there was an increase. There was also a significant increase in White immigration during this time. In whole numbers the minority population increased by just over two hundred while the White population increased by over seventy-five hundred. Native Americans were still the largest majority, but there were Blacks and Chinese listed on the 1920 census.¹⁵

Two articles made the page one column, clearly written at separate times on the same day. The first article did not mention the original incident at all, it noted the fire area, although it did not delineate that it was only the Greenwood District that was burned. It did give some early death and injury statistics but focused more on the groups involved in keeping the peace. It reported “[n]egroes were taken from passenger trains” as part of the roundup, the only newspaper in this dataset to note this. The second article in the column was written later and gave more information. It listed the original incident of the Black man held and charged with assault of a White woman. However, it then said “200 negroes tried to storm a jail” which was patently false. The article made no mention of any type of White mob. The article did state the riot ended “when troops rounded up 3,000 blacks and herded them to a convention hall” and notably they were “marched with hats off,” something that can only be a sign of disrespect.¹⁶ There was so little information on Whites that based on this article alone it would be hard to believe there were any involved. Both articles laid the blame solely on the Black population.

¹⁴ “Many Killed in Race Riot,” *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵ Table 30.

¹⁶ “Oklahoma Race Riots Cost 50 Lives,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 1, 1921, 1.

On June 2, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* published a second article on the incident. The subtitles showed a definite change of tone in this article, reporting Blacks as victims. “Torch Leaves 10,000 Negroes Homeless” and “Race Hatred in Tulsa Costs Nearly 100 Lives and Loss of About \$11,000,000.” Readers might be forgiven in thinking this article would be different from earlier articles, but they would be wrong. “Whites who fought a ferocious battle with practically the entire male black population” had to change their actions and now find homes for the ten thousand negroes. This certainly made the Whites appear selfless and caring, but the article noticeably failed to mention the Whites were the reason these people no longer had homes. It was more sympathetic than the previous day’s report, describing how Blacks fleeing the city hid in the nearby forest for two days without food or water. But upon coming out, farmers helped round them up and delivered them to the National Guard for internment. This was, however, the only article that stated the Black mob originally formed at the courthouse because they had heard rumors the accused man was going to be lynched. No other newspaper in this dataset provided this information.¹⁷ The June 3 article was even more sympathetic. This article reported the looting of the Greenwood District and that the National Guard was now tasked with protecting the property of Blacks. It did give a nod to the trauma the Blacks suffered. “Although the negroes were back at their jobs of menial labor today they were not at ease. It will take some time to overcome their fears after having been shot at and herded about like cattle in a pasture for over 30 hours.” Remember, this district was home to affluent Blacks, but apparently Blacks only worked ‘menial labor’ jobs. Even though this article was beginning to show Blacks as victims, it could not stop itself from blaming the Blacks for the riot. The last sentence: “Reportings of a secret negro cult was believed by authorities to have fanned the race

¹⁷ United Press, “Race Rioting in Oklahoma Quieted Today,” *Ibid.*, June 2, 1921, 1.

feelings.”¹⁸ Not the fact that Whites were on their way to possibly lynch a man, not the fact that city officials armed a White mob and even deputized some of them, or the fact that Whites followed a dispersing mob to their homes, invaded the district, torched it, and then allowed a wholesale roundup and internment of Black men with no cause. There was always the belief that Blacks brought these events upon themselves, and Whites could continue to deny any responsibility for their actions.

The *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, the *Elko Independent*, and the *Coosa River News* chose not to report this incident. Nebraska and Nevada both had small Black populations at this time, with Box Butte County, Nebraska having a 2% Black population¹⁹ and Elko County, Nevada having 0.5% Black population.²⁰ This may be the reason editors chose not to report on the incident; however, this incident seems significant enough that the population diversity should not have been a factor. Even if one takes into consideration the markedly underreported death toll, this was still a major event, including a riot, dozens possibly hundreds dead and injured, and a devastating fire resulting in significant and costly damages. The *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times* had over two and a half times as many negative mentions of minorities than positive mentions during the eight weeks surrounding the incident.²¹ The *Elko Independent*, on the other hand, had no mentions of minorities, negative or positive, in the two weeks prior to the incident, and only negative mentions in the weeks following. However, based on reporting around previous incidents, this appeared to follow the newspaper’s standard reporting norm.²²

¹⁸ United Press “Pillage Marks Close of Riot in Oklahoma,” Ibid, June 3, 1921, 1.

¹⁹ Table 31.

²⁰ Table 34.

²¹ Table 9.

²² Table 1, 3 5, 7, 9.

Cherokee County, Alabama saw a two-thirds decrease in its minority population between 1900 and 1920, but it was still nearly 10%. This was not just a percentage decrease; it was a decrease in whole numbers at about the same ratio.²³ But it may be this relatively higher percentage that was the reason the *Coosa River News* did not publish any articles on this incident. There was only one positive mention of minorities in the eight weeks surrounding this incident, but ten negative mentions. The negative mentions happened primarily after the incident but were not direct. All were “place” reminders; segregated church service announcements and obituaries of Blacks referring to them as “aunt” and “darkey.”²⁴ One can draw the conclusion the newspaper did not wish to create sympathy toward the Blacks or incite aggression among the Blacks in their county. It would have been difficult to report on this story with only a pro-White bias when there were so many more Blacks killed and their entire district burned to the ground, so the editors may have found it easier to ignore the incident as a whole.

The Exeter Incident

What happens when the West Coast agricultural industry, heavily dependent on Asian labor, people willing to work at low wages for long hours in poor conditions often in a transient capacity, had to abide by changing federal immigration laws which severely restricted that very demographic from entering the country? They found a different minority group willing to work long hours for low pay in poor conditions. The Immigration Act of 1924 barred Japanese from entering the U.S.²⁵ The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and its eventual permanent extension by

²³ Table 32.

²⁴ “Local Interest News and Notes,” *Coosa River News*, June 10, 1921, 3; “Following is a List of Cherokee Boys Who Were Killed or Injured in the World War,” *Ibid.*, July 8, 1921, 4.

²⁵ “The Immigration Act of 1924,” History, Art & Archives, United States House of Representatives, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Immigration-Act-of-1924/>, (accessed July 27, 2021).

the Geary Act²⁶ was already in place barring the entry of Chinese laborers. However, the Philippine Islands were a U.S. territory, so Filipinos were not excluded by the Immigration Act. These workers took over the agricultural roles formerly filled by East Asian immigrants and became the major migrant labor group in the Central Valley of California by 1929.

Unfortunately, racial incidents did not stop, they were just directed at a new target. The several weeks leading up to an Autumn Festival in October 1929 near Exeter, California, were filled with Whites harassing the two hundred Filipino workers who lived in the area. Filipinos were being blamed for keeping wages low and taking jobs from Whites. At the Autumn Festival, an incident occurred between Whites and Filipinos. The exact precipitating event is unclear, however it resulted in the stabbing of two White men by a Filipino man. The wounds were not serious, but that did not stop a mob of over three hundred White men from forming and pursuing the attacker and his group to a barn on the ranch where the Filipinos were living. The barn was set on fire and innocent Filipinos were attacked and forced to flee the area. Two Whites were arrested for setting the barn on fire.²⁷

Despite the fact there were no deaths, and this could be considered comparatively minor in relation to other racial incidents, three newspapers in this dataset covered this incident. The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published reports of the riots. Filipinos were a very small percentage of the U.S. population, not even appearing as a separate category in the U.S. Census until 1960.²⁸ There does not appear to be any specific outside influences that would have exacerbated perceptions to cause this racial

²⁶ “Chinese Exclusion Act (1882),” Our Documents, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47>, (accessed July 27, 2021).

²⁷ Fabros, Alex S. Jr. “In the Heat of the Night: The Exeter and Watsonville Riots 1929-1930,” Positively Filipino, <http://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/in-the-heat-of-the-night-the-exeter-and-watsonville-riots-1929-1930>, (accessed September 2020).

²⁸ Table 29.

incident. The Philippine Islands were working toward independence from the United States, but this was a lengthy, ongoing process and does not appear to have created increased animosity that would have affected the reporting of this incident.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* published one article on this incident on October 26. It is a short article but managed to convey bias via omission. It stated four Whites were injured but did not note whether any Filipinos were hurt. The “Filipino laborers exchanged angry words with a group of white workers.” While this did not say the Filipinos were the instigators, the way in which it was written certainly gave the reader that impression. It described a “crowd of white persons” who spread the fight to a ranch resulting in a fire, destruction of hay, and demolishing of automobiles belonging to Filipinos. It did not say, however, that a White farmer owned this ranch, and this was the temporary housing for the workers. But it did admit one of the results of the incident was a “number of Filipinos being chased from the community.”²⁹ Since Filipinos were not listed as a separate ethnic category in the 1920 U.S. Census, they would be categorized as “Other.” At this time in Cook County, the “Other” category would only have been between 0.01% and 0.05% of the total population.³⁰ One might think it is surprising the incident received any press at all considering the small population of Filipinos in Chicago, however, a reader would be seeing an article focusing on the Whites in the incident.

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* apparently felt this incident was a greater importance than the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. An article on this incident was published on the front page and referred to it as a race riot, unlike how it was covered by the previous newspaper. While participant numbers were not mentioned in the Chicago newspaper, this newspaper stated five hundred people were involved. This article was not much longer than the *Chicago Daily Tribune* article,

²⁹ “4 Men Stabbed in Battle with Filipino Group,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1929, sec 1, 4.

³⁰ Table 33.

but it contained much more information and portrayed this as a violent racial event. Rather than some “fighting,” this was a mob of Whites in “an attempt to drive the Filipinos out of that section of the county.” It was reported as something beyond a disagreement between laborers; it was a full-blown racial incident. The article described the torching of the shed as did the previous article, however this article pointed out the shed was where Filipinos were residing while working on the farm. As the Filipinos “retreated” from the carnival, three hundred Whites followed them to the farm. After the fire, the Filipinos fled in their automobiles or hid in the vineyards. As they fled, the “whites pursued them, pelting them with stones and brandishing clubs and pitchforks.”³¹ This was a quite different article than what was published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and it was published a day earlier as well. Even though Beltrami County appeared to have no Filipino population at this time, the editors apparently felt it to be a significant enough incident to be reported. Overall, during the eight-week period surrounding this incident, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* had proportionally fewer negative or stereotypical references to minorities than did the *Chicago Daily Tribune*,³² even though the overall percentage of minorities in Beltrami County was higher than the percentage of minorities in Cook County.³³

The *Junction City Union* also reported on this incident, the longest article of the three newspapers. The first five paragraphs of the article were the same as reported in the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, with both newspapers using the same Associated Press wire article. However, this article had an additional paragraph that was not used by the editors at the Bemidji newspaper. It was only two sentences, but it showed the depth of the race issue. It said that after

³¹ “Race Riot Caused by Stabbing of White Man,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, October 25, 1929, 1.

³² Table 11.

³³ Table 30, 33.

leaving the ranch the mob had torched, the Whites separated into smaller groups and headed to other ranches “determined to drive out any Filipinos remaining in the vicinity.” The article had no information on the results of these actions.³⁴ The “Other” population in Geary County was small but did increase nearly 0.4% between 1920 and 1930.³⁵ This may have included some Filipinos. Regardless, this was the only newspaper in this dataset mentioning the race trouble did not end with this one incident and that it was an ongoing assault on Filipino laborers. Unfortunately, this newspaper still reported eighty-three negative or stereotypical mentions as compared to twenty-five positive mentions of minorities.³⁶

The *Elko Independent* did not report on this article, even though Nevada borders California and Oregon, two of the states having racial events involving Filipinos. Between 1920 and 1930 the minority population increased by just over 2%, but whereas in 1920 less than 3.5% were other than Native Americans, by 1930 over 7% of minorities were other than Native Americans.³⁷ It would be logical to believe that a county with a growing minority population that was becoming more diverse might have thought its readership would be interested in this incident. However, since this incident did not result in deaths or serious injuries, it may not have been considered newsworthy. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the *Elko Independent* published sixty negative or stereotypical mentions of minorities as opposed to ten positive mentions, and these were overwhelmingly focused on local incidents.³⁸ It is conceivable this county was concerned more with issues of its own quickly increasing minority population and chose not to bring in outside problems involving a population that did not reside in their area.

³⁴ “Mob Clashes in California,” *Junction City Union*, October 25, 1929, 8.

³⁵ Table 35.

³⁶ Table 11.

³⁷ Table 34.

³⁸ Table 11.

The *Coosa River News*, published in a county with no minorities other than Blacks,³⁹ also did not report this incident. This is not surprising; it was a distant incident geographically and would probably be something of no interest to their readers. Pemiscot County, Missouri also had few minorities other than Blacks at this time.⁴⁰ One would suspect this is the reason this incident was not reported in the newspaper, but surprisingly, despite have more than a 14% Black population, the *Missouri Herald* published almost no articles on any minorities. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident there were nine negative or stereotypical mentions, and no positive mentions. Six of the eight editions had no mention of minorities at all.⁴¹ It appears the *Missouri Herald* was either disinterested in, denying, or negating the existence of minorities in its community.

Between 1920 and 1930 the largest minority increase in Box Butte County, Nebraska was Mexicans, from zero to 1.29% of the population.⁴² In a rural agricultural area, it would not be unexpected to see this increase considering the use of Mexicans as field laborers. This may be the reason why the *Alliance Times-Herald* did not report on the Exeter incident. In part, it may be that, while there were no Filipinos, the overall situation was similar enough to the local situation the decision was made to not highlight or portray incidents that might encourage similar actions locally. It is clear from the newspaper that in the eight weeks surrounding this incident they were having race issues of their own. Like other newspapers, there was a high number of negative and stereotypical references to minorities with seventy-seven, and very few positives with only five.⁴³ This does seem like an unusually strong negative portrayal in a county with a

³⁹ Table 32.

⁴⁰ Table 36.

⁴¹ Table 11.

⁴² Table 31.

⁴³ Table 11-12.

minority population of just over 3%.⁴⁴ One must ask what could be driving this strong negative reaction to minorities in an area with so few. There is no local Native American minority in this county, which suggests a settlement of the area by all Whites. This strong negative reaction may be a combination of fear and resentment of minorities moving into what it's residents thought of as an all-White area.

⁴⁴ Table 31.

Chapter 4 1930-1939

The Lynching of Nelson Nash

In the early morning hours of February 19, 1933, a banker and his wife in Ringgold, Louisiana were taken from their home to the bank by an unidentified man. The banker was ordered to open the vault, however, was unable to do so. The intruder then walked the couple a mile along the railroad track and allegedly attempted to assault the wife. The banker fought back and was badly beaten, but the wife was able to escape to a nearby cabin and authorities were notified. The banker died on the way to the hospital. Within a few hours a White posse brought Nelson Nash to law enforcement as the murderer. Despite his protestations of innocence and the refusal of the banker's wife to identify him as the assailant, he was intercepted by a mob while being transported by law enforcement. Taking him back to the crime scene, the mob intended to burn him at the stake but was unable to find dry wood. They hung him from a tree and riddled him with bullets, but not before cutting out his tongue when he asked if he could pray. Nash's family was warned to stay away from the scene, and after eighteen hours the coroner cut down the body. He was reportedly buried nearby in an unmarked grave. The coroner's report indicated up to one thousand people participated in the lynching. The local sheriff purportedly investigated the incident, but no charges were filed. Nelson Nash was 24 years old.¹

Four of the newspapers in this dataset reported on this incident. These were the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, the *Elko Independent*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

¹ Civil Rights and Restorative Justice, "Nelson Nash," Northeastern University, https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/downloads/neu:m04286971?datastream_id=content, (accessed September 2020).

The country was closely following another case involving minorities during this time. In 1931 nine Black teenagers were arrested and convicted of raping two White women on a train. All were sentenced to death by the all-White jury; however, the judge declared a mistrial in the case of the thirteen-year-old. Known in the press as the Scottsboro Boys, their cases wound their way through the legal system between 1931 and 1935, resulting in three United States Supreme Court rulings, including one requiring Black people be allowed to serve on juries. The women who were the alleged victims of the boys eventually admitted they had fabricated the incident.² The frustration and anger of both Whites and minorities exacerbated by this case must be taken into consideration when viewing incidents against minorities during this timeframe.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported the Nash lynching in one article on June 20. There were many inconsistencies. The article began by stating the banker was beaten to death by a Black man and named Nelson Nash as the perpetrator, stating he confessed. In reality, Nash protested his innocence all along. The woman he allegedly assaulted did not identify him as the assailant. And while the final paragraph's subtitle, "Captured Near Scene of Killing" certainly implied guilt by proximity to the crime scene, he was actually caught fifteen miles from the site of the beating.³ There are approximately a dozen small towns within a fifteen-mile radius of the crime scene; it was unclear if Nash was living in the area at the time. There was no information provided on why the posse believed Nash was the perpetrator or how they were able to locate him. In the previous decade Cook County's minority population nearly doubled.⁴ This acceptance with no questioning of the narrative may reflect Cook County's struggles in dealing with the increase in their own minority population.

² "The Scottsboro Boys," National Museum of African American History & Culture, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog/scottsboro-boys>, (accessed September 15, 2021).

³ "Louisiana Mob Lynches Negro After Slaying," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 20, 1933, sec 1, 2.

⁴ Table 33.

This incident was reported in the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, and while the article came from the Associated Press wire service as did the article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the two newspapers did not publish the same article. This article was even more matter of fact that Nash was the perpetrator of the crime. It failed to report the banker's wife did not identify him when given the opportunity. It did say several hundred citizens in a posse captured Nash and brought him back to law enforcement, where he confessed. The posse then intercepted him during transport and lynched him. It seems improbable that a posse of several hundred would bother to turn him over to law enforcement only to take him away again and lynch him. If true, this may have been a way of shielding law enforcement, in effect providing deniability they were complicit in a lynching as well as legitimatizing the lynch mob, providing the appearance of following the law. While not suggested, it would not have been unheard of to have law enforcement hand a person over to a lynch mob. There did not appear to be any condemnation in the lynching report, as if it were so common it was just another way justice was meted out.⁵ The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* had very few articles on Blacks in the eight weeks surrounding this incident,⁶ more than likely because the Black population in the county at this time was only 0.07%.⁷ However, when it did mention Blacks, other than advertising a Black basketball team coming to play, all mentions save one were negative or stereotypical.⁸

The *Junction City Union* published one article on this incident. It appears to be the same Associated Press article used by the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. There was no question of guilt, just a recounting of the incident and the lynching.⁹ While there were positive minority references

⁵ "Negro Lynched After Slaying Louisiana Man," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 20, 1933, 1.

⁶ Table 14.

⁷ Table 30.

⁸ Table 13.

⁹ "Angry Mob Lynches Negro," *Junction City Union*, February 20, 1933, 3.

during the eight weeks surrounding this incident, most references to Blacks were negative.¹⁰ The *Elko Independent*, on the other hand, had an article which provided information not found in any of the other newspapers in this dataset. The most noticeable difference was the role of law enforcement. According to this article, there was no jail in the area, so law enforcement locked Nash in a garage, bravely fending off an angry mob. When Nash supposedly confessed, the sheriff and deputies walked him to the area of the beating so he could locate the gun used in the assault. It was during this walk, despite the pleading of the sheriff, that the mob overwhelmed law enforcement and took Nash to be lynched.¹¹ One must seriously question why, in the face of an angry mob that is said to have numbered two thousand men at one point, would the sheriff remove Nash from the only location where he could be protected and walk, not drive, him two miles from town. Clearly all the articles on this incident, despite some factual differences, were complicit in legitimizing the mob's actions. Everything was stated factually, there was no question of Nash's guilt even though the banker's wife would not identify him. No newspaper suggested this could be a case of mistaken identity or called for the prosecution of the lynchers. Law enforcement's role was at best shown as inadequate and rather minimal throughout the entire event.

Three newspapers did not report on this incident: the *Missouri Herald*, the *Coosa River News*, and the *Alliance Times and Herald*. Two of the counties, Pemiscot County, Missouri and Cherokee County, Alabama had significant Black populations at this time, and few if any other minorities.¹² In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the *Missouri Herald's* only positive mentions of minorities involved the sport of boxing. The *Coosa River News* was a tiny bit better,

¹⁰ Table 13.

¹¹ "500 Men Lynch Negro Killer," *Elko Independent*, February 20, 1933, 1.

¹² Tables 32, 36.

but negative or stereotypical mentions outnumbered positive mentions thirty-six to six.¹³ Both of these newspapers were following a similar reporting pattern for previous incidents. The information was ignored, providing legitimacy to the act by not calling out those involved.

Minorities in sports seemed to be the exception to negative articles. The *Alliance Times and Herald* had twelve positive minority references in the eight weeks surrounding this incident,¹⁴ and all but two involved a sporting event. Even so, this was more than the specifically negative references, of which there were nine. Box Butte County, Nebraska had a very small minority population at only 3.5%.¹⁵ This may account for the lack of reporting on this incident, editors may have felt that it would not have been of interest to their readership. The information provided on this incident was not so unique that this lynching would have been an attention-grabbing headline.

