

PRESS COVERAGE OF LYNCHINGS IN MISSOURI: AN ANALYSIS OF THE
NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BLACK AND WHITE LYNCHINGS BETWEEN
1882 AND 1942

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And hereby certify that in their opinion it is ~~w~~orthy of acceptance.

AB17930

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the men and women who died at "the hands of persons unknown,"
in hopes that someday, justice will be served.

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I would like to thank Dr. Rex Campbell, first and foremost, because he saved my life. While he would grumble and say, “Yeah, right,” it is important for me to thank him on paper. When I say he saved my life, I mean only that without Dr. Rex Campbell, I would not be in the position to question, analyze or fulfill my need to be a thinker. Dr. Campbell provided me with the opportunity of a life time. For these things, and the privilege of learning from him, I am eternally grateful.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

In the early to mid-nineteenth-century United States, a wave of lynching swept the nation. The first victims of lynchings were predominately White, not Black. The crimes for which these individuals were lynched were commonly associated with property theft, assault or homicide. The lynching of Black men as slaves was relatively rare.¹ When a slave was accused of murder, it was not considered worthy of a public “lynching.” On the contrary, it was the master that generally administered, either directly or through an overseer the punishment, often of a capital nature.

After the Civil War, however, emancipated slaves were no longer “protected” by the owners from mob violence. Starting about fifteen years after “freedom” from slavery, the mob justice system was born. White communities fearful of the free Black population took their anxieties to levels of irrationality, lashing out at any Black person caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Rural communities in the 1880s began to lynch Black men.² The lynchings were reported in the local press. It was through this medium that the lynching reports were described to readers both within and without the community in which the lynching occurred. The lynchings usually drew large crowds, and the

¹ Black men, women, girls and boys were, pre-emancipation, too valuable as slaves to murder them for petty offenses committed. Most often, they were beaten or whipped for violations of their master’s wishes or society’s morals. Upon serious offenses, however, such as assault of a White man or murder, even slaves were lynched. See Blassingame, John (ed.) *Slave Testimony: Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies*. (2003). Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. pp. 25, 126, and 139.

² Please note that only Black men were lynched in Missouri between the designated time periods. There were no Black or White women reportedly lynched in Missouri.

newspapers were there to cover the “festivals of violence”³ with passion and opinion abounding. This was no doubt in response to the strong desire for sensational news reporting that swept the nation at the very dawn of the industrial revolution in the United States.⁴

Between 1889 and 1932, Arthur Raper indicated that 3,745 people, both Black and White were murdered by lynch mobs, while Stewart Tolnay and E.M. Beck indicated that nearly 2,500 were Black.⁵ The disparity between Black lynching numbers and Whites lynched was represented in every state in which lynching became a method of control over the Black population, in that Black people were the victims of lynch mob violence more often than Whites or any other ethnic group between the specified dates.⁶

Missouri as a state outside of the Deep South experienced the same phenomenon – and responded to the actions of mobs around the countryside in relatively the same way. The newspaper reportings of lynching changed over time, as did the popularity of lynchings. The national lynching era came to a close around the 1930s. One might ask: did the news media, through their style and method of publishing and reporting their news information concerning lynchings, contribute to the increase in lynching as an accepted form of extralegal violence? Subsequently, did the breakdown of the media’s opinions later concerning lynchings as a desirable end to deviant Black men and women

³ Taken from: Tolnay, Stewart and E.M. Beck. *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. (1998). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

⁴ Starr, Paul. *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*. (2004). New York: Basic Books. pp. 256.

⁵ Raper, Arthur F. *The Tragedy of Lynching*. (1933). Mineola: Dover Publications.

⁶ Tolnay & Beck, *A Festival of Violence*. (1998). pp. ix.

contribute also to the demise of this devastating ritual? While these questions are difficult to answer, it is important, nonetheless, that they be discussed in order to understand the possible contribution of the media to general trends within the White population of Missouri.

CHAPTER 2 - PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON LYNCHING AND NEWSPAPERS

The lynchings have been studied and reported in numerous articles and books. In historic pieces, whose benefit is the time period from which they report the lynchings, the discussion of lynching is different than those contemporary analyses. Arthur Raper, for instance, and Walter White both contribute to the body of knowledge concerning lynching in the South from the perspective of information available in 1929 and 1933 respectively.⁷ The contemporary research of the phenomenon of lynching in the United States is contributed to by several sources as well, with different perspectives on the events. As previously mentioned, Stewart Tolnay and E.M. Beck have contributed significant amounts of information concerning lynchings in the Deep South, including analysis of seasonal patterns of lynchings and economic trends and their correlation with the lynching rates in the same region.

Orlando Patterson approaches the act of lynching from a unique standpoint by identifying significant symbols and abstract meanings for the processes of the lynching of Black men. He includes that the influence over those Whites engaged in the lynching was rooted in a fundamental concept of Christianity. Patterson included that the tree or the bridge did in fact represent something deeper in terms of death and religion.⁸ In fact, there is a plethora of

⁷ See Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching*. (1933). and White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. (1929). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

⁸ See Patterson, Orlando. *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries*. (1998). New York: Basic Civitas. pps: 168-232.

information concerning lynchings in the Deep South. Some research has focused on specific lynchings, such as Dominic Capeci, who chose to analyze the event itself and the surrounding occurrences that gave light to the lynching of Cleo Wright in Sikeston, Scott County, Missouri in 1942.⁹ At the same time, some researchers have focused aspects of their research on the use of the press in the lynching. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, for example, used newspapers for the whole of his research on lynching as a phenomenon in Virginia and Georgia, as part of the “New South.”¹⁰ However, there is no research concerning the Missouri lynching phenomenon in reference to strictly the press’s coverage of lynchings. The purpose of this research is to identify the role of the press in Missouri when reporting the lynchings. Therefore, the interest of this research is to identify the differences within the press in Missouri when reporting the lynching of a Black male in rural parts of the state in comparison with the lynching of White males. In addition to the questions posed above, another concern centers around the dangerous idea that the press perhaps was more contributive than many individual historians or sociological researchers have observed in writing.

Previous Newspaper Research

At the beginning of the 1880s, the only source of information concerning the world, the nation, the state or the community, accessible to many was the newspaper. Radios would not emerge for another fifty years, thus newspapers

⁹ Capeci, Dominic. *The Lynching of Cleo Wright*. (1998) Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

¹⁰ See Brundage, W. Fitzhugh. *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*. (1993). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

were the only source of information to inform the public. The newspaper's domination as a national source would not have been possible without the development of the telegraph. It was not only the development of telegraphic technology. The near monopoly of the wire services available for the transmission of the news contributed to the ways in which the news was communicated from smaller town newspapers to the metropolitan newspapers.¹¹

The relationship between the wire service, Associated Press and the local newspapers was based on the transference of news back and forth – from the rural parts of the United States to the nearest Associated Press hub, and right back to the rural papers from the metropolitan hub with news from around the country and around the world.¹² This relationship created a dependency of the local, rural presses on the larger, metropolitan commercial industries for advertising dollars, further cementing the connection between the rural press and the metropolitan lifestyle.¹³

It would be incorrect to blame only the newspapers for the racial violence enacted upon Black people by Whites. Indeed, there are several elements that composed the environment of lynchings; the newspapers were simply a fraction of that foundation. However, there was no more effective means of communicating the goings on from one community to the next like the newspaper. Word-of-mouth will always be an effective way to communicate gossip, and spread rumors; but the newspaper, especially in tight-knit rural

¹¹ Starr. *The Creation of the Media*. (2004). pp. 183-185.

¹² *Ibid.* 185.

¹³ *Ibid.* 263.

communities, was not only a place to retrieve information about the happenings in the community, but an eye into the soul of the community.

Lynching and the coverage of lynchings¹⁴ in the United States by the press beginning in the 1880s was reflective of the trends in coverage of other news-worthy events in that the sensationalism incorporated into newspaper reporting by Joseph Pulitzer¹⁵ explicitly detailed the connection of the lynching, the Black men and the angry White mobs. Individuals and businesses could profit from the misfortune of others through the sale of newspapers, with headlines that developed interest and reports that were more like novels with coverage that was not completely factual or objective. In fact, with the increase in the actions of mobs in the South, the newspapers outside the South began reporting the lynchings in such detail, that it would not have been difficult to imagine being there during the mob action.¹⁶

The pioneering work of Ida B. Wells, a Memphis woman who began to use her newspaper the *Free Speech* to spread information concerning anti-lynching sentiment, was very effective in communicating Wells's anti-lynching sentiment to Black citizens.¹⁷ Christopher Waldrep suggests that she affected more Black citizens than White citizens in her campaign to educate the public about lynching.¹⁸ However, Waldrep also discusses the manipulation of information by

¹⁴ For the purpose of this research, the *lynching* shall be identified as the action of the lynching: the capture, the procession, the "trial," the ceremony of judgment and the execution.

¹⁵ Starr, Paul. *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*. (2004). New York: Basic Books. pp. 256.

¹⁶ See Ginzberg, Ralph. *100 Years of Lynching*. (1962). Baltimore: Black Classic Press. pp.24 or 113 for examples.

¹⁷ Waldrep, Christopher. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch: Extralegal Violence and Punishment in America*. (2002). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 103-111.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 122

Wells and others when contributing to the statistical information of Black victims of lynch mob violence. This discrepancy, as detailed below, sustains itself as the largest issue with gathering of accurate data in regard to the individuals lynched by mobs between 1880 and 1930:

Robert Charles killed a police officer, and then killed more police officers as they tried to arrest him. Charles made his last stand on Saratoga Street, holding off a mob the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* claimed numbered twenty-thousand. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* estimated the crowd at five thousand, not counting police and a company of militia. Wells quoted the larger figure.¹⁹

If this variation in information proves to be common, the variability may make the finding accurate information about the lynchings difficult. The development of the telegraph, for example and the relatively high cost of manual transmission of information “over the wire” may have encouraged information to be truncated.

Ralph Ginzberg collected several hundred newspaper articles from around the country during what the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People would label “The Lynching Era”²⁰: 1880 to 1930.²¹ His work, *100 Years of Lynching* (1962), Ginzberg selected articles from California to Maryland, from Florida and Michigan. Ginzberg’s work illustrates Pulitzer’s style. The headlines are astounding, yet simple: “ROASTED ALIVE,” and “BOY UNSEXES NEGRO

¹⁹ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 17.

²⁰ NAACP. *Thirty Years of Lynching NAACP. Thirty Years of Lynching in America, 1880-1910*. (1919). New York: Arno Press.

²¹ This was not the end of lynchings, *per se*, but merely a weakening of the lynching as a major form of social control. Lynchings themselves as a practice privately occurred, as reported, on through the 1960s in parts of the South.

BEFORE MOB LYNCHES HIM,”²² leaving nothing to the imagination concerning the murders of Richard Coleman (Maysville, Kentucky. 1899) and Bert Smith (Houston, Texas. 1917). At the same time that these headlines were sensational, they were not accurate of the events that had taken place; lynchings were often gruesome spectacles.

The downside to the reporting of the lynching from the head office in New York, some 1,200 miles from Birmingham, Alabama or 880 miles from Atlanta, Georgia, was that the report of the lynching itself lacked the true flavor of the region, and its views on lynching, racism and mob rule.²³ The size and content of the article concerning the actual lynching was generally brief and unsubstantial in information and sentiment of the community.

Christopher Waldrep pursued the relationship between the newspaper and the lynching in a different manner. Waldrep claimed that the term “lynching” itself, as coined by journalists²⁴, was interchangeable with “murder,” depending on the actions of the mob. In other words, if the mob did not act in a way that seemed to benefit the citizens of that particular area the newspaper would label the action a “murder,” charging it as a vendetta. If the reaction of the mob to a serious crime such as murder was that lynching would be appropriate, there was a justification that there was “honor” in punishing Black men for their alleged crimes.²⁵

²² “Roasted Alive.” (1899, December 7). *New York World*: np. and “Boy Unsexes Negro Before Mob Lynches Him.” (1917, October 13). *The Chicago Defender*: np. Taken from Ginzberg, Ralph. *100 Years of Lynchings*. (1962). pps 24 and 113 (resp).

²³ Mileage numbers supplied by Rand McNally, “The Road Atlas '04: United States, Canada, and Mexico.” (2004). pp. 138.

²⁴ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 86.

According to Waldrep because of the frequency of lynchings, the press became routinized in their telling of the lynchings, with every new lynching, the story was repeated from the previous event.²⁶ This could have contributed to the belief that lynchings were a part of normal community life and thus added to the contagion of the acceptance of lynchings as a tool for justice.²⁷ If members of a community several hundred miles away from a lynching read the routine descriptions that were included in the newspaper reports from the *New York World* or the *Chicago Tribune*, and did not witness the real violence and horror of a lynching, it may have contributed to the perpetuation of the other lynchings?²⁸ While these newspapers repeated the stories, using only slightly different language from one report to the next, the general message was the same: Black men were being punished, by White society.

The Atlanta Constitution and the Lynching of Sam Hose

The murder of Sam Hose²⁹ in Newnan, Georgia, 1899, and the reporting of the events leading up to the lynching of Hose in the *Atlanta Constitution* illustrate this description and hypothesis precisely. Within the collections of Ginzberg, there are at least two reports in this compilation, one from a Florida press (*The Kissimmee Valley Gazette*) and one from a Massachusetts press

²⁶ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 88.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The discussion of contagion contributed by larger press machines in removed geographic areas will be discussed in the "Results and Discussion" chapter of this work.

²⁹ There are several errors concerning the spelling of the names of the victims within Ralph Ginzberg's collection. I have seen this name as "Sam Hose" and "Sam Holt." As the fundamental body of knowledge concurs that his name was indeed Sam Hose, he will be referred to as "Sam Hose" in this analysis.

(*Springfield Weekly Republican*), in which the reports contain, as would be expected, the “facts” of the execution. However, and perhaps the most interesting aspect when comparing these two coverage perspectives is that they both published their accounts with assumed guilt. The *Springfield Weekly Republican* used language in describing Sam Hose within the first sentences as a “murderer” and a “ravisher,” without the benefit of a proceeding or any other legal interference.³⁰ The press was a powerful tool for narrating the story of violent racist practice in the South, even when the newspaper was telling its story 1,200 miles away.

The *Atlanta Constitution*, was credited by supplying enough information to removed members of the mob that they could locate and identify Sam Hose if they encountered him. The *Constitution* went so far as to offer a reward for Hose’s capture – and upon his discovery and death, it paid out. The receiver of the reward credited the newspaper with its detailed descriptions, which played their parts in Sam Hose’s eventual execution.³¹ As discussed, the newspaper, and more accurately, the individuals behind the news reports covering the lynching did not mask their belief that the lynching was justified if the social boundary between the world of Black men and the world of White men and women was breached.

Waldrep discussed in depth the case of Sam Hose and the portraying of this Black tenant farmer as a murderer, before he was even brought into a

³⁰ “Sam Holt Burned at Stake” (1899, April 28). *Kissimmee Valley Gazette*: np. and “Negro Burned Alive in Florida; Second Negro Then Hanged.” (1899, April 28). *Springfield Weekly Republican*: np. Taken from Ginzberg. *100 Years of Lynchings*.(1962). pgs and 10 and 12 (resp).

³¹ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 120.

courtroom.³² It is important to discuss this specific case, as the capture, portrayal and eventual murder of Sam Hose reflect the popular reporting style of the lynching through the press and the justification of the lynching itself, both by the public, as expressed through newspaper reports, and the reports themselves.

As previously mentioned, Sam Hose was a Black tenant farmer in Newnan, Georgia, which is only about 40 miles outside of Atlanta. The *Atlanta Constitution* concentrates its story on the idea that Sam Hose entered his employer's house, Alfred Cranford, and attempted to rob him while he sat at his dinner. After being refused, Phillip Dray noted that the *Constitution* conveys that Hose "crushed Alfred Cranford's skull with an axe" and proceeded to rape Mrs. Cranford in a "pool of her husband's blood."³³ Of course, this story was circulated and the racial tension within that community, and any community subscribing to the newspaper approached dangerous levels of a desired violent outcome. The *Atlanta Constitution*, as Waldrep notes, because of Hose's continued elusion of the Georgia mobs, had plenty of time to continue to construct the image of Hose to the literate public.³⁴

Waldrep also discussed an interesting aspect of the lynching and the newspaper coverage, in that the reporting of the lynching in such a supportive manner could possibly have come from communities believing very much in the popular sovereignty of the citizen.³⁵ This support of the mob then might have suggested that it was not so much about the lynch mob itself, but the justice that

³² Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch* (2002). pp. 119.

³³ Dray, Phillip. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. (2003). New York: The Modern Library. pp. 5.

³⁴ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch* (2002). pp. 119.

³⁵ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch* (2002). pp. 126.

was represented in that mob action: the action of the people against the ineffective government agency.

It is interesting as well that Waldrep described several aspects of the newspapers, as demonstrated through Ginzberg's piece, that seem to apply to most of the newspapers reporting the lynching. He discussed the effect of hyperbole on the literate public as one "inspire[ing] public hysteria."³⁶ Without the use of exaggeration, the rural newspaper might have looked more like the metropolitan newspapers of the time, with its sterile reporting. However, the extreme to which the newspapers reported the lynching, and with the amount of graphic information provided by the newspaper, the rural newspapers were quite different from the metropolitan news presses.³⁷

Waldrep also discussed patterns in press reporting, as the repetition of the criminal account was necessary to set the scene for the succession of violence. "Reporters wrote articles that essentially retold the same story, a standard narrative for lynching, a formula that could be repeated, and would be repeated, for decades."³⁸ This could have been measured in a number of ways, while at the same time, the motives for that established pattern are transparent. Waldrep contributed: "The standard narrative archived in print a process for calculating the legitimacy of crowd violence."³⁹ The effects of this understanding and inadvertent manipulation of the system by newspaper editors would be felt for generations, as the practice of lynching and the reporting of the lynching would

³⁶ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 88.

³⁷ See "Blood-Curdling Lynching Witnessed by 2,000 Persons." (1918, February 13). *Chattanooga Times*: np. Taken from Ginzberg, *100 Years of Lynching*. (1962). pg. 114.

³⁸ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 88

³⁹ *Ibid.*

become increasingly graphic and brutal, much as the actual lynching practice was.

With the elements Waldrep alludes to, such as the reporting of the story of Hose repetitively with the ingredient of hyperbole to fuel the outrage of the citizen and the unwavering support that was expressed for the mob “justice” through the media, one must ask if the presses themselves were not at least somewhat responsible for the relatively short-term public acceptance of lynching as a form of punishment for “boundary crossers?” It is important to convey also that not much detailed research has been done concerning the local reporting of the lynching, the language used, the accusations implied, or the retelling of the story. Waldrep’s is the only work discovered during this research project that implies the repetitive story-telling nature of the newspaper when the lynching and the lynch mob are the subjects.⁴⁰

Grace Elizabeth Hale commented that “Hose’s fate had already been decided by the papers ten days before”⁴¹ With the newspaper working over time to publish the story that peaked the curiosity of the paying public, time was of the essence. It is through this method of communication that the individual rewarded for the apprehension of Sam Hose credited his success solely with the information from the *Constitution*.⁴² The actual lynching of Sam Hose and its graphic recounting by numerous presses around the country illustrates perfectly

⁴⁰ Waldrep. *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 88.

⁴¹ Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*. (1998). New York: Vintage Books. pp. 210.

⁴² “The *Constitution* paid a reward to the man who captured Hose, J.B. Jones. And Jones gave the *Constitution* credit as well, giving the paper a testimonial saying he would not have known to look for Hose or known what he looked like, had it not been for the *Constitution*’s detailed description.” Ibid. 120.

the assertion of Richard Perloff, who stated: “Far from suppressing news about lynchings, newspapers embraced them, providing abundant, even graphic, coverage of vigilante violence.”⁴³ This element of the newspaper report might have turned stomachs, but it also sold newspapers.

Hale introduced an interesting connection through the information communicated by the newspaper and the actual event. In other words, she noted that the barbarity of the lynching, and the truth behind the behavior of the mob was never reported.⁴⁴ If the newspapers in 1890 recorded that men and women were cutting off the genitals of a Black man, the social outcry at the description might have caused some issues or at least raised questions as to how “good Christian” men could be so savage.

It is fair to say that a great deal of the Sam Hose case was escalated by the reporting from the newspaper. It also seems fair to relate that the newspapers contributed to a larger phenomenon, in which one individual or community could be “infected” with the social “craze” of another; that is a type of contagion: social contagion. Paul Marsden, when identifying different categories of social contagion, referred to this form of contagion as a “contagion of aggressive behavior,” and especially one of “dispersed collective,” in which the level of the media is measured in conjunction with the level of aggressiveness.⁴⁵

⁴³ Perloff, Richard M. “The Press and Lynchings of African Americans” (2000, January) *Journal of Black Studies*: pp 315-330.

⁴⁴ Hale, *Making Whiteness* (1998). pp. 214.

⁴⁵ Marsden, Paul. Memetics and Social Contagion: Two Sides of the Same Coin? (1998). *Journal of Memetics – Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, 2. http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/1998/v012/marsden_p.html.

Marsden defined social contagion as: “the spread of ideas, feelings and some think, neuroses through a community or group by suggestion, gossip, imitation, etc.”⁴⁶ This definition centered on the concept of “the spread of ideas . . . neuroses” through “imitation;” the social contagion hypothesized in this research: the newspaper involved in reporting the lynching had the resources to spread the story of the lynching across the countryside. If a desire of the time was to control the emancipated Black population, one tool would have been the employing of the newspaper to communicate the punishment for social boundary violation.

There are only four reports in Ginzberg’s work from what could be considered Southern newspapers before 1910. There is evidence presented by Ginzberg that the journalists of the Southern region, contributing their reports to newspapers such as the *Atlanta Constitution*, attempted to remain neutral in their reporting of the lynchings, but the objectiveness in the Southern newspapers did not begin to appear until after 1910.⁴⁷ The newspaper reports concerning the lynching of Sam Hose presented in Ginzberg were removed from the proximity of the event; therefore, the “flavor” of the community in which the lynching took place is lost.

