

Arkansas Black History Online

“Madness with a Past: An Overview of Race Violence in Arkansas History”

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During the 1890s Arkansas was swept by a movement among African-Americans to emigrate to Africa. In September 1895, N. M. Rogers, from his new home in Johnsonville, Liberia, wrote back to his family in Morrilton, Arkansas—urging his relatives to join him. Among the reasons black Arkansans ought to move to their ancestral homeland, Rogers wrote, was to escape the continuing violence perpetrated against black citizens. “...I would not exchange homes if someone would give me a place there and stock to work it. We don’t have everything here as plentiful as there, but in a few years when we begin to raise our coffee, we will have what we need. One thing I like, there is no white man to give orders and when you go in your house, *there is no one to stand outside and call you out of the door and shoot when you come out.*”¹

Black Arkansans might have wished to go to Africa, but very few had the means to make the journey. Instead, they continued to call Arkansas home—and they continued to face violence at the hands of the dominant white population. This paper provides an overview of that racial violence. As a summary, it is impossible to cover every aspect of racial violence in the state, and, indeed, much research remains before historians can with assurance provide a full picture of racial antagonism in Arkansas. But enough evidence survives that we can begin to tell the story.

The Era of Slavery

It is almost redundant to speak of violence and slavery. Indeed, the institution of slavery could not exist without the threat of physical force. Apologists for slavery make the case that slavery was a complicated institution, which at its heart was based on economics. And the economic value of a slave, according to these latter-day Confederates, protected the slave from severe violence. This defense might make sense in a world in which economic matters were more important than race, but in the United States slavery was based on race—and force or the threat of force was used to keep blacks in a subjugated condition. As we shall see, being worth a good deal of money did not prevent slaves from facing the lyncher’s rope or faggot.

The most common example of violence used against slaves in Arkansas was the whip. One of the modern images of slavery portrays a “slave driver” riding about the cotton fields with a whip in hand. This image, though probably not a typical sight on anything other than large plantations, did occur. Henry M. Stanley, of African exploration fame, spent some time in Arkansas just prior to the Civil War. In his autobiography he recalls visiting an Arkansas plantation on which an overseer “cried out his commands with a more imperious note. A young fellow [slave] named Jim was the first victim of his ire, ...and he could not answer him as politely as expected. He flicked at [the slave’s] naked shoulders with his whip, and the lash, flying unexpectedly near me, caused us both to drop our spikes.”²

Orville W. Taylor, the premier student of slavery in Arkansas, believed “there is no doubt it [the whip] was used often, with no effort made to conceal the fact. Casual allusions to the practice of whipping appear throughout the sources of the period, and a substantial number of runaway slaves were described as

bearing whip marks." Taylor also reminds us that whipping was a commonly accepted form of punishment in the mid-1800s, with everyone from sailors to school children being subject to the cane.³

Sometimes slaves found guilty of a crime were sentenced to whippings. Ebba, a Pulaski County slave charged with murdering her owner, was sentenced to 500 lashes in 1860—though on appeal she was granted a new trial.⁴

Perhaps the most barbaric recorded instance of slave whipping was in Washington County, Arkansas where a man named Spencer was discovered in 1839⁵ beating a newly purchased female slave who had run away: "He had her stripped, and staked down on the ground; her hands and feet extended, and fastened to stakes; and her face downward. He...was whipping her at intervals, using a cowhide, with a plaited buckskin lash about fifteen inches long. He asked what made her [run away], and she said that Beford and Buchanan told her, that if she staid there, she would be whipped to death. The witness examined the negro, and found her to look wild. Spencer had drawn some blood, but not a great deal. He took salt and a cob, and salted her back."⁶

Slaves were sometimes whipped by "township slave patrols," which were authorized by law to provide, as historian Orville W. Taylor has written, "for more formal surveillance of slave activities." The patrollers usually functioned at night, trying to find slaves who were away from their owner's home without permission. Statutes allowed the patrollers to administer up to 20 lashes to any slave encountered in an unlawful assembly—or even out and about without a pass. One instance of this occurred in Ouachita County in 1854 when a patrol arrested and whipped a number of slaves returning home from a church service. The patrol members were sued by the owner of the beaten slaves, charging that the whippings caused his slaves to lose work time.⁷ A slave who could not work was a slave without value.