The Harlem Race Riot

A 16-year-old Black-Puerto Rican boy decided on March 19, 1935, to steal a penknife from the Kress Five and Ten store. He was caught in the act by the store owner and the assistant manager, who summoned police. The store owner chose not to press charges and the boy was sent home. From that point, a series of misinterpretations led to the first riot in New York City in the 20th century. A police officer led the boy out the back of the store to avoid a gathering crowd. Seen by the spectators, someone yelled they were taking the boy to the basement to beat him. Shortly thereafter an ambulance arrived and then left, empty. Even though it had only been called to treat minor wounds sustained by the store owner and assistant manager, the crowd

¹³ Table 13.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Table 31.

assumed the empty ambulance meant the boy had been killed. A hearse driver visiting a family member happened to park across the street from the store. The crowd assumed it was there to retrieve the boy's body. The police arrived to disperse the crowd, assuring them the boy was unharmed. The crowd did not believe them, demanding they produce the boy. The police responded that it was none of the crowd's business. Eventually the police circulated a photo, the crowd claimed it was fake. Word quickly spread across Harlem police had mistreated the boy. Thousands of people gathered for a demonstration, and someone threw an object through a store window. The police arrested the demonstration speaker and tried to disperse the crowd. The demonstration reformed nearby, and a second speaker was arrested. Crowds began to gather in large numbers and looting and rioting began as the sun set. By the following day, the riot was over. Three Blacks were killed, sixty people were injured, and seventy-five people, mostly Black, were arrested. There was over \$200 million in property damage. This is the first incident in this dataset where Blacks rioted in protest, rather than Whites rioting or attacking in revenge for an incident they ascribed to a Black person.¹⁶

Five of the seven newspapers in this dataset reported on this incident: the *Alliance Times and Herald*, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, the *Elko Independent*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. In the background, the ongoing Great Depression created employment stressors that were significantly higher among minorities. Minorities were often the first to lose jobs, and the unemployment rate for some was over 50% while the average unemployment rate was 25%.¹⁷

¹⁶ Wang, Tabitha, "Harlem Race Riot (1935)," Black Past, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/events-african-american-history/harlem-riot-1935/>, (accessed September 2020).

¹⁷ "Minority Groups and the Great Depression," Encyclopedia, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/economics/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/minority-groups-and-great-depression>, (accessed September 19, 2021).

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* had two articles on this incident. The first article gave a somewhat detailed accounting of what occurred but also spent some time exploring who might be to blame for the riot. The mayor blamed “a few irresponsible individuals,” the police were protecting the area from the “hoodlum element,” others blamed Communists, and still others blamed economic conditions, segregation, and discrimination, saying the Communists were only taking advantage of a situation. The Communists tried to pin everything on police brutality although witnesses said the police were restrained. For the first time in this dataset, an article shows a reaction which could create change. Black leaders, and Whites who wanted to help them, were planning a mass meeting to show the public just how bad the conditions were for Black people in Harlem. Rather than just publishing articles relating the incident and maybe following up on it, this article showed a group of people taking a situation and choosing to use it to promote better understanding of the struggles of minorities.¹⁸

A second article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* related a specific incident. During the riot, Black shop owners were writing the word “colored” on their windows to prevent them from being smashed. The Chinese owner of a laundry saw this and wrote “me colored too” on his window. His window was smashed anyway. The newspaper refers to this as “a grim touch of humor” in the situation, but it is doubtful the Chinese proprietor found this humorous.¹⁹ This was the first mention in this dataset of a second minority involved in an incident.

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* also published two articles on this incident. The first article detailed the incident and was filled with inflammatory words and descriptions. “Rioters raged,” “mob gatherings,” “guerrilla outbreaks,” and “roving bands of negroes” were some of the terms used. Harlem itself, noted as the largest Black settlement in the United States, was “a bedlam

¹⁸ “Thousands Mill Through Harlem Riot Districts,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 21, 1935, sec 1, 3.

¹⁹ “Chinese is ‘Colored, Too,’ But Fails to Save His Shop,” *Ibid*.

with shots, screeching sirens of police cars, clanging fire apparatus,” and the “clamor of the rioters.” The facts of the incident were minimal, with the age of the boy reported as ten years of age rather than sixteen, and “agitators” being charged by police. There was no mention of Communists which had been pointed out repeatedly in the Chicago newspaper, nor any detailing of the misinterpretation of events that led to the riot or the underlying stressor conditions of unemployment and discrimination. The group planning a meeting to show people the conditions of Harlem was also not mentioned, so no positive action appeared to come from the riot.²⁰ This incident was clearly an overreaction by Blacks to a situation where the White store manager was considerate enough to let the perpetrator go without charges. The second article published in the newspaper, the following day, was the article about the Chinese laundry owner. At least in this version it was not “dark humor.”²¹ The negative or stereotypical references to minorities appeared at the same frequency as for previous incidents, however the positive mentions appear to be noticeably more frequent than for any of the previous incidents.²²

The *Junction City Union* used the same Associated Press wire article as the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*; however, they printed a longer version. This version contained significantly more detail of the riot and its causes. It related how the riot began due to rumors and misinterpretation of the original incident and reported policemen blaming a Communist group for starting the riot. It stated police were unable to find the boy until 2 a.m. to prove he was alive. There was a gun battle between a police officer and an armed Black youth. Rioters watched buildings burn and assaulted innocent bystanders, all of whom appeared to have been White. While specific injury circumstances were given for at least four White people, there was only one report of a specific

²⁰ “At Least Hundred Hurt in Harlem Disorders,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 20, 1935, 1.

²¹ “Flashes of Life,” *Ibid.*, March 21, 1935, 6.

²² Table 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15.

injury to a Black, and it was life-threatening.²³ The second article related the story of the Chinese laundry owner and his smashed window.²⁴ Geary County had only a minor increase in minorities in the previous ten years. This appears to be reflected in the amount of negative versus positive mentions of minorities, there was no notable change.²⁵

The first of two articles appearing in the *Elko Independent* was a very brief recitation of the incident, albeit in very negative terms. Again, phrases such as “hoodlum marauding” and “guerilla bands” were used when describing the actions. It was also mentioned that Blacks had sharpshooters on roofs, one of whom jumped off when surrounded by police. According to the article, this was all due to a false report of the beating death of a Black youth. It does not bother to recount the stages of the incident, although it could be argued as not entirely negative since the cause of the riot was to protest the beating of a child.²⁶

Two days later the newspaper published a photo taken in Harlem the night of the riot. It showed police and Black people struggling. While there was no article with this photo, the caption stated the riot began “after a negro boy was said to have been ejected from a store.” This was a quite different cause of the action, even compared to the previous article in this newspaper. By stating this so incorrectly, it made it appear the riot was an entirely irrational response to what was really a non-incident. It was vastly different than saying the crowd was under the impression a child had been beaten to death.²⁷ The newspaper articles in the eight weeks surrounding this incident were overwhelmingly negative or stereotypical of minorities.²⁸ There were only five positive mentions, and only one of these was written after the incident. All but

²³ “Riots in Harlem,” *Junction City Union*, March 20, 1935, 6.

²⁴ “Tactful Chinese,” *Ibid.*, March 21, 1935, 4.

²⁵ Table 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15.

²⁶ “Harlem Stages Riots as Negro Guerillas Avenge Beating,” *Elko Independent*, March 20, 1935, 1.

²⁷ “Scores Injured as Harlem Mob Battles Police,” *Ibid.*, March 22, 1935, 1.

²⁸ Table 15-16.

one of these articles involved sports. Elko County, Nevada had a diverse minority population. Outside of Cook County, it is the only county in this dataset that had representatives of each minority listed in the 1930 U.S. Census, and its minority population was higher than the national average.²⁹ This may account for the overwhelmingly negative view on minorities.

The *Alliance Times and Herald* published only one article on the incident, and it was the story of the Chinese laundry owner.³⁰ There were no articles about the actual riot events. Box Butte County, Nebraska had a very small minority population primarily consisting of Blacks and Mexicans³¹ so it is not a surprise the event was not a major article in the newspaper. But again, for a county with such a small minority percentage, the number of negative versus positive mentions in the newspapers seems unusually high. There are seven times as many negative as positive references,³² and of the positive references only two are mentions that do not involve sports.

Neither the *Missouri Herald* nor the *Coosa River News* published articles on this event. Pemiscot County, Missouri had the highest percentage of minorities at this time with nearly 27%, mostly Black.³³ Cherokee County, Alabama had a relatively high number with nearly 10%, all Black.³⁴ With such a high percentage of minorities, the *Missouri Herald* still had two of the eight issues surrounding this incident with zero mentions of minorities, and only one positive mention. The mentions published were all negative, and more overtly negative than subtle place reminders.³⁵ The *Coosa River News*, on the other hand, while not reporting this incident, did have a better balance of negative versus positive mentions. There were only three outright

²⁹ Tables 29-36.

³⁰ "Peep Sights," *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 26, 1935, 4.

³¹ Table 31.

³² Table 15.

³³ Table 36.

³⁴ Tables 32.

³⁵ Table 15.

negative mentions, and one was a retelling of an historical article. There were six positive mentions. While the negative and stereotypical mentions were still three times more than the positive mentions, they are more subtle,³⁶ and the positive mentions are not limited to sports. It does not appear that either of these two newspapers were interested in reporting on articles that might incite any type of agitation among their minority populations. Alabama may still have had a very deep-seated resentment of Blacks and did not want them to be shown having any control or power, and Missouri either felt the same or may have been having their own difficulties assimilating a large influx of minorities into their area in a short amount of time.

³⁶ Table 15.

Chapter 5 1940-1949

Executive Order #9066 and the Terminal Island Incident

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order #9066. In an effort to prevent espionage and sabotage, the military was granted the power to declare areas of the country restricted in the name of national security. The order authorized the military, at their own discretion, to remove persons from these areas. The military was under the obligation to offer food, transportation, housing, and other accommodations as necessary. No specific ethnicity was mentioned in the order. It did not provide in any way recompense for the loss of jobs, homes, businesses, or personal property.¹ People of Japanese descent living on the West Coast had been segregated for decades. Yet as a group they were prosperous, owning land and small businesses. In 1940, people of Japanese descent owned 4% of the farmland in California but produced more than 10% of farm resources. Decades of discrimination and distrust, combined with jealousy, physical characteristics which made them easily identifiable, and anger toward the Japanese for the bombing of Pearl Harbor, allowed Americans to quickly target Japanese and Japanese-Americans, removing them en masse from the West Coast. Terminal Island near Los Angeles, California was a tight knit Japanese fishing community established at the turn of the century. This close community kept alive many of their Japanese homeland traditions. Within two days of the Executive Order, community residents were given forty-eight-hour notice to leave. Approximately three thousand people were forced out of their homes,

¹ U.S. President, Executive Order, "Executive Order 9066 of February 19, 1942, Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=219>, (accessed September 2020).

leaving nearly everything behind. There was no structure set up for storage of belongings, care or sale of businesses or personal assets. Despite efforts of a few local White people, most possessions were abandoned. After leaving, the military bulldozed the homes and businesses in the community. What had once been a thriving fishing community was completely erased.² During the war, the U.S. ultimately relocated 122,000 people of Japanese ancestry, 70,000 of whom were U.S. citizens. The majority were moved to ten different internment camps in the West, surrounded by fences, barbed wire, and armed guards. As a military operation authorized by Executive Order, these actions were not subject to any civilian court of appeals.

Only three newspapers in this dataset, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the *Missouri Herald*, and the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, reported on the release of the Executive Order. All the newspapers reported on the removal of Japanese from the West Coast to internment camps, but only the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on the incident at Terminal Island. The United States had entered the war only ten weeks earlier. The attack on Pearl Harbor and its repercussions were still in the news, along with the swift Japanese advances in the Philippines. While the Executive Order did not specify those of Japanese descent as the targets, it was much too easy to make them the face of the enemy. The total number of those claiming Japanese ancestry on the 1940 census was less than 0.1%.³ Only two of the counties in this dataset had any of Japanese descent living in their area. Cook County, Illinois had 0.01%⁴ and Elko County, Nevada had 0.55%.⁵

² “Japanese-American History at Terminal Island,” Los Angeles Conservancy, <https://www.laconservancy.org/node/1020>, (accessed September 23, 2021).

³ Table 29.

⁴ Table 33.

⁵ Table 34.

The first article reporting on the order in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* made it clear those with Japanese ancestry were the intended targets of the Executive Order. While the order itself did not specify ethnicity, the Attorney General stated the purpose was to remove sixty thousand “second generation Japanese from the west coast.” Second generation means they were U.S. citizens. Despite this, the newspaper was careful to point out the order applied to anyone, it was not singling out one group. It would even allow the military to ban “undesirables” from Washington DC if believed necessary. The article also went on to state the Attorney General believed the civilian courts would not interfere, seeing it was a military matter.⁶ This article did not raise the question of the legality (not to mention morality) of forced removal of those with Japanese ancestry to internment camps. However, it could be considered that by even mentioning the legal aspect, the newspaper may have been considering the order was an overreach by the executive branch and the military. Two days later on February 24, the newspaper reported the first action taken under the new Executive Order, the evacuation around Terminal Island. “Hundreds of men riding in trucks with fixed bayonets and machine guns” and “navy planes” flying overhead were in the Japanese area of Los Angeles, removing hundreds from an area surrounding military installations. The newspaper did report the “evacuation” was largely “orderly and voluntary.” One would not expect much resistance with armed soldiers involved. The article did not say what would happen to the evacuees, nor did it mention what happened to their resources – homes, businesses, personal possessions.⁷ On the same page was an article about a map seized from a Japanese spy purportedly showing invasion plans for the

⁶ “Empower Army to Clear Vital Areas of Japs,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 21, 1942, sec 1, 1.

⁷ “Troops Occupy Japanese Area in Los Angeles,” *Ibid.*, February 24, 1942, sec 1, 2.

United States. It was to be discussed in Congress.⁸ This alone would be enough for most readers to justify the mass internment of those of Japanese ancestry living in America.

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* published what was in effect a notice of the Executive Order. In a noticeably short article, it stated the military was being directed to set up areas where “any persons, either aliens or citizens,” could be removed.⁹ It is interesting to note the wording of this notice, where “any persons” could be removed. This implied discretion as to whom might be harmful to have in those areas, not that the areas themselves necessarily needed to be cleared of all people. This certainly left the door open to focus on “undesirables.” The following day, however, an article was published that made it more than clear those of Japanese ancestry were the targets. During a meeting of California county supervisors, the newspaper reported the group urged concentration camps be utilized to hold “enemy aliens and their descendants who are now disloyal, or may become disloyal to the United States,” specifically referring to the Japanese. The article then went on to describe attacks by civilians on Japanese in the area, including one murder.¹⁰ Subsequent newspaper articles told of raids occurring, but this newspaper did not cover the Terminal Island incident. While Beltrami County had no minorities identifying as being of Japanese ethnicity, it did have nearly a 10% minority population.¹¹ This article was not blatantly anti-Japanese in its reporting and appeared to lay out the information in a way that might make one question whether this was the best way to enforce the order or may be pointing out how others could use this to legally justify discrimination already present. It may be an issue of walking a fine line between being a supportive, unified home front and calling out an injustice that could be construed as aiding the enemy. The newspaper did, however, still have

⁸ “Reveal Jap Map Showing Plans for U.S. Invasion,” *Ibid.*, sec 1, 2.

⁹ “After Aliens,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 20, 1942, 2.

¹⁰ “Handling Aliens is Becoming Hard Problem,” *Ibid.*, February 21, 1942, 6.

¹¹ Table 30.

significantly more negative or stereotypical mentions of minorities than positive mentions.¹²

There are many more anti-Japanese “filler” pieces which never appeared in previous editions, just short one-line items such as “[o]ur idea of an optimist is a girl who sends Japanese-made silk things to a Chinese laundry and expects to get them back in good condition.”¹³

The *Alliance Times and Herald* published no articles on the Executive Order or the beginning of the mass roundups. But it did publish a quote from a California congressman calling for people of Japanese descent to be moved to inland concentration camps and moved quickly.¹⁴ It also published an article on March 10 describing how Little Tokyo in Los Angeles was dying and would soon be a ghost town. There is no mention of forced relocations. In fact, there was little sympathy toward those targeted, implying this was the result of “fifth column” activity in Pearl Harbor.¹⁵ With a Japanese population of zero and a total minority population of less than 1.5%,¹⁶ the newspaper published articles containing over one hundred fifty negative or stereotypical mentions as opposed to only seventeen positive mentions.¹⁷ Over half of the negative mentions involved Japanese.¹⁸

The *Missouri Herald* did mention the Executive Order in one paragraph near the end of an article about wartime rationing. It was only a statement that the military had the authority to remove persons, aliens and citizens, from sensitive areas. It did point out that over four thousand enemy aliens had been apprehended by the FBI since the war began. Over one-third of those were said to be Japanese from the West Coast.¹⁹ There was one more article regarding relocation

¹² Table 17.

¹³ “Conversations,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 6, 1942, 4.

¹⁴ “News Briefs,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 27, 1942, 10.

¹⁵ “‘Little Tokyo’ Dying in Los Angeles Area,” *Ibid.*, March 10, 1942, 10.

¹⁶ Table 31.

¹⁷ Table 18

¹⁸ Table 17.

¹⁹ “Rationing,” *Missouri Herald*, February 27, 1942, 2.

on April 8, which stated the first large scale internment (twenty thousand people) was taking place on the Colorado River Indian Reservation in Arizona, specifically for “citizen and alien Japanese residents.”²⁰ In the eight weeks surrounding the enactment of the Executive Order, the newspaper published only four articles mentioning minorities favorably, but over forty with negative or stereotypical portrayals.²¹ The vast majority of these involved the Japanese.²² Clearly on display was the concept of a united home front against enemies, particularly those who attacked U.S. soil.

It is interesting that the *Junction City Union* did not mention the Executive Order, considering the county was home to a large military installation. They did report on enemy alien roundups on February 24 and 25, but neither article covered the mass round ups in the Los Angeles area. The first was in Dallas, Texas and did not specify the race of those arrested.²³ The second article discussed the fate of the over five thousand enemy aliens apprehended to date. Of the just over one thousand cases adjudicated thus far, over four hundred were being interned, with the remaining either released outright or on parole. While Japanese were included in those numbers, it did not provide a disposition of cases broken down by ethnicity.²⁴ A February 27 article mentioned San Francisco area residents being “shipped” somewhere else. The wording in this article was interesting, as it ended with “the ultimate disposal of California’s 93,000 Japanese, 33,000 of whom are aliens.” Although the implication is 60,000 are U.S. citizens, the article was careful to avoid that specific wording.²⁵ In the eight weeks surrounding the Executive Order, the newspaper published articles with over one hundred negative or

²⁰ “Aliens and Disloyal Citizens,” *Ibid.*, April 3, 1942, 2.

²¹ Table 17.

²² Table 18.

²³ “Seize More Enemy Aliens,” *Junction City Union*, February 24, 1942, 3.

²⁴ “Holding 448 Aliens,” *Ibid.*, February 25, 1942, 1.

²⁵ “Bulletins and News Briefs,” *Ibid.*, February 27, 1942, 2.

stereotypical mentions, and less than twenty positive mentions.²⁶ There were more anti-Japanese mentions, as expected, but not nearly the overwhelming amount found in other newspapers.²⁷ In 1942 the United States military was still segregated, and it was clear that the town maintained the same segregated status as used on base.

Despite being one of the two counties in this dataset with a population of people with Japanese ancestry, the *Elko Independent* reported on neither the Executive Order nor the Terminal Island incident. While they reported the ongoing requirement for aliens to register, it was not until March 5 that the mass deportation of people was acknowledged, and only in a roundabout way. There is an article stating the governors of nine western states did not want interned people to work in their areas, they wanted the federal government to handle all aspects of the internment. Concentration camps “under strong guard and federal expense” would be acceptable. This was in regard to the “employment of enemies,” there was no acknowledgement that the majority of those interned are United States citizens, or that they had been forced into the camps with no means to support themselves.²⁸ There were thirty-one negative or stereotypical mentions and only five positive mentions in the eight weeks surrounding this incident.²⁹ No positive mention is made of anyone of Japanese ancestry, and only three of the negative or stereotypical mentions are of a race other than Japanese.³⁰

The *Coosa River News* did not cover the Executive Order or the Terminal Island incident. In fact, it did not even mention forced relocation until the April 3 issue of the newspaper. In this issue a photo was published of the first “Jap arrivals” at an “evacuee community” in east/central

²⁶ Table 17.

²⁷ Table 18.

²⁸ “Favors Concentration Camps,” *Elko Independent*, March 5, 1942, 2.

²⁹ Table 17

³⁰ Table 18.

California, between the Sequoia National Forest and Death Valley. The picture showed men and women milling around houses as if they were chatting in their neighborhoods. The poor-quality picture did not show guards, fences, or barbed wire, no home interiors, no number of people per housing unit, in fact there did not appear to even be any children in the community. One could not know if there were groceries, laundries, schools, medical facilities, or even a post office. A very superficial photo made it look like the “community” it was called in the picture caption rather than a concentration camp.³¹ Considering Alabama is in the Deep South, it is not surprising that stories of problems on the West Coast would not be of interest to its readers. In a county with a White population of over 91% and only Black minorities,³² the negative or stereotypical mentions outweigh the positive mentions forty-four to two.³³ What is interesting is the number of times Japanese were mentioned in the newspaper. In the eight weeks surrounding each of the eight previous incidents, reference to Japanese appeared only one time, in 1906.³⁴ In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, Japs or Japanese is mentioned in eight articles, and colored or Negro in only six articles.³⁵

Aerial Hit and Run Murder of John Hall

On furlough for the Fourth of July holiday in 1949, Corporal Robert E. Pennick from Louisiana decided to charter a light plane and fly himself and three friends home. Over Alabama, he decided to “swoop down” on group of five Black people in a mule-drawn wagon. The act spooked the mule, forcing the driver, John H. Hall, to stand up in an attempt to regain

³¹ “This Week’s News,” *Coosa River News*, April 3, 1942, 2.

³² Table 32.

³³ Table 17.

³⁴ “Trouble is Imminent,” *Coosa River News*, December 7, 1906, 2; Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16.

