

“BLOODY CADDO”: WHITE VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACKS IN A LOUISIANA PARISH, 1865–1876

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Violence has always been an important component of Louisiana history and culture. Even before the Civil War, Louisiana was infamous for its frequent feuds, street fights, duels, whiskey brawls, vigilance committees and outbursts of violence.¹ In Reconstructed Louisiana, violence reached new highs as it took on racial and political overtones.² For more than a generation, Revisionist historians have acknowledged the importance and intensity of Reconstruction violence as an issue in Louisiana, as elsewhere in the South. They have shown the “cruel and atrocious” character of that violence to be a widespread phenomenon. They have scrutinized the different factors that divided blacks and whites and examined the rationale for the conflicts and tensions that underlined violence in the South after the Civil War. They have stressed, among other things, the social demoralization that affected the white community after the war, the conflicts over rights and status of the freedmen, the racial animosity raised by blacks’ political assertiveness and their struggle for political power, the transformation of the economic structure and the indefinite condition of the working relations, and the retreat of the federal government from its earlier commitments to a policy of civil rights. Consequently, a substantial consensus has emerged among historians regarding the mitigatory character of the radical Reconstruction policy, describing it more as an unfinished revolution.³

And yet, despite outstanding research, most historians who have examined post-Civil War violence present a limited analysis. Their studies usually cover specific race riots or offer a general overview of political violence and race relations in a particular state or for the whole South. Their investigations have rarely brought them to a thorough examination of individual regional patterns, to put them in their geographical context and to explain why the level of violence was so high in some areas and not in others. The present study on Caddo Parish between 1865 and 1876 is drawn from a larger investigation of crimes and violence in Reconstructed Louisiana.

For Caddo Parish the end of the Civil War did not bring peace. For years after the war, the parish had little or no law and witnessed within its borders some of the most atrocious murders ever recorded. In July 1870, the *Jefferson State Register* declared that disorderly ruffians had given Caddo an unenviable reputation. This view was echoed by the *Donaldsonville Chief* which asserted in March 1875 that Caddo was living up to its name and rightly deserved to be called “Bloody Caddo”. It went on to say that human life was held so cheaply there that scarcely a week passed without bringing news of some horrible new crime. Moreover, three congressional committees concluded that “Bloody Caddo” merited its epithet, as the worst men known to any civilized country lived within the limits of that parish.⁴

Drawing upon but not confined to statistics on homicides, the main goal of this study is twofold: first, to analyse the nature and patterns of violence in Caddo in order to demonstrate that the level of Reconstruction violence could vary greatly even within one state; secondly, to examine the underlying causes that made the parish the most violent area in Louisiana.

Caddo Violence In A Regional Perspective

Reconstructed Louisiana was indeed notorious for its unenviable record of violence. Compiled informations (Appendix 1) on homicides show that Louisiana had 3494 homicides⁵ between 1865 and 1876 (Table 1). Statistics reveal that Caddo, with 566 homicides, was the most violent parish in this violent state of Louisiana.⁶ This homicide index⁷ represents a significant record of the real amount of physical violence that occurred in Caddo and in Louisiana after the Civil War.⁸ The breakdown of homicide statistics for Louisiana shows that violence varied greatly from one area to another even within a single state (Table 2). Indeed, 45% of Louisiana homicides were concentrated in seven parishes,⁹ including Caddo,¹⁰ along the Red River and located in the northwestern corner of the state (Map 1). Moreover, with less than 3% of the state population, Caddo Parish had 16% of all Louisiana homicides during the Reconstruction period. Finally our data not only confirm that Caddo parish was a very violent area, but also show, when compared with other areas,¹¹ that Caddo had a homicide rate well above the state level, in a state where violence went beyond any reasonable standard even for the period.¹²

Moreover, in Caddo, as in other parishes, blacks were charged by whites as being the main perpetrators of violence.¹³ Joe Gray Taylor asserted also that "more black men were killed or wounded by black men than by whites during

Table 1
Caddo Homicides, 1865-1876

Year	Total	% of Blacks	Louisiana Homicides	% from Caddo
1865	13	81.9	92	14.1
1866	18	64.6	219	8.2
1867	26	71.5	221	12.6
1868	185	96.8	855	21.6
1869	19	80.0	170	11.1
1870	66	89.3	277	23.6
1871	27	78.3	225	12.0
1872	46	84.7	215	21.4
1873	32	65.6	409	7.8
1874	105	85.8	397	26.7
1875	23	90.0	162	14.4
1876	6	60.0	252	2.3
Total	566	86.5	3494	16.2

N.B.: 85 cases for which the race of victims remained unknown were not included in the % of black victims.