Slaves might have been valuable property, but that did not protect them from murder by their owners and others. Slaves who were accused of serious crimes, especially murder, were often lynched by mobs. State law guaranteed slaves the right to a trial, but outraged white citizens—realizing that violence was the underpinning of slavery—often refused to follow even that form of justice. To make the lynching even more violent and presumably make more of an impression on the slave population, slaves were often burned to death.

In the autumn of 1849 an unnamed slave living near Almyra in Arkansas County was burned for the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl and the murder of her brother. A few days later in Phillips County, two slaves were blamed for the murder of their owner. The newspaper reported: "The negroes were arrested, and their guilt being evident they were burnt to death." Another grisly lynching took place in Hot Spring County in 1836. A slave named William was a member of a group migrating through Arkansas to Texas. Near the little town of Rockport, William apparently murdered his owner and several other members of the party. Ultimately the unfortunate slave was captured, and here is how the *Arkansas Gazette* described his lynching: "We have been informed that the slave William, who murdered his master some weeks since...was taken by a party...from the sheriff of Hot Spring, and burned alive! Yes, tied up to the limb of a tree, a fire built under him, and consumed in slow and lingering torture!"⁸ Even the *Gazette*, which was far from enlightened on slavery, was forced to condemn "this disgraceful and barbarous outrage."⁹

No act of defiance could rile up white folks as much as "insurrection." Whites, especially in areas with large slave populations, lived in dread of the day when slaves would rise up against their oppressors. The publicity generated by Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion in Virginia, which resulted in the murder of about 60 whites, spread hysteria throughout the South. While no slave insurrections are documented in Arkansas, that fact did not prevent fear and apprehension among the slave owners. In 1862, while the Civil War raged, a rumor of insurrection arose in White County near the town of Searcy. The supposed White County insurrection involved a conspiracy led by a white Methodist preacher, Charles Cavender from Jackson County. Here's how the *Gazette* described the event:

"We learn from a reliable source that a projected negro insurrection has been thwarted by the arrest of some fifteen negroes at Searcy, White County from whom the plans and intentions of

the outbreak have been fully made known. A Protestant Methodist Preacher, Charles Cavender, was the originator and Captain of the organization. The negroes were to start from Austin, Prairie County 27 miles west of Des Arc killing all as they went until they met at Searcy, and there Cavender was to take charge of and conduct them to Memphis, where they were to meet their friends.

A gentleman of Searcy writes that eight negroes are in jail, four of which will be hung. Cavender made his escape, but was pursued and arrested, and will be hung today. Des Arc and vicinity has been placed under a strict police and the Des Arc Regulators are armed and ready at a moment's warning, not only to defend the town, but adjacent country.¹⁰

It must be admitted that most slave states, including Arkansas, had laws to protect slaves from excessive punishment and abuse. While a colonial possession of the French, Arkansas slaves (and their owners) were subject to the *Code Noir*, or Black Code, which was adopted by the French in 1724. This code was long and detailed, and it included many provisions intended to protect slaves. After Arkansas became a separate territory in 1819, a body of law was enacted over time to regulate the institution of slavery. These statutes did indeed outlaw cruel punishment and murder of slaves, and evidence indicates that at least one man was tried for murdering a slave.¹¹ However, these laws contained a basic contradiction: *slavery by its very nature was cruel and based on physical force*.

Civil War & Reconstruction

The Civil War was at first a white man's battle. War raged for well over a year before President Lincoln finally authorized black units. African-Americans joined the military in large numbers, and this infuriated white Southerners who took their revenge at many battlefields where black troops were present. Black and white soldiers fought valiantly in several battles in Arkansas, but, at the Battle of Poison Springs in Ouachita County in 1863, the battlefield became a racial killing field.

