

FORGETTING STRENGTH: COFFEYVILLE, THE
BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE, AND
THE VANISHING OF MEMORY

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by
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University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2013

ABSTRACT

When a white lynch mob of 3,000 stormed the city jail in Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1927, incited by rumors that three “negroes” had raped two white high school girls, the incident ended very differently from so many others in the Jim Crow era. No one was lynched. The mob was driven back, first by black deputies at the jail, then by armed African Americans who prevented their neighborhood from being torched. The National Guard occupied the city for five days.

Black community leaders, certain that the girls’ assailants were white, posted a reward for information, and pressured the city to hire an independent investigator. The County Prosecutor, two months later, surprised everyone by charging a white car salesman for rape, and naming one of the girls as an accomplice. But an all-white, all-male jury acquitted both. Then the city began a concerted effort to erase memory. All prosecutions for rioting, and all damage suits against the city were dismissed. By year-end, the local newspapers omitted all mention of the riot, occupation, and trial in their wrap-ups of the year’s events.

This thesis uses the lens of the Coffeyville riot to argue that African American activism in Kansas flourished because of the state’s unique history. While never an

egalitarian racial paradise (“the myth of Kansas”), Kansas did not fully implement a Jim Crow racial caste system. Blacks could vote in large numbers. The Kansas Republican Party valued black support. The Ku Klux Klan was expelled from the state by 1927. More significantly, Kansas funded “Separate but Equal” schools that were truly equal. They educated a generation of local black activists who contested school segregation, police brutality, and white lynch mobs. Yet memory of Kansas’s accomplishments in the Black Freedom Struggle (black Civil War regiments, the Coffeyville resistance, and Wichita lunch counter sit-ins) have largely vanished. If not for *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, there would be no memory at all.

“Ignore that man behind the curtain,” the *The Wizard of Oz* admonished Dorothy at the end of the film. America’s historians have, for the most part, heeded that advice, at least about Kansas’s role in the Black Freedom Struggle.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “Coffeyville, the Black Freedom Struggle, and the Vanishing of Memory,” presented by Geoffrey Jay Newman, candidate for the Master’s of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When two crying and hysterical high school girls banged on a neighbor's door at 1 a.m. in March of 1927, they plunged a small city in southern Kansas into a week of race riots, attempted lynching, and occupation by the National Guard. The girls, both white, said they had been raped "by three negroes" in the dark, empty, house next door. Police arrested three suspects. That evening, a mob of 3,000 white townspeople looted a sporting goods store, seized rifles and ammunition, and stormed the jail and city hall, breaking every window.¹

We know how stories like this often ended in the 1920s -- with a lynching, and the black part of town set ablaze – violent but not uncommon events in the Jim Crow era. But this time things were different. Deputies, some black, some white, held back the white mob. As part of the mob surged toward the African American neighborhood, a black deputy, Robert Liggins, pulled his gun, ordered them to halt, and "stopped 60

¹ Estimates of the mob ranged from 1500-3000, depending on the report. "Street Battle Leads to Martial Law Here." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, March 18, 1927,1; "City Under Martial Law," (*Coffeyville*) *Morning News*, March 19, 1927, 1-2;"Whites Clash with Negroes at Coffeyville," *Topeka Capital*, March 19, 1927,1; "City Hall Windows Targets of Coffeyville Mob," *Independence (KS) Daily Reporter*, March 21, 1927, 1; "Quiet Prevails in Coffeyville After Warfare," *Topeka Journal*, March 19, 1927,1-2; "Coffeyville Is Under Military Rule," *Independence (KS) Daily Reporter*, March 19, 1927, 1,6; "Troop Patrol Brings Order In Coffeyville," *Kansas City Post*, March 19, 1927; "Martial Law In Riot," *Kansas City Times*, March 19, 1927, 1; "Race Rioting In Coffeyville; 2 Hurt," *Kansas City Journal*, March 19, 1927, 1-2; "Bullets Quell Kansas Riot; 10 Shot," *Chicago Defender*, March 26, 1927, 1; "Two Negroes Under Arrest and Charged with Shooting Men," *Independence (KS) Daily Reporter*, March 21, 1927, 1,5.

men,” according to the *Kansas City Call*.² Liggins was just one man armed with only a hot revolver and a cold stare. A group of black men, some World War I veterans armed with shotguns and revolvers, countered the white mob. Gunfire erupted. Three men were wounded.³ But the white mob was successfully driven off. The governor ordered the National Guard into Coffeyville, for four days of occupation and martial law.

What did the Coffeyville events mean for African Americans? Was there something different about Kansas, even in this segregated era? What did Coffeyville signify about the agency of the accusers—young “flappers” shaped by the era’s gender revolution in manners and morals?

Coffeyville served as a clear victory for the agency of African Americans. That victory was based on a local tradition of black activism, which, while contested, had been nurtured by the unique history of Kansas. After police released the three black suspects for lack of evidence, black church leaders posted a \$2,500 reward, and pressured the city to hire a private detective to head the investigation to identify the assailants. Eventually the county prosecutor would indict two people, both white, for the rapes. This was a victory, a rare occurrence for blacks during an era called “the nadir of American race

² Liggins was a “merchant policeman”, a private security guard hired by the city to supplement its police force. “The Man Who Stopped 60,” (photo of Robert Liggins), also “Where a Few Negroes Made a Mob Change its Mind” (map of downtown Coffeyville), and “Soot-Smeared Bathtub and Gowns Cast Doubt on Negro Guilt in Coffeyville Crime. Town Criticizes Officials, Saying Firm Hand Could Have Nipped Rioting,” *Kansas City Call* 8, No. 47 (3/25/27): 1.

³ This is the official story, based on police reports used in the subsequent trial. Other reports, such as those in the black newspaper, *Chicago Defender*, said that 10 were shot. “Bullets Quell Kansas Riot; 10 Shot,” *Chicago Defender*, March 26, 1927, 1;

relations;”⁴ but it was also a defeat for young women. During the trial, the attorneys manipulated community opinion by employing gender tropes that ricocheted between images of demure good girls, and ”incorrigible” bad girls – innocents and sirens.⁵

Using newspapers to uncover the gender and racial landscape, I examined four local dailies in Coffeyville and the nearby county seat of Independence, Kansas, and regional newspapers in Kansas City and Topeka. These give us the official versions of events of the era. In contrast, the *Chicago Defender* and *Kansas City Call* provided a distinctly African American point of view. *The Call* even published a map, showing how the white mob had been turned back. Augmenting this, I used documents from the courts, and internal correspondence from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an organization that played a critical role behind the scenes in influencing the outcome.⁶

Little is known about the events in Coffeyville. Mark Robert Schneider gave the incident only eight paragraphs in his 500-page synthesis, *We Return Fighting: The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age*, published in 2002. Schneider argued that increased activism by black Americans in the 1920s was connected to the military training that

⁴ This phrase was first popularized by historian Rayford W. Logan, of Howard University, in his 1954 book, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901*. Other historians, such as James Loewen and Eric Foner, extended the period into the 1920s due to the extension of legalized racial segregation in that era.

⁵ In various forms, these tropes are still employed by attorneys in rape trials today.

⁶ Accounts between white and black newspapers differed considerably. For example: the *Kansas City Post* headlined a photo with “Coffeyville Citizens, Incensed, Group for Action.” *Kansas City Post* 22, No. 6, March 19, 1927, 2. White newspapers rarely identified African Americans by name, unless they were named in police documents. *The Call*, by contrast, not only identified people by name, but actually interviewed African Americans.

many had received in World War I.⁷ While Schneider's work focused on race, Susan Cahn, who studied the intersection of race and teen sexuality in *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age*, viewed young women as "critical actors," who, while acting individually, "undermined the twin pillars of the Jim Crow South – racial purity and white male dominance."⁹

Events in Coffeyville contradict the historiographical canon that primarily emphasized setbacks for African Americans in the 1920s. Coffeyville is a crucial – if forgotten – event in the Black Freedom Struggle. Some historians, such as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, have challenged the conventional wisdom that brackets a modern Civil Rights Movement between *Brown v. Board* (1954) or the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955) and the late 1960s. She traced black activism to roots in the union and leftist movements of the mid-1930s, and argued on behalf of a concept she termed "The Long Civil Rights Movement." Glenda Gilmore argued that the roots for the 1950s and 1960s

⁷Mark Robert Schneider, *We Return Fighting: The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age*. (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2002).

⁹ The South, as a region, had the strictest racial caste system. It also had strong notions, shared by the rest of America, about patriarchy. A challenge to the white male dominance in the South had greater risk of undermining the whole system, of which Jim Crow was an essential part. See Susan K. Cahn, *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), especially pp. 1-42, on how modernity challenged Southern norms.

Cahn argues adolescents in the American South of 1920s adopted the same youth culture as the nation, but these were acted out in a region that had stronger restrictions on gender and racial roles. The protection of white womanhood took on special meaning in the region between 1865 and 1940, where any allegation of its violation had historically served as a trigger for racial violence and retribution. The trial of the Scottsboro boys is one example of how this played out. The race riot in Tulsa is another.

activism could be found in the leftist and communist movements of the 1930s.¹⁰ Robin D.G. Kelly documented incidents of black working-class agency in contesting segregation and unfair treatment on Birmingham's buses during World War II.¹¹

Coffeyville demands our attention because its activists won a victory against racism almost 25 years before the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Furthermore, the victory had its roots in a little-known court case that desegregated junior high schools statewide in Kansas 30 years before *Brown*.¹² Yet these victories never created a national wave of change. Kansas, with the notable exception of the immediate pre-Civil War period, has remained remote from the centers of national discourse on race. Furthermore, what racial milestones were achieved were soon forgotten locally. I discovered that few in Coffeyville's black community recall the race riot of 1927. No one can remember family stories about how their grandparents' generation successfully fought a lynching,

¹⁰ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233-1263, but especially 1240-1248, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3660172> (accessed November 1, 2013); Also Leslie Brown. *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008, especially chapters 8-9; Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008, especially chapters 1-3.; Also Priscilla, A.B. Chitty Murolo, *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*, (New York: The New Press, 2001), 212-213.

¹¹ Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 55-75.

¹² *Thurman-Watts v. Board of Education of Coffeyville (1924)* was argued by Elisha Scott Sr., who also happens to be the father of Charles Scott Sr. and John Scott, attorneys of record in the original *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* case.

and turned back a white mob.¹³ These events, as well as other Kansas cases, should cause us to re-evaluate the continuing resistance to the racial caste system, even at the height of the Jim Crow Era.¹⁴

When I first came across the story of the Coffeyville events, while reading a scratchy microfilm of 84-year-old copies of the *Kansas City Call*, I thought, “I have heard this story before.” The plot, with few variations is: A town’s white men (male protectors), aggrieved at a crime or insult against a young, woman (read: pretty, white, innocent and vulnerable) leads to a manhunt with roadblocks, bloodhounds, and the jailing of African American suspects. The formula is still a staple of today’s 24- by-7 cable news shows, because -- in the words of one of my journalism school professors from Northwestern -- “It attracts eyeballs.”¹⁵ The gendered plot itself is timeless, and has

¹³ I had visited a major African American church congregation in Coffeyville in the summer of 2011. No one knew about the events of 1927. This was even true for one of the great grand nieces of Dennis Hunigan, the grocer who had been so active in the Coffeyville Branch of the NAACP, and whose letters show a constant trail of activism between Coffeyville and the NAACP National Office. She had been born well after Hunigan’s death in the mid-1950s, yet there were stories passed down through family folklore.

¹⁴ There were several small local victories against segregation in Kansas in the early 20th century, of which the 1924 Coffeyville case is probably the most far-reaching. See “The Segregation of Topeka's Public School System, 1879-1951” by National Park Service historian Thom Rosenblum, on the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site website, at <http://www.nps.gov/brvb/historyculture/topekasegregation.htm>. Rosenblum is writing a book on Elisha Scott and desegregation in Kansas. There is also a list of 12 “Court Cases in Prelude to Brown, 1849-1949” at the website of the Brown Foundation, although their research is unsigned and should be viewed with a more skeptical eye: <http://brownvboard.org/content/court-cases-prelude-brown-1849-1949>. However, *Thurman-Watts* (1924) and *Webb v. School District 90* of Merriam, KS (1949) are generally viewed as historical predecessors to *Brown*.

¹⁵ That was advice given in a news writing class for newspapers, in 1975. In the broadcast classes, the motto was “If it bleeds, it leads.” Part of the curriculum for the

existed at least since Helen was abducted by the wicked Trojans in Homer's *Odyssey*. All cultures have their own mythology, and they add their own unique cultural symbols to it. The American variation is one that depicts the fear of the rapacious black rapist who must be checked by white, vigilante justice.¹⁶ A common gendered subplot blames the female victim for her actions, waywardness, or sexuality. Given these tropes, I was not surprised to learn that as darkness fell the next day, the Coffeyville mob of whites attacked the jail, to lynch the suspects. I thought: How many times has this ugly scene been played out in America -- especially in the 1920s, when the Ku Klux Klan was at its peak, holding Washington rallies, marching down Pennsylvania Avenue to the US Capitol?

In the American South, it was often assumed – nearly always in this era – that the men of color were rapists and that the women were innocent. Yet the drama played out differently in Kansas.

education of professional journalists emphasizes that it is a competitive business: You are not “creating content” for yourself but to attract readership and viewership. Today, with web-based journalism, that also means “page clicks.”

¹⁶ Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See also Diane Miller Sommerville, “The Rape Myth in the Old South Reconsidered,” *The Journal of Southern History* 61, no. 3 (August 1995): 481-518; also Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Why Coffeyville Stands Out

Whites Clash with Negroes at Coffeyville; Youths of high school age lead march on Negro section of city, which is quickly halted when Negroes open fire.

-- Topeka Capital, March 19, 1927

There were many unexpected twists in this rape-leads-to-race-riot story. First, no one was lynched. Deputies, both white and black, drove the mob from the jail. Second, the mob was driven back from its attack on black businesses, as African Americans successfully fought back. Newspaper accounts speak of “negroes” armed with pistols and shotguns, pouring out of the pool hall, once its owner, the aptly named Napoleon Bonaparte (“Poly”) Anderson, fired shots into the white mob. This display of agency is something that many popular histories tend to overlook, with their focus on African American victimhood. Men who had served in World War I enacted this drama. They had been trained in using guns. Third, there was an *intimacy* to the gunfight: This gunfire across the street was between whites and blacks *who knew each other* and their reputations, because there is really no anonymity in a small city of 16,000.¹⁷ This was not anonymous violence, like one would encounter in big-city riots. Fourth, the police released the black suspects, citing lack of evidence. That may have been common, but the more notorious practice was to ignore the evidence and charge them anyway, as can be seen a few years later with the more-famous Scottsboro Boys. Fifth, the black

¹⁷ While lynching was almost always an intimate activity, where the perpetrators and the victim knew each other, that is more unusual with gunfire on this scale.

community cooperated in ways that amazed the majority white sentiment, by raising money for a reward. Sixth, the city hired a private detective from the Burns Detective Agency to head the city police department's own investigation of the rapes.¹⁸ There was talk that white boys had been involved, sons of prominent citizens, even the star player of the high school football team. Seventh, after a two-month investigation, the prosecutor issued indictments. But no "negroes" were charged. Instead, County Prosecutor C.W. Mitchell charged a Studebaker salesman with rape. The accused was married and the father of three at the time of the rape. By the time of the trial, two months later, he was the father of four, with his wife and infant seated in the front-row, next to the jury.

However, what was most shocking to the common racial and gender tropes of the era, was that the prosecutor indicted one of the girls as an accomplice. The prosecutor said that Julia Mooney, 19, the older girl, had set up her trusting, younger friend, Margaret Akers, 17, to be raped by three strangers in a dark house on St. Patrick's Day. There were rumors that the girls had thrown a party *with alcohol*. People asked: What were two white girls doing, alone and unsupervised, in a dark house on a school night, violating Prohibition?

While researching the Coffeyville events, I was plagued by several questions: What was different about this time and place? What made Kansas different? What made Coffeyville different? Why did this little boomtown that made bricks and glass become the place where suddenly, the 1920s took on a contested racial landscape more in line

¹⁸ Minutes of the Coffeyville City Council, March 23, 1927. *Coffeyville, City of, Council Minutes, 1916-1928, Vol. M, Roll #5*. Kansas State Archives. The Council actually created and funded the new office of city detective.

with the late 1960s: Racial agency, sexual agency, and activism – accompanied by wall-to-wall media coverage of a hot court room drama?

What took place in Coffeyville was not only the reaction to previous local events, but indicative of Kansas's contested racial history. Furthermore, Tulsa, Oklahoma, was the biggest city nearby. Coffeyville's black community knew about the burning of the all-black Greenwood section of Tulsa, only six years before. Some of Coffeyville's black residents had family members there, so that descriptions of Tulsa's violence had the additional weight, coming from the lips of family members, not just newspapers or radio.

Kansas, like Atlanta, had institutions that educated a generation of activist leaders. Just as Dr. Martin Luther King and his associates were shaped by Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spellman College, black attorneys like Elisha Scott, Roy Van Dyne, and Charles Scott were prepared for leadership by high-quality primary schools in Topeka, as well as Washburn Law School.¹⁹ In addition, Kansas had a tradition of radical movements, labor activism, socialism, and free thought. While it was the free soil, anti-slavery activism of the 1850s that has captured historians' imaginations, these radical movements proliferated in Kansas well into the 1940s.²⁰ Certainly, this combination of socialist, grange, and free-thought activism differed from the proto-civil

¹⁹ Black Topeka attorney James H. Guy was also involved, and he mentored Elisha Scott, but while he spent his career in Kansas, he grew up in Ohio.

²⁰ Kansas had a tradition of activism, both left and right. On the left, *The Appeal to Reason* weekly had been among the largest-circulation newspapers in the country, with a peak circulation of over a half-million. It had been published in Girard, KS, during the two decades before World War I. For right-wing populist activism, see Harold Piehler, "Henry Vincent: Kansas Populist and Radical-Reform Journalist," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, 2, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 14-25; also Clifford R., Jr Hope, "Strident Voices in Kansas Between the Wars," *Kansas History*, 2, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 54-64.

rights activism of Coffeyville's black residents. Kansas's historical tradition of radicalism made the state a fertile ground for black activism as well.

This heritage of activism is largely forgotten today. The Coffeyville Riot and the agency shown by its black citizens has joined several events in the dustbin of history. Just as the history of the successful Wichita lunch-counter sit-ins, which preceded those in Greensboro, North Carolina, memory of Coffeyville's resistance has also vanished. Just as the knowledge of an African-American Civil War regiment – the First Kansas Colored fought and won a victory over Confederate irregulars the day before the more-famous Massachusetts 54th Infantry went into battle, the Coffeyville story has disappeared. It was not even passed down in family stories to the grandchildren of the participants.²¹

One can argue that such stories have been blotted out of American memory by the overwhelming imagery of Hollywood. For example, through the cleansing magic of cinema, Hollywood transformed L. Frank Baum's biting and satiric *Oz* stories – a takedown of William Jennings Bryan and the extravagant rhetoric of the free-silver movement -- into a fable for children. It is as if the creators of popular culture that fill our memory have obeyed Baum's the line at the end of *The Wizard of Oz* -- "Ignore that man behind that curtain!" – and have done the same with Kansas's activism.

This short social and cultural history is structured so that Chapter 2 details events of the riot and subsequent trial. What did these events mean to race relations in a

²¹ The First Kansas Colored had fought in the Battle of Honey Springs, Oklahoma.

Midwestern city with a small population? We can be sure that many of those shooting at each other across Union Street knew each other, had gone to school with each other, and had dealt with each other's businesses for years. The violence was intimate. In addition, there were aspects of rebellious Prohibition-Era youth, gender, and class that affected the outcome. Chapter 3 examines the "engines for activism" among African Americans in Kansas – the school system that afforded "separate but equal" education that was *close* to being equal, how the "myth of Kansas" made it a destination for a previous generation of African Americans. Furthermore, Kansas was by no means racially tolerant. Historian Brent Campney has shown how the state had suffered numerous lynchings in the late Nineteenth century. However, African Americans could and did vote. They were an important constituency for the state Republican Party. Some African Americans held local leadership positions in the Republican Party of Montgomery County, where Coffeyville is located.

These factors helped mold the 1920s generation of activists who acted with agency to influence events in Coffeyville. Chapter 4 describes what the City of Coffeyville chooses to remember today – how it celebrates itself as "The City that Stopped the Dalton Gang." It will give some reasons why the events of 1927 have been all but forgotten, and what can be done to remedy it. Finally, in the Appendix, I will parse the clues, after 85 years, and try to identify who the real rapists were.

CHAPTER 2

THE GIRLS AND THE TRIAL

Coffeyville in 1927 was a segregated city. Whites lived west of downtown, which was centered at Seventh and Union streets. Blacks lived east, not only east of Union Street, but in an old racial phrase that applies, “Across the tracks.” Two parallel railroad lines were the real residential dividing lines. The Kansas and Texas Railroad Line, called “The Katy” and the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe tracks separated the races in this city of 16,198 (1930). The 1,824 African Americans comprised about 12 percent of the population, the second-highest percentage among the state’s cities.¹ The segregation was not complete, however, by the post-World War II geographic standard that separates races by miles.

Both white and black-owned retail businesses were often located next to each other on the same block of Union, with significant black-owned businesses on the east side. Everyone knew which businesses, like the Commercial Hotel on the west side of Union, were *for whites* and which, like Napoleon Anderson’s pool hall (“The Almeda Club”) and Curtis Smith’s barber shop, both at 609 Union Street, were *for blacks*. This racial barrier’s business frontiers were permeable: African-Americans frequently crossed them to reach necessities, such as the trolley stop for the 48-person, electric Interurban streetcar, operated by the Union Traction Company, which ran between Coffeyville, Independence, and Cherryvale. Whites were less likely to travel into the black part of

¹ Kansas City, Kansas, had the highest percentage at 16 percent, and in raw numbers it dwarfed the African American populations of every other city in Kansas. *Fifteenth US Census of Population and Housing*, (vol. 3, part I: Kansas cities). Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1930), National Archives and Records Administration, 1930: 839.

town, with its “negro cottages” and unpaved streets. They might only go as far as the passenger terminal waiting room for the Missouri-Texas and Kansas Railroad -- known as the MKT (the “Katy”) -- on the west side of the tracks.²

Segregation was incomplete, even in schools. There were attempts to impose it, to conform with the norm of Jim Crow. Both black and white students attended Washington High School, as well as the newer Junior High. Under Kansas law, Coffeyville did not have the “privilege” accorded to the three biggest cities “Cities of the First Class” -- Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City (KS) – to set up separate schools.³ There were forms of social segregation, however. In the class photos in the yearbooks for the classes of the 1920s, the black students were shown on their own separate page. Some years, that page was at the end; in other years, it was in the middle. Black students might be listed in white clubs, like band and orchestra, but they were not in any group photos, except for the black student organization, “The Dunbar Club,” named for poet and writer Paul Lawrence Dunbar.⁴

² The phrase “negro cottages” was often employed by the *Coffeyville Daily Journal* to refer to residences east of Union Street. For a description of the housing segregation in Coffeyville, see *the Fifteenth Census of the United States*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1930), National Archives and Records Administration, 1930, T626 (2667 microfilm rolls).

³ State law in Kansas guaranteed all citizens the right to education. Kansas had divided cities into four classes, each with different levels of home rule. As a city grew in population, it obtained more rights under state law. Only the biggest cities – those of the first class – were granted the right to have segregated high schools. Coffeyville, with its 12,000 inhabitants in 1927 was considered a city of the second class.

⁴ Yearbooks for Coffeyville High School, 1922-1931.

The 1931 yearbook’s description of the Dunbar Club hints at a certain level of black racial pride in this Jim Crow era : “Members of the Dunbar Club represent a progressive and energetic group of high school students who are seeking higher ideals in life and who

But the shops across from the rear of City Hall, along Union Street, were integrated *by ownership*. Some were owned by whites; some by African Americans. Curtis Smith operated the barbershop, but Napoleon Anderson owned it. Smith was a 33-year-old African American, a corporal in the World War, who had moved up from being a porter to being a barber. Smith's barbershop was right across Union Street from the northeast side – the back -- of the old City Hall, facing the one-story firehouse on the corner. From the sidewalk in front of the barbershop and pool hall, Anderson had a clear view of the wide expanse of Union and Seventh streets and could see the front of City Hall, one block away and across the street.

Rumors of Rape Incite a Lynch Mob

The Negroes told the girls they knew they were alone in the home and that was the reason they broke in, according to the story told by the girls.

-- "Two Girls Brutally Assaulted this Morning,"
Coffeyville Morning News, March 18, 1927

are ready and willing to cooperate with the rest of the school in forwarding all worthy causes and event The reading and encouraging of good literature is the aim of every loyal member... They have studied such authors as Abbott, DeBois [SIC], and of course, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, after whom the club is named."