³⁵ Table 18.

control of the animal. The wing of the airplane clipped Hall, knocking him out of the wagon and fatally injuring him. The plane landed on the highway and took off again without offering to render any assistance. A nearby farmer rushed Hall to the hospital where he later died. State Police surmised the plane would be landing in Alexander City, Alabama and were waiting there to seize the pilot. He was held for a Grand Jury looking at a possible indictment on second degree murder. Pennick admitted he knew he had hit Hall with the wing but said the only reason he was flying low was to land because he thought he was low on fuel. Landing on a state highway, Pennick should have had an ample amount of room to land if that were his intent without coming near Hall's wagon. This was not an uncontrolled emergency landing. One must question the explanation of low gas when the plane immediately took off again. Following this case, the Grand Jury cleared Pennick of first-degree manslaughter charges. The explanation now was the plane was "forced down" when the gas gauge showed empty. The wing clipped Hall as he sat in his wagon on the side of the road.³⁶ John Hall was 55 years old.³⁷

Two newspapers in this dataset reported this incident, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. The article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* related the incident, but it was clear the story of low gas as the cause was questioned by law enforcement. The article used terms such as "swooped down" and "buzzed the wagon" showing this appeared to be a deliberate act – maybe not the murder, but the buzzing of the wagon. Three passengers in the plane were held as material witnesses, but there were no statements detailing their version of events. The newspaper did give information on Pennick, that he was married with two children, but provided no information on Hall other than he was a married 55-year-old farmer, or any information on

³⁶ "Exonerated," *Lafayette Sun*, September 28, 1949, 1.

³⁷ "'Hit-Run' Pilot Dives and Kills a Mule Driver," *Daily News*, July 4, 1949, 13.

the other people in the wagon at the time of the incident.³⁸ It seemed clear that this was a deliberate act by Pennick at the very least designed to scare the wagon's occupants, if not murder them.

The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* also published an article on this incident, albeit a much shorter one. This article was much more vague, spending most of its time on the pilot. The article stated he was bound over for Grand Jury and that an "aged negro" driver had stood up to "quiet the team of mules" and was then struck by the plane wing. There is no mention of low gas, or that Pennick landed and took off without rendering aid. There is also no mention of other people involved, either in the plane or wagon.³⁹ It was just an unusual accident to report.

None of the other newspapers in this dataset mentioned this incident. Three counties, Cherokee County, Alabama, Pemiscot County, Missouri, and Elko County, Nevada had increases in the percentage of Black population during the 1940s.⁴⁰ It seemed clear from the reading of the two articles that, while the pilot may not have meant to kill anyone, at best it was a prank or joke gone terribly wrong. Even if it were just a tragic accident, one would think counties with rising Black populations would have published information on this incident. To learn later the pilot was cleared of all responsibility just pushed home the disregard for and disinterest in minority lives.⁴¹ The *Coosa River News* and the *Missouri Herald* were heavily negative or stereotypical in their mentioning of minorities, usual for them based on data from previous incidents.⁴² The *Elko Independent* had very few mentions of minorities at all in the eight-weeks surrounding this incident, with only nine.⁴³ This is perplexing since their minority population at the time was

³⁸ "Pilot Charged with Aerial Hit and Run Murder," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 4, 1949, pt 2, 2.

³⁹ "Low-Flying Plane Kills Teamster," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, July 6, 1949, 2.

⁴⁰ Tables 32, 34, 36.

⁴¹ "Exonerated," *Lafayette Sun*, September 28, 1949, 1.

⁴² Table 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

about 11%.⁴⁴ This was a rather innocuous story, but it would have made an interesting short article for any newspaper.

The *Alliance Times and Herald* did not report on this incident but did continue with strongly negative or stereotypical mentions of minorities. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, there were fifty-two negative mentions as opposed to only eleven positive mentions.⁴⁵ With less than 3% of the population in Box Butte County minority,⁴⁶ the amount of negativity against them seems abnormally high, but this has been their pattern throughout this study.⁴⁷

While the *Junction City Union* did not report on this incident, they did have a strong positive versus negative mention in the eight weeks surrounding this incident. There were thirty-one positive references with only forty-one negative or stereotypical mentions.⁴⁸ Geary County had seen a slight increase in minorities in the ten years prior to this incident.⁴⁹ Home to a large military base, one might consider the 1948 desegregation of the military to have had a part in the trend toward equalization of minority portrayals.

⁴⁴ Table 34.

⁴⁵ Table 19.

⁴⁶ Table 31.

⁴⁷ Table 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19.

⁴⁸ Table 19.

⁴⁹ Table 35.

Chapter 6 1950-1959

The Murder of Emmett Till

A native of Chicago, in August of 1955 Emmett Till traveled to Money, Mississippi to visit relatives. On August 24, other boys reportedly dared him to enter a store and talk to the White woman working the counter. While there are different versions of what supposedly transpired, the most accepted was Till entered the store and whistled at the woman before quickly running out of the store and leaving with his friends. Four days later, on August 28, the woman's husband and his half-brother, and possibly the woman herself and a third White man, showed up at the house of Till's great-uncle where he was staying during his visit. Till was abducted and never seen alive again. Three days later, on August 31, a body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River. Emmett Till had been shot in the head and beaten so badly his face was unrecognizable. A seventy-five-pound cotton gin fan had been tied around his waist with barbed wire. His great-uncle identified the body by a ring Till wore with his father's initials on it. He was 14 years old.

The woman's husband and brother-in-law were arrested and tried, with Till's great-uncle, Mose Wright, identifying the men in court. It was the first time a "black man had testified to the guilt of a white man in Mississippi." Despite overwhelming evidence, it took the all-White, all-male-jury only sixty-seven minutes to acquit the two men of murder.¹

¹ "Remembering Emmett Till," United States Civil Rights Trail, <https://civilrightstrail.com/experience/sumner/> (accessed September 29, 2021); "Till, Emmett Louis," Stanford: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/till-emmett-louis>, (accessed September 2020).

Despite the press coverage of the trial and Till's mother's vow that the country see what happened to her son, only four newspapers in this dataset reported on the incident. They were the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. In 1954, the year prior, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. 1955 was the first school year of forced desegregation. The anger and resentment this decision created may have affected how this incident was reported.

With Till being a Chicago native, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* quickly picked up the story and put it on the front page. They reported it as a possible kidnapping before Till's body had even been found. The information eventually testified to in the trial was different than what was being reported at the time. The first article reported three kidnapers, not just two, and that the three were armed and had threatened to kill Till. It reported the initial altercation as an "argument" in the store. But even at that time the family feared that Till had been killed.² On August 30 a second article gave a recitation of what happened at the store, based on the statement of another boy who had been with Till at the time. Still being viewed as a kidnapping, the sheriff reported speaking with two suspects, but they assured him they had let the boy go and had no idea where he was.³ Note that this is an actual admission of the kidnapping, but neither man would ever be convicted. By August 31, the story was relegated to page twenty in the newspaper, reporting the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to aid in the search for the boy.⁴ On September 1 the story was back on the front page; Till's body had been found. The article

² "Fear Chicago Boy Kidnaped," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 29, 1955, sec 1, 1.

³ "Kidnaped Boy Whistled at Woman: Friend," *Ibid.*, August 30, 1955, sec 1, 2.

⁴ "Seeks FBI Aid in Search for Chicago Boy, 14" *Ibid.*, August 31, 1955, pt 1, 20.

described the beating or cutting, the gunshot wound, and the cotton gin fan attached around the boy's waist with barbed wire. It also reported Wright's claim three armed men and one woman came to his home and kidnapped the boy. The Sheriff decided only two men were involved and told a reporter he was "making a big to-do about this." The NAACP determined Till's death qualified as a lynching. This was also the only article the newspaper published which included a picture of Till.⁵ The two men were quickly tried, and the verdict returned on September 24. Articles on this incident were regularly in the newspaper from the time of the abduction until the verdict was announced. It is the September 24 article on the not guilty verdict that provided a glimpse into the mindset of rural Mississippi. How did a jury come back with a not guilty verdict in the trial of two White men murdering a Black boy, despite eyewitness testimony, admission of the abduction, witnesses testifying to the beating and weapons being involved, and a plethora of strong circumstantial evidence, and not look like they let two murderers go free because the victim was "only" a Black boy? They denied the victim's identity and discounted all testimony that pointed to the contrary, especially if the testimony came from Black people. The September 24 article quoted the foreman of the jury as saying they were unable to positively identify the body as Emmett Till's therefore they could not convict the men since they could not prove Till was dead. This despite the fact the body had been positively identified by both Till's great-uncle and his mother. In fact, Till's mother testified at the trial as to the identity, but apparently did not impress the jury foremen who said "[i]f she had tried a little harder she might have got out a tear."⁶ As a reader, one might wonder how many young teenage boys were missing in this area that there could be a question about the identity of the body, and why, if there had been a question of identity, was the body allowed to be shipped to Chicago for burial?

⁵ "Find Kidnaped Chicago Boy's Body in River," *Ibid.*, September 1, 1955, sec 1, 1-2.

⁶ Holmes, Paul, "Jury Reaches Verdict After Hour Debate," *Ibid.*, September 24, 1955, sec 1, 1.

The newspaper published photos with the various articles involving this incident. It is interesting to note the first photos published of the defendants were their military photos.⁷ Other photos included pictures of the men's wives, pictures of the men with their children, and a happy photo of the men with their wives after the acquittal.⁸ In 1950 Cook County had a minority population of nearly 12%, mostly Black, and it was on the rise. By 1960 that percentage would jump to over 17%.⁹ Despite this being a local boy and the brutality of the murder, the newspaper still overwhelmingly portrayed minorities in a negative or stereotypical way. There were over three hundred fifty negative or stereotypical mentions as opposed to just over one hundred twenty-five positive mentions.¹⁰

The minority population in Box Butte County, Nebraska doubled in the 10 years before this incident, yet it was still just under 3% in 1955.¹¹ However, as has been the case throughout this study, this newspaper had a very negative portrayal of minorities, with approximately a two to one ratio of negative to positive mentions.¹² The first article published by the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald* was on September 3, the day of Till's funeral. This article gave a very short synopsis of the incident but spent most of the time on the funeral. The reader certainly leaves with the impression that only Blacks attended this funeral, and it was used as a fundraiser for "fighting dollars' to help Negro America." There was no information on the two men arrested for the crime.¹³ The next article on this incident did not appear until September 13. The newspaper reported Till's mother was receiving threats to stay out of Mississippi and not testify

⁷ "Boy's Slaying Held Murder by Gov. White," *Ibid.*, September 2, 1955, sec 1, 1.

⁸ "Mates Face Trial," *Ibid.*, September 16, 1955, pt 1, 13; "Defendants in Slaying Trial," *Ibid.*, September 20, 1955, pt 1, 2; "Mississippi Jury Acquits Two in Slaying," *Ibid.*, September 24, 1955, pt 2, 28.

⁹ Table 33.

¹⁰ Table 21.

¹¹ Table 31.

¹² Table 21.

¹³ "Throng Sees Battered Body at Funeral," *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, September 3, 1955, 1.

at the trial.¹⁴ In this edition the newspaper also published an editorial by Nobel-prize winning author William Faulkner, a native of Mississippi. He “chides” Whites, telling America it could not survive in the world with the continuing racist attitudes that would allow the murder of a child. He points out Whites are only one-quarter of the world’s population and considering the damage the Japanese alone did to the U.S. in 1941, Americans should be mindful that to survive as a nation, they needed to accept the minorities not only in the nation but in the rest of the world.¹⁵ On September 24 the newspaper reported the not-guilty verdict, stating the main reason for the acquittal was the inability to identify the body. This article provided more detail than the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, stating that two defense witnesses claimed this body could not have been Till’s and that the suspects swore they released the boy after the woman at the center of the incident claimed it was the wrong boy.¹⁶ Of course they did not relate the testimony of Blacks stating the kidnapers specifically asked if Till was the boy who had whistled at the woman and he had answered affirmatively. On September 26, the newspaper did report there were rallies across the country in protest of the verdict.¹⁷ Till’s killers were still being held while waiting for kidnapping charges to be filed in a different county, and the newspaper reported on September 30 that they were released on bond. Interestingly, the article title puts the word kidnapers in quotation marks, as if there was a question as to whether this was accurate or not. It reiterated that the men were found innocent of the murder after the boy made “indecent remarks and whistling at Bryant’s attractive young wife.”¹⁸ This is an underlying insinuation that Till brought this on himself, playing on the deep-seated fear of Black males attacking White women. In a

¹⁴ “Slain Negro Child’s Mother Gets Threat,” *Ibid.*, September 13, 1955, 6.

¹⁵ “Mississippi Author Chides White Man on Color Attitude,” *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ “Jury Frees Two in Killing of Negro,” *Ibid.*, September 24, 1955, 1.

¹⁷ “Negro Rallies Protest Verdict in Mississippi,” *Ibid.*, September 26, 1955, 2.

¹⁸ “Till ‘Kidnapers’ Free on Bonds,” *Ibid.*, September 30, 1955, 1.

county with a miniscule Black population, it could be viewed that these insinuations were a warning to other minorities.

Like the Box Butte County newspaper, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* did not publish an article on the incident until Till's body was found and the two men had been charged with murder. The information reported about the incident was a bit different. This article stated Till was killed by a blow to the head, no mention of a gunshot, clearly noted in other accounts. It also stated three men and a woman were believed to have been involved, but the sheriff decided it was only two men, despite the statements of several witnesses. The entire incident was caused by "ugly remarks" to the wife of one of the defendants. This was also the first article that quoted Till's mother, portraying her as grief-stricken but vengeful, vowing "the entire state of Mississippi is going to pay for this."¹⁹ The following day a more complete and accurate article was published. It was now being called the "wolf-whistle" murder, and both the governor of Mississippi and the governor of Illinois called for an investigation. The Mississippi governor apologized and stated this was not a lynching, it was a "straight out murder." One could ask what the technical difference of that would be since the end result is the same for both. The article then went on to name the two men charged in the crime, pointing out that one was a former Army paratrooper and the other had been an Army lieutenant in World War II. One can only assume this to be the initial groundwork in portraying the defendants as upstanding citizens incapable of this crime, considering World War II had been over for ten years. The article also described the alleged incident purportedly based on statements of other boys who were there, showing Till as laughing about what he had done even though the others were concerned there would be trouble. Again, the insinuation of a transgression that would somehow show Till

¹⁹ "Negro Youth Slain; White Men Accused," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, September 1, 1955, 2.

deserved his fate.²⁰ Articles in the September 6, 7, and 8 issues of the newspaper reported on the indictment, quick trial date, and Till's mother being invited to the trial.²¹ An article on September 18 kept readers updated on the case as the trial began. The death penalty was not going to be an option, and the article explained the all-male, all-White jury; women were not allowed to sit on juries in Mississippi and only registered voters could serve on juries. There were no non-White registered voters in that county, even though Blacks comprised 65% of Tallahatchie County's population in the 1960 census.²² The article recapped the incident, went on to report "all accounts" said two men kidnapped Till, but then later said Mose Wright claimed there were three men. An interesting sentence appeared in this article. "His body was found in the river three days later – at least most officers believe it was his body. Sheriff H.C. Strider doubts that it was..." Before the trial even began the misidentification seed was planted, supported if not actually began by law enforcement, even though this was never alluded to in any previous article.²³ The newspaper followed the progress of the trial as the other newspapers did, describing testimony and announcing the acquittal. But on October 8 one more article was published. The article stated that Mose Wright spent the night of the acquittal sleeping in his vehicle in a cemetery, for fear of reprisal. A neighbor did report to him that he had seen men at the Wright home that same night flashing a light around.²⁴ Beltrami County had over a 10% minority population in 1950, but less than 1% were Black.²⁵ Yet they had thorough coverage of

²⁰ "Gov. White, of Mississippi, Apologizes in Wolf-whistle Slaying of Negro Youth, 14," *Ibid.*, September 2, 1955, 2.

²¹ "Two White Men are Indicted for Killing Negro Boy," *Ibid.*, September 6, 1955, 2; "Set Trial Soon for Pair Held in Race Slaying," *Ibid.*, September 7, 1955, 2; "Murder Victim's Mother Invited to Attend Trial," *Ibid.*, September 8, 1955, 8.

²² United States Census Bureau, "Census of Population, 1950," vol II, table 42, 1953, 44-77.

²³ Johnson, Sam, "Death Penalty Request is Not Expected as Two White Men are Tried for Negro's Death," *Ibid.*, September 18, 1955, 1-2.

²⁴ Wold, Felix B. "Spends Night in Hiding After Lynch Trial Ends," *Ibid.*, October 8, 1955, 1.

²⁵ Table 30.

this incident, and it appeared relatively well-balanced. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident they had a high number of positive mentions of minorities at forty-four, with negative or stereotypical mentions at fifty-three.²⁶

The *Junction City Union* did report on this incident, but nothing appeared in the newspaper until September 22, after the trial began. This article related the testimony of one of the surprise prosecution witnesses, a Black farmhand who claimed to have seen four White men with Till, heard screaming from the barn, and had seen at least one of the men armed with a pistol. This was a short article and did not delve into the complexities of the case.²⁷ It is interesting to note the headline refers to Till as the “kidnaped” boy, not the “murdered” boy. This was the first of only three articles on the incident. The second article, published the following day when the case wrapped up, gave some details of testimony but included information that the defense was confident the all-White, all-male jury would find the defendants innocent, and the prosecution admitted they were unsure of a jury verdict.²⁸ The final article reported on the acquittal based on the inability to identify the body. Like all other articles on the verdict, this one also mentioned that the defendants “accepted the verdict calmly.”²⁹ One must consider whether this calmness was due to the fact they knew they were going to be acquitted. With nearly an 8% minority population, almost all Black,³⁰ it was rather surprising how little information was published about the incident by the newspaper. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident there were eighty-three negative or stereotypical mentions and thirty-eight positive mentions of minorities by the newspaper. Recalling there is a large military base in the area, the

²⁶ Table 21.

²⁷ “Youth Testifies to Seeing 4 White Men with Kidnaped Boy,” *Junction City Union*, September 22, 1955, 1.

²⁸ “Murder of Negro Boy Cowardly Act, Attorney Declares,” *Ibid.*, September 23, 1955, 8.

²⁹ “Pair Found Innocent of Till Murder,” *Ibid.*, September 24, 1955, 1.

³⁰ Table 35.

amount of negativity is concerning considering by this time the military had been desegregated. It is possible this incident was downplayed due to the large concentration of Black soldiers in one area, whose proximity might have created unease in the local White population if it was felt they would react poorly to the outcome of the trial.

The *Coosa River News*, the *Missouri Herald*, and the *Elko Independent* did not report on this incident at all. It is not surprising that Cherokee County in the Deep South state of Alabama did not mention this incident. Even though their minority population was under 10% at this time,³¹ one could assume they were not going to publish information where White men were being tried for the murder of a Black person, even if it was a child. It was also not surprising Pemiscot County, Missouri did not publish anything related to this. With a minority population of over 21% and rising,³² their history of overwhelmingly negative portrayals of minorities remained the same, with nineteen negative or stereotypical mentions and only two positive mentions in the eight weeks surrounding this incident.³³ Based on the reporting around previous incidents, this newspaper continued its practice of downplaying or outright ignoring incidents where minorities were shown having any power or legitimacy, or anything that might agitate the local population and cause trouble. Clearly an attempt to maintain the status quo.

It was a bit surprising the *Elko Independent* did not publish anything on this incident considering the county had a minority population of over 11%.³⁴ Only one article was published in the eight weeks surrounding this incident that even mentioned a Black person,³⁵ but overall their reporting was more balanced, with twenty-one negative or stereotypical mentions and

³¹ Table 32.

³² Table 36.

³³ Table 21.

³⁴ Table 34.

³⁵ Table 22.

eighteen positive mentions.³⁶ One might argue this incident may not have been of interest to their readers, but this seems a poor excuse in light of the circumstances of the murder.

The Battle of Hayes Pond

Amidst the negative atmosphere caused by forced integration as a result of the *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, the Ku Klux Klan decided the Lumbee tribe in North Carolina was intermingling too freely with Whites and needed to be reminded of their place. In 1958 the Klan's Grand Wizard in the area, Rev. James Cole, planned to hold a rally in Robeson County, North Carolina. The rally was well publicized and in the days leading up to it crosses were burned in the yard of a Native American family who had moved into a White neighborhood and in the yard of a Native American woman who was reportedly dating a White man. Tribal members were incensed and having only recently received official tribal recognition from the U.S. government, it could be understood why they were not going to let the Klan intimidate them. On January 18 in a field near Hayes Pond in Maxton, North Carolina, the Klan set up their rally. Members of the Lumbee tribe began to arrive at the rally site, and even though the Klansmen were armed, there were only between fifty and one hundred present compared to what ended up being approximately five hundred well-armed Lumbee, Tuscarora, and Coharie tribal members. It was only a few moments after the rally began that one of the Lumbee shot out the light that had been rigged. In the darkness tribal members began shooting into the air to disperse the attendees. It worked; the Klansmen fled leaving much behind, including Cole's wife. She reportedly received a ride to her home in a neighboring county from Alfred Oxendine, a member of the Lumbee tribe. The Lumbee tribal members gathered up discarded robes and a

³⁶ Table 21.

KKK banner and returned to Maxton to celebrate their victory. The press on hand documented the incident and the story of the event was later published in *Life* magazine.³⁷ This is the sole incident in this dataset where the minorities were feted by the media rather than blamed for the incident.

Four newspapers in this dataset reported on this incident, the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. In the national background was the growing civil rights movement, which included the desegregation orders created by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*.