Table 2
Regional Distrubution of Homicides in Reconstructed Louisiana

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Caddo Parish	1	21,714	72.3	566	16.6	246.4
2. Red River Delta Area	6	50,414	72.9	972	28.5	150.2
3. Western Area	2	10,456	19.5	42	1.2	31.2
4. Southwestern Area	3	12,852	22.3	32	0.9	26.3
5. Northern Area	5	50,210	47.0	136	3.9	28.5
6. North Central Hill Area	4	29,766	41.1	126	3.7	42.9
7. Northern Bluff Land Area	4	31,151	63.3	184	5.3	53.4
8. Mississippi Delta Area	5	54,087	83.0	95	2.7	15.4
9. South Central Prairies Area	3	48,867	46.5	192	5.6	42.0
10. Sugar Bowl Area	12	123,495	59.3	296	8.6	21.7
11. Eastern Bluff Land Area	3	41,814	70.9	192	5.6	41.0
12. Florida Parishes Area	5	26,293	37.9	48	1.3	16.6
13. Bayou Area	3	31,872	62.0	62	1.8	17.9
14. Orleans Parish	1	191,418	26.2	457	13.4	21.7
Total and Average	57	726,915	50.0	3410	99.1	42.5

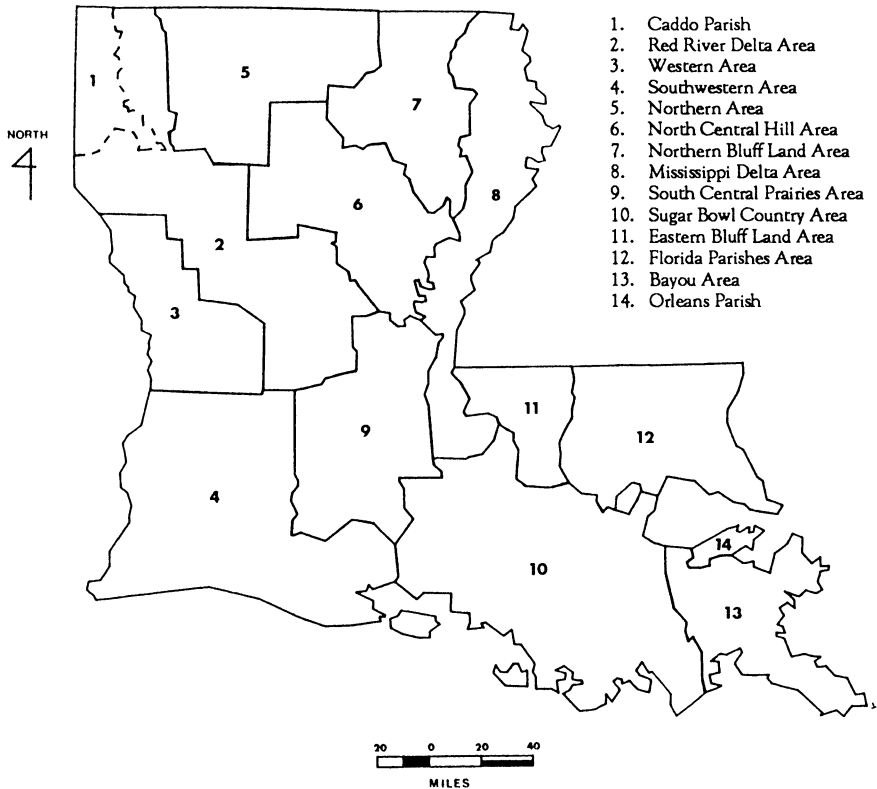
- 1) Number of parishes
- 2) Regional population has been compiled from the 1870 Federal census
- 3) Regional % of blacks
- 4) Number of homicides. The total number did not add to 3494 as there were 84 homicides that we were not able to fix in a parish or region.
- 5) Regional % of homicides
- 6) Annual Homicide rates were compiled on a basis of 100,000 inhabitants.

all the years from 1865 through 1878”, that “most violence inflicted upon black people in Louisiana, and elsewhere for that matter, was inflicted by black people”, and that “for every black man killed by a white man for political or other reasons, two were killed by other black men”.¹⁴ However, the statistical breakdown of homicides in Caddo and in Louisiana tells a different story (Table 3).

Table 3
Racial Distribution of Homicides

<i>Race of victims</i>	<i>Race of perpetrators</i>	<i>Caddo</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Lousiana</i>	<i>%</i>
unknown	by unknown	44	7.8	335	9.5
unknown	by whites	28	4.9	168	4.8
unknown	by blacks	13	2.3	75	2.1
whites	by unknown	12	2.1	126	3.6
blacks	by unknown	66	11.7	266	7.6
whites	by whites	41	7.2	589	16.8
whites	by blacks	12	2.1	115	3.3
blacks	by whites	295	52.1	1472	42.1
blacks	by blacks	55	9.7	348	10.2
Total		566	99.9	3494	100.0

Map 1

GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL REGIONS OF LOUISIANA IN 1870

Significantly, blacks were victims of 85% of all homicides¹⁵ that occurred in Caddo between 1865 and 1876, while whites were the presumed perpetrators of at least 84% of the blacks murdered.¹⁶ Although a little higher, these rates are comparable to the ones for Louisiana as a whole where blacks represented 71% of the victims of homicides and whites 80% of the presumed perpetrators. Indeed, black homicides were also a feature of the period, but compared to white homicides they were minimal.