The white students on the yearbook staff probably edited the description written by Dunbar Club members. They would not have known that Robert Sengstacke Abbott was the founder and crusading editor of the *Chicago Defender*, the biggest circulation black newspaper in the country. They misspelled the named of W.E.B. Du Bois, a founder of the NAACP and the leading black public intellectual of the first half of the 20th century.

What the residents of Coffeyville *knew* about the rapes on that day after the St. Patrick's Day parties was only a subset of what they would learn later. Race and rumor influenced the details. What the white residents *knew* differed dramatically from what Coffeyville's black residents suspected.

Two white high school girls, Julia Mooney, 19, and Margaret Akers, 17, had run screaming to the house next door at 1:30 on the morning of March 18. They pounded on the door, waking up the middle-aged couple. The girls told the next-door neighbor, E.M. Hodshire, that "negroes" had raped them in the dark, empty Mooney house next door. Mrs. Hodshire tried to calm the girls while E.M. phoned the police.

The violation of a white female was perhaps the greatest race-based taboo in post-Civil War America. White women – and white girls in particular – symbolized the purity of Anglo-Saxon civilization, especially in the Jim Crow South, but throughout America as well. The violation of a white woman was perhaps the number one trigger for lynching. Race, and the myth of the black beast rapist, only exacerbated the emotions. The rapes in Coffeyville challenged both the gender and racial hierarchies in the same instant.

Just before dawn, while the girls remained at the neighbor's house, police setup roadblocks on the routes out of town. They stopped cars and detained African American males over a wide area, stretching across several Kansas counties. Suspects were brought to the Hodshire's house for the girls to identify. In one case, a black suspect was detained because he was found in possession of a woman's compact mirror.

Police sent for bloodhounds from Kansas City. The two dogs arrived at 4 p.m. in the afternoon of the 18th, and they traced a route from the backdoor of Julia Mooney's

house on West 5th Street, down the alley between 8th and 9th streets, into the downtown. The crowd of whites gathered and became frenzied, as the dogs darted through the door of Curtis Smith's barbershop on Union Street. Then the bloodhounds took off, crossing the Katy railroad tracks, heading deep into the segregated African American section of town, east of the tracks. A long caravan of about 200 whites in cars followed the police and bloodhounds. At 500 East 5th Street, they passed Hunigan's Grocery, where the owner, Dennis M. Hunigan must have watched the threatening procession from his front window. Hunigan had been active in the local branch of the NAACP, which was chartered in 1922, shortly after the Greenwood section of Tulsa had been burned down by whites.⁵ Tulsa, at two hours away by car, was the nearest big city. Hunigan's Grocery ("Staple and Fancy Groceries, Everything Clean and Fresh" said his letterhead) had the one phone in the neighborhood, and the number was 2066. As treasurer of the Coffeyville Local Branch, Dennis Hunigan was in frequent contact with the NAACP national office. Both membership dues and news flowed from him to New York.⁶

⁵ The NAACP required 50 dues-paying members to establish a local branch. At the same time, Coffeyville had one of the only seven branches in Kansas, of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. UNIA required only seven named members to charter a local division. (<http://www.blackpast.org/perspectives/garveyism-looks-toward-pacific-unia-and-black-workers-american-west>, Robin Dearmon Muhammad, Ohio University); also see "Location of UNIA Divisions and Chapters (Appendix X) of Robert A. Hill (ed.), *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Vol VII*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 989.

⁶ "Two Girls Assaulted. Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers Victims of Three Negro Men, Last Night. Hounds Take Trail." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, March 18, 1927, 1-2.; Elisha J. Scott, (Topeka attorney), Letter from Scott to NAACP National Office, March 19, 1927, DOI:US Library of Congress, "NAACP Administrative File, SUG File -- Lynching, Coffeyville, Kansas, Mar-May, 1927.; *Ibid.*, Letter from Dennis Hunigan to James Weldon Johnson, c/o NAACP National Office, June 20, 1927

The police bloodhounds traced a scent that ran from the Mooney home to the rear door of “a negro cottage,” as one the white newspaper put it.⁷ In Garvin Hardin’s home, at 604 East 5th Street, the police found barber Curtis Smith. Joining Smith inside were two men who lived there. The police took the 30-year-old Smith, and Vanges Harden, 20, and his father, Garvin Harden, 45 -- into custody for questioning. (His name is variously reported in different newspaper accounts as Garvin and Carvin. I have chosen the more common spelling. The *Coffeyville Daily News* also misidentified Garvin as Vanges’s brother. Vanges is listed as an honor student in the 1925 high school yearbook.) The line of an estimated 200 whites in cars followed the police and their suspects back to City Hall, where the second-floor jail was located. They joined the crowd that had already gathered in front of the building. One could tell the part of the old red brick building that had the jail: It had bars over the windows.

As night fell, the two Hardens were released after they convinced police that they had no connection with the crime. Police escorted them out of the building, and through the hostile crowd of whites. By now the crowd was becoming an angry lynch mob of hundreds that was growing by the hour. “Feeling [SIC] against the Negroes, at a fever heat all day, was fanned into a flame by the use of tear gas bombs on the crowd by police,” said the reporter for *Topeka Capital*. Meanwhile, Mayor Elmer Joyce, Coffeyville Chief of Police C.P. Cathers, and Montgomery County Sheriff W.D.

⁷ One explanation for the scent trail, later offered at trial, was that Curtis Smith had delivered a case of liquor to the Mooney house, either before or after the girls came back from the movie theater. That coincided with the detail of Julia’s mysterious phone call, on the way home.

In reviewing three months of court records in 1927, I have found that the liquor-law violations were the single most common offense.

McCrabb used the City Hall telephones to request help from Topeka for the worsening situation.⁸

About 8 p.m. a rumor caught fire in the crowd that “one of the assaulted girls had just died.” Armed with guns and other weapons, the white mob, now 2000-3000 strong, “commenced to stone any colored person on the streets.” Gus Hughes, a porter, was attacked and severely beaten, along with another black man, George Follette, who escaped and ran toward the safety of Anderson’s pool hall, 200 feet away, on the east side of Union Street. Gus Hughes dragged himself toward the black section of town east of the railroad tracks, before dropping unconscious in the passenger terminal of the Missouri Pacific Station, on the west side. As the mob charged the pool hall, Napoleon Anderson, the 60-year-old owner, stepped outside and emptied his revolver toward the mob. (There are conflicting reports of whether he shot into or above the crowd.) The mob halted, then ran back.⁹

Meanwhile, on the front side of City Hall, three blocks away, “A hundred men left the throng and surged toward the west door, with cries of ‘Give us the nigger,’ ‘Don’t pay any attention to the law,’ and similar outcries, and started up the winding stairway to the jail.” Eight officers with drawn revolvers, night clubs and tear gas bombs” met them

⁸ "Whites Clash with Negroes at Coffeyville. Youths of High School Age Lead March on Negro Section of City, Which Is Quickly Halted When Negroes Open Fire." *Topeka Journal*, March 19, 1927. Clip page #203, *Montgomery County Clippings, Vol 3, 1882-1932*. Kansas State Historical Society (unpublished clip file). Original volume photocopied 1999; "City Under Martial Law. Windows Broken Out of City Hall By Mob." [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News*, March 18, 1927, 1; "Street Battle Leads to Martial Rule Here. Curtis Smith, Accused Negro, Was Spirited Out of Town to Unknown Destination for Safe Keeping." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, March 18, 1927, 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, "Street Battle"; *Ibid.*, Elisha Scott Letter to NAACP, March 19, 1927.

at the second landing. Twice they attempted to storm the stairway but were driven back by tear gas.¹⁰

We do not know the exact sequence of events, given the conflicting accounts – whether the mob attacked the building first or whether the police shot the tear gas first. But led “by youths between the ages of 19 and 21 years” – newspapers of the era always reported white youths as “youths” and black youths as “negroes” – about 30 members of the mob attacked the municipal building with stones, breaking every window. We know that several members of the mob dropped a ladder across the gap between the building next door and City Hall, got on the roof, and tried to force an entrance into the upper-level windows. The windows were defended by deputies, firemen, and even a jury foreman who was now trapped in the building. Other white teens attempted to climb the water spout to the top of the building, where they were beaten back “by a policeman’s billy.” The tear gas was so intense at the front of City Hall that “the 20-odd persons (inside) looked like a group of chief mourners at a funeral,” wrote the reporter for *The Morning News*.

At some point early in the riot, a fire truck with hoses was brought from the corner firehouse to city hall. Firefighters stretched hoses from hydrants on the curb into City Hall. But the mob cut into the hoses, to prevent them from being turned on them. An alarm sounded, and the fire truck then sped away. Three delegations from the mob were eventually allowed to search the jail for Curtis Smith. But police had hidden him on the roof, in the cupola over the building, while they spread the rumor “that the Negro had

¹⁰*Ibid*, “Street Battle”, 2.

been secreted under the hose of the fire truck and spirited out of town,” said the *Daily Capital*.

Unable to force their way up the narrow stairway leading to the jail, part of the mob broke away and charged across the street to attack the black-owned shops and “the Negro section” – as the Topeka newspaper put it. For those on both sides, memories of the burning of Tulsa must have been fresh. “With all the windows broken, the mob started for the Negro section shouting threats to burn homes and the shooting started.”¹¹ However, they “were met with a ready response when two Negro sentries were encountered” and a fistfight followed. “The two Negroes were beaten severely,” said the newspaper.¹²

This account differs when read in the African American newspapers of the day. According to the *Kansas City Call*, one man held the white mob back – an African American policeman named Robert W. Liggins -- who according to *The Call* “pulled his gun and stopped 60.” Liggins worked for the city as a “merchant policeman” – not part of the official police force but hired to patrol the black neighborhood. The incident was corroborated by the account in *The Morning News*, which had interviewed him afterward. Had his white assailant taken another step, “he would have shot him dead.” For a black man, even a uniformed policeman, to threaten a white man was a gross violation of Jim Crow. It was unheard of in the American South in this era, and it was not really acceptable in the Kansas of the 1920s. Liggins, after all, had been hired to patrol the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, “Whites Clash with Negroes at Coffeyville.

¹² The *Topeka Capital* conflated the stories of black merchant policeman Robert Liggins with a Hughes and Follette, black civilians who beaten by the white mob. Liggins was unharmed.

black community. But Liggins was motivated to stop this mob. Like Hunigan, he had been a charter member of Coffeyville's NAACP Local Branch in 1922.¹³

Behind Liggins about 20-25 African American men had been watching the growing chaos from the windows of The Alameda Club, Napoleon Anderson's pool hall, restaurant and barber shop. The distance from the back corner of the old city hall to the pool hall was no more than 350 feet, across an unusually wide avenue that ran parallel to the railroad tracks. They could hear the shouts and make out individual conversations.

Anderson had been another charter member of the local branch of the NAACP – having joined while he was a laborer, five years earlier. He grabbed his rifle and a handgun, and emptied the 32-caliber revolver's magazine toward the white crowd. Other African Americans poured out of the pool hall and took up positions in the ditch on the corner, reminiscent of the trench warfare of World War I. Gunfire and smoke filled the air as the white mob, beginning with the men who led it, and then the women and children who followed, turned around and fled back across the street for cover, “with bullets whizzing thru the air.” Several whites later reported they shielded themselves in doorways during the gunfight. Other whites began firing from the second-floor of the Commercial Hotel across the street from the pool hall. As the shooting increased, the crowd dispersed temporarily.

Sometime that evening, *The Morning News* received a telegram from State Senator Dallas W. Knapp and Kansas State Representative Harold McGugin, in Topeka: “Citizens of Coffeyville: For the good of Coffeyville, and the state of Kansas, do nothing

¹³ *Ibid.*, “City Under Martial Law”; Membership roster and charter, Coffeyville Branch, NAACP, granted in 1922. Records in the NAACP Papers, US Library of Congress.

rash. Respect your color and the dignity of the law. (Signed) Dallas W. Knapp, Harold McGugin.” The advice fell on deaf ears.

By 10:50 p.m., the city officially went under martial law, when orders from the Adjunct General’s officer were read by Capt. G. W. Noel, of Company B, to the mob. Nonetheless, as word of the clash spread, more people descended on City Hall. “Angered citizens” – the wording of the era indicates whites – “stormed the hardware stores, breaking in the doors and depleting the stocks of guns and ammunition.” The *Morning News* reported that four white boys, aged 18 to 23, broke the front windows of the white-owned Long Bell Hardware, and looted the store of rifles and ammunition. A combined force of local and state officers on the scene intercepted them. By midnight, 32 local guardsmen surrounded city hall – the first to arrive was the local American Legion, mustered from Coffeyville and adjoining towns in Montgomery County. These were men who had had combat experience in the trenches in France nine years before. A heavy rain began shortly afterward, which also helped disperse the mob. By 3 a.m., Kansas National Guard troops A and G of the 117th Cavalry arrived by motorcar from Iola and Yates Center, to join Troop B.¹⁴

The mainstream opinion in Coffeyville, echoed by *The Morning News*, held that the perpetrators of the riot had been youths from across the state line, in Lenapah, OK, where Julia Mooney was from, and where her older brother had been a high school football hero. But the facts do not support that. For example, of the four youths arrested for looting the hardware store of guns and ammunition, three were from Coffeyville; only one was identified as being from Oklahoma.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, “City Under Martial Law”; “Two Girls Assaulted”.

“The city hall presents the appearance of having gone through a siege of gunfire, as a result of the damage to the windows and the interior cluttered with debris thrown by the rioters,” wrote the reporter for the *Coffeyville Daily News*.

Growing Up Female in Jazz Age Kansas

The Montgomery County that Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers were raised in was a bustling and thriving center of economic activity. In 1910, Montgomery County was the fifth most populous in Kansas – just behind the county that held the mining town of Pittsburg, and trailing the constant trio of counties with the state’s biggest cities, Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka.

Coffeyville was the biggest city in Montgomery County. It hummed with economic activity. It had glassmaking factories, and five separate factories that produced the bricks that paved the Midwest’s roads in the era before concrete. The reporter sent there from the *Kansas City Call* described it as: “Coffeyville! Beehive of industry in the Southern part of the Great Sunflower State of Kansas.”¹⁵

At the time of the girls’ births (1909 and 1910), Napoleon Anderson, the owner of the pool hall and barber shop, had been a day laborer -- the most common occupation listed in the US Census for Coffeyville’s black men.¹⁶ In the riot, he would play a key role in leading others in repelling the white mob. By the time she entered high school,

¹⁵ “At the turn of the century, there were five brick companies with a capacity of over 765,000 bricks a day.” Trotter brick exhibit, Dalton Defenders Museum, Coffeyville Historical Society. Also, Carl Beckwith, "Soot-Smeared Bathtub and Gowns Cast Doubt on Negro Guilt in Coffeyville Crime." *Kansas City Call*, March 25, 1927.

¹⁶ Details of the personal histories of each of these families are pieced together from the decennial US Census for 1910, 1920, and 1930. In addition, Kansas conducted its own state census in 1915 and 1925.

Margaret's father, was an electrician, a skilled worker at R & P Miles Company. Julia Mooney's father, Charley, held an upper-middle class job with the United States government. He was the postmaster of nearby Nowata, OK, 24 miles south, and across the state line. Unlike most of the residents of Coffeyville, the Mooney family was well travelled. They had moved to the area from Washington, DC, by way of a short residence in Ohio, where Julia's older brother was born. Clearly, in an era when the census was filled with occupations like "laborer" and "electrician," they were people of means. This was particularly true in the small hamlet of Lenapah, Oklahoma, where Julia had grown up, and where her brother had been a football star. Lenapah never had more than 434 residents at its peak, in 1920. Lenapah was a majority white town surrounded by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.¹⁷

Both Margaret and Julia were younger children, in families with much older fathers. Margaret was the second youngest of four, and her father was 56 years old at the time of the rape and riot. Julia Mooney, one of two children, had a father who was 64 years old when the events transpired. Her brother, Robert, seven years older, had already secured a job as a salesman. His football stardom made him a local hero. Even today, there were photos of this 1920s high school football star at the local history museum. Julia, on the other hand, was the wild and troublesome younger daughter, so unlike her older brother. This is supported by the caption beneath her photo in the 1927 Coffeyville High School yearbook: "Lonely? NO!"¹⁸

¹⁷ Cheatam, "Lenapah".

¹⁸ 1910 and 1920 US Census; Lenapah History Museum; *The Purple 'C'* (Yearbook of Coffeyville High School), 1926, (Coffeyville, KS: 1926).

Margaret's talent was music. She played the cello in the school orchestra, and she was known throughout the Coffeyville high school. In December, 1926, in her junior year, Margaret was cast in the junior class play, "Come Out of the Kitchen," Alice Duer Miller's 1914 comedy of manners, in which she played "Amanda," the social-climbing main character's "black mammy" (the phrasing is from the 1927 school yearbook's junior class activities section). The yearbook photo of the play shows her in blackface with an "Aunt Jemima" style headscarf -- an ironic touch, given the pivotal racial role she would play three months later in instigating the race riot.¹⁹

We do not know a lot about Julia, or her motivations. Unlike Margaret, she dressed like a flapper in her 1927 high school yearbook picture. We know that the only activity where she and Margaret appeared to overlap was Glee Club, where Julia was listed as the accompanist. In the 1927 yearbook, there is a comment in her activities paragraph: "She makes the ivory speak jazzy tunes!" Interestingly, she did not attend the high school her brother attended, in Lenapah. Instead, she went to high school in Coffeyville, the big city for the area.

According newspaper reports of testimony, the house that Julia lived in -- the crime scene -- had been occupied the year before by Julia's family until a few months before. They moved to Lenapah, Oklahoma, close to the town where her father was US postmaster. The house was then rented to Ira Kennedy and his family, but Julia Mooney occupied a spare room. About two weeks before the rape, the Kennedys moved out, and Julia continued to live in the house alone. That a young woman should occupy a house alone, in the 1920s, was considered unusual. Certainly, it raised questions about her

¹⁹ *The Purple C*, (The Coffeyville High School Yearbooks), 1926 and 1927.

morals in that era, as well as for her safety. Perhaps that is why she invited Margaret to sleep over, as she had other female friends on previous nights.

We know, further, from the newspaper accounts, that Julia never attended her graduation ceremony: Charged as an accomplice in the rapes, she had been jailed on the day of her graduation. Her bond was set at \$20,000 – an enormous sum in 1927. We also know that after the rape trial, she returned home to Lenapah to live with her family. After the 1930 Census, she disappears from public record.

Margaret, however, graduated in 1928 and later moved to various small cities in Kansas, as a public school teacher of music. We do not know the effect of the rape trial on her, the one person that everyone agreed was the victim. However, she never married. She died at the age of 75, and is buried in a cemetery about 30 miles northwest of Coffeyville.

White Female Purity Comes Under Attack

The events that led to the rape are a canvas on which we can see the limits of liberation for young girls during the height of the Flapper Era, in the late 1920s. Reviewing the events of the night of March 17, Margaret's mother testified that Julia had come to her house early in the evening. She asked Margaret to spend the night with her in the empty Mooney house. Margaret's mother tried and failed to get Julia to spend the night at the Akers' home instead, under the eyes of Margaret's watchful parents. However, Mrs. Akers finally consented, even though she feared for the safety of two high school girls, "in a house alone at night."²⁰

Leaving the Akers house, Margaret and Julia went to a movie, and remained there until 11:20 p.m. As they left the theater, Julia stopped to make a mysterious phone call. She did not tell Margaret why, or to whom. Then they went to a drug store "for an Eskimo pie" but, seeing it was closed, went to the American Confectionary shop nearby. On the way home, Margaret noticed that Julia insisted on walking slowly, complaining that she was tired. Then she said something that shocked Margaret: "I would willingly ride with anyone who might ask me." In the 1920s, that kind of comment from a middle-class girl was shocking. Many people would interpret it as a marker of loose morals, not modernity. After two years of companionship, this remark led Margaret to believe "that perhaps Julia was not the kind of girl she should associate with." Nevertheless, she continued with Julia to the front door of the empty Mooney house.

²⁰ The details that follow are all from "Jury Trial Next Phase of Assault." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 20, 1927, 1-3.

Then, oddly, after unlocking the door, Julia did not lead the way into the house. Instead, she pushed Margaret ahead, and let her open the door. Margaret stopped, held back, and let Julia open the door. Inside, Margaret immediately noticed “a peculiar odor,” like tar and sweat. Julia dismissed her concerns: “It was probably the cat,” she said.²¹

As Julia opened the closet to pull out the bed sheets and blankets, Margaret noticed a curtain move. She was frightened, she said. Julia again dismissed her concerns, saying it was probably the cat. The house was hot, and Julia opened the window on the single-story house. After dressing for bed, each girl went to sleep.

Margaret said she woke up with her assailant’s fingers gripping her throat, and his knees pushing down on her chest. She tried to scream but the man said he would kill her if she did. She said she heard Julia scream as two other men attacked her. The screams immediately were stifled.

As she told the court, later, Margaret thought her assailant seemed familiar. She pushed against his head, and grasped his hair, which she said was long and straight. This description, given at the pretrial hearing, would change under cross-examination questioning by Julia’s attorney during the actual trial, to curly and kinky.

²¹ Ibid.

Race and Gender Tropes Influence the Criminal Trial

Margaret also testified that after a week at her own home with Julia, she became afraid...that [Julia] or her assailants would come to her home and kill her.

-- *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 20, 1927

Margaret was suggestible during repeated questioning, and she radically changed her answers over the months of examination by different detectives, attorneys, and law enforcement officials. A common factor that was cited in objections in the trial was the charge of leading questioning; that is, framing a set of questions to induce the witness to give a specific answer. Margaret was easily manipulated by opposing parties into doing so. At one point, she insisted that her assailant was white; in another moment, she said he was black. Later, she would insist that her assailant had been Ira Kennedy. After repeated changes in her story, her testimony was so impugned that she had been impeached as a witness. The all-white, all-male jury did not believe her testimony.

Under questioning during the pretrial hearing, Margaret said that from her attacker's build, she recognized him as Ira Kennedy. Meanwhile, she said she heard Julia being dragged from the bedroom to the living room by her two assailants. Shortly later, Julia came back into the bedroom, accompanied by the two men.

"What shall I do, give in?" Margaret asked. "You can't do anything else," Julia replied, in a disgusted tone of voice.²²

²² *Ibid.*

Margaret asked her attacker for a minute's time, "to prepare for the ordeal," as the *Coffeyville Daily Journal* put it. "She fell down on her knees beside the bed and lifted up her voice in prayer. 'O God!' she pleaded, 'How I need you now; Let this cup pass from me if it be thy will!'" The reporter for the newspaper added, perhaps ruefully: "And even as she prayed, her assailant leered down upon her in mockery."²³

When the assault was completed, the three men left the house through the kitchen window. The first two, one heavy built, the other tall and slender, went through the window first, while the short, stocky man held the two girls captive. Then he fled too. As the heavy built man looked back, Margaret said she recognized Ira Kennedy's face in the moonlit light. Margaret and Julia knew Kennedy: A friend of Julia's, he and his family of four had rented the now-empty house for several months, after Julia's family had moved to Oklahoma. He knew the layout of the house. What is more, he often gave Julia and Margaret a ride to their high school. There was a more-than-passing familiarity between Kennedy and Julia.

While never explained in detail during the trial, the writer for the African American newspaper, the *Kansas City Call*, noted that soot-stained nightshirts were found discarded in the bathroom. If white attackers had wanted to camouflage their identities from the girls, a soot-covered blackface was a possible method. Another explanation, offered by *The Call*, was that the rapes had resulted from a liquor-infused teen party that got out of hand.²⁴

²³ "Arrest Two in Money Akers Assault." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, May 30, 1927, 1-2.

²⁴ "Soot-Smeared Bathtub and Gowns Cast Doubt on Negro Guilt in Coffeyville Crime." *Kansas City Call* 8, No. 47 (3/25/27): 1, 4B.

The girls restated their original story under questioning by patrolman O.W. Childers and Capt. Grover Jackson, who was in charge that night. They told him three negroes” had assaulted them. The police sent for a physician. In later questioning, Margaret said that both Julia and her mother had counseled her “to stick with the negro story.”²⁵ She did not. She remembered that her rapist had had straight hair, and seemed familiar. But she feared that she would be slain if she changed her story.²⁶

After a week, the two girls moved from the neighbor’s to Margaret’s house, one block west on 9th Street. There, under the eye of her parents, Margaret’s full fear of Julia came out. Little by little, she concluded that Julia was in league with her assailants. She borrowed a revolver from her father, and slept with it under her pillow. She arranged to spend nights with her relatives, away from Julia, and with Julia in the dark about her whereabouts.²⁷

When she returned, after a week, Margaret told Julia that she had come to think that Kennedy had been her assailant. Julia turned pale, Margaret later told the court, became angry and screamed at her: “Mr. Kennedy had nothing to do with it. They were negroes.”²⁸

This change in Margaret’s story had occurred early in May, in the run-up to the trial. She first told special investigator R. W. Davis, the private detective hired by the city, on May 8 – five weeks after the assault – that she was positive that her attacker had

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ "Jury Trial Next Phase of Assault", *Coffeyville Daily News* (6/20/27): 1,3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Kennedy knew Julia from occupying the house with her, and with his family. He knew Margaret, testimony showed, because he had often given the two girls a ride to school.

been Kennedy. Later she told her mother, then Coffeyville City Attorney Walter Keith. Finally, on May 25th, she told the local prosecutor, County Attorney C.W. Mitchell. Under pressure from all sides, he issued the arrest warrant for Kennedy three days later.