On January 20, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published an article on the Battle of Hayes Pond, although it was not called this at that time. While the article itself laid out events in a way that would portray the Native Americans in a positive light, fighting back against the Ku Klux Klan, the newspaper did not drop the ingrained stereotypes. The title contained the phrase “Indians Go on Warpath.” There were “gun-wielding Indians” but only a mention later in the article that Klansmen were armed. Thousands of rounds of ammunition were reportedly fired, but the article did not state it was fired into the air and ground to disperse the people. As the disturbance was broken up, “hooting Indians banged on the sides of the automobiles with rifle and shotgun butts.” The article did state the intention of possible charges to the Klansmen for inciting a riot.³⁸ This edition of the newspaper also included a photo of two of the Lumbee tribal

³⁷ “Routing the KKK,” Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, https://3aa0349e-a4c3-4857-8f0a-2e7e416fac87.filesusr.com/ugd/1b5843_e7523da8764840f68c885c83958ffb7f.pdf, (accessed September 2020); Weber, Brandon, “When Native Americans Routed the Ku Klux Klan in the Battle of Hayes Pond,” *The Progressive Magazine*, <https://progressive.org/latest/the-time-native-americans-routed-the-ku-klux-klan-hayes-pond-1958-180719/>, (accessed October 1, 2021).

³⁸ “Move to Indict Ku Klux Klan Leaders for Inciting Indians to Go on Warpath,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 20, 1958, pt 1, 19.

members smiling and wrapped in the KKK banner they took from the rally.³⁹ This is one of the very few times in this study where a Native American was pictured without being in some type of traditional regalia or in conjunction with a native craft. While this initial report on the incident did not make page one of the newspaper, the article the following day did. On January 21, the newspaper published an article stating two Klan leaders were being indicted for inciting a riot. While clearly written in favor of the Native Americans' actions, again the stereotypes appear. "Bloodcurdling warwhoops" preceded the gunfire by the Native Americans. Of note, the newspaper included the makeup of the Grand Jury which handed down the indictment; thirteen White men, two Blacks, and three Native Americans.⁴⁰

On January 22, the newspaper published an editorial commending the Lumbee tribe for their actions against the Klan. The writer seemed bemused by the incident, and while clearly anti-KKK, says the Klan itself made a mistake when choosing the location to hold their rally. Does the writer really mean to say the Klan should have chosen an area with people who were less able to defend themselves? The writer stated the Lumbee, historically a Cherokee tribe, made up about a third of the population in that county, and of course have "Americanism...of considerably older vintage than any the klan can claim." As much as the writer is anti-Klan, it was difficult to discern if they were actually pro-Native American, considering the Native Americans were "on the warpath."⁴¹ There is cause to wonder why a group of people defending their homes, families, and lifestyle from avowed violent racists in one incident are the ones who are "on the warpath." One would be more likely to consider the decades of violence against minorities by hooded vigilantes to be more war-like. The Native American population at this

³⁹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 20, 1958, pt 6, 8.

⁴⁰ "Indict 2 Klan Leaders for Indian Riot," *Ibid.*, January 21, 1958, pt 1, 1, 4.

⁴¹ "The Oldest Americans on the Warpath," *Ibid.*, January 22, 1958, pt 1, 16.

time in Cook County was miniscule, at only 0.02%.⁴² Despite the generally positive portrayal of the minority in this incident, it does not seem to have affected the general reporting on minorities in the eight weeks surrounding the incident. The newspaper had nearly three hundred negative or stereotypical mentions of minorities as opposed to just over one hundred positive mentions.⁴³

The *Alliance Daily Times-Herald* published an article on this incident on January 20. It primarily discussed the impending charges against Klan members and their reaction to it, portraying themselves as the victims and threatening to sue the sheriff. It did provide a brief summary of the incident. Despite being a rather neutral article, the title used portrayed this as a win for the minorities against the Klan. “Indians Rout Klansmen” certainly left no doubt as to who won and was a portrayal of the Klan in a way that made them look unorganized, defensive, and fading.⁴⁴ On the following day an article was published stating one Klansman received a fine and suspended sentence in connection with the rally. The newspaper noted the judge was Native American, and the sentence had been lenient. It also simply stated the rally had been “broke up with gunfire,” no stereotypes regarding being on the warpath.⁴⁵ A final article published by the newspaper was an editorial on the incident. After a quick recap of the incident, the point of the editorial was to applaud law enforcement and the legal system for prosecuting the perpetrators rather than just breaking up the rally and sending them home. It was the writer’s hope that the prejudice of the South was less than what was thought.⁴⁶ The 1950 census showed 2.35% of the population in Box Butte County identifying themselves as Native American, rising to 4.07% by 1960.⁴⁷ Native Americans were nearly the entire minority population in this county.

⁴² Table 33.

⁴³ Table 23.

⁴⁴ “Charges Flying After Indians Rout Klansmen,” *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, January 20, 1958, 1.

⁴⁵ “Klansman Gets \$60 Fine Over Uprising,” *Ibid.*, January 23, 1958, 5.

⁴⁶ “Isn’t All Prejudice,” *Ibid.*, January 24, 1958, 4.

⁴⁷ Table 31.

While this was positive reporting on the Native Americans, other races did not fare as well. There were nearly seventy-five negative or stereotypical mentions compared to just over thirty positive mentions in the eight weeks surrounding this incident.⁴⁸

Like Box Butte County, Beltrami County, Minnesota also had a minority population that was primarily Native American. It was nearly 11% in 1950 and over 12.5% by 1960,⁴⁹ yet the number of negative versus positive mentions were nearly identical for this time period.⁵⁰ The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* did publish articles on this incident. The first article appeared prior to the incident. On January 17, an article was published relating the incidents leading up to the rally, the agitation of the Lumbee tribe as well as the county as a whole and condemned the Ku Klux Klan.⁵¹ An article published on January 20 was very similar in content to the article published by the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, leading with possible charges to the Klan participants. This was one of two articles in the dataset containing quotes from one of the Lumbee tribal members, showing their reasoning. The quote was by Simeon Oxendine, the son of the Lumbee mayor, a veteran of World War II and the commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in his district, overseeing six White VFW chapters and one Native American VFW chapter. Oxendine said he had attended a previous rally in the area targeting Blacks and listened to them say “some awful things about the Negroes.” He then said, “[t]he Negroes should have done something about this.”⁵² A second article, including a photo, appeared the following day. The photo showed Lumbee tribal members during the incident, one of whom was holding a gun on a White man. This article was nearly identical to the follow-up article about the indictments appearing in the

⁴⁸ Table 23.

⁴⁹ Table 30.

⁵⁰ Table 23.

⁵¹ “Kluxers and Indians ‘War’ in N. Carolina,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, January 17, 1958, 2.

⁵² “Indictment of Klan Leader to be Sought After Angry Indians Rout His Followers,” *Ibid.*, January 20, 1958, 1-2.

Alliance Daily Times-Herald, including the past criminal record of Cole, the indicted leader of the Klan. There was little mention of the Native Americans other than to say they broke up the rally by shooting, mostly into the air and ground. The one interesting quote came from the second man charged in the incident, who said he was sorry he ever came to the county or even joined the Klan. Not because it was wrong but because “I didn’t think my fellow Klansmen would vanish in time of need.”⁵³ The final article on the incident was published on January 22 and covered the court hearing of this second Klansmen. This article quoted at some length the remarks of the judge to the defendant. In “low, measured tones” the judge lectured the man for bringing discontent into a happy, peaceful community that just wanted to be an asset to the nation. He even said that the man’s organization would be welcome in their community if they had something worthwhile to offer.⁵⁴ This was a powerful article to publish. It showed a Native American in a legal, respected position of power over a White man. It had the Native Americans as the protectors of the peace and progress in their community, and it showed a compassion that was frequently lacking in the sentencing of people of color by handing down a very mild sentence. This was not the typical portrayal of Native Americans at the time. One can only imagine the impact this must have had on other Native Americans.

The *Junction City Union* also published an article prior to the incident. It was a short article stating the Lumbee tribe was “stirred up” and were planning to attend the rally to break it up. The article did assure the reader the authorities were moving to “head off any violence.”⁵⁵ Geary County, Kansas had a minority population of just over 7.5% in 1950, but only 0.11% identified as Native American.⁵⁶ Although the newspaper had a lot of mentions involving

⁵³ “Preacher-Leader of KKK is Indicted for Inciting a Riot,” *Ibid.*, January 21, 1958, 1.

⁵⁴ “Kluxer Lectured by Indian Judge on Racial Good-will,” *Ibid.*, January 22, 1958, 1.

⁵⁵ “Threat of KKK Arouses Indians,” *Junction City Union*, January 18, 1958, 7.

⁵⁶ Table 35.

stereotypes with forty-seven, the directly negative mentions were forty-three compared to sixty-three positive mentions.⁵⁷ On January 20 the newspaper did publish an article on the incident, however if the reader only read the headline they would not have known Native Americans were involved. It only noted the Ku Klux Klan. Like the other articles, the focus was first on the Klan members and the charges that might be brought, before relating the actions of the Lumbee tribe. Native Americans at the scene were described as “whooping” and “hooting.” Cole again was quoted, claiming the Klansmen were the victims and the sheriff should be charging the Lumbee tribal participants. Like the article in the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, this article quoted Simeon Oxendine about having attended an earlier rally and stating “[t]he Negroes should have done something about it.” This was the second incident where a second minority was referenced, the first being the Harlem Race Riot. A photo was included with the page one article, showing armed Lumbee tribal members speaking with a Klansman.⁵⁸ The following day the newspaper published a short editorial paragraph congratulating the Lumbee for breaking up the rally. It is clear this writer was anti-Klan, saying their “lawless, violent methods deserve the violent reaction.” It went on to question, however, why state troopers had come to rescue the Klansmen. The question asked was, since the law is supposed to arrive just in time to rescue the victims and arrest the villains, by rescuing Klansmen, on which side did they stand?⁵⁹ In the same edition of the newspaper was an article stating the Grand Jury, with its multiracial composition, had charged Cole and he was ordered to turn himself in.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Table 23.

⁵⁸ “KKK Chief May Face Indictment,” *Junction City Union*, January 20, 1958, 1, 7.

⁵⁹ “Incidentally...” *Ibid.*, January 21, 1958, 3.

⁶⁰ “Leader of Klan is Told to Surrender,” *Ibid.*, 5.

With, ironically, no Native American population in Cherokee County, Alabama⁶¹ and only 0.02% in Pemiscot County, Missouri,⁶² it is not surprising that neither the *Cherokee County Herald* nor the *Missouri Herald* reported on this incident. The *Cherokee County Herald* had thirty-two negative or stereotypical mentions compared to only six positive mentions in the eight weeks surrounding this incident.⁶³ This was still better than the *Missouri Herald*, however, which had seven negative or stereotypical mentions and zero positive mentions.⁶⁴ While Pemiscot County had a miniscule Native American population, it did have a Black population of nearly 22%.⁶⁵ Again, it must be considered that these incidents were not publicized in an attempt to maintain status quo and control their own minority populations. There were many positions of power in this incident being held by minorities, not a typical or necessarily wanted representation.

It was rather surprising, however, the *Elko Independent* did not report on this story. With a Native American population in 1950 of just over 9% in Elko County,⁶⁶ one would think this would be an article of keen interest to their readers. As a more western geographical location, it is possible the Ku Klux Klan was not active in the area and so the breakup of their rally was of little note. It also should be considered that reports of armed Native Americans breaking up Whites congregating might not be advisable, again as an attempt to maintain control of the status quo. With only three positive mentions in the eight weeks surrounding this incident, none of were applied to a Native Americans.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Table 32.

⁶² Table 36.

⁶³ Table 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Table 36.

⁶⁶ Table 34.

⁶⁷ Table 23-24.

Chapter 7 1960-1969

Freedom Riders and Protests in Albany, Georgia

In 1946 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregation in interstate transportation illegal.¹ In 1960 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregation in supporting facilities such as bus terminals, restrooms, dining areas, and waiting rooms was also illegal.² Beginning in Spring 1961 Freedom Riders, primarily groups of Black and White students, headed south to test the enforcement of these laws in the states of the Deep South. The result was sanctioned violence, beatings, arrests, and eventually federal intervention. On November 1, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission banned segregation in all facilities under its jurisdiction. While most of the Freedom Rides had ended by this time, on December 10 a group of nine Black and White people rode the train into Albany, Georgia. Their goal was to test the enforcement of the federal desegregation law at the Albany train station. Due to the announcement of this event in the local Black press, the Freedom Riders were expected, and a large crowd of Blacks and Whites gathered at the train station that Sunday. Local law enforcement was ordered to block the doors to the station to protect the Freedom Riders. The Riders told law enforcement of their intent to stay in the city and exited the train terminal, where the Blacks from the crowd went to greet them, causing road blockages and general disturbance. When law enforcement was unable to disperse the crowd they arrested the Freedom Riders, hoping this would prevent the crowd from

¹ Catsam, Derek C., Brendan Wolfe, "Morgan v. Virginia," Encyclopedia Virginia, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/morgan-v-virginia-1946/>, (accessed October 6, 2021).

² "Boynton v. Virginia," Oyez, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1960/7>, (accessed October 6, 2021).

getting out of control. The Freedom Riders were charged with disorderly conduct, obstruction of traffic, and failing to obey an officer.³

Four newspapers in this dataset reported on this incident. They were the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. There had been a multitude of Freedom Rides previous to this incident, with the public witnessing beatings and arrests shown by the media. Forced segregation mandated by courts was being strongly resisted by many. The reporting on this incident focused less on the Freedom Riders and more on the response to the incident. After months of Freedom Rides, the protestors were still peaceful, numerous, and clearly willing to continue to fight for their rights. This was not something that was a phase that would go away.

It is not surprising the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported on this incident since the minority population of Cook County rose by more than 5% in the preceding ten years. The increase was mostly among Blacks, with a small percentage increase among Chinese.⁴ The newspaper published a total of eight articles revolving around this incident, but the first one was not published until two days after the incident; a tiny article tucked in among other civil rights news, and the information was partially incorrect. It stated eleven “integrationists” had their hearing postponed at their lawyer’s request. It then went on to say five Blacks and Whites from Atlanta plus two local Blacks were arrested when they refused to leave the waiting room at the train station.⁵ It was unclear how the two Blacks from Albany ended up being charged with the same

³ “Freedom Rides,” Stanford University Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/freedom-rides> (accessed August 24, 2021); “WSB-TV Newsfilm Clip of Police Chief Laurie Pritchett Speaking to Reporters About the Arrest of Freedom Riders in Albany, GA 1961 December 10,” Civil Rights Digital Library, http://crdl.usg.edu/cgi/crdl?format=_video;query=id:ugabma_wsbn_wsbn44899, (accessed September 2020).

⁴ Table 33.

⁵ “Court Hearing Postponed,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 12, 1961, pt 1, 2.

crimes as the people from Atlanta. It also did not say how many Whites were involved. This incident was barely a blip on the radar initially. The following day a much longer article appeared; the police in Albany had started arresting protestors who turned out in considerable numbers to peacefully protest the arrest of the Freedom Riders. The article stated that Albany, “a rigidly segregated city,” arrested the peaceful, singing protestors for disorderly conduct and blocking sidewalks. Two hundred sixty-seven were arrested, mostly young students according to the article.⁶ The following day an article reported another one hundred ninety-eight people were jailed as protests continued. It was the third march within eight hours in the town. There were no reports of any violence or disturbances at any of these protests, only singing, kneeling, and marching. Yet by this time the State Police had arrived “in force” to help patrol the streets.⁷ According to a follow-up article on December 14, a biracial committee of six men had been formed to try to negotiate away the unrest. Other than the desegregation of bus and train terminals, which was already law, there was no other indication of what was being negotiated. National Guard units were on standby, even though there had been zero incidences of violence. The committee negotiations stalled when the Black members asked for the release of protestors as part of the deal.⁸ A follow up article the next day specifically stated what the Black negotiators were working toward: release of those arrested in the demonstrations, desegregation of bus and train facilities as per law, and negotiations began to make inroads into desegregation in the city. Despite the work of the committee, the mayor held a press conference to declare “the city does not consider the talks binding.” When asked by reporters about the failure to enforce desegregation in the train terminal which led to the original arrests, the mayor replied it was not

⁶ “267 Negroes Herded Off to Jail in Georgia,” *Ibid.*, December 13, 1961, pt 4, 11.

⁷ “198 Negroes Jailed in New Racial March,” *Ibid.*, December 14, 1961, pt 2, 11.

⁸ “Bi-Racial Unit Progress Told in Albany, GA,” *Ibid.*, December 15, 1961, pt 2, 1.

an integration issue, they were just enforcing local laws and ordinances outside of the train station.⁹ The final article written on December 19 showed some progress. The committee had been successful in negotiating the release of the protestors without bond until trial, and the newspaper did note the chance of them actually being prosecuted was slim.¹⁰ It was made perfectly clear these were peaceful protests in response to a violation of a federal law, and the “right” side was obvious. One can see this newspaper focused little on the arrest of the Freedom Riders, which had been happening for months. Instead, it chose to focus on the mass arrests in this short period of time, arrests that were unwarranted and unfounded. While one may believe the tone of the newspaper toward minorities was changing, it appeared to have been only in relation to certain incidents. Unfortunately, in the eight weeks surrounding this incident there was still a two to one ratio of negative or stereotypical mentions as opposed to positive mentions.¹¹

The *Alliance Daily Times-Herald* published three articles regarding this incident. The first article did not appear until December 14, four days after the Freedom Riders were arrested. The newspaper was much more interested in the protests taking place and the mass arrests of protestors. The article described the protests as having “no violence and little tension” and even mentioned the White residents “have shown little close-range interest in the incidents.” Yet five hundred sixty people, only five of whom were White, were arrested in four days. There were warnings of more arrests, though by all accounts there were no threats to the general populace. While the article did mention the arrest of the Freedom Riders, it was much less important to the article than the mass demonstrations.¹² The following day the newspaper did not publish an

⁹ “Await Racial Peace Bargain in Georgia City,” *Ibid.*, December 16, 1961, pt 1, 11.

¹⁰ “Agree to Free 427 Negroes in Albany, GA.,” *Ibid.*, December 19, 1961, pt 2, 10.

¹¹ Table 25.

¹² “Warns Demonstrators,” *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, December 14, 1961, 1.

article but did publish a photo of protestors holding a “prayer marathon.”¹³ The final article was published on December 18 and summed up the court proceedings of the arrested protestors. With a total of over seven hundred arrests, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy, seventy were released because they were juveniles. This article stated Blacks vowed to continue fighting for integration and had suggested an economic boycott for the Christmas season.¹⁴ While each of these articles were reported on page one of the newspaper, it still was downplayed. There was no mention of the staunch segregation of the city, the National Guard being placed on call, or state troopers coming in to assist. It did not give any details about the original Freedom Rider arrests or the bi-racial committee that was established. It appeared to be a peaceful protest where people were arrested, passed quickly through the courts, and were released. The only negative aspect was the threat of economic boycott. During the eight weeks surrounding this incident the newspaper had ninety negative or stereotypical mentions and only twenty-six positive mentions.¹⁵

There was only one article relating to this incident published in the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. This article was about the protestors being held for demonstrating against the arrest of the Freedom Riders. The only mention of the original incident was to say Freedom Riders had been arrested at an earlier demonstration. This, of course, was untrue, there was no demonstration and that was not why they were arrested. It did point out the protests were peaceful, but also quoted the sheriff as blaming the incident on outside agitators trying to get the protestors into trouble.¹⁶ There were no other articles about this incident, and obviously no mention of the strict segregation, the bi-racial committee, extra law enforcement, or the fact the

¹³ “Demonstrate at ‘Riders’ Trial,” *Ibid.*, December 15, 1961, 1.

¹⁴ “Drive Moves Into Court,” *Ibid.*, December 18, 1961, 1.

¹⁵ Table 25

¹⁶ “156 Negroes are Held for Protesting Segregation,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, December 13, 1961, 2.

original Freedom Riders were only there to test the enforcement of a federal law. At this time Beltrami County had nearly a 13% minority population, but few Blacks.¹⁷ It is possible that the newspaper felt this was not a news story about which its readers would be concerned, but it may also have had to do with many months of similar protesting, and this was just another in a lengthy line of incidents. This newspaper was beginning to show a better balance in its minority reporting. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, there were forty-five negative mentions compared to thirty-five positive mentions, but the more subtle “place reminders” and stereotypes remained high at fifty-three.¹⁸ One must consider if the stereotypes were so embedded in the White culture that they were essentially unnoticed, or the newspaper had little control of them such as stereotypical wording and images in advertisements, at the same time consciously reducing the outright negative articles.

The *Junction City Union* reported this incident in a less vague way. The first article on December 14 certainly portrayed more tension than what was seen in either the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* or the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*. The readers’ introduction to the incident announced the National Guard had been put on alert. There was very little information about the actual incident; like the other newspapers it focused on the protests. They did make it clear that it was believed trouble would be coming from outside agitators. While this may have been partially true since the newspaper reported the president of the Albany Movement had sent telegrams asking other civil rights groups for help, the newspaper clearly followed along with the falsehood that the minorities in the city were happy and there would be no issues if not for the agitators.¹⁹ A second article was published on December 18, showing more of the racial tension

¹⁷ Table 30.

¹⁸ Table 25.

¹⁹ “Guard Unit is Alerted in Georgia,” *Junction City Union*, December 14, 1961, 1.

but again pushing the story that it was all outside agitators. It discussed the biracial committee working to solve the “fuss,” focusing mostly on negotiating the release of the hundreds of people arrested during the protests. The newspaper did go on to say that the mayor claimed to “know” six outside agitators were in the city and had a hand in the whole problem.²⁰ With hundreds of local Blacks arrested one could assume a rather large Black population in a rigidly segregated city of over 55,000. For the establishment to blame the disturbances on just six outsiders is disingenuous. The final article published by the newspaper touted a biracial agreement but did go on to say desegregation efforts would be continuing. This final article finally noted the original incident, that arrests had been made during an attempt to enforce desegregation of the train terminal. It pointed out that one of the concessions given by Whites was the enforcement of the desegregation transportation law. This was symbolic only; it was already federal law. In any case, the article did say further talks would be forthcoming, and an economic boycott by Blacks was still in effect.²¹ Geary County, Kansas saw a significant jump in its minority population in the ten years prior to this incident. The population went from just over 7.5% in 1950 to nearly 14.5% in 1960.²² This may have been the reason this story was covered in more detail here than by newspapers in other areas. This minority change is also shown in the newspaper’s reporting. In the eight weeks surrounding the incident there were forty negative or stereotypical mentions as compared to sixty-five positive mentions.²³ Other areas with large Black minority populations, such as Cherokee County, Alabama and Pemiscot County, Missouri, seemed reluctant to report on racial incidents. With a smaller minority population, Kansas historically appears to be more open about its minority reporting, and this carried over when their minority

²⁰ “Effort Launched to Ease Georgia Integration Fuss,” *Ibid.*, December 18, 1961, 2.