During the Battle of Poison Springs the Kansas Colored Volunteers were a part of a Union foraging detachment that was overrun by converging Confederates. A Texas Confederate artilleryman confided in his journal: "The surprise of the enemy was complete—at least 400 darkies were killed." No black prisoners were captured. Of all those who engaged in the homicidal frenzy at Poison Springs, none surpassed Colonel Tandy Walker's Choctaw Confederates for sheer ferocity. One Confederate wrote in his diary: "The havoc among the negroes had been tremendous—over a small portion of the field we saw at least 40 dead bodies lying in all conceivable attitudes, some scalped and nearly all stripped by the bloodthirsty Choctaws." Another Arkansas Confederate soldier commented: "You ought to see Indians fight Negroes—kill and scalp them. Let me tell you. I never expected to see as many dead Negroes again. They were so thick you could walk on them."¹²

May 1865 was a momentous time for Arkansas. The war was over, and the state was at a crossroads in its history. As both Confederate and Union soldiers streamed back home they encountered a variety of problems and challenges, not the least being how to modify race relations in the aftermath of emancipation. In Arkansas, suddenly more than 100,000 human beings were freed—at least in name. Many things changed, but racism was not one of them. And violence against black freedmen remained one of the constants of Arkansas history.

The Civil War forced white Southerners to give up their slaves but did nothing to end the racist attitudes that were the underpinnings of slavery itself. Indeed, once the freedmen received the vote, blacks faced a whole new kind of partisan political violence.

The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 were intended to provide a mechanism by which the former Confederate states could be rehabilitated and then readmitted to the union. The South was forced to accept black voting rights. New state constitutions were drawn up, certain former rebels were disfranchised, and the party of Lincoln, the Republicans, made a belated entry into Southern politics. All of this was to be accomplished under the eye and guidance of Federal troops.¹³

Many if not most former Confederates saw Reconstruction as a form of military occupation, and they refused to accept the Reconstruction government. Many whites viewed blacks as pawns of the Republicans, and within a short time racial violence once again reared its head. Here is how historian Michael B. Dougan described the growing use of violence as an instrument of political action:

“The first counterattack against Republicans came in the fall [of 1868]. ...the Democrats borrowed a tactic from Tennessee: the Ku Klux Klan. What began as a prank was soon discovered to be an acceptable way to intimidate black voters.... More violent means were used when intimidation failed. By one Republican estimate, 385 Republicans [many being black] were killed in two years.”¹⁴

Ultimately Republican governor Powell Clayton declared martial law in several counties, and a heavily-black state militia engaged in a three month campaign of skirmishing against the Klan and other armed whites. A major battle took place in Center Point, in southwest Arkansas, where the whites were defeated—and, according to Governor Clayton, the Klan was broken up. In Crittenden County a black militia unit was attacked by whites, and the militia ultimately had to be rescued after being trapped in the county courthouse in Marion.¹⁵ Clayton’s militia was effective, and the Klan was abandoned by whites. But, as events were to show, destruction of the Klan did not stop race violence.

Uneasy Truce, 1875-1890

Reconstruction died an ignoble death in Arkansas in 1874 when feuding among the ruling Republicans reached the explosive point. In what has become known as the Brooks-Baxter War, Republican factions fielded small armies after one side occupied the state capitol and deposed the sitting governor, Elisha Baxter. Blacks fought on both sides of this Republican civil war, and they probably suffered most of the casualties. President Grant, who never understood the South in the first place and found Arkansas politics unfathomable, ultimately recognized Baxter and the “war” ended. Thus ended Reconstruction.¹⁶

For several years after Reconstruction race relations in Arkansas were in a state of flux. This was the beginning of the era known as “The New South,” a time when new leaders called upon the South to abandon its old ways and join the rapidly developing movement toward industrialization and modernization. This New South white leadership eschewed violence as a means of maintaining white hegemony, or at least they used it as a last resort rather than the first. Succeeding Baxter as governor in 1874 was Augustus H. Garland. An old line Whig before the war, Garland worked to keep the state orderly and to restore fiscal integrity to the state government. On racial matters he was a moderate.

For a time it seemed that perhaps a chance existed to bridge the great racial divide in Arkansas. Black Arkansans continued to strive for economic and political advancement—even after the state was “redeemed” by the Democrats. Heavily black Lee County, for example, elected a black sheriff in 1872—and he continued to get re-elected even after Reconstruction ended. Similarly, Jefferson, Phillips, Pulaski, and many other counties sent black legislators to the General Assembly. In 1883, for example, the entire Jefferson County House delegation was black. Blacks even served in political office as Democrats, though the bulk of black voters stayed loyal to the GOP.