Julia's reputation soured as Margaret's story was leaked by the prosecutors. While two months earlier, Julia was portrayed as a victim, she was now described by the newspapers as "the female Judas, the vampire woman who upset the records" and who had setup her trusting, young friend.²⁹ The trope of female cunning and treachery was eagerly embellished by reporters, based on leaks from the local prosecutor and the detective in charge of the city's criminal investigation. One reporter described poor Margaret's situation that night as "A virgin moth lured into a fine-spun web by a painted dragon fly, and stung into submission more awful than death, the state will seek to prove." The metaphors of the painted dragonfly – the loose woman and the virgin – encapsulate the Madonna / whore binary that is so prevalent in patriarchies around the world. Michel Foucault might have argued that the "painted dragon fly" was the sum of all fears of men in many lands. How convenient that this trope could be used by a male reporter in southern Kansas to persuade his readership. How convenient that the jury, the prosecution, and the newspaper editors were all at least a generation older than the girls - and carried that earlier generation's Victorian and Edwardian attitudes toward the moral dangers posed by the temptations of sex and loose women. Foucault would have regarded them as the mini-enforcers who imposed society's discipline over their female

²⁹ "Investigating New Assault Clue Here." *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 23, 1927, 1-2.

bodies. In any case, this was certainly the reaction of the unenlightened in the enlightened Roaring Twenties.³⁰

We can trace the drift of public opinion because of the changes in tone of the news coverage. The newspapers praised the detective – at least at first. “Coffeyville was still searching for negroes when Detective Davis took charge of the investigation, four days after the assault was perpetrated,” wrote the reporter for the *Coffeyville Daily Journal*. “While rumors floated and the tongues of gossips wagged, he went about his work quietly and aggressively. There was little tangible evidence, but he worked on and on, piecing the material together with expert hands.”³¹

The detective suspected that African Americans were not the assailants of the girls. According to the *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, that was because the three of them worked together in committing the assault -- “an unheard-of thing [for negroes]” according to the white reporter. The assailants would have been incapable of working together, according to this popular myth. Furthermore, “they remained in the house so long,” he wrote, which arguably undercuts the common trope of the black beast rapist, who would have fled immediately.

Yet there was probably another reason for Detective Davis’s skepticism. Working behind the scenes – certainly not in a public role visible to the white community – was African American attorney Elisha J. Scott, the civil rights lion from Topeka. The

³⁰ “Arrest Two in Mooney-Akers Assault.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, May 30, 1927, 1-2. For historiographical background on Foucault, see Ann J. Cahill, “Foucault, Rape, and the Construction of the Female Body,” *Hypatia* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 43-63; also Foucault, “Right of Death and Power Over Life” from his *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, from Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984): 258-272.

³¹ *Ibid*, “Arrest Two.”

black community, through the local branch of the NAACP, had retained him. He served as an invisible liaison between prosecutor's office, the black community, and the national office of the NAACP. There is some evidence that he had been given, secretly and informally, the temporary authority of an assistant attorney general to enable his questioning of suspects.³² In any case, he made regular and detailed reports on the progress of the investigation to the NAACP National Office in New York, .

Elisha J. Scott was a public figure in Topeka. He was well known enough to receive letters simply addressed as "Elisha Scott, Colored Attorney, Topeka, Kansas. African Americans in Kansas, while segregated in many schools and most public accommodations, did not experience the depth of terror that was present in the racial caste system of the 1920s Jim Crow South. Among the differences: They could vote, without life-threatening repercussions, and they were considered an important constituency in the Republican coalition that governed Kansas. However, it would be a mistake to assume that white Republicans in 1920s Kansas believed in post-Civil Rights Movement notions of racial equality. While they abided by the informal and ever-tightening restrictions of Jim Crow and segregation, they were conscious of the power of the black vote. Kansas was not Mississippi.³³

³² Scott says he was granted this authority, in his reports to the NAACP National Office. However, it is not corroborated in the newspaper accounts, of either the local papers or the Kansas City Call.

³³ One example: a handwritten letter from a Coffeyville NAACP officer to the NAACP national office, written on the letterhead of the Montgomery County Republican Central Committee. Dr. A.R. Ferebee's 1/19/25 letter expressed concern that the Klan was "canvassing" the Kansas Legislature" in an "effort to Jim Crow and segregate the colored people throughout the state." Kansas Republican Senator and NAACP national board member Arthur Capper advised that the Klan was not a serious threat. (NAACP Papers).

Somewhere between March 17 and May 8, Margaret changed her story, from blaming “negroes” to blaming Ira Kennedy. What we know, based on Elisha Scott’s correspondence to James Weldon Johnson in the NAACP National Office, is that this case had a media spotlight on it. “The Attorney General is going to appear in person and prosecute the Kennedy and Mooney case,” he wrote in his report to Johnson. The State will show, he said, “that Acres [SIC] and [the] Mooney girl were supposed to have been assaulted by Negroes, but were in fact assaulted by white men...” he wrote.

The Coffeyville city attorney, Walter C. Keith, swore out the warrant for Mooney and Kennedy. That would be a fateful decision with horrendous consequences, because normal protocol called for the Montgomery County Attorney C.W. Mitchell, to issue arrest warrants. Keith and Mitchell were rivals. Mitchell, already a loose cannon, was now inflamed against his own prosecution team.³⁴

A Corrupt Prosecutor Torpedoes His Own Case

Mitchell’s Tactics Hard to Understand. Tries Hard to Breakdown Case for the State. Virtually ‘Kidnaps’ State’s Chief Witness and Tries to Get Her to Retract... Special Prosecutor in Mooney-Kennedy Case Angered at Strange Action.

-- Headlines from the [Coffeyville] Morning News,
July 10, 1927³⁵

³⁴ This was made worse because the Kansas Attorney General, William A. Smith, chose to work closely with Keith and not Mitchell.

³⁵ Mitchell’s Tactics Hard to Understand. Tries Hard to Breakdown Case for the State. Virtually ‘Kidnaps’ State’s Chief Witness and Tries to Get Her to Retract. Clash of

The assault case was weakened, Elisha Scott wrote, because the theory that whites were responsible had originated between City Attorney Walter C. Keith and his detective. County Attorney Mitchell disagreed, and now had a grudge, as the Kansas attorney general named Keith as a special prosecutor. “The County Attorney [is] wholly refusing to swear to said complaint,” wrote Scott. “And after the complaint was filed, and the parties arrested, the County Attorney has done all he could to spoil the case.”

While Scott cited the County Attorney’s attempts to get Margaret to make contradictory statements, he only made cursory mention of the most outrageous examples of his conduct. Mitchell even badgered his own witness on the stand, attempting to impeach her. When that failed, he engaged in what is arguably, witness tampering.

“Some of the statements by County Attorney Mitchell, as published in the *Independence Reporter* on the assault case prosecution, sounds (SIC) more like the statements were coming from defense attorneys than the prosecutor,” charged the editors for the (Coffeyville) *Morning News*. “Statements made by him on the case eclipses [SIC] anything ever heard in a criminal case. No defense attorney could give out a better interview than the one published in the Independence newspaper, as coming from the county attorney,” they wrote.³⁶

Authority. Special Prosecutor in Mooney-Kennedy Case Angered at Strange Action. A Ruse Resorted To. Miss Akers Thru Ruse, Gets Word to Mayor Lang of Kidnapping Escapade.” (Coffeyville) *Morning News* 9, No. 135 (7/10/27):1,6.

³⁶ “And That Reminds Us – Some of the Statements from County Attorney Mitchell” (unsigned editorial). [Coffeyville] *Morning News* 9, No. 104 (6/3/27):6.

Mitchell and a jail matron seized Margaret at her home on a Saturday morning, not a common workday in municipal government anywhere in the US, then or now. As they attempted to take her into custody, she begged them to let her change her clothes first. She slipped into the bathroom, called out the window to the teen boy next door, and pleaded for him to call the city attorney or the Mayor for help. The boy's father called Mayor Lang³⁷, who called City Attorney Keith. The two officials found the "safe house" (at 915 W. 5th St.) where the prosecutor and matron had taken Margaret, and descended on it.³⁸ At that point, "the real fireworks were set off," between Mitchell and the two Coffeyville officials, according to the reporter for *Coffeyville Morning News*.

Mitchell denied that he had tampered with the State's key witness. "Miss Akers came to the interview voluntarily, and with her mother's special permission," he said in a statement to the press. "Any talk of 'kidnapping' is, of course, bosh," he said. That led *The (Coffeyville) Morning News* to send a reporter to question Mrs. Akers. She lambasted the prosecutor. "That's absolutely false," she said. "I protested with all my might. I begged and pleaded that they either question my daughter in her home, or *let me go with her* (emphasis added), even if I had to sit in another room."³⁹

³⁷ Harry Lang succeeded Elmer Joyce as mayor, in an election that took place one month after the riot. Elected with Lang was a new majority on the city council. Lang appointed a new police chief. Lang took a personal interest in getting justice for Margaret.

³⁸ That Mitchell compelled to use the personal residence of a friend, rather than any of Coffeyville's municipal buildings, indicates that the Independence-based prosecutor felt that the City of Coffeyville was in hostile territory.

³⁹ "Mrs. Akers In a Flat Denial of Mitchell Story. Declares Daughter Was Taken From Her Home Over Both Their Protests. Publish Falsehood. Brands Published Story of County Attorney Untrue In Talk to News." [Coffeyville] *Morning News* 9, No. 137 (7/13/27):1,2

“I asked them why they couldn’t question Margaret in her own home,” she said. “Unless there was something crooked about it, I thought, then I couldn’t see why they wanted to take Margaret away.” She added: “As for Margaret, she certainly did not want to go. If she had wanted to go, then do you suppose she would have stuck her head out of the bathroom window in our home and shouted to Robert Hunt, a neighbor boy, ‘For God’s sake, get me some help and get it quick!’.”

The witness tampering charge is based on Mrs. Akers (Margaret’s mother’s) interview with the *Morning News*. Under the subheading “Miss Akers Threatened” the reporter quoted her mother as saying, “Margaret told me they threatened her if she did not come across [and change her story back to blaming “negroes”], she would be behind bars by Friday. I tell you that when Margaret came home she was in hysterics.” She added: “If I had known what I know now, they would never have gotten Margaret without court papers.”

Later, in an unsigned editorial – as was the custom in newspaper editorials of the era – *The Morning News* demanded that County Attorney Mitchell be dismissed from the case. “Unless Country Attorney Mitchell is removed from the case speedily, he will do the State’s case irreparable harm.”⁴⁰ Then the editors asked: “Shall the people of Coffeyville stand idly by and see anyone under the cover of a badge of authority thwart justice in this county? Shall the people of this community stand by and allow the traducer of an innocent girl go free through the influence of money, politics or gross incompetency on the part of officials?” They added: “The young victim of the attack...should be given every protection and assistance in her attempt to reveal who the

⁴⁰ “And That Reminds Us -- When County Attorney Mitchell Undertook to Impeach” (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 135 (7/10/27):8.

guilty person or persons are, and not treated as if she is worse than the brute that committed the crime against her.”

“There has been an open breach between the City Attorney Walter S. Keith, and [C.W.] Mitchell, the County Attorney,” explained Elisha Scott in his report to James Weldon Johnson, the NAACP national secretary. “Mr. Keith is the man that swore to the complaint, charging Ira Kennedy, white man, with statutory rape on Margurite Acres [SIC] and charging Julia Mooney with being an accessory after the fact...”⁴¹

Scott’s assessment was damning. What was the county prosecutor’s motive for undermining his own case? “[Margaret] refused to tell him the story of the alleged rape.” Furthermore, because the County Attorney kidnapped of his witness, “. . .now the said Margurite Acres [SIC] is under Police protection constantly.”

Scott suspected that Mitchell’s main motive was professional jealousy. Continuing in his report to James Weldon Johnson, he added, “You recall, that the said Mitchell County Attorney refused to ask the Attorney General to assist in the prosecution, and reports heretofore furnished you, shows how the Attorney General got into the case, through and by the invitation and pressure brought to bear by the N.A.A.C.P.”

But there was more pressure to bear than simply from the NAACP, as complimentary as that may have been for Scott to tell the organization who had contracted him, and was paying one-half of his legal fees. By now, the feud in the prosecution team had become public knowledge. Kansas Attorney General William A. Smith opened urgent letters and telegrams from Coffeyville city officials, and local

⁴¹ Letter from Elisha J. Scott to James Weldon Johnson, NAACP Papers, US Library of Congress.

leaders of the American Legion. The local newspapers urged his intervention. All asked him to intervene, and personally take charge of the case.

The rivalry between the Coffeyville officials and the County Attorney led Mayor Lang to call the Kansas Attorney General William A. Smith, to have Mitchell “do nothing more” until the Attorney General arrived in Coffeyville the following Monday. That call had actually followed on the heels of an earlier request, by mail, from the two top officers of the local American Legion Post in Coffeyville. Commander Roy Brant and Adjunct Frank Sutton wrote that the County Attorney had “bungled” the prosecution case “either purposely or through incompetence.”⁴² This is what led the state’s attorney general to personally come to Coffeyville to observe the now-tattered prosecution team.

Today, the American Legion is looked upon as just another fraternal organization, often thought of in the same breath as the Shriners, the Jaycees, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Elks. That was not the case in the 1920s, when the Legion was regarded as an active home guard, comprised of veterans of the First World War. It was a new organization, formed in St. Louis in 1919.

An example of this home militia function can be seen in the immediate calls for assistance from the Coffeyville administration on the night of March 17, 1927. Confronted with a full-scale riot and mobs of whites and African Americans, the mayor called on the American Legion. They summoned troops from nearby Legion posts in Parsons and Iola, Kansas. These were the first troops to arrive on scene. So when the commanders of the Coffeyville American Legion Post wrote to the Attorney General of

⁴² Mitchell’s Tactics Hard to Understand. Tries Hard to Breakdown Case for the State. [Coffeyville] *Morning News* 9, No. 135 (7/10/27):1,6.

Kansas, and expressed dismay at the tactics of his subordinate, County Prosecutor C.W. Mitchell, the Attorney General listened.

Clearly, the two local Coffeyville newspapers backed their own city officials against the out-of-town County Attorney and his sympathetic hometown newspaper, the *Independence Daily News*. Tellingly, there was no mention in the *Independence* newspaper of the whole kidnapping incident. But the *Morning News*'s other rival in town, the bigger, afternoon newspaper, *The Coffeyville Daily Journal*, took the more conservative approach. They backed Julia Mooney's "negro story." In contrast, the *Morning News* "cautioned against the 'snap judgment' in fastening the crime upon Negroes." It condemned the rioting, "when another newspaper [the rival *Coffeyville Daily Journal*] in a double column editorial absolutely justified mob action by making the excuse that the people had lost confidence in the courts of justice. This same newspaper called upon the colored people of Coffeyville to get busy and try to ferret out the crime, and when they liberally subscribed to a reward fund that *The Morning News* had suggested, said the colored people "had accepted the challenge of that newspaper."⁴³

The difference in tone in racial issues between the Republican-leaning *Morning News* and the Democratic-leaning *Coffeyville Daily News* was profound. Initially, the police and sheriff jumped at every possible tip for a suspect, in the 12 hours immediately after the rapes. As each new black suspect was brought before the girls to identify, the *Morning News* was more likely to identify each by name, age, and occupation; the *Coffeyville Daily Journal* simply noted that they were "negroes." When the *Coffeyville*

⁴³ "And That reminds Us -- The Morning News Has To Acknowledge Defeat" (unsigned editorial). [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, No. 102 (6/1/27):6.

Police took into custody Garvin Hardin, his son, Vanges, and Curtis Smith, the *Morning News* identified each by name, and gave the address of the Hardin residence. The *Daily Journal*, in contrast, in a later summary simply stated that the police found “three negroes at a dinner table – “a tall one, a large one, and a small one!”⁴⁴ Even worse, the *Daily Journal*, in an editorial titled “Will the Negroes Help Bring Criminals to Bar?” wrote “They should comb the color section for suspects and resolve to rest neither day nor night until the guilty are brought to face the penalty prescribed by law for their crimes.”⁴⁵ In contrast, the *Morning News* noted that “The Colored Citizens of Coffeyville Pledge Loyalty.”⁴⁶ The Democratic Party in this pre-New Deal era was not sympathetic to African-Americans, who voted heavily Republican. African Americans were a significant part of the Republican coalition in Kansas’s politics. Republican Senator (and former governor) Arthur Capper was the State Chairman of the NAACP.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ “Detailed History of Assault Case. *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 296 (5/30/27):1.

⁴⁵ “Will the Negroes Help Bring Criminals to Bar?” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 238 (3/22/27): 4.

⁴⁶ “Colored Citizens of Coffeyville Pledge Loyalty. Meet Last Night, Declare Stand and Offer Reward for Criminals’ Arrest.” [Coffeyville] *Morning News* 9, No. 43 (3/23/27):1.

⁴⁷ When there was a surge in Klan activity in Kansas politics in the mid-1920s, the NAACP National Office repeatedly asked Capper for his advice. See the handwritten letter from Dr. A.R. Ferebee, a Coffeyville NAACP officer to the NAACP national office, dated 1/19/1925. written on the letterhead of the Montgomery County Republican Central Committee. Ferebee was the Republican precinct chair of the second precinct, first ward, of Coffeyville City. (NAACP Papers, US Library of Congress).

White Female Purity is Rescued, Class Plays a Role

Whether Julia Mooney is the female Judas, the vampire woman who seduc[ed] one of her own sex without hope of reward; whether Kennedy is a revealing wolf in sheep's clothing, or whether both are innocent and have been accused falsely, may be revealed by the rejected stone which is expected to become the true keystone in the arch of justice to be built by the state."

-- "Investigating New Assault Clue Here,"
Coffeyville Daily Journal, June 23, 1927

The arc of Julia Mooney's reputation captures the major tropes about young women in the 1920s. When the story first broke, the newspapers portrayed her as a pure and victimized young woman, "savaged" by black rapists. The *Morning News* story said she had "an experience more terrible than death" having been "assaulted by three negro men just after midnight... Though suffering from shock and bruises, the girls will recover, physicians say."⁴⁸ Subsequent days newspaper stories provided updates on the girls' conditions. Yet Julia's reputation, so elevated at first, would soon sour.

When the county prosecutor issued indictments for rape, naming Kennedy and Mooney, gender replaced race as the villain in Coffeyville. Julia's reputation plummeted, as the newspapers portrayed her as a schemer, morally unsound, even treacherous. Her co-defendant, the auto salesman, was further accused of having embezzled from a former employer.⁵⁰ There were innuendoes that he had had a sexual relationship with Julia, who

⁴⁸ "Two Girls Are Brutally Assaulted This Morning," [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News*, March 18, 1927, 1.

⁵⁰ "Kennedy Under a Cloud Before He Came Here," [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, no. 105, June 4, 1927, 1. The story detailed how Kennedy had been "arrested the first day he

had lived in the same house with the salesman and his family.⁵¹ Prosecutors alleged that Julia had setup Margaret, betraying her. During the rape, she told Margaret not to resist. Afterward, she told her young friend not to report it. She also had fabricated “the negro story.” During this damning testimony by Margaret, Julia and her mother both “smiled sarcastically,” said the *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, which now called Julia “the female Judas” and “the vampire woman.”⁵²

Such sexual treachery and female scheming were frequent newspaper storylines in the 1920s: Liberated young women – “flappers”—flaunted their sexuality with revealing clothing styles; they entrapped men and destroyed families. They even committed murder, as in the case of the beautiful Mrs. Ruth Brown Snyder, a Queens, New York, housewife, who was tried, convicted, and executed for murdering her art-dealer husband, so she could run off with her lover, a corset salesman from New Jersey.⁵³ Compounding this atmosphere were numerous gender-based comics, such as “Flapper Fanny,” which

came to Coffeyville.”

⁵¹ “Margaret Akers Identifies Ira Kennedy, Damning Statement Is Made by Victim of Assault at Hearing,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, no.5, June 18, 1927, 1-2.

⁵² The full quote, in colorful 1927 newspaper hyperbole is: “Whether Julia Mooney is the female Judas, the vampire woman who upset the records, sacred and profane, by seducing one of her own sex without hope of reward; whether Kennedy is a revealing wolf in sheep’s clothing, or whether both are innocent victims of circumstance and have been accused falsely, may be revealed by the rejected stone which is expected to become the true keystone in the arch of justice to be built by the state.” -- “Investigating New Assault Clue Here,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 23, 1927, 2.

⁵³ “Mrs. Snyder to Die with Gray on Jan. 9; Condemned Woman and Her Paramour Are Held in the Death Cell to Await Execution,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, no. 137, November 11, 1927, 1-2. A photo of Mrs. Snyder’s execution was taken by a reporter for the *New York Daily News*, using a hidden camera. It became famous and front-page material around the world.

depicted young women as alluring, but morally bankrupt. In one cartoon, a man was shown ignoring two young women in swimsuits. The caption read “A man is known by the company he keeps out of.”⁵⁴ The message was clear: Watch out for immoral young women -- they cause disorder.⁵⁶ Indeed, the historian Mary Odem found that the juvenile court system in Los Angeles in the 1920s “identified sex immorality as the primary form of delinquency for girls” -- but almost never for boys.⁵⁷

Stereotypes of age compounded those of gender. Teen girl culture, based on clothing and cosmetics, truly began to flourish in the consumer culture of the 1920s. “Publishers and writers began to notice the market value of stories on ‘wild youth’ as well as a new reading audience of high school girls,” argues historian Kelly Schrum.⁵⁸ Teen girls were criticized for both “sexuality and sexual behavior,” at the same time they were marketed to, as consumers. “In the consumer world, girls were the first teenagers.”⁵⁹ They would push the boundaries of behavior, particularly in the 1920s when even many “good,” middle-class people violated Prohibition with impunity. At the time of the riot, for example, almost two-thirds of criminal cases on the docket in

⁵⁴ “Flapper Fanny Says:” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, no. 70, September 4, 1927, 5.

⁵⁶ Another regular full-page cartoon about stunningly dressed, scheming young women, called “Meet the Misses!” regularly appeared in the *Independence Daily Reporter*, for example, on July 19, 1927.

⁵⁷ Mary Odem, “Single Mothers, Delinquent Daughters, and the Juvenile Court,” chap. 3 of *The Girls History and Culture Reader*, Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris, eds., Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011, 76.

⁵⁸ Kelly Schrum, *Some Wore Bobby Sox: The Emergence of Teenage Girls’ Culture, 1920-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 4.

Independence, Kansas, were for liquor law violations.⁶⁰ Lawlessness was widespread, and out-of-control youth were blamed as part of the problem. In fact, white college youth captured “the lion’s share” of the attention of those who “charted society’s changing values” in the 1920s, according to historians John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman.⁶¹ “Sexual innovation” – such as petting – played “a key role in this new world of youth, say D’Emilio and Freedman. These changes reached down to the high school level as well.⁶² This is the basis for the widespread belief about the immorality of “flappers.”

Julia’s living quarters raised eyebrows in this era when young women, and particularly adolescent girls, were suspect. The Kennedys had moved from the house about two weeks before the attack, leaving Julia living there alone, in an empty house with only a bed remaining.

However, Julia’s public reputation, which had begun after the rapes as a sympathetic victim, and which was so smeared by the pretrial hearing, suddenly turned around again. Class would play a role in Julia’s rescue. Her parents had influence.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Newman, review of three months of criminal warrants on microfilm for Montgomery County District Court, March through June, 1927, at the Kansas State Historical Society.

Curtis Smith, one of the three black men who were initially detained and released by police for the rapes, was charged with “liquor law violation” a week before Mooney and Kennedy were indicted. There is speculation that that mysterious phone call Julia made from the theater, before arriving home, was for Smith to deliver liquor to the house. That might explain why the police bloodhounds followed a trail from the house to Smith’s house in the black part of Coffeyville, the following afternoon. City of Independence Criminal Court records, microfilm rolls 45-46, Dockets 3696-3795 and 3796-3897, for 1926 and 1927, Kansas State Historical Society.

⁶¹ John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988, 1997), 256.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 256-257.