²¹ “Agreement in Georgia Eases Racial Tension,” *Ibid.*, December 19, 1961, 4.

²² Table 35.

²³ Table 25.

population significantly increased. A large minority population did not cause the newspaper to downplay or ignore racial incidents.

The *Cherokee County Herald*, the *Missouri Herald*, and the *Elko Independent* did not report on either the arrest of the Freedom Riders nor the mass arrests of protestors. It is not surprising the *Cherokee County Herald* did not mention these incidents. In the Deep South state of Alabama, it would not be in their interest to promote anything that showed progress in ending segregation. In fact, it could be assumed they would prefer the opposite. If there were violence by Blacks, showing them as destructive and threatening, one could believe they may have covered the story, but this was not the case. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the newspaper published a dozen negative or stereotypical mentions and only two positive mentions. Most of these mentions were subtle place reminder type of mentions.²⁴ It is also not surprising the *Missouri Herald* did not report on this incident. By 1960 Pemiscot County had nearly 27% minority population, nearly all Black²⁵ This continual rise in the Black population clearly was uncomfortable for the Whites. As per their history of reporting, in the eight weeks surrounding this incident there were only three mentions of minorities in the newspaper total, and all contained stereotypical portrayals.²⁶ Pemiscot County remained consistent with its history of downplaying racial incidents.

Elko County, Nevada had nearly 11% minority population in 1960, with all minorities in this study represented.²⁷ Yet the *Elko Independent* did not report on this incident. Again, it may have been due to the far western location of this county, where the segregation fight was less prominent based on the lack of protests reported in the area. They did have a nearly equal

²⁴ Table 25.

²⁵ Table 36.

²⁶ Table 25.

²⁷ Table 34.

negative or stereotypical mentions with five versus four positive mentions.²⁸ It must also be considered that, after months of similar activities, this incident was felt as just another in a series and did not warrant following.

The 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing

On Sunday, September 15, 1963, five Black girls gathered in the basement ladies' room of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Addie Mae and Susan Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley were at church for the Youth Day service. Built in 1911, the church's prominence and central location in the city made it a natural center for holding civil rights' mass meetings and rallies in what was the most segregated city in the country. Shortly before 11 a.m. a bomb which had been placed underneath the church steps exploded, killing four of the girls and permanently blinding the fifth. Amid national outrage an investigation immediately began, led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It took two years to identify four men as the probable bombers, believed to be members of one of the most violent Ku Klux Klan groups in the South. Three of the four eventually were tried and found guilty, but only after the case was closed in 1968 and reopened in 1971 by the Alabama Attorney General. One suspect was tried and convicted in 1977, one in 2001, and one in 2002. The fourth suspect passed away before he could be tried. Addie Mae, Denise and Carol were 14 years old; Cynthia was 11 years old. Susan, permanently blinded, was 12 years old.²⁹

Four of the seven newspapers in this dataset reported on the bombing. These were the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, the *Junction City Union*, and the

²⁸ Table 25.

²⁹ "16th Street Baptist Church Bombing (1963)," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/16thstreetbaptist.htm>, (accessed September 2020).

Chicago Tribune. 1963 was the year Alabama's public schools were being forcibly integrated, resulting in President Kennedy ordering the federalization of the Alabama National Guard.

Tensions were high, with violence across the state in the weeks leading up to the bombing.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported this incident on its front page. It was the main headline, with two articles and photos of the damaged church. Not only did the article describe the bombing and its damage in great detail, but it also stated the event caused spreading violence, with at least two more Black deaths that day and multiple fires set at Black businesses. It also claimed a thousand-person strong motorcade of Whites ready to protest school integration was called off. The articles provided vivid descriptions of the damage caused by the bomb, focusing on the damage to the areas where children had been. Black people's anger was shown, and they were ready to fight back. This article was probably the most detailed in showing the response of the minority as any in this dataset. Yet, that undercurrent of negativity was there. The newspaper reported the police thought it might have been a drive by bombing and were looking for a car reported to have been in the area, driven by two "dark-skinned" men.³⁰ Another article on page one showed the rising tension. One of the top men in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) asked the federal government for real help, and if that could not happen Black people would "employ such methods as our desperation may dictate in defense of the lives of our people." This article also clearly named the person Blacks believed was to blame. Governor George Wallace's stance against school integration, escalating to the use of troops, created an environment in which this incident could occur.³¹ The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. joined in condemning the act and blaming the governor for the situation.

Although a proponent of non-violence, he warned that he might not be able to convince his

³⁰ "Bomb Negro Church; 4 Die," *Chicago Tribune*, September 16, 1963, sec 1, 1-2.

³¹ "Negroes Will Defend Lives, Wilkins Says," *Ibid.*, 1.

followers that non-violence was the way to change in the wake of such an act.³² The following day an article was published to update readers on the situation. Clearly portrayed was the desperation among the Blacks to receive federal help, with, at the time of printing, no response from the President. The article also stated the number of law enforcement personnel in Birmingham to prevent more violence; 450 Birmingham police, 150 sheriff's officers, 300 state police, and 300 federalized National Guard members. The article then moved on to problems with school integration, which had caused the rise in tension that eventually led to the bombing. It also noted that "bombings... had plagued the city" in recent weeks.³³ In the same edition was an article describing protests and vigils spreading across the country.³⁴ Subsequent articles focus on the funerals of the victims³⁵ and a myriad of memorial marches, protests, and sit-ins in support of the Birmingham Blacks. In amongst these articles is an *Esquire* magazine advertisement. It promoted an upcoming article in the magazine about tactics that will be used by integrationists in Chicago. The tone of the short advertisement is clearly negative, and the reader comes away a bit fearful. It talks of "agitation," the methods to be used in the "battle" for integration, where the "Negroes will strike next," with the article itself titled "A Battle Plan for Future Integration."³⁶ The September 30 newspaper did publish an article stating several White men were being held in conjunction with the bombing. This article pointed out that there had been twenty-one racial bombings in "recent years," suggesting they may all have been the work of the same group of people.³⁷ The October 10 newspaper reported three men were found guilty of possession of dynamite, which was a misdemeanor. This was a small article mixed in with

³² "King Warns of Holocaust," *Ibid.*, 1, 4.

³³ "Negroes Vow to Press for Aid by Army," *Ibid.*, September 17, 1963, sec 1, 1-2.

³⁴ "Birmingham Violence Stirs Wide Protest," *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵ "Funeral Held for Victim of Church Bombing," *Ibid.*, September 18, 1963, sec 1A, 21; "Bury 3 Negro Girls Slain in Church Blast," *Ibid.*, September 19, 1963, sec 1, 4.

³⁶ "Chicago: How the Negroes Will Strike Next," *Ibid.*, September 23, 1963, sec 2, 15.

³⁷ "Hold Several White Men in Birmingham," *Ibid.*, September 30, 1963, sec 1, 1.

several other articles on race incidents and buried well back in the newspaper.³⁸ Among all the violence, in the eight weeks surrounding this incident there were nearly five hundred negative or stereotypical mentions and only one hundred sixty-eight positive mentions.³⁹ The area was clearly struggling with its own race issues. Cook County did have higher than national average minority population at just over 17%, and it was still increasing, reaching nearly 23% by 1970.⁴⁰

The *Alliance Daily Times-Herald* reported on this incident, but it was in the broader context of ongoing racial unrest in the area. The article focused on the reaction to the incident; how the area was quiet that morning, reactions from politicians, and responses from the Kennedy administration. It put into perspective the impact of the bombing; “[n]ot since Medgar Evers was shot to death at his home...has the nation’s Negro community reacted so strongly to racial violence.” All voices in the article condemned the action and hoped it would bring about more action on racial justice. The last portion of the article did give the basic information of the bombing, stating what happened and listing the names of the girls killed.⁴¹ The following day an article was published which included a photo of damage done to the church. The article announced the first funeral to be held, stating extra police presence would be there to ensure peace. The Blacks in Alabama blamed Governor George Wallace and planned a march on the state capital in protest. It also noted the White boycott of schools was weakening as more students returned to school.⁴² On October 1, the newspaper published a photo of R.E. Chambliss, a White man being questioned for the Birmingham bombing.⁴³ Unbeknownst to them, it would take until 1977 to convict Chambliss of the bombing. At this time, Box Butte

³⁸ “Convict 3 White Men,” *Ibid.*, October 10, 1963, sec 1C, 1.

³⁹ Table 27.

⁴⁰ Table 33.

⁴¹ “Grand Jurors Probing Birmingham Bombings,” *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, September 16, 1963, 1.

⁴² “Guard Birmingham Rites; Rap Wallace,” *Ibid.*, September 17, 1963, 1.

⁴³ “Church Bombing,” *Ibid.*, October 1, 1963, 2.

County had less than a 5% minority population.⁴⁴ However, in the eight weeks surrounding this incident the negative or stereotypical mentions still outnumbered positive mentions by a three to one margin.⁴⁵ This appears consistent with the coverage of past incidents, possibly having to do with a minority population small enough to be ignored, or possibly the community felt as if their situation was different from what was being reported elsewhere. Articles were merely reprints of picked up from the wire service.

With a nearly 12% minority population in 1960,⁴⁶ one could assume the civil rights movement was being closely watched, even though there were few Blacks in Beltrami County, Minnesota. The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, in the eight weeks surrounding this incident, still had over one hundred ten negative or stereotypical mentions as compared to only thirty-nine positive mentions.⁴⁷ One must wonder if this was a reflexive reaction to the increasing violence in relation to civil rights, or an attempt to assert some control over the local minority population. The newspaper published at least nine articles on this incident. The headlining article was about the reaction of the Kennedy administration to this incident, expressing outrage, praising the Blacks' non-violent response, and calling for action on racial equality.⁴⁸ A second article on the front page was the same wire article used by the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, with calls for investigations, indictments, and a brief description of the bombing, naming the girls who were killed.⁴⁹ On the same day the newspaper published an editorial unequivocally condemning the racial violence, lamenting the death and injuries of the children, and asserting the bombing was a stain on the democracy that was supposed to be a beacon to the "the needy and oppressed of the

⁴⁴ Table 31.

⁴⁵ Table 27.

⁴⁶ Table 30.

⁴⁷ Table 27.

⁴⁸ "Federal Grand Jury to Probe Racial Violence," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, September 16, 1963, 1.

⁴⁹ "Four Children Killed When Birmingham Negro Church is Bombed," *Ibid.*, 1-2.

entire world.”⁵⁰ Other than a social mention of two Native American women,⁵¹ all the articles on minorities published on this day were about the situation in Birmingham. The follow up article on September 18 was again the same article as in the *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, with a photo of the bomb site, notice of the planned march on the capital, the first funeral, and the weakening of the school boycott. However, the headline was different, clearly laying blame at the governor’s doorstep.⁵² On September 23 the newspaper reported on more unrest and protests in Alabama surrounding integration, as well as across the country, but also reported Birmingham requested the assistance of the federal government to solve the racial issues.⁵³ The following day, an article reported the President’s racial peace envoys arrived in Alabama. Their job was to open the lines of communication between the races. Interestingly, these were two White men, one the former Secretary of the Army and one the former football coach at the U.S. Military Academy.⁵⁴ While one would assume this was designed to bring federal resources and leverage to negotiations, one must wonder at the qualifications of the envoys. An interesting editorial written by the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* was republished by the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* on September 28. In this editorial, the author pointed out what led to this day, that all of the South bore responsibility for what happened, as flames were fanned and transgressions allowed for so many years. No one silenced the mean jokes, too busy sidestepping the uncomfortable conversations, and electing politicians who fanned the flames of hate and violence.⁵⁵ This was a powerful editorial published where it was all too easy for the public to think that this was someone else’s problem, that the minority relations in “our” area were not that way. One only

⁵⁰ “The Love That Forgives,” *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵¹ “Redlake,” *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵² “Blame For Bomb Murders Laid at Governor’s Door as Promoter of Racial Tension,” *Ibid.*, September 17, 1963, 1-2.

⁵³ “7 Indicted for Balking Integration in Alabama,” *Ibid.*, September 23, 1963, 1-2.

⁵⁴ “President’s Racial Peace Envoys Arrive in Alabama,” *Ibid.*, September 24, 1963, 1.

⁵⁵ Patterson, Eugene, “Musin’ on the Mezzanine...” *Ibid.*, September 28, 1963, 6.

has to look at the negative versus positive mentions to see what the editorial pointed out – too much denial of responsibility and burying of heads in the sand.

The *Junction City Union* reported on this incident, which would be expected when one considers their minority population was over 14%.⁵⁶ Their first article was the main wire service article leading with the Grand Jury probe of the bombings. It chronicled the recent racial unrest, school boycotts, and the church bombings. It did provide a brief description of the church bombing. This article actually combined what appeared as two wire articles in other newspapers.⁵⁷ The following day two articles regarding the bombing were on page one. One was the same follow-up article used by other newspapers, talking about a planned march on the capital, the first of the funerals, and attendance during the school boycott, but it also included more. It described a church bell tolling that was scheduled in Birmingham, how the racial violence was affecting businesses in the city, and reported Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others placing the blame for the bombing on Governor George Wallace. The newspaper appeared to concur, with the subtitle of that section being “Wallace Silent.” They did not attempt to provide a defense or an excuse of mitigating circumstances.⁵⁸ A second article appeared on page one of the newspaper the same day. It was a proclamation by the mayor of Junction City announcing a day of prayer at all churches for a solution to the “national race problem.”⁵⁹ This was the only newspaper in this dataset that showed organization at the local governmental level, city-wide, in support of minorities. Demonstrations were held in other cities but appeared to be organized by individuals or community groups. A September 18 article noted the remaining funerals and went

⁵⁶ Table 35.

⁵⁷ “U.S. Jury Ordered to Probe Race Violence,” *Junction City Union*, September 16, 1963, 1-2.

⁵⁸ “Birmingham Police Alert for Trouble at Funeral Services for Blast Victim,” *Ibid.*, September 17, 1963, 1-2.

⁵⁹ “Day of Prayer Proclaimed by Mayor Murphy,” *Ibid.*, 1.

on to list calls for remembrance days across the nation, even at the federal level.⁶⁰ The newspaper did note the sending of racial envoys using the same article as the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*.⁶¹ On October 17 the newspaper published an article about Sarah Jean Collins, the girl who was blinded in the bombing. It described her injuries and how she was coping.⁶² This was the only newspaper in this dataset which followed up on this victim. In the eight weeks surrounding this incident, the newspaper had more positive mentions of minorities at ninety-one as opposed to negative or stereotypical mentions at sixty-nine.⁶³

With a 10% minority population, down from 30% in 1900,⁶⁴ it is not surprising the *Cherokee County Herald* in Alabama did not report on this incident. The newspaper held consistent in its negative portrayal of minorities. During the eight weeks surrounding this incident, there was one positive mention of minorities in the newspaper, and it was a cultural reference to Native Americans believing in witches.⁶⁵ This newspaper had a thinly disguised editorial column couched as a social column titled “Folks in Cherokee.” It is abundantly clear from this column what the prevailing attitude in the county is at this time. Reporting on the marriage of a Black man and White woman who met at college, the author asks “this is the danger of mixed races in our schools. Do you want this?”⁶⁶ Subsequent articles suggested a reelection of Kennedy would be the last election ever held in the U.S., that if defeated Kennedy would refuse to leave office, and why does MLK have a direct line to the oval office?⁶⁷ Black people were being “forced into positions...the negroes aren’t capable of doing,” what would

⁶⁰ “Rites Honor 3 Victims of Blast,” *Ibid*, September 18, 1963, 1-2.

⁶¹ “Leaders Await Special Envoys to Birmingham,” *Ibid.*, September 24, 1963, 1.

⁶² “Church Bombing Victim Lives in Darkness,” *Ibid.*, October 17, 1963, 4.

⁶³ Table 27.

⁶⁴ Table 32.

⁶⁵ “Hallowe’en,” *Cherokee County Herald*, October 30, 1963, 2.

⁶⁶ “Folks in Cherokee,” *Ibid.*, September 11, 1963, 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1963, 2.

Blacks think if Whites were being forced into their schools, and its “horrible” that White neighborhoods are being forced to accept Black neighbors.⁶⁸ With this as the prevailing attitude, it was no wonder this newspaper did not report on the church bombing. Based on past reporting one could easily believe that in this the case, silence was approval.⁶⁹

While the *Elko Independent* did not report on the incident, in the eight weeks surrounding this event it published five positive mentions and only one negative or stereotypical mention of minorities.⁷⁰ Although the Black population was small, Elko County did have nearly an 11% minority population at this time, with all minorities in this dataset represented.⁷¹ While this incident was geographically distant from Elko County, one would think the bombing murder of innocent children would have at least rated a mention in the newspaper.

The *Missouri Herald* could be referred to as staunchly anti-minority throughout the course of this examination. This tradition was continued regarding the church bombing. There were no mentions of the incident in the newspaper, and only one positive mention on a minority during the eight weeks surrounding it. There were eighteen negative mentions.⁷² Pemiscot County had nearly a 27% minority population at this time, nearly all Black.⁷³ One must once again consider if the newspaper was making the effort to maintain status quo in its own area. It is unclear when reporting these incidents whether the newspaper was hoping to control their own minority population, or, since the people must have seen news coverage on television, it was downplaying the situation to make it appear irrelevant to their own geographical area. It may

⁶⁸ Ibid., October 9, 1963, 2.

⁶⁹ Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27.

⁷⁰ Table 27.

⁷¹ Table 34.

⁷² Table 27.

⁷³ Table 36.

also have been a fear of taking a stand, or possibly, like the *Cherokee County Herald*, their refusal to speak out equated to approval of the act.

Chapter 8 Discussion and Conclusions

Reviewing the data, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the treatment of minorities over the decades. While some of these trends were positive, there was no obvious incident that immediately caused a change in the way minorities were portrayed in these newspapers. Changes were gradual but discernable when viewed over time in this examination, and oftentimes issues outside of the incidents involving minorities had a noticeable effect on how minority incidents were reported. Occasionally these outside influences were helpful to minorities, but most of the time they provided another justification to continue the oppression.

One of the most interesting changes in the treatment of minorities involved sports, most notably at first with boxing.¹ While Black boxers were the most prominent minority, it was not uncommon to see Native Americans, Mexicans, and Filipinos as well. Despite the rioting which occurred when Jack Johnson became the first Black Heavyweight Boxing Champion in 1910,² minorities began to be mentioned positively in the sports pages. It is important to note that for the most part in the beginning of the 20th century these positive mentions applied primarily to individual sports, such as boxing, cycling, wrestling, horse racing, golf, and track and field.³ Joe

¹ “Week’s News,” *Pemiscot Argus*, January 4, 1907, 4; “Gunther and Whitehead to Fight,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, April 21, 1909, 4; “Short Work of English Champion,” *Junction City Union*, May 26, 1909, 5; “Pugilistic Pointers,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 1, 1911, 3; “To Stage Four Bouts,” *Junction City Union*, July 6, 1921, 5; “Filipino Wins by Technical Kayo,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, October 18, 1929, 8; *Missouri Herald*, October 11, 1929, 4; Rose, Murray, “Marciano Heavy Favorite in Tonight’s Title Scrap,” *Junction City Union*, September 21, 1955, 6; “Basilio Will Sign Robinson Fight Contract Thursday,” *Ibid.*, January 17, 1958, 8; “Boxer Fatally Hurt in Bout for \$250 Purse,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, October 16, 1963, 12.

² “Jack Johnson vs. James Jeffries: Topics in Chronicling America,” Library of Congress Research Guide, <https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-johnson-vs-jeffries>, (accessed January 9, 2022).

³ “Gate Receipts Cause of Friction,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 9, 1907, 10; “Good Day for Sam Hildreth,” *Ibid.*, January 11, 1907, 10; “Best Runners in Marathon,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, April 19, 1909, 4; “Taylor Sails for France,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1909, 13; Eckersall, Walter, “Rival Sprinters Promise Battle at ‘Big 10’ Meet,” *Ibid.*, June 5, 1918, 10; “Big 10 High Jump Record in Danger When Ward Leaps,” *Ibid.*, March 8, 1933, 12; “Fred Pollard to Seek A.A.U. Hurdles Crown,” *Ibid.*, March 22, 1933,

Louis, Jesse Owens, Jackie Robinson⁴- these were minority men whom Whites allowed to transcend their race because they excelled at sports. It is unclear if the acceptance was due to their great sporting prowess, their entertainment value, or if people decided they could make money from them, making the minority useful to Whites. After all, they were an oddity, only one or two in a sea of White faces in sport.

While team sports did include some minorities,⁵ it was more common to have segregated teams. Blacks had separate Negro League baseball until 1973,⁶ and the league was closely followed by many White newspapers. Black basketball teams such as the Harlem Globetrotters and the Detroit Famous Negro Stars did not play “real” games against White professional teams.⁷ These exhibition teams were touted for their entertainment value, but that does not mean they were not taken seriously. While being entertained, the ultimate goal was really to see if the White basketball players would win the game. Native Americans attended boarding schools or reservation schools which fielded all Native basketball teams.⁸ Blacks attended segregated colleges and played in a segregated football league.⁹ It wasn’t until Jackie Robinson in 1947¹⁰

21; “And Anything Goes,” *Coosa River News*, March 29, 1935, 1; Bartlett, Charles, “Entries Close Next Week for National Open,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 17, 1935, 24.