Ginzberg collected 172 newspaper articles from sources outside of the South for their accounts on the lynchings within the Southern regions.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Sutherland, S. (ed.) (1995). *Macmillan Dictionary of Psychology*. London: Macmillan Press. Taken from Marsden, (1998). Memetics and Social Contagion. http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/1998/vo12/marsden_p.html.

⁴⁷ “Second Negro Lynched for Crime of One Man” (1913, February 9) *Atlanta Constitution*: np. and “Negro Preacher is Found Swinging From A Limb.” (1913, February 16). *Atlanta Constitution*: np. Taken from Ginzberg. *100 Years of Lynchings*.(1962). pp. 80.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* whole text count.

However, as stated previously, because of the distance between the site of the lynching and the report of the lynching (when coming from a non-local newspaper) through the newspaper, some of the important elements of the lynching itself are lost. Therefore, it would seem more appropriate to analyze the lynching report from a local newspaper; one that knew better the people within the community that would be involved in the lynching ritual.

In another study of Southern lynchings, Stewart Tolnay and E.M. Beck noted that the Southern press was anything but objective in their reportings of lynchings. They cited that many times, even if the newspaper openly deplored the action of the mob, there was no “exoneration” of guilt for the accused.⁴⁹ This was a common element in the articles compiled by Ralph Ginzberg as well, in that even the newspapers outside of the South did not question the guilt or innocence of the lynching victims.⁵⁰

W. Fitzhugh Brundage claimed that there were several editors of Southern presses that were publicly pro-lynching, and anti-Black.⁵¹ Charles Smith was a journalist for the *Atlanta Constitution*, and was vocal about his support of lynching as a form of social control.⁵² At the same time, Rebecca Lattimer Felton, a journalist for the *Atlanta Journal* was a little more graphic with her support for the lynching of Black men when she exclaimed that if lynching protected women from rapists, then she prescribed “lynching a thousand a week if it becomes

⁴⁹ Tolnay & Beck. *A Festival of Violence* (1998). pp. 87-88.

⁵⁰ See Ginzberg. *100 Years of Lynching* (1962). Entire work.

⁵¹ Brundage. *Lynching in the New South*. (1993). pp.198.

⁵² “As for lynching, I repeat what I have said before, let the good work go on. Lynch em! Hang em! Shoot em! Burn em!” (Brundage, W. Fitzhugh. *Lynchings in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930*. (1993). Urbana: University of Illinois Press. pp. 198.)

necessary.”⁵³ If the press was to remain objective when reporting their findings from the community, but the journalists reporting the lynchings were racist within, could that information be balanced? Arthur Raper concluded that several Mississippi newspapers weren’t hesitant about exaggerating the truth, either one way or the other.⁵⁴

However, John T. Kneebone insisted that most Southern journalists evolved, beginning in 1920, to a place where they were generally not in support of the idea of lynchings, only because they believed that any form of extralegal action against Black men or women would be looked upon as evidence of the savagery of the people of the South, and its lack of ability to reform its ways to modernize with the rest of the country.⁵⁵

Previous Missouri Lynching Research

A simple list was provided from previous research by scholars such as Dominic Capeci and Michael Pfeiffer⁵⁶, both of which studied relatively in-depth information concerning the lynchings in Missouri, their locations, causes and

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Raper, Arthur F. *The Tragedy of Lynching*. (1933). Mineola: Dover Publications.

⁵⁵ Kneebone, John T. *Southern Liberal Journalists and the Issue of Race, 1920-1944*. (1985). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. pp. 76.

⁵⁶ Capeci, Dominic. *The Lynching of Cleo Wright*. (1998) Lexington: University of Kentucky Press. and Michael Pfeiffer’s work in the form of a chart, including names, dates, ethnicity, locations, and crimes supposedly committed by victims of lynch mob violence. Retrieved from the world wide web on January 12, 2004, from <http://users.bestweb.net/~rg/lynchings/Missouri%20Lynchings.htm>. and <http://users.bestweb.net/~rg/lynchings/Missouri%202a.htm>. This list and information from Pfeiffer were also taken from Pfeiffer, Michael. *Rough Justice: Lynching And American Society, 1874-1947*. (2004). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

other important information for the identification purposes. Another crude list was provided by Ralph Ginzberg, in which a “partial list” of victims from all over the United States was compiled.⁵⁷ All of the lists provided to this research endeavor numbered close to 70 for Black American lynching victims. The lists provided a guide to begin the data collection, and while these works are crucial for the body of knowledge concerning Missouri lynchings, they did not cover in depth any pertinent information to newspaper coverage of lynchings in Missouri.

⁵⁷ Ginzberg. *100 Years of Lynching*. (1962). Appendix.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY – THE DESIGN, HYPOTHESIS AND VARIABLES OF THE MISSOURI NEWSPAPER STUDY

Research Design

The mixed method of research design was designed to create more dimensional, all encompassing results. Quantitative methods were used when creating and analyzing the data set. The Chi-square would be invaluable in providing a concrete example of patterns, if any were to be found. At the same time, the qualitative method of reporting the data was essential as well, as content analysis is traditionally considered an exercise in descriptive recounting of events that build a story concerning the research question. With this in mind, mixed method design seemed to serve this research project perfectly.

As one of the benefits of quantitative design is the understanding and eventual proving or disproving of the hypothesis through statistics; it was necessary for the purpose of this research to implement a statistical analysis. Chi-squares would be used to contribute to descriptive statistical analysis made necessary by the variables selected from the overall newspaper collection.

At the same time, the qualitative method was necessary to implement since the bulk of the analysis was the language in the newspaper article. Because of the historical nature of the research as well, it was necessary to employ qualitative methods to the analysis. At the same time, because the total number of cases in this population was 75, this small population did not provide enough cases for logistical regression, much less a sample.

The *N* and the *n*

The data set was compiled from a series of 222 articles spanning approximately 60 years, composed of 49 White newspapers.⁵⁸ The population of lynching victims was tallied and confirmed at 51 Black American male victims and 24 White lynching victims. The majority of the lynchings in Missouri occurred between 1890 and 1910, which coincides with the findings of other researchers for the peak of lynchings in the South as well. White lynchings (24) were used for the purpose of comparison against the Black lynching reports. Through this analysis, the hope was that a difference would be obvious to the reader between the press's coverage of the White lynching and the press's coverage of the Black lynching. These figures combined resulted in $N=75$ for the population of lynching victims in Missouri.

At the same time, given that some of the information, especially concerning those variables that were exclusive to one part of the analysis, was specifically not inclusive of all of the cases (the reporting of the occupation of the White male murder victim, for instance), the *n* was subject to change.

Implementing the variables concerning White male occupation (as listed above) and the crimes committed against White males as a variable also did not include all 51 of the cases involving Black male lynching victims. In fact, out of the 51 cases of Black lynchings, only nineteen of those cases were against

⁵⁸ Please note that there are 49 newspapers in collection because a number of White lynchings and Black lynchings took place in the same communities. Therefore, some of the newspapers reporting lynchings make more than one appearance in the content analysis.

males, and out of those 19, 12 were reported as murder. In regard to the White lynching victims, most of the alleged crimes were committed against White men by other White men, and the newspapers did not seem to concentrate too much on deviation from one White lynching report to the next. Therefore, the n for the White males lynched remained at 24 for the duration of the analysis.

Research Question

The research question motivating this endeavor is quite simple. Did newspapers in Missouri report the lynching of a Black man differently than they reported the lynching of a White man? Through newspaper analysis the purpose of this research was to determine if the language used by the newspaper was different from the reporting of the Black lynching to the reporting of the White lynching.

Hypothesis

The research hypothesis for this project was that through content analysis of Missouri newspapers, it would be determined that the newspaper reports of the lynching of a Black man would differ from the newspaper reports of the lynching of a White man.

Null-Hypothesis

As a result, the null hypothesis of this historical investigation provided that the reporting of the Black lynching would not differ from the newspaper reports of the White lynching.

Sub-Hypothesis

Formulating a sub-hypothesis included expanding on the differences in reporting the lynching based on the color of the skin. In other words, variables in regard to which part of the state the report came from became an important contributor to analyzing the nature of the report between Black lynching victims and White lynching victims.

The Data Set

It was determined that a data set was necessary, as the content analysis yielded several obvious patterns and a means by which to organize and analyze these patterns was necessary. A total of 26 variables were included in the data set, but out of those 26, 19 variables from the data set were used in the final analysis. The exclusion of the nine other variables, some of which included nominal information such as the name of the accused, title of the newspaper from which the lynching report came, and the name of the specific county in which the lynching occurred. These variables were predominantly used for identifying the individual cases and using that information to develop evidence for the hypothesis. The remaining 19 variables are discussed below.

There were initially three data sets compiled with the same variables for all three data sets. The first data set was restricted to the Black lynching victims only. This data set was designed to eliminate the bias of the data concerning White lynching victims in order to test the hypothesis. The second data set was compiled of White lynching victims only, and was designed for the same purpose

that the separate data set for Black lynching victims was designed. The third and final data set was composed of both Black and White lynching victims and would be used predominantly for record keeping due to the nature of the analysis. In other words, it would be necessary to separate and analyze separately the applicable variables in order to test the hypothesis.

The Variables

There were several variables created for the purpose of categorizing the articles. One of those variables was the reporting style of the newspaper publishing the lynching article. Specific definitions of the newspaper report's language were created for the different reporting styles. Supportive of lynching meant that the editor/reporter openly and verbally asserted his support of the mob's action. This would be represented as mentioned, through his language, interviews (if any), and descriptions of the mob and its victim. The anti-lynching category was the obvious denouncement of the mob, and at the very least, criticism on paper concerning the behavior of the mob itself. The objective style of writing a lynching report was identified by an absence of the other two categories listed above. If the newspaper article demonstrated any of the above characteristics concerning support for the lynching, it was assigned a 1. Anti-lynch mob articles were assigned the number 2, while the objective reporting styles were assigned the number 3. The articles were separated at this point between Black and White lynching articles and the reporting style of the press reporting the lynching.

After the newspaper articles were separated out, by type and region, another analysis over the content was initiated. The focus of was to look for the role of the law enforcement officials. The names of the sheriffs, officers, deputies and any action or lack thereof described concerning these individuals was noted in conjunction with the lynching. Information was also collected concerning the victim of the alleged crime, including gender, his or her age, the crime the Black or White man was accused of, and any reactions from the community were also recorded for the purpose of analysis. In some instances, the newspapers did not mention the age, and it was assumed, based on the rest of the description of the individual that he or she was over the age of 21. If it was possible to identify, the occupation of the accused was also noted, however most often, this information was not presented in the newspaper article. The occupations of the White male victims of the crime were created as a variable.

In developing a data set for statistical analysis, it was important to define certain variables. The ages of the accused and the victim of the alleged crime were categorized. Four categories were designed. Age categories were: under 12, 12-16, 17-21, and 21 and over. In the event that there was no age reported, this was noted as well.

The variable of language is important to identify, as the language the reporter or editor used or allowed use of to describe the accused was different from some newspapers to others. If the newspaper predominantly used "negro," as either a proper noun or an adjective, the value assigned the language variable was 1. Referring to the accused predominantly as "colored" received a value of

2. If the word “nigger” was used at any point in the report, whether inside or outside of quotes, the article received the value of 3. It is important to reiterate that if the article predominantly used “negro,” but used the word “nigger” anywhere else in the report, the value 3 was automatically assigned. However, if “negro” was used predominantly and “colored” was mentioned, the value assigned that specific case would still be 1. This variable applied strictly to Black male lynching victims, if the accused was White, a number 4 was assigned.

The other variables and titles of variables included in the analysis:

- The ethnicity of the lynch mob victim;
- The age of the victim and the accused.
- whether the crime committed was murder, rape, both, robbery, assault or other crimes (including “insulting White people”) (crime);
- the decade of the lynching (years);
- the region in which the lynching took place (region);
- the gender of the victim of the alleged crime (gender);⁵⁹
- the violence against the police officers involved (mob violence against cops);
- the level of police involvement (level involvement);
- the status of the accused with the police: in custody or not in custody at the time of the lynching (custody);
- the composition of the crowd in terms of men, women, and children (crowd composition);
- the size of the crowd at the lynching (crowd number);

⁵⁹ There was an elimination of the variable concerning the gender of the accused as all of the victims of reported lynchings in Missouri were men. Other variables that were eliminated within the analysis were any nominal data, such as name of the lynched man, title of the newspaper, and county name in which the accused was lynched. The inclusion of these variables in the data set was primary for the researcher’s purpose in identifying individual cases to use as evidence in the text.

- the atmosphere of the lynching (festival or vengeance);
- whether or not the mob was disguised (masked mob);
- whether or not the victim of the lynch mob was displayed for a prolonged period of time (extended display);
- The means by which the lynching victim was murdered (primary method of death).

Obviously, the variable addressing the ethnicity of the accused was the most important variable for either proving or disproving the hypothesis. The individual lynch mob victims that were White males were assigned a 0, while the Black lynch mob victim was assigned a 1.⁶⁰

When separating the crimes committed by the accused, originally, all of the crimes were listed according to the type. Murder, rape, assault, robbery, insulting White people, and domestic violence were all crimes that were in the newspaper articles. For analysis, the variable of “crime committed” was divided into three categories: murder, rape/assault, and other. “Other” is the category that includes all of the less frequently occurring accusations against the Black males involved in the lynching. Murder was assigned the number 1, while rape/assault was assigned a 2. Other crimes committed (robbery, insubordination, and the like) were assigned a 0.

A variable concerning the time period of the crime committed and the lynching was determined and assigned to a nominal status, because the time periods varied from event to event. This variable was important because it might aid in shedding light on the reporting process of the lynching. If the newspaper

⁶⁰ It was assumed by the researcher that if the newspaper did not include the ethnicity of the lynch mob victim in its report that the victim was White.

had enough time to report the events unfolding before the mob took action. At the same time, the variable “number groups” was coded accordingly. For example, 1880-1889 was a decade group that received a 1, 1890-1899 was assigned a 2, and each decade thereafter was numbered accordingly.

Violence against the police and the level of police involvement varied as well. These variables were assigned nominal values. If there was no involvement from the police, such as active attempt to protect the prisoner, the value assigned to this variable was 0. The cases in which the police or other law enforcement officials were involved were assigned either a 1 for passive involvement, in which the police were present, but intervened minimally. The second rating (2) was some involvement, meaning that the law enforcement official was involved in the conflict of protecting the accused from the mob. The last level assigned (3) was aggressive involvement, in which the law enforcement official actively tried to prevent the lynching from occurring, either by firing into the crowd or physically resisting the extraction of the prisoner from the jail facility.

The level of violence against the police officer as reported by the newspaper was one of the dichotomous variables designed in this study. There were some instances in which the police were not present, and therefore, the case was assigned a 0 or “no report.” However, if the mob enacted violence of any kind on the law enforcement official, even if there was no injury to the officer, the case was assigned the value of 1, indicating violence.

The variable for custody was based on the events preceding the lynchings. If the accused was not in custody, the number assigned was 0. The

number assigned if the accused was in custody was represented as a 1. This variable is important because there might be a discrepancy in the process of the lynching, in that if the individual is not in custody, then the size of the crowd and composition of the crowd might be different, and there would most likely be very little if any police involvement reported. The variable for custody status could signify also posse activity, instead of legal intervention.

When analyzing crowd composition, it was very clear that most of the newspaper did not mention the gender and age demographics of the mob. However, it is important to examine whether women and children were included in the crowd, as this might have had an effect on violence against law enforcement officials or atmosphere of the lynching. Therefore, the value of 1 was assigned to mob reports of men only. For the mobs composed of men and women only, with no report of “boys”⁶¹, the value of 2 was designated. “Men and boys only” as a group in the mob was allocated the value of 3, and a composition that contained all three groups was assigned the value 4. However, if there was no report or mention of any gender or age in regard to the crowd, the value of 0 was assigned.⁶²

As the crowd size indicated community involvement, the size of the crowd at the lynching as a variable was designed, in part, to stand on its own as an indicator of community involvement with the lynching, and as a measure for the atmosphere of the lynching as a variable. The size of crowd was divided up into

⁶¹ Please note that for the purpose of this study, “boys” of either White males or Black males will be defined as anyone under the age of 20.

⁶² At the same time that “no report” would be indicated, it is understood by the researcher that no mention generally meant that men were the only group present at the lynching.

four defined groups. The first value, of course, was the 0 or “no report;” 1 was crowd size fewer than 25 people; 2 was a group of 25-75; 3 was for crowds ranging in size from 75-100; 4 for a crowd size of 100-300; and 5 was designated to reflect on crowd sizes of 300 or more.

The atmosphere of the lynching environment was a dichotomous variable. The analysis of this was subjective because the newspaper rarely described the mood of the lynch mob, so the atmosphere of the lynching had to be carefully defined. If the crowd size was small (less than 75 people), and the newspaper described the members of the mob as “vengeful” or described the proceedings as “somber” or “quiet,” the event was categorized as a circumstance of vengeance for a crime, and therefore, the value assigned that case would be a 1. However, if the crowd was large (75 to 300 or more), and the newspaper included information pertaining to the emotions of the crowd (by using words such as “rejoicing” or “congratulating”), the value assigned the case was a 2 for “festival” atmosphere.

The disguise of the mob was another variable that was not often mentioned. Most often, the newspaper did not report whether the mob wore masks or not. If the disguise was not reported, the value assigned the case would be 0. The value of 1 would be assigned to no disguise, while the value of 2 was assigned to those cases in which some members of the lynch mob were disguised. The third value, 3, was assigned to those cases in which all members of the mob wore masks.

In the definition “extended display” variable or circumstance, the newspaper reports did not always indicate the length of time the victim was displayed *post mortem*. This was a dichotomous value determined by the length of time the body was displayed. If the newspaper reported that the victim of lynch mob violence was displayed for more than 15 minutes, then the value of 1 was assigned, indicating that “extended display” had taken place. If the victim was “cut down” or turned over to the authorities rather hastily, then the value assigned to the case would be indicated by a 2.

The means by which the accused met his death is an important variable that attempts to capture some level of difference between the White and the Black lynchings, and of course, the means by which they were reported. The categories for this variable include death by: hanging (1), burning (2), drowning (3), bullets (4), dragging (5), beating (6), and a combination of any of these as 7. The number 0 was used to represent those cases in which the primary means of death were unknown. This only means that if there was no description of the actual lynching, but the victim was simply found, a zero would be assigned to the case.

The occupation of the male crime victim as a part of the newspaper report was important. The reporting of the occupation might have some part to play in the sympathy to anger within the community, and subsequently, justification for the lynching. If the victim of the crime was a woman, a number 0 was assigned. If the individual victim of the crime was not murdered (that is, assaulted), the number 1 was assigned. If the newspaper made no mention of the occupation, a

2 was assigned. However, if the individual male was reported to have been a farmer, 3 was assigned to him and the number 4 was assigned to the individual reported as a police officer.

Gathering the Data – Previous Research Lists and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

This study stems from an interest in the newspapers of Missouri and the coverage of the Black lynchings that occurred in Missouri between 1882 and 1942, as compared to White lynchings. The initial intention of this study is to explore and describe the differences between the reporting of the White lynching and the Black lynching. Subsequently, it is also the intention of this study to describe the different methods by which individual rural presses reported the lynchings as they occurred either in the same vicinity as the newspaper or in close proximity.

It was suggested that exploring the historic newspaper files at the Missouri State Historical Society would determine the correct number of lynching victims in Missouri. The newspaper library was employed to clarify, verify and correct the names, dates and locations of the lynchings that Capeci, Pfeiffer and Ginzberg⁶³ contributed in previous research.

⁶³ Without knowing the original sources of information that contributed to these lists, it is hard to say, with Ginzberg especially, how accurate the lists are. However, it is certain that at least the list provided by Ginzberg was most likely a list provided for the most part by the NAACP in 1919. The lynchings directly following the publication of *Thirty Years of Lynching*, occurring after 1919 were most likely sources from a reliable reference, as Ginzberg becomes more accurate in his detail of lynching victims after 1920.

The newspapers themselves were scanned with the date, name and location of the lynching provided by the above three sources. Each county listed in the previous works provided at least one newspaper that could be relied upon to report the major goings-on in the surrounding rural sections of the county, and sometimes even over county boundaries. However, what was discovered as the research became more involved with the content of the newspaper was that there was more to the lynching than simply the name, year, location and crime committed.

As the research continued, it became clear that some of the names provided on all of the above mentioned lists were not accurate. Some of the errors included names that were misspelled, the location of lynchings that did not exist in Missouri, the incorrect date or year and even the lack of lynching. For example, and certainly by chance, the name of William Jackson was found on an internet source, lynched in 1893 in Bates County, he was not listed anywhere in the work of Pfeiffer, Capeci or Ginzberg.⁶⁴ The Missouri newspapers were the sources of information, including names, location, dates and crimes for this research. The search began with the first lynching of a Black American male in Missouri.⁶⁵

When no local sources were found reporting a possible lynching, one of the major metropolitan papers in Missouri was examined to find any additional

⁶⁴ The name of William Jackson was retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 2, 2004, from http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/history/modules/mod23/mod15_frame03.htm.

⁶⁵ The first lynching of a Black man during the Lynching Era in Missouri was in April 1882, and occurred in Kansas City, Jackson County.

information. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* was selected as the stable and most reliable source of information concerning the lynchings in Missouri.