Blacks also jumped onto the economic development bandwagon. Although most of the black population lived in rural areas and worked on farms, a surprising number moved to the developing urban centers. Freedmen such as Green Thompson of Ouachita County moved to Little Rock and went into business. Scott Bond of St. Francis County was a startlingly successful farmer and entrepreneur. However, the epitome of business success was Wiley Jones, a Pine Bluff freedman who started out as a barber but over time became the proprietor of a racetrack, a string of liquor stores, and even the city streetcar system.¹⁷

Their very success caused problems for some New South blacks. Many whites, especially those from the lower economic classes, were fearful of blacks as competitors. Economic insecurity, when mixed with

plain racism, could create severe confrontations. For example, in 1882 whites in Van Buren County tried to force black farmers from the north side of the Cadron River. A prosperous black homesteader by the name of Burrell Lindsey fled his farm and walked all the way to Conway, where he filed a complaint about the threats blacks faced in his area. About five months earlier, on August 30, 1882, a black man found a warning tacked to a tree on his land: "Notice is her by giving That I sertify you, Mr. Nigger, just as shore as you locate your Self her—death is your potion, the Cadron is the ded line, your cind cant live on this side a tall...." In this case Federal authorities filed charges against six white males, all of Van Buren County, and all "of evil minds and dispositions." While the historical record is too inconclusive to determine the outcome of this confrontation, it is clear that black homesteaders were not welcome in certain areas of Arkansas.¹⁸ As time passed, this process of "racial cleansing" spread from rural areas to many towns.

Jim Crow Era, 1890-1964

Modern Southerners assumed for years that segregation had always been in place throughout the region. Thanks to the seminal work of Arkansas-born historian C. Vann Woodward, we now know that the era of "Jim Crow" developed in the early 1890s, long after the Civil War and Reconstruction. The cause was political.

In the years after Reconstruction ended in 1874, the Arkansas Democratic Party reigned supreme. Republicans could count on winning elections only in areas with large black populations, such as Chicot, Jefferson, and Phillips counties, and in certain isolated areas in the Ozark Mountains—such as Searcy and Newton counties. Republicans might mount campaigns, then pick up a few legislative seats, but they were no real threat to the Democratic Party. However, as the last decade of the century approached, the Democratic Party was shaken to its collective boots by the rise of a broad agrarian political movement.

In 1888 the Republican Party, which was hungry for power, joined forces with a rapidly growing farmer's political movement—which ran under the banner of the Union Labor Party. Farmers throughout the nation were in dire economic straits, and economic conditions forced many farmers to abandon the Democratic Party. The Union Labor Party gave its gubernatorial nomination to a one-legged Confederate veteran and state senator named C. M. Norwood. The Democrats nominated a prominent Baptist leader by the name of James P. Eagle, a Lonoke planter. Despite the religious inclinations of its nominee, the Democrats proceeded to steal the election of 1888.

One means used by the Democrats was intimidation of black voters. In Crittenden County, where a "fusion" arrangement had allowed white Democrats and black Republicans to share power, Democrats in 1888 used armed force to occupy the county courthouse, steal the election, and drive black county officials from office. Ballot thievery in Pulaski County involved throwing six ballot boxes into the Arkansas River. When the dust settled, the Democrats held the reins of power—but the close call shattered their confidence.

The Democratic Party knew that its days of unchallenged power were over—unless they could find an issue to bring those white farmers back to the party. At this defining moment, the dominant party chose racism as its unifying theme. Thus began the Era of Jim Crow.

Democrats cobbled together a number of measures to clearly define themselves as the "friend of the white man." A new election law was adopted in 1891 that consolidated both state and local elections under Democratic administration. Two years later a constitutional amendment implemented a poll tax, which had the desired effect of reducing black voter registration. In 1906 the Democratic primary elections were restricted to white voters only. Between 1890 and 1894 voter participation fell by 70,000. After the 1894 elections, no blacks served in the Arkansas legislature until 1973.¹⁹

Making a bad situation even worse, the disfranchisement of black citizens was accompanied by a growing physical violence. Racial cleansing, as discussed earlier, continued and spread to urban areas. Lonoke was the scene of a cleansing in 1898 that resulted in "an exodus of frightened negroes from the

town.... The cause is traceable to the fact that warning notes have been posted on the front gates of negro citizens, threatening them with dire vengeance unless they emigrate within thirty days." In 1906 every black resident was cleansed from Cotter, in Baxter County. The newspaper account noted that "every [black] family was expelled—even the one well-respected one. He was given more time than the others. There were only 10 blacks in the town. Several had been run-out earlier."²⁰

No doubt much of the motivation for the cleansing was economic. When forced to flee quickly, blacks often lost their possessions or sold them cheaply. During the early 1920s, during the oil boom in south Arkansas, many black residents of Ouachita and Union counties were chased off by threats and intimidation. In south Ouachita County signs were posted warning blacks to flee. The local newspaper charged that the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who supposedly wanted jobs held by blacks, were behind the cleansing.²¹ Unless they left the south altogether, fleeing Afro-Arkansans had no real refuge from the violence and intimidation. Indeed, all too often intimidation gave way to the scourge of lynching.