Unlike Kennedy, she was released after two weeks in jail, on \$5,000 bond, signed by three Coffeyville property holders and guaranteed by eight others from her family's hometown of Lenapah, Oklahoma.⁶³ That amount was five times greater than the average income of 1927.⁶⁴ Beyond influence and owning the rental property in Coffeyville and their residence in Oklahoma, Julia's family was also able to hire a defense team of two top trial lawyers. Charles Ise was himself the former county prosecutor and the soon-to-be-elected head of the school board. An experienced litigator, he exploited weaknesses in the divided prosecution team, and in the new judge. Citing illness, the normal trial judge for the county -- who had overseen the preliminary hearing -- resigned and was replaced by a temporary judge secured from another county.⁶⁷

In his defense of Julia, defense attorney Charles Ise deployed a powerful gendered trope that recast her as a misunderstood, good girl, not a devious bad one. Ise painted a picture of poor Julia, pulled from her graduation exercises only to be tossed, "weeping, in the county jail, in the company of a prostitute."⁶⁸ When Ise put Julia on the stand, she

⁶³ "New Turn in Case; Miss Julia Mooney Released on Bond," *[Coffeyville] Morning News*, June 16, 1927, 1; "Julia Mooney Is Out, Girl Charged With Complicity in Alleged Criminal Assault of Chum Gave Bond Today," *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 15, 1927, 2.

⁶⁴ "Gale World Chronology: 1927", Answers.com. People's Chronology, The Gale Group, Inc, 2005. <http://www.answers.com/topic/1927>, accessed May 05, 2011.

⁶⁷ "Kennedy-Mooney Trial on Monday. Continuance Taken Today on Account of Judge Holdren's Illness," *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, July 14, 1927,1; "Holdren Ill; Judge Ayres Takes Bench. Montgomery County Jurist Calls Judge A.T. Ayres of Howard to Substitute," *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, July 16, 1927,2; "Judge Ayers of Butler County Will Preside. Relives Judge Holdren of Hearing Kennedy-Mooney Case, At His Request," *[Coffeyville] Morning News*, July 13, 1927,1-2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, July 12, 1927, 3.

testified that she had always been telling the truth. She had protected Margaret, her younger friend, and counseled her.⁶⁹ The assailants *were* “negroes.” Ise argued that Julia had been a “victim of a conspiracy” devised by blacks and the new city commission that had hired a questionable private detective, R.W. Davis, who lied so he could get the reward money. Ise charged that the detective had pressured the girls to change their story -- to say that white men had been the assailants.⁷¹ In his cross-examination of the detective, Ise denounced him as a moral degenerate for bragging to the sheriff and attorneys, that “he would get the truth out of the girls” by “taking them to a picture show, ‘pet them a little, if necessary,’” then “take them to a jazzing party.”⁷² Julia’s second defense attorney then questioned a series of witnesses, who discredited Margaret as utterly unreliable, someone who changed her story several times.⁷³ The defense team then asked the judge to drop all charges against Julia. She walked free from the courtroom.

The case against Kennedy was sent to the all-white, all-male jury, who deliberated only 50 minutes before acquitting him. The humiliated city administration fired the

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* “Julia Mooney Is Free on Demurrer,” 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷² “Defendants Not Guilty,” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News*, 9, no. 143, July 20, 1927, 1-3; “Kennedy Is Free By Jury Verdict; Judge Ayres By His Motion Frees Mooney,” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, no. 266, July 20, 1927; “Jury Acquits Kennedy In 50 Minutes; Accused Man Freed of Assault Charge...Detective Davis Bore Brunt of Defense Counsel’s Attack...”*Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, no. 30, July 20, 1927, 1-3.

⁷³ The newspaper headlines show the trend: “Margaret Akers Unshaken on Stand,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, no. 28, July 18, 1927, 1-2.; *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, no. 264, July 18, 1927, 1-2. “New Evidence Offered in Assault Case by 2 R.R., Margaret Akers on Stand in Grilling Cross-Examination, State’s Star Witness Under A Cross-Fire for Hours by Defense Attorneys,” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, no. 265, July 19, 1927, 1-3.

detective, who was also denounced by the attorney general. Adding injury to insult, Margaret Akers and her mother were severely injured, returning from the trial, when the mayor's car, in which they were riding, overturned in a ditch.

Julia Mooney's reputation was like that of the arc of a pendulum -- initially at a high point, as a victimized innocent; to a low point, as scheming accomplice of a sexual predator; and back to a second high point, as that of a good girl unfairly besmirched by unscrupulous detectives and newspapermen. That arc demonstrates the spectrum of stereotypes applied to young women in the 1920s. At first, she was considered to be demure, that is, an innocent. When her reputation was at its lowest, she was stereotyped as demonic, "the female Judas."⁷⁴ Margaret Akers -- first assaulted by criminals then discredited by the legal process -- shows why Coffeyville was a resounding defeat for all young women, even Julia. "About the only moral gained from the whole affair," editorialized the *Morning News*, "is that it is not safe for two young girls to be alone over night in a house."⁷⁵ Today, that is known as blaming the victim.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, June 23, 1927.

⁷⁵ "And That Reminds Us --" (editorial), [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, no. 143, July 20, 1927, 6.

CHAPTER 3
THE ENGINE OF ACTIVISM: THE SCHOOLING OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN KANSAS

“Not only were the three men who assaulted the two girls WHITE men, but it is pretty well established now thru detective agency [SIC] agency that one of the girls... had plotted with one of the men... this girl and the principal male plotter...are from Oklahoma, they knew exactly what to do: Have a good time and then go out and cry ‘Nigger!’ to divert attention.

They did it, nearly got away with it, got bad race feeling into the veins of this community, nearly got three innocent colored men lynched, and had the whole 3,000 colored people terrorized, insulted and threatened with massacre.¹

-- William Pickens, Field Secretary, NAACP, 1927

The roots of the activism of Coffeyville’s African Americans in the 1920s are traceable to two causes. One was the unique history of the state and the region. The second was the nationwide initiative undertaken by the NAACP, called its “Anti-Lynching Campaign.”

Attorney Elisha J. Scott was an advocate for civil rights. At times, he seemed everywhere at once, in the era from World War I to the late 1940s. He handled an appeal

¹ Memo from William Pickens “To the National Officers and The Board of Directors, June 5, 1927, datelined Coffeyville, Kan.” NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July-Dec,1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Also “William Pickens Papers, 1906-1954” and “William Pickens Papers (Additions), 1909-1950.” Schomburg Manuscripts, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

for Jack Jones, when the black heavyweight champion was sentenced for violations of the Mann Act. He defended the 156 black servicemen who were tried for mutiny after their involvement in the 1917 race riot in Houston (19 were later executed, and 41 were given life sentences) – an event that prefigured the race riots after World War I. Scott was a key figure in pressuring for the prosecution of numerous lynching cases across the country. Elisha Scott was not atypical. He was part of a generation of African American leaders that had come to maturity during the Progressive Era in Kansas.

Kansas was unusual in two respects. First, it was a border state. But it was not just on the border between North and South, as had been the case before and during the Civil War. Kansas was also on the border between the East and the West. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to determine at what point the state became Midwestern, as opposed to being part of the Trans-Mississippi West of the 1860s. Perhaps we might designate Kansas as Midwestern by the 1890s, when the frontier “closed” and Kansas farmers were part of the insurgency of The Grange. But as part of “the West,” Kansas beckoned to both white and black settlers, particularly after the Civil War.

Second, Kansas was perhaps unusual in the education opportunities it offered to African Americans. The state constitution – the final Topeka Constitution that was adopted at statehood in 1861 -- committed Kansas to providing education for all citizens. Kansas had established several schools for educating its citizens. Along with the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and Kansas State Agricultural College in Manhattan, and Kansas State Normal School, which trained teachers in Emporia, and the Manual Training Normal School in Pittsburg, the state established “special needs” schools. These

included a state school for the deaf in Olathe, and a state school for the blind in Kansas City, Kansas.

Private philanthropists also established schools, in a manner that was similar to John D. Rockefeller's endowments to historically black Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spellman College. The Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, a Congregationalist minister who believed in the social gospel of uplift, established a school in Topeka in 1895 to train African American students in manual trades. Called the Topeka Industrial Institute for Negro Youth, it was taken over by the state in 1917, and renamed as the Kansas Industrial and Educational Institute (and later, Topeka Tech).² A famed author, who had written one of the best sellers of the 19th century, Shelton was keenly interested in education.³ Earlier, inspired by the German Kindergarten Movement, he had founded

² The Institute closed immediately after *Brown v. Board* was handed down by the US Supreme Court, because its mission of segregated education was no longer possible. However, by the time it was shuttered, it was fully integrated. Indeed, in 1950, 123 whites and 396 blacks enrolled. Files: *The Topeka Industrial Institute for Negro Youth, Catalog, 1899-1900*, Kansas Technical Institute pamphlet file, volume 2. KSHS, "Vocational School Catalogs." Other information was summarized from catalogs from *Industrial and Educational Institute Catalog 1919-1920*, and *Kansas Vocational School Catalog, 1930*. There is also information from *The Principal's Report for the Board of Administration, Kansas Industrial and Educational Institute, 1920*, as well as biennial reports from 1922 and 1928, and the "Kansas Technical Institute Pamphlets File" at the Kansas State Historical Society.

For the reasons behind its closing, see *General Information Regarding the Kansas Technical Institute in Regards to its Status and Place in the Educational Picture of Kansas, 1954*, in which its president, G. Robert Cotton, said that the Kansas Board of Regents voted to close the institute despite it now being integrated. It included a memorandum from the Regents of the Institute to the governor, legislators, State Board of Regents, and the State Board of Education.

³ Sheldon's novelized gospel, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* sold millions of copies after it was first published in 1896. The actual sales numbers are disputed because different publishers reprinted it.

two parallel kindergartens, one for white children at his Central Congregational Church, and another for black children in Tennessee Town, the first “Negro Kindergarten” west of the Mississippi.⁴ Elisha J. Scott was one of its pupils, where Shelton noticed him, and took a special interest in his development.

The Industrial Institute, known as “The Tuskegee of the West” offered diplomas in barbering, cosmetology, commerce, masonry, tailoring, carpentry, and eventually auto mechanics. Marketed as “As School for Opportunities” it had a predominantly black faculty with advanced degrees from the University of Kansas, the University of Chicago, Howard University, Fisk University, and several others. In the Jim Crow Era, African American teachers with advanced degrees were likely to be steered to historically black colleges and institutes because a system of racial discrimination prevented them from acquiring positions in the mainstream white colleges. Looking back at his education in 1950, Elisha J. Scott argued that his teachers were among the best, and far superior to white teachers at comparable schools.⁵

⁴ The kindergarten lasted 18 years, when the city of Topeka took it over in 1910 and moved it to the all-black Buchanan Elementary School. Timothy Miller, *Following In His Steps: A Biography of Charles M. Sheldon*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 28-29.

⁵ His refusal to undertake an earlier desegregation case in Topeka was because he decided that the black teachers he admired would lose their positions to white teachers in an integrated school. Scott was often at odds with the leadership of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

For the biographical information on Elisha Scott, I am indebted to Thom Rosenblum, the historian at the *Brown v. Board* National Historic Site. Much of the detail is from his unpublished manuscript, “Elisha Scott, Colored Lawyer, Topeka.”

Elisha Scott and the Previous Generation of “Exodusters”

Elisha Scott was symbolic of the generation that had been nurtured by these new institutions. Scott’s family had migrated to Kansas and settled in Tennessee Town.⁶ As the name suggests, Scott’s family had moved from Memphis, as part of a group of 50 families.⁷ He was the youngest of 13 children, yet he received an unusually good education because Kansas had both public and private institutions for black children. He attended the “free colored kindergarten” in Tennessee Town, sponsored by the Rev. Charles Shelton. Shelton mentored the boy, and he attended the rigorous Industrial and Educational Institute, a residential trades high school for African Americans, which was run like a military school. There were even uniforms, and a before-dawn roll call. Scott went to college at Washburn University, taking law classes in his final two years, and graduated from Washburn Law School in 1916. Notably, he was the third black student to do so.⁸

While African Americans in Kansas enjoyed some advantages, they still lived in a Jim Crow America. Unlike Missouri and many former slave states, Kansas did not have statewide laws mandating racial segregation. However, many municipalities had them. When the local law neglected to specify, social custom enforced segregation. In

⁶ Hall Smith, “The Unforgettable Elisha Scott,” *Bulletin of the Shawnee County Historical Society* 42, December 1965, 21.

⁷ “Elisha Scott, Sr.,” *Kansopedia*, website of the Kansas Historical Society, 2011. <http://www.kshs.org/kansopedia/elisha-scott-sr/12198>

⁸ Kim Cary Warren, *The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880-1935 (Kindle Edition)*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Coffeyville, for example, there was a separate movie theater for black audiences. There were also the balconies in white theaters, where black patrons could be seated.

Historian Brent Campney has argued that white-on-black violence was prevalent in Kansas, from the time of the Civil War to the early 1900s. The numerous lynchings he documented provide a counterpoint to the commonly held and carefully crafted “Free State Narrative” that celebrates Kansas’s racial tolerance.⁹ Yet, the “Myth of Kansas” was powerful, especially in the years of the 1870s, as the Reconstruction regimes in the Deep South were overthrown. The parents and grandparents of the 1920s generation of black activists were drawn from this milieu. It was part of Elisha Scott’s family history.

Almost 20,000 Black settlers in Kansas arrived to two great waves. The first wave, in 1875, was comprised largely of immigrants from Tennessee and Kentucky. Inspired by black land speculator Benjamin “Pap” Singleton of Nashville, these were settlers who had the means to buy land to homestead. They settled throughout Kansas, particularly in Baxter Springs in southeast Kansas, as well as southwest of Topeka.¹⁰ But perhaps most famously in the all-black town of Nicodemus.¹¹ The second wave, in 1879-1880, was made up of freedmen (and women) who were desperately seeking an exit from

⁹Brent M.S. Campney, “A Little Bit Different from Alabama’: Sectional Narratives and the Rhetoric of Racist Violence,” chap. 13 in *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border*, ed. Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Atherarn, *In Search of Canaan*, 76; Fleming, “Pap Singleton, the Moses of the Colored Exodus”; Roy Garvin, “Benjamin, or ‘Pap’ Singleton and His Followers,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 33, no. 1 (January 1948): 7-23; Walter L. Fleming, “‘Pap’ Singleton, the Moses of the Colored Exodus,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 15, no. 1 (July 1909): 61-82.

¹¹ The National Park Service runs the Nicodemus National Historic Site, with a Visitors Center. <http://www.nps.gov/nico/index.htm>

Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, as well as Texas. These were the “Exodusters.” Southern whites complained “Kansas Fever” had deluded them. The Exodusters attended mass meetings, then lined the banks of the Mississippi and attempted to hail down steamships. Often they only had enough fare to reach St. Louis, where they would work as laborers or domestics, to earn additional fare to travel upstream to the town of Wyandotte (Kansas City, Kansas).¹²

Why would these people, who were terribly in debt, try to leave the lower South for a myth? In part, it was the power of the image of Bleeding Kansas. They were attracted to Kansas because they had heard how some Kansans had fought one another to prevent its admission as a slave state. “The Crime of Kansas” (how Missouri bushwhackers had flooded the state and manipulated voting for territorial constitutions) had been a staple of Abolitionist rhetoric in the late 1850s. Another reason for the migration was the collapse of the last Reconstruction state governments in the lower South. After 1877, “questions of sheer bodily safety obsessed rural black people, in contrast to urban dwellers who could afford to theorize about political practice in comparative safety,” argued historian Nell Irvin Painter. Perhaps they did not realize that Kansas had lynchings too, but unlike the Deep South, Kansas had *free* public schools. The South’s public schools systems, established during Reconstruction, were being dismantled throughout the region by the new Redemptionist regimes. Why tax property-owning whites just to school negroes? What public schools remained were often only open two or three months a year.¹³

¹³ Painter, Nell Irwin, *Exodusters*, 27-55. Painter documents murders and beatings by Southern white landowners, in an attempt to thwart the exodus. They also harassed the

Most Exodusters came to Kansas via steamships that navigated the Mississippi, Missouri, and Kansas rivers. But some, from Texas, arrived by the Katy railroad, from Sherman or Dennison, Texas. The Katy had a terminal in Parsons, Kansas, about an hour northeast of Coffeyville.

Regardless of their initial settlements, many black immigrants moved to an unincorporated portion of Topeka, where industrial jobs for laborers were plentiful. Topeka was not only the state capital, but was the location of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad's maintenance shops. So many black immigrants settled in the unincorporated neighborhood that it became known as "Tennessee Town." By the 1880 census, African Americans comprised 31 percent of Topeka's population, "a higher percentage than was found in New Orleans."¹⁴ The Rev. Sheldon, having setup his main church in a white area of Topeka, located another in Tennessee Town, and opened a kindergarten for black children in 1893.¹⁵ There are many photos of the Sheldon Kindergarten at both the Kansas State Historical Society, and at the University of Kansas.¹⁶ One photo shows the mothers and female relatives of the Kindergarten

steamship captains with boycotts and vigilantism to prevent their stopping to pick up black passengers. White officials also attempted to arrest the emigrants for breach of contract to sharecrop. Painter, 190-197; Steven Hahn, *Nation Under Our Feet*, 356.

¹⁴ Miller, *Following In His Steps*, 47.

¹⁵ Sheldon created one the first kindergarten teacher-training institutions. Its graduate teachers "were eagerly snapped up by kindergartens from Maine to Texas, as the movement spread throughout the United States. One kindergarten graduate was Dr. Karl Menninger. *Ibid*, 29.

¹⁶ Minus Gentry Collection of Sheldon Kindergarten Photographs, 1898-circa 1908, which Reverend Charles M. Sheldon and the Central Congregational Church in the Tennessee Town area of Topeka operated from 1893 to 1908. Kansas Collection. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. Minus Gentry attended the

children, with their names written on the back. One is labeled as “Diana Scott.” That would be Elisha’s mother.

The myth of Kansas certainly motivated the Exodusters. But what were the actual conditions for African Americans? Were the second-class jobs as laborers and domestics and occasional lynchings, an improvement over the Deep South? Nell Irvin Painter answered with a resounding yes in her conclusion:

By 1900 Blacks in Kansas were generally, if not overwhelmingly, more prosperous than their counterparts in the South; politically they were enormously better off. Although they might not enjoy their civil rights to the extent that white Kansans did, they were far freer and less discriminated against than were their peers in the South. Kansas was no Canaan, but it was a far cry from Mississippi and Louisiana. Relative to those states, Kansas was better in the 1880s and still better in the 1890s and early twentieth century... All in all, the Exodus to Kansas was a qualified by real success.¹⁷

The children of this generation were educated in Kansas at institutions like the segregated Topeka Industrial Institute, and in the state’s somewhat integrated public schools. Rev. Sheldon, incidentally, paid for Elisha Scott’s tuition at the Institute.¹⁸

Tennessee Town kindergarten.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Painter, 260.

¹⁸ Rosenblum, “Elisha Scott, Colored Lawyer, Topeka”, 4.

The NAACP's Anti-Lynching Campaign Finds Support

It is hard for us to grasp today how common lynching was, and the degree to which it was accepted in some quarters. Anti-lynching laws in Congress were regularly defeated. Postcards of lynchings were commonly available. There was even an agreement, signed by dozens of white citizens of Jackson, Mississippi, in June of 1927 – the same month as the Kennedy-Mooney Trial -- that they would not try to lynch a black man who had fled to North Dakota if he agreed to return to Jackson for a trial.¹⁹ Some lynchings were even advertised as public events, as was the 1919 lynching of John Hartsfield, of Ellisville, Mississippi, whose impending lynching was announced ahead of time in the Jackson newspaper.²⁰

The NAACP had conducted an aggressive anti-lynching campaign even before the “Red Summer” riots of 1919.²¹ The term was coined by NAACP secretary James Weldon Johnson to describe the race riots that broke out nationwide in 1919, and were especially deadly in Chicago, Elaine (Arkansas) and Washington, DC. The NAACP agitated, published newspaper articles, and lobbied Congress on behalf of anti-lynching bills, all of which failed due to Southern opposition. Walter F. White, Johnson’s assistant secretary, established his reputation in 1919 as a field investigator who traveled through the Deep South, collecting evidence behind lynching incidents. Because he was light-

¹⁹ “Mississippians Agree Not to Lynch Negro,” *Kansas City Call*, June 24, 1927, B3.

²⁰ Schneider, *We Return Fighting*, 35.

²¹ It formed its official Anti-Lynching Committee in 1916. But lynching had long been an issue, as can be seen by the efforts of Ida B. Wells in Memphis in the early 1890s.

skinned, blue-eyed, and blond-haired, he could pass for white and could infiltrate groups of white killers. The principals in the Coffeyville Branch were in constant contact with White and Weldon at the NAACP national office, not just during and after the 1927 riot, but earlier, during the 1924 desegregation case. They were motivated because of numerous events of the “Red Summer” that marked race conflict in the years after World War I.

The Coffeyville events occurred in the context of a post-World War I era marked by brutal incidents of racial violence.²² The Chicago Race Riot of 1919 had resulted in 38 dead.²³ That same year in Elaine, Arkansas, a race war left several hundred African American sharecroppers dead, at the hands of armed whites.²⁴ White mobs burnt down the black business district of Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921²⁵ and the all-black town of Rosewood, Florida, in 1923.²⁶ The violence has been blamed on the dislocations from

²² There were also an extraordinary number of labor strikes, anarchist bombings, and of course, the Palmer Raids. But the black community of Coffeyville would have been most affected by incidents of racial violence.

²³ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1995), s.v. “Chicago Race Riot of 1919,” 196. Most of the statistics about numbers of dead in such incidents are disputed, but this is the official death toll.

²⁴ “Elaine Massacre,” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, 2011. Retrieved online from <<<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1102>>>.

²⁵ The number of deaths is disputed. But a systematic study in 2001 of the casualty count by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921 found at least 120 caskets built for blacks, and had circumstantial evidence for a number as high as 300. *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Oklahoma Historical Society. << <http://www.okhistory.org/trrc/fireport.pdf>>>

²⁶ Investigators from four Florida public universities published an online report, *Documented History of the Incident which Occurred at Rosewood, Florida, in January*

the war, part of the violent birth of modernism in the 1920s.²⁷ Historian Mark Robert Schneider argues that the military training that African Americans received, combined with equality of treatment by Europeans, made them less willing to accept the domination of a Jim Crow America.²⁸ Certainly, the sight of a black man in a US Army uniform could incite white anger in much of America. It upset the racial caste system.

The heightened awareness can be seen in the turn of black newspapers from covering social news and civic clubs to what today we would call “hard news.” *The Kansas City Call’s* news editor, Roy Wilkins (future head of the NAACP), and his reporter, Carl Beckwith, wrote many stories tracking the Coffeyville riot’s causes and its subsequent court trials. *The Call’s* advocacy crested in June, 1927, after the Montgomery County Attorney announced indictments for the rapes that, surprisingly, included no blacks: “Coffeyville Riot Secret Is Out” was the front-page banner headline.²⁹ Wilkins even published a front-page comic strip at the bottom of the page, showing the sequence of events – as *The Call* saw it.³⁰ This was a new form of communication, similar to the

1923, Submitted to the Florida Board of Regents, December 22, 1993. Published by Displays for Schools, LLC.

Retrieved from << <http://www.displaysforschools.com/rosewoodrp.html#intro>>>

²⁷ Aside from the specific racial factors, I would argue that “War fuels changes.” After World War I, there was an outbreak of anarchist bombings, industrial strikes, and social change. War transforms society and is a catalyst for change.

²⁸ Mark Robert Schneider, *We Return Fighting: The Civil Rights Movement in the Jazz Age*. (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2002).

²⁹ African Americans found it unbelievable that any “negro” could have slipped, undetected, into the heart of the police-patrolled white section of Coffeyville, at midnight, in the Jim Crow world of 1927; “Coffeyville Riot Secret Is Out,” *Kansas City Call* 9, no. 5, June 3, 1927.

³⁰ The comic strip / graphic novel shows the house, a party, reporting the rape, and subsequent events. *The Call’s* assertion of a party was disputed by the girls in their

graphic novels of today, which made events comprehensible even to young people and the illiterate.

After the prosecutor had indicted, not a black man, but a white, 30-year-old Studebaker salesman and one of the two high school girl victims, *The Call* published Mooney's yearbook photo, centered, on the front-page, beneath the headline: "HER TALE STARTED RIOT."³¹ *The Call* used quotes significantly: "JULIA MOONEY, ONE 'VICTIM', IS IN JAIL CHARGED WITH PLANNING PARTY FOR GIRLS AND THREE MEN."³² *The Call* charged, in its headlines, that "Julia Told [Margaret], the other girl, to 'Stick to the Negro Story.'" It was a "Tale [that] Caused Three-Day Riot."³³ Elisha Scott and editor Roy Wilkins probably shared information. Besides editing *The Call*, Wilkins was active in the NAACP's Kansas City, Missouri, Local Branch.³⁴

In his letters to Walter F. White at the NAACP, Scott repeated two things. "It is my opinion that his investigation will disclose that the two alleged rapers [SIC] are

testimony. Yet there was evidence that liquor was delivered to the house.