The Nature of White Violence Against Blacks

Historians have for a long time been puzzled by the high level of violence that prevailed in Caddo and in the other parishes along the Red River. They have attempted to explain it by the high percentage of blacks that lived there.¹⁷ The distribution and composition of the Caddo population were important factors underlying the violence in that parish. Indeed, more than 70% of Caddo popu-

lation was black. The heavy concentration of blacks in the Caddo countryside made it more difficult for whites to maintain their social control and ascendancy over the blacks masses.¹⁸ However, other areas in Louisiana had a similar (Eastern Bluff Land Area) or even higher (Mississippi Delta Area) percentage of blacks without having a level of violence comparable to Caddo's. Other factors must be addressed to explain why whites in Caddo were more prone to violence than in any other parish or region of Louisiana.

Post-Civil War violence has to be analyzed from the point of view of Southern thought and Southern values of the time. Whites in Caddo, as elsewhere in the South, were afraid of losing their sense of identity and they were not ready to accept the changes that shattered the image they had of themselves and of the blacks. Consequently, violence in Caddo has to be understood in a racist and white supremacy perspective, as a reactionary fear of a large segment of the white population, as a desperate attempt to regain the rights they had once enjoyed over the lands and the black population.¹⁹

In Caddo, the situation was particularly difficult. Caddo and the surrounding parishes constituted the only region in Louisiana that was spared by the war. As the parish did not live through the terror, famine and others sufferings brought by the war, no rebuilding, no repair or reconstruction needed to be done there. Moreover, the war had brought great prosperity to the parish, as Shreveport became the capital of Confederate Louisiana after the fall of New Orleans. As the region escaped invasion and was occupied only after the surrender of the Southern armies, white people there did not feel they had been vanquished.²⁰ As a consequence, the white community in Caddo was periodically dominated by a class of daring, brave and utterly reckless men who stubbornly opposed the federal government and its reconstruction policy and who strongly resented the presence of federal troops, particularly when those occupying forces were composed of black regiments.²¹ These men firmly resisted the changes brought by the war, and did not shrink from anything, even from murder.²² Violence, consequently, became the ultimate instrument in coercing blacks into submissiveness and in maintaining Caddo as a white-man's country.

As Leon Litwack had asserted, much of the violence inflicted on the freedmen by whites was well organized.²³ Repeatedly, the whole white community rose

Table 4
Collective Nature of White Homicides*

Victims	<i>Caddo</i>			<i>Louisiana</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Whites	26	14	35.0	383	185	32.6
Blacks	79	188	70.5	392	1011	72.1
Unknown	17	11	39.4	123	44	26.4

*The cases for which we were not able to determine how many people were involved in the killing are not included in the present table.

1) individual

2) collective

3) % of collective

Table 5
Involvement of Whites in Killing Blacks

<i>Number of Homicides</i>	<i>Caddo</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Louisiana</i>	<i>%</i>
at least one	256	67.5	1361	65.2
two	34	8.9	182	8.7
three to five	64	16.8	305	14.6
six to ten	12	3.1	174	8.3
more than ten	13	3.4	64	3.0
	379	99.7	2086	99.8

up during the Reconstruction period as Caddo was shaken by wild rumors of black insurrection.²⁴ The parish was then transformed into a hunting ground, as whites all over Caddo rallied and organized posses and para-military groups that scouted the rural areas.²⁵ Furthermore, our data show that 70% of white homicides against blacks in Caddo (Table 4) were committed by more than one person. These statistics are comparable to the figures for Louisiana as a whole and highlight the fact that whites killed blacks not simply from personal quarrels but in groups as a means of social control.

When violence reached a paroxysm, as it did in 1868 and again in 1874, even the most moderate whites could not disagree with the conservative policies of intimidation and violence.²⁶ The breakdown of statistics not only confirms the brutal character of violence in Caddo as related by official reports, but it also highlights the fact that whites in Caddo, more than in any other parish or region, largely rallied behind the calls for white solidarity. Indeed, our data show that no less than 379 whites in Caddo were involved in killing blacks. This meant that no less than 30% of whites in Caddo between the ages of 18 and 45 were involved in those homicides.²⁷ This percentage was ten times higher than the one for the state as a whole. No less significant, however, is the fact that 123 whites (32%) were involved in more than one homicide (Table 5). Moreover, data on the occupation and social profile of the whites involved in the killing of

Table 6
Occupation of Whites Involved in Killing Blacks

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Caddo</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Louisiana</i>	<i>%</i>
Public officials	17	14.2	29	5.4
Liberal professions	9	7.5	62	11.6
Businessmen	1	0.8	14	2.6
Planters	52	43.7	177	33.2
Farmers	25	21.0	142	26.6
Small professionals	3	2.5	23	4.3
Small businessmen	3	2.5	12	2.2
Skilled workers	1	.8	20	3.7
Laborers	2	1.6	26	4.9
Farm Laborers	1	0.8	20	3.7
Students	3	2.5	8	1.5
Others	2	1.6	5	.9
Total	119	99.8	533	99.9

blacks show that these people represented the best class of Caddo community (Table 6). Indeed, violence originated from the top of the white social stratum.²⁸

