

Visualizing the Red Summer: A collection of primary source material about
the race riots of 1919

<https://visualizingtheredsummer.web.unc.edu>

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Author's note: While the website [Visualizing the Red Summer: A Collection of Primary Source Material About the Race Riots of 1919](https://visualizingtheredsummer.web.unc.edu) is my thesis project, the following paper serves to provide an extended history of the riots, describe the process of creating the online map, archive and timeline, and discuss what can be learned from the data.

The Red Summer of 1919, a series of at least three-dozen riots and lynchings throughout the United States that year, is one of the most significant yet rarely told stories in American History. While lynchings and riots were not new concepts, the sheer magnitude and frequency of the events were what made the Red Summer of 1919 unique. For some it is a key moment in the civil rights movement, when African Americans began fighting back against their attackers and oppressive treatment.¹ The Red Summer (dubbed 'red' for the bloodshed, although there were Communist connotations as well) resulted in the loss of over 100 lives at the hands of angry, almost always white, mobs. The events, both urban and rural, included riots, lynchings, forced expulsions and other clashes between the races.

My goal in creating this thesis project was to locate and copy as many primary source materials on the events of the Red Summer as possible, make them available online, and create a website to visualize the materials in different ways. By collecting a large number of documents related to the riots and making them publicly available through these visualizations, I hoped it might stimulate more comprehensive research on the riots and trends between them. This project was an experiment to see if I could find any materials that helped show a different perspective on the events that summer. While most of what I found was to be expected, seeing the primary documents themselves rather than just reading a recap about them helped illuminate a number of topics that weren't really touched upon in existing scholarship on the Red Summer, including gun control during the riots, attacks on women as motivation and wording used by the press.

¹ Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011) 250-253.

While called the Red Summer, the time frame for the events that summer is generally considered to be April through November of 1919. The events were sparked by a number of factors. Around half of the riots that summer involved soldiers, both black and white, many of who had fought in the recent war. A riot in Charleston, South Carolina started between black locals and drunken white sailors on leave from a nearby naval yard.² In San Francisco that same week in May of 1919, a riot began at the Presidio between black and white soldiers. A Siamese (Thai) soldier had been sleeping in segregated housing with African-Americans. When he was moved into white quarters, a riot broke out over the fact that this captive was getting better living quarters than the black soldiers defending their country. Twenty-two black soldiers were arrested.³ A few of the riots, including those in Bisbee, Arizona, and in Norfolk, Virginia, occurred on the eve of celebrations meant to honor returning soldiers.⁴

Newspaper articles were quick to peg the riots as a northern or southern problem linked to the “Great Migration” of African Americans from the south to cities in the north and Midwest. An August, 1919 editorial from the *Jackson Sun* in Mississippi claims that “the Chicago and Washington clashes were due to the fundamental fact that the Northern people are no more willing to accord social equality to the negro than are the Southern people.”⁵ The same article said that the migration from south to north was brought on by “false promises of social equality.” Some newspapers fueled the fire by spreading

² “Riot Trouble is Followed By a Quiet Sunday,” *Charleston Evening Post*, May 12, 1919.

³ “22 Negroes Jailed in Clash at Presidio,” *San Francisco Call*, May 15, 1919.

⁴ “Five Wounded in Streets of Bisbee as Police and Negroes Exchange Shots”, *Bisbee Daily Review*, July 4, 1919.

⁵ “The Negro North and South,” *Jackson Sun*, Jackson, MS. August 3, 1919.

baseless rumors about white women being accosted by African American men.⁶

In 1919 many newspapers were still politically partisan and, particularly in the South, racist editorial positions influenced local reporting of the riots.