³¹ *Ibid*, "Coffeyville Riot Secret is Out."

³² *Ibid*.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ The electrifying impact of charging two whites for the rapes can be seen in an editorial from the *Kansas City Call*. Written either by owner Chester Arthur Franklin or by editor Roy Wilkins, it was titled "Truth Gets an Inning." The newspaper said that the turn of events "must be a shock to those who think crime and innocence are determined by the color of the skin." Furthermore, the writer said: "There have been other cases where we have been called evil-doers, Elaine, Arkansas, was one of them, but seldom has the truth caught up with the lie with the speed it has in Coffeyville." "Truth Gets an Inning", *Kansas City Call* (6/24/27): B4.

white.”³⁵ He then took credit. “It is our work [the local branch in Coffeyville] that has brought about the disclosure of the truth in the riot cases.”³⁶ When Kansas Attorney General William Smith made an appearance in the courtroom to personally lend his moral support to the prosecution team, it was due to the influence of the NAACP, according to attorney Scott.³⁷

But beyond the truth about the assailants, the NAACP had another motive. Napoleon Anderson and Hershel Ford, two black men, had filed lawsuits against the city for injuries they suffered during the riot. Anderson had been crippled by gunshots in both legs. But the County Prosecutor was obligated to convict Anderson of rioting “in order to save the city \$20,000,” Scott wrote. This is confirmed by city documents. The minutes of the Coffeyville City Clerk show that the damage suits were discussed at four separate City Council meetings between April and June, 1927. Anderson’s outlook was grim. “There are four or five witnesses that are going to testify that they saw Anderson empty a thirty-two revolver into the mob,” Scott wrote. In contrast, the riot charges the prosecutor had filed against 18 whites had “all...been dismissed and discharged,” he said. Scott continued:

This case is of unusual importance because the Negroes

³⁵ Unpublished letter from Elisha Scott to Walter F. White, “Re: Coffeyville Kansas Riot Cases,” May 18, 1927; Letter from Elisha Scott to James Weldon Johnson, June 27, 1927. Letter from James Weldon Johnson to Elisha Scott, July 13, 1927; All from the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July-Dec,1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Unpublished letter from Elisha Scott to James Weldon Johnson, June 27, 1927.

³⁷ However, letters from the American Legion, and calls from Coffeyville’s mayor no doubt also influenced Governor Paulen to send his attorney general. *Ibid.*, “Kansas Attorney-General to Prosecute Rape Cases Personally. Action Due to Influence of N.A.A.C.P, Attorney Scott Writes. (NAACP press release, July 15, 1927.)

made a stand, turned back the mob and saved the property of our folks. And it is a fact without dispute, that these two white girls that I have afore named, were not assaulted by Negroes. (underlined text In the original)³⁸

William Pickens underscored the importance of the Coffeyville events to the NAACP. Pickens was a nationally known figure in the black America. He was known as “Dean Pickens” because he had been dean of Baltimore’s historically black Morgan State College (today, Morgan State University). Pickens, who was then working as the field secretary of the NAACP, was on a lecture tour of the Midwest, raising money through judging baby contests and speeches for the NAACP.³⁹ He wrote an urgent memo back to the NAACP board in New York, saying “This Coffeyville Case is one that we should push to the FINISH, if need be. Like the Detroit Case, it is an effort to deny colored people the right of self-defense against a mob,” he wrote.⁴⁰ Singling out

³⁸*Ibid.*, undated “Statement” (report) by Elisha Scott to NAACP Board, probably authored in mid-May, 1927. the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July-Dec,1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July-Dec,1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

³⁹ He was on the road for more than half the year. At one point, he asked his secretary in New York to rush ship him a belt, underwear, and socks when he suddenly added a new destination to his travels. Baby contests were a frequent fundraiser for the NAACP, and were held by many local branches. Typically, parents would buy a ticket for their child, and a celebrity judge would select the prettiest or cutest baby. “William Pickens Papers, 1906-1954” and “William Pickens Papers (Additions), 1909-1950.” Schomburg Manuscripts, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

⁴⁰ Ossian Sweet, a black physician, bought a house in a white neighborhood of Detroit, in 1925. When a white mob stoned the house, Sweet and several defenders fired back from the second floor, wounding one attacker and killing another. Dr. Sweet was tried for murder, and was successfully defended by an NAACP legal team, which at one point included Clarence Darrow. The organization’s membership soared as a result of the case’s notoriety.

Napoleon Anderson, he said “The only man in jeopardy of the law is one colored man who defended his place of business when the mob moved on it.”⁴¹

Pickens was a well-known national figure, who drew hundreds to each of his lectures. Like Pickens, Elisha Scott was well known to the people in Coffeyville, black and white. He had a personal history with that city, because he was the attorney retained by black parents and the NAACP local branch, who had successfully sued the board of education four years earlier, to desegregate the new junior high school.

Local and Regional Events Energized an Activist Community

The Klan and the 1924 Desegregation Case

The 1923-1924 Coffeyville junior high school desegregation case also helped politicize the city’s black community. The old junior high was overcrowded, and the city issued bonds and taxed everyone, white and black, to build a new junior high school. Once built, the school board arbitrarily barred admission to black students. This was a new development, as the elementary school included both white and black students. But there was a new force in Kansas, the Ku Klux Klan, which had expanded into the state. The Klan had had explosive growth nationally since the release of D.W. Griffith’s 1915

⁴¹ Memo from William Pickens “To the National Officers and The Board of Directors, June 5, 1927, datelined Coffeyville, Kan.” NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July-Dec,1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Also “William Pickens Papers, 1906-1954” and “William Pickens Papers (Additions), 1909-1950.” Schomburg Manuscripts, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

blockbuster, *The Birth of a Nation*. Several Klan organizations moved into Kansas from Oklahoma, looking to increase membership and set up local chapters.⁴²

Attorney Scott argued the case on behalf of Victoria Thurman, daughter of Celia Thurman-Watts. Under questioning by Scott, four members of the school board admitted being current or past members of the Klan. Scott's argument might strike us as strange today, in the post-*Brown v. Board* world. He did not attempt to overturn the doctrine of "Separate But Equal," which would have been impossible at the time. Instead, he argued on narrower grounds that only the biggest cities in Kansas -- "Cities of the First Class" -- were permitted under Kansas law to racially segregate their high schools. Because the new junior high included ninth grade -- in which a high-school curriculum was taught -- Coffeyville ("A City of the Second Class") could not legally segregate the new school. The Kansas Supreme Court concurred, and ordered the school desegregated. The ruling affected junior high schools across the state.⁴³

The victory was celebrated in Coffeyville and it helped the NAACP increase its membership nationally. There were letters of congratulation from the NAACP's national office, but there was a notable energizing of activism in Coffeyville too. At the end of 1924, the Ku Klux Klan newspaper in Coffeyville, which began publishing shortly after

⁴² The Klan dominated the politics of several states in the 1920s, most famously that of Oklahoma. In Kansas, the Klan had a short lifespan from about 1923 to 1928, when a local court upheld the long-litigated decision by Republican state officials to decertify the Klan as a foreign, i.e. out of state, corporation that was not licensed to operate in Kansas.

⁴³ "Kansas Citizens Win High School Fight. Court Orders Officials to Open Coffeyville School." *Kansas City Call* 5, No. 43, February 22, 1924; "Blame Klan in School Ouster at Coffeyville. Board of Education Refuses Our Children Admittance to Junior High School." *Chicago Defender*, November 10, 1923; "Open Door to School by Writ." *Chicago Defender*, February 23, 1924. Also "Prelude to Brown - 1924: Thurman-Watts v. Coffeyville." Website of the Brown Foundation.

<<<http://brownvboard.org/content/prelude-brown-1924-thurman-watts-v-coffeyville>>>

the ruling, was mysteriously blown up. “Authorities advanced two theories,” said the *New York Times* on the destruction of *The Daily Dawn*. “One [is] that the explosion was caused by vandals and the other that it was due to the accumulation of natural gas.” There seems to have been no further investigation of the cause.⁴⁴ In any case, the Republican Party finally succeeded in expelling the Klan from Kansas in 1927, after a five-year court battle.⁴⁵

An earlier event that may have energized the black citizens of Coffeyville was the race riot in nearby Independence, Kansas, in 1920. Along with the other race riots that erupted during the “Red Summer” of 1919, and the bloody Tulsa riot of 1921, it would reverberate as a trigger for activism and agency.

*The 1920 Independence (Kansas) Race Riot*⁴⁶

The Independence race riot was triggered by the robbery and murder of a white grocery store owner, R.R. Wharton. Reaction was swift to the word-of-mouth tale of black-on-white crime: “Automobiles loaded with armed men began to streak out over the country searching for the criminal,” wrote the *Independence Daily Reporter*. “The negro

⁴⁴ “Kansas Paper Blown Up.” *New York Times*, December 9, 1924.

⁴⁵ The Klan was expelled for being a “foreign corporation” based in Georgia that was not properly licensed to do business in the state. The anti-Klan assistant attorney general who handled the case was eventually elected attorney general (William A. Smith), the one who showed up in Coffeyville to rally the prosecution team. Sloan, “The Legal Ouster of the KKK from Kansas, 393-409.

⁴⁶ I am indebted to Brent Campney for alerting me to this event.

districts were combed by men who entered the houses...⁴⁷ The two Independence daily newspapers ran screaming headlines and even a front-page editorial titled “Let the Law Prevail.”⁴⁸ “The sentiment of many,” wrote the *Daily Reporter*, “[is] to lynch the negro would be giving him his just desserts.”⁴⁹

The riot began after police arrested Noble Green, 38, and three other suspects. Ralph Mitchell, a baker who had been making his morning delivery, walked in on the crime scene. He said he saw “a negro” reach into the cash drawer, but he could not positively identify the man to police. He told the white mob that gathered outside the jail that if he would come back the next morning and “take another look at him, and if he is the man I’ll help you boys string him up.” The next day, after receiving death threats, his memory seemingly improved, and he positively identified Green as the killer.⁵⁰

The Independence riot, unlike Coffeyville’s, had a death toll.⁵¹ One black man and one white child were killed. The spark that set off the gunfire was the accidental discharge of a shotgun by Arthur Harper, a 22-year-old black man who the white mob turned on, and riddled with bullets. That started two minutes of sustained shooting, with “negroes on the south side of the church firing west on Main Street and whites began

⁴⁷ “Ralph Mitchell Tells How He Saw Negro Robbing Cash Register.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80, December 16, 1920, 1.

⁴⁸ “Let the Law Prevail.” (Front-page editorial.) *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81, December 17, 1920, :1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, “Ralph Mitchell Tells...”

⁵⁰ “Mitchell Addresses Crowd, Urging Them to Disperse Last Night.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81, December 17, 1920; and “Green Identified as Slayer of R.R. Wharton.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 178, December 17, 1920.

⁵¹ While there were no officially recorded deaths from the Coffeyville riot, the African American newspapers asserted that some whites from Oklahoma were killed.

firing east.” The police chief, caught in the middle, got “two bullet holes through his left hat brim.”⁵²

The mayor requested aid, and the American Legion arrived from nearby towns. Later, the Kansas Militia arrived from Lawrence to patrol the streets. The black suspect was quickly charged with murder, and spirited away under cover of darkness for safekeeping in another town, before being sent to a secure prison in Lansing, Kansas.⁵³ Mobs of whites invaded the jails of nearby Girard and Ft. Scott, searching for the suspect. In the end, Independence “looked like an army camp this morning with young men carrying shotguns over their shoulders,” wrote the *Independence Daily Reporter* in a “Notes” column.⁵⁴

These events would have been a wakeup call for the black community in Coffeyville. There were rumors in Coffeyville that Green had been lynched. “Negroes and Whites Clash With Shot Guns and Revolvers,” ran the headline in the Coffeyville *Morning News*.⁵⁵ “The race feeling flared out again today when the Twentieth Century Club, a negro pool hall in the downtown section, was fired on,” said the *Coffeyville Daily*

⁵² “Accidental Shot Started the Riot.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81, December 17, 1920, 1; also “Never in Trouble Before”,1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, “Two Dead in Last Night’s Riot”, 1; “Call for Troops,” “Notes on Last Night’s Riot”,6; “Green Charged with First Degree Murder.” [*Independence Evening Star* 21, No. 155, December 18, 1920, 1; “Green Is Removed Early Today. Alleged Slayer of R.R. Wharton Taken Away Under a Guard of Special Officers as Soon as Two Companies of Militia Arrived from Lawrence.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82, December 18, 1920,1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, “Notes” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82, December 18, 1920.

⁵⁵ “Soldiers Patrol Independence. 2 Men Killed in a Fight Last Night. Negroes and Whites Clash With Shot Guns and Revolvers.” [*Coffeyville Morning News* 3, No. 271, December 17, 1920,1,6.

Journal.⁵⁶ The Coffeyville police stopped “any movement of negroes there who contemplated coming to Independence,” said the *Independence Daily Reporter*. Every interurban electric car that left the city was examined, and guards were placed at all the stops, as well as along the highways.⁵⁷ If the white-on-black violence in nearby Independence alarmed Coffeyville’s black community, what happened next in Tulsa would have the impact of a bomb blast.

The 1921 Burning of the Greenwood Section of Tulsa

The biggest attack on a black city occurred barely an hour’s ride from Coffeyville – even on the dirt roads of the 1920s – in the nearby city of Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1920. Tulsa was an hour and half drive from Coffeyville. There were economic links. Tulsa companies had branch offices in Coffeyville. One could argue that Coffeyville, which bordered on Oklahoma, was actually part of Tulsa’s cultural orbit more than it was of Topeka’s or Kansas City’s.

The initial dynamics of the Tulsa Race riot paralleled Coffeyville’s¹. There was a black suspect, Dick Rowland, who had been apprehended for attempted rape. A white lynch mob surrounded the courthouse. Alerted by the staff of the black newspaper, *The Tulsa Star*, a group of 75 African American men marched to the courthouse to defend it. A skirmish occurred with the white mob. At daybreak on June 1st, perhaps 10,000 whites, organized in three groups, some armed with machine guns, invaded the

⁵⁶ “Green Identified as Slayer of R.R. Wharton.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 178, December 17, 1920,1.

⁵⁷ “Heard of a Lynching. Coffeyville Police Report Many Wild Stories There.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81, December 17, 1920,4.

Greenwood Section of Tulsa after a siren sounded at 5:08 a.m. Six airplanes, piloted by whites, fired on and bombed the neighborhood. Oklahoma National Guardsmen entered the fray, but their role was not impartial; they shot at black residents, using their standard-issue Springfield rifles.

As engines of the Tulsa Fire Department arrived, and attempted to fight the fires set by marauding whites, they were driven off. National Guardsmen began rounding up black prisoners. They broke into black homes, and ordered residents out at gunpoint, before burning the houses. The National Guard setup prison camps for blacks at Tulsa's Convention Hall, the Fairgrounds, and McNulty Park. Months later, a retired Tulsa policeman told how prominent city officials had preplanned the attack with airplanes. In all, 35 city blocks were burnt, and up to 300 residents were killed.⁵⁸

Certainly, the horrific events in Tulsa electrified Coffeyville's black community. Probably many had connections there: family, friends, and business. Within a year, there were efforts to charter an NAACP Local Branch in Coffeyville. Fifty people were required to sign up and pay the \$5 annual dues for the local branch to be chartered. The original membership roster in 1922, showed the occupations. Along with those of the black middle class – teachers, doctors, dentists, etc. – there are a significant number of people that would be considered working class: laborers, seamstresses, domestics, and

⁵⁸ Estimates vary between 50 and 300 deaths. There were legal battles afterward over the disposition of real estate in the black neighborhood. White officials attempted to prevent resettlement by African Americans. Don Ross, *A Century of African-American Experience: Greenwood: Ruins, Resilience and Renaissance*, (Tulsa, OK: Greenwood Cultural Center, 2002).

laundresses.⁵⁹ The activism in Coffeyville had deep roots. Perhaps it was from events in Tulsa, perhaps from Independence, Kansas, perhaps it was from the previous battles over integrating the junior high. Perhaps it was simply having a cadre of activist individuals who could make a difference in marshaling community support.

The Coffeyville events of 1927 were a remarkable burst of agency. The local community and the NAACP succeeded in first shifting responsibility for the rapes from the traditional scapegoat to the likely perpetrators. Then the community's efforts succeeded in getting Napoleon Anderson acquitted of firearms charges connected to the riot. The victory was incomplete, however. No one was ever convicted of the rapes. No African American succeeded in getting the city to pay damages for their injuries. Civil juries denied damages for Hershel Ford and Napoleon Anderson. In Anderson's case, the multiple bullet wounds were certainly crippling.

Several civil rights leaders were involved with Coffeyville, early in their careers. Roy Wilkins, who headed the NAACP in the 1960s and 1970s, was a 25-year-old activist editor at the *Kansas City Call* in 1927, in holding his first real job as a journalist. After several years reporting news from Kansas City – news that included Coffeyville – he moved to New York and joined the NAACP national office.⁶⁰ He was hired on as assistant to Walter F. White, and soon became the editor of the NAACP's national

⁵⁹ Coffeyville 1922 membership list, NAACP Collection, US Library of Congress

⁶⁰ White became the head the NAACP National Office after James Weldon Johnson resigned, in 1930, to take a position at Fisk University. White was promoted on the basis of his work in the Anti-Lynching Campaign. Interestingly, soon after Wilkins joined the National Office, his *Kansas City Call* reporter, Carl Beckwith took a position there too.

The victory against lynching in Coffeyville probably had an impact on these career advancements. It was certainly promoted enough in the National Office's press releases in the summer of 1927. NAACP Collection, US Library of Congress.

magazine, *The Crisis*, replacing W.E.B. Du Bois. Unlike Wilkins, Elisha Scott, the Topeka attorney who influenced events behind the scenes in Coffeyville, is now a forgotten figure. Scott, whose long legal career stretches from World War I to the 1960s, who defended two heavyweight champions, Jack Johnson and Joe Louis, and whose 1924 lawsuit desegregated junior highs in Kansas, has been largely forgotten. If he is remembered at all, it is because of his two sons – Charles Scott and John Scott – who were attorneys of record for the parents in the original *Brown v. Board* filing.

Like the successful resistance in Coffeyville, memory of Elisha Scott has seemingly vanished from Kansas's history. His son, Charles, is remembered because his notable role as the original attorney for the *Brown v. Board* parents. His personal papers were donated to the University of Kansas's Spencer Research Library. A fire at Elisha's house destroyed his own papers in the 1950s. What the city of Coffeyville chose to remember about its past is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EPILOGUE: CONSTRUCTING MEMORY SELECTING HISTORICAL FACTS

Coffeyville stands out as a forgotten but successful episode of resistance. African Americans exercised agency in a decisive way. They were able to repel false charges, malicious prosecutions, and even the violence of a white lynch mob. In this manner, Coffeyville heralded the racial climate of the future.

White supremacy and male privilege triumphed in the end; they not only won the trial but, for the time being, they reset and normalized the gender and racial system that had supported the accusations. Whether intentional or not, memory of the case disappeared. In the immediate aftermath, the county prosecutor—the one who had so undermined the case —promised he would hunt down the real assailants.¹ He never did, despite a petition by 900 citizens to empanel a grand jury -- it had double the number of signatures required.² Prosecutions for the riot were dropped,³ and lawsuits for riot damages were denied.⁴ In December, when each of the three daily newspapers ran their year-end summaries of the news of 1927 – the stories mentioned Sacco and Vanzetti and

¹ “County Attorney In Statement Says End Is Not Here As Yet; Promises Thorough Investigation of Coffeyville Assault Case By Office,” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, no. 266, July 20, 1927, 1; “Keith Offer of Aid in Assault Case to Mitchell and ‘Mac’,” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, no. 267, July 21, 1927;

² “Grand Jury Will Be Petitioned For At Once, Sponsors of Grand Jury Petition to Insist on Learning Facts In Case,” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, no. 145, July 22, 1927, 1-2.

³ In all, 22 people had been charged with “unlawful assembly” for rioting. All charges were dropped. “Detailed History of Assault Case”, 1.

⁴The one exception was a teen who worked for the *Coffeyville Daily Journal*, as a printer’s apprentice. He had been shot by accident during the riot. He had lost three fingers from buckshot, and the newspaper’s editors covered reports of his injuries sympathetically.

Charles Lindbergh. But there was no mention of the rape, riot, four-day occupation by the National Guard, or the acquittal.⁵ The events had vanished from local historical memory, but not the beliefs about black men and white girls that had set them into motion.⁶

“Memory is one of the most powerful elements in our human constitution,” wrote historian David Blight.⁷ In its collective form, as public memory, certain events are endorsed and memorialized; others are forgotten. There is an inevitable selection process. This is particularly true of public history, where the erecting of a memorial – or a museum exhibit – gives sanction to a particular view of the past. Certain events fit the endorser’s accepted frame of reference. Others are consigned to the dustbin of history. Sometimes there is actual suppression of the memory of painful events. That has certainly occurred with the subject of slavery, and its omission from the public tours of the great plantation houses of the Old South.⁸ But another common situation is that an

⁵ “Many Tragedies In News Review of 1927,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, December 31, 1927, 3; “News Events of 1927 Outlined Briefly,” *Independence Daily Reporter*, January 2, 1928, 5-7.

⁶ The *Chicago Defender*, the leading black newspaper in the country, did however recall at least one aspect of the events in its year end wrap-up with the heading “Coffeyville Riot Quelled.” The four-sentence news item had many inaccuracies – it said that 10 white men were killed in the riot – and it failed to note the surprising indictments of whites for the rapes that triggered the riot. “Significant Changes Mark the Year 1927,” *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, January 7, 1928, 6. The *Defender* never published another item about the Coffeyville riot or trial. There was no mention of the events in the *Kansas City Call* either. The memory disappeared.

⁷ David Blight, “If You Don’t Tell It Like It Was, It Can Never Be As It Ought To Be,” *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American History*, ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (New York: The New Press (W.W. Norton & Company), 2006), 20-33.

⁸ Most plantation houses are either commercial or non-profit tourist attractions. They are invested in glorifying an antebellum past that was romanticized in *Gone With The Wind*.

event simply does not comport with our understanding of the past. Selection becomes the great filter, and the event is omitted. That, I argue, is the case with Coffeyville riot and trial.

The city of Coffeyville today celebrates one particular event from its past. It draws thousands of tourists each year. It has christened landmarks and historic sites, commemorating the blood-soaked event. That event is the Dalton Gang Raid of 1892, and Coffeyville is justifiably famous as “The Town that Stopped the Dalton Gang.”

The Chamber of Commerce took a lead in promoting this identity for the town, and is highly successful in drawing tourists. The old downtown has been restored with an eye to creating a Dalton Experience for visitors. There are murals all through the downtown area that commemorate this particular memory. The Old Condon Bank – one of the two banks in Coffeyville that the Dalton Gang robbed – has been carefully restored and repainted. The Coffeyville Chamber of Commerce, whose offices are in the building next door, conducts on-demand tours of the bank building, and the famous vault. There is a huge “Dalton Defenders Museum” only one block away that celebrates this brief moment of memory in Coffeyville’s Wild West Past, with signs highlighting “Death Alley,” the exact spot where four of the Dalton Gang were shot by the city’s defenders.

A similar controversy arose when the Library of Congress created a traveling exhibit about plantation slavery called “Back of the Big House.” While it was scheduled to tour at ten venues, the exhibition was cancelled due to protests from both whites and African Americans. “Apparently, the seething anger over long-standing grievances made any image that recalled abusive dimensions of the African American past unacceptable,” wrote one of the authors. John Michael Vlach, “The Last Great Taboo Subject: Exhibiting Slavery at the Library of Congress,” *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American History*, ed. James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton (New York: The New Press (W.W. Norton & Company), 2006), 57-73.

The Coffeyville Historical Society operates the museum. The Society and the Chamber of Commerce have “monetized” this identity for Coffeyville in several ways. The Coffeyville Historical Society sells books and mementos of the Dalton Raid. The Chamber of Commerce sells postcards, showing the four members of the Dalton Gang, dead, lying behind bars in the city jail.