The Political Motives for Violence

Our data clearly show that whites in Caddo did not really accept post-war changes and that they particularly objected to their political implications. Whites in Caddo resented the Republican party ascendancy over the black masses and its control of the parish and state governments. They felt that violence, as a last resort, was the only means to get rid of the "corrupt" Republican officials who manipulated and forced blacks to vote for them. If these politicians were overthrown, they argued, there would no longer be disorders in Caddo and in Louisiana, and a war of the races would be prevented.²⁹

The numerous murders and acts of violence committed during the weeks preceding the presidential election of 1868, and during the summer and fall of 1874, clearly indicated the political nature of the white violence. Indeed, at least 290 homicides (51% of the total number) occurred during those two years. Moreover, even more significant is the fact that no less than 220 blacks (74%) killed by whites were during those two years. These statistics were much higher than the ones for the other parts of the state.³⁰ They show the greater readiness of whites in Caddo to resort to extreme violence in period of political tensions in order to maintain their social and political preponderance over the black masses. The lawlessness atmosphere that prevailed in Caddo during those years created much fear within the black community. It was indeed impossible to be Republican and to survive in Caddo during the fall of 1868 and the summer of 1874.³¹

As the wrath of the white community fell upon the blacks, the latter became terrorized and apprehensive for their lives. During the "negro hunts" that underlined the outbursts of political violence of 1868 and of 1874, countless numbers of freedmen were taken from their homes and either killed or forced to leave their homes, crops and everything they possessed.³² Many blacks chose then to sleep out in the woods or to take refuge into the swamps and other hiding places to escape the white fury.³³ White violence even degenerated into mass-murder during the fall of 1868,³⁴ insuring a complete victory for the Democratic party at the 1868 Presidential election as only one Republican vote was cast for the entire parish.³⁵ As the white league in Caddo developed during the summer of 1874 as a white supremacist organization, blacks fell victims once again to racist anger and were coerced to vote for the Democratic party.³⁶

This determination of Caddo whites to maintain their parish and their state as a white-man's country is further confirmed by the circumstances surrounding violence there. Although sketchy,³⁷ the underlying causes of specific white homicides against blacks are often revealing. Indeed, blacks in Caddo who confined to whites' demands, who agreed to keep their place and to go to work, were kindly treated by whites.³⁸ Much of white anger was directed against blacks who engaged in political activities, joined Republican clubs and asserted their right to vote. Without minimizing the influence of other factors,³⁹ politics was truly at the root of most violence in Caddo, as elsewhere in Louisiana (Table 7). Evidence clearly shows that whites did not kill blacks at random, but de-

veloped a selective and deliberate policy aimed at eliminating black leadership and intimidating the black population. Our data show that white violence was primarily directed against black males.⁴⁰ The high rate of black men killed by white men is even more significant if we take into account that violence in Caddo was directed towards a population of 3,300 black males between the ages of 18 to 45.⁴¹ This meant that about 10% of black males in that group age were killed by whites during the Reconstruction period. Furthermore, this selective policy is further confirmed by the fact that among those black victims there were three who held a state or local offices and fifty seven who were members of the Republican party. This meant that at least 60 or 20% of the blacks killed by whites were actively involved in politics.⁴²

This determination of Caddo whites to maintain their political ascendancy also caused their involvement in the political affairs of neighboring parishes. In October 1868, no less than 75 whites left Shreveport and went to support whites in Bossier parish who were involved in a race riot.⁴³ Again in August

Table 7
The Motives Underlying White Homicides of Blacks

<i>Motives</i>	<i>Caddo</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Louisiana</i>	<i>%</i>
Political	83	72.1	614	76.0
– election	(66)		(244)	
– riot	(5)		(338)	
– others	(12)		(32)	
Economic	13	11.3	42	5.2
– labor	(8)		(20)	
– business	(2)		(6)	
– others	(0)		(16)	
Social	11	9.5	97	12.0
– drunkenness	(0)		(2)	
– racial	(0)		(9)	
– laughing about a white woman	(2)		(6)	
– live with a white	(3)		(7)	
– protect his wife	(1)		(9)	
– too arrogant	(3)		(34)	
– trivial	(2)		(12)	
– personal quarrel	(0)		(18)	
Criminal	8	6.9	54	6.7
– robbery	(3)		(20)	
– rape	(0)		(8)	
– self-defense	(0)		(9)	
– for being a witness	(2)		(6)	
– resisted arrest	(3)		(5)	
– murder	(0)		(6)	
– others	(0)		(1)	
Unknown	180		665	
Total	295	99.8	1472	99.7

1874, a large number of whites from Shreveport were involved in the slaying of Republican officials of the Red River parish at Coushatta.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Much post-Civil War violence in Caddo, as elsewhere in Louisiana, was closely linked to the redefinition of the black status and race relations. After the war the majority of the white population in Louisiana was not ready to accept emancipation except in a very limited sense. Thus, violence reflected the growing white hostility toward changes in black status introduced by the radical Republicans and imposed by the North. By asserting their new freedom and exercising their newly won political rights, blacks offended the whites and became subject to chastisement. Consequently, whites resorted to all means possible to maintain their political predominance. Activities ranged from night raids to intimidation, whippings, rowdyisms and murders. Brutal murders, lynchings, race riots, and even mass-murders became, as a last resort, the ultimate response of the whites for avenging the wrongs brought by the Reconstruction policies and for correcting the course of history.