⁴ “Joe Louis Adds Natie Brown to His Victims,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 30, 1935, 6; “Shorts on Sports,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, April 30, 1935, 3; “Robinson Leads Race,” *Junction City Union*, July 19, 1949, 6.

⁵ “Crescents Win First Game,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 13, 1906, 12; “Fosston and Bemidji to Play Baseball Sunday,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 3, 1909, 1; “Brief City News,” *Junction City Union*, June 10, 1909, 6; Lardner, R.W., “Heap Big Indian Scalps Bear Cubs,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 13, 1909, 8.

⁶ Peterson, Robert W. “Negro League,” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/sports/Negro-league>, (accessed October 25, 2021).

⁷ “Colored Quint Here Thursday,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 29, 1933, 6; “Famous Negro Stars Coming,” *Ibid.*, March 19, 1935, 6; “Globe Trotters to Post Again Friday,” *Junction City Union*, February 12, 1942, 7; “Goose and Son,” *Ibid.*, December 28, 1961, 9.

⁸ “Stars Are In Lineups,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 21, 1933, 3; “Brackets Fill Rapidly for Four-State Basketball Competition Here,” *Ibid.*, March 22, 1935, 3.

⁹ “Colored Teams Play Today At Soldiers’ Field,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1929, 23; “When These 2 Foes Meet, Time Simply Stands Still,” *Ibid.*, January 27, 1958, 54.

¹⁰ “Jackie Robinson,” National Baseball Hall of Fame, <https://baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/robinson-jackie>, (accessed October 25, 2021).

that Blacks broke into professional baseball, although a few Native Americans and Hispanics had played in professional leagues since 1897.¹¹ Blacks broke into professional basketball in 1950¹² and by 1958 Wilt Chamberlain's mastery of the game during his college career was reported across the country.¹³ Newspapers could publish dozens of negative mentions of minorities in any given issue, but if one read only the sports pages it would be difficult to see there was serious disparity between Whites and minorities. Yet despite these increasingly positive mentions, minority athletes were still discriminated against in day-to-day life, being barred from hotels, restaurants, and transportation to games because they were not White,¹⁴ and some White athletes refused to participate with minorities.¹⁵ Only exceptional minority athletes benefitted from increasingly positive media attention; this did not translate to more tolerance of any of the minority groups. This was limited progress, and one only need peruse the help wanted ads in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* to see where most minorities stood in society. The most common employment offered to minorities were for positions as domestics, laundresses, house servants, cooks, chauffeurs, childcare, porters, and butlers. No one subscribing to White-run newspapers was interested in minority accountants, college graduates, managers, attorney, doctors, or dentists.

¹¹ "American Indian Major League Baseball Players," Baseball Almanac, https://www.baseball-almanac.com/legendary/american_indian_baseball_players.shtml, (accessed October 25, 2021); Echevarria, Roberto Gonzalez, "Latin Americans in Major League Baseball Through the First Years of the 21st Century," Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Latin-Americans-in-Major-League-Baseball-910675#ref230096>, (accessed October 25, 2021).

¹² Bowen, Fred, "In Its Early Years, NBA Blocked Black Players," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/in-nbas-early-years-black-players-werent-welcome/2017/02/15/664aa92e-f1fc-11e6-b9c9-e83fce42fb61_story.html, (accessed October 25, 2021).

¹³ "Oklahoma Hands Kansas Second Straight Defeat," *Junction City Union*, January 8, 1958, 8; Wilks, Ed, "Wilt Scores 32 Points as K.U. Whips Colorado," *Ibid.*, January 14, 1958, 6; Wilks, Ed, "Wilt Bows to Boozer in Cage Scoring," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 4, 1958, 6.

¹⁴ "Colored 'Champ' Flays Jeff," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 19, 1909, 12; "G.O.P. Dinner for Morton is Picketed," *Ibid.*, December 22, 1961, pt 1, 2.

¹⁵ "Jack Dempsey Draws the Color Line, But Bars No Other Rival," *Ibid.*, July 9, 1921, 8.

Another important conclusion is that different minorities were viewed differently. While no minority was able to avoid negative mentions, the type, degree and intensity differed by race, and could change based on what was happening in society at that time. Those of Native American descent were handled noticeably differently than other minorities. After the Indian Wars, in reality a failed attempt at genocide, the U.S. government had three choices on how to move forward with Native American tribes: as independent nations, equal in status with the United States and any other country; as conquered nations to be absorbed in their entirety by the United States; or as dependent nations, giving them a special status while being under the protection and guidance of the U.S. government. The third option was chosen, and it clearly affected the way Native Americans were viewed. With most Natives relegated to their reservations, Indian Agents were hired to “deal” with the Natives, responsible for providing housing on reservations, as well as food, clothing, education, medical care and any other necessities. They also were instrumental in allotting and selling lands, providing payments and holding money in trust.¹⁶ Based on newspaper articles, one of the main issues was the enforcement of liquor laws in relation to Native Americans.¹⁷ There was no selling of liquor on reservation land or to Native Americans at all, and many appeared in court reports for purchasing liquor or being drunk.¹⁸ Drunken Native Americans were reported as an ongoing problem until

¹⁶ “Indians Agree to Sell Lands,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 31, 1907, 7; “Protecting Indian Timber,” *Junction City Union*, May 27, 1909, 5; “Oklahoma Indian Lands,” *Ibid.*, June 18, 1918, 26; “Board of Education to Visit Mission Reserve,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 10, 1921, 7; “Indian Payment Gets Under Way This Week,” *Ibid.*, February 20, 1933, 1; “Food For Indians Plea To McCarran,” *Elko Independent*, March 3, 1933, 2; “Measure to Reimburse Chippewas is Approved,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 20, 1955, 3.

¹⁷ “Liquor is Being Sold to Leech Squaws,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, January 8, 1907, 4; “Salmagundi From Thursday’s Daily,” *Weekly Independent*, February 1, 1907, 3; “Local Saloonkeepers Will Probably Assist,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, May 18, 1909, 1; “Given Six Month Term,” *Ibid.*, March 8, 1911, 1; “Mercy in Liquor Cases,” *Junction City Union*, March 6, 1935, 3; “Bayer Brought Charge,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 13, 1942, 6; “Liquor Sales to Indian Result in Jail Term,” *Ibid.*, June 21, 1949, 10.

¹⁸ “Good Mornin’ Judge,” *Junction City Union*, March 13, 1911, 3; “Town Talk,” *Elko Independent*, May 13, 1918, 1; “Good Mornin’ Judge,” *Junction City Union*, June 27, 1921, 6; “Eight Visitors are Brought Into Court,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 22, 1933, 3.

the law prohibiting liquor sales was repealed in 1954.¹⁹ Assimilation was still the goal, attempted with the use of mandatory Indian Boarding Schools for Native American children until 1978.²⁰ Children were forcibly sent to boarding schools to receive “proper” education, with severe punishments for attempting to keep their traditional culture. Once through this White-run school system, however, they were not embraced as equals by White society. Reservations were a way to keep them out of the way while the government continued to provide food, housing, clothing, and other services, all substandard.²¹ Natives were supposed to be grateful; everything was being done for their own good.

Three articles really stood out showcasing just how much the U.S. tried to destroy the Native American culture and rebuild it with one approved by Whites. One was an article titled “Guide Course For Indians Proposed at College.”²² This was an article describing a series of courses at Bemidji State College to train Native Americans with the intent of creating the Minnesota Indian Guide Service. Once the students graduated, they would be hired during the tourist and hunting seasons as guides. A second program titled “Operation Vegetable Garden” was developed to instruct people on the reservation to grow and preserve their own vegetables.²³ Seeds were provided and then the gardens judged. The food was primarily for individual family use, although some families sold vegetables along the roadside. Pressure cookers for canning

¹⁹ “Rushville Okays Sale of Liquor to Indians,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, September 20, 1955, 2.

²⁰ “Teaching Indians to Work,” *Daily Union*, December 24, 1906, 4; “History and Culture: Boarding Schools,” American Indian Relief Council, http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=airc_hist_boardingschools, (accessed November 1, 2021).

²¹ “Obtained the Lots By Fraud,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, May 10, 1909, 4; “Elko Indians Have Typhoid,” *Elko Independent*, October 10, 1929, 2; Fisher, John, “Delinquency Reported High Among Indians,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 2, 1955, 31; “Two Indians, Victims of Land Swindle, Receive \$1,175,000,” *Ibid.*, September 22, 1955, 33; “Set Hearing on Red Lake Rule Dispute,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 1, 1958, 1.

²² “Guide Course for Indians is Proposed at College,” *Ibid.*, February 6, 1958, 1, 8.

²³ “Operation Vegetable Garden...Mission Accomplished,” *Ibid.*, October 4, 1963, 1-2.

were also provided. This was despite the fact Native Americans had mastered both the growing and preserving of food well before the White man set foot on their land. Had Whites not spent decades attempting to assimilate and destroy the Native American cultures, these programs would have been moot. A third article published in 1906 explained how the government should preserve the historic Native American cliff dwellings in Colorado.²⁴ Apparently “Indians and relic hunters” were destroying them. Again, Whites felt this need to assert dominance by determining the Native Americans were incapable of using and maintaining their own sites competently.

The belief Native Americans were unable to competently care for themselves was one of two ways Native Americans were viewed. The other view was that they were fierce warriors; there was no gray area in-between. The media helped drive this stereotype of the Native American; exceptional yet savage warriors, particularly noticeable in the abundance of western-themed movies and television programs during the 1950s.²⁵ The media was not above using this warrior stereotype when it suited. During World War I and World War II, Native Americans were heralded as exceptional soldiers, even noting “Indian” tactics being used by regular troops.²⁶ But that myth could not transfer to modern reality. Natives who left the reservation were suspect, which is one of the details noted in the Shoshone Mike incident – the band had left the reservation.²⁷ As much as the stereotypical warrior myth was embraced, Whites refused to

²⁴ “Save Precious Ruins,” *Daily Union*, December 29, 1906, 2.

²⁵ *Junction City Union*, August 13, 1955, 10; *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, September 10, 1955, 2; *Junction City Union*, January 7, 1958, 6; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1955, pt 2, 9; *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, March 1, 1958, 3.

²⁶ “Pershing Knows Red Men,” *Junction City Union*, May 14, 1918, 2; “Indian Warriors,” *Coosa River News*, May 24, 1918, 3; James, Edwin L., “U.S. Men Use Indian Tactics to Get Boches,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 18, 1918, 3; “Sioux Welcome Their Hero Dead,” *Ibid.*, May 19, 1921, 1; “Tomahawk and Wrench,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 24, 1942, 8; “Indian Sighs for Battle,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 4, 1942, 2; “W-G-N Dedicates ‘Ramparts’ Show to U.S. Infantry,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 12, 1942, 15.

²⁷ “Indians Killed at a War Dance,” *Ibid.*, February 28, 1911, 6.

see Native Americans as a strong, valid culture. They became merely a burden to care for and had to be kept from returning to their savage mentality. The murder of Shoshone Mike and his family group was an example of bending the warrior myth to fit the wanted narrative. Shoshone Mike's band became part of the last of the "Indian Uprisings," savages who murdered indiscriminately, where the only good Indian was a dead Indian.²⁸ This warrior myth was even used by Whites on the Native Americans themselves. During World War I, Native Americans were not U.S. citizens and therefore not subject to the draft. This did not prevent pressure to join the military or support the war effort financially, with references to the warrior abilities of Native Americans.²⁹ The warrior stereotype was part of what made the Battle of Hayes Pond incident so interesting to the readers. This was a portion of the warrior stereotype in action, but not during wartime. The tribal members appeared willing to use force for their own protection, which one would think would not be received positively by Whites, despite the fact the Ku Klux Klan were involved. It may be that despite shots being fired, no one really was hurt, and yet the incident fed into this warrior stereotype. The press did clearly point out that some of the most prominent involved were military veterans, in fact one was head of the 8th district of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.³⁰ This incident was covered by the media very differently than the murder of Shoshone Mike and his family group. It may be because this incident occurred in Robeson County where Natives did not live on a reservation and were over 29% of the population by

²⁸ "They Are Good Indians," *Weekly Independent*, March 3, 1911, 1; "Indian Mike's Last Stand," *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁹ "Major Yost Talks To Indians At Red Lake Reservation," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 3, 1918, 1; "Volunteers Given Rousing Reception," *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, June 4, 1918, 1; "Indian Warriors," *Coosa River News*, May 24, 1918, 3; "The Call of the Tribe," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 8, 1918, 2; "Indians Are Ingenious," *Junction City Union*, January 29, 1942, 3; "Gold In Alaska – For Defense Bonds," *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 6, 1942, 5.

³⁰ "Indictment of Klan Leader to be Sought After Angry Indians Rout His Followers," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, January 20, 1958, 1-2.

1960,³¹ while nationally the Native American population was only 0.29%.³² These tribal members may have been viewed as much more integrated into “regular” society. It may have had to do with the increasing notice being taken of the Civil Rights movement, however one must consider whether if any other minority was involved if the amount of positive press would have been the same. It is difficult to see this incident receiving the same positive response if this had been a large group of armed Black, Mexican, or Chinese people.

The warrior myth did not prevent the press from using derogatory terms to describe Native Americans. Terms such as “scalp,” “bucks,” “papoose,” “squaw,” and “savages”³³ were used to tap into that primitive stereotype. Common sayings such as “make an Apache Indian blush with shame,” “howling like a pack of Apache Indians,” “yelling like a Comanche,” and referring to sports contests with phrases such as “Indians In Scalping Mood” and “Saints Scalp Indians”³⁴ perpetuated the stereotype of fearsome and savage warriors.

Although the warrior stereotype was present, day-to-day interactions with Native Americans were centered on the view of them as dependents. Native Americans as a “cause” were frequently recipients of assistance from women’s clubs, church organizations and other charitable groups throughout the country in the middle portion of the century.³⁵ This was the

³¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, vol 1, “Characteristics of the Population,” pt 35, table 28, 1963, 35-129.

³² Table 29.

³³ “Indians and German Youth,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 5, 1907, 8; “High Ideals Marked Indians,” *Junction City Union*, May 14, 1918, 5; “Red Man Also Lines Up For Food Conservation,” *Elko Independent*, June 3, 1918, 1; “The Silent Drama in Elko,” *Ibid.*, June 17, 1918, 2; “Bambino Hits No. 17, But Indians Scalp Yanks in 11th, 8 to 6,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 11, 1921, 10; *Missouri Herald*, October 11, 1929, 2; “Full Program of Fun on the Streets Here,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, October 25, 1929, 1; “Did Not Seek Papoose,” *Junction City Union*, February 22, 1933, 6; “Miller And Garrett Capture 15 Gallons Men and Rabbits Join ‘Bird Gang’,” *Coosa River News*, March 6, 1942, 1;

³⁴ “Butcher Above the Hunter,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 7, 1909, 5; “Indians in Scalping Mood,” *Ibid.*, May 7, 1909, 9; “Saints Scalp Indians, 17-2,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, July 9, 1949, 4.

³⁵ “Religious News Notes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1949, 12; “Circle 5 Hears Lesson on American Indian,” *Junction City Union*, September 14, 1955, 3; “For Christmas Baskets,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, December 23, 1961, 3; “Social Calendar,” *Ibid.*, October 11, 1963, 2; “Attended D.A.C. Meeting at Blytheville,” *Missouri Herald*, October 24, 1963, 4.

viewpoint most people saw regularly. Like other minorities, Native Americans were separated and perceived as “less-than” Whites, and the media perpetuated these beliefs. Other than sports, the reports on the Battle of Hayes Pond were some of the few truly positive reactions to Native Americans. The dichotomy of the White perceptions of Native Americans created a unique place for them in White society. This did not in any way prevent discrimination, racism, segregation, bigotry, and hatred from affecting them any less. After all, Junction City felt it necessary to let the townsfolk know the Native Americans were only in the area to visit their sons who were stationed at Fort Riley, not to cause trouble.³⁶ If anything, the dichotomy would be confusing. What role do they take in society, becoming like the Whites, or embracing a culture that is perceived as either savage or child-like, but certainly primitive in both instances? While it would be easy to just say take the best of both, that makes an inherent assumption that parts of their culture are “wrong.”

People of Mexican heritage were only a small minority population during this timeframe. Only the 1930 census listed this group as a separate category. This was unusual since, at just over 1%, they were the second largest minority group in the country after Blacks.³⁷ The results regarding Mexicans in this dataset are somewhat skewed, since by the 1940 Census there had been a successful lobbying attempt to drop Mexicans as a separate group in the census, they were to be classified as White.³⁸ Most articles appeared to revolve around Mexicans as laborers,³⁹

³⁶ *Junction City Union*, June 18, 1918, 6.

³⁷ Table 29.

³⁸ Parker, Kim, Juliana Menasche Horowitz, Rich Morin, Mark Hugo Lopez, “Multiracial in America: Chapter 1: Race and Multiracial Americans in the U.S. Census,” Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/06/11/chapter-1-race-and-multiracial-americans-in-the-u-s-census/>, (accessed November 7, 2021).

³⁹ “Latest News of the Day,” *Junction City Union*, June 20, 1921, 1; “Study Beet Acreage; Dakota Plant ‘Out’,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, October 15, 1963, 1; “Asserts 50,000 Mexicans Enter U.S. Each Year,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 2, 1929, 8.

with occasional mentions of criminal activity.⁴⁰ Apparently being classified as “White” allowed them to avoid some of the worst of the racism toward other minorities. If one follows the theory that Mexicans were likely the second largest minority in the country, it is interesting to note how seldom they were mentioned in the newspapers.⁴¹

People of Asian descent were also treated differently than other minority groups by Whites in the United States. While the goal in dealing with Native Americans was to try to force assimilation, with Asian people there was a tremendous effort to prevent them from immigrating to this country in any significant numbers, if at all. It is telling of American attitudes that an article was published about the world’s oldest man living in China with an age of 252 years. This was written as a serious, factual article, so on one hand one must wonder if Whites found Asians so mysterious they truly believed the Chinese had ways of living this long, or if they were mocking the Chinese professor who claimed to have discovered proof that the man was that aged, showing a gullibility and naivete among this minority.⁴² As shown by the data, the percentage of people of Asian descent was very small, even if one included Filipinos in this group.⁴³ Chinese and Japanese immigration laws clearly demonstrated they were not wanted in the United States.⁴⁴ They were prevented from coming to the U.S. legally, yet they were needed for their labor, especially in the West. The U.S. tolerated these minorities; they were useful for labor and the government clearly pursued the economic opportunities that could be provided in the immigrants’ home countries. Asia was a vast source of raw materials and a market for U.S.

⁴⁰ “Escaped Texas Prisoner Taken Back; Says He’s ‘Glad It’s Over’,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, July 29, 1949, 1; “Mexican Shot at Topeka,” *Junction City Union*, October 17, 1929, 1.

⁴¹ Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28.

⁴² “World’s Oldest Man 252, Lives in China,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, November 16, 1929, 4.

⁴³ Table 29.

⁴⁴ The Immigration Act of 1924,” United States House of Representatives, History, Art & Archives, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Immigration-Act-of-1924/>, (accessed July 27, 2021); “Chinese Exclusion Act (1882),” Our Documents, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47>, (accessed July 27, 2021).

goods. Even though an 1894 treaty with Japan allowed for immigration to the United States,⁴⁵ there were limits to how much Whites were willing to associate with them.⁴⁶ In 1906 Japanese immigrants and their children were in conflict with school districts in California, particularly San Francisco. It was clearly resented that Japanese be allowed in schools with Whites. The school district faced off with the Federal Government, claiming it was a state's rights issue, but the Federal Government wanted to preserve their trade agreements with Japan, which Japan was using as leverage to enforce the treaty details, which included schooling.⁴⁷ Outside of the World War II timeframe, it was difficult to find reports of incidents against people of Asian descent, both individually or in a group. This may have had to do with their small population and the fact so many settled on the West coast, which was far from the small communities of the Midwest. Based on help wanted ads in the Chicago newspaper, it did not appear that there was a difference in their social status compared to other minorities.⁴⁸ This included a position wanted ad by a Japanese dentist, who was looking for work as an assistant in a dental office,⁴⁹ a definite implication that a job as an actual dentist would not be a possibility.

In the 1920s, public pressure against immigration from Asia increased, resulting in the cessation of immigration for Japanese. Filipinos were not included in the immigration ban since the Philippines were a U.S. territory. They were able to fill the jobs that normally would have been filled by immigrants from Asia. The Exeter Incident appeared to be a situation where the

⁴⁵ "Japanese-American Relations at the Turn of the Century, 1900-1922," Department of State, Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/japanese-relations>, (accessed November 10, 2021).

⁴⁶ "On Japanese Question," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, December 27, 1906, 4.

⁴⁷ "Trouble is Imminent," *Coosa River News*, December 7, 1906, 2; "Senator Rayner Caustic," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, December 13, 1906, 4; "Attorney Devlin to Washington," *Daily Union*, December 28, 1906, 1; "Week's News," *Pemiscot Argus*, January 25, 1907, 4.

⁴⁸ "Situations and Help Wanted," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 22, 1906, 15; *Ibid.*, Wednesday May 19, 1909, 16; *Ibid.*, March 6, 1911, 12; *Ibid.*, May 13, 1918, 19; *Ibid.*, June 22, 1921, 27; *Ibid.*, October 21, 1929, 36.

⁴⁹ "Situations Wanted – Male," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 3, 1907, 12.

specific race involved was irrelevant. Had the workers been Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or even Mexican, it was likely an incident would have occurred. Whites believed immigrants were taking jobs at such low pay it was depressing all wages in the area. White people did not appear to understand the fault did not lie with the immigrant workers but with the employers and White labor.