Lynching

Lynching is a particularly brutal example of the tradition of violence in American society, and especially the violent culture of the South. The word comes from the reputation of Judge Charles Lynch, a Virginia jurist during the Revolutionary War. Judge Lynch imposed extraordinary punishments, including hanging, against resident Virginia Tories. The word "lynching" was found in American dictionaries by the 1840s.

After Reconstruction racists claimed lynch law was the only thing preventing black sexual assaults upon white women. However, as early as 1905 it was documented that only one-third of lynched blacks were even accused of rape! To add to the horror, as time passed lynchings became more brutal. Often the lynching showed great planning and organization. The newspaper in Osceola proudly announced in 1897 that a recent lynching had been "methodical." But, sometimes, things did not go as planned, and a lynching could become quite improvisational.²² Such was the tragic case of John Carter, a retarded black man from Little Rock, who was lynched on May 4, 1927. This killing occurred immediately after a lynching had been narrowly averted. Indeed, it seems fair to say the wrathful energy generated for the unfulfilled first lynching was visited upon a man as unlucky as he was mentally limited.

It was early May, and Little Rock was abloom with roses and irises when an unarmed black man attacked a woman and her daughter along a rural road west of Little Rock. Probably unbeknownst to John Carter the last three evenings had seen lynch mobs surrounding Little Rock city hall, their objective being to lynch 15-year-old Lonnie Dixon, accused of the murder of a 12-year-old girl. Each evening the mob melted away in simmering anger when it became clear that the authorities would not turn over their prisoner. Soon the mob turned its wrath on a new victim, John Carter.

Carter was caught shortly after he attacked the two women. Though neither of the women was injured, the mob was not interested in allowing this victim to "get away." Carter was lynched within hours of his capture. Here is how a female Kansas journalist—who visited the city within days of the lynching and interviewed scores of witnesses—described the aftermath of the lynching:

"Into town came the stream of cars and the word spread. It was now close to 7 p.m. At 14th and Ringo the body [John Carter's] was taken out of the Ford and tied, head first, behind a roadster. Headed by a motorcycle, followed by the car dragging Carter's body and behind it a string (eventually 26 blocks long) of other cars, they went hooting, shouting, shooting, and screaming, even tooting horns and blowing whistles, in and out the streets, around the city hall and back on Broadway to 9th Street. At this corner, 9th and Broadway, are located the largest Negro church in Little Rock, a drug store (for many years owned and run by a colored man), a restaurant, and a grocery store.... In the very center of the street, on the car tracks, Carter—in what state after being dragged for so many blocks, you can easily imagine—was deposited, gasoline was thrown over him and a match was applied."²³

As the flames died away, the mob slowly drifted away—but not before a few took “souvenirs” from the scene. When National Guard troops finally arrived on the scene about three hours after the lynching, they discovered a member of the mob directing traffic, using as a baton a badly charred arm that had been broken from Carter’s body. Later a boy was arrested for selling picture postcards of Carter’s burned body.²⁴

Newly elected Governor John E. Martineau, along with local newspaper editors, ministers, and a broad cross section of the populace condemned the lynching of John Carter. Despite public indignation, no one was ever prosecuted for this lynching. A grand jury was impaneled, and several members of the jury including the foreman called for the indictment of Mayor Charles E. Moyer and Sheriff J. M. Haynie; however, the jury could not reach the required three-quarters majority vote for prosecution.

Murder of Henry Lowry

While the killing of John Carter bore all the marks of an “improvisational” lynching, the torture killing of Henry Lowry in 1921 was as systematic as it was depraved. Indeed, the lynching of Lowry was so inhumane that it is difficult to contemplate even eighty years after the fact. It is a story of pain and sadism. And the sadism is made profoundly worse by its group nature. The very horror of this lynching means we cannot allow ourselves to forget. History sometimes cries out for remembrance.