However, Caddo parish was unique in Louisiana in the intensity and high level of its racial violence. Our statistics show that political issues in Caddo pervaded all conflicts and lay at the root of most violence that occurred in that parish. Indeed, the situation in Caddo was particularly difficult as the parish came out of the war undamaged, without suffering any devastation. As a result, whites there did not feel vanquished and resented more strongly the changes brought by the war. This factor made post-Civil War adjustment in Caddo more difficult than in any other region of Louisiana, and underlined the greater political and social turmoil that troubled the parish at the time.

More than a century ago, Redfield had already shown the existence of a great variety of patterns of violence among the different Southern states. The point to be emphasized here is that Reconstruction violence in Louisiana, as for the other Southern states, must be put in a regional and local perspective in order to be fully understood. Indeed, the nature, the patterns and the intensity of violence greatly fluctuated depending of the social and cultural areas in which it occurred. Further local and regional studies are needed in order to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of violence of that period.

APPENDIX 1: Sources and Limits of the Data

Reconstruction violence was more regularly reported and better registered in Louisiana than in any other Southern state. The National Archives in Washington contain not only the general correspondence and documents of both the Gulf Department and the Freedmen Bureau, but also four miscellaneous reports of murders and outrages that occurred in Louisiana after the war.⁴⁵ Violence in Louisiana was also investigated by joint-committees of its own State Assembly.⁴⁶ The reports and executive documents published by Congress still represent, however, the largest and best sources of information. Never before or since has violence in a state attracted so much national attention. No less than ten congressional committees made the journey to Louisiana to investigate the conditions of affairs

in the state and each of them compiled in its reports hundreds if not thousands of pages of testimony. Moreover, both houses of Congress obtained no less than eight major executive documents from the federal administration concerning the condition of affairs in Louisiana.⁴⁷ All these rich and diversified sources were complemented by a thorough examination of the numerous New Orleans and parish papers that regularly reported the violent incidents occurring within their parish.⁴⁸

In spite of the diversity and quantity of the sources used, we must be cautious in establishing a repertoire of individual cases of violence on Reconstructed Louisiana. Compiling statistics on crimes and violent incidents has always represented a problem for historians. Official data are often biased and do not indicate the real degree of crime and violence. Petty crimes and less serious forms of violence went largely underreported, and therefore bring only limited and sketchy results. An analysis based on homicide rates would rest on better ground and give a more reliable measure of the extent of violence.⁴⁹

Such a data set contains many flaws, biases, limitations and omissions and can only be used with caution. For one part, it relies on distorted information often based on hearsay and reported afterwards by Democratic-oriented or Republican-inspired newspapers. Secondly, the general correspondence of the Gulf Department as well as the Freedmen Bureau or the Congressional reports are not without their own biases, and contain many contradictory testimonies of sworn witnesses with different political allegiances. Therefore, the information contained in these sources is often very sketchy and provides only minimal background material on the individuals involved in that violence.⁵⁰ However, the cross-checking of each individual case from a variety of sources has made it possible to diminish the deficiencies of some lists and to establish a relatively accurate data set that gives a comprehensive description of the level of violence in Caddo and in Louisiana after the Civil War.

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ENDNOTES

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1. Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 1845-1877* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 58, 61-62; Joe Gray Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877* (Baton Rouge, 1974), 91.
2. Carolyn E. Delatte, "The St.-Landry Riot: A Forgotten Incident of Reconstruction Violence," *Louisiana History* XVII-1 (Winter, 1976): 41-49; Melinda M. Hennessey, "Race and Violence in Reconstruction New Orleans: The 1868 Riot," *Louisiana History* XX-1 (Winter, 1979): 77-92; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 418-23; Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York, 1971), 127-136; Frank J. Wetta, " 'Bulldozing the Scalawags': Some Examples of the Persecution of Southern White Republicans in Louisiana During Reconstruction," *Louisiana History* XXI-1 (Winter, 1980): 43-58.
3. Recent literature is outstanding in the quality of works published. See Edward Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th-Century American South* (New York, 1984); John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago, 1973); Gregg Cantrell, "Racial Violence and Reconstruction Policy in Texas, 1867-1868," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (January 1990): 333-355; Barry A. Crouch, "A Spirit of Lawlessness: White Violence; Texas Blacks, 1865-1868," *Journal of Social History* 18-2

(Winter 1984): 217–232; Joseph G. Dawson, “The Long Ordeal: Army General and Reconstruction in Louisiana, 1862–1877,” (PhD. Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1978); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988); William Gillette, *Retreat From Reconstruction, 1869–1879* (Baton Rouge, 1979); Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1979); Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890* (Urbana, 1980); George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens, GA, 1984); Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response, From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst, 1988); Ted Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism and Race in Louisiana, 1862–1877* (Baton Rouge, 1984); Michael Wayne, *The Reshaping of Plantation Society, The Natchez District, 1860–1880* (Baton Rouge, 1983); Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York, 1984).