Of the forty-two riots and lynchings I researched, I realized that twenty-one of them appear to have been precipitated by rumors of white women being attacked by black men. In September, a mob in Jacksonville, Florida, went on the hunt for a prisoner in the jail who they believed had assaulted a white girl. When they could not find their intended target, the mob took two other black prisoners, shot them, tied them up to cars and dragged their bodies throughout town.⁷ In Knoxville, Tennessee, Maurice Mays, a black man, was convicted of murdering a white woman, Bertie Lindsey. A mob numbering in the thousands destroyed the courthouse searching for him so they could lynch him, yet he had already been moved to another jail. The frenzy evolved into an all out race riot in the streets. Mays was executed after numerous trials and retrials, despite evidence that supported his acquittal. A 1921 letter to Tennessee Governor A.A. Taylor accused the lead detective in the case of conducting a vendetta against Mays.⁸ While McWhirter alluded to bad blood between the two men, this letter I found verifies the role that bad blood played in the case.⁹ Although the overwhelming number of Red Summer events arising from purported sexual attacks involved black men alleged to have attacked white women, in at least one case an elderly black man was lynched for his role in

⁶ Menard, Orville D. "Tom Dennison, the Omaha Bee, and the 1919 Omaha Race Riot." *Nebraska History* 68.4 (1987): 152-153.

⁷ "Mob Storms Jail and Gets Blacks," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 8, 1919.

⁸ J.E. Troutt to A.A. Taylor. Letter. November 9, 1921. Don Payne Collection [MS.3056], University of Tennessee, Knoxville-Libraries.

⁹ McWhirter 173.

stopping two white male attackers from sexually assaulting two young black girls.¹⁰

While Berry Washington's story has been reported before, this letter I found from Governor Hugh Dorsey shows an early government response unknown before.

Labor tensions were key factors in some riots. In Bogalusa, Louisiana, a riot started after white union workers helped black timber workers organize.¹¹ The threat of blacks unionizing was also a factor in what became known as the Elaine Massacre that fall. Sharecroppers organized a union in protest over low prices paid for their crops and exorbitant prices charged them at the plantation store. This was seen by local white leaders as an attempt to overthrow and kill all of the whites in town.¹² The white landowners, who were also the local government leaders, formed a committee amongst themselves to investigate the events, calling themselves the Committee of Seven. They held sway with politicians at the state level as well.¹³ While no one knows the origins, the event is often called the Elaine Massacre, likely for the number of people killed. While official counts are only verified as nine, rumors of African Americans being killed indiscriminately were rampant, with numbers as high as in the 800s.¹⁴

As lynchings and riots are, by nature, messy and chaotic events, sometimes involving multiple factors, it is often difficult to reliable and impartial information about them. For many of the Red Summer events I am covering there are conflicting reports of

¹⁰ Gov. Hugh Manson Dorsey. Letter. May 26, 1919. Hugh Manson Dorsey papers [RG 001-01-005 DOC 3126], Georgia State Archives.

¹¹ "Troops May Be Sent Bogalusa; Riots Brewing," *Monroe News Star*, November 25, 1919.

¹² "Profiteered For Years on the Negro Share Croppers," *New York Age*, October 25, 1919.

¹³ Committee of Seven to Gov. Charles Brough, November 14, 1920. James Weldon Johnson Collection [MSS 126], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

¹⁴ Grif Stockley, *Blood in their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacres of 1919* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2001), xiv.

everything from the number of deaths to the instigating factors. The fact that the riots took place in dozens of locations across the US further complicates forming a comprehensive understanding of the riots, as original documents are spread out in collections across the US.

Existing Scholarship

There are two major scholarly works on the Red Summer that look at the events as a whole. These are Jan Voogd's *Race Riots and Resistance : the Red Summer of 1919*, and Cameron McWhirter's *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*. Both offer comprehensive histories of the events, although they differ slightly in their focus, scope, and organization.

McWhirter interweaves the stories of the summer with stories of other race riots in years before and after these, and with stories of other events linked to the political climate in a city or in the country as a whole. While he mentions other cities briefly in his book, it focuses on events in Carswell Grove, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Ellisville, Mississippi; Longview, Texas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Elaine, Arkansas; Washington, DC; Chicago, and Omaha. McWhirter talks about motivating factors in many of the events, but does not group them by causal factors or themes. Rather, he sees 1919 as a moment of change in which African-Americans began standing up for their rights. He links this to being one of the starting points in the civil rights movement, a necessary first step.¹⁵

Voogd takes a different approach in her organization of the 26 riots and lynchings

¹⁵ Mc Whirter 245-253.

she discusses. She distinguishes between a riot, which she sees as being aimed at the black community as a whole, and a lynching, which is focused on one or two intended victims.¹⁶ After putting the Red Summer into context with the events around it, like the end of the recent war, she classified each riot or lynching into one of four categories:

1. Riots as Hysterical Reaction to Racial Caste Rupture
2. Riots Arising Out of Labor Conflicts
3. Riots Involving the Military as Agents or Targets
4. Riots Arising Out of Local Politics¹⁷

Like McWhirter, Voogd settles on a list of 26 events, although they disagree about a few. While both authors offer a defined list of events, they acknowledge that other race clashes occurred that summer. Voogd notes there could be as many as 56 riots and lynchings on the list that year.¹⁸ In my research, I have included any event from both of their lists for which I could find evidence in the primary source material I gathered. A comparison, of which riots are included on Voogd and McWhirter's lists, as well as those I included, can be seen in Figure 1.

¹⁶ Jan Voogd. *Race Riots and Resistance : the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 19.

¹⁷ Voogd 28.

¹⁸ Voogd 6.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
2	Date	Place		Voogd	McWhirter	Sieber
3						
4						
5	13-Apr	Millen/Carswell/Jenkins		X	X	X
6	2-May	Warrenton			X	X
7	8-May	Pickens/Jasp N			X	X
8	10-May	Charleston, South Carolina		X	X	X
9	10-May	Philadelphia				X
10	14-May	Vicksburg			X	X
11	15-May	Hawkinsville			X	
12	15-May	Dublin, Georgia			X	X
13	15-May	San Francisco				X
14	21-May	El Dorado Arkansas			X	
15	25-May	Milan (Dodge, Telfai Co.)		X	X	X
16	13-Jun	New London, Connecticut		X	X	X
17	26-Jun	Ellisville, MS			X	X
18	27-Jun	Annapolis, Maryland				X
19	30-Jun	San Francisco			X	X
20	3-Jul	Bisbee, Arizona		X	X	X
21	6-Jul	Dublin, Georgia				X
22	8-Jul	Coatesville, Pennsylvania				X
23	10-Jul	Longview, Texas		X	X	X
24	15-Jul	Port Arthur, Texas		X		X
25	19-Jul	Washington, D.C.		X	X	X
26	20-Jul	NYC		X		
27	21-Jul	Norfolk, Virginia		X	X	X
28	23-Jul	Darby, Pennsylvania				X
29	26-Jul	Hobson City, Alabama				X
30	27-Jul	Chicago, Illinois		X	X	X
31	28-Jul	Newberry, South Carolina				X
32	31-Jul	Syracuse, New York		X		X
33	5-Aug	Lexington, NE		X		X
34	18-Aug	Mulberry, FL		X		X
35	21-Aug	New York City, New York		X		X
36	29-Aug	Ocmulgee, Georgia		X		X
37	30-Aug	Knoxville, Tennessee		X	X	X
38	31-Aug	Bogalusa, LA				X
39	8-Sep	Jacksonville, FL				X
40	16-Sep	NYC		X		X
41	28-Sep	Omaha, Nebraska		X	X	X
42	30-Sep	Montgomery, Alabama			X	X
43	1-Oct	Elaine, Arkansas		X	X	X
44	2-Oct	Baltimore				X
45	4-Oct	Gary, IN		X		
46	6-Oct	Washington, GA				X
47	7-Oct	Monticello, GA				X
48	10-Oct	Hubbard OH		X		X
49	30-Oct	Corbin, KY		X	X	X
50	3-Nov	Macon, Georgia			X	X
51	13-Nov	Wilmington, Delaware		X	X	X
52	22-Nov	Bogalusa, LA		X	X	X

Figure 1-List of riot and lynchings included in different texts.