The Museum is a large facility with multimedia presentations that draws tens of thousands of tourists annually. While it highlights the Dalton Raid, it celebrates several other key points in the city’s Western past, including memorabilia and famous Coffeyville sports figures. There are also exhibits on famous people who emerged from Coffeyville, such as baseball player Walter Johnson – the strikeout king who pitched for the Washington Senators -- and Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie, the Party’s nominee for the Presidency in 1940 who was defeated by Franklin Roosevelt. Willkie taught American History for one year, in 1915-16 at Coffeyville High School, before returning to Indiana University for his law degree. The museum’s visitors are drawn to the 80-foot-long diorama of Old Coffeyville, a Wild West Street, with saloons, sheriffs, gun fighters, saloon girls, gas lamps, and a jail holding a likeness of the wounded, surviving Dalton brother, Emmett.⁹

The city even favors the celebrity of the four dead Dalton Gang lawbreakers over the gravesites of its own law-enforcement defenders. The Chamber of Commerce

⁹ Emmett Dalton served 15 years for robbery and murder, before being pardoned by Kansas Governor Edward W. Hoch in 1907. He then joined Pawnee Bill’s Wild West Show, and eventually moved to Hollywood and became a scriptwriter and technical advisor on Westerns. He acted in two silent films about the Dalton Gang. “Thereafter, he found a legal way to talk people out of their money and began selling Los Angeles real estate in the 1920s.” Near death, evangelist Sister Aimee Semple McPherson baptized him. (Rasmussen, 2001)

distributes tourist maps, showing the route to the cemetery where both the Dalton Gang and Coffeyville defenders are buried. Upon visiting it, one easily finds the huge poster-sized signs marking graves of Robert and Granton Dalton – their celebrity trumps not only history, but the less-marked graves of Coffeyville’s defenders.¹⁰ There is, however, a Dalton Defenders Motel on 5th Street, so perhaps free enterprise has rescued what the city fathers have chosen to neglect.

This poses a rhetorical question, however. What if Coffeyville decided to celebrate the forgotten event of African American agency that is, arguably, more significant than the Dalton Raid, because it is a notable milestone in early Civil Rights History?

Laying the Groundwork for the Modern Civil Rights Era

Emporia editor William Allen White famously asked “What’s the Matter with Kansas?” a question that was recently echoed by Thomas Frank in his book of the same name. The problem with Kansas, at least in Civil Rights History, is that it breaks our narrative frames of reference.

The “short” Civil Rights Era – what Bayard Rustin called “the classic era” -- runs from *Brown* in 1954 to the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965. *Brown* is usually presented as the achievement of Thurgood Marshall. The dominant narrative focuses on the Jim Crow South – the site of the worst abuses in America’s racial caste system. But the dominant narrative fails to answer why *Brown* took place in the less-restrictive

¹⁰ The gravesite also sports the hitching post, used by the Dalton’s to tie up their horses outside the Condon Bank. It had been moved several miles from “Death Alley” where they were shot!

Kansas. More generally, that narrative obscures the contribution of the Border States in the Long Civil Rights Movement that we call “the Black Freedom Struggle.”¹¹

If Hollywood had depicted Kansas as it was, Dorothy’s parents, in *The Wizard of Oz*, would be shown to have hired at least one black farm hand. His parents might have arrived poor and penniless in Kansas, as part of the “Kansas Fever” that had swept through black communities along with Mississippi in the Deep South in 1879-1880. Or his parents might have been homesteaders, who arrived from Tennessee with some funds and tools, and purchased a plot to homestead and live on. If they had lived in one of the bigger cities, Topeka, Wichita, or Kansas City, Kansas – “Cities of the First Class” under Kansas law – this farmhand would have attended a segregated high school after going to integrated elementary and junior high schools. His high school, however, was probably a well-built two-story brick structure with many classrooms: a contrast to the one-room wooden shack his parents might have attended for their six years of rural schooling in Mississippi.

¹¹ The Border States were an important first wedge in the NAACP’s strategy to dismantle the “Separate but Equal” doctrine in the decades before *Brown v. Board*. The NAACP focused initially on admission of African Americans to law schools, as in *State of Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), and *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* (1948). Having won victories in challenging “Separate but Equal” in those venues, the NAACP moved forward on several public school cases. *Brown* was united with several other cases, but was significant because there was no evidence of inferior school facilities. I argue that it was also significant because of James H. Guy, Elisha Scott, and other African American attorneys who had been battling school segregation under state law in Kansas throughout the twentieth century. Coffeyville was the site of two of those cases, the later one in 1924, described previously, was a victory for the black community.

Memorializing and Monetizing Coffeyville's Contribution

But what if the City of Coffeyville decided that it had a real pot of gold in remembering and marketing its place in Civil Rights History? What if it set up a trail of numbered historical markers that took a visitor through the stages of the capture of the black suspects, the victory over lynching, and the successful thwarting of the attack on the black neighborhood? What if it told the story of the unprecedented turnabout of the rape allegation? What if it connected Elisha Scott with his sons, who laid the groundwork for *Brown v. Board*?

There are already four books based around Civil Rights tourism, such as Jim Carrier's *Traveler's Guide to the Civil Rights Movement*. The little city of Coffeyville, whose biggest employers today are the school district and the Amazon.com warehouse, might draw to itself a new source of tourism. While the most famous battles of the Civil Rights Era occurred in the South, the struggle was nationwide. Kansas had a significant role, and Coffeyville's African American citizens played a part. Their efforts and victories should not be forgotten.

APPENDIX A

COLD CASE FILE:

TRACING A POTENTIAL RAPE SUSPECT 85 YEARS LATER

It would be convenient to say that the sexual assault part of the Coffeyville story ended with the acquittal of Ira Kennedy and the dropping of charges against Julia Mooney, but that was not the case. The Montgomery County Attorney dropped riot charges against the 22 whites and blacks whom he had previously charged. Napoleon Anderson was acquitted of discharging a weapon within the city limits, when he shot at the white lynch mob that was advancing on his pool hall. The courts dismissed the damage suits that Anderson had filed against the city.

Over a thousand citizens signed a petition, urging the prosecutor to empanel a grand jury to track down the rapists of the girls. The two newspapers in Coffeyville wrote editorials demanding a grand jury. The County Attorney said he would call one, but he never did. Three years later, after the traumatic first shockwaves from the Great Depression began to be felt in Kansas, the flapper era of the 1920s must have seemed like a dream as faded as an old photograph, as if it had never even happened.

Certainly, Hughes and Anderson would not forget the riot that caused their injuries, which in Anderson's case were severe and crippling. He had sustained bullet wounds in both knees.

The trial's outcome was convenient because the real assailants were never unmasked. There is a considerable body of circumstantial evidence, however, alleged by *The Kansas City Call*, that they were the sons of prominent citizens. The *Coffeyville Daily Journal* reported that the football star of Coffeyville High School, Chet Benefiel,

was caught eavesdropping at the courtroom door after the judge had ordered the courtroom cleared of anyone under 18. The judge then reprimanded him.¹ Benefiel might have been just a gossip, or a local celebrity with entitled behavior, but perhaps there was something more. Ira Kennedy's defense attorney made a point of calling Benefiel as a witness during the preliminary hearing. Arch Williams questioned Benefiel to elicit denials that he had ever been to the Mooney home, or that he even knew Ira Kennedy. The reporter for the *Coffeyville Daily Journal* wrote:

Benefiel said he was not acquainted with Kennedy.

"Where were you on the night of March 17?" Mr. Mitchell asked.

"At the St. Patrick's dance at Memorial Hall," he replied.

"Did you see either of these two girls there?"

"No."

"Have you been to the Mooney home *since* the attack?" (Emphasis added)

"No."

"Have you been to the Akers home?"

"I have."

"Did you ever hear Margaret Akers or Julia Mooney mention Kennedy in your conversations with them?"

"I have not."

Benefiel left the stand smiling.²

¹ "Jury Trial Next Phase of Assault", *Coffeyville Daily Journal* (June 20, 1927): 3.

² *Ibid.*

One wonders why calling Benefiel as a witness was necessary. No one had ever publicly named him as a suspect. Yet Kennedy's defense attorney felt it was necessary to *disassociate* his client from Benefiel. Note the unusual wording – why would the attorney phrase it – *since* the attack? Could it be to prevent Benefiel from perjuring himself, because the attorney knew he had been in the Mooney house *on the night* of the attack? Most importantly, the questioning created an official alibi for his whereabouts. Why create an alibi for someone who was not involved?

Perhaps it was to quash the rumors.

The black community thought important white boys had been involved from the beginning. In his initial report to the NAACP National Office, Elisha Scott said “It appears that two very prominent young white men of Coffeyville Kansas had a party with these girls and that is where the story originates.”³ The black press suspected that the purpose of the investigation was to cover-up the real perpetrators. “Whites Hush-Up Coffeyville Inquiry” said a front-page headline in the *Kansas City Call*, which was concerned about secret questioning conducted by the independent investigator, a month before arrest warrants were issued for Mooney and Kennedy.⁴ In the following week, in a “special to *The Call*” – probably a leak from Elisha Scott, City Attorney Walter Keith, or the private investigator – the newspaper alleged, “Two young scions of the ‘best’

³ Scott also wrote, in a letter to NAACP counsel Arthur Spigarn, that he would furnish a letter naming the boys, if the NAACP lawyer wanted it. From the NAACP Administrative File, “Subj File: Lynching Coffeyville: for, “Mar–May, 1927, and July–Dec, 1927. NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

⁴ “Whites ‘Hush Up’ Coffeyville Inquiry”, *Kansas City Call* 8, No. 48 (4/1/27): 1.

families are suspected.”⁵ The newspaper continued: “One comes from a family that runs a business of no mean size and the other has a father who at the time was identified as prominent in building character in men.” Chet’s father, Issac, ran a butcher shop and meat market. The second reference is unclear: it might be about a man who was involved in the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, a teacher, or a pastor.⁶

The first reports of the rapes in the *Coffeyville Daily Journal* acknowledged the rumor of white involvement, even as “the negro story” became the dominant theme. Buried on page 2, under the subhead “Certain Assailants Were Negroes, the reporter wrote: “The rumor that the three were white men blacked up was discredited today when one of the girls asserted that she was positive her hands encountered kinky hair on a negro’s head during the assault.”⁷ One could almost hear the gasp of relief by the white reporter and Coffeyville’s establishment.

If he had been one of the assailants, there was probably considerable pressure to protect Chet Benefiel. He and Billy Boehm were local heroes. They were stars of the high school football team. They were symbols of the community. They would graduate

⁵ “Arrests Near in Rape Case in Coffeyville. Two Young Scions of ‘Best’ Families are Suspected of Assault.” *Kansas City Call* (4/8/27): 1.

⁶ In later correspondence between Elisha Scott and the NAACP National Office, he referred to information that he had previously sent, which had identified the prominent white perpetrators. However, a search of his previous letters to Walter F. White and James Weldon Johnson showed that while he hinted, there was no smoking gun to the identities of the “white scions.”

⁷ That was Margaret’s initial story, before she became certain that her assailant was Ira Kennedy. “Two Girls Assaulted”, *Coffeyville Daily News* (3/18/27):2.

in 1927 and go on to achieve NCAA records in the late 1920s at the University of Tulsa, as “the Coffeyville Twins.”⁸

The strongest evidence of a cover-up was the testimony itself. Margaret Akers had testified that she recognized one of her attackers, but she declined to say who it was. Incredibly, the prosecutors did not press her on it.⁹ Why was this not pursued? Was it because one of the town heroes might be implicated? Benefiel was not only the school’s outstanding athlete, who had lettered in football, basketball, and track. He was also the senior class president. Benefiel was part of the town’s elite: His uncle served as the principal of the Junior High School for over 33 years. Today, the Roosevelt Middle School’s assembly hall bears the name “The Benefiel Auditorium.”

Chet Benefiel went on to have an outstanding athletic career at Tulsa, first as a player who scored the first touchdown in the University’s new stadium, then as a football star for four years. He then served as a winning football coach for eight years (assistant coach for six, head coach for two). He was so famous in Oklahoma that local Tulsa eateries sought endorsements from him, and used his likeness in their newspaper advertising.¹⁰

⁸ Chad Bonham, *Golden Hurricane Football: At the University of Tulsa* (Mt. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 10,23.

⁹ “She admitted getting a good look at his build and the outline of his features, but when asked to state who she thought he was, refused.” “Jury Trial Next Phase of Assault,” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* (6/20/27):3.

¹⁰ “Where Collegians Eat... Chet Benefiel says: ‘I think the Pig Stand is a swell place to eat.’” Advertisement, *The Tulsa Collegian* (10/11/40):P4

Then something happened. According to the University of Tulsa school newspaper, both Benefiel and his assistant coach resigned in December, 1940.¹¹ The reason was never mentioned, and the University's president said the record of the 1940 team "had no bearing on Benefiel's resignation." Tellingly, the University rejected the assistant coach's resignation but accepted Benefiel's, indicating that he was perhaps forced to resign. After that, Chet Benefiel, a figure bigger than life, disappeared from Tulsa.

What kind of scandal might lead to a winning coach's resignation and dismissal, with no follow-up news stories about him? I was not able to find out. In fact, there is no more mention of Benefiel until 1945, when the *Atchison Daily Globe* ran a wire photo of Lt. Chester (Chet) J. Benefiel, who had just been named head coach at the U.S. Navy Training Center, in the small Finger Lakes town of Sampson, New York. The facility was opened after the World War II to process the discharge of naval officers and sailors. It would close within six months, by April 1946.¹²

This career path, moving from a major collegiate athletic power to what is arguably a backwater, hints that perhaps there was a stain on Benefiel's reputation. It fits with a historically common pattern of cover-up when sexual malfeasance is involved. This is perhaps best exemplified in recent history by the Jerry Sandusky scandal at Penn State, whose cover-up led to the resignation of head coach Joe Paterno, the face of Penn State football for 45 years.

¹¹ Baskette Mosse, "Benefiel Resigns Grid Job, Sterrett Named Cage Coach," *The Tulsa Collegian* (12/6/40):1

¹² "At Sampson", *Atchison Daily Globe* (9/22/45):8.

Malfeasance by star athletes has recurred enough time in American history to deserve recognition as a trend in itself.¹³ Thus, it leaves us with an enduring mystery surrounding the Coffeyville rapists.

¹³ One recent example is the rape scandal in Maryville, Missouri, in 2012 and 2013, with its allegations of prosecutorial cover-up. Another is the Steubenville, Ohio, rape case of 2012, which also involved high school football players as protected local heroes. On the other hand, overzealous prosecutors have occasionally withheld exculpatory evidence that would acquit athletes accused sexual assault – which seems to have been the case with Durham County District Attorney Mike Nifong and the 2006 case involving the Duke University Lacrosse Team. Nifong was disbarred for prosecutorial misconduct.

The lesson, however, is that such emotion-charged cases involving accusations against star athletes and the sons of powerful families can boomerang against the prosecutors who undertake them.

APPENDIX B
ILLUSTRATIONS

Map 1: Coffeyville, Kansas, and surrounding area.



Fig. 1. Location of Coffeyville, Kansas, on the state line with Oklahoma.
Map courtesy of National Park Service.
<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/99condon/99locate1.htm>

Held Prisoners



— Press Photos.

These Coffeyville, Kas., high school girls were held prisoners in their own room two hours by three Negroes early Friday morning. A search by posses and bloodhounds, arrests of three Negroes and attempts to lynch the prisoners almost brought on a race war in Coffeyville. The girls are Miss Julia Mooney, 19 years old, (above), and Miss Margaret Akers, 17.

Fig. 2. Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers, 1927.
Held Prisoners. Press Photos, *Kansas City Post*, March 19, 1927.
Kansas City Public Library.



Fig. 3. Mooney House at 812 West 9th Street, Coffeyville, Kansas.
The Crime Scene. Photo by the author, (8/04/2012)

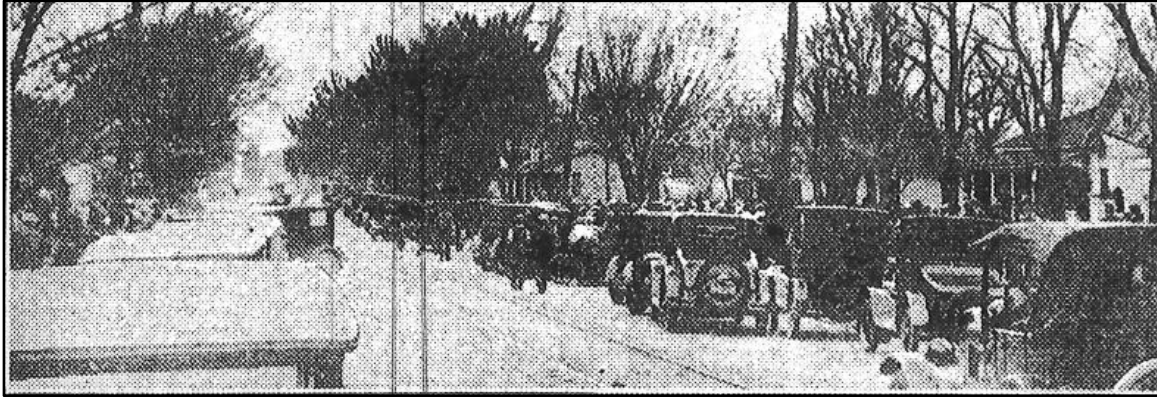


Fig. 4. A line of cars followed the police bloodhounds to the suspects' house. *Scenes in Coffeyville Late Yesterday When Mob Violence Was Set Aflame. Topeka Journal, March 19, 1927. Montgomery County Clippings, Volume 3: 1883-1932. Kansas State Historical Society, 1999.*

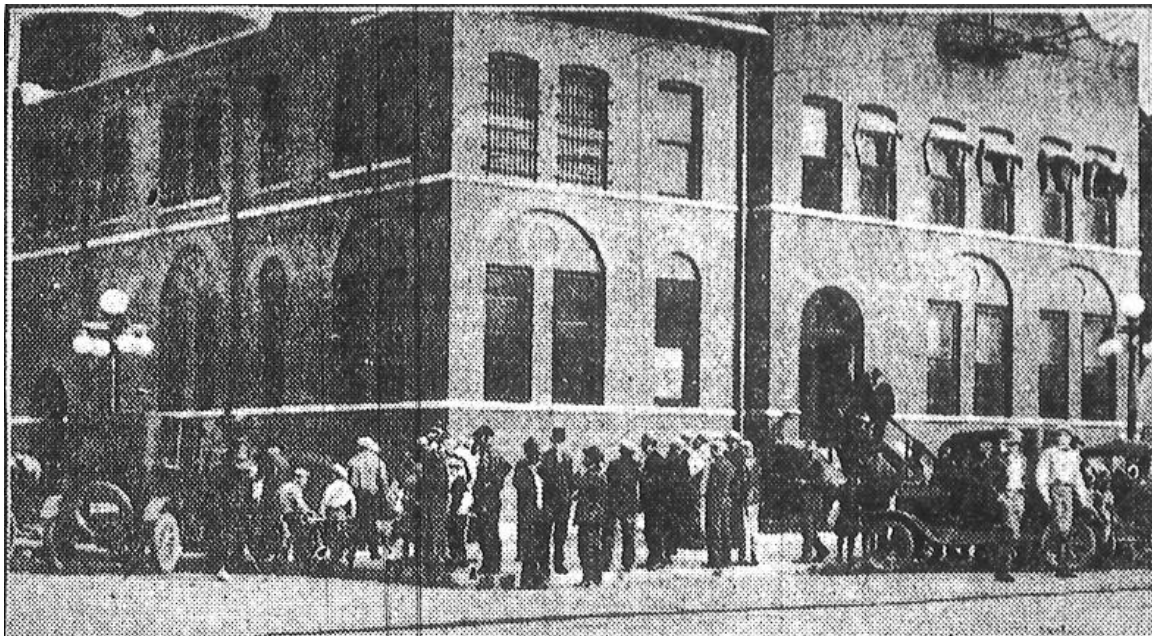


Fig. 5. A white mob gathered in front of the city hall and jail, shown with bars on the second-floor corner window. *Coffeyville Citizens, Incensed, Group for Action. Kansas City Post, March 19, 1927. Kansas City Public Library.*



Fig. 6: Headlines from the local, white-owned newspapers.

Her Tale Started Riot

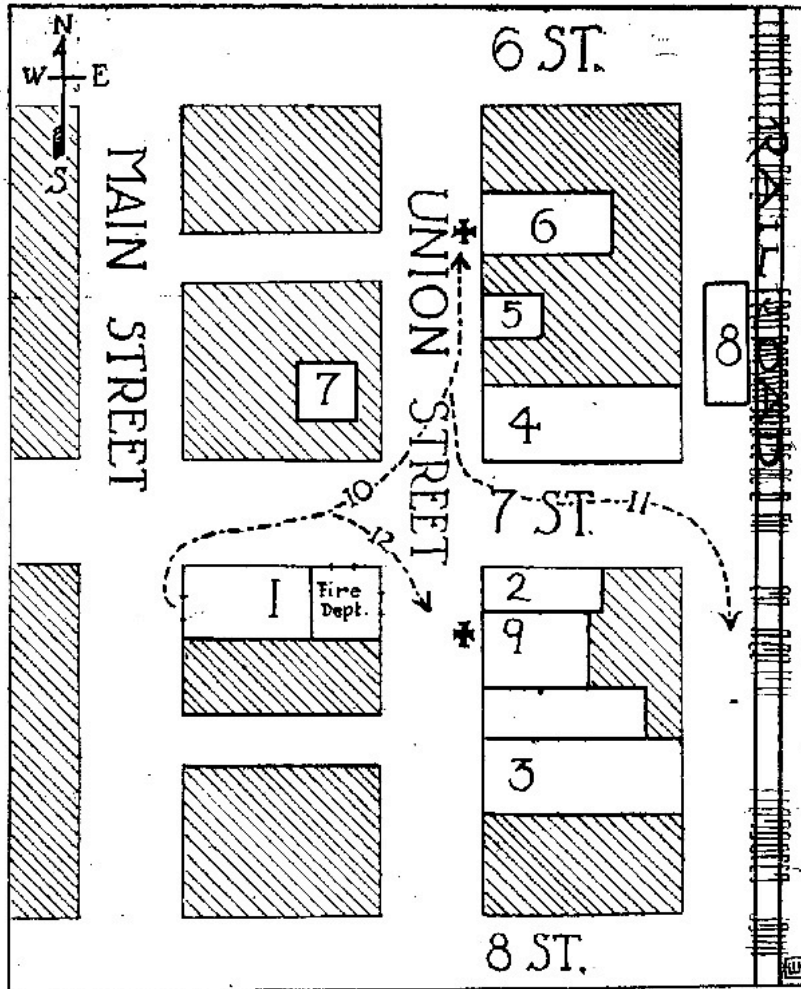


JULIA MOONEY

Coffeyville, Kas., high school girl, who is held in jail there on \$20,000 bond charged with being accessory after the fact in the alleged raping of Margaret Akers, another high school girl, by a white man, said to be Ira Kennedy, an auto salesman. Kennedy is also in jail held for the same bond. The Mooney girl and her chum, caused the Coffeyville race riot on March 17, 18 and 19 when they screamed that they had been assaulted by three Negroes about midnight, March 17. Private detectives declare they have evidence now that the "party" in the girls' bedroom was arranged by the Mooney girl and that all deliberately planned to blame the affair on Negroes.

Fig. 7: The black-owned *Kansas City Call* cast Julia Mooney as the villain. Her allegations triggered the race riot. Charges against her were dropped during the trial.

Where a Few Negroes Made a Mob Change Its Mind



- 1.—City Hall.
- 2.—Salvation Army building in front of which group of Negroes were standing, watching mob stone city hall.
- 3.—People's Drug Store, colored, one of buildings sixty members of mob planned to loot and burn.
- 4.—Feed Store, white, in front of which Negroes were standing who were chased by mob towards
- 5.—Barber shop owned by Curtis Smith and
- 6.—Alameda Club, where they met other men who returned fire of

- mob and forced them to turn and run.
- 7.—Commercial hotel, white, from which rifle shots are alleged to have been fired at club.
- 8.—Katy station, where Gus Hughes was found, seriously injured by members of mob who slipped up behind him and stabbed him.
- 9.—Negro places of business; balance of block is white.
- 10.—Route taken by mob chasing Negroes; cross marks as far as they got.

- 11.—Marks route taken in hurried retreat of mob, after group of twenty or thirty Negroes decided to shoot it out with mob numbering about 2,000.
- 12.—Sixty members of mob who took this route to burn stores, but had their minds changed by one man, Bob Liggins, at spot marked by cross. There was no mob 10 minutes after this action, which was hours before the soldiers arrived.

Fig. 8: Location of city hall and jail (1), and Napoleon Anderson's Alameda Club pool hall (6) and barbershop (5). Where deputy Robert Liggins stood off the mob (12 ⊕). Where Napoleon Anderson fired into the mob (6 ⊕).
Kansas City Call, March 25, 1927

This Is the Picture Story of How the

30 MARCH 17
AFTER RETURNING from a movie, Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers retire to bed at 11:30 p. m. March 17, in a house owned by Julia's father. The girls are alone in the house, which has only one furnished bedroom - the one in which they sleep.

MIDNIGHT
ABOUT MIDNIGHT they were awakened by three men who "wrestled with them for more than an hour." The Akers girl was assaulted by one man who is said to be Ira Kennedy, 30, an auto salesman, who rented the house from the Mooneys until one week prior to the riot.