4. Donaldsonville Chief, March 27, 1875; *Jefferson State Register*, July 23, 1870; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Do., no 154, part 2, 36, 161; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 64, 379, 787; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Do., no 30, 362.

5. Horace Redfield, a 19th century American journalist who studied homicides in the United States, found similar numbers for Louisiana for the years 1866 to 1878. Redfield conducted a thorough investigation through local papers of 14 parishes in Louisiana, and by extrapolating for the rest of Louisiana he got an annual average of 203 homicides. Furthermore, he asserted that at least 3,000 homicides had been committed in Louisiana during the years he studied; Horace V. Redfield, *Homicides, North and South*, (Philadelphia, 1880), 150.

6. Although New Orleans had ten times more inhabitants than Caddo, it had only 457 homicides as opposed to the 566 in Caddo parish.

7. All statistics and tables that are included in this article were drawn from that homicide index.

8. In order to avoid any duplication or repetition of cases, we entered in our data set only cases for which existed clear information about the name of the victim, the date, place and type of violence. Although it was asserted by different witnesses that more than 300 blacks were killed in Caddo in 1868, we retained only 185 cases for which we had information. Consequently, the level of homicides in Caddo was higher than the 566 cases contained in our data set.

9. Meanwhile, twenty-two parishes located in other areas had each twenty people or less killed, and fourteen of them had ten or less.

10. As the map shows it, Caddo was a part of a larger region that covered the Red River Delta Area.

11. As the number of parishes, the political sub-unit of Louisiana, passed from 48 to 57 during the Reconstruction period, any analysis based on the parish level is almost impossible and could bring only sketchy results. Therefore, we chose here to create an intermediary level of geographic and cultural areas between the parish and state levels. This approach gives us comparable data for each area for the whole period. The delineation of our sub-regions was done on the basis of geographical and cultural characteristics of each region as reported by Daniel Dennett, *Louisiana As It Is* (New Orleans, 1876), Samuel Lockett, *Louisiana As It Is* (1969 reprint), and Alvin L. Bertrand, *The Many Louisianas: Rural Social Areas and Cultural Islands* (Baton Rouge, 1955). Moreover, we took into account the percentage of blacks as an important characteristic of each parish. Consequently, parishes were regrouped in a particular zone only when they had approximately the same percentage of blacks among their population.

12. Redfield compared both Maine and Louisiana, two states with approximately the same population, and showed that Maine had a homicide rate ten times lower than the one in Louisiana. Redfield, *Homicides, North and South*, 147–150.

13. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 7; *Louisiana Democrat*, Feb. 23, 1875; *Opelousas Courier*, July 22, 1875; *Shreveport Southwestern*, Aug. 8, 1871; *Shreveport Times*, Jan. 24, 1875, June 19, 1880; *Sugar Bowl*, April 21, 1873, Nov. 24, 1874, April 3, 1877; *Thibodeaux Sentinel*, May 22, 1877.

14. Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 91, 421.

15. We did not take into account 85 homicides for which the race of the victims was unknown.

16. We did not take into account 122 homicides committed by unknown parties.

17. Otis Singletary, "The Reassertion of White Supremacy in Louisiana," (M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1949), 27–29; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 155, 175, 188–89; Allie B. Windham, "Methods and Mechanisms Used to Restore White Supremacy in Louisiana," (M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1948), 54, 60, 80; Allie B. Webb-Windham, "A History of Negro Voting in Louisiana," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1962), 11–12, 35, 72–75.

18. More than half of the 7,000 white inhabitants of the parish lived in Shreveport, which meant that blacks outnumbered whites in the countryside in a ratio of ten to one. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 432; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 362; *Shreveport Times*, No. 7, 9, 13, 1878; *Louisiana Capitolian*, Sept. 10, 1881; Perry A. Snyder, "Shreveport, Louisiana, 1861–1865: From Secession to Surrender," *Louisiana Studies* XI-1, (Spring 1972): 63; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 155; George W. Waring and George E. Cable, *History and Present Conditions of New Orleans*, (Washington, 1881), 296, 298.

19. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 361; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 280; William Ivy Hair, *Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, Louisiana Politics, 1877–1900* (Baton Rouge, 1969), 91; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 61; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 54, 60.