An extensive search of the *Post-Dispatch* was conducted over approximately a year and a half, in which information was examined to verify any lynchings in Missouri. Every page of issues ranging from 1882 to the 1920s was scanned for possible reports of lynchings in rural parts of Missouri. In some of the Dispatch's issues, the lynching would be horrendous enough to the *Post* that it would report the lynching of a Black man on the front pages, but for the most part, the *St Louis Post Dispatch* did not publish large articles, but described the lynchings briefly with names, locations and dates being generally the only real information. These excerpts were usually only a total of one paragraph, but provided enough information for the further investigation into that individual lynching.

The Rural Newspapers

The search for the newspapers from the individual rural communities began. It was not difficult to find the dates, names and places for most lynchings, but the process would encounter some obstacles if the Historical Society did not have the specific paper needed. In that instance, the nearest town was located, and its newspaper scrutinized for the reporting of the lynching.

The Categorization Process

The local newspapers provided, as would be expected, the best information concerning facts about the lynching: personal information about the victim of the lynch mob, intimate details about the victim of the alleged crime and the crime itself, the action of the police in the face of a violent mob, the mob itself and its composition, and so on. It was discovered that the local newspapers in the communities in which the lynching took place were the absolute best source of information concerning the real lynching. Therefore, it was determined that in order to demonstrate the different social aspects of the lynching in small, rural, predominantly White communities, the local newspaper would have to be the primary tool for description.

The articles that pertained to the Black lynchings were recovered from at least 37 different newspapers.⁶⁶ A collection of newspapers began with the Jackson County lynching in 1882, from the *Kansas City Star*. Once the articles were collected, they were arranged chronologically. The articles were analyzed for content: language, settings and other information newspapers might include racism, support or denouncement of lynching or other pertinent points.

Several words were identified and used to distinguish one newspaper from another. Words like “beast,” “brute,” or “black fiend,” were taken as indicators

⁶⁶ It is important to note here that many of the articles had more than one report. We counted the front page as one article, and any subsequent story on the same paper was considered one article. However, if the newspaper continued to print information and “new developments” for the next few days, those subsequent articles were considered separate from the initial article. Please see the bibliography for a list of Missouri’s rural newspapers.

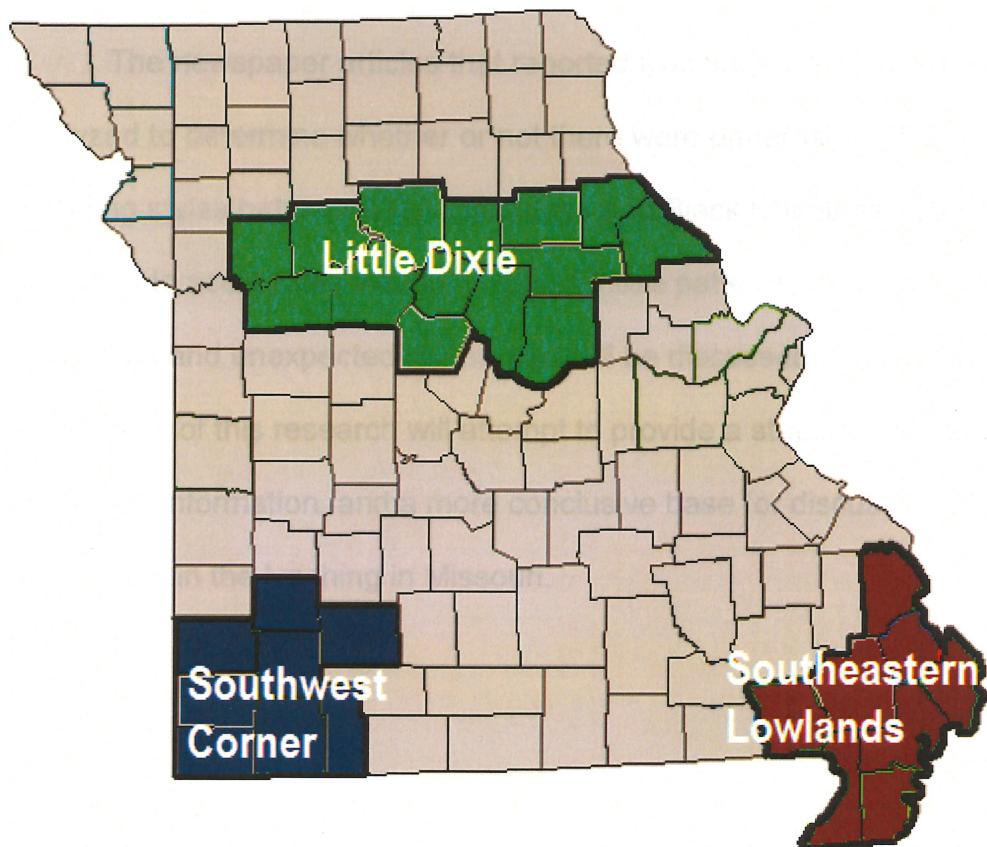
that the newspapers supported the action of the mobs. Any other descriptive terms that seemed to favor the mob were also separated into this category of support. The articles that denounced the lynchings were separated into a respective category. The same for those news reports that reported simply the occurrence with no commentary, either for or against the lynch mob action. However, it was not just the superficial language used in the article that separated it from the other categories. If the language or the description of the lynch mob or the town sentiment was communicated in a supportive fashion for the mob's action, then it would be separated also.

The newspaper articles were separated into two categories depending on ethnicity of the lynching victim. Due to the similarities between the White lynching reports, the articles containing information on White lynchings were only separated into reporting style.

The dominant regions for the study were defined. "Little Dixie," refers to a belt of counties that stretches from the eastern border with Illinois in Pike County, southward, running along the Mississippi River to the southern boundary of Pike County, and then along the northern edge of the Missouri River (with exception to Cooper County, which sits to the south of the river), west within range of the Kansas border in Ray County. The counties included Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Monroe, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Ray and Saline Counties. There were several lynchings in the eight counties in the Southwest Corner of the state. The eight counties included are Barry, Dade, Greene, Jasper, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton, and Stone Counties. The last

region of the state was the “Southeastern Lowlands” or the “Southeast.” There are eight counties that composed this region: Butler, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Scott, and Stoddard Counties. The rest of the counties that experienced lynchings were outside of any regional qualification, and were labeled as “outliers” (See Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 - Map of Regions Analyzed in Missouri⁶⁷



⁶⁷ All maps of Missouri in this research were taken from the “U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts” taken on February 14, 2004 from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/missouri_map.html.

There were several instances in which the newspaper articles numbered more than one per lynching. For some of the lynchings, there were several newspaper articles that covered the series of events from the beginning (the perpetration of the crime) to the end (the lynching of the accused).

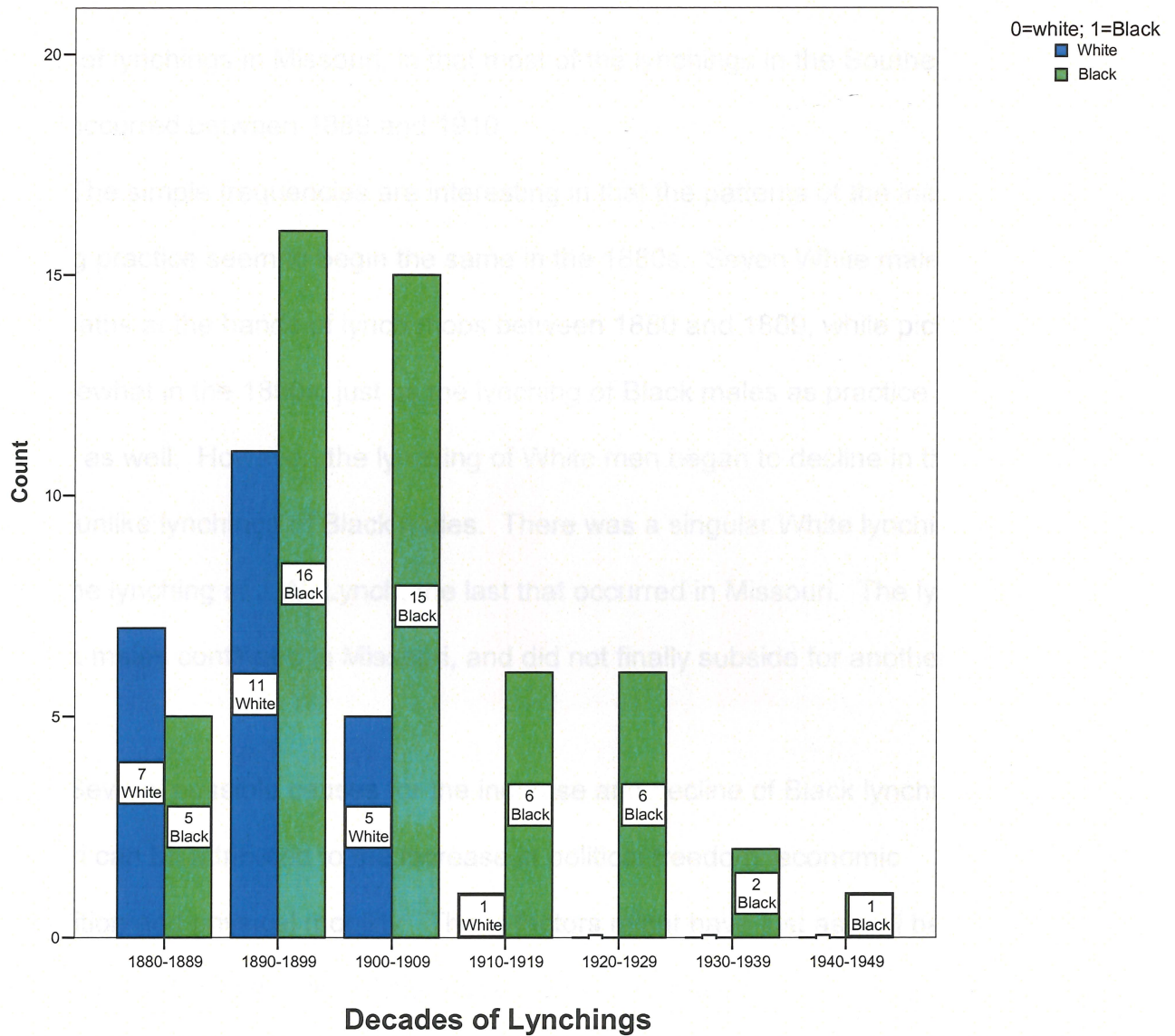
The multiple articles remained in their respective locations in terms of category and sub-category, but they were isolated for analysis based on the inference that there would be more information pertinent to the feeling of the community in regard to the lynching because the report was spread out over a few days, or some times, even weeks.

The newspaper articles that reported lynchings were collected, and analyzed to determine whether or not there were patterns or differences in reporting styles between White lynchings and Black lynchings. The data set was designed to accentuate the possibility of those patterns, and it provided interesting and unexpected results that will be discussed in the following chapter. The results of this research will attempt to provide a statistical understanding of the above information, and a more conclusive base for discussion of the press and its role in the lynching in Missouri.

CHAPTER 4 - LYNCHING RAW AND RATES: NUMBERS OF BLACK AND WHITE LYNCHING VICTIMS

It is obvious from Figure 4.1 that the raw numbers in Missouri for lynching victims, both Black and White were not equally distributed. As it appears, the lynching of White men between 1880 and 1889 provided a slightly higher count than lynchings of Black men in Missouri. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, this difference became reciprocal. Beginning in 1900, the disparity between the number of Black men lynched in Missouri and the number of White men lynched grew enormously. Between 1900 and 1909, ten more Black men were lynched in Missouri than White men. By 1919, while the numbers for reported lynchings declined, five more Black men were lynched than White men, and by 1920 until 1942, there were only Black victims of lynch mob violence.

Figure 4.1 – Number of Lynchings per Decade in Missouri – Black and White



The trend is obvious from this tabulation: the lynching phenomenon in Missouri began slowly in the 1880s, and quickly accelerated into the 1890s and into the 1900s. The practice seemingly begins to decline in the 1910s and picks up somewhat in the 1920s, before dying off in the 1930s. The 1940s saw the last lynching in Missouri with Cleo Wright in Sikeston, Scott County, 1942. Notice

how closely the decades of 1890-1899 and 1900-1909 come to having the same number of lynchings. The lynching trend in the South was very similar to the pattern of lynchings in Missouri, in that most of the lynchings in the Southern states occurred between 1889 and 1910.

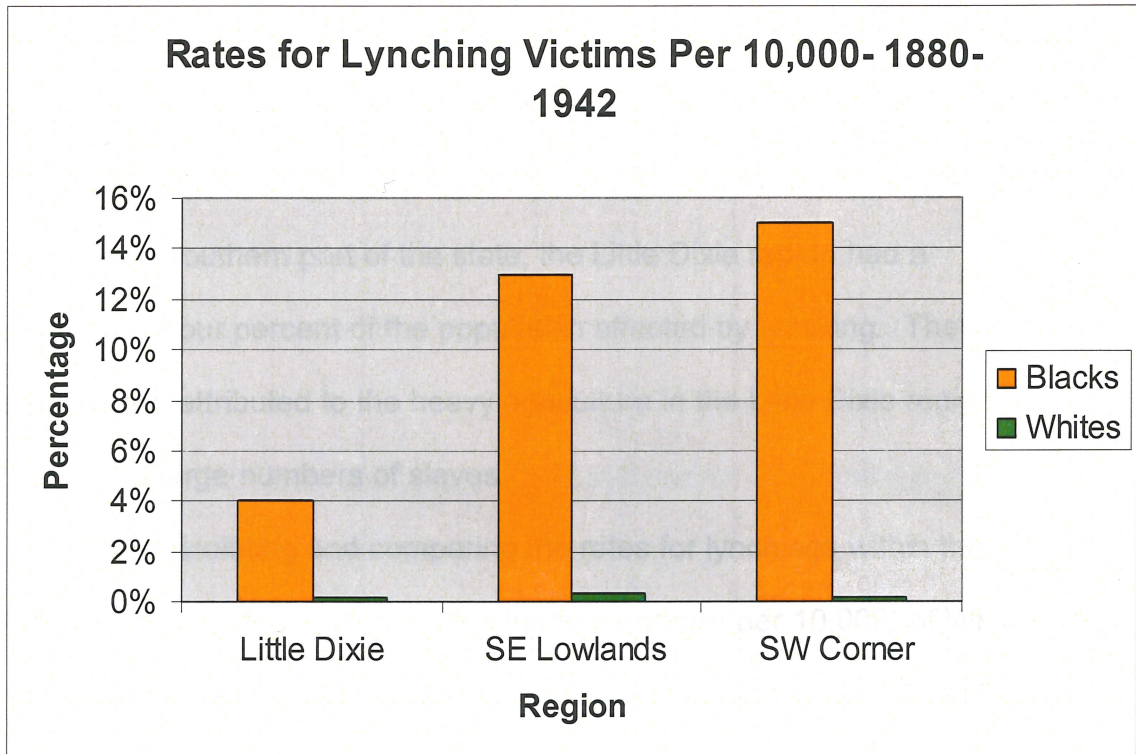
The simple frequencies are interesting in that the patterns of the initial lynching practice seem to begin the same in the 1880s. Seven White males met their deaths at the hands of lynch mobs between 1880 and 1889, while picking up somewhat in the 1890s, just as the lynching of Black males as practice peaked as well. However, the lynching of White men began to decline in the 1900s, unlike lynchings of Black males. There was a singular White lynching in 1919, the lynching of J.W. Lynch, the last that occurred in Missouri. The lynching of Black males continued in Missouri, and did not finally subside for another 23 years.

Several possible causes for the increase and decline of Black lynchings in Missouri can be attributed to the increase in political freedom, economic competition and physical mobility. These factors might have just as well been a contributing factor to the rise of the Black lynching in Missouri, as it was in the South.⁶⁸ The White lynching increase can be attributed to the trend in mob action and perhaps even the nature in which the White individuals lynched by mobs in Missouri committed crimes. The drop off in lynchings in the 1910s might be attributed to international events at the time, and a focus away from the events at home.

⁶⁸ See Dray. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*. (2002). pp. 75.

The discussion of rates yields a slightly more dramatic result:

Figure 4.2 – The Rates for Lynching Victims per 10,000 from 1880-1942



The rates of White men lynched between 1880 and 1942 are for the most part barely discernable, save perhaps for the sliver that represents 0.32 percent of the White population in Southeastern Lowlands. In contrast, the rates for Black men lynched especially in the Southeastern Lowlands (13 percent) and the Southwest Corner (15 percent) of the state demonstrated that compared to the White population, the Black populations of these areas were greatly affected by the lynching of a Black man. The dramatic difference is attributed to the absence

of significant Black populations in these two regions. This is not an excuse by any means, but merely an observation that these regions of the state were not populated by large groups of Black people. In the Southwest Corner, there were only really three main centers in an eight county areas: Springfield, in Greene County; Joplin, in Jasper County; and for the most part, Pierce City, in Lawrence County. The Southeastern Lowlands were somewhat different as this eight county region could claim an average of one major population center per county. Outside of the southern part of the state, the Little Dixie region had a representative four percent of the population affected by lynching. These differences are attributed to the heavy agriculture in the Little Dixie region and the “need” for large numbers of slaves.

When calculating and comparing the rates for lynchings within the specified regions of the state between the percentage (per 10,000) of Whites and the percentage (per 10,000) of Blacks, the results are interesting. The Black population in Missouri in 1900 was 161,234,⁶⁹ twenty-six percent (42,222) of which was located in the Little Dixie region. The Southeastern Lowlands housed six percent of the Black population (9,422), while the Southwest Corner was home to only three percent (6,017) of the Black population in the state. At the same time, when discussing lynching, it is interesting to note that given this population and the information provided in Table 4.2, the rates for the number of Black people lynched in Little Dixie is four percent. At the same time, the Southeastern Lowlands, whose Black population was four times less than that of

⁶⁹ The census data year of 1900 was used for the base population rates of both White and Black populations.

the Little Dixie region, had a rate of 13 percent of the population as victims of lynching. This is astronomical, especially when including the rates for White lynching into the analysis, as the rate for Whites lynched in Little Dixie and the Southeastern Lowlands combined equals less than one percent of the White population (0.22).⁷⁰ The Southwest Corner of the state had similar rates for Black lynchings with 15 percent of the Black population in that part of the state being victims of lynch mob violence. Something else to note is that the land area for Little Dixie was much larger than that of both the Southwest Corner and the Southeastern Lowlands, and that the population reflected this geographic actuality.

The rates for Black lynchings in the Southeastern Lowlands, and the Southwest Corner seem to defeat the idea of Hubert Blalock's racial threat hypotheses, discussed in Tolnay and Beck's work.⁷² If the threat to the dominant population from the subordinate population reaches a level of discomfort, the dominant population reacts with increased levels of subordinating action, in this case, lynching. However, given the population of Black people in the eight counties of the Southeastern Lowlands and the eight counties included in the Southwest Corner, this hypothesis does not apply. Similarly, the Black population in Little Dixie only composed 26 percent of the total number in 14

⁷⁰ The populations of Whites in these three regions are: Little Dixie – 300,054; The Southeastern Lowlands – 126,352; and the Southwest Corner – 256,452.

⁷¹ Information concerning census data in this paragraph was taken from the University of Virginia Library: Geospatial & Statistical Data Center: Historical Census Data, off of the World Wide Web on February 20, 2004 from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>.

⁷² See Tolnay, Stewart, E.M. Beck, and James L. Massey. "Black Lynchings: The Power Threat Hypothesis Revisited." (1989). *Social Forces*. Vol. 67, No. 3: pps. 605-623.

counties. It is here that the conversation must develop to include different hypothesis for the outbreak of lynching phenomenon in these two regions, and indeed, throughout the state.

CHAPTER 5 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE MISSOURI STUDY

Language in the Press: The Crime Labeling

The discussion of the methods employed by the rural Missouri press between 1882 and 1942 cannot be complete without some definition and analysis of the language used to both describe the lynching from the newspaper and identify the differences between the different reporting styles. Most of the rural newspapers that covered the lynching used the same language to describe the Black male accused of the crime. "Brute" and "beast" were popular adjectives with the supportive newspapers when describing the Black man. "Ravisher," was used when applicable, and because it was an accusation of rape, it was used quite often in the articles. The Fayette *Democrat Leader* called Frank Embree a "black devil," for the crime he supposedly committed with Willie Dougherty.⁷³ The Charleston, Mississippi County, *East Prairie Eagle* used adjectives in the headline: "Negro Fiend Lynched," when reporting the death of Roosevelt Grigsby on the third page.⁷⁴

The legal language was also an important part of the reporting of the information.⁷⁵ Legal language here is not indicative of a newspaper that reported the occurrence with sophisticated terms or understanding, but the liberty that the newspaper took when discussing the guilt or innocence of the accused. In this

⁷³ "Dastardly Crime." 1899.

⁷⁴ "Negro Fiend Lynched: Taken from Sheriff, Beaten, Hanged, Body Saturated with Gasoline and Burned by Mob." (1924, December 19). *East Prairie Eagle*: pg 3.

⁷⁵ When I use "legal language" here, I am referring to the judgment that the newspaper was comfortable passing on the condemned.

regard, the newspaper might be regarded as the spokesman for a crude jury of angry citizens. By using words like “ravisher,” “murderer,” and “rapist,” the editor determines the nature of the verdict before the accused could be tried before a judge. Cyrus King, lynched in 1885⁷⁶, New London, Ralls County, was called a “ravisher” before he was even apprehended, simply because the women he supposedly assaulted claimed confirmed his identity.⁷⁷ Will Henderson met the same defamation with the *Cape Girardeau Democrat* in 1895. Without the benefit of trial or jury, Henderson was convicted by the *Democrat* of being a rapist. The sub-headline reads: “An Infuriated Mob of Over Two Hundred Men Take a Rapist from Sheriff Randol and Swung Him From a Limb.”⁷⁸ In fact, most of the headlines either imply guilt prematurely or describe the accused in an incredibly evil way. The newspaper reports in collection that did not convict or as harshly slander the accused were those that were reporting the lynching from an objective point of view. Many times, the word “wretch” was used to describe the accused under the umbrella of pity, and even “poor brute” could be found occasionally in those papers that adamantly opposed the “justice” of the mob. It

⁷⁶ This incident and its applicability to be defined as a lynching might find some dispute in that the body of Cyrus King was found hanging from a tree a few days after the initial crime outside of New London. His body was noted as being semi-decomposed. Quite frequently, deaths by means of hanging, when no lynch mob or proof is available otherwise, are ruled as suicides. Cyrus King was called a suicide, but we felt as though the circumstances were too suspicious to settle for this explanation. Of course, no information is available at this time to determine the true cause of death for Cyrus King, but for the purpose of this research, based on the alleged crimes committed, the fact that there was a posse after him, the circumstances surrounding his death, and the state of the body when it was discovered, we conclude that he was probably lynched by a mob that did not claim the action. As with the rest of the instances involved with this research, these are all simply reported lynchings. This obviously does not include any lynching that occurred unreported.