On the surface Henry Lowry seemed to have little to fear from a lynch mob. This black man from Mississippi, along with his wife and six-year-old daughter, came to live near the little town of Nodena, in Mississippi County, where he worked for O. T. Craig, owner of a large plantation. The sharecropper was considered an honest, hardworking man.

The historical record is somewhat unclear as to what brought this black sharecropper into mortal combat with the planter and his family. A writer in *The Nation* magazine stated that Lowry committed the offense of asking for a settlement and release from his contract. Supposedly he was denied a settlement, and the planter considered it impudence for a sharecropper to even request such a thing.²⁵

Whatever the cause, Lowry went to the planter’s big house on two occasions, and on Christmas day during the second confrontation, shots rang out. O. T. Craig lay dead, along with his married daughter. His two sons were injured. Henry Lowry fled the area. The local Memphis newspapers published a series of articles on the murders, all of which were tainted with bias and sometimes included obvious attempts to incite the population. Lowry, meantime, was captured in El Paso, Texas. Governor Thomas C. McRae, a relative liberal on racial matters and a man of high character and reputation, tried to forestall a lynching by ordering the Mississippi County authorities to bring Lowry directly from Texas to Little Rock.

McRae did not anticipate the duplicity of the local authorities. Indeed, the Mississippi County sheriff’s deputies took Lowry *eastward* through New Orleans. In a galling act of deceit and dereliction of duty, the deputies actually delivered their prisoner to the mob during a stop in Mississippi. Here is how *The Nation* writer described developments:

“This mob paraded itself unhindered through three States; going from Arkansas through Tennessee to Mississippi, announcing its purpose boldly to the officers of another State, then waiting leisurely at the railway station and a hotel, ‘overpowering’ the deputies in the face of the public, and parading again with its victim through three States past the great city of Memphis to the spot in Arkansas where the burning was scheduled to take place. Some of the mob even stopped at a principal Memphis hotel, tipped off the news [media] so that the afternoon papers could announce the exact hour when the lynching and burning would take place, and be ‘celebrated’ with a good dinner. ...The spirit of all the news in the papers tended to make heroes out of these lynchers, who had captured a handcuffed Negro from conniving officers. One paper spoke of them as being ‘all men.’”

Meanwhile all law was prostrate, as if it were nonexistent. Everybody seemed to know just when and where the burning was to take place, except the sheriff of that county. The papers say that there were six hundred lynchers and sightseers from all the surrounding communities. The Memphis papers even had a correspondent on the scene to cover the affair for them.... The torturers burned the victim for nearly an hour before he died. They began with his feet, sprinkling dry leaves by the handful on a slow fire."

The victim never begged for mercy. And the mob gave none. In the ultimate act of hatred, the lynchers even brought Lowry's wife and child to witness his torture and death! Later, Lowry's misery ended when gasoline was poured on him. Despite the obvious efforts of the Pine Bluff *Daily Graphic* and Missionary Baptist leader Ben Bogard to justify lynching, many white Arkansans spoke out against the madness of lynching. As time passed many sheriffs and other officials took positive action to prevent lynchings. In Jackson County a pugnacious sheriff with only one hand, Sheriff Richard W. Bandy, faced down a mob saying "Folks, you may kill me and secure the Negro but I will kill four or five of you before you can do it, which I regret to do, so I earnestly request that you desist from this mad undertaking...."²⁶ Even in Mississippi County where Henry Lowry was lynched with the connivance of law enforcement, Sheriff Dwight H. Blackwood and American Legion volunteers later surrounded the jail to prevent lynching of prisoners accused of aiding Lowry's earlier flight. Governors Martineau and McRae periodically took action to prevent lynchings. No lynchings occurred in Arkansas after 1936. Although the bill ultimately failed, in 1949 reform Governor Sidney S. McMath sought passage of strong anti-lynching legislation.²⁷ Later governors, such as Winthrop Rockefeller and Dale Bumpers, did much to bring blacks into the state's police agencies. During the Civil Rights efforts of the 1960s no blacks were murdered, unlike in Mississippi and other Southern states. However, in more recent years black-on-black violence has taken the lives of many Afro-Arkansans. The madness continues—only the color and motivation of the perpetrators have changed.