20. 39th Congress, 1st sess., House Report, no 30, 160; J. Fair Hardin, "An Outline of Shreveport and Caddo Parish History," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* XVIII-4 (October 1935): 859–61; Snyder, "Shreveport 1861–1865," 60, 65, 69–70; Perry A. Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 1979), 142; Edward Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 159, and Barry Crouch, "A Spirit of Lawlessness," 219, show that similar conditions prevailed in some of the unconquered regions of Georgia and Texas.

21. Nothing could more incite whites in Caddo into violence than to see black soldiers and black civilians wandering around armed. They were the reason underlying the whites' objections in October 1865 to the presence of a black regiment in Shreveport and their petition for white troops. Caddo whites warned of the "demoralizing effects" that black soldiers had on freedmen. 39th Congress, 1st sess., House Report, no 30, 142; N.O. *Bee*, Oct. 24, 1865; N.O. *Picayune*, Oct. 21, 1865; *Shreveport Southwestern*, July 25, 1866, Jan. 30, 1867; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 149–50, 166; Ripley, *Slaves and Freedmen*, 124.

22. 44th congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 194, 280, 383, 388; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 361, 367; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 17, 4–6; N.O. *Times*, Jan. 27, 1875; *Shreveport Times* July 20, 1874; Dawson, "The Long

Ordeal," 364; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 196-97, 223-24; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 54, 60.

23. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 278-279; See also Trelease, *White Terror*, 127-136; Barry Crouch presents a different conclusion in his examination of statistics for Texas for the years 1865 to 1868.

24. As blacks did not conform to the traditional white racist conceptions, any attempt by blacks to assert their newly won freedom or even any small skirmish within the black community was seen as a threat to the white domination and a sign of an impending black insurrection. Rumors of black insurrection were particularly widespread during the presidential election of 1868 and the congressional election of 1874. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 365, 441, 765, 780-81, 787, 953; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 154, part 1, 340-1, 355, 474; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 17, 7; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 283, 384; Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands (hereafter cited as BFRAL), Thomas F. Monroe to L.O. Parker, Shreveport, Aug. 20, 1867, letters sent, vol. 18, no 1927, 4498, box 3, BFRAL, Reg, 105, War Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; N.O. *Picayune*, Oct. 20, 74; N.O. *Republican*, Aug. 2, 1874; N.O. *Times*, Sept. 30, 1867; *Shreveport Times*, June 30, July 12, 19, 29, 1874, Jan. 31, 1875; Dawson, "The Long Ordeal," 117; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 157; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 81.

25. 39th Congress, 1st sess., House Report, no 30, 156; 39th Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 6, 86-87; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 148, 175, 189, 953; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 193, 415; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 17, 5, 50, 53; General Hatch Report, published in Supplemental Report of the Joint committee of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Late Election and the Condition of Peace and Order in the State (hereafter cited as Supplemental Report), (New Orleans, 1869), 21, 257; N.O. *Picayune*, Aug. 8, 1868, Aug. 21, 1874, Jan. 28, 1875; N.O. *Bee*, Jan. 20, 1875; N.O. *Republican*, Aug. 9, 18, Dec. 25, 1874; *Shreveport Times*, Jan. 21, 1875; Dawson, "The Long Ordeal," 61, 384; Singletary, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 27-28; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 221; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 91, 317; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 60, 80.

26. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report no 261, 361; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc. no 30, 280.

27. The federal census of 1870 reveals that whites formed 28% of the population in Caddo. Out of a total male population of 4577 between the ages of 18 and 45, there were approximately 1300 whites (28% of 4577). Moreover, our index reveals that at least 379 whites in Caddo were involved in murdering blacks during the Reconstruction period and that 88% of them were between the ages of 18 and 45.

28. Moreover, three whites owned more than \$30,000 of property, while two owned \$6,000 to \$10,000, and sixteen between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

29. 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House exec. Doc., no 30, 373; *Shreveport Times*, Sept. 14, 1874.

30. The percentage of homicides committed in other regions of Louisiana during those two years was much lower with 32% (962 out of 2948) as was the percentage of blacks killed by whites with 33% (398 out of 1127).

31. 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Dop., no 30, 359; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, part 1, 309, 474-75, part 2, 116, 128-29, 440-443; Supplemental Report, XVI-XVII, 75, 78.