1:30 SAME NIGHT
AFTER THE PARTY was over the five persons held a conference and decided to give out the story that three Negroes had assaulted the two girls. The Mooney girl is said to have tried to arouse neighbors, and, failing the first time, proposed to go back and "make a night of it."

Fig. 9: How *The Call* explained a complicated story on its front page, after the indictments were announced. The "conference" is conjectural.

Truth Caught Up With the Coffeyville Lie.

1:50
THE CRY OF "Negroes attacked us" aroused the whole town about 2 a. m. and from then on the riot spirit grew until a mob stormed the jail seeking suspects. The mob ransacked the Negro residence district, but was checked when armed Negroes were met.

THE NEXT WEEK
THE NEXT WEEK white people began whispering what Negroes already knew, that is, that white men and not Negroes were guilty of the crime against the girls. Coffeyville tried to hush up the inquiry.

MAY 30
BUT NEGROES AND SOME white people were determined the truth should be found out. Negroes gave \$100 cash toward a fund to investigate the riot, hired a Burns detective, and on May 30, Julia Mooney was jailed charged with aiding in the raping of Margaret Akers. Kennedy is also in jail, charged with raping the Akers girl.

Fig. 10: This version of events fails to account for the discarded soot-stained nightshirts found in the bathroom, which indicate blackface was used. Margaret Akers testified she recognized one attacker. *Kansas City Call*, June 3, 1927.

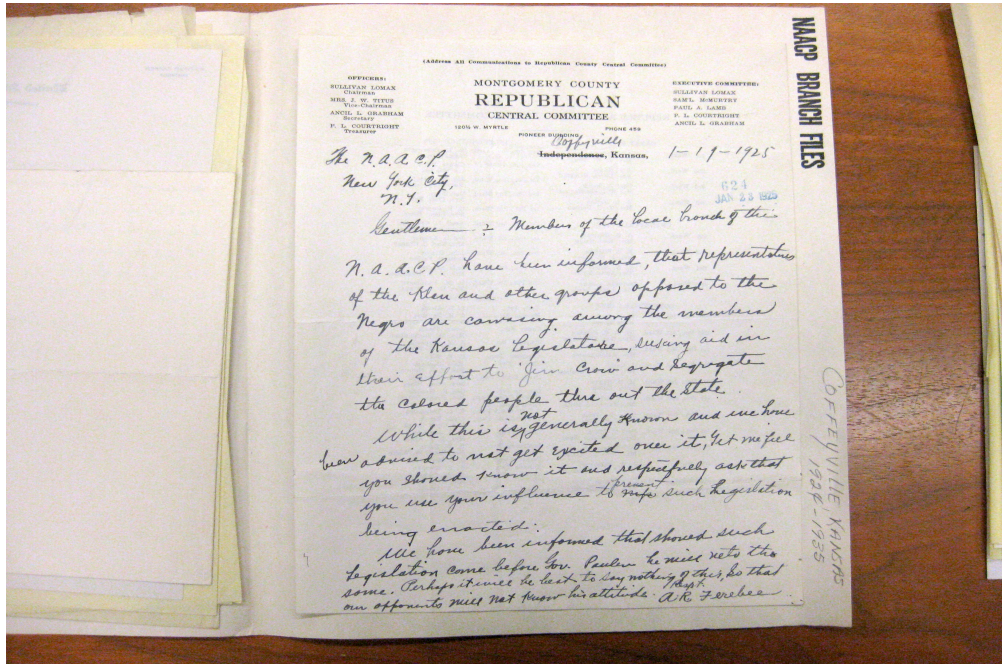


Fig. 11: Letter to NAACP national office from Dr. A. R. Ferebee, of Coffeyville, on letterhead of the Republican county central committee. Ferebee was both a Republican precinct leader and a NAACP local official. This shows the close working relationship between Kansas Republicans and the NAACP national office. (NAACP Papers)



Fig 12: Roy Wilkins, news editor of *Kansas City Call* in 1927. (NAACP Papers, US Library of Congress)



Fig. 13: Elisha J. Scott, attorney for the NAACP. (Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas)

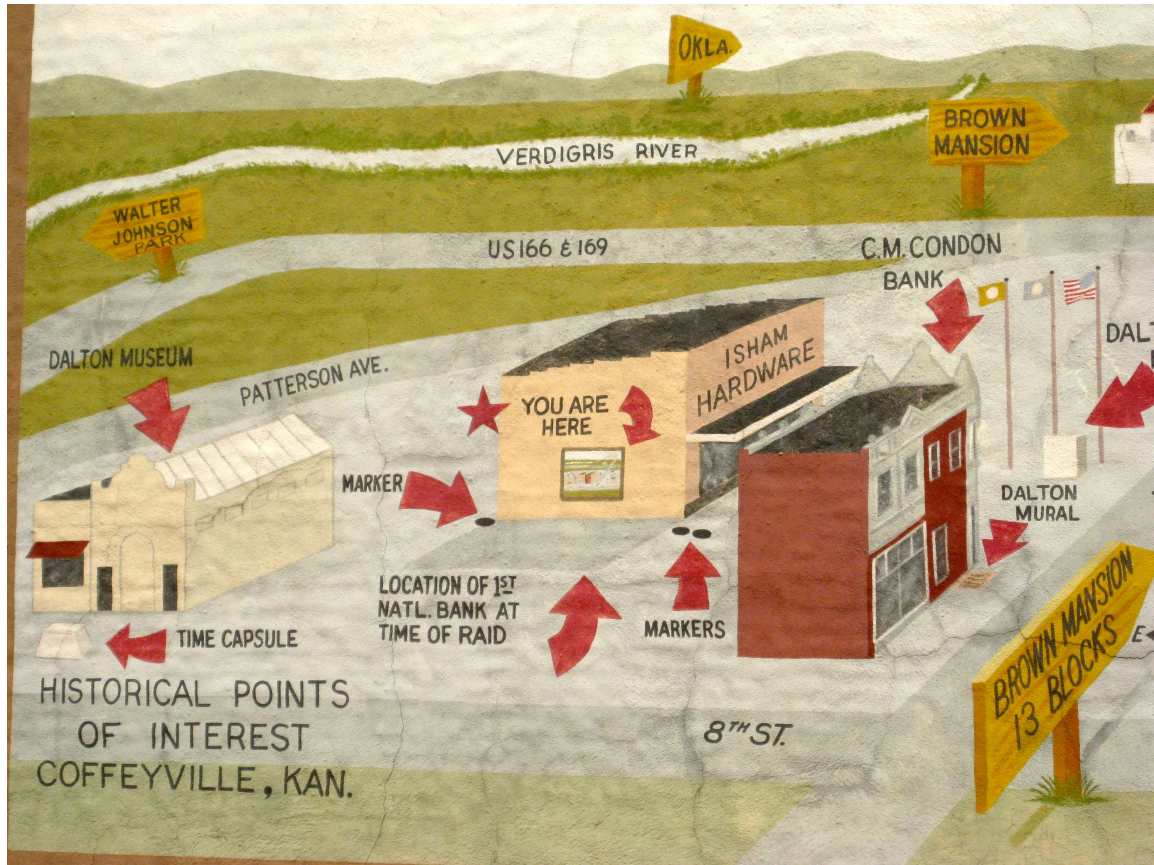


Fig. 14: What Coffeyville chooses to remember. One of the 15 historical murals in downtown Coffeyville painted by artist Don Sprague. This mural tells tourists of the recommended “Historical Points of Interest.” It highlights the Dalton Gang raid of 1892. The points of interest include the Dalton Museum and the two banks that were robbed. It also includes tourist sites -- the Brown Mansion, and a park honoring Washington baseball star Walter Johnson. Johnson, a Coffeyville native, played for the Washington Senators in the 1920s. (Photo by the author)

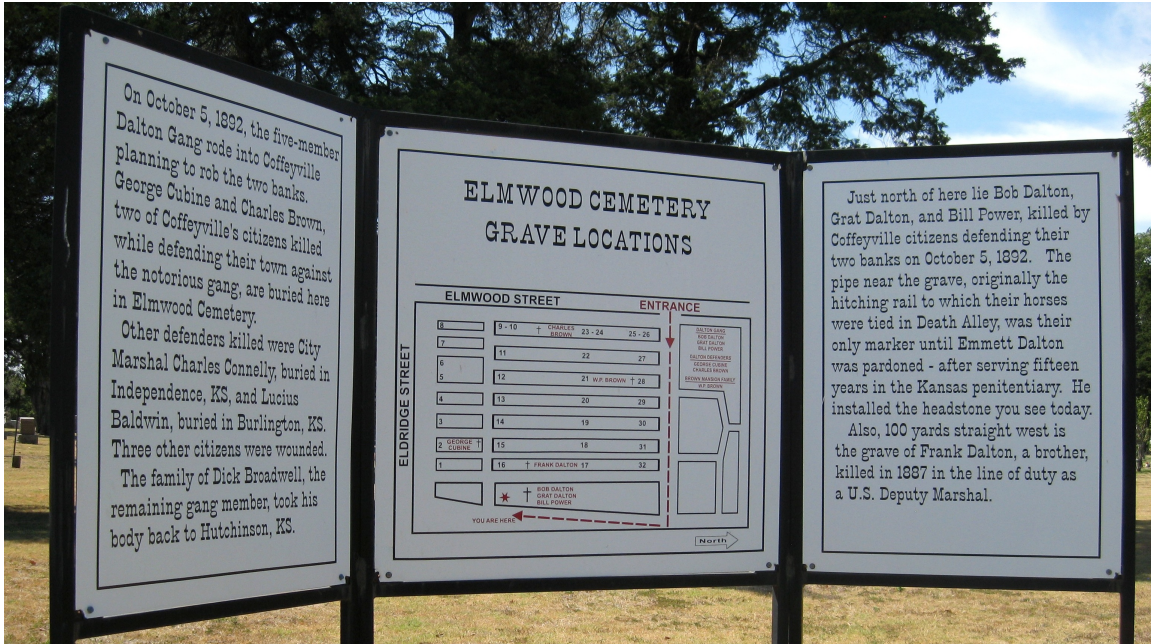


Fig. 15: Public memory: Marker for the Dalton graves. (Photo by the author)

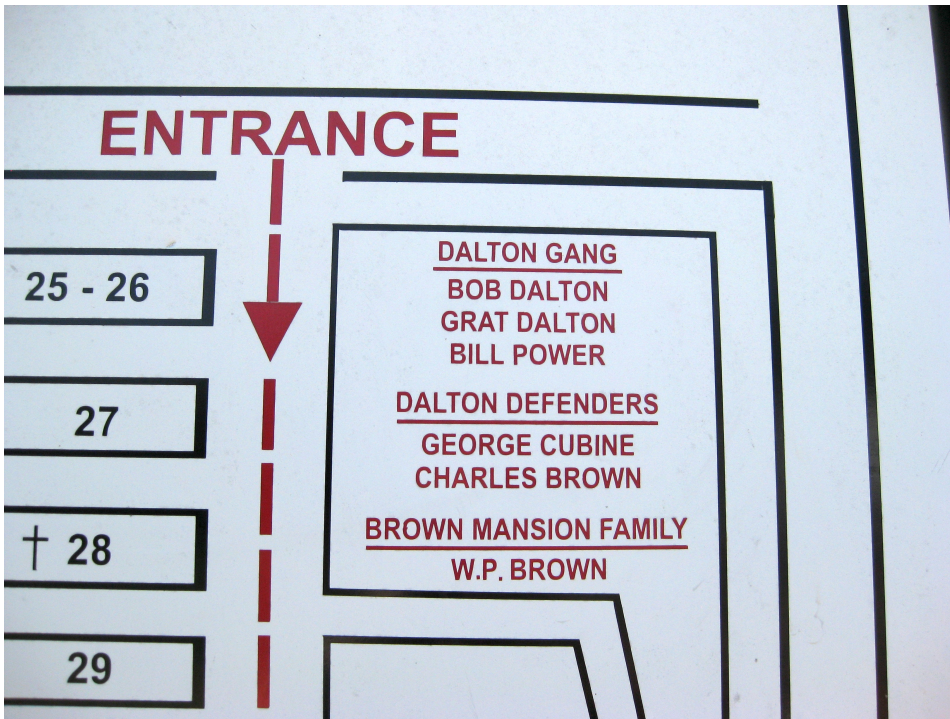


Fig. 16: Detail of sign, showing the graves of the Dalton Gang and that of the Coffeyville defenders who helped defeat them. (Photo by the author)

REFERENCE LIST

Primary Sources – Newspapers Listed Chronologically, by City

Local:

Coffeyville Daily Journal (evening)
[Coffeyville] Morning News (morning)
Independence Daily Reporter (morning)
[Independence] Evening Star (evening)

Regional & National:

The New York Times
Kansas City Star
Kansas City Times
Kansas City Post
Kansas City Journal
Topeka Capital
Topeka Journal

Black Press:

Kansas City Call
Chicago Defender

Primary Sources -- Archival Documents

NAACP papers

Coffeyville Branch (Kansas State Archives)
NAACP Papers Collection (Library of Congress)
Papers of William Pickens
(Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
New York Public Library)

Minutes, Coffeyville City Council, Coffeyville, KS (Kansas State Archives)

Trial documents, District Court, Independence, KS (Kansas State Archives)

Personal Letters, Charles Scott Collection, Spencer Research Library
(University of Kansas)

Catalogs

Kansas Technical Institute, also called Kansas Vocational School
(formerly The Topeka Industrial Institute for Negro Youth)

High School Yearbooks

Coffeyville High School, 1924-1930: Renamed "Washington High School," 1931
(Coffeyville Public Library)

Family history file of "The Hon. F.M. Benefiel." From the Montgomery County
Geneological Society
(Coffeyville Public Library)

COFFEYVILLE – MAINSTREAM PRESS

The 1920 Independence, Kansas, Race Riot

12/16/20

"Negro Killed R.R. Wharton." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

"Ralph Mitchell Tells How He Saw Negro Robbing Cash Register." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

"R.R. Wharton Killed by Negro." [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 153 (12/16/20):1

"R.R. Wharton Is Killed Today by Negro Robber. Independence Grocer, Formerly of Coffeyville, Has Head Blown Off." *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 177 (12/16/20):1

"Scene of the Wharton Tragedy." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

"Sidelights on the Wharton Case." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

"Today's Crime Third of Kind in 8 Years." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

"Two Arrests But Not Identified." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 80 (12/16/20):1.

12/17/20

"Accidental Shot Started the Riot." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

"Call for Troops. State Officials Were Almost All Away Last Night. Sec. Adam of Commercial Association Finally Got in Touch with Attorney General Hopkins." *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Chief Hall’s Close Call. Bullet Went Through Hat As He Stood Between Firing Crowds.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 178 (12/17/20):2.

“Dynamite Stolen.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Green Identified as Murderer.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Green Identified as Slayer of R.R. Wharton.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 178 (12/17/20):1

“Heard of a Lynching. Coffeyville Police Report Many Wild Stories There.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):4.

“Let the Law Prevail.” (Front-page editorial.) *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Many Close Calls.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Mitchell Addresses Crowd, Urging Them to Disperse Last Night.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Never in Trouble Before.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Notice to the Public.” (Front-page public notice of martial law and 7 pm curfew) *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Notes on Last Night’s Riot.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Relatives Appeal for Law.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Soldiers Patrol Independence. 2 Men Killed in a Fight Last Night. Negroes and Whites Clash With Shot Guns and Revolvers.” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 3, No. 271 (12/17/20):1,6.

“Thankful to Neodesha. Legion Men from There Rendered Valuable Assistance.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):4.

“Two Dead in Last Night’s Riot. Lawrence Clennan, White Boy, and Arthur Harper, Colored, Slain in Street Battle at Fifth and Main – H.S. McHenry, A.W. Milbeck, Norman Dickens and Fred Kelly Seriously Injured – Riot Followed Day of Intense Race Feeling in Which Bloodshed was Feared – Soldier Boys Under Major Bob Lewis Take Charge of Situation and City Goes Under Martial Law – All Quiet Today as Plans Are Made to Keep Peace Tonight – Citizens Forbidden to Carry Arms.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

“Wild Shot Hit Boy.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 81 (12/17/20):1.

12/18/20

“Accused Negro Taken Out of City. Everything Quiet in Independence Last Night and Today. Special Santa Fe Train Brought Machine Gun and Infantry Companies Here from Lawrence at 5:45 This Morning.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 155 (12/18/20)

“An Opening Door Kept Guard and Watchman Playing Checkers.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):6.

“City Looked Like a Deserted Village. All Traffic Down Town was Halted Last Night. Guards on All Streets.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Green Charged with First Degree Murder.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 155 (12/18/20):1

“Green Is Removed Early Today. Alleged Slayer of R.R. Wharton Taken Away Under a Guard of Special Officers as Soon as Two Companies of Militia Arrived from Lawrence.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Green Taken to Girard Jail.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Green Taken to Pittsburg to Escape Mob Violence. Removed from Independence Jail Under Escort of National Guard Troops. Machine Guns Posted.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 27, No. 179 (12/18/20):1.

“In the First Degree. Murder Charge Filed Against Noble Green.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Looked Like Real War. Machine Gun Planted in the Court House Corridor. Mess Tent at City Hall. Soldiers from Lawrence Have Taken Charge of Things and Use All the Machinery of War.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):6.

“Mayor Orders a Timely One. Mayor Did Right in Ordering Business Houses Closed. Action of Authorities in Closing Business District Last Night Approved by Public – Action Was Necessary.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 155 (12/18/20):1

“Notes on the Events of Yesterday.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):6.

“Notice to the Public.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Parsons Sammies. American Legion Boys Came in Twenty-Three Strong. Formed in Line and Marched to City Hall and Reported for Duty – Brought a Woman Along.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 82 (12/18/20):1.

“Quietness Reins at Independence. Murderer Is Identified and In Jail.” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 3, No. 272 (12/18/20).

“R.R. Wharton Laid to Rest.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 155 (12/18/20):1

12/20/20

“City is Normal After Stormy Week.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 83 (12/20/20):1.

“Continue Inquest Today. Expect to Finish Work Within Two Days.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 156 (12/20/20):1

“Funeral of Riot Victim. Services for Arthur Harper Yesterday Were Largely Attended.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 83 (12/20/20):3.

“Green Moved Out of Girard Jail. That Fact Probably Saved Him from Being Lynched. Men Searched the Jail. Girard Reports Arrival of Autos Loaded with Men Who Sought Green.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 83 (12/20/20):1.

“No Hearing Date Set. The Whereabouts of Noble Green a Secret.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 156 (12/20/20):1.

“Troops Back to Lawrence. Left Shortly After 12 Yesterday Afternoon.” [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 156 (12/20/20):1.

“We’re Not Armed. K.C. Papers Story About Funeral Called False. Negroes in Procession of Arthur Harper’s Funeral Carried No Weapons Say Officials.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 83 (12/20/20):1.

12/21/20

“A Lie Travels Far. Independence Pictured as ‘Armed Camp’ by ‘Staff Correspondents.’” (Front-page editorial). *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 84 (12/21/20):1.

“Appreciation of the Press.” (statement by the mayor). [*Independence*] *Evening Star* 21, No. 157. (12/21/20).

Mayor Thanks the Local Press.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 84 (12/21/20):1.

“No Censorship on Press Reports. What the Officials Opposed Was False News Dispatches. Said Town Was Armed.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 84 (12/21/20):1.

“Witnessed the Tragedy. Marvin Johnson Saw Negro Kill Wharton. [*Independence Evening Star* 21, No. 157:1.

12/22/20

“Boy Saw the Murder of R.R. Wharton. Had Gone to Store for Loaf of Bread, Followed Negro In. Hid in the Store.” [*Coffeyville Morning News* 3, No. 275 (12/22/20).

“May Connect Green with Earle Robbery. Search Home for Loot.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 85 (12/22/20):1.

“Noble Green At Lansing. Reported Taken From Fort Scott Jail.” [*Independence Evening Star* 21, No. 158 (12/22/20):1.

“Saw Negro Leave Store. Telephone Girl Saw Murderer of Wharton. Heard Shot While Near the United Brethren Church on Way to Work.” [*Independence Evening Star* 21, No. 158 (12/22/20):1.

“Not Sent From Here. United Press Got Its Wild News from Kansas City Post.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 40, No. 85 (12/22/20):1.

The 1924 Coffeyville High School Desegregation Case

“Blame Klan in School Ouster at Coffeyville. Board of Education Refuses Our Children Admittance to Junior High School.” *Chicago Defender* (11/10/23). ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

“Kansas Citizens Win High School Fight. Court Orders Officials to Open Coffeyville School.” *Kansas City Call* 5, No. 43 (2/22/24):1

“Open Door to School by Writ.” *Chicago Defender* (2/23/24). ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

“Prelude to Brown - 1924: Thurman-Watts v. Coffeyville.” Website of the Brown Foundation.
<<<http://brownvboard.org/content/prelude-brown-1924-thurman-watts-v-coffeyville>>>

The 1927 Coffeyville, Kansas, Rapes and Race Riot

2/5/27

“Wife Employs Husband, Giving Him Better Job.” (*Coffeyville*) *Morning News* 9, No. 12 (2/15/27):6.

3/10/27

“Coffeyville to Build New School House. To Erect Senior High School on Unit Plan...School Board Members and Business Men Discuss School Problems. Had Hot Discussion.” (*Coffeyville*) *Morning News* 9, No. 32 (3/10/27):1,3

3/18/27

“A Negro Wounded?” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 235 (3/18/27): 1.

“City Under Martial Law. Windows Broken Out of City Hall By Mob. Curtis Smith, Negro, Begin Held as suspect in Assault of Two White Girls Here Yesterday; 2 Released. National Guard Cavalry Troops, A and B Enroute This Morning From Iola and Yates Center; Local Unit Got Situation Under Control Soon After They Were Called Out, Reading Martial Law Edict, at 10:50. Tear Gas Repulsed a Rush Into Hall. Bombs of Tear Gas Hurlled Into Crowd That Was Making Way Up City Hall Stairway, Driving Them Back to Streets; Damage to City Hall Estimated at \$500 or More. Victims of the Assault Improving. Misses Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers, Attacked In Their Room Thursday Night and Friday Morning, Reported Recovering Last Night; Blood Hounds Traced Suspects To House. Break Into Long Bell Hardware Co. Four Youths Arrested, With Guns in Possession; Charged With Possession of Stolen Fire Arms; William Waddel, In Hospital, as a Result of Gun Shot Wounds; R.C. Walden to Hospital With Injured Shoulder.” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, No. 39 (3/18/27): 1.

“Street Battle Leads to Martial Rule Here. Curtis Smith, Accused Negro, Was Spirited Out of Town to Unknown Destination for Safe Keeping. Peace Follows a Night of Wild Disorder.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 235 (3/18/27): 1

“Street Battle Leads to Martial Rule Here. Civil Authorities Unable to Cope with Situation, and Troop B is Called Out to Restore Order. Billie Waddle is Seriously Wounded.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 235 (EXTRA EDITION FOR 3/18/27): 1-2.

“Two Girls Are Brutally Assaulted This Morning. Three Young Negroes Break Into Home Where Miss Margaret Akers, Daughter of Chas. Akers, and Miss Julia Mooney, of Delaware, Okla., Were Alone At 812 W. Ninth, Beat Girls and Attack Them. Both Girls Are High School Girls; Girls Were Submitted to Most Revolting Indignities. Officers Search. Police Force, Joined by Citizens Are Scouring the City; Sheriff McCrabb and His Deputies Arrive; Towns Around Notified. [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, No. 39 (3/18/27): 1.

“Two Girls Assaulted. Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers Victims of Three Negro Men, Last Night. Hounds Take Trail. Dogs Led Officers from House, Where Crime Was Committed, to Rear Door of House on East Fifth Street -- Large Crowd Gathered. *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 235 (3/18/27):1-2.

“Victims Improve.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 235 (3/18/27): 1.

3/19/27

“Amputate William Waddle’s Fingers; 2 Negroes Wounded.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

“Boots and Her Buddies” (racist cartoon). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 11.

“Bulletin!” [*Coffeyville*] *Morning News* 9, No. 40 (3/19/27): 1.

“Coffeyville is Under Military Rule. Quit Follows Night of Terror in Which Mob of 1,500 Stormed City Jail After Accused Negro.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 162 (3/19/27):1,6.

“County Attorney to Prosecute All Law Violators, He Says.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

“Many Calls Came for News of Riot.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

“Notice to the Public” (Day 1). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

“Order People Off Streets by 9 Tonight. Major Patterson Directs Stores, Movies and All Places of Business Closed and Commands People to Remain In Homes. Same Closing Is Effective Sunday Night. Decree is Precautionary Measure to Prevent Recurrence of Armed Clash – Military and Civil Authorities Appear to Have Situation Well In Hand – Curtis Smith and All Other Suspects Released, Assault Victims Saying Smith Was Not One of the Assailants – Three Face Burglary Charges as a Result of Breaking into Hardware Stores for Guns and Ammunition – Costs Over \$200 to Replace Windows and Screens At City Hall.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

“Some Officials Blundered” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): B4.