There are also scholarly accounts of individual riots. Robert Whitaker's book *On the Laps of Gods* focuses on the trials surrounding the Elaine Massacre in Arkansas and the role of African-American lawyer Scipio Jones. He examined the cases of hundreds of black farmers sentenced by all-white juries (some in less than 2 minutes) by looking at court documents, NAACP files, and papers from the Federal Surveillance of African-Americans files. In *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*, William Tuttle examines the events that he says were spurred by "gut level animosities between the races."¹⁹ In the 1960's when writing his book, Tuttle had access to many of the same documents that I viewed this summer, as the Chicago riot was both better documented than other riots and also better studied by the local government afterwards in reports.²⁰ Tuttle's book looked at potential causes that spurred the riots by examining statistics related to migration, housing and labor in the Chicago Commission on Race Relation's *Negro in Chicago*.²¹

There are also a few notable journal articles and dissertations that focus on a single city or riot. Delia Cunningham Mellis' dissertation "The Monsters We Defy: Washington, D.C. in the Red Summer of 1919" and Matthew Lakin's "'A Dark Night': The Knoxville Race Riot of 1919" in the *Journal of East Tennessee History*, were both of use to me in my research. Additionally, there is a journal article by Mark Ellis called "J. Edgar Hoover and the "Red Summer" of 1919" that I have yet to consult, but that may be

¹⁹ Tuttle, William M. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996) vii.

²⁰ Huffman, Peter J. "The race riots biennial report, 1918-1919 and official record of inquests on the victims of the race riots of July and August 1919."

²¹ Chicago Commission on Race Relations. *The Negro in Chicago: a study of race relations and a race riot*. Chicago, Ill., [1923].

a good jumping off point for further research on government surveillance of African Americans during this time period.

Approach and Research Plan

Spring semester 2015 was spent going over scholarly research about the Red Summer, including Voogd and McWhirter's books and articles that focused on specific riots. This helped me get a firm grasp of the events. Along the way I noted collections cited in their bibliographies that might be of future use. Knowing that my end goal was to create a database of sorts, I also tried to pay attention to ways of organizing the data. During this time I also began to digitally clip newspaper articles on Newspapers.com.

I compiled a list of primary sources cited in the scholarship on the riots, as well as libraries, archives, and other institutions that housed them. With the support of an undergraduate research fellowship (SURF), I was able to visit eight towns in which riots occurred and twenty-two collections of primary source materials. Most of the collections I consulted had also been used by other scholars, but I was able to find new sources and collections, in particular, the Douglas County Historical Society in Omaha, Nebraska and the Arkansas History Commission.

I have collected over 700 documents from across the country (thus far) that are directly related to the Red Summer. These include newspaper articles, letters, photographs, telegrams and other historic documents. Below is a list of the collections from which these primary sources were taken.

- Ida B. Wells papers, University of Chicago, Special Collections
- Julius Rosenwald papers, University of Chicago Library

- University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections
- Douglas County (NE) Historical Society
- William Tuttle papers, University of Kansas, Spencer Research Library
- Carl Sandburg papers, University of Illinois at Champagne Urbana
- Don Payne Collection, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
- McClung Collection, Knoxville Public Library
- Tennessee State Library and Archives
- Charles Hillman Brough Collection, Arkansas History Commission
- James Weldon Johnson papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,
Yale University
- Center for Arkansas History and Culture, University of Arkansas Little Rock
- Auburn University Libraries
- University of Georgia – Athens Libraries
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History
- Georgia State Archives
- Georgia State Supreme Court
- South Carolina Historical Society
- Library of Congress
- Archibald Grimke papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard Univ.
- National Archives at College Park, MD
- WEB DuBois papers, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
- NAACP Anti-Lynching files microfilm
- Tuskegee Institute’s News Clipping Files (microfilm)

With limited time and money for the summer trip, I did not spend as much time in each location as I would have liked. Most institutions banned scanners, so I ended up taking photos with my phone. Often I wasn't able to *really* see what I got until later, meaning blurry, crooked or shadowed pictures were sometimes what I ended up with. Along my trip I also reached out to local librarians and historians to see if they were aware of additional sources or collections that may be of interest. Librarians at the Arkansas History Commission directed me to the nearby Center for Arkansas History and Culture, which had testimonies of the 'Elaine Twelve' defendants and the constitution and by-laws for the sharecroppers' union that sparked the Elaine Massacre.²² I took photos of anything and everything for my records, but later ended up cutting any items that were reprints of other articles I had. For now, I am still collecting Associated Press and news wire articles, but hope to switch those out once I can find original articles. I'd rather have an AP account of an event that summer than no account.