⁷⁷ “Cy King: A Devil Incarnate, Ravishes Two Respectable White Women, And Is Still at Large. \$250 Reward for His Arrest” (1885, September 30). *The Ralls County Record*: front page.

⁷⁸ “Swung from a Limb: That Was the Fate of Will Henderson” (1895, October 19). *The Cape Girardeau Democrat*: front page.

was through language such as this that even anti-lynching newspapers conveyed a message of insensitivity.

In respect to the mention of the crime, none of the newspapers analyzed had any trouble mentioning the crime of murder, robbery or even insubordination from Black males. In fact, they were quick to make note of the supposed crime when it came to White men “being wronged” by Black men. The subject of the crime and the lynching stemmed from a sexual action supposedly committed; most Missouri newspapers did not choose to entice the public with the word “rape.” Instead, they chose to use words like “ravisher,” and “outrage,” to describe the accused and the action.

Language in the Press: The Labeling of the Black Man

Interestingly enough, the newspapers of the time censored their quotes, for example, the *Iron County Register*. When the sheriff emerged from the jail in Ironton, Iron County, he was seized by two men and surrounded by six others. One of the masked men was quoted as saying, “by G—d, we’re going to have that nigger.”⁷⁹ There is a very important distinction to be made at this point. They left out words that might have been considered offensive. “God” would have been offensive to many if not all of the readers in the community, but “nigger” was part of the *lingua franca*, so to speak, therefore, its use was not something that would have offended many of the White people in the community, reading the newspaper.

⁷⁹ “A Terrible Crime and Its Reward” (1882, July 30). *Iron County Register*: page 4.

At the same time, the use of the word “nigger” was not found in most of the newspapers that covered the lynchings (See Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 – Language Used In Reference to the Accused in Missouri Press

Description of Accused	Number of Occurrences
No description	2
Negro/negro	43
Colored	3
Nigger	3
Total Occurrences	51

The “showdown” with Fayette Chandler in 1916, St. Charles, St. Charles County incited the *St. Charles Banner News* to quote the members of the posse: “Don’t go near him, John; that d---d nigger can’t be trusted.”⁸⁰ When the newspaper reported the lynching, predominantly, this word was not used to describe the accused. In fact, contrary to what might be expected, that specific word was used to describe the accused only three times, and it was not the reporter or editor that directly used it. If this word was used in Missouri press reports of the lynching, it was within the context of the mob’s conversation with one another or the sheriff being quoted. Most often “Negro” appeared and it could be either a proper noun or an adjective. “Colored” was also used to describe some of the accused victims of lynch mob violence, but as is obvious from Table 5.1, this occurred as often as “nigger” appeared.

⁸⁰ “Dierker Dead = Negro Surrounded and Killed: Ollendorff Badly Wounded in Legs Two Barns Burned” (1914, April 6). *St. Charles Banner-News*: front page.

The relationship between the use of “nigger” in the press or the discrepancies within the language itself has no relationship with the region from which the newspaper report comes (.071). This, on one hand, is surprising, but possibly only because it might be assumed that more newspapers would use the derogatory language to describe the non-White social “deviant.” On the other hand, it is also a glimpse into the inconsistency of the label for the Black man at this time. In other words, the newspaper usually only used “nigger” within the context of conversation or dialogue between two individuals or within the mob, and even then, this word only appeared within newspaper reports concerning lynchings three times in Missouri. Why the infrequent use of the derogatory to describe someone that the community assumed had violated social and moral laws – and was ready to murder because of the breach? It would make sense that the fury of the community would be reflected within the report and accounts of the newspaper, but it is interesting nonetheless that the newspaper chooses not to use the vernacular of the community when reporting its information.

The newspapers that used the word “nigger” were not in any of the areas in which the crime that occurred was exceedingly heinous. In fact, two of the newspapers that used “nigger” were referring to individuals that had murdered police officers.⁸¹ The other incident in which “nigger” was reported involved an

⁸¹ This is perhaps a reaction that could be contributed to by the thoughts of Foucault concerning the breaking of the laws as being direct disobedience to the sovereign. By killing a police officer, the individual breaks down one of the elements of social control, and therefore, violates not only the civil boundaries of socially acceptable behaviors, but the boundaries of White society itself. As the police officer is a representative of that social and moral boundary, his death is symbolic in that the boundary is now compromised. This is an assault on the state – and therefore, the citizens must defend themselves and the state from the crossing over of the Black man into power. See Foucault. *Discipline and Punish*. (1977). New York: Vintage Books. pp. 47.

assault on a young White male.⁸² Obviously, the newspapers were not using “nigger” to describe Black males that were accused of assaulting White women. The especially brutal crimes supposedly committed by a few of the Black male victims did not warrant any utterance of “nigger” in their reports. So, it is in this way that the *lack* of “nigger” in the composition and editing processes of the newspaper article initiates surprise.

The use of the word “colored” had a little less representative pattern than its more derogatory sibling. There was absolutely no indication of the conditions necessary for the use of the word “colored” to describe the accused. In one instance, David Sims, murdered near Kennett, Dunklin County in 1892, was gunned down in his home by the KKK for no apparent reason – and was subsequently referred to as “colored.”⁸³ The other cases were nothing particularly different from one another.⁸⁴ At the same time that these newspapers might refer to the individual as “colored” or even “nigger” in one sense, the most common term used to describe the Black male victims of lynch mob violence was “Negro” or “negro.” Very rarely did the newspaper fail to mention the ethnicity of the individual especially if the individual in question was a Black man. The mention of Whiteness concerning White lynching victims was nonexistent.

⁸² See “Dierker Dead” (1914, April 6), “Louis F. Wright” (1902, February 22), and “Fourteen Year-Old Girl is Attacked.” (1921, May 5).

⁸³ “Three Men Killed.” (1902, April 28). *Kennett Clipper*: front page.

⁸⁴ See “Swung From a Limb: That Was the Fate of Will Henderson.” (1895, October 19). *The Cape Girardeau Democrat*: front page. and “Salyers and Gates Hanged By A Mob.” (1902, August 16). *Lexington Intelligencer*: front page.

Language in the Press: Girls and Women

The victims of the alleged crimes are depicted in a very different light. It is as if there are only two sides to this spectrum, literally and figuratively black and white. The victims, as previously mentioned, were predominantly women, and when the newspaper report covering the lynching described the victim of the crime, the portrait of the individual was always brilliant. If the newspaper was reporting the “rape” of a White woman by a Black man, the woman was elevated to a high status: one of which cast no doubt on her person, and all of the guilt on the offending Black male. Depending on her age, the victim of the accused’s crime was referred to in a series of popular ways. If the girl was under the age of 12, and some crime occurred to her, it was generally assumed that she had been “outraged,” even if there was no physical evidence.

In the case of George Bush, the young Jones girl (five or six years old) accused Bush of “mistreating” her. There was no indication in the report as to what that meant. There was some information that should not be made public. Upon examination of the young girl, the *Herald* implies that the physicians would not speak of the results of the exam.⁸⁵ There was enough information floating about the community that some conclusions were drawn: “The matter was kept extremely quiet; however, the facts, more or less distorted, soon became common property.”⁸⁶ There was no public statement by the physician declaring what if anything had been done to the young girl. The facts, as the *Herald*

⁸⁵ “Hung Him High” (1889, September 12)

⁸⁶ “Hung Him High” (1889, September 12)

suggests, had become mangled, thereby leaving room for speculation by the community as to exactly what had happened to the young Jones. So, without any conclusive evidence, the newspaper decided that he must be guilty, and he was lynched within 48 hours. The group that took his life reportedly left a note pinned to his chest, which the *Herald* gladly replicated for its readers, insisting that anyone committing similar crimes would be treated the same way. The newspaper headline itself condemned the 17-year old boy before he could even be heard, calling him a “child ravisher.”⁸⁷

If the woman to which the crime had been committed were older than 12, between the ages of 12-17, the treatment of her in the press still resembled that of the child, but the sentiment was slightly changed by the fact that society at this time believed that the innocence remained, but that parts of the adult world were beginning to infiltrate the mind and behavior. The newspapers in seemed to suggest in some cases that 13-17 year old girls would be exposed to enough sexual content that they would be curious, but frightened at the same time, adding to the excitement of the crime and contributing largely to the insecurity of the male community upon perpetration of that crime. The reporting of the lynching of Roy Hammonds, as discussed, represents an example of this situation. It is alleged that Hammonds attacked Virginia Terrell, 14 near a church in Bowling Green, took her behind the church and asked her to take her clothes off. As he confessed, she did not take her clothes off, and proceeded to tell Hammonds that she “ain’t got no money.” It is important to note here that Terrell resisted the request by Hammonds, and was not necessarily frightened to

⁸⁷ “Hung Him High” (1889, September 12)

the point of escaping the situation. From the tone of the report in the *Bowling Green Times*, Hammonds did not have her restrained either, other than to keep her from sounding at someone else's passing, which reportedly occurred only once.⁸⁸

Prejudice in the press concerning crimes against women did not just occur for the girls and adolescents, the same treatment, albeit with a slightly different flavor, persisted for the women 19-21 and 21 and older as well. However, the women of these ages were regarded with some reverence or respect that the girls and adolescents were not. Women of 19 and older in the 1880s through the 1930s had jobs either in the home with their families or outside of the home in limited professions. These women were supposedly aware of social boundaries and acceptable behaviors. The newspapers reported as if the community assumed this understanding, and that any brush with that boundary, whether through public or private interaction with Black men, had the potential to become dangerous to White women. It would seem this was the popular belief. Therefore, White women, especially older (19+) White women were regarded as having this understanding, and with that, avoidance of the Black male.

Perhaps this can be illustrated by several examples from various parts of the state's rural presses.

⁸⁸ "Fourteen-Year Old Girl is Attacked." (1921, May 5). Interestingly, there are other parts of the report that might suggest that Roy Hammonds and Virginia Terrell knew one another. This is only speculation, of course, but Hammonds's confession does not give the impression that there was excessive violence or force involved. "I did put my hands and arms around her, and she walked around back of the church" (pg 2).

Emmett Divers and Mrs. J.W. Cain – Supportive Language

The murder of Mrs. J.W. Cain by Emmett Divers in 1895, Fulton, Callaway County, was indeed described brutally by the *Fulton Gazette*, but the references to the young woman murdered were an interesting part of this analysis.

Supposedly, J.W. Cain had just taken a wife, and having to visit his grandmother some distance away, decided to leave his new wife by herself on their small farm. As the *Gazette* continues to develop the elements of the crime, it becomes obvious that Mrs. Cain is to be regarded with admiration. The newspaper alleges that Divers was trying to rob Mrs. Cain when he tied her up, raped her and murdered her. However, the newspaper contributes that there was a struggle and that she fought Divers to the last. This detail implies and is reported in a way that seems to suggest her gallantry.

Within Divers reported “confession,” the *Gazette* reports that Divers confirms that Mrs. Cain fought him to the last. Evidently, Divers wanted a ring that belonged to Mrs. Cain, and when she refused to give it to him, he beat her and took the ring. However, the newspaper expands, claiming that she would not have him with the ring and fought him for it until he beat her, tied her up and continued mistreatment, finally cutting her throat with a blunt knife.⁸⁹

Mrs. Eliza Thomas testifies also, as the *Gazette* reports, and is quoted as recalling that Mrs. Cain was in “good spirits” when the two women were together

⁸⁹ “Divers’ Confession: He Tells How He Assaulted Mrs. Cain and Cut Her Throat” (1895, August 1). *The Fulton Gazette*: front page.

some hours before Mrs. Cain was murdered. At the same time, the husband of the murdered woman relates details that the newspaper sees fit to print, including, “She was lying on her back and her clothes were turned back, leaving the lower part of her body nude.”⁹⁰ This description alone would have been explicit enough to cause ripples in the community – both angered over the actions of Divers and the “outrage” of a happy young wife to such a degree by a Black man.

The supportive language in this newspaper report is not so much reflected in the description of the victim as it might be in the reaction and testimonies of the witnesses. The means by which the newspaper used the accounts from witnesses is obviously a contributor to the horror of the crime and the supposed disrespect to the person of Mrs. Cain by Emmett Divers

Raymond Gunn and Velma Colter – Anti-Lynching Language

In 1931, Raymond Gunn was burned alive by a White mob in Maryville, Nodaway County for the murder of Velma Colter. The newspaper reports that his victim was a 20-year old novice school teacher, and that her murder occurred in the very school in which she taught.⁹¹ The *Maryville Forum* was, unlike the *Fulton Gazette* some years before, against action of the mob. This style of reporting does slightly change the language used when describing individuals.

⁹⁰ “Horrible Murder: Mrs. J.W. Cain Assaulted and Murdered in Cold Blood-Throat Cut from Ear to Ear” (1895, July 25). *The Fulton Gazette*: page 4.

⁹¹ “Gun Burned: Negro Taken to the School in the Hands of the Mob” (1931, January 12). *The Maryville Forum*: front page.

Obviously, the *Forum* was interested in the event itself, and took pictures that appeared in Maryville's newspaper, but this particular report of the lynching does not seem to be as interested in painting a picture of the crime Raymond Gunn committed, as the newspaper is interested in communicating the story and denouncing the practice.

The pages collected from the January 13, 1931, concerning the lynching of Raymond Gunn include very little about Colter, in terms of her personality or other descriptors that might make her look more like a coveted virgin than an average White woman. This is unlike the supportive language, which demonstrates, not only through the reporting of Divers and Cain, but with Frank Embree, and Squire Divers to name only a few, that the anti-lynching language does not use much in terms of adjectives as filler for its article. In other words, there is not much description of the victim of the crime, in terms of flattery or patronizing sexism.

In that regard, the treatment of Velma Colter in the *Maryville Forum* is that of the young victim of a horrible crime. While the newspaper does communicate her obituary and small relative details about her life, there is no extensive recalling of her purity or happiness to sway the reader. The mention of age in the following day's issue is one of the only instances in which the *Forum* might be attempting to provide the reader with more information, so that they might empathize with the youth of the victim.⁹²

Perhaps an appropriate question might be: would the anti-lynching language be as strong, or exist at all if the victim of the crime had been younger?

⁹² "Gun Burned" (1931, January 12).

It is difficult to say, as most of the victims of lynching that were reported in the anti-lynch mob presses were all over the age of 18.

Cleo Wright and Mrs. Grace Sturgeon – Objective Language

The anti-lynching press and objective press were not different from this treatment of women on their pages. The objective news reports of the lynching did not portray women in this manner frequently, generally because they did not use the time or the space to explain the crime or the people involved in the event itself. This was not the case for the report concerning Cleo Wright, lynched in 1942, Sikeston, Scott County, and the coverage of the crime supposedly committed by Wright against a White woman. Grace Sturgeon was in her bedroom when Wright entered and awoke both her and her sister-in-law from their sleep. When the sister-in-law ran for help, Sturgeon tried to follow, but Wright supposedly grabbed her and stabbed her in the side.⁹³ The recounting of this series of incidents was preceded by a speculation that the war (World War II) was indeed part of the emotional energy in the community at the time. The *Standard* even went so far as to invite speculation: "Sergeant Dace said that he believed that the existence of war and the fact that the women's husbands were away and unprotected was an important factor in inciting the crowd of men to violence." The newspaper also chooses to mention more than once that the husbands of these women were "stationed on the west coast," and at least

⁹³ "Lynch Negro After Knife Attacks: Matron, Policeman Victims of Stabbing" (1942, January 27). *The Sikeston Standard*: front page.

J.W. Sturgeon was an officer in the Army. This is a patriotic twist that most of the newspapers either chose not to use in wartime, or they simply did not have the opportunity to include this element in their report, especially concerning females and crime.

There is an understanding and a behavior in these women that is not demonstrated in the incident involving the young Jones girl or the events embroiling Roy Hammonds and Virginia Terrell. There is no curiosity reported; Grace Sturgeon was at home, in her bed, sleeping when Cleo Wright was believed to have entered her home. The events reported in the *Standard* are much more similar to the details surrounding the incident involving Emmett Divers and Mrs. Cain, in that both of these women, over 19, were at home and reported as being such. Was this expected from women over the age of 19, with husbands and children? Undoubtedly, most of the rural communities in Missouri between 1882 and 1942 did not change over time so drastically that this assumption would have been out of the question.

While the adjectives used to describe the woman stabbed in this report were not as vividly sympathetic or chivalric as reports in the past had been throughout Missouri, the *Standard* implies that the vulnerability of White women was due to the absence of White men, unavailable to “protect” them from Black men and crime.

Language in the Press: White Men as Victims

The language used in the reports of lynchings in which White men were involved was obviously different. The men in the reports that were murder victims were not pedestalized or idolized as untainted citizens as their White female counterparts experienced, but rather as individuals of property, reputation or legal affiliation. Indeed, as the newspapers in Missouri reported the lynchings that occurred involving White men as victims, most of the individuals reported were either farmers or police officers. If the individual was not murdered, but simply assaulted, the nature of the report was different still, and it can be hypothesized that the lynching occurred in assault cases because of the insubordination aspect to the assault of a White man by a Black man.

Murder and White Men

There are several examples of murder involving White men as reported in the press. In fact, out of all of the cases in which White men were involved as victims of crime, only seven of those instances did not include murder. While there were 12 reported cases of White men being murdered by Black men due to various circumstances, the seven cases mentioned above were composed of one assault case, involving a young boy and Louis Wright, which led to the lynching of Wright in New Madrid, New Madrid County in 1902. The other six

cases involved crimes that were either not published or of a relatively petty nature (meaning thievery or robbery), and will be discussed later in this chapter. The focus of the following information concerns the language used to describe the victims of the crimes that led to the lynching of a Black man.

Table 5.2 – Frequency Reporting Style and Crime Committed on White Males by Black Males⁹⁴

Reporting Style	Alleged Crime Committed by Lynching Victim			Total
	Murder	Assault/Rape	Other	
Supportive	8	2	3	13
Anti-Lynching	1	0	2	3
Objective	3	0	0	3
Total	12	2	5	19

The individual rural newspapers throughout Missouri seemed to regard the murder of a White man by a Black man a crime, of course, but not so much as a crime against women. The murder of a White man in the Missouri press was reported in a pro-lynching newspaper report in about 42 percent of the accounts published. Because of the nature of the crime, the newspaper that published the report in the supportive fashion had a tendency to focus on the victim briefly. The adjectives used in a complimentary fashion were also somewhat limited. This contrasts with the events in which White women were murdered by Black men as they were reported in the rural presses. It is interesting at the same time that the crime supposedly committed had absolutely no relationship to the

⁹⁴ Please note that the $n = 19$ here because the number of crimes committed against White men by Black men was limited to a reported 19 cases in which Black men victimized White men.

reporting style of the specific newspaper (0.623). When considering that most of the crimes that Black men were accused of were crimes involving White women, usually rape or assault, it makes sense that there is no relationship between the type of crime reported and the language or sentiment conveyed in the newspaper report of that lynching. In other words, the supportive lynching report in the community newspaper occurred 80 percent of the time, regardless of the accused's ethnicity (see Table 5.2).

There also seems to be a difference in the way the newspaper chooses to report the murder and the history of the male victim based on the occupation of the victim. This differs from the reports of women as well, in that women in rural Missouri areas were not reputed for their occupations. There is a strong relationship between the ethnicity of the lynching victim and the reporting of the occupation of the White male involved in the murder (.005). This might be explained by the fact that more often than not, the newspaper reporting the Black lynching chose to identify the victim of the alleged crime and their role in the community. The newspaper reports were not the same for the White lynching victims. Table 5.3 illustrates that of the 12 lynchings, those events reported in which White males were involved as victims included five instances in which farmers were murdered, and five instances in which law enforcement officials were murdered. The other occupations (a miner and a socialite) were not as prevalent. Interestingly enough, the cases in which the newspaper did not expand on the occupations of the White victims are the same instances in which murder did not occur. Regardless of whether the reporting newspaper was

supportive of the lynching or against mob law, the newspapers consistently reported the information concerning occupation in regard to the White victim.

Table 5.3 – Frequencies of Occupations Reported for White Male Victims of Murder⁹⁵

Occupation of the Victim	Number of Occurrences	
	Black	White
No mention	0	6
Farmer	5	1
Law Enforcement Official	5	3
Other	2	2
Total Occurrences	12	12

Reporting the occupation of the White male victim would have been important because in rural communities, the occupation of the individual was a very important component of social status. If the poor and destitute Black man harbored enough courage and disregard for social boundaries that he could kill a White man over a game of dice or in a botched robbery,⁹⁶ then there could be considerable danger to the safety and separation of Black people and White people. It is speculation, but nonetheless important to consider that the reporting of the occupation of the White male victim of murder was just as important to the retention of the social boundary as reporting details concerning the “outrage” of a White woman. At the same time, the question must be asked: what other reason would the small rural newspaper have for mentioning the occupation of the

⁹⁵ Please note that there are only 12 cases in Table 5.3, because seven of the sixteen cases surrounding the lynchings were not murders. The discussion on the language of the assault follows this section. Please refer to this section for the results and argument concerning cases other than murder.