By the early 1930s, the already negative view toward the Japanese became even more prevalent. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria and China⁵⁰ created a focal point for discrimination against Japanese. It also created a much more favorable view of Chinese people,⁵¹ however not enough to reverse the immigration ban.⁵² The ongoing hostility toward people of Asian descent⁵³ was oddly combined with a downplaying of any real threat Japan could have toward the U.S., both economically and militarily.⁵⁴ This attitude may help explain the surprise of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but Executive Order 9066 resulting in the internment of Japanese in America was not out of character with how people of Asian descent had been viewed since at least the turn of the century. There was no quarter for anyone of Japanese descent, it did not matter if one was an immigrant or a U.S. citizen. The more interesting aspect of this incident was how the media aided the government in creating the narrative around what was happening. These people were leaving “voluntarily” or being “evacuated,” going to “relocation communities” and “reception centers,” one even described a

⁵⁰ “Big News Breaks All Over World During This Week,” *Missouri Herald*, February 17, 1933, 1; “War Mad Japan,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 3, 1933, 1.

⁵¹ “Chicago Chinese Observe Independence Day Today,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 10, 1929, 34.

⁵² “Helmets to Chinese Troops,” *Junction City Union*, February 24, 1933, 1; “Just Before three Chinese Soldiers Met Death,” *Missouri Herald*, March 31, 1933, 1; “A Line O’ Type or Two,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1933, 14.

⁵³ “Exclude Japs, Yankee Labor Delegates’ Fiat,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1921, 23; “Small Town Stuff,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, April 12, 1935, 4; “We Have Room to Grow,” *Ibid.*, April 16, 1935, 4.

⁵⁴ “Japanese, Yankees Freely Study Armies of Both the Nations,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 29, 1935, 8; “A Line O’ Type or Two,” *Ibid.*, April 30, 1935, 12.

“boom town” with Japanese artisans contributing to its creation.⁵⁵ It was considered perfectly reasonable that the Santa Anita Racetrack was closed, to be turned into a “sprawling Japanese tourist camp.” Barns filled with horse stalls were converted into a series of two room apartments.⁵⁶ Some elected leaders were volunteering to host internment camps since it meant a ready labor source, while others refused to have them in their area, believing it would harm the labor market.⁵⁷ The Union Pacific Railroad proudly announced they had the foresight to fire all Japanese employees in December 1941.⁵⁸ Even the newspapers reporting roundups frequently presented them as the roundup of spies, conveniently ignoring the citizen status and due process, and frequent lack of real evidence.⁵⁹ There were no mentions of the loss of all possessions or the absence of any legal recourse for those affected. The entire operation was presented in a way to quell any objections. Mentions of Japanese had never been very frequent but spiked in 1942, however after World War II ended the mentions became even less than the pre-war numbers.⁶⁰ The exception to this was 1961, when the “Buz Sawyer” comic strip ran in newspapers with a storyline including Japanese characters. After World War II U.S. policy toward Japan changed dramatically as the U.S. rebuilt Japan, creating a secure ally against the rise of communism.⁶¹ The negative comments decreased in the wake of this change, clearly to be in accordance with official policy and the belief that stemming the spread of communism was of the highest

⁵⁵ “On Way Out,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 17, 1942, 2; “Comfort Waits Jap Evacuees; Move Monday,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 20, 1942, 9; “Japs Into Isolation for the ‘Duration’,” *Junction City Union*, March 23, 1942, 1, 3; “News Briefs,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 24, 1942, 10.

⁵⁶ “Horses Leave Santa Anita as the Japs Arrive,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 25, 1942, 23.

⁵⁷ “Bids For Jap Labor,” *Junction City Union*, February 6, 1942, 1; “Urges Alien Camp in West Nebraska,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 10, 1942, 8; “No Jap Labor,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 7, 1942, 2.

⁵⁸ “News Briefs,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 17, 1942, 3.

⁵⁹ “Sweep Down on Japs,” *Junction City Union*, February 16, 1942, 5; “Spy Raids: On West Coast,” *Elko Independent*, February 19, 1942, 6; “Arrest Japanese,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 20, 1942, 5; “Many Aliens are Taken Into Custody,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 26, 1942, 4; “Aliens and Disloyal Citizens,” *Missouri Herald*, April 3, 1942, 2.

⁶⁰ Tables 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28.

⁶¹ “Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945-52,” Department of State, Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/japan-reconstruction>, (accessed November 3, 2021).

importance. Noticeably, while negative mentions decreased, positive mentions did not increase.⁶²

While the treatment of Blacks had many things in common with the treatment of Native Americans and Asians, there were distinct differences. Blacks were frequently mentioned in relation to crimes being committed.⁶³ Racial incidents involving Blacks were much more prevalent in the newspapers than those involving other minorities, likely because Blacks were the largest minority in the country.⁶⁴ In the first half of the 20th century they were often portrayed in anecdotes as uneducated, unable to speak English “properly,” and naïve to the ways of the world.⁶⁵ It appeared as if they were relegated to menial labor, particularly in the South.⁶⁶ A viewing of help wanted ads in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* shows Blacks recruited for service jobs, as well as advertisements for segregated housing which then led to businesses for sale with “colored trade,” meaning its customer base was Black.⁶⁷ Blacks were referred to as “sambo” and “darkey.”⁶⁸ It was common when reporting natural disasters to list the names of the White dead, and then just include “many coloreds died.” The reporters did not bother to find out their names,

⁶² Tables 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29.

⁶³ “Brief City News,” *Junction City Union*, March 14, 1911, 4; “Arrested on Rape Charge, Now in Jail,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, May 7, 1918, 1; “Escaped Prisoners Returned to St. Cloud,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 20, 1921, 1; “Forty Years Ago,” *Coosa River News*, October 18, 1929, 1; “Bandit Rifles Cash Register,” *Junction City Union*, March 3, 1933, 1; “Probe Cream Bottle Theft,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, April 16, 1935, 1; “Negroes Knife and Rob Two Men on ‘L’ Platforms,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 20, 1942, 19; “Juanita Plummer Accused,” *Junction City Union*, June 28, 1949, 3; “3 Executed for Slaying Policeman,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, September 3, 1955, 1; “Negroes Arrested for Assault and Robbery After Crime Spree,” *Missouri Herald*, January 10, 1958, 1; “Charges Filed Against Social Welfare Clients,” *Junction City Union*, November 30, 1961, 2; “Negro Held in Birmingham ‘Arson’ Case,” *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, October 4, 1963, 6.

⁶⁴ Table 29.

⁶⁵ “Teaching Him His Place,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, February 20, 1911, 2; “Peep Sights,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, June 7, 1918, 4; “Beseeches Mr. Nance, Home,” *Coosa River News*, October 18, 1929, 2; “Small Town Stuff,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 29, 1935, 4; “Reg’lar Fellers,” *Elko Independent*, April 16, 1942, 8.

⁶⁶ “Hayti School News,” *Missouri Herald*, October 11, 1929, 3.

⁶⁷ “Business Opportunities for Sale,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 14, 1958, pt 3, 11.

⁶⁸ “An Unreliable Dog,” *Coosa River News*, April 23, 1909, 6; “Centre Darkey Spots Us 2 Years,” *Ibid.*, March 10, 1933, 1.

or seldom contacted a minority area that had been in the path of a storm.⁶⁹ Like any other minority, only Blacks who were exceptional received positive mentions in the media. Besides sports stars, this included people like a young Black girl who won thousands on a game show,⁷⁰ a private who was selected as a colonel's orderly four times,⁷¹ a bathroom attendant who won a prize for politeness,⁷² and remarkably, a janitor who became a lawyer and was admitted to a state supreme court to practice law.⁷³

As can be seen by the many incidents in this dataset, crime reporting was stated as fact, even if there was initially little information on what had happened. A White person reporting a crime involving a Black person was believed without question by the press, and often by law enforcement.⁷⁴ One only need look at the trial of Emmett Till's murderers to see this. A Black person's eyewitness testimony was entirely ignored while testimony of Whites was accepted by the jury without question. Treatment by law enforcement and the courts was unequal, and even Blacks and Whites caught together for the exact same offense did not receive the same treatment.⁷⁵ While the victims of lynching were not exclusively Black, of the 4700 lynchings estimated to have occurred between 1882 and 1968, 73% were of Black people, and were much more prevalent in Southern states.⁷⁶ As frequent as these lynchings were, the newspapers did not delve into them at all. Even Emmett Till's death, the brutal murder of a child, went unreported

⁶⁹ "More Oklahoma Tornadoes," *Junction City Union*, June 1, 1909, 2; "Tornado Takes Several Lives," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 31, 1933, 1-2; "Tornadoes Hit Five Southern States; 18 Dead," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 7, 1942, 5.

⁷⁰ "Girl, 12, Spells Out \$16,000 Sentence," *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, August 25, 1955, 10.

⁷¹ "Consistant (sic) Colonel's Orderly," *Junction City Union*, September 9, 1963, 7.

⁷² Gardener, Virginia, "Endearing Word and a Big Smile Take \$25 Prize," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 15, 1935, 9.

⁷³ "News at a Glance," *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, May 27, 1921, 9.

⁷⁴ "Retrial of Scottsboro Assault Case Under Way," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 28, 1933, 1.

⁷⁵ "Broke Up Poker Games," *Junction City Union*, June 28, 1921, 1.

⁷⁶ O'Neill, Aaron, "Number of Executions by Lynching in the United States by State and Race Between 1882 and 1968," Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1175147/lynching-by-race-state-and-race/>, (accessed November 4, 2021).

by several newspapers in this dataset. Most reports gave some detail of the alleged crime which resulted in a lynching, sometimes pointing out the actions of law enforcement. Articles which did point out law enforcement's role usually had them appearing as if they had done everything possible to protect the victim but were simply overpowered.⁷⁷ It was clear from the one account of Mary Turner's lynching that no one wanted to look at these incidents too closely.⁷⁸ It was much easier to accept the guilt of the Black person, and the righteousness of the Whites involved, than to admit that this was murder. The fact that so many lynchings occurred and so few people were held responsible makes Black peoples' place in American society all too clear. They could be murdered on the whim of a group of people, outside the law, and it was unopposed. No one deeply investigated reports of lynchings, if they were even reported in the press. There is no lamenting the lack of rule of law, no one insisting on the dead person's innocence. As shown in the case of the Mose, Hill, and Chase lynching and the Tulsa Race Massacre, some of the newspapers were unable to even make sure names were reported correctly. But the tide was slowly changing, beginning early in the data. Some Whites were being held accountable for their actions, although it was minimal for the most part.⁷⁹ It was startling when White law enforcement officials were convicted of contempt by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1909 regarding the lynching of a Black man in 1905. Shocked was the White reaction.⁸⁰ This was most decidedly an exception to the how these cases were handled, in most there were either no arrests or convictions. Emmett Till's murderers were acquitted of all charges, even though they

⁷⁷ "Mob Sacks Jail in Texas; Three Negroes Lynched," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1909, 2; "Angry Mob Lynches Negro," *Junction City Union*, February 20, 1933, 3.

⁷⁸ "Four Negroes Lynched for Georgia Murder," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1918, 1.

⁷⁹ "1906 A Review of the history of the Past Year," *Pemiscot Argus*, January 4, 1907, 6.

⁸⁰ "Held Guilty of Contempt," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, May 25, 1909, 2; "Six in Contempt of Highest Court," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 25, 1909, 2; "Police Officers Acquitted," *Junction City Union*, February 7, 1942, 4.

admitted to the kidnapping.⁸¹ It was summary executions for minorities when Whites believed they had broken the law, but Whites did not have to face consequences for any of their actions, including those who murdered a Black politician inside a police car.⁸² News articles immediately painted Black people as guilty, and even though some walked back the original assessments in follow-up articles, the damage was done. It must have been particularly difficult to maintain a White supremacy attitude when the victims were children, yet there were no noticeable differences when compared to other incidents.

Discrimination against minorities was not confined to legal matters. All minorities were discriminated against in employment, education, housing; all aspects of society. Blacks were not affected any differently, and even though over the decades the outright negativity seemed to become less, the more subtle “place reminders” and stereotypes increased. Overall, there does not appear to be any reduction in the quantity of negative mentions of Blacks. Each minority had active discrimination; e.g. Native Americans were delayed U.S. citizenship and had no control of their own society, people of Asian descent were barred from legally entering the country, and Blacks were purposely denied voting rights⁸³ and physically driven out and barred from White housing and education.⁸⁴ Segregation was widespread, from music festivals to swimming pools, tennis courts, dances, cemeteries, even the Boy Scouts had separate Black troops.⁸⁵ The

⁸¹ “Find Kidnaped Chicago Boy’s Body in River,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 1, 1955, pt 1, 1-2.

⁸² “Granady Case Ends; Freedom to Defendants,” *Ibid.*, November 28, 1929, 1.

⁸³ “How Texans Feel About Negroes,” *Ibid.*, January 4, 1907, 6; “Child Labor Evil Shown to Senate,” *Ibid.*, January 24, 1907, 11; “The World at Large,” *Hayti Herald*, May 6, 1909, 3; “Sen. Borah Spoke,” *Junction City Union*, February 17, 1911, 1; Brown, Park, “Foes of Free Bench in Last Hour Battle,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 6, 1921, 1.

⁸⁴ “Blue Island in Throes of Zoning Battle,” *Ibid.*, November 1, 1929, 22; “Realty Board Raps Federal Housing Unit,” *Ibid.*, March 7, 1935, 23; “N.Y. High Court OK’s Negro Tenant Ban by Housing Project,” *Ibid.*, July 20, 1949, pt 2, 9; “Alabama Governor Bars School With Troopers,” *Alliance Daily Times-Herald*, September 2, 1963, 1.

⁸⁵ “Boxes Taken for Music Fete for Negro Soldiers,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 12, 1918, 9; “Attention Colored Folk,” *Junction City Union*, April 1, 1933, 1; “Colored Scout Troop,” *Ibid.*, March 26, 1935, 6; “Tennis Courts Are Open,” *Ibid.*, April 26, 1935, 5; “Find Cemetery Not Guilty in Suit on Rights,” *Chicago*

segregation went so far as to have Black births, marriages, hospital news, and church service notices in separate sections in some newspapers.⁸⁶

The dataset used in this study did not provide many statistics in the news articles, but the ones they did relay were telling. The 1889 school appropriation fund for schools in Cherokee County, Alabama was \$5,422.15 for Whites and \$797.75 for Blacks.⁸⁷ The Black population was nearly 14%⁸⁸ so the proportion of division was close, however segregated schools prevented Blacks from having access to materials White schools could afford to purchase, including better teachers. In the 1962-63 school year, the same county spent \$5.55 on the alteration of old school buildings attended by Black students and \$5,664.18 on remodeling school buildings attended by White students and another \$1752.48 on alterations of old buildings used by White students. Of the amount spent on new equipment, less than 7% of the funds went to Black schools.⁸⁹ As the Civil Rights movement fought for the ability of Blacks to expand their opportunities, the failure of the separate but equal school system was clear. In 1963 New York State government recruiters stopped their efforts at southern Black colleges because too few graduates could pass the necessary civil service exams.⁹⁰

Other data included homicide statistics for Chicago in 1942, where half of homicide victims were Black⁹¹ although the Black population was approximately 7%,⁹² and an article in a

Tribune, October 11, 1963, sec 3, 12; "Transfer Two USO Workers," *Junction City Union*, January 30, 1942, 2.

⁸⁶ *Hayti Herald*, May 26, 1921, 6; "Births Registered in Pemiscot County," *Missouri Herald*, August 5, 1949, 12; "At the Churches," *Coosa River News*, August 19, 1955, 2; "Patients January 21st," *Cherokee County Herald*, January 22, 1958, 5.

⁸⁷ "Forty Years Ago," *Coosa River News*, November 1, 1929, 1.

⁸⁸ United States Census Bureau, "Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census:1890," table 15, 402.

⁸⁹ "Financial Statement," *Cherokee County Herald*, October 23, 1963, 5.

⁹⁰ "N.Y. Job Tests Thwart Negro College Graduates," *Chicago Tribune*, September 17, 1963, sec 3, 11.

⁹¹ "Traffic Deaths and Homicides in County Gain," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 6, 1942, 13.

⁹² Table 33.

1962 *Junction City Union* edition claiming Blacks were responsible for over half of the crime in Kansas City.⁹³ Minorities only composed 23% of the population of Kansas City in 1960.⁹⁴ In 1955, 75% of people on the city's welfare rolls were Black.⁹⁵ Missouri blamed the high number of illegitimate births to non-Whites directly on a welfare system, which they believed encouraged it.⁹⁶ To counter this "problem," delegates at the National Baptist Convention were asked to "teach Negroes how to live."⁹⁷ This included instruction in family planning, the practice of which would allow them to rise to middle class.⁹⁸ At least one reader recognized that illegitimacy statistics were skewed against Blacks for a variety of reasons, therefore they should not encourage the stereotype of Blacks being promiscuous.⁹⁹ This deeply institutionalized racism was succinctly summed up by one southerner in a letter to the *Chicago Tribune*. Southern Whites were not racist, they "merely endeavor to keep...children from associating with persons who are lacking in social morals, manners, and acceptable behavior in public."¹⁰⁰ One must wonder if this parent applies these same requirements to the White people who bomb churches, lynch people, threaten students, beat up Blacks at lunch counters, and turn police dogs and fire hoses on peaceful protestors.

Despite the extent of racism toward all minorities, Whites were happy to use minority cultural references when it suited their needs. Much like the stereotypical Native American warrior myth of the past, many of these were historical in nature, used as factoids when filling in

⁹³ "Negroes Blamed for 68 Per Cent of Kansas City Crime," *Junction City Union*, January 13, 1961, 2.

⁹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960*, vol. I "Characteristics of the Population," part 18, Kansas, 59.

⁹⁵ "Chicago Relief Rolls Drop 6,000 in Four Months," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 22, 1955, pt 2, 5.

⁹⁶ Denman, Clint H., "Fewer White Births and More Non-Whites in Southeast Missouri Last Year," *Missouri Herald*, September 2, 1955, 8.

⁹⁷ "Baptist Body Asked to Teach Negro to Live," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 8, 1955, pt 6, 10.

⁹⁸ "Plan Family, Negroes Told by Legislator," *Chicago Tribune*, September 19, 1963, sec 1, 5.

⁹⁹ "Illegitimacy Statistics," *Ibid.*, October 5, 1963, sec 1, 10.

¹⁰⁰ "Southern Parent Replies," *Ibid.*, September 28, 1963, sec 1, 10.

open spaces in the newspaper.¹⁰¹ Black culture was typically not included in these factoids, possibly because Whites had done such a good job of stripping their historical culture from them, downplaying any cultural contributions by Black as a whole. Not only were they excluded, in some instances what may originally have been part of their culture was actually stripped from them.¹⁰² As the target of some of the worst racism as well as the fear of the group as a whole, it would have been in the best interests of the status quo to promote strong, positive Black historical culture. Yet this was not done. The reader learns of place names, medicines, and beliefs among Native Americans,¹⁰³ as well as customs, traditions and beliefs of other minority cultures.¹⁰⁴ But these are always short filler statements and articles, not in-depth reporting on the minority. Just enough bits and pieces to slightly elevate the culture, but not enough to positively affect the minority in this country. Indian place name origins are interesting, but their children need to be educated in “proper” White schools.¹⁰⁵ Despite being intrigued by certain cultural aspects, the dismissal of their intrinsic value can be seen by the prevalence of films where White people consistently played the roles of minorities, roles which were most often minority stereotypes.¹⁰⁶ Whites had no qualms appropriating minority cultures for their own entertainment. Organizational and club parties and events frequently had minority cultural

¹⁰¹ “Colors of the Bluebird,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, January 3, 1907, 2; “Indian Landmarks in Ohio Woods,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, March 14, 1911, 5.

¹⁰² “Bre’r Fox’ Not Negro Tale,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 7, 1909, 10.

¹⁰³ “The Indian Medicine Man,” *Junction City Union*, April 23, 1909, 5; “Sources of Dyes Long Known Only to Indians,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 20, 1933, 5; “Beautiful Bemidji,” *Ibid.*, July 30, 1949, 3.

¹⁰⁴ “The Origin of New Year’s Calls,” *Pemiscot Argus*, December 28, 1906, 4; “Got Rid of the Devils,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, January 11, 1907, 6; “Chinese Kitchens,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, October 25, 1929, 16; “Chinese Women Grow Ashamed of Bound Feet,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, November 13, 1929, 3; “Primitive Home Life,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, November 16, 1929, 5; Meade, Mary, “Cardamom Spices Holiday Fare,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 20, 1961, pt 3, 15.

¹⁰⁵ “Alabama Highlights,” *Coosa River News*, July 29, 1949, 1; “In the Wake of the News,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1921, 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Junction City Union*, May 18, 1921, 3; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 26, 1921, 16; *Junction City Union*, November 13, 1929, 2; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 7, 1942, 16; *Junction City Union*, August 20, 1955; 7; *Chicago Tribune*, September 13, 1963, sec 2, 12.

themes. This could have been anything from minstrel shows to dressing as Chinese coolies to putting on Native American costumes for a women's club meeting.¹⁰⁷ To continue the social norm of appropriation, youth organizations did this as well. For example, the Boy Scouts of America feels it acceptable to appropriate Native American culture in the Order of the Arrow dance performances.¹⁰⁸

The two incidents which occurred during World War I and World War II were notable in the different way they were reported by the press. For most incidents, the first reports were usually reflexive responses to whatever had occurred, with minorities at fault. However, normally these were followed up with articles that would explain the situation a bit more fully, giving a clearer picture of what actually happened, even if still presented in a White-centric way. The Mary Turner lynching, occurring during World War I, went largely unreported, and there were no follow up articles at all. At that time the focus was on the unity needed for a successful war effort. To keep dissent to a minimum, negative or "hot button" issues would be downplayed extensively. At a time when the country needed to pull together for the war effort at home, it would not have been beneficial to make Mary Turner's lynching a keystone event. The facts were so horrific that, had they been reported, it had the potential to cause a significant reaction from Black communities, affecting the war effort. Soldiers were needed, even if the service was segregated at the time. Farm labor and factory labor was also desperately needed. Whites did not want to create incidents at home that would cause problems when everyone should be

¹⁰⁷ "Indian Costumes a Feature of Party of West Side Women at Menoken Club," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 8, 1907, 3; "Meetings and Entertainments," *Ibid.*, April 29, 1909, 7; "Japanese Rites at Mock Wedding," *Ibid.*, May 10, 1909, 11; "Senior Clasc (sic) Play Is a Good Entertainment," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, May 21, 1909, 1; *Elko Independent*, February 20, 1933, 4; "Hemingford Lions Talk About Roads," *Alliance Times and Herald*, March 15, 1935, 10; "They Were There," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 17, 1955, pt 1, 17; "Japanese Dinner at Legion Thursday Eve," *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, February 18, 1958, 3.