Some collections provided material that could be incorporated into my project, such as the James Weldon Johnson papers at Yale University. Others had interesting items in their collections, but were difficult or impossible for me to use in the visualizations of data I was planning. This was the case of the Walter Mosley Scrapbooks at the South Carolina Historical Society. So many articles were pasted on to gigantic pages together, often broke up into numerous columns, which made deciphering which article was which difficult. Other collections proved too massive to truly dig into, such as those at the National Archives, which houses an enormous collection of military records.

²² Testimony of Alf Banks in Arkansas Supreme Court, Dec. 18, 1919.
Constitution and By Laws of the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America, 1919.

The next step was to organize what I had copied into a spreadsheet. This involved entering all of the metadata associated with each source, including publication titles, dates, locations, citations and other relevant data. I also tagged each item as it related to both categories identified by Voogd such as labor and military involvement, as well as with other tags related to trends I saw in the documents such as gun control or the reactions of different local leaders. This data was then cleaned or made uniform.

For this project I used two different programs to create visualizations on my website. For the timeline I used Timeline JS, an open-source tool developed by Knight Labs at Northwestern University that builds visually rich, interactive timelines out of users' Google Sheets. I chose it because it is visually my favorite of the timeline tools, and because it lets users make changes on the Google Sheet to update the website, making the addition of other riot cities quite easy. I chose a timeline visualization to help users get a feel for the timing and chronology of the events, from a trickle of events barely covered in the news to an inundation of riots back-to-back, dominating the news. The timeline includes primary documents from a variety of sources and includes one article, image or letter related to each event. I attempted to choose documents that helped communicate the complexity of the events. While only a few lines of text are attached to each timeline entry, they give users a useful brief background history of the types of events that summer and what some of the trends and motivating factors were.

For the map and the archive I used DH Press to visualize my data. DH Press is an open-source toolkit available as a plug-in for WordPress designed by the Digital Innovation Lab at the University of North Carolina. It allows scholars to visualize their

data and multimedia content in a variety of ways. For example, users can use the background knowledge they acquired in the timeline to start to sort data about the riots in other ways—by locations, size, number of deaths, factors behind the riots and more. The tool’s ability to spatially organize data based on location helps better illuminate trends and clusters. The topic card function was the best tool for me to visualize the items I had collected and to see trends that don’t necessarily fit into singular categories. While the archive is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive, it is representative of the types of documents and perspectives that exist on the topic.

I hope that a wide range of users will visit this site. I think that scholars, high school teachers and students, and grandfathers browsing from home will all find it useful. This site will be of particular benefit to researchers with background knowledge about the events of that summer who are in search of primary sources. Yet I hope that the tools, especially the timeline, will prompt others to interact with some of the more than 700 documents accessible through the site.

What the data reveals

My goal in this project was not to produce a new comprehensive account of the Red Summer riots. It was to gather, organize, and share primary source materials that might shed new light on these events. The digital platform I used, DH Press, allows large amounts of data and a large number of primary sources to be explored and for multiple patterns and connections among them to be discovered. Ironically, perhaps, addressing the technological challenge of curating the data and creating the user interface meant that I was not able to conduct intensive research using the sources I found. However, there

are some preliminary findings I have made that deserve further investigation.

Organizing and visualizing the sources by “common themes” reveals interesting commonalities as well as differences among the riots—which cities shared particular instigating factors (attacks on women, for example), and which called in troops for backup. Mapping the riots in relation to themes revealed regional differences as well. Nearly all of the lynchings that summer happened in the south with the exception of Omaha.²³ Southern riots were more likely to involve mob justice being sought by breaking prisoners out of jail. In general, while there are exceptions, the map also shows that the southern riots and lynchings were in predominantly rural areas, while northern events tended to be in big cities.

Selecting “women as cause” as a theme reveals that roughly half of the cities’ riots and lynchings that summer were instigated by an event related to an alleged attack on white women by African American men. More generally, it would appear that the intersection of race and gender deserves further research. The intensity of some riots was driven by white men’s anger over purported attacks of white women by black men, the rumor of attacks, or interracial social relations. In Vicksburg, Mississippi, a mob broke not-yet-convicted Lloyd Clay out of jail and hung him while they lit a fire underneath him and riddled his body with bullets. No actual assault occurred, although a girl claimed a man had attempted to assault her. She ripped a piece from his shirt as he ran away which they said matched Clay’s shirt.²⁴

²³ New York had a near lynching, and Coatesville is marked as ‘lynching’ yet it refers to an event months earlier there.