⁹⁶ See Tom Hayden (Howard County) and “Unknown man” (New Madrid) respectively for further information.

murder victim, especially when it is expected that most everyone in the community (White or Black) knew perfectly well the vocation of the victim, if not to aide in the maintenance of that boundary?

The lynching of White men for the murder of White men in which the newspaper did not report the profession of the male victim occurred 25 percent of the time. In other words, the newspaper might not have thought the mention of occupation for the victim of the accused's crime was important. On the other hand, notice in Table 3.3 that the number of times the rural newspaper choose not to mention the occupation of the White victim of the Black accused's crime occurred zero percent of the time; in other words, not at all. In every single newspaper report that communicated the lynching of an individual accused of murder, the occupation of the White male victims was not mentioned. This is interesting because the lack of mention 25 percent of the time with the White lynch mob victims, demonstrates exactly the notion that the exposition of occupation of the White male victim in a Black crime is more important to the maintenance of the intricate social fiber.

Assault and White Men

The situation involving the aforementioned Louis Wright unraveled thusly: some of the members of the minstrel show, in which Wright was employed also, were finding their way around in New Madrid before their show one Saturday evening in February. They came across a group of older teenage White males.

One of the boys, Tom Waters, threw a snowball at the group and nearly hit one of the members. The actor commented to Waters, as quoted in *The New Madrid Record*, “ You dirty s—of b----.”

As the newspaper reports it, the White boys were set to find that particular actor and punish him for his impudence. However, Louis Wright came upon them preparing to beat the man and fired a shot into the group. He wounded two of the boys, and most certainly frightened them all.⁹⁷ One of the interesting aspects to this exchange is the unique detail used to describe the White boys that initiated the process of the lynching.

It is obvious that while this is not the only case of reported assault committed on a White male by a Black man in Missouri between 1882 and 1933⁹⁸; it is certainly the only case on record that resulted in a lynching. Thus, it is difficult to compare the language of this report with other reports concerning the assault of White males. However, it is most certainly a different language than that of the report of the murder of a White man. The language in the *New Madrid Record* does not focus much of its report on the White boys *per se*. Perhaps this is attributed to the fact that none of the White boys were devastatingly injured in the gun fight that ensued. Louis Wright was not a local man either, and this detachment might have something to do with the lack of

⁹⁷ “Louis F. Wright” (1902, February 22).

⁹⁸ Cleo Wright attacked and wounded a police officer before he was lynched in Scott County, January 1942. However, as his initial crime was assaulting a White woman, which consequently involved the law and eventually, members of the Sikeston community, his crime label for this study is “assault/rape,” and his case will be analyzed with this primary crime as the foundation of events leading up to his lynching. The assault of the police officer is causal, and therefore, is not considered the main crime that incited the townspeople to murder him. However, it is considered most certainly, as part of the individual lynching involving Cleo Wright.

description focused on the White boys involved, and the extensive focus on Wright and his fellow minstrels.

There were no assaults reported on males when concerning the White lynching. The only rape/assault cases were committed on women, and only one of those is what the general population would consider “rape.”⁹⁹

Regional Analysis of the Lynching

When measuring the location of the lynchings in Missouri based on regional information, the explanation for these numbers follows the direction of the history of slavery in the state, also based on regional agricultural demands.¹⁰⁰ It must be noted that while the region of the state is important for certain parts of this overall analysis, there are variables for which the regional location does not apply. The region of the state from which the lynching comes is important when identifying treatment of the Black or White male lynching victim, the reporting method (supportive, anti-lynching or objective). It is only for these variables that the regional chi-square analysis will be included, so as to provide a better focus on the issues surrounding the differences between the reporting of the Black lynching and the reporting of the White lynching.

⁹⁹ See “They Hung Him to an Oak Tree: Brutal Tom Larkins Strung Up at Rhinelands. Lynched in the Night. Taken from the Hotel to a Clump of Woods and Left Dangling From a Limb.” (1896, September 4). *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: page 1.

¹⁰⁰ The explanation of the White male lynchings in each of the individual regions could possibly be attributed to by railroad traffic and job opportunity, but as White males were “entitled” to their residence in any region of the state of Missouri, explaining the location of the lynching in terms of the White male population does not seem to be necessary.

Observing the distribution of lynchings from one region to another is interesting (See Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 – Black and White Lynchings in Missouri by Region

Regions	Number of Lynchings	
	Black Males	White Males
Little Dixie	17	2
The Southeast (Southeastern Lowlands)	12	4
The Southwest Corner	9	4
Outlying Counties	13	14
Total Lynchings	51	24

There is a strong relationship between the ethnicity of the individual lynched and the region in which he was lynched (.026). This can be explained by the number of Black lynchings that took place in Little Dixie and the Southeastern Lowlands, in relation to the White lynchings, which predominantly occurred in outlying counties. The majority of the Black lynchings in Missouri took place in the Little Dixie region. Lynchings in Missouri took place in Little Dixie 33 percent of the time, while the other regions of the state saw slightly less than this in terms of mob violence and lynching. As previously mentioned, the different agricultural histories of the regions within Missouri played a large part in the number of slaves implicated or required to work the farm, the plantation, or take care of the house.¹⁰¹ This history also contributed to the number of freedmen remaining

¹⁰¹ As indicated in the University of Virginia Library: Geospatial & Statistical Data Center: Historical Census Data, taken from the World Wide Web on February 20, 2004 from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>, the slave population in central Missouri (later known as "Little Dixie") composed at least 52 percent of the slave population in the state between 1830 and 1860.

post-Emancipation in those same agricultural regions. Because Little Dixie was an area in which heavy agriculture in tobacco crops coincided with the culture, there were approximately 46,299 slaves in the region in 1860.¹⁰² After the slaves were emancipated, Missouri did not stand out as a state in which a large portion of the population migrated outside of the state's borders. At the same time, there was some movement out of the once-bound toward the larger cities in the state, like St. Louis. In this respect, and in respect to the population aspect in Missouri, it is not like those Southern states with heavy concentrations of freedmen in the population, in that there was marked migration outward from Southern states, whereas in Missouri, the migration was not so obvious.

The frequency in which lynchings occurred to White males in Little Dixie is far less than those of the Black males; however, the number of White males lynched was severely disproportionate to the population, much like the raw number of Black lynching victims was not an indicative representation of the Black populations in Missouri at the time.

The Southeastern Lowlands maintained a smaller Black American population than did Little Dixie, but the propensity of the region toward the lynching increases the individual lynching count to a level nearly that of Little Dixie's. While the agricultural support in the southeast before the drainage of Mississippi River swamps in the late teens and early 1920s was primarily cotton and grains, the freeing up of the fertile river bottom land made way for more cotton, and therefore, an increase in free labor. This is not to say that the

¹⁰² University of Virginia Library: Geospatial & Statistical Data Center. Retrieved from World Wide Web on February 20, 2004. Available at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>.

population before the drainage of the swamps was not substantial (9,663), as is illustrated by the population increases, but the number of laborers increases dramatically as the river land entered the stages of cultivation for cotton.¹⁰³

Interestingly, the number of White lynching victims in the southeast was slightly more than the number of White lynchings in Little Dixie, unlike the regional dispersion of Black lynchings throughout both areas. The lynching of White males in the southeast as an event is outnumbered by those events that involved Black males by almost one-third. The population of White males in the southeast during the "Lynching Era,"¹⁰⁴ in terms of rates was far greater than that of the presence of Black males.

As the Southwest Corner of the state did not have a heavy agricultural heritage, the main portions of this region's Black population was generated by work on the Springfield railroads and perhaps even the meat markets of Joplin and Springfield as well. The lynchings in the southwestern part of the state are interesting because seven of the nine lynchings in this region occur in rapid succession over a period of only five years. After the last lynching in Springfield, Greene County, 1906, many of the Black American residents of the larger towns had migrated out of the area, almost overnight.¹⁰⁵

As the outlying counties in this study are important to illustrate the nature of contagion through print and other means, it is important to note that there were

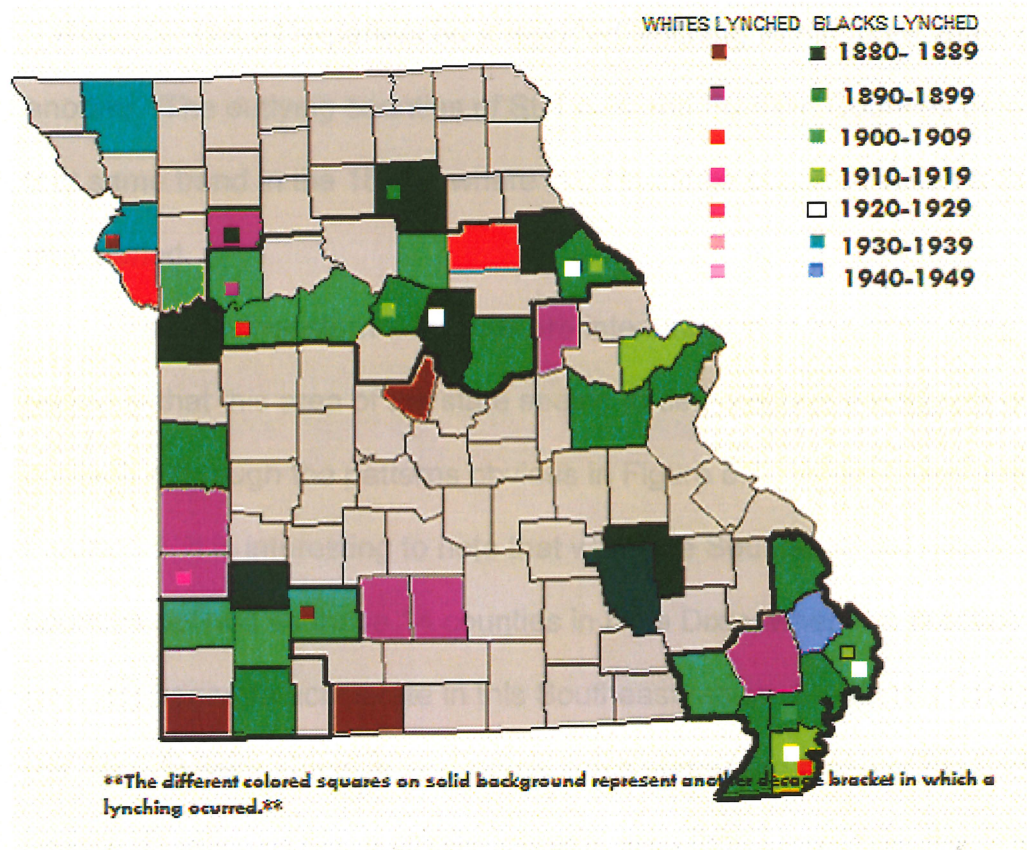
¹⁰³ The population census in 1910 was 9,663 for the Black population in the Southeast in 1910. By 1920, the drainage of the Mississippi River swamp lands increased the Black population in the Southeast by nearly 1,000 people, resulting in a 1920 census of 10,649. Taken from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>.

¹⁰⁴ NAACP. *Thirty Years of Lynching in America, 1880-1910*. (1919). New York: Arno Press.

¹⁰⁵ The cities in reference here are some of the larger towns in this region. The newspaper reports mention in three of the of the five reports concerning the lynchings in this area that the Black population migrated *en masse* out of Pierce City, Joplin and Springfield, "almost overnight."

14 occurrences of Black lynchings, and 13 counties total considered outliers in terms of Black lynchings. Another aspect to the information in Table 5.4 that provides some difference is that the majority of the lynchings that involved White males occurred outside of any delegated regions in the state. Fifty-eight percent of the lynchings involving White males occurred in counties that, for the purpose of this study, are considered outliers. The description of the outlying counties and the coverage in the individual county newspapers will be discussed later in this text.

Figure 5.1 – Lynching of Black and White Males in Missouri 1880-1942¹⁰⁶



¹⁰⁶ All maps of Missouri in this research were taken from the “U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts” taken on February 14, 2004 from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/missouri_map.html.

The figure above illustrates the spread and practice of lynching in Missouri over time.¹⁰⁷ Notice how many of the counties are clustered together in similar brackets. The Southwest Corner, for example saw seven lynchings in five years. The first lynching in the area after the turn-of-the-century was the multiple lynchings of Will and French Godley and Pete Hampton in Pierce City, Lawrence County, 1901. Shortly after that, Thomas Gilyard was lynched in Joplin, Jasper County, 1903 for killing a police officer. The last lynchings in the area took place in Springfield, Greene County in 1906, in which Fred Coker, Horace Duncan and Will Allen were all lynched the same night in the town square.

Little Dixie also displays the same pattern in which Lafayette, Ray and Saline counties all experienced a reported lynching within three years of one another. The outlying counties of St. Louis and Franklin Counties demonstrate that same trend in the 1890s, where two lynchings occurred within a three year time period.

The Southeastern Lowlands are interesting in terms of lynching and time period in that this area of the state seems to demonstrate the aspect of social contagion through the patterns obvious in Figure 5.1. When cross-referencing Figure 3.1, it is interesting to note that while the Southeast had nearly half the counties defined as those 14 counties in Little Dixie, when the practice of lynching began to accelerate in this Southeast region, the number of lynchings per decade were identical, and some times surpassed those of the Little Dixie region. In other words, a smaller general area than Little Dixie, the Southeast

¹⁰⁷ Please refer to Figures 4.1 and 4.2, along with Table 5.4 for further clarification of Figure 7.1 – Map of Black Male Lynchings in Missouri 1880-1942.

demonstrated a competitive rate of lynchings within its eight-county boundary as Little Dixie within 14 counties.

Crime and All of Its Elements

The analysis of crime, even in simple frequencies discloses the aspect of Southern culture, previously discussed, in that while many of the Black lynching victims did not cross the boundary of sexual relationships or aggressions with White women, the newspaper reported rape or assault in almost half of the lynching cases (See Table 5.5). The literature and analysis of lynchings in the Deep South indicate that while murder was most often the crime committed inducing the mob to lynch, rape or sexual assault was reported more often in the Southern rural press.

Table 5.5 – Reported Crime Frequencies in Missouri

Crime Reported	Number of Lynching Victims	
	Black Lynchings	White Lynchings
Murder	17	17
Rape/Assault	26	2
Other	8	5
Total Lynchings	51	24

Notice also that crimes included under the “other” category occurred in only eight instances in the sixty years that Missouri counties practiced lynch mob violence against Black males. There is a significant relationship between the crime committed and the ethnicity of the accused at the .004 level. This simply reinforces the idea that more White males supposedly committed crimes that

excluded sexual assault, whereas more Black males were accused of sexually related crimes. In comparison to murder and rape/assault, crimes like robbery or insolence were only punished by mob violence a reported 16 per cent of the time. At the same time, the few cases of lynchings involving White males in Missouri center on the crime of murder, not rape or assault.¹⁰⁸ Comparing the number of White victims accused of rape is too obvious against the Black victims of lynch mob violence murdered for the same crime. The same number of White victims, however, died accused of murder as those of Black lynchings (17). More than half of the White lynching victims were accused of murder, while only about 33 percent of the Black lynchings were consequences of murder accusations.

The most interesting additive to the discussion concerning the reported crime in these events concerning Black Americans has to do with the charge of rape or sexual assault. As was confirmed in previously by Waldrep,¹⁰⁹ the crime most often perpetrated by Black American males was murder, not rape, but the Missouri newspapers reported the occurrence of rape an average of 51 percent more often than murder or other crimes. That is nearly half of the total lynching count in the state of Missouri.

The other crimes that Black American males were murdered for varied from domestic violence to stealing a bag of flour from the homes of White people. The crimes committed by White males that did not fit into the “murder” or

¹⁰⁸ The reasons concerning the lack of rape charge on White males probably had something to do with the laws in Missouri and elsewhere concerning matrimonial responsibilities at the time; not to mention that the Black male was seen, obviously, as a threat, and the only threat outside of money to the White male was the interest and “conquest” of White women in Black males and *visa versa*.

¹⁰⁹ Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. (2002). pp. 90.

“rape/assault” categories were similar to the crimes of Black males outside of those categories, albeit not hyper-reported in such a way that readers would be horrified by the crime committed. Henry Williams for example, a 30 year old Black American man, was lynched by a mob in Macon, Macon County, 1898, for stealing items from people’s homes and threatening a White woman. A bag of flour that was stolen from one of the homes was the means by which the law enforcement officials implicated Williams, because there was a hole in the bag and the trail led to his home. When the police arrived at Williams’s home, they found what the *Macon Republican* referred to as an “Old Curiosity Shop,” due to the ladies garments and miscellaneous items they found within his home.¹¹⁰ This discovery and its publication most certainly added to the conviction that Williams was the man the community had been looking for. This was simply one example of the other crimes for which Black men were subject to be lynched and the high level of reactivity in which it was reported. Charles Salyers (the partner of George Gates), lynched in Lafayette County in 1902, was reported simply to have stolen chickens and confronted the proprietor of the chickens with murder. In this way, these two crimes are reported differently, and further discussion of these differences will occur further in the chapter.

In respect to the “crime” variable, the results of analysis on the victim of the accused crime are interesting, but most certainly expected. As observed in Table 3.6, White females were reported to be more likely victims of crimes involving Black American males than White males. White males were only

¹¹⁰ “Vox Populi: Henry Williams, Supposed Invader of Macon Homes, comes to his death at the hands of unknown parties, so says the coroner’s jury.” (1898, July 1). *The Macon Republican*: page 6.

accused of crimes against White women about 31 percent of the time. As demonstrated in Table 5.5, on only two occasions were White men accused of rape or assault, and in reading the reports in detail, only one of those two crimes was actually what might be considered “rape.”

The two instances indicated as “no report” in regard to gender, only one of those circumstances was truly a situation in which the newspaper did not report the gender of the victim. An unknown White man was found hanging to a tree over a road near Roscoe, St. Clair County in 1894. There was no official news report that indicated the unknown individual had committed any crime, much less a crime against a woman. It was speculated that he was a thief, and that the local community was practicing its own form of justice on criminals of that nature.¹¹¹

Table 5.6 – Gender of the Victim Involved in Crime

Gender of the Victim	Number of Lynching Victims	
	Black Lynchings	White Lynchings
Female	30	7
Male	19	15
No Report	2	2
Total Lynchings	51	24

The number of women reportedly involved in crimes in which Black men were eventually lynched (30) makes sense when compared to the prevailing accusations from the “punitive” community. In other words, since the crime most often reported as the perpetration of the accused was rape or assault, it makes

¹¹¹ “Hanging in the Woods: Two Nevada Men Make a Grim Discovery” (1894, November 5). *The Nevada Daily Mail*: front page.

sense that women would number far greater than men. The relationship between the ethnicity of the accused and the gender of the victim as reported is a moderate one (.041). This level of significance in this relationship is somewhat puzzling, given that most of the victims of supposed Black violence were women, and the majority of the victims of supposed White violence were men.

Throughout the analysis of the newspapers, it was obvious that men were most often the victims of crimes involving money. The same is basically true for the White lynching victims as well. These conflicts generally ended in the death of the victim, in which the accused would be lynched for the murder. In most of the cases analyzed, the murder of the White victim was not generally pre-mediated. It was not malicious or cruel, but some conflict arising out of a misunderstanding or in some cases drunkenness. A specific instance in Howard County in 1899, involving Tom Hayden, a farm hand and Andrew Woods, described by the newspaper as “an industrious young farmer,” escalated quickly during a dice game when the young Woods was “joshing” and slapped Hayden’s brother, Ben in the face with his hat. Hayden then drew his pistol and shot Woods. The lynching of Tom Hayden followed this action within a day of the incident.¹¹² In Missouri, most often the victim of the murder was a White male, while at the victims of rape were obviously White women. Interestingly enough, many of the rape or sexual assault cases involving women were not also murder cases.

¹¹² “Avenge the Murder: A Mob Hangs Tom Hayden for the Cold-Blooded Murder of Andrew Woods” (1899, November 2). *The Democrat-Leader*. front page.

The newspaper reported the crime as it was informed. Most often the newspaper's source of information was not the police, as much as it was the first person that would make a statement to the press. If a witness came forward publicly, claiming that the victim had been "outraged," regardless of the factual nature of the information, rape was reported in the newspaper. In some instances, rape or assault was reported by the victim, and no such action had occurred, or if it had, the facts as reported by the newspaper seem to side with consensual action. When Roy Hammonds was lynched in Bowling Green, Pike County in 1921, he was accused of "attacking" 14-year old Virginia Terrill, but the newspaper report was not clear that there was force involved. In Hammond's "confession" to the authorities, the tone of the confession is questionable because of the tone of the account: "I followed the other white girl. I do not know her name. I caught her just South of the church. . . . I kept her from making an outcry by holding her mouth with my hand. I did not choke her. I did ask her to take her clothing off. She did not do it. That was all I did."¹¹³

In addition to this information concerning the gender of the victim, it is important to analyze also the age of the victim involved in the individual crimes. There is a relatively strong relationship between the age of the victim and the ethnicity of the accused (.029). Notice that the majority of the individuals involved in crimes that led to lynchings of Black men were between the ages of 17 and 21 (See Table 5.7). At the same time, observe that the largest numbers of victims were over the age of 21 when discussing the White lynching victims.

¹¹³ "Fourteen Year-Old Girl is Attacked: Roy Hammonds, A Negro, Confesses and is Lynched." (1921, May 5). *The Bowling Green Times*: front page.

This difference can be traced back to the numbers in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7. The number of male victims between the Black lynching victims and the White lynching victims are obviously different, as are the occurrences of crimes committed between Black men and White men. In both situations, the men that were murdered either by Black men or White men were all over the age of 21. There were more White men murdered by White men than murdered by Black men, so it makes sense that more victims of White crime were over the age of 21, compared simultaneously to the nearly fifty percent (47) of those victims of Black crime being between 17 and 21, and female victims of rape or assault.