¹⁰⁸ "Scout Court to Feature Indians," *Alliance Times and Herald*, July 15, 1949, 5.

focused on the war effort. Any event that would have taken focus off this would have been dismissed. Japanese laborers in one town set the record for buying war bonds during the third bond drive.¹⁰⁹ Minorities were using this push toward unity as an opportunity to prove themselves useful to the dominant White culture, an attempt at acceptance. This would not have been possible if minorities had created any type of organized pushback against the crimes being committed against them. Negative mentions of minorities during World War I were significantly less than during the previous incidents' data.¹¹⁰

In World War II, the incident had the added component that an enemy happened to be a minority Whites had been targeting for decades. This made them obvious targets, easily identifiable, already excluded from White society. The reporting involving Japanese was clearly an effort to vilify this minority and justify heavy-handed tactics by the government in response to threats, real or imagined. Anti-Japanese sentiment became a rallying point for unification on the home front. When Executive Order 9066 was enacted and reports of roundups appeared in the newspapers, readers had to have been able to make the connection that many of these people were U.S. citizens, or "second generation," as one newspaper referred to them.¹¹¹ Yet no one, at least initially, was going to come to their defense so closely after the attack on Pearl Harbor. So, the newspapers reported the arrests, branded them as spies and saboteurs, and did their best to make it look like we were sending them off to a new future for their own protection and with their full cooperation. White Americans have never truly taken responsibility for its history of racism, but this was one incident where Whites were forced to admit some responsibility of wrongdoing. The 1988 reparations of \$20,000 per living person paid to people of Japanese

¹⁰⁹ "Hoffland Tops All in Liberty Drive," *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, May 10, 1918, 1.

¹¹⁰ Tables 1, 3, 5, 7.

¹¹¹ Trohan, Walter, "Empower Army to Clear Vital Areas of Japs," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 21, 1942, 1.

descent wrongfully incarcerated in the United States during World War II¹¹² was hardly adequate compensation for the damage done to these people. And this was due to pressure from the survivors, not out of any sense of remorse by the U.S. government. Between the two World Wars the negative references to minorities returned to pre-World War I levels.¹¹³ While this overall level did not drop during World War II, one can see that the negative mentions specifically of Japanese was significantly higher during this time.¹¹⁴ During the war 11,500 people of German ancestry and 3,000 people of Italian ancestry were interned,¹¹⁵ compared to 120,000 of Japanese ancestry. There were millions of people in the U.S. of German and Italian descent, two of the largest immigrant groups. Yet because they were White, they were much less visible targets. The country focused their racism specifically on the Japanese during World War II. This point was brought home as other minorities, and their war efforts, were featured in newspaper articles. In a still segregated military, Black units were being increased, even though advanced training was done at all-Black colleges.¹¹⁶ Champion boxer Joe Louis was drafted, and the press followed him closely.¹¹⁷ Chinese laborers in the U.S. wore signs to distinguish themselves from Japanese and the first Chinese airman trained by the U.S. graduated.¹¹⁸

¹¹² “Redress and Reparations for Japanese American Incarceration,” The National WWII Museum, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/redress-and-reparations-japanese-american-incarceration>, (accessed October 25, 2021).

¹¹³ Tables 9, 11, 13, 15.

¹¹⁴ Table 17-18.

¹¹⁵ “German and Italian Detainees,” Densho Encyclopedia, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/German_and_Italian_detainees/, (accessed October 23, 2021).

¹¹⁶ “Army,” *Missouri Herald*, January 14, 1942, 4; “Navy Takes Negroes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 4, 1942, 14; “Ask Air Courses for 20,000 at 3 Negro Colleges,” *Ibid.*, February 3, 1942, 5.

¹¹⁷ “His Biggest Bout,” *Alliance Times and Herald*, February 10, 1942, 6; “Louis Gives Conn a Pointer,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, March 25, 1942, 6.

¹¹⁸ “In the Week’s News,” *Coosa River News*, February 20, 1942, 4; “Wings For Chinese,” *Elko Independent*, April 23, 1942, 5.

Newspapers could not say enough about the bravery of the Filipino soldiers fighting the Japanese.¹¹⁹

A key component of this examination was to see if increasing or decreasing minority populations in a small county would change the local press reporting. It could be hypothesized that the more minorities were in an area, the more often one would see positive reports as they integrated into the local population. This was not the case. Pemiscot County, Missouri was the most obvious case, with Cherokee County, Alabama a close second. Pemiscot County saw one of the most significant increases in minority population over these seven decades, yet the news reports remained extremely negative throughout the study, and a surprising number of issues ignored minorities entirely.¹²⁰ This leads to a conclusion that minorities were not being integrated into the local population, possibly being actively prohibited from integrating. Cherokee County had a significant decrease in their minority population, yet the newspaper stayed consistently and strongly negative. In this case the conclusion would be a maintenance of the status quo, they were content with the dwindling minority population and took every opportunity to reassert White dominance.¹²¹

The data does show a decrease overall in the number of mentions that are blatantly negative, but this is countered by an increase in mentions of stereotyping and “place” reminders.¹²² It was as if racism was going underground, it became less obvious but more entrenched in the fabric of society. It cannot be determined if this was deliberate, but it can be proposed it was more likely an evolution in response to increasing pushback by minority

¹¹⁹ “A Week of the War,” *Missouri Herald*, February 27, 1942, 2; “All Ready to Dynamite Bridge and Japs,” *Elko Independent*, April 16, 1942, 5; “MacArthur Bridge,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 10, 1942, 12.

¹²⁰ Tables 1-28, 36.

¹²¹ Tables 1-28, 32.

¹²² Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27.

populations. One could make an argument that institutionalized racism developed as an alternative to the constant negative actions. Once built into society, it would be self-sustaining for the most part, the individual could deny responsibility by blaming it on society. It is insidious, and incredibly difficult to identify and remove. Yet newspapers, just by changing their wording, tone, and article choice, could have done so much to counter this.

As the Civil Rights movement gained momentum, articles involving minorities in incidents appeared to offer more detail and more follow up articles were published. Readers were beginning to see reporters questioning and examining facts, but still no real action against the abuse of minorities. It was not until the Battle of Hayes Pond and the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing that one sees editorials clearly coming out in support of minorities involved.¹²³ Not that there were no longer detractors, but newspapers were finally publishing remarks by Whites about how wrong the treatment of minorities has been. This may account for some of the drop in outright negative mentions, but racism did appear to become more deeply entrenched.¹²⁴ The acceptance of institutionalized racism was what was preventing any real progress for minorities in society. An example of this would be a Black man speaking out against civil rights protests, calling them damaging to Blacks and with an inability to address the real problems of crime, too many babies, and illiteracy, yet unwilling to acknowledge that all three are direct results of decades of institutionalized racism.¹²⁵ Another would be arguing against the use of violence, urging minorities to work within the legal and legislative systems to create change.¹²⁶ The minority population up until 1970 was never more than 13% nationally,¹²⁷ which in itself

¹²³ “Incidentally...” *Junction City Union*, January 21, 1958, 3; “The Oldest Americans on the Warpath,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 22, 1958, pt 1, 16; “Editorial: ‘The Love That Forgives’,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, September 16, 1963, 8; “Negroes Honor Bomb Victims,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1963, sec 1, 10.

¹²⁴ Tables 21, 23, 25, 27.

¹²⁵ “Negro Raps Military Protests,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 4, 1963, sec 1, 5.

¹²⁶ “The School Boycott,” *Ibid.*, October 22, 1963, sec 1, 14.

¹²⁷ Table 29.

would preclude the voting system as a way to create real change for minorities. Combined with voting restrictions in many states, the percentage of minority people actually capable of voting would be too small to create a difference. As late as 1955 of the nineteen thousand Blacks living in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, zero were registered to vote.¹²⁸ To effect change, the minorities would first have to convince nearly a majority of the White population to support the changes, in other words they must rely on their oppressors to create change that would alter the status quo of their own society. As shown, many of the incidents involving large groups of minorities were blamed on “outside agitators,” there were no issues or concerns in those areas which would cause these types of problems, “undesirables” were coming in and causing trouble. If Whites could blame problems on “outside” people, that meant nothing had to change because it wasn’t a real problem, “their” minorities were content. Even convincing Whites there was a fundamental problem was difficult. In 1963, the governor of Nebraska was agreeable to creating a committee to study civil rights issues, but it was not an “emergency” since the state had been living with the problem “for 50 to 75 years.”¹²⁹ The state of Illinois had to go so far as to ban state funding to school districts that refused to integrate according to federal law.¹³⁰ Racism was so deeply embedded even the most innocuous changes were problematic. Desegregation of public pools caused riots.¹³¹ Teachers were fired for being related to someone who signed an anti-segregation petition.¹³² People were beaten for sitting at a newly integrated lunch counter.¹³³

¹²⁸ “Free Elections,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 29, 1955, pt 1, 20.

¹²⁹ “Morrison: No Civil Rights Emergency in State,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, September 13, 1963, 1.

¹³⁰ Tagge, George, “Bar School Aid to Any Backing Race Exclusion,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1949, 6.

¹³¹ “Erasure of Color Lines at Public Pool Cause of Riot,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 22, 1949, 1.

¹³² Kuettner, Al, “Negro Fired After Years of Service,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, September 1, 1955, 12.

¹³³ “Mob Attacks 5 Negroes at Bus Terminal,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 30, 1961, pt 4, 4.

When dealing with the portrayal of minorities in these newspapers, one of the issues with this dataset was the lack of accurate information on so many of these incidents. Obviously, small newspapers did not have the funds to send reporters across the county to cover stories, which is why the wire services were used. However, one would think some follow up questions might be asked about some of these incidents. Had newspaper editors demanded more thorough and substantial reporting, there is no reason to believe the wire services would not have accommodated those requests. Many of the initial articles lacked verifiable details, and some of the follow-up articles were little better. The incidents involving individuals or a small number of people seem to be the most affected. Lynchings did not receive accurate reporting; none of the contemporary articles in this dataset matched the actual historical information that has been investigated and confirmed about the incident since it occurred. One must wonder if these incidents were covered up at the incident site and reporters were unable to learn more information, if the newspaper receiving this information did not want to confront the problems, or if there was more of a “don’t ask, don’t tell” mentality regarding that type of incident. Considering the lynching of a person would involve the person doing the lynching committing a crime, one could draw the conclusion that facts were suppressed or altered at the source to protect the perpetrators. Even in the larger incidents, which would be harder to suppress due to the number of people involved, the reporting in most instances was biased toward Whites. The Battle of Hayes Pond was the exception to this. Even reporting the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, while roundly condemned as a whole, the articles focused on the ongoing tensions and conflict between Blacks and Whites. Racism was self-perpetuating, with minorities being viewed negatively, then biased reporting, causing minorities to be viewed negatively.

Overall, minorities were portrayed by the news media as if they were a constant, imminent threat to the “American” way of life, when in fact from 1900 to 1970 they never composed more than 13% of the U.S. population.¹³⁴ The overwhelming number of negative mentions as opposed to positive mentions in the dataset leaves no doubt that there was a deep-seated fear surrounding minority actions.¹³⁵ This fear translates into biased reporting of incidents involving minorities, and perpetuates the false narrative. This can be traced through immigration restrictions, job and housing discrimination, and voting restrictions. It can also be seen in the reaction to many of the original incidents. As shown, the number of Whites involved in many of these incidents was inconsistent with the severity of the original action. The Nash lynching reported a mob of over one thousand people to find one person. Shoshone Mike’s band of twelve were hunted by two separate posses. The Exeter Riot involved over three hundred Whites, even though there were only two hundred Filipinos in the entire area. And for interning 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans, the entire U.S. Army was available for use. Every incident in this dataset with the exception of the Battle of Hayes Pond was an overreaction to an event, frequently based most often on rumor, half-truths, and assumptions.¹³⁶ These incidents were not the only instances, they can be found throughout the data. Responses such as threatening to lynch a soldier who allegedly “threw” a White woman into the street,¹³⁷ justifying

¹³⁴ Table 29.

¹³⁵ Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27.

¹³⁶ Civil Rights and Restorative Justice, “Nelson Nash,” Northeastern University, https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/downloads/neu:m04286971?datastream_id=content, (accessed September 2020).; Hickson, Howard, “Last Indian Uprising?” Howard Hickson’s Histories, <https://www.gbcnv.edu/howh/ShoshoneMike.html>, (accessed September 2020); Fabros, Alex S. Jr. “In the Heat of the Night: The Exeter and Watsonville Riots 1929-1930,” *Positively Filipino*, <http://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/in-the-heat-of-the-night-the-exeter-and-watsonville-riots-1929-1930>, (accessed September 2020); U.S. President, Executive Order, “Executive Order 9066 of February 19, 1942, Resulting in the Relocation of Japanese,” National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=219>, (accessed September 2020).

¹³⁷ “May Lynch Reno Negro,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1906, 5.

the murder of a Black man by a White woman because he “annoyed her,”¹³⁸ forcing a man to climb a tree and riddling him with bullets for allegedly attacking a White woman,¹³⁹ a six month jail sentence for “making obscene remarks” to a White woman,¹⁴⁰ or the refusal of U.S. Naval officers to eat in the same dining hall as the Black Commissioner sailing to Liberia as a representative of a State Department commission.¹⁴¹ The very last incident in this dataset, the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, is a violent reaction to what boils down to Black children being offered equal education. Unfortunately, in some areas not much progress was made.

As the largest minority by a significant amount,¹⁴² Blacks most often bore the brunt of the negativity. The deep-seated fear of retaliation which emerged once slavery ended morphed into deeply entrenched institutionalized racism. Whites did not want minorities, particularly Blacks, to gain enough power to change the status quo. To prevent this, Black people were stereotyped as unintelligent, lazy, and criminal, subservient to Whites and serious repercussions were meted out if they strayed from their assigned role in society. They were kept in low paying jobs, housed together so as not to “taint” the White population who were their betters. Whites needed them for labor but did not want to give them any power.¹⁴³ The racism was so much a part of everyday life that Whites did not bother to make differentiations for other colors. In 1955 the Indian Ambassador to the U.S. was segregated in a restaurant in the Houston, Texas airport. State law forbade Blacks from eating in the same dining room as Whites, so he was placed in a separate room. Racial segregation was so foreign to him he did not realize he had been

¹³⁸ “A Woman’s Honor,” *Hayti Herald*, March 16, 1911, 2.

¹³⁹ “News at a Glance,” *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, June 24, 1921, 11.

¹⁴⁰ “Till ‘Kidnapers’ Free on Bonds,” *Alliance Daily Times and Herald*, September 30, 1955, 1.

¹⁴¹ “Liberian Cruise Starts Race Row,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 17, 1909, 4.

¹⁴² Table 29.

¹⁴³ “Would Scatter the Negroes,” *Junction City Union*, June 11, 1909, 1.

segregated, he thought he was receiving special treatment because he was an ambassador. But, as the restaurant supervisor said, “[t]he law’s the law.”¹⁴⁴

This entrenched racism could be seen in something as innocuous as advertisements for products. Apparently, products were not made for minorities, or possibly minorities should want products marketed to Whites so they could be just like them. If minorities were mentioned in a product advertisement, it was in a stereotypical way. A “high quality toilet soap” would fix a woman’s complexion so she did not have to “grease herself with creams and lotions till she looks like a Sioux Indian getting ready to put on his war paint.”¹⁴⁵ Chesterfield cigarettes stated people looked for “wit” in an entertainer and “taste” in a cigarette. The “entertainer” in the ad was a minstrel wearing blackface.¹⁴⁶ The Santa Fe Railroad tried to tempt passengers to head to warmer climes for the winter, with “Indian detours” along the way.¹⁴⁷ The Great Western Paint Company lets the reader know “War Paint Has Changed... And So Has House Paint,” complete with the face of a chief in headdress and warpaint.¹⁴⁸ A cartoon titled “Ching-Chow” featuring a Chinese man provided pearls of wisdom until 1971.¹⁴⁹ No advertisements asked White women if they wanted to use a product that made their hair thick, silky, shiny, and straight like a Japanese woman’s, or teased a secret formula Black women used to keep their skin soft - now available to everyone. These are only a few examples of how the stereotypes of minorities continued, and by no means has this practice ended. One would think marketing to minorities would be economically beneficial to a company, but apparently it was easier to just stand by the conviction

¹⁴⁴ “India’s Envoy to U.S. Runs Afoul of Segregation Laws,” *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, August 23, 1955, 1; “Envoy Honored Till Texas and U.S. Apologize,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 24, 1955, pt 2, 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1909, 11.

¹⁴⁶ *Junction City Union*, November 9, 1929, 3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, February 8, 1933, 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, March 20, 1942, 4.

¹⁴⁹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 10, 1949, 16.

that products for Whites were the products everyone would want, there was no need for separate products just for minorities.

What is also seen in this dataset is that throughout these seventy years, there were always people who took exception to the treatment of minorities. Whether this was done in accordance with a person's personal beliefs or for political expediency, there are many instances where Whites publicly disagreed with the treatment of minorities. When President Theodore Roosevelt summarily dismissed an entire Black Army unit over the actions of a few men, with no due process for those dismissed, Congressional leaders demanded a proper investigation.¹⁵⁰ As discussions moved forward regarding a change in the election of Senators, the Sutherland amendment was added to provide federal oversight of elections to protect the voting rights of minorities, particularly Blacks.¹⁵¹ A short mention of visiting Native Americans pointing out they get a "scanty welcome" yet they never get into mischief.¹⁵² When it was discovered Mexican families in the area were in serious need, townspeople stepped up to provide for them.¹⁵³ Forcing the Scottsboro case to the U.S. Supreme Court ended the exclusion of Blacks from juries.¹⁵⁴ By 1949 the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* was reporting on "terrorism" in the South, White mobs attacking Blacks.¹⁵⁵ And there are more articles showing Whites being arrested and convicted for crimes against minorities.¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately, these voices always seemed to be too few to create real change in the treatment of minorities, and seldom did any of the editors use their platform to try to create change.

¹⁵⁰ "Taken Behind Closed Doors," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, January 16, 1907, 2.

¹⁵¹ "Direct Vote Bill Beaten by Trick?" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1911, 4.

¹⁵² "Small Town Stuff," *Alliance Semi-Weekly Times*, May 20, 1921, 9.

¹⁵³ "Families Destitute," *Junction City Union*, May 20, 1921, 1; "Few Need Aid Now," *Ibid.*, June 18, 1921, 1.

¹⁵⁴ "Alabama Jury Method Fought at Murder Trial," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1933, 12.

¹⁵⁵ "Terrorists are Active in Three States," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, June 27, 1949, 1.

¹⁵⁶ "Fourth Klansman is Convicted in Negro Mutilation," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 21, 1958, pt 1, 16.

Overall, it was disheartening to see the excruciatingly slow pace of change in attitudes toward minorities. Incidents involving minorities, large or small, were reported by the press, but no single incident appeared to be enough to break through the embedded racism and create real change. Refusing or neglecting to accurately report stories of extrajudicial murders of individuals or large groups of people points to the failure of the sole purpose of newspapers – informing their readers of what was happening in the world. Of the fourteen incidents studied, not a single one was reported by every newspaper. Even some important successes, such as desegregation and representation on juries, were not enough to create rapid change. By 1955 the Civil Rights movement had become increasingly visible and covered by the press. Overall, the percentage of negative versus positive mentions was relatively stable until 1955,¹⁵⁷ after which positive mentions began to increase, a trend which continued through 1963.¹⁵⁸ Changes finally began to occur when the Federal Government, through Supreme Court rulings and legislation, began to force Whites to change their treatment of minorities in the U.S. While the government certainly could not regulate people’s beliefs, the support of minorities by the Federal Government finally pushed the media to begin to change the way they covered minorities. Yet overall, newspapers which tended to publish articles with a more favorable tone toward minorities continued in that style through the study, the converse also being true.

The changing minority status did not change the reporting style.¹⁵⁹ While that might be understandable when using wire service articles, which were written by a pool of reporters across the country, there appeared to be no difference in attitudes when local news writers and editors reported local events. An incident against a minority did not cause local news outlets to stop

¹⁵⁷ Tables 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19

¹⁵⁸ Tables 21, 23, 25, 27

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

using racial slurs or stereotypes or cause them to report more positive stories. Newspaper editors could not make the connection between the continuing occurrence of racial incidents across the country and the multitude of ways the media was complicit in maintaining the status quo, resulting in the perpetuation of such incidents. Changes in the reporting style after events would have been indicative of changing attitudes at the local level, that, combined with other areas doing the same, could have effected social change from the inside, so to speak. Instead, change came only when minorities became focused enough to effectively demand changes. The White majority had as its sole focus the continuation of its current social system, and newspapers were an integral part of its maintenance.

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