¹ N. M. Rogers, Johnsonville, Liberia, to Green Rogers, Morrilton, Arkansas, September 20, 1895, reprinted in Kenneth C. Barnes, *Who Killed John Clayton? Political Violence and the Emergence of the New South, 1861-1893*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 147-48. [Emphasis added.]

² Henry Morton Stanley, *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909, p. 149.

³ Orville W. Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Arkansas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1958, pp. 204-206.

⁴ *Pulaski County, Arkansas Circuit Court Record (Civil) Book Z*, p. 286 and *passim*.

⁵ The statement was rendered in 1839; likely the beatings took place a few years earlier, about the time Arkansas became a state.

⁶ Quoted in Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Arkansas*, p. 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, November 29, 1836.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 11, 1862; the event is further discussed in J. M. Moore to "My Dear Son," Searcy, Arkansas, May 10, 186[2], J. M. Moore Papers, Ottenheimer Library Archives, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

¹¹ Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Arkansas*, p. 204.

¹² Gregory J. W. Urwin, "'We Cannot Treat Negroes...as Prisoners of War': Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in Civil War Arkansas." *Civil War History*, XLII (September 1996), pp. 193-210.

¹³ For a good overview of Reconstruction history in Arkansas, see Carl H. Moneyhon, *The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Arkansas: Persistence in the Midst of Ruin*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.

¹⁴ Michael B. Dougan, *Arkansas Odyssey: The Saga of Arkansas from Prehistoric Times to Present*. Little Rock: Rose Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 245-46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246-47.

¹⁶ A brief summary of the Brooks-Baxter War can be found in Earl F. Woodward, "The Brooks and Baxter War in Arkansas, 1872-1874," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. XXX (Winter 1971), pp. 315-336.

¹⁷ The best available biography of Jones is James W. Leslie, "Wiley Jones: A Slave Who Left Mark on Pine Bluff's Business World," *Pine Bluff Commercial*. April 5, 1970.

¹⁸ Robert W. Meriwether, “‘Bulldozing’ on the Cadron (1883),” *Faulkner Facts and Fiddlings*. XLI (Fall/Winter 1999), pp. 67-70.

¹⁹ John William Graves, “Negro Disfranchisement in Arkansas.” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (Autumn 1967), 199-225; Graves, “Jim Crow in Arkansas: A Reconsideration of Urban Race Relations in the Post-Reconstruction South.” *Journal of Southern History*, LV (August 1989), pp. 421-448

²⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, January 29, 1898, August 25, 1906.

²¹ A. R. and R. B. Buckalew, “The Discovery of Oil in South Arkansas, 1920-1924.” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (Autumn 1974), p. 235.

²² For a description of the “methodical” lynching in Osceola, see *Pine Bluff Weekly Press-Eagle*, November 16, 1897. An interesting overview of lynching can be found in David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman, *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, pp. 762-764;

²³ Marcell Haldeman-Julius, “The Story of a Lynching—An Exploration of Southern Psychology,” *Haldeman-Julius Monthly*. VI (August 1927), p. 32. A more recent account of the lynching is Brian Greer, “A Reign of Terror,” *Arkansas Times*. August 4, 2000, pp. 12-19.

²⁴ James R. Eison, “Dead, But She was in a Good Place, a Church,” *Pulaski County Historical Review*. XXX (Summer 1982), p. 37.

²⁵ The best account of the murder of Lowry can be found in William Pickens, “The American Congo—Burning of Henry Lowry,” *The Nation*. CXII (March 23, 1921), pp. 426-28. The Lowry lynching is studied in the larger context of post-World War I race violence in Todd E. Lewis, “Mob Justice in the ‘American Congo’: Judge Lynch in Arkansas During the Decade After World War I,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. LII (Summer 1993), pp. 156-84.

²⁶ Harry Lee Williams, “Uncle Dick’ Bandy, Early Jackson County Sheriff, Holds Off Mob, Wins Wide Acclaim,” undated newspaper article reprinted in *Stream of History*, XXIII (Summer 1986), pp. 18-19.

²⁷ Lewis, “American Congo,” p. 177 and *passim*; Jim Lester, *A Man for Arkansas: Sid McMath and the Southern Reform Tradition*. Little Rock: Rose Pub. Co., 1976, p. 161.