Table 5.7 – Age of the Victim Involved in Crime

Age of the Victim	Number of Lynchings	
	Black Lynchings	White Lynchings
No report	5	1
Under 12	2	1
12-16	5	0
17-21	24	5
21+	15	17
Total Lynchings	51	24

While it is known at this time that most of the crimes committed in Missouri by Black men were reported to be sexually related, and that White women were most often the victims of the crime supposedly committed by the Black men, it is also important to note that of all of the victims under the age of 16 within the cases of lynchings in Missouri were females. The two victims under the age of twelve were both little girls, much like the one victim under 12 that resulted in a White lynching, neither of which was raped or really assaulted. George Bush, a

seventeen year-old farm hand lynched in Columbia, Boone County, was jailed for “mistreating” the small child of a local farm woman. The medical report conducted on the child did not deny or confirm the charge that he had committed any act at all.¹¹⁴ It is unfortunate that many times, the medical report for the accusation of rape was inconclusive, and that many Black American men were found “not guilty” too late. At the same time, however, many mob actions demonstrate that the innocence of the individual becomes unimportant as the popularity of the idea of “mob justice” takes over.¹¹⁵

The Environment Preceding the Lynching: Failed Lynching Attempts

In this section, there shall be a brief discussion of the newspaper reporting the events that never materialized into a true “lynching.” The environment before the lynching occurred involving Black men was generally charged, an element of energy that might be expected before a mob attacks a person and commits murder. However, there is an added perspective to the lynching environment that might add some dimension to the situation and the community possibly a week or more in advance. In at least three cases involving Black males being lynched, crimes were committed by different Black men some times a week to three weeks before the actual lynching. In other words, before the lynching

¹¹⁴ “Hung Him High: A Short Shrift and a Stout Rope” (1889, September 12). *The Columbia Herald*, front page.

¹¹⁵ The other case of false accusation of “rape” involved William Jackson, lynched in 1893 by a mob in Rich Hill, Bates County. He supposed attacked an 11 year-old girl, only grabbing her arm, and she escaped, running to tell her parents nearby of the occurrence. Will Jackson was apprehended by a sheriff’s posse and lynched subsequently for the “outrage” of the young girl.

victim was murdered, in some cases, there was a similar attempt on another “accused” Black man some weeks earlier.

Before George Bush was lynched in Columbia, Boone County on September 11, 1889, a young Black man named Squire Divers¹¹⁶ was accused of attacking the young daughter of his employer. The sheriff, the same officer Evans that was restrained for the lynching of George Bush some four years later, performed the familiar ritual of transporting the prisoner between the community in which the crime was committed and surrounding holding facilities of other towns inside or outside of the home county. Evans successfully retained the prisoner and prevented him from being captured by the mob. Divers was spirited off to another venue and processed through the criminal justice system. This lynching was thwarted.¹¹⁷ However, two weeks later, when the teenage George Bush supposedly “mistreated” a young White girl, the *Columbia Herald* commented that this crime had “[C]ome so soon after the Divers case, expressions were heard here and there that the negro ought to be made an example of. . .”¹¹⁸ The temperature was just right for some sort of action to occur. George Bush had committed the same crime and was not being moved.

¹¹⁶ The interesting note for Squire Divers is the potential for his relation to Emmett Divers, of whom was lynched by a mob in Callaway County (to the east of Boone) some four years later. In the Emmett Divers articles, the *Fulton Gazette* notes that Divers : “has three brothers, two of whom are in the penitentiary and the other was for awhile in the Reform school” (“History of Divers: The Negro Who Outraged and Murdered Mrs. J.W. Cain, July 23,” 1895, August 1. front page. The Divers family was a large one, and while this is somewhat speculative, it is safe to assume that Squire Divers and Emmett Divers were related to one another. The *Columbia Herald* informs: “Divers was raised in Callaway county . . .” (“Charged with Assault: Squire Divers, a Negro, Lodged in Jail Upon a Secure Charge” [1889, August 22]. front page. This is merely a larger demonstration in an example of the relatively immobile Black population in the Little Dixie area post-emancipation.

¹¹⁷ “Hang Him! That’s What the Cedar Creekers Say” (1889, August 29). *Columbia Herald*: front page.

¹¹⁸ “Hung Him High” (1889, September 12).

Squire Divers escaped the wrath of the mob; thus, the rage did not find a conduit. The lynching of George Bush was both circumstantial and spontaneous. The circumstantial aspect is indicated by the fact that Bush was not moved after he was incarcerated. He was permitted to stay in the jailhouse. The mob that sought vengeance did not have to travel, and therefore, the circumstance contributed to his death. At the same time, it was also circumstantial in that because of the experience and failure of the mob to enact its “justice” on Squire Divers, the element of frustration and hatred in the mob was immense. It had to be defused. George Bush was the victim of Squire Diver’s escape as much as he was a victim of the masked mob. This is the circumstantial aspect.

The spontaneous element was the lack of knowledge that was contained inside the mob, and the action of taking advantage of the situation by overtaking the law and killing the individual. In the case of George Bush, the spontaneous part of the event itself was that people talked about it in the streets, and decided that Bush “ought to be made an example of,” and it seems that within a relatively short amount of time, the mob was masked, assembled and engaged in the act of murdering this young man. If, as the *Herald* hints, there was tension because of the “Divers case,” the spontaneity of eruption into action could have been attributed to a desire for success in killing a Black man.

A similar incident occurred with Harrison Rose (the rescued) and Love Rudd (the fallen) in Pike County in 1911. Harrison Rose was a farmhand employed locally in the Clarksville area. When Rose supposedly murdered his boss, D.H. Davidson with a pitch fork and made his escape a late summer’s

afternoon August 31, 1915, it was not too long before Rose was apprehended by a mob and prepared for execution. The mob leaders bantered about the absent participants of dispersed posses elsewhere and the execution was postponed. As the individuals transported Rose down county roads, the victim's family ambushed the motorcade with road blocks, relieving the angry mob of their victim. Rose was safely settled with the Bowling Green police and there he remained until he was transported out of the area.¹¹⁹ Approximately two weeks later, Love Rudd, accused of stealing from local Clarksville residents, was found floating face up in the Mississippi River. It would seem that the offense supposedly committed by Love (burglary) would appeal less to individuals as a capital crime, but the mob was determined to lynch him. At the same time that it is evident Lane was murdered by a mob in lynch mob fashion, the accounts in *The Louisiana Press-Journal* provide little information as to how Love Rudd was actually killed. His body, as mentioned previously, was found floating in the river, and no real questions were asked.¹²⁰ There is only about a two week period between these two events. While Rose was moved and located somewhere to await trial, Love Rudd suffered the punishment that would have been Rose's for his violation of the racial contract.¹²¹

It can be certainly asserted that the intention of the lynch mob, in any case, whether successful or not, is to indeed murder the perpetrator of the crime

¹¹⁹ "Caught in a Cornfield: Negro Who Killed Dudley Davidson is Lodged in Jail – Feeling Against Slayer Still at Fever Heat at Clarksville" (1915, September 9). *The Pike County News*: front page.

¹²⁰ "Body Found: Love Rudd, Who Disappeared Wednesday Night, Comes to Surface: Coroner's Jury Returns a Verdict That Unknown Negro was Drowned" (1915, September 16). *The Louisiana Press-Journal*: front page.

¹²¹ See Mills, Charles, *The Racial Contract*. (1997). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

against Whiteness. While there are these examples of reported failed lynching attempts, the disappointing fact endures that the information obtained and reported through the newspapers seems to demonstrate that there were more “successful” lynchings in Missouri than there were failed attempts.

In the newspaper articles that covered the attempted and failed lynching, there are very few, if any accounts contributed to the article by law enforcement officials. In other words, the newspaper does not engage necessarily with law enforcement if there is no success with the mob action. This is only interesting because the newspaper reports extensively action and conversation between law enforcement and the mob when the lynching is successful; if the lynching is thwarted somehow, the newspaper observes and reports the failed action of the mob at great length.

Newspapers and the Method of Reporting

Most if not all newspapers in rural Missouri were owned and operated by White men; it was within their power in their position to utilize the newspaper as a communication device not only of the news or current events, but to convey a popular opinion. In other words, as they were individuals that relied on outside operations to provide business, it was in the best interest of the editor/owner to reflect the sentiment of his community or area, regardless of the topic. If the community was politically dominated one way or another, the newspaper reflected the same affiliation. It was not different for the lynching. If the people of

the closest community to the lynching supported the action of the mob, it was undoubted that the paper would reflect the sentiment of the home town citizen.

Along with the analysis of the newspaper reports in terms of victims, crime and lynching counts, the issue surrounding the actual style of reporting the lynching needs to be addressed and explained. According to the frequency table (Table 5.8), in the reporting of Black lynchings, the supportive style of reporting, in which the newspaper used specific language to voice support for the action of the mob, occurred nearly 80 (77.8) per cent more often than the objective reporting style and that style that would oppose the lawlessness of the mob (anti-lynching). The comparison of White lynchings as reported in the newspaper is interesting, in terms of frequency, as it would be assumed that the supportive reporting of the lynch mob for White victims might be significantly less than that of reported Black lynchings. The information provided, however, contradicts that assumption and supports that the proportions of supportive reporting for Black lynchings and White lynchings are very similar.

With this information, however, it is important to focus the lens on other aspects of reporting the lynching in the rural newspapers in terms of Black lynchings and White lynchings: how did the actual reporting of the lynching differ from White men to Black men? Perhaps, as it seems at least for a while (See Figure 5.1), the “Lynching Era” itself was an inclusive movement in mob law and punishment, and this predisposed the community newspapers involved in the lynchings to be supportive of “popular sovereignty.” However, and as will be discussed in further arguments, the language itself, while falling into the blanket

category of “supportive” in this particular aspect of the analysis, was the crucial determinant between the reporting of Black and White lynching victims.

Table 5.8 – Occurrence of Reporting Styles for Black and White Lynchings¹²²

Reporting Style	Number of Lynchings	
	Black Occurrences	White Occurrences
Supportive	37	19
Anti-lynching	8	3
Objective	0	2
Total Occurrences	45	24

It is important to be able to identify how the regions were different from one another through their locations in the state and the reporting styles predominantly implemented through the report of the lynching, the first variables selected for analysis were “reporting style” and “region of the state.” There seemed to be a relatively strong relationship between the part of the state from which the newspaper reported the lynching and the style of reporting utilized by that particular newspaper when analyzing Black and White lynchings both. In other words, there was a moderate relationship (0.31) between where the newspaper was located, whether in Little Dixie, the Southeast or the Southwest Corner, and the way in which the newspaper reported the lynching, either supportively, protesting the event or objectively reporting. Given the information in Table 5.4 and 5.8, it is obvious that while Black lynching victims murdered in

¹²² Please note that the total for this table will be **45** because the lynchings in which more than one individual was murdered at a time were combined into one occurrence (as all of the victims would have been included in the newspaper report). From this point in the study, when the newspapers themselves are mentioned as a source of data, the n=45. At the same time, when specific information about the victims, the crime or other event specific information, the N=51.

the Little Dixie region composed 33 percent of the lynching universe, and the supportive style of newspaper reporting predominated also, and given the significant level of the relationship between the region and the reporting style, it makes sense that the majority of the newspapers in the Little Dixie region would be supportive of the lynching, as more lynchings happened in this part of the state on a consistent level than anywhere else in Missouri. It is only because we know that the lynchings in Little Dixie began in 1889 and did not reportedly cease until 1923. During those thirty-four years, no decade passed that a lynching did not occur. In other words, there were slightly less than one lynching a year in Little Dixie between 1889 and 1923. In relation to this, Little Dixie also had the largest number of supportive Black lynching reports in each of their county's newspapers.¹²³ None of the newspaper reports, save for one, from Little Dixie concerning the Black lynching did not report the event with a supportive sentiment towards the lynch mob.

¹²³ There is one instance with the lynching Jim Johnson, June 30, 1891, Hiller's Creek, Callaway County as featured in the *Fulton Gazette*, in which the newspaper reporter happens upon a crowd and the hanging body of Johnson. The reporter communicates with a relatively sympathetic and horrified tone, but it is difficult to distinguish if he is supportive of the event itself or not. Therefore, his report uses none of the language that has been outlined for the purpose of this study, his report of the lynching of Jim Johnson is considered "anti-lynching." At the same time, it must be noted that the same newspaper, the *Fulton Gazette*, reported the gruesome lynching of Emmett Divers several years later with full support of the lynching mob's violence.

**Table 5.9 –Cross-section of Region (I.V.) and the Reporting Style
(D.V.)- Black Lynching Victims**

Region	Supportive	Anti-Lynching	Objective	TOTAL
Little Dixie	17	1	0	18
The Southeast	9	2	0	11
Southwest Corner	4	5	0	9
Outliers	11	2	0	13
TOTAL	41	10	0	51

White Lynching Victims

Region	Supportive	Anti-Lynching	Objective	TOTAL
Little Dixie	1	1	0	2
The Southeast	3	1	0	4
Southwest Corner	1	1	2	4
Outliers	9	0	5	14
TOTAL	14	3	7	24

When observing the cross section of the regional information with the reporting styles evident in the data in Table 5.9, Little Dixie newspapers were more likely to have a supportive press in general than the other regions of the state. At the same time that 94 percent of the newspaper reports covering the lynching were supportive in the Little Dixie area, the Southeast newspapers also publicized their lynching sentiment predominantly in the supportive tone as well, with 83 percent of their newspaper reports reflecting such an attitude toward Black lynchings. There is also a relatively strong relationship between the region of the state the newspaper was coming from and the method of reporting that seemed to prevail within the newspapers of that particular region (.021). This could be explained in the fact that most of the counties that reported the

lynchings used their newspaper to supply information in a manner that was supportive of the lynching as an act of “justice.” Therefore, it makes sense that the relationship between the reporting style and the region is relatively strong. Outlying counties maintained a large number of supportive presses within their county boundaries, but the Southwest Corner’s county newspapers published over half (55 percent) of their coverage of the Black lynching in the anti-lynch mob tone. The White lynching data is an interesting additive to this equation because of the number of objective reports in relation to the number of newspaper reports that would have been considered objective for the Black lynching victims. Out of the 51 Black lynching victims, none of the newspapers in Little Dixie reported the events in what could be considered an objective manner. This is contrast to the seven reportings of White lynching.

At the same time, it is important to note that when the information is dissected concerning the region and the reporting style, the numbers appear to tell a similar story in a different way. Notice from Table 5.9 that the number of supportive reports coming out of the participating county newspapers for the three major regions within this study, there were only five supportive reports in those regions (and merely one in Little Dixie), whereas the level of pro-lynching media communicating from Little Dixie alone during the same time periods for Black lynching numbered seventeen supportive reports. It can be speculated that the reporting style was different between Black lynching victims and White lynching victims because, as will be discussed later, the methods of death did not vary between one White lynching victim and another so very much. In this

regard, if the method of death was relatively consistent and without a festival, then why would the reporting style concerning the White lynching victims vary too much from the norm, which was supportive of the lynching. With the exception of the Outlying counties and their reporting of lynchings with White males reporting nine supportive events out of fourteen, the distribution of reporting styles across the separate regions of the state is relatively even. Meanwhile, the numbers of reporting styles in the dominant regions of the state for the Black lynching are very obviously disproportionate to the reporting of lynchings either in an anti-lynch mob or an objective style. One can deduce that in terms of reporting the Black lynching, most local newspapers covering the event in their own area reported the lynching Black males with more consistency in a supportive way than any other style or even the reporting of the White lynching supportively.

The press in Missouri in the 1880s was composed predominantly of White men. The men that engaged in newspaper work were often the owners, editors and reporters for their own papers. Very few rural presses had the capital or the need for a separation of those duties, as the towns they served were rarely communities numbering more than a few thousand people. At the same time, these men were often relatively powerful men in the community. It took a great deal of money to run a press and purchase materials for the newspaper. The individuals that owned the newspaper even in a small community were individuals that were most certainly establishments in the community in terms of wealth and standing. At this time in United States history, and indeed in Missouri history (1880-1900), it can be certain that there were few if any rural, wealthy

Black men that wished to finance a newspaper, and so it was the White men in rural communities that sponsored the communication of events to the surrounding towns about the county, state and nation.

It is interesting to note that several unique qualities emerged from the reporting of the lynching in a supportive way. There seemed to be a pattern with the reports of the lynchings that incorporated most of the newspapers in rural areas with a system of communicating the happenings at the lynchings. In other words, several of the newspapers in the rural parts of Missouri, reporting local lynchings had similar styles or ever-present elements to their account.

CHAPTER 6 - LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PRESS¹²⁴

Law enforcement played a huge role in the story that was represented in the lynching of a Black man in the rural parts of Missouri. Interestingly enough, there were very few incidences in which law enforcement was not involved somehow in the narrative contributed to the population by way of the news release. Of course, the mob was crucial to the production of the jailbreak as well, but without the law enforcement officials, there was no drama.

The next variables to be analyzed for frequency are all related to one another in some way, as they all have something to do with the mob itself, and its relationship and interaction with law enforcement officials. Whether law enforcement was involved is the base variable for two of the other variables: level of involvement by law enforcement and violence against law enforcement. So, if there was no indication of involvement by law enforcement, then there would be no accounting for level of involvement, and there would certainly be no violence committed against law enforcement. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 6.1, which is a combined table of law enforcement involvement, level of that involvement and reported violence against law enforcement officials as a part of the lynching.

¹²⁴ It must be noted in all fairness that this research is obviously the study of the press in the lynching and thereby excludes from this portion the situations in which the mob was thwarted from murdering a would-be victim. This section of the discussion is not a critique of law enforcement behavior in the face of a "howling" mob, but a discussion concerning the actions of the police in the face of that mob, and the portrayal of the law enforcement officials through the newspaper reports.

Table 6.1 – Law Enforcement Involvement and Mob Action¹²⁵

Law Enforcement Involvement	Number of Occurrences	
	Black Occurrence	White Occurrence
Yes, Involved	34	12
No, Absent from Report	11	12
Total Occurrences	45	24
Level of Involvement		
No involvement	13	12
Passive Involvement	15	5
Some Involvement	9	3
Aggressive Involvement	8	4
Total Occurrences	45	24
Violence Against Law Officials		
Violence	23	18
No Violence	22	6
Total Occurrences	45	24
Accused in Custody - Time of Lynching		
No, not in custody	10	6
Yes, Accused in Custody	35	18
Total Occurrences	45	24

As indicated by the figures in Table 6.1, law enforcement officials were reported to have been at least involved or present at the time of the mob action or lynching 34 times in the Black lynching. There is a strong relationship between the involvement of the law enforcement officials (involved or not) at the .022 level and the ethnicity of the lynching victim, however, the relationship between the level of involvement and the ethnicity of the victim is nonexistent (.278). This is difficult to explain, but when cross-referenced with the numbers from Table 6.1, perhaps a logical explanation would include that the level of involvement between law enforcement officials and the mob reportedly did not

¹²⁵ See footnote 56 for explanation on *n*.

necessarily matter. The victims of the mob's objective were successfully murdered, regardless of the level of intervention.

Coincidentally, the involvement of police officers in the White lynching occurred exactly half of the time. While the raw number of instances in which law enforcement was not involved in "preventing" the lynching for the Black males was 11 ("No involvement"), and the number of instances in which the police officers were reportedly not involved in the lynching for White males is represented with 12. The number of events that excluded the police involvement in regard to White victims occurred exactly in half of the events for White males. Interestingly, the percentage of police interferences for Black males is greater than that of White males (29 percent) proportionately. Is it possible that police interfered more with the potential lynching of a Black man than a White man? To answer this question, it should be considered that the definition of "interference" be applied. In other words, the number of occurrences does not take into account the type of interference. If the sheriff stood in front of a frenzied mob and yelled to cease and desist, as so many officers attempted, this is still considered interference. The action was not necessarily absolute in that many different exchanges between the townspeople and the law enforcement officials occurred.

In regard to the Black lynching, out of the 45 lynchings in Missouri, police officials were present 76 per cent of the time. However, the level of involvement changes that perspective slightly. The newspapers either reported no involvement (in terms of level of involvement) or the police were not present 11

out of 45 times. Given that law enforcement was absent from the report nine times, this would allow only twice that law enforcement was not involved in any degree in resisting the mob action and protecting the prisoner. However, it is interesting to note that 15 times, or 33 per cent of the time in reported lynchings, the police officers were only passively involved in defending the accused. Relative to the number of White lynchings in Missouri, the police were passively involved only 21 percent of the time. It is interesting to note that while there were close to half of the lynchings involving White men, but the proportion of passive police involvement is relatively close. One can only speculate as to why the number of police absences or passive interactions was so high for the White victims of lynch mob violence, especially when the majority of the White males accused of crimes were incarcerated before they were lynched. Very few of the lynchings involving White men happened spontaneously.¹²⁶

Newspapers reported violence against the police in which officers were aggressively molested for a Black prisoner 51 per cent of time, or in 23 occurrences, versus 22 instances in which they were not acted out against. Still, there is a moderately strong relationship between the violence engaged in by the mob against the police officer in regard to ethnicity of the lynching victim (0.34). It is interesting also that the number of occurrences in which there was violence performed against the officers by the mob are almost at equal levels for Black lynching victims. During the extraction of the White male from the custody of law enforcement, the mob enacted violence on the participating officer 75 percent of

¹²⁶ The discussion in depth of the White lynching in Missouri shall be reviewed and elaborated in a subsequent work. As this research concerns primarily the press and the Black lynching, the information provided concerning White lynchings is used simply for comparative purposes.

the time. There is a seeming contradiction in comparing these numbers. As can be expected, the level of involvement of the law enforcement officials in any particular event would ultimately dictate if there was violence perpetrated against that said officer. However, there were a number of times that even some involvement in preventing the lynching, perhaps not exceeding bracing the jail door from the mob, would result in some violence against the police officer. Because of the above-mentioned proportions, the previous question concerning the involvement of law enforcement and the level in relation to the White accused versus the Black accused might be a little clearer. Strictly based on the percentages as the comparative information, if there was violence 75 percent of the time involving White accuseds, and only violence committed against law enforcement officials only about 50 percent of the time for Black accuseds, one can speculate that law enforcement was not as aggressive in protecting the Black prisoner as protecting the life of the White prisoner. This claim can be doubly-supported by reasserting the basic difference in the number of White lynching victims and Black lynching victims.