“Victims of Assault Take Nourishment; Many Flowers Sent.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 236 (3/19/27): 1.

3/21/27

“Bring the Guilty to Bar; Let All Good Citizens Cooperate” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 237 (3/21/27): 4.

“Firm Authority Respected When Properly Directed” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 237 (3/21/27): 4.

“Fourteen Warrants For Coffeyville Rioters. City Hall Windows Targets of Coffeyville Mob.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):1.

“Fourteen Warrants For Coffeyville Rioters. Coffeyville Store Robbed; Two Held.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):1.

“Fourteen Warrants For Coffeyville Rioters. More Warrants to Follow as Fast as Evidence Develops; Five Men Are on Bond; A Complete Investigation. *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):1.

“Fourteen Warrants For Coffeyville Rioters. Officials Deny Three Men Are Held in a Jail. Rumor Trio Assailants Are Under Arrest ‘Somewhere in Kansas’” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):1.

“Militiamen Quiet Mob Seeking Revenge” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):3.

“Notice to the Public” (Day 2). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 237 (3/21/27): 1.

“Troops to Stay All Night, Longer If It Is Necessary, Governor Paulen Promises. Orders Issued Late This Afternoon Upon Request of Local Authorities and a Number of Citizens. No Gatherings At All; Close At 10. Chief Cathers Urges Necessity for Everyone to Be Careful of Actions and Speech; Begin Serving ‘Riot’ Warrants, Eleven Having Been Issued.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 237 (3/21/27): 1.

“Two Negroes Under Arrest and Charged with Shooting Men. First Round in Attempt to Find Those Guilty of Inciting Riot Friday.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 163 (3/21/27):1,5.

3/22/27

“Notice to the Public” (Day 3). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 238 (3/22/27): 1.

“Adjunct-General Coming Tonight: Still Close At 10: A Detective Employed. Head of State Military Forces to Investigate Advisability of Withdrawing Soldiers From City. Legion Is Raising Reward of \$1,000. Mayor Joyce Also Has Asked the County Commissioners to Offer Sum for Arrest and Conviction of Felons; Some Social Functions Held Before Ban.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 238 (3/22/27): 1-4.

“And That Reminds Us -- It Is No Test of Citizenship” (unsigned editorial). *[Coffeyville] Morning News* 9, No. 42 (3/22/27):6.

“Beauty is Marshal at 21.” *[Coffeyville] Morning News* 9, No. 42 (3/22/27):1.

“Girls Resting Well.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 164 (3/22/27):1.

“McCrabb Expects No More Rioting. Sheriff Denies Holding Suspects In Any Jail; Coffeyville Girls Recovering; Detective Employed.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 164 (3/22/27):1.

“Why Law Is Breaking Down” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 238 (3/22/27): 4.

“Will the Negroes Help Bring Criminals to Bar?” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 238 (3/22/27): 4.

3/23/27

“Military Rule Ended At Midnight. Reward Totals Are Increasing Rapidly. Adjutant-General Withdrew Troops After a Conference Here Last Night. Three Men Released. Burglary and Larceny Charges Against Alleged Looters Dismissed by County Attorney This Afternoon – Negroes Subscribing to Funds to Run down Felons.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 239 (3/23/27):1-2.

“And That Reminds Us – The National Guard Troops Were Withdrawn” (unsigned editorial). *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 43 (3/23/27):6.

“Colored Citizens of Coffeyville Pledge Loyalty. Meet Last Night, Declare Stand and Offer Reward for Criminals’ Arrest.” *Morning News* 9, No. 43 (3/23/27):1.

“Troops Are Withdrawn From City. At Midnight City Ceased to be Under Rule of Military of the State. Praises Officers. Adjutant General McLean Says Local Officers Did Nobly in Work Here. Fully Discussed. Every Phase of Situation Gone Over with Mayor, Sheriff and Police. *(Coffeyville) Daily News* 9, No. 43 (3/23/27):1.

“Troops Dismissed At Coffeyville; All Is Quiet In Border City. General McLean Complimented Officers for Manner In Caring for Rioting.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 165 (3/23/27):1.

3/24/27

Suspect Is Freed Here Last Night; Not Identified. Claude Brown, Negro, Brought to City Last Night, Exonerated by Two Girls. Alibi Was Perfect. Brown Had Long Hair, A Complete Clearance; But A Clue Was Developed.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 44 (3/24/27):1.

3/25/27

“Reward Offer Is Growing; \$2,400 To Be Available. State, County, Citizens Swell Reward to Make It Profitable For Solver of Crime.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 45 (3/25/27):1.

3/28/27

“Assault Victims Being Questioned. Julia Mooney and Margaret Akers Taken From Home to Hotel Dale. City Attorney Reed and Two Detectives Are in Conference with Girls This Afternoon – Sensational Developments Expected.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 243 (3/28/27):1.

4/1/27

“Ten Arrests on Rioting Charges Are Made Today.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 247 (4/1/27):1.

“No More Warrants on Rioting Charges to Be Issued Now.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 247 (4/1/27):2.

4/6/27

“Unofficial Vote at Yesterday’s City Election.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 251 (4/6/27):1.

“Harry Lang Beats Britton for Mayor 442; Jensen is Only Incumbent Retained. Voters Yesterday Made a Clean Sweep of City Hall and the Board of Education with One Exception. Wilson and Ford In Closest Race. Commissioner of Streets and Public Improvements Loses Out By Only 62 Votes; Singleton and Prather Retired By Decisive

Majorities. Brainard, Farmer and Moon Outdistance Their Opponents.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 251 (4/6/27):1.

4/26/27

“Third Riot Damage Claim Filed Today. Gus Hughes, Negro, Asks City for \$15,000 for Alleged Injury. Claimant Says He Was Attacked by Dozen Men, Struck, Knocked Down, Stabbed in the Back, And Also Fired Upon.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 268 (4/26/27):1.

“Anderson and Ford File \$20,000 Claim for ‘Riot’ Injuries.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 268 (4/26/27):1.

5/6/27

“Developments in Assault Case May Be Expected Soon.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 277 (5/6/27):2.

5/15/27

“Coffeyville Sued for \$10,000 for Damages In Riot. Geo. Rollett, Plaintiff; a Total of \$45,000 Damages Sought by Plaintiffs.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 89 (5/15/27):1.

5/21/27

“No Assault Case Arrest Made Today. Two Taken into Custody Sunday and Yesterday Taken into County Jail. Kennedy Has an Alibi. Man Charged with the Offense against Margaret Akers Says He was in Wichita Night of Crime; Julia Mooney Expects to Give Bond Tomorrow.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 297 (5/31/27):1.

5/26/27

“Evidence In the Assault Case In Mitchell’s Care. Detective Has Wound Web of Evidence; Arrests Are Expected Today. Sensation Assured. Names Suppressed Until After Arrests; Facts Different to First Story.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 98 (5/26/27),

5/27/27

“No Assault Arrests.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 295 (5/27/27):2.

5/30/27

“Detailed History of Assault Case. Nation Wide Interest Centered on Largest Local Event Since Dalton Raid. First Narrative of School Girls At Variance With Details Uncovered in Investigation by Detective Davis. History of Assault Case.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 296 (5/30/27):1.

“Session of District Court Here June 6. First Case Scheduled in Coffeyville Division is in Lander-Fortner Suit. On Request of Attorney Chas D. Welch, Judge Holdren Will Hear Arguments on Wording of Journal Entry.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 296 (5/30/27):1.

“Arrest Two In Mooney-Akers Assault! Other Arrests Expected Momentarily. Ira Kennedy, Former Auto Salesman Here, Charged with Rape; Julia Mooney, one of High School Girl ‘Victims’ Held on Accessory Charge; Bond Fixed at \$20,000 Each – Girl, Calm Through Many Questionings, Breaks Down When Jail Door Slams To; Kennedy Married, Has Three Children, and Expects Stork at Home Again Shortly.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 296 (5/30/27):1-2.

6/1/27

“And That reminds Us -- The Morning News Has To Acknowledge Defeat” (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 102 (6/1/27):6.

“Kennedy and Miss Mooney Arraigned. Both Entered Pleas of Not Guilty to Charges in connection with Assault. Bond Was Fixed by Justice Jukes at \$5,000 Each for Appearance on June 11 – Wichita Attorney Represents Kennedy.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 298 (6/1/27):1.

“Mystery Around Assault Case Is Lifting Rapidly. Ira Kennedy Held In Jail, Charged With Rape; Julia Mooney, Accomplice, Aver. Still Another One. Data Gathered, It Is Said, May Connect Kennedy With Another Local Girl. Gather Many Facts. All Participants In Affair Known; No Other Arrests Expected At This Time. (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 102 (6/1/27):1.

“Wags a Wicked Tongue.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 298 (6/1/27):1.

6/2/27

“One Suspect In Assault Case A Wife Deserter. It Was Discovered He Has Left the County; Preliminaries for Two June 11.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 103 (6/2/27):1.

6/3/27

“And That Reminds Us – Some of the Statements from County Attorney Mitchell” (unsigned editorial). *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 104 (6/3/27):6.

“More Claims Filed. So Far Damage Claims Totaling \$72,866 Have Been Filed Against City.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 104 (6/3/27):1.

6/4/27

“Kennedy Under a Cloud Before He Came Here, Aver. Was Arrested the First Day He Came to Coffeyville, Local Policeman Says.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 105 (6/4/27):1.

6/7/27

“Two More Rioting Claims Are Filed” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 303 (6/7/27):1.

6/10/27

“Postponement of Kennedy-Mooney Cases Is Probable.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 32, No. 306 (6/10/27):1.

6/11/27

“Arrest Here Said to Connect With Assault Case. Frank Attebury, Buster Brown Shoe Salesman, Arrested Here Late Friday. Friend of Kennedy. Worked Here Together; Arrested on Wife Desertion Charge; Posed as Single.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 111 (6/11/27):1-2.

6/15/27

“Julia Mooney Is Out. Girl Charged With Complicity in Alleged Criminal Assault of Chum Gave Bond Today.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 2 (6/15/27):2.

6/16/27

“New Turn In Case. Miss Julia Mooney Released on Bond; Attebury Released, Case Dismissed.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 115 (6/16/27):1-2.

6/17/27

“15 Are Subpoenaed. Evidence in Assault Case in Hands of County Attorney; Hearing Saturday.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 116 (6/17/27):1.

6/18/27

“Another Claim Is Filed; \$15,000 Is Asked of City. G.W. Anderson, colored, Avers He Was Shot and Wounded During the Riot.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 117 (6/18/27):1.

“Ira Kennedy Is Identified; Miss Akers on Stand. First State Witness in Preliminary Swears Assailants Were All White Men. Miss Akers Was Still on the Stand at 4 O’Clock.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No 240 (6/18/27), 1-2.

6/20/27

“Jury Trial Next Phase of Assault. Justice Jukes Indicates that He Will Bind Julia Mooney and Ira Kennedy Over to District Court. Decision Wednesday. Margaret Akers Is Unshaken in Her Identification of Kennedy at Hearing Saturday; Victim Retold Her Story; Sheriff McCrabb Springs Surprise.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 6 (6/20/27):1,3.

“Kennedy-Mooney Decision Will Be Given Wednesday Morning. Hearing of Coffeyville Assault Case Before Jukes Ended Saturday Night.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 241, (6/20/27):1,5,9.

“Marriage Must Wait Upon Divorce.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 241, (6/20/27):5.

6/21/27

“And That Reminds Us -- The Statement from Attorney General Smith” (unsigned editorial). *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 119 (6/21/27):6.

“He Assures City Attorney Keith and Mayor Lang. If Justice Jukes Binds Over Ira Kennedy and Miss Mooney, Will Take Charge. Testimony Checks. Mrs. Akers and Daughter Didn’t Contradict, as to Girls Staying Together.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 119 (6/21/27):1.

6/22/27

“Jury Trial Is Ordered in Assault. Justice Jukes Binds Julia Mooney and Ira Kennedy Over to the District Court. June Term Probable. Although Docket Is Already Made, the Two Cases Based on Attack on Margaret Akers May Be Heard; Miss Mooney Makes Bond; Kennedy Is in Jail.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 8 (6/22/27):1-2.

“Kennedy and Julia Mooney Held for Trial. Justice C.L. Jukes Announced His Decision This Morning; Bonds Were Placed, \$5,000 for Each Defendant.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 243 (6/22/27):1.

“Mitchell In a Statement on Assault Case. Tells His Side of Controversy Opening; No Word From Attorney General.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 243 (6/22/27):1,3.

“State May Aid.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 243 (6/22/27):1.

6/23/27

“Investigating New Assault Clue Here. Expected to Turn Light on Some Mysterious Phases of the Case. Comparatively Little Detail, Which Came to Light Today, Apparently Never Had Heretofore Been Suggested or Considered.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 9 (6/23/27):1-2.

“Ira Kennedy and Julia Mooney to District Court. Justice Jukes Binds Them Over on Charges of Rape, and Accessory. Trial Date Not Set. Not on June Term Docket; Miss Mooney Gives Bond; Kennedy Expects To.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 121 (6/23/27):1,5.

“Kennedy-Mooney Trial Dates May Be Fixed Monday.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 9 (6/23/27):2.

6/26/27

“Kennedy and Mooney Trial on July 15?” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 124 (6/26/27):1.

6/28/27

“Kennedy-Mooney Trials Set for July Fifteenth. Walter Keith, City Attorney Assistant Attorney General in Case.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 125 (6/28/27):1,5,6

7/8/27

“More Witnesses Are Subpoenaed in the Mooney-Kennedy Case.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 133 (7/8/27):1.

7/9/27

“Attorney General Takes Hand In County. Will Force the Country Board to Redistrict the County by Writ. Mandamus Action Filed Late Yesterday in Kansas Supreme Court by Smith. To Jail If Ignored. Alternative eWrit Requires Commissioners to Act, Or Show Cause for Not.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 134 (7/9/27):1.

7/10/27

“And That Reminds Us -- When County Attorney Mitchell Undertook to Impeach“ (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 135 (7/10/27):8.

Mitchell’s Tactics Hard to Understand. Tries Hard to Breakdown Case for the State. Virtually ‘Kidnaps’ State’s Chief Witness and Tries to Get Her to Retract. Clash of Authority. Special Prosecutor in Mooney-Kennedy Case Angered at Strange Action. A Ruse Resorted To. Miss Akers Thru Ruse, Gets Word to Mayor Lang of Kidnapping Escapade.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 135 (7/10/27):1,6.

7/12/27

“And That Reminds Us -- Like the Old Saying, Every Time County Attorney Mitchell ‘Opens His Mouth He Sticks His Foot In It’” (unsigned editorial) (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 136 (7/12/27):6.

“Atty. General Smith Takes Charge of the Case. He Compliments Local Officers for Work Well Done. Interviews Margaret Akers, State’s Chief Witness, Says Evidence Convincing. Mitchell Puzzle. Makes Notation on Court Records that Baffles; Smith Expresses Surprise. (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 136 (7/12/27):1,2.

7/13/27

“And That Reminds Us -- The Story Recently Published Here To The Effect That Independence Politicians Had Tried to Bring Pressure To Bear At The Attorney General’s Office” (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 137 (7/13/27):6.

“Mrs. Akers In a Flat Denial of Mitchell Story. Declares Daughter Was Taken From Her Home Over Both Their Protests. Publish Falsehood. Brands Published Story of County Attorney Untrue In Talk to News.” *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 137 (7/13/27):1,2.

7/14/27

“Kennedy-Mooney Trial on Monday. Continuance Taken Today on Account of Judge Holdren’s Illness. Hearing of Assault Case Was Scheduled to Begin Tomorrow – Both Sides Pleased at No Interruption Over Sunday.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 25 (7/14/27):1.

7/16/27

“Holdren Ill; Judge Ayres Takes Bench. Montgomery County Jurist Calls Judge A.T. Ayres of Howard to Substitute.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 27 (7/16/27):2.

7/17/27

“Judge Ayers of Butler County Will Preside. Relives Judge Holdren of Hearing Kennedy-Mooney Case, At His Request. Sensational Rumors. Sheriff McCrabb Brands Story of His Activity for Kennedy, As False. *(Coffeyville) Morning News* 9, No. 141 (7/13/27):1,2.

7/18/27

“Ark City Jew Runs Sunday Show; Pleas Saturday Sabbath. Lewis Linx Arrested For Alleged Violation of State Law After Show Yesterday.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 264 (7/18/27):1.

“Kennedy-Mooney Case Under Way; State’s Star Witness, Miss Akers, on the Stand.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 264 (7/18/27):1-2.

“Margaret Akers Unshaken on Stand. State’s Main Witness in Assault Case is Cool While Relating Her Story. Jury is Soon Chosen. Three Coffeyville Men and Three Single Men on Venire Which Will Determine Innocence or Guilt of Ira Kennedy and Miss Julia Mooney. Kennedy Identified. Miss Akers Refers to Her Assailant as Kennedy and Not as “Assailant”; Denies Telling McCrabb She Was Victim of ‘Filthy Negro.’” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 28 (7/18/27):1-2.

7/19/27

“Another Woman Accuses Kennedy In Court. Margaret Akers Identifies Him. Positively Declares She Knows Ira Kennedy Is the Man Who Attacked Her on March 17th. Wichita, Kan., Confectionery Proprietress Declares Kennedy Was Engaged to Wichita Girl, to be Married on March 17, But He Was Out of Town that Night; Alleged Engaged Girl to Kennedy and Kennedy Were Patrons of Her Store. Miss Akers Afraid to Accuse Kennedy. Testified he Threatened Her If She Told of His Attacking Her. County Attorney Mitchell, Ordered by Court to Have Statement of Miss Akers in Court This Morning, Recalling Mitchell’s Taking Witness to Task at Preliminary.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 142 (7/19/27):1,2.

“Big Crowd At Trial.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 265 (7/19/27):1.

“Meet the Misses” (cartoon). *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 265 (7/19/27):7.

“Ira Kennedy on Stand This Afternoon in Self-Defense Claims an Alibi. Motor Car Salesman Swears He Was in Wichita in Employe of Firm at Time of Assault.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 265 (7/19/27):1-2.

“Julia Mooney is Free on Demurrer. Judge Ayers Sustained Motion Offered by Attorney Ise. Accused Girl Left Court Room at 5:22 o’Clock This Afternoon After Receiving Congratulations of Her Attorney and Friends...Kennedy Case to Jury Tonight.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 29 (7/19/27):1-2,8.

New Evidence Offered in Assault Case by 2 R.R. Men; Cross-Exam. Miss Akers in Close Cross-Examination by the Attorneys for Kennedy and Mooney. Margaret Akers on Stand in Grilling Cross-Examination. State’s Star Witness Under a Cross-Fire for Hours by Defense Attorneys.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 265 (7/19/27):1,3.

New Evidence Offered in Assault Case by 2 R.R. Men; Cross-Exam. Miss Akers in Close Cross-Examination by the Attorneys for Kennedy and Mooney. Mo. Pac. Trainmen in New Story About a Mysterious Fare. Hour or So After Assault a Blood-Stained Man Boarded Train in Coffeyville.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 265 (7/19/27):1,6.

7/20/27

“And That Reminds Us -- We Are Right Back Where We Started” (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 143 (7/20/27):1,3.

“County Attorney in Statement Says End is not Here as Yet.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 266 (7/20/27):1.

“Defendants Not Guilty. Ira Kennedy and Julia Mooney Acquitted. Margaret Akers Hurt In Accident. Kennedy Is Freed by Jury After 55 Minutes Deliberation Last Night; Julia Mooney Is Freed by the Court. (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 143 (7/20/27):1,3.

“Jury Acquits Kennedy in 50 Minutes. Accused Man Freed of Assault Charge in District Court. Second Ballot by Jurymen Gave Wichita Motor Car Salesman His Liberty After Two Months in County Jail. Home With His Wife. Spectacular Finish of Widely Discussed Case Filled With Much-Sought Sensationalism; Detective Davis Bore Brunt of Defense Counsel’s Attack. Charged Conspiracy. Attorneys for Two Defendants Said Collection of Reward Inspired Prosecution: Charges Against Julia Mooney Held Insufficient; Mitchell Says Investigation Will Be Continued by the County.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 30 (7/20/27):1,3.

“Kennedy Is Free by Jury Verdict; Judge Ayres by His Motion Frees Mooney.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 266 (7/20/27):1,3.

“Miss Akers Injured. State’s Main Witness in Kennedy-Mooney Case in Motor Car Accident Late Last Night.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 30 (7/20/27):1.

“A Thought: Crimes To Go Unpunished?” (unsigned editorial). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 30 (7/20/27):4.

7/21/27

“And That Reminds Us -- Let’s Call the Grand Jury” (unsigned editorial). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 144 (7/21/27):6.

“Atta Boy, Mitchell” (unsigned editorial). *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 266 (7/21/27):6.

“Just Among Us Girls” (cartoon). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 198 (7/21/27):4

“Grand Jury Will be Petitioned For At Once. Sponsors of Grand Jury Petition to Insist on Learning Facts in Case.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 145 (7/21/27):1-2.

“Keith Offer of Aid in Assault Case to Mitchell and ‘Mac’. County Attorney Not Disposed to Accept Aid Which Interfered in the Trial.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 267 (7/21/27):1.

7/22/27 and Afterward

“Will He Accept?” (unsigned editorial). *Independence Daily Reporter* 46, No. 268 (7/22/27):6.

“And That Reminds Us -- There Is an Old Saying” (unsigned editorial) (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 146 (7/23/27):6.

“And That Reminds Us – All Doubt As To Whether A Grand Jury May Be Called.” (unsigned editorial) (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 147 (7/24/27):8.

“City Is Sued Again. Gus Hughes, Colored, Demands \$15,000 for Alleged Injuries During Riot.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 156 (8/4/27):1.

“Charles D. Ise Is Elected Head of the School Board. New School Board Convenes as Old Board Hands Over School Reins.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 154 (8/5/27):1.

“One Swallow Does Not Make a Party.” “Flapper Fannie Says...” (cartoon). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 68 (9/2/27):5.

“A Man Is Known By the Company He Keeps Out Of.” “Flapper Fannie Says...” (cartoon). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 70 (9/6/27):5.

“Does A Man Like A ‘Brainy’ Woman?” (Camay Soap ad). *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 71 (9/7/27):5.

“County Attorney Loses Two Cases Through Errors. Man on Trial Freed on Demurer; Crime, If Any, Committed Elsewhere. Other on Pleading. State’s Argument to Jury a Violation of Law – Court Declares a Mistrial.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 197 (9/22/27):1.

“99 Physicians In Indiana Indicted by a Grand Jury. Accused of Transporting 350,000 Gallons of Whiskey into City Last 4 Years.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 200 (9/25/27):1.

“The Flying Flapper. Ruth Elder.” (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 217 (10/3/27):1.

“Fair Co-Ed Seeks Law Degree” (front page photo). (*Coffeyville Morning News* 9, No. 240 (11/11/27):1.

“Damage Suit Based on Riot Under Way. Jury Hears Evidence In Napoleon Anderson’s Claim Against City. City Attorney In Opening Statement Says If Plaintiff Was Injured, He Suffered Because of His Own Aggressiveness.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 136 (11/22/27):1-2.

“City Wins Anderson Riot Case. The Jury Returned a Verdict In Favor of the City and Against the Plaintiff in the \$10,000 Damage Suit of Napoleon Anderson, at 4:20 O’Clock This Afternoon. *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 137 (11/23/27):2.

“Mrs. Snyder to Die with Gray on Jan. 9. New York Court of Appeals Sets Second Week of New Year as Time. Condemned Woman and Her Paramour Are Held in the Death Cell to Await Execution Upheld by Supreme Court.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No. 137 (11/23/27):1-2.

“Verdict for City. Suit of Poly Anderson, vs. City for Damages, Resulted in Verdict for City.” (*Coffeyville*) *Morning News* 9, No. 251 (11/24/27):1,2.

“Many Tragedies In News Review of 1927.” *Coffeyville Daily Journal* 33, No.167 (12/31/27): 3.

“District Court Was Busy Yesterday and Much Business Done. Many Cases Disposed of as Court and Attorneys Confer on Matters.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 47, No. 96 (1/2/28):8.

“News Events of 1927 Outlined Briefly.” *Independence Daily Reporter* 47, No. 96 (1/2/28):5-7

Regional and National Mainstream Press

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Mr. Newman began work toward his Master's in History at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in the Fall of 2008. He is currently teaching US History at the Art Institutes International - Kansas City. He is also currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in American Studies at the University of Kansas. Upon completion of his degree requirements, Mr. Newman intends to continue his career in teaching and to pursue research interests.

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