²⁴ “Mob Uses Rope, Fire and Bullets to Lynch Negro,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1919.

There is great potential for research that focuses on gun control during the riots. Numerous newspaper accounts mention guns being taken from African American citizens despite the fact that they were under attack. A gun was even taken from an elderly black man, and from African-American soldiers called in to help quell the riots.²⁵ In Longview, Texas and Elaine, Arkansas the police confiscated guns from all African Americans in town. In Knoxville, troops opened fire on a crowd using machine guns.²⁶

‘Out migration’ is another interesting topic for potential research. A number of articles and other documents highlight both forced removal of African Americans from towns during this time as well as stories of people fleeing for their safety, or to return home south. I found mention of people moving out of the north and returning home, both by choice as well as by force, in numerous locations across the country. These examples of forced or coerced relocation of African American families in 1919—in some cases “back” to the south—suggest the need for further research on this phenomenon.

As I went through the documents, I made note of the many lists of dead and injured persons I encountered, and I created a filter so that the lists could easily be located and compared. Many of these lists also include the location and means of death. These lists deserve further examination and organization in a database. For example, there is enough material on the Chicago riot alone to warrant a dedicated database and map. Being able to view and sort attacks throughout Chicago might also help determine

²⁵ “102 Year Old Colored Man With Revolver Disarmed”, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 31, 1919.
“Negro Specials Lose Their Guns”, Unknown date, 1919.

²⁶ “Guns Are Used By Soldiers to Quell Mob,” *Knoxville Times Journal*, August 31, 1919.

whether the attacks were clustered in certain locations, or whether one race fared better than the other. These “dead and injured” lists could also be aggregated to produce a database of all the victims of riot violence-- something that has never been done to my knowledge. These lists also offer details that were otherwise not covered in traditional news articles. In a list of injured and dead from the Omaha riots, for example, Fred Christianson is listed as being in serious condition after being thrown from the fourth floor of the courthouse during the jailbreak and lynching of Will Brown.²⁷ This helps bring to life the chaos at the scene of the courthouse that day.

Although most of the documents in my project are newspaper articles, the inclusion of some material from manuscript and correspondence collections points to the value of these documents in understanding the impact of the riots. The NAACP papers in my project, for example, suggest that it would be important to look more closely at how civil rights leaders were communicating with each other, how they were describing the events, what kind of plan of action, if any, was decided upon, and how the public received African-Americans banding together to collectively fight back. These documents could also be viewed in relation to government documents (not yet part of this collection) that detail surveillance of these same organizations for seditious behavior.

I was surprised that there was little effort to reach out to politicians or local law enforcement, yet there were many letters between NAACP leaders that stressed the need to for more accurate reporting of the stories and a better working relationship with the press. Leaders saw the danger in sensationalized, often rumor driven accounts of the riots that only fueled the fire. In a letter from Charles Edward Russell to John R. Shillady,

²⁷ “List of Injured,” Omaha World-Herald, September 30, 1919.

executive secretary of the NAACP, Russell writes, “I was in Washington last week and learned that the beginning of the riot there was very different from the account of it sent out by the press agencies.”²⁸ NAACP papers reveal that much attention was spent to verify riots and lynchings that were not covered in the mainstream press, in an effort to make sure that history was being recorded in a more comprehensive way.

The newspaper clippings contained in the collection is by no means complete or comprehensive, but they would form the basis for further analysis regarding the way in which the riots, participants, causes, and consequences are represented. For example, I noticed that newspaper articles and editorials frequently invoke war and military language to describe the riots—something perhaps not surprising given the fact that the First World War had just ended months earlier and was still fresh on people’s minds. Papers used specific words to invoke images of war when talking about the race riots, with headlines like “The Great Battle of Longview,” and “5,000 Fight Night Battle; Fusillades All Over City; Fire Adds to Terrorism.”²⁹

The timing of this project and its subject matter caused me on many occasions to think about the relationship between the Red Summer events of 1919 and current events in 2015. The militarization of police and the brutality exhibited against African Americans by the people meant to protect them is evident in both time periods. I was struck by similarities in the representation of riots nearly a century apart. Many times I thought about the continuing history of violence against African Americans—from police