As most of the Black lynching victims were in custody at the time of their mob murder (78 percent), it must be noted that the instances in which the officers were either not reported to be involved or were not active in the prevention of the lynching are relatively close to the number of instances in which the individuals were not in custody. In other words, it is obvious that some if not many of the situations in which the lynching of a Black man accused of a crime occurred, police officers or law enforcement were not involved because they were not

there. Spontaneous posses of men might form to scour the countryside for the fugitive Black man. Upon finding him, depending on the circumstances, the law might be completely bypassed and the man murdered on the spot. This was the case with an unknown man in Madrid Bend¹²⁷, New Madrid County, 1898.

Alexander Loin, noted by the *New Madrid Record* as a “prominent farmer,” had traveled into New Madrid for supplies and was headed back to his home, which was across the river in Tennessee. He met two Black men aboard the skiff and began to converse with them. They were discussing which of them the “better” oarsman was, and wagering money. Evidently, the farmer exposed his wallet with \$300 in it. As the story continues, the two unidentified Black men entered a grocery store some time later, and one of them had blood on their clothes. The clerk was alarmed and threatened to arrest the men, but they fled. One of the unnamed men was caught by a posse, after the crime scene was discovered¹²⁸ and subsequently forced into the river to search for the body. Upon his lack of discovery of the person, he was shot, the newspaper implicitly notes “50 times” before the posse disbanded and his body left in the road.¹²⁹ This is merely one example of an individual meeting death by the hands of a mob, outside of the

¹²⁷ Madrid Bend, like so many other smaller towns along the Mississippi River in Missouri no longer exists. As New Madrid itself sits on the “bend” in the Mississippi, it can be assumed that Madrid Bend simply melded into the growing county seat of New Madrid.

¹²⁸ The description of the crime scene in the *New Madrid Record* was somewhat suspect itself, as it describes two men finding the crime scene, completely unaware of the violence that had possibly occurred, and making the assumption that a human body had been dragged and thusly thrown into the river. The newspaper indicates that “the tracks of two men leading to the water,” was enough to decide that a “murder had been committed.” (“Murder and Lynching: Alex Loin Killed by Two Negroes in Madrid Bend” [1898, November 26] *The New Madrid Record*: front page.) It is possible that the two people that made tracks in the mud by the river were barefooted, and this is the conclusion that is made by both the men of the community and the newspaper; however, it seems as though there was no escape for the two Black men that were suspected of this crime, regardless of the evidence.

¹²⁹ “Murder and Lynching” (1898, November 26).

custody of local law enforcement officials. Again, it must be noted that nine times, officers of the law were not present or reported active in resisting the mob, so out of those 20 non-confrontational instances, only 11 were true non-violent reactions to obtain the accused for the purpose of lynching.

Failure of Law Enforcement Officials as the Authority

While the information provided by Table 6.1 illustrates that law enforcement were frequently involved within the lynching (usually attempting to prevent the lynching), this level of involvement was not indicative, as previously described, of prevention. Most of the encounters with law enforcement by the mob did not result in any serious struggle, and rarely, if ever, did the sheriff or other official attempt to truly stop the mob from taking the accused out and murdering him.

In many cases, the sheriff would speak to the crowd, attempting to dissuade them from pushing forward. This speech was usually met by disrespect and disregard, ultimately resulting in the lynching of the accused anyway. Many times, law enforcement officials would use humor or affiliation with members of the mob in an effort to halt their proceedings.

The local newspapers were rarely inflammatory of the police officials, even if the sway of the particular newspaper was supportive of mob action in that instance. In fact, most newspapers covered the mob's interaction with the police in a rather romantic way, meaning only that if the official was "restricted" or restrained in any way as part of extrapolating the accused, the newspaper

covered it with detail. For example, when George Bush was lynched in Columbia, Boone County in 1889, the *Herald* reported the accounts of Sheriff Evans, who had successfully impeded the mob in their attempts to lynch a young Black man several months before for the same general crime in a rather exciting manner.¹³⁰ This is not to say that the experience of the sheriff was not exciting, but it is speculated that the newspaper itself might have retold the story in print with some additives that might have proven themselves profitable:

“Well, my mind was easy on that score, and, being pretty tired, as I say, I soon fell asleep and know no more till my wife awakened me saying that Constable Edwards was outside with a prisoner . . .”

This is the second paragraph in the description as quoted by Sheriff Evans. “That score” refers to the idea that no one in the township was discussing lynching George Bush. It is obvious from the report in the newspaper that the practice of prisoner exchange in small towns in Missouri displayed the customary and intimate practice of incarcerating a prisoner through the home of the local law enforcement official. Of course, it is also known that many of the jails in county seats throughout Missouri had separate quarters for the higher ranking officers attached to the jail itself, which is possibly another reason that law enforcement officials such as the sheriff would have a higher stake in the actions of the mob against the jail to obtain the prisoner. At any rate, Sheriff Evans has his residence within or at least in a proximity to the jailhouse that

¹³⁰ See *The Columbia Herald* (Boone County) dating August 22, August 29 and September 12, 1889, for the reports on the attempted and thwarted lynching of Squire Divers.

would seem exceptionally unusual today. This relationship requires him to be available at all times.

In yet another part of the same article, *The Herald* continues the “testimony” of the sheriff. This is the element of his story that adds to the romantic “excitement” portrayed in the Columbia newspaper:

“I still had no suspicion and opened the door. A man about the size of Edwards was standing there with his hat drawn down over his eyes. He at once stepped inside, and right behind him three or four others, who had been standing on one side of the door in the shadow of the house. Before I could say any a word, four of the men grabbed me.”¹³¹

The newspaper reports explicit details to this encounter, and it is illustrated with so much of that detail that not being intrigued by the interaction is difficult. However, this demonstrates perfectly the level to which the newspapers in Missouri chose to systematically report the involvement of law enforcement in a romantic way.

Another example of law enforcement interaction with the mob that did not result in the sheriff or any other member of law enforcement suffering detention, in fact, some times, attempting to assuage the mob by means of diffusing the situation lies with Sheriff Otto Theisen in his hollow attempt to prevent the murder of 19-year old Lloyd Warner in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, 1933. Two different newspapers covered the story of the lynching at the time¹³², but the *St.*

¹³¹ “Hung Him High” (1889, September 12).

¹³² St. Joseph was, at the time of Lloyd Warner’s lynching, and indeed for long before this lynching, a relatively large town or small city. Because of the railroad and cattle industry, St.

Joseph Gazette displayed pictures of the scene and an account of the interaction between the sheriff, Otto Theisen, and the mob. Theisen quips, "I guess you people have heard that it took twenty Irishmen to whip one Dutchman . . ." ¹³³ He proceeded to hand over Lloyd Warner, who was subsequently beaten nearly to death and then hung near a busy intersection in St. Joseph. Theisen had access to defense through the National Guard, deployed by the governor to aid if conflict arose, and he chose not to use it. This is merely one example of a lynching in which the law enforcement officials passively attempted to protect the prisoner, but when their efforts were challenged by the mob, they withdrew and surrendered.

Logically, one can assume that if the law enforcement officials in these specific rural communities exhibited obvious submission to the mob, either by giving up the keys to the jail cells of the potential victim or withdrawing authority at the risk of harming a White citizen in the mob itself, the mob or the people of the community would not necessarily be compelled to remain lawful. In other words, the lack of assertive forceful authority communicated by the officer could have been a threshold to the success of the mob.

Joseph was a "boom" town. It is somewhat unusual that a town of this size, even in 1933, would have had two central newspapers circulating at one time.

¹³³"Mob Hangs Negro Attacker at Fifth, Jule; Body Saturated with Gasoline and Burned: 'There's Too Many of You,' Says Theisen: Surrender Negro After Parlay in Jail" (1933, November 29). *St. Joseph Gazette*: front page.

CHAPTER 7 - THE MISSOURI MOBS AND CROWDS: FESTIVALS, SIZES, COMPOSITIONS AND MASKS

The size of the crowd and composition of the crowd, in terms of men, women and children were also important factors in attempting to predict any level of mob violence towards law enforcement officials. As with the law enforcement variable, two of the “mob” oriented variables will be paired together to demonstrate the pattern in mob population through different lynchings.

Table 7.1 – Mob Size and Composition¹³⁴

Mob Size at Lynching	Number of Occurrences	
	Black Occurrences	White Occurrences
No Report	12	11
Under 25	2	5
25-75	10	1
75-100	1	3
100-300	8	2
300+	12	2
Total Occurrences	45	24
Crowd Composition		
No report	6	7
Men only	28	13
Men and women	1	0
Men and boys	4	1
Men, women and boys	6	3
Total Occurrences	45	24

Observe Table 7.1 in which the crowd sizes at most Missouri lynchings of Black men numbered greater than 300 people by approximately 27 per cent. It

¹³⁴ The explanation for the $n=45$ in this instance centers on the previously discussed discrepancies. The $n=45$ because this analysis occurs outside of the lynching victim. In other words, there were 45 cases of lynching in terms of events, and 51 Black men lynched total.

also should be observed, however, that the smaller crowd sizes (25-75) were also close to being a quarter of the instances in which Black men were lynched. This does not diminish the fact, however, that while nearly 27 percent of the crowd sizes reported by the press in terms of Black lynchings were attended by 300 people or more (indicating part of the characteristic of the “festival” event¹³⁵), of the 24 lynchings of White men, the numbers advance a completely different outcome. There is a strong relationship between the size of the crowd and the ethnicity of the accused (.005). The differences between the White lynching information and the Black lynching information: about 46 percent (45.8) of the time, the newspaper did not report the size of the crowd in reference to the White lynching victim. For the Black lynching, the newspaper either did not have access or chose not to report the size of the crowd 27 percent of the time. Perhaps the number in attendance for the Black lynching was more crucial for establishing the festival-like account of the event, while at the same time maintaining a level of acceptance in numbers for the lynching.

The majority of the 24 White lynching cases were reported in the newspaper to have been attended by 25 people or less approximately 21 percent of the time (five occurrences). This differs greatly from the data concerning Black victims and the size of the crowd. The Black lynching drew a crowd of 25 or less only about five percent of the time, whereas the White lynching reportedly drew crowds of over 300 only about eight percent of the time.

In regard to the composition of the crowd, perhaps it is expected that 28 Black lynchings were orchestrated by men only (62 per cent), and in the same

¹³⁵ For the “Festival vs. Vengeance” discussion, see following section.

instance, the number of events in which men only were attending White lynchings is relatively proportionate to the number of men at Black lynchings (13 occurrences or 54 percent). The relationship between the ethnicity of the accused and the composition of the crowd is weak to non-existent (.411). This could be attributed to the fact that the newspapers did not readily report the true composition of the crowd, unless large numbers were present. It is surprising that six of the occurrences out of the 45 lynchings in Missouri were attended by men, boys and women. However, noting that the 27 percent of the lynchings in Missouri drew crowds of 300 or more, it makes sense to assume that these larger, festival-like crowds contained representations of every part of the community. Interestingly, however, the newspaper never mentioned female children.

Festivals and Vengeance

The aspect of the lynching that seems to lead the most accurately into the following sections is a discussion and analysis of the atmosphere of the lynching itself. If the mob was enacting their “justice” as a form of vengeance, how did that atmosphere, as reported by the newspaper, differ from the environment of the festival-like lynching?

Table 7.2 demonstrates the differences between the environments of the White lynchings and that atmosphere of the Black lynching. While the “unknown” environments represent either a lack of reporting the event carefully or in few cases, the discovery of a lynched individual without the pomp of the mob

formation and execution, are similar between Black victims and White victims (three environments were unknown for Black men, while four were unknown for White men), the similarity between the numbers of “vengeance” motivated lynchings can be disassembled based on number of lynchings. In other words, while the Black lynching was reported and analyzed as being driven by vengeance 19 out of the 45 times, or 42 percent of the time, the White lynching was motivated by vengeance 12 out of 24 times, or 50 percent of the time. It is significant that the lynching of a Black man was reported with a sense of festival over half (55 percent) of the time, compared to the 33 percent of the White victims subjected to a festival environment.

Table 7.2 – Frequencies of Festival versus Vengeance Atmospheres for Lynching

Gender of Victim	Atmosphere of Lynching					
	Black Lynching			White Lynching ¹³⁶		
	Festival	Vengeance	Unknown	Festival	Vengeance	Unknown
Female	17	12	1	2	3	0
Male	9	10	2	6	11	1
No report	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	26	22	3	8	14	2
TOTAL	51			24		

The information provided by Table 7.2 indicates by first glance some very obvious characteristics of the atmosphere of the lynching depending on the

¹³⁶ In two known cases, the victim of the crime committed by the accused was not discussed in the newspaper.

ethnicity of the lynch-mob's victim. It is quite clear that in regard to the number of lynchings that became festivals, crimes against women were most often those that erupted into a festival environment. Out of the lynchings considered festivals involving Black men, 65 percent of the festival-like lynchings occurred because of a crime against a White woman. At the same time, in terms of the lynchings that spawned from vengeance, crimes against women were still the majority of the causes of vengeance lynchings, but only by ten percent.¹³⁷ At the same time, the total number of lynchings that could be considered festivals and the lynchings that could be considered vengeance related are relatively close to one another in raw number of occurrences (51 percent and 43 percent respectively).¹³⁸

What is perhaps the most interesting to note in terms of the White lynchings when compared to Black lynchings is the large number of lynchings that were based on revenge. According to Table 7.2, White males were avenged by White mobs 79 percent of the time under the classification of vengeance. Overall, White males were lynched for crimes against other White males with the atmosphere of vengeance 46 percent of the time. It is important to note once more that most White men involved as victims of lynch-mob violence did not victimize White women. Thus, the number of women for which White men were lynched within festival environments occurred 25 percent of the time, while the lynchings that were conducted for the sake of a crime committed against a White women in which the mood was vengeful occurred 21 percent of the time.

¹³⁷ Women as the cause for the lynching when the environment was more vengeance related occurred 55 percent of the time, over men being lynched based on vengeance, which occurred only 45 percent of the time.

¹³⁸ The three unknown cases represented in this table make up about six percent of the overall cases when analyzing the atmosphere of the lynching.

Overall, the reported atmosphere of the lynching for White men resembling a festival occurred 33 percent of the time, and as previously mentioned, 46 percent reported as seemingly vengeance lynchings.¹³⁹ Perhaps the newspapers chose to report the lynching of a Black man with more of a festival-like description, whether they were present or receiving a story from a secondary source, because the idea was that the lynching of a Black man was supposed to be entertainment. In many of the newspaper articles in which specific language was used to communicate the atmosphere of the lynching, the reporter chose to use phrases implying that the crowd was cheering when the neck of the Black male was broken by a member of the mob, or the “rejoicing” departure as the mob’s victim was assumed to be expired.¹⁴⁰ Such treatments were not usually practiced by the mob or reported by the press for the victims of White lynch mobs.

Certain aspects outside of Table 7.2 must be discussed in depth in regard to the festival lynching concerning Black men, and one of the very bold differences between the White lynchings. There was not a single White victim of lynch mob violence that was burned in Missouri *post mortem*. The festival lynching of the Black man can be characterized to some extent by the actions of the mob after the Black body had ceased to be living. This can be speculated to demonstrate the lack of respect for the Black body as a whole, while the White

¹³⁹ White male lynchings whose environments were unknown, because of no report occurred approximately eight percent of the time, overall.

¹⁴⁰ See “Mob Hangs Negro Attacker at Fifth, Jule; Body Saturated with Gasoline and Burned.” (1933, November 29). *The St. Joseph Gazette*: front page.

male victims of lynch mob violence might have suffered only an extended display.

Lloyd Warner, Cleo Wright and the “Springfield Three”¹⁴¹ were all victims of *post mortem* violence. In fact all five of these individuals were reduced to ashes upon their deaths. The reports of the actions of the mob are most certainly graphic and disturbing. In the case of Lloyd Warner, the crowd decided that after the flames had ceased to incinerate their victim it was time for the collection of “souvenirs” from the tree used to murder him.¹⁴²

It is interesting to note also that there is a significant relationship between the accused’s custody status and the environment of the lynching (.005). This is significant because the larger groups of people attending a lynching would obviously take some time. If the individual to be lynched was not in custody, his capture would mean immediate retribution, as with Frank Canafex, lynched by a posse in Reynolds County, 1920. The posse came upon the escaped convict and decided to kill him before the police could arrive.¹⁴³

The festival or vengeance environment was a significant result of the gender of the individual victim of the crime of the accused (.003). In other words, if there was a girl or a woman assaulted or murdered, the newspaper was more likely to report the event as a festival. As the crime of rape was outrageous to many of the rural Whites, it can be assumed that the punishment for rape would draw a relatively festival-like crowd. At the same time, the White lynchings rarely drew the same number of spectators or participants that the Black lynchings did.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix B.1 for more information.

¹⁴² See “Mob Hangs Negro Attacker At Fifth, Jule (1933, November 29).

¹⁴³ “Negro Convict Killed.” (1920, July 15).

One example of a case in which the crowd numbered more than 300 for a White lynching was for the press-dubbed “outlaw,” J.W. Lynch. Lynch had evaded the law and the lynch mob so often that by the time he was captured, the hype was extensive, and he was attended in the lynching by over one thousand people.¹⁴⁴

Primary Means of Death: Treatment and Its Report

Another aspect that needs to be addressed in concern with additional variables inside the festival lynching differing from Black lynchings to White lynchings is the method by which the individual himself was killed by the mob. While the majority of the White lynchings that took place were exercises in actually hanging someone, with the exception of firing squad-like executions, the method by which the Black victim of lynch mob violence was murdered varied somewhat from assumed lynching method, hanging, to burning, bullets, beatings, draggings and combinations of several of those methods at one.

Lynch mobs rarely extended their efforts past the hanging on their White lynching victims. Jesse Winner and James Nelson, for example, were reported to have been lynched by a mob of 200 from Ray County. Taken from the jailhouse, they were simply strung up.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, some of the incidents within the lynching were even themselves so horrendous one could speculate that organized mobs did not desire to make so much of an example of

¹⁴⁴ “A Mob Hangs Lynch at 3:45: Prisoner Was Taken From Room In Court House Without Difficulty, The Officers Putting Up Feeble Resistance.” (1919. May 29). *Republican Sentinel* (Lamar): front page.

¹⁴⁵ “Hanged by a Mob: Jesse Winner and James Nelson Taken From the Lafayette County Jail and Lynched.” (1896, December 12). *Weekly Intelligencer* (Lexington): front page.

the White lynching victims.¹⁴⁶ Black men lynched in general, in whatever way by rural mobs were reported to have suffered different treatments than those of the White men. This is not to say, however, that the treatment of some Black men in violent crowd conditions did not suffer similar fates as their White counterparts.¹⁴⁷ It is only that mobs attacking White accuseds did not tie their victims to automobiles and drag them; nor did they burn their White victims. Black victims, like Lloyd Warner, Cleo Wright and the “Springfield Three” were beaten and tortured before their hangings by rope, and *The St. Joseph News-Press* reported that many citizens thought Warner was dead when the crowd hoisted his body into the air.¹⁴⁸ Cleo Wright was dragged to his death behind a car and then burned at an intersection to the predominantly Black part of Sikeston.¹⁴⁹ As this was the last reported lynching in Missouri, it is absolutely appropriate to claim that nothing resembling that treatment ever befell the reporting of the White victim of a Missouri lynch mob.

It is also in the basic reporting of the lynching, as discussed previously, that contributes to the level of detail in which the public is informed of the execution. Newspaper coverage of either lynching (Black or White), attempted to

¹⁴⁶ J.W. Lynch for example, eluded the law for such an unusual amount of time that when he was indeed captured and secured in custody, the public converged and brutally lynched him. The *Sentinel* reports that he was dragged down several flights of stairs head first, and includes that people in the crowd did not know if he was alive and unconscious or simply dead when he was strung up to a tree. See “Mob Hangs Lynch at 3:45.” (1919, May 29).

¹⁴⁷ Indeed, both Edmund Burke (White) and George Tracy (Black) were executed in Caldwell County, within the same decade (1890s) for generally the same domestic crime of abusing their wives. Burke was dragged from his bed by the KKK and strangled, while George Tracy was assassinated in his jail cell by gun-toting members of a mob. So, in this regard, there are some situations in which the Black lynching and the White lynching are similar in forms of execution/torture, but the above listed case, any case that would arise in which the White man is mutilated or molested *post mortem* is a rare, if not nonexistent occurrence.

¹⁴⁸ “Mob Hangs Attacker After Siege at Jail: Lloyd Warner, Negro, Is Put to Death at Fifth and Jule Streets in View of 5,000” (1933, November 29). *St. Joseph News-Press*: front page.

¹⁴⁹ “Lynch Negro After Knife Attacks” (1942, January 27).

include as much tasteful detail as possible, and used phrases like “swung into eternity” to describe the execution of the individual in either case. However, there was no such detail to report that White men had been burned, and their remains sifted through and retained as souvenirs (partially attributed to their bodies not being burned *post mortem*).¹⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, the anti-lynching sentiment of the report in the *Maryville Forum* did not exclude this newspaper from including explicit details concerning the death of Raymond Gunn. Details included descriptions of preparations for his death, in which the crowd chained him to the roof of the school house (noted as the place “in which he committed his confessed crime.”)¹⁵¹ and set the building ablaze. The newspaper even published pictures of the event, and the figure of Gunn can be seen twisting within the torture of his own death in the background.