²⁸ Charles Edward Russell to John R. Shillady, August 9, 1919. James Weldon Johnson Collection [MSS 126], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

²⁹ “The Great Battle of Longview,” *Dallas Express*, July 9, 1919.
“5,000 Fight Night Battle; Fusillades All Over City; Fire Adds to Terrorism,” *New York American*, July 30, 1919.

brutality, to the mass killings at the church in Charleston by a white supremacist, and the killing of Black Lives Matter protestors in Minneapolis. Systematic oppression, from poor educational opportunities to the over-jailing of African Americans, are also still at play in modern times, just as they were nearly 100 years ago in the Red Summer. Even though the specifics have changed, many of the driving factors behind the riots are the same, including labor and housing issues, a biased legal system, and the perceived threats of anyone non-white. As one reads the newspapers or watches the news these days and reads of the hate between races and religions, it is easy to think that not much has changed. Riots and lynching have been happening across the country, in every decade since the Red Summer. While the civil rights movement helped to make great strides in the treatment of African Americans and change the minds of many white Americans, that doesn't mean that racial injustice and violence towards blacks is not still a pressing issue. Even if progress has been made, the fight is far from over, and protestors today can learn a great deal from history.

Expansion

Librarians at UNC 's Wilson Library have expressed interest in making this website available to students here as a research tool. While I have created a sample student activities page, I hope to meet with scholars in the Education department here at UNC to develop the student section to better fit with teachers' learning plans and goals that correspond to different grade levels.

There are numerous ways that I would like to make tiny tweaks and changes to this site and this database in the very near future. The first is to include an image or two for each pin on the map. The second change I would like to make is to have the images

from the archive topic card view open up in larger boxes for easier readability. With over 700 entries, this may take some time. Lastly, I would like to re-look at each newspaper that I acquired articles from and start recording which ones are white papers and which ones are African American papers. I'd like to eventually be able to sort the articles in this way to see how identical events were portrayed in the two presses. This could also be done with progressive papers and liberal papers.

There are numerous ways in which this data could be expanded upon. I have barely cracked the Tuskegee and NAACP microfilm files, and haven't gotten anything from west coast sources yet. I would like to explore what sources exist for the Bisbee and San Francisco riots locally. I also recently acquired access to quite a few of the Georgia and Arkansas court cases that I can add to the archive. I would also like to return to the NARA for further research into court records of the military men involved in the Charleston riot. This project can easily be expanded to include those additional items and potentially hundreds more.

I also think that it would be interesting to visualize the Red Summer as a worldwide phenomenon, which hasn't really been done before. Jan Voogd spends a few pages talking about riots in the UK, but in my research I have found numerous other race riots across not only the UK but in Australia, Canada, parts of Africa and elsewhere in 1919. Although I haven't read much yet about riots overseas, I know that there is a book by a scholar named Jacqueline Jenkinson called *Black 1919: riots, resistance and racism in imperial Britain*. With additional time and funding I could create a map visualization that includes data about these other riots. The events seem to be more urban overseas, and

many of the cities have newspapers digitized. One could then visualize and compare say, if riots in the US were deadlier than in the UK, or if police forces in Omaha handled the situation differently than in Australia.

Ideally, the end goal for an expansion of this project, which would take a team of people, would be to expand the map visualization to look at all race riots across US history. This would allow for even greater comparisons to be made across space and time and examine how riots and their causes have changed throughout the years. From Tulsa to Watts, if academics had a database of facts related to hundreds of race riots and racially motivated events throughout modern US history, then perhaps that information could actually be used to make a difference. This would require assembling a team of researchers that was each responsible for either a location or a time period, and would require a longer time period to collect the data.

As I add more items to the archive and more events to the map, I hope that each item helps give a more comprehensive understanding of these events and how people wrote about and captured them. I believe that with a little tweaking and adding, this site can serve as inspiration for jumping off points into research not yet delved into about the Red Summer. This important time period of history is complex and layered, and the variety of primary sources now available on this topic I hope will only add to the layered telling of the history of the Red Summer race riot.

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