While the newspaper was not essentially reporting the White lynchings in the same manner, part of this should be attributed to the action of the mob. If the mob was not burning the bodies of the White lynching victims, then the newspaper would obviously have nothing to cover in that endeavor. It is through this discussion that it can be affirmed that the treatment of most of the White males accused of murdering another man or woman were treated differently even within their criminal identities than those treatments of the Black males for allegedly committing the same or similar crimes. The Black man murderer of a White man was reported as a greater offense because of the socially constructed boundaries that suffered a violation.

¹⁵⁰ “Gunn Burned” (1931, January 12).

¹⁵¹ “Gunn Burned” (1931, January 12).

The relationship between the region that the news report is coming from and the means of death for the lynching victim is relatively weak. This is not surprising as the lynching methods of the mobs in Missouri did not differ greatly from another. In other words, there seemed to be a set of standard tools and equipment used in the typical lynching. There was always a rope handy. The means of death for the lynching victim was seemingly determined by other variables, but not the region in which the practice took place. This is not to say that any one region practiced murder by the rope more than others, but that region was not detrimental to the equation involving means of death.

Table 7.3 – Primary Means of Death by Region – Black Occurrences

Region	Hanging	Burning	Drowning	Bullets	Dragging	Beating	TOTAL
Little Dixie	15	0	1	0	0	1	17
The Southeast	5	0	2	3	1	1	12
Southwest Corner	6	1	0	2	0	0	9
Outliers	8	2	0	2	0	1	13
TOTAL	34	3	3	7	1	3	51

White Occurrence

Region	Hanging	Burning	Drowning	Bullets	Dragging	Beating	TOTAL
Little Dixie	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
The Southeast	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
Southwest Corner	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
Outliers	10	0	0	2	1	1	14
TOTAL	16	0	0	6	1	1	24

Because of the complexity of the above tables, it is important to point out a few very simple differences between the ways in which the primary means of

death were obviously reported in the rural newspapers. Notice that there are three incidents of burning the victim of the lynch mob when observing the Black lynching and how it was reported, compared to no burning of the victim when analyzing the White lynching.¹⁵² At the same time, there are three drownings as means of primary death reported for the Black male victim, and zero drownings for the White lynching victims reported.¹⁵³ This is interesting because the method of primary death for the White victims, as reported by the press was either by the rope or by the gun, predominantly. There are some outlying cases in which the victims was beaten or dragged, as was the case for J.W. Lynch, but as stated previously, his case was extraordinary.

Further analysis reveals that there is a non-significant relationship between the ethnicity of the lynch victim and the means of that individual's death (.241), and yet, there are no burnings or drowning episodes within the analysis of the White lynching. This is puzzling indeed, but perhaps can be rationalized because the most of the methods of death revolve predominantly around the rope as an implement, and the other methods of death remain relatively rare and therefore, secondary. This could be attributed to many things: for example, the rope seemed to be the most available means of death for the victims of early lynch mob violence. Bullets were also available and as obvious in Table 7.3, bullets were the second most common means of death for both White and Black

¹⁵² The only cases in which the treatment of the accused in White lynchings deviated from the hanging death or death by bullets were the cases in which the victim was beaten or the victim was dragged. The victim of the beating was J.W. Lynch, in Lamar, Barton County in 1919, and the victim of the dragging was Edmund Burke in Breckenridge, Caldwell County, 1893.

¹⁵³ The victims of the drownings were an Unknown man in Madrid Bend, New Madrid County in 1898, and Rudd Love in Clarksville, Pike County, 1915.

reported lynching victims. However, the burning, beating, drowning, dragging aspects of the lynching report as a means of primary death were not reported as often as the cause of death, but the prequels to the lynching by rope. Some victims, like Cleo Wright, Lloyd Warner and George Bush were all beaten before their deaths by dragging and ropes. Therefore, it might have been difficult for the reporter, amongst the throngs of people present at the Wright or Warner lynchings to differentiate between the living Black male, on the verge of death and the beaten, dead Black male whose often “lifeless” body was strung up anyway.¹⁵⁴

Mobs in Disguise: Disguise and the Lynching

The disclosure of information concerning whether the mob was masked or not was also interesting. This variable is important because the mob using masks to disguise themselves might be a contributing factor towards the atmosphere of the lynching or even part of the characteristic that decides who composes the crowd.

Table 7.4 – The Frequency of Disguise in the Mob

Masked Mob	Number of Occurrences	
	Black Occurrences	White Occurrences
No masks/no report	41	17
Partially masked/disguised	3	0
Fully masked/disguised crowd	7	7
Total Occurrences	51	24

¹⁵⁴ See “Mob Hangs Attacker After Siege at Jail.” (1933, November 29).

It must be recognized that there is a non-significant relationship between the ethnicity of the individual lynching victim and the level of disguise of the mob (.158). This seems relatively easy to explain, as the mobs that lynched White men were some times masked as well, implying that it was not just the lynching of a Black man for which disguise might have seemed necessary. At the same time, perhaps the newspaper reported the presence of the disguise to add to the clandestine nature of the lynching, and to provide added sensationalism to the report. At the same time, the reporting of the mob wearing masks might serve also to protect the identify of the members from the reporter, not that the reporter would have mentioned names were they known, but the disguise did alleviate the responsibility of having to identify the culprits. The police were also not inclined to investigate the murder of a Black man through the action of a White mob, but the disguises would ensure that the police would not have to investigate, as the identities of the mob members were a mystery.

Table 7.4 illustrates that nearly 80 per cent of the time preceding the Black lynching, either the mob was not disguised or the newspaper did not report whether the mob was disguised or not. Compared to the White lynchings, this number is incredibly similar. At the same time, it is obvious that there were seven occurrences in which the mob was fully masked. The most interesting part of this frequency table is the materialization of the reports of masked mobs and the numbers representing the number of instances in which White lynching victims were murdered by masked mobs. While there were seven times (70

percent) in which the mob was reportedly masked or disguised when engaging in White lynchings. At the same time, at least one of the occurrences in which a White masked mob lynched a White male, the Ku Klux Klan was blamed for the violence.¹⁵⁵

Extended Display: Sending a Message?

The last variable that will be analyzed with frequency is the “extended display” variable. This variable is important because the extended display of the lynching victim might have some conjunction with the atmosphere of the lynching or the level of law enforcement intervention.

Table 7.5 – Extended Display of the Victim

Extended Display of the Victim	Number of Occurrences	
	Black Occurrences	White Occurrences
No report	9	8
Yes, extended display	31	14
No, no extended display	11	2
Total Occurrences	51	24

Notice on Table 7.5 that the majority of the lynching victims were displayed *post mortem* for an extended period in 31 out of the 51 lynchings (51 per cent). Interestingly enough, nearly 60 percent of the White lynching victims were reported to have been displayed *post mortem* for an extended period of time. This might be helpful when discovering that a weak and relatively non-

¹⁵⁵ “White Cappers At Work: Edmund Burk, of Breckenridge, Found Dead in Bed Sunday Morning. Death Caused by a Band of Klu Klux.” [sic](1893, September 22). *Caldwell County Hamiltonian*: front page.

significant relationship exists between the ethnicity of the accused and whether or not there was an extended display reported (.085).

The discussion in this chapter reflects several different variables from which information can be gleaned to demonstrate the nature of the media in rural Missouri between 1880 and 1942. As this was known as the “Lynching Era,” it is obvious that while the newspapers reported the lynching with much detail, while at the same time, the news reports generally conveyed different stories depending on the color of the victim’s skin. In other words, the newspapers in rural Missouri were reporting the information generated from the lynching in different ways depending on the ethnicity of the mob’s victim. To be certain, this difference was not something that was discussed or probably even realized, but the tone of the nation between 1882 and 1942 was one of acceptance for certain kinds of violence towards the newly freed slave. In fact, perhaps one should not use “certain kinds” to describe the acceptability of the lynching amongst vast portions of the nation’s population, but “any kind” in its place, as it seems murder was not even out of the question. The newspapers in Missouri, overall, did not work to extinguish this blaze of violence, racism and death, but instead chose to report it and capitalize on the deaths of 75 victims, 51 of those victims being Black men.

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION

From this study, several conclusions can be made based on the information discovered in this historic investigation. First, and most obvious, all of the lynchings in Missouri between 1882 and 1942 occurred in rural areas. There were no metropolitan lynchings in Missouri.¹⁵⁶ Another apparent discovery in relation to this project was that the newspapers that reported the lynchings were all generally owned and operated by White men.

Coincidentally, there were major between the reporting of the White lynching and the reporting of the Black lynching. Therefore, it would be accurate to confirm the research question with an affirmative answer. The results of each content analysis were so different, in many ways that the reading of the first paragraph of the article did not allow for mystery as to the “race” of the lynching victim.

The majority of the above variables shed some light on rural life for Black people and White people alike. While it is obvious that the newspapers thoroughly covered some aspects of the lynchings similarly between White and Black lynchings, there are several differences. It is important to understand some of the similarities and the differences between the reporting styles of the different presses when discussing White lynchings and Black lynchings.

¹⁵⁶ While some might argue that Levi Herrington was lynched in a metropolitan area that was Kansas City, Jackson County only claimed 9, 850 Black people in 1880. This total for Jackson County was only slightly more than some of the considerable rural counties in the Little Dixie region. Kansas City was not the metropolitan center that it would become; therefore, it can be claimed that the lynchings that occurred in Missouri occurred in rural areas.

From what has been reported in this study, it is obvious that the similarities between the reporting of the White lynching and the Black lynchings by rural Missouri newspapers are generally restricted to the physical facts. In other words, for most every one of the cases analyzed between the White lynchings and the Black lynchings, the gender, crime and police action is recorded.¹⁵⁷ The proceedings of the lynching are usually reported with some coincidence, in that the procession of the mob with the victim is reported and the action of the mob within that process is reported as well.

However, while these are some of the stronger similarities, there are vast underlying differences between the way the press chose to report the lynching of a Black man and the way the same press chose to report a lynching of a White man. The language, for example, was different. There was no single report in which the newspaper referred to the White victim as a “White devil,” or any other description that could be considered pejorative. At the same time, regardless of the guilt or innocence of the Black man accused, the adjectives where he was concerned revolved around the idea of evil, darkness and villainy. If the newspaper, before the individual was apprehended and questioned, was already referring to his crime as committed by a “black brute,” “black beast,” or “black fiend,” then what could the reaction of the community have been?¹⁵⁸ Even in those cases in which the newspaper refrained from derogatory or incendiary language, “wretch” was used in a hopeless, effortless way. While it must be

¹⁵⁷ This applies to those White and Black lynchings in which the police were actors.

¹⁵⁸ Of course, I am not assuming that people in rural communities did not think for themselves, but the time and the nature of the historic rural Missouri community allows for a strong assumption that the newspaper editor was reflecting the sentiment of his reader base, and therefore the representative voice for the community.

considered that much, if not all of Missouri suffered from post-partum depression with slavery, the racism that emerged as a result of lynching simply compounded the already dangerous state of social affairs in the United States. The report of the lynching of a Black man, as told through many voices of the press, ranging from the rural newspaper, to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to any lynching in Missouri covered by a faction of the national press, was far different than the report of the White lynching, anywhere.

Interestingly enough, the lynching reports themselves are so different that even without identification, it is easy to determine which report belongs to which group, White lynching victims or Black. The difference in the White lynching events and Black lynching events could only signify a few things: the killing of a Black man was more important in terms of coverage, detail and defamation than that report of the White man. At the same time, the White men that were lynched were not the aristocrats of the community by far. This was certainly a class issue to some extent, but the real impression is that the class status of the Black man was never an issue to be addressed. The lynched Black man was assumed to be guilty, and there was no opportunity to prove innocence, as the newspaper and community had condemned him, in most cases prior to any arrest or confession. It was not an event that was ever marked with remorse for the victim. It was only the county that seemed to suffer reputation for being so savage. The loss of a Black life was worth only the regret of tarnishing a county's name.

The constructed social boundary between Black people and White people that was ferociously protected by a layer of violence unquestionably brutal was most certainly threatened by many aspects of the emancipated Black community. Of course, several other conditions were in place that contributed to the successful lifetime of lynch mob violence in Missouri. The newspaper was simply the method by which these conditions found their voice and were communicated, tangibly for the literate world to witness. The event of a lynching through the eyes of the press was an invaluable tool for those that had not been present to witness the burning of the Black body. If the individuals that had not been present read the report, and had no frame of reference, what other source was provided that could effectively communicate the goings-on in the community center? The “truth” was in the pages. If the newspaper printed that the accused Black man had undoubtedly committed a crime, why would the people removed physically from the community village believe anything else? This is not to say that the farmers needed assistance when it came to racism; indeed, they would have had their own opinions about Black crime and migrant Black workers at this time. What is intended here is an assertion that the newspapers in small rural communities were not just responsible for submitting the news to the public; they were also responsible for transmitting messages through their pages about social issues and consequences for social boundary violation. If the press had been of any other opinion than the community at large, the outcome of this study would have been completely different. One can speculate that if the rural newspapers had been progressive in their time, and their opinion of the lynching event and

the murder of innocence¹⁵⁹ had been counter to the general population, perhaps the lynching of Black men would not have spanned sixty years as a practice.

The decline of lynchings in the 1930s, and the last lynching in 1942 marked the end of any reported lynching practice in Missouri. It is obvious as well that the style of reporting changed within Missouri newspapers from the popular coverage of a spectacle to a relatively objective news reporting body.¹⁶⁰ The death of Cleo Wright was so brutal and tragic, and the newspaper in the predominantly Southern culture of the Southeastern Lowlands could have reported it with the same venom that the rural newspapers of the same region chose to report the same occurrence fifty years before. However, the *Sikeston Standard* reported the story of Cleo Wright's death with a surprising objectivity that stuck out most certainly as objective, even when compared with the horrifying account of Lloyd Warner's murder in St. Joseph some nine years before. The report of Cleo Wright's "lynching" was itself objective, but the editor of the *Standard* did not the opportunity to editorialize his opinions of the lynching during subsequent issues of the newspaper.¹⁶¹ While the opinion conveyed is troubling, and would indicate that the justification for lynching Black men was still alive and well, the change came in the means by which this opinion is communicated. In 1895 Scott County, based on the idea of social contagion, the editor of the Sikeston press would not have saved his opinions for the editorial

¹⁵⁹ This statement is not intended to pass judgment on the accused. "Innocence" here simply refers to the Constitutional right that every citizen of the United States has the right to a fair trial. As the Black men lynched were most often not judicially processed, they were theoretically innocent – as they had not yet been tried. (Information concerning the U.S. Constitution taken from "U.S. Constitution Online: Amendment XIV, on December 15, 2005, from <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#Am5>.

¹⁶⁰ From Levi Herrington in 1882 to Cleo Wright in 1942.

¹⁶¹ Blanton, C.L. (1942, January 30). Editorial columns from *Sikeston Standard*: front page.

column. Indeed his opinions would have been smoothly integrated into the actual report of the lynching. In this way, the press did shift its practice of reporting these mob events, but not necessarily their views of Black men or the appropriate treatment for those supposedly committing crimes against Whites.

The implications of this research are simply to demonstrate the ability of the rural press in Missouri to communicate and reflect the sentiments of the population for which the newspaper was reporting the event of lynching Black men. The power of the press in conjunction with the population has become very obvious, indeed media in general. While I will acknowledge that communities have an impact on the style in which a local newspaper conveys events, it is predominantly the power behind the press that makes the decisions concerning what we read and what we know. This power or control has the potential to be very dangerous, and it is the responsibility of the community to be involved with the process of information disseminated to those that it truly affects. Quite possibly, had this relationship or balance existed in rural communities, the “lynching era” might not have been an “era” at all.

There is most certainly no way to prove the absolute role of the press in Missouri lynchings between 1880 and 1942. However, strong speculation concerning the information provided in the newspapers themselves from each lynching can shed light on the possibility that the newspaper was just as powerful as the mob itself, both participated in public lynchings. Hopefully, the evidence that I have contributed to this body of knowledge answers the research question most blatantly: Missouri newspapers between 1880 and 1942 most certainly

reported the lynching of a White man, but those same newspapers reported the *destruction* of the Black man. There is a difference.

Further research might be conducted concerning the same newspaper coverage of the processing of the convicted Black man through the rural legal system during the same time period compared to the reporting of the legal processing of the White man. It would be interesting to see if the newspaper discussed the crime and the outcome of the proceedings in the same way or a different way than the coverage of the lynching as well.

Appendix A: Cross-Tab Results for Independent Variables

A.1 Ethnicity as Independent Variable as Reported

Dependent Variable – Reported by Press	
Region of the Lynching	.026
Crime committed by Accused	.004
Gender of the Crime Victim	.041
Age of the Victim	.029
Occupation of Male Victim of Crime	.005
Age of the Accused	.031
Method of Reporting Style (support, anti-lynching, objective)	.021
Police Involvement (dichotomous)	.022
Level of Police involvement	.278
Violence committed against police officers by mob	.034
Size of the crowd	.005
Composition of the crowd	.411
Disguise of Mob	.158
Atmosphere of the lynching	.075
Extended display of the lynching victim	.085
Method of death	.241

A.2 Region as Independent Variable as Origin of Report

Dependent Variable – Location of the Press	
Ethnicity of the Lynching Victim	.026
Method of Reporting Style (support, anti-lynching, objective)	.021

Appendix B.1: Black Lynching Victims in Missouri – 1880-1942¹⁶²

Name	Date	County
Levi Herrington	May 1882	Jackson
Henry Caldwell	July 1882	Iron
George Burris	May 1885	Dade
Cyrus King	October 1885	Ralls
George Bush	September 1889	Boone

Olli Truxton	January 1891	Howard
David Sims	April 1892	Dunklin
Will Jackson	September 1893	Bates
Ulysses Hayden	January 1894	Barry
Jim Johnson	July 1894	Callaway
John Buckner	July 1894	St. Louis
Emmett Divers	February 1895	Callaway
George Tracy	July 1895	Caldwell
Will Henderson	October 1895	Cape Girardeau
Erastus Brown	July 1897	Franklin
Curtis Young	June 1898	Pike
Sam Young	June 1898	Pike
Unknown Man	July 1898	New Madrid
Henry Williams	November 1898	Macon
Tom Hayden	June 1899	Howard
Frank Embree	November 1899	Howard

Mindu Cowaghee	May 1900	Saline
Henry Darley	May 1900	Clay
Nelson Simpson	January 1901	Butler
French Godley	March 1901	Lawrence
Will Godley	August 1901	Lawrence
Pete Hampton	August 1901	Lawrence
Arthur McNeal	August 1901	Ray
Harry Gates	February 1902	Lafayette
Oliver Wright	March 1902	Randolph
Louis Wright	August 1902	New Madrid
Thomas Gilyard	April 1903	Jasper
Tom Witherspoon	May 1905	Mississippi
Will Allen	April 1906	Greene
Fred Coker	April 1906	Greene
Horace Duncan	April 1906	Greene

¹⁶² The highlighted names indicate the only two instances in the defined time period in which three Black men were lynched at the same time. The latter of the two groups is what was previously referred to as the “Springfield Three.”

Black Lynching Victims in Missouri – 1880 to 1942 (continued)

Bob Coleman	July 1910	Mississippi
Sam Fields	July 1910	Mississippi
A.B. Richardson	October 1911	Pemiscot
Dallas Shields	March 1914	Howard
Rudd Love	September 1915	Pike
Fayette Chandler	April 1916	St. Charles

Frank Canafex	July 1920	Reynolds
Roy Hammonds	May 1921	Pike
James Scott	April 1923	Boone
Roosevelt Grigsby	December 1924	Mississippi
Walter Mitchell	August 1925	Clay
Will Sherod	May 1927	Pemiscot

Raymond Gunn	January 1931	Nodaway
Lloyd Warner	November 1933	Buchanan
Cleo Wright	January 1942	Scott

APPENDIX B.2: White Lynching Victims in Missouri – 1880 to 1942

Name	Date	County
Garland Mann	1883	Newton
Frank Taylor	1885	Taney
Tubal Taylor	1885	Taney
Irwin Grubb	1885	McDonald
Joe Thornton	1885	Jasper
Henry Thomas	1889	Cole
John Davis	1889	Greene
Amos Miller	1892	Cape Girardeau
Dick Cullin	1892	Webster
Robert Helpler	1893	Barton
Edmund Burke	1894	Caldwell
Unknown	1896	St Clair
John Mitchell	1896	Wright
James Nelson	1896	Lafayette
Jesse Winner	1896	Lafayette
Thomas Larkin	1896	Montgomery
Jack Coffman	1897	Wright
William Huff	1899	Stoddard
Abe Withrup	1902	Monroe
Charles Salyers	1902	Lafayette
Malone	1903	Pemiscot
W.M. Mooneyhan	1903	Pemiscot
George Johnson	1909	Platte
J.W. Lynch	1919	Barton

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Columbia Herald (Boone)

Commonwealth (Ash Grove-Greene)

East Prairie Eagle (Mississippi)

Ellington Press (Reynolds)

Fayette Democrat Leader (Howard)

Fulton Gazette (Callaway)

Hamiltonian (Caldwell)

Iron County Register

Jasper County Democrat

Kansas City Star (Jackson)

Kennett Clipper (Dunklin)

Lawrence Chieftain (Lawrence)

Lexington Intelligencer (Lafayette)

Liberty Advance (Clay)

Louisiana Press-Journal (Missouri)

Macon Republican (Macon)

Maryville Daily Forum (Nodaway)

Richmond Conservator (Ray)

Moberly Weekly Monitor (Randolph)

Nevada Daily Mail (Vernon)

Nevada Noticer (Vernon)

New Madrid Record

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