32. General Hatch Report, published in Supplemental Report, 21, 257; N.O. *Picayune*, Aug. 8, 1868; Dawson, "The Long Ordeal," 384; Singletary, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 27–28; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 221; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 60; Webb-Windham, "Negro Voting in Louisiana," 74.
33. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 148, 175, 189, 953; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 193, 415; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 17, 5, 50, 53; N.O. *Picayune* Aug. 21, 1874, Jan. 28, 1875; N.O. *Bee*, Jan. 20, 1875; N.O. *Republican*, Aug. 9, 18, Dec. 25, 1874; *Shreveport Times* Jan. 21, 1875; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 60, 80.
34. On October 1, a band of some 75 whites from Shreveport on its way to the scene of the Bossier riot met a group of nine blacks who were taken to the bank of the Red River and told to swim for their lives. As they rose to the surface after having plunged in the river, the blacks were shot. Not one of them escaped. On the same night, thirty blacks were taken from around Shreveport, marched to the bank of the Red River, tied together with ropes and shot in the back. During the following days, a raft of swollen bodies drifted down the turbid river until the bodies were eaten by alligators. Few days later, seven blacks were chained in an old abandoned building which was then burned to the ground. On October 12, a group of whites went to the Johnson's brick-yard and took five blacks away from their work. After tying their hands, they riddled them with bullets. 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, 126; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 379; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 293, 359, 391–922; Supplemental Report, 76, 265; BFRAL, Letters sent and report, T.F. Monroe to J.M. Lee, A.A. Inspector General, Oc. 12, 1868, box 1, Micro 4501; Trelease, *White Terror*, 130; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 155–156.
35. On the day of the election, armed white men surrounded the polling places and made sure that every vote went the right way. James Watson, a black constable, cast the only Republican vote in Caddo in November 1868 and was killed half an hour later in a grocery store by the son of his former master and several other whites; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 359; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, part 1 309, part 2 116, 128–29, 440–444, 474–75; 46th Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Report, no 693, XVIII; 41st Congress, 1st session, no 27, 251–252; Supplemental report, XVI–XV11, 75, 78.
36. Not surprisingly, frightful stories began to circulate about the deplorable condition that prevailed in Caddo and numerous reports were made asserting that no less than thirty blacks had been killed during the months of July and August 1874. 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 783; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 382; N.O. *Louisiana*, Aug. 9 1874; N.O. *Republican*, Aug. 20, 1874; N.O. *Picayune*, Aug. 21, 1874; Dawson, "The Long Ordeal," 384; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 215 221; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 299; Windham, "White Supremacy in Louisiana," 60, 77, 80, 88–92.
37. Judge A.B. Levisse testified in 1875 before a congressional committee that there were many cases in Caddo of blacks who had been killed by white men under circumstances where the facts had never come to light. He further asserted that in Caddo it was not "an uncommon thing for a colored man to be found dead." When a black is found dead, he added, "a simple mention is made of it, perhaps orally or in print, and nothing is done. There is no investigation made. The coroner is sent for, perhaps to hold an inquest and we have him buried." This statement was further confirmed by Major Lewis Merrill of the U.S. Army who asserted that the killing of a black was not considered as a murder by the whites in Caddo and that no local grand jury would indict a white for such murder. See 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 175, 366–67; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 13, 4; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154,

part 2, 131; N.O. *Bulletin*, Jan. 29, 1875; Snyder, "Shreveport During the Civil War and Reconstruction," 232.

38. 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc. no 154, part 2, 80.

39. Our index also confirms that blacks were killed because they asked for a fair settlement for their crops or because they refused to work and wanted to break away from the plantation system. Finally, it reveals the social tension related to breaches of social etiquette as numerous blacks were killed because they did not obey a white order quickly enough, they talked back, they refused to yield the road or sidewalk to a white, they were "impolite" to a white woman, or they protested too strongly while whites took away their wife or children. 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 417-18, 421-22, 425-26, 430-31, 435, 444-47, 544; Taylor, *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 93.

40. Only fourteen black women were killed by whites in Caddo between 1865 and 1876. In numerous instances, black males were taken out of their cabins and shot by unknown white parties, while wives and children remained unmolested. 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, part 2, 443; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 478.

41. The Federal census of 1870 reveals that blacks formed 72% of the population in Caddo. Out of a total male population of 4577 between the ages of 18 and 45, blacks comprised approximately 3300. Moreover, our data indicate that 82% of black victims were between the ages of 18 and 45.

42. The percentage for Louisiana as a whole is a little higher with 26% (389 out of 1472).

43. 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, 126; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 293, 391; BFRAL, Letters Sent and Reports, T.F. Monroe to J. M. Lee, A. A. Inspector General, Oct. 12, 1868, box 1, micro 4501; Supplemental Report, 265; Trelease, *White Terror*, 130; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 155-56.

44. General P. Sheridan to Secretary of War, W.W. Belknap, Jan. 10, 1875, in 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., Senate Exec. Doc., no 13, 31; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report, no 261, 395, 429; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 381; Taylor *Louisiana Reconstructed*, 271, 290; Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 199.

45. "Miscellaneous Reports", no 1318, and "Register of Murders and Outrages", no 1322, BFRAL.

46. Report of the Joint Committee of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Late Election and on the Condition of Peace and Order in the State (New Orleans, 1868); Supplemental Report of the Joint Committee of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Late Election and the Condition of Peace and Order in the State (New Orleans, 1869); Report of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Election of April 17, and 18, 1868, and the Condition of Peace and Order in the State (New Orleans, 1868).

47. *House Reports*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, no 30; 39th Congress, 2nd Session, no 16; 41st Congress, 2nd Session, no 261; 44th Congress, 1st Session, no 816; 44th Congress, 2nd Session, nos 100, 156 (2 parts); *Senate Report*, 44th Congress, 2nd Session, no 701 (4 parts); *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, no 68; 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, no 2, 30; 40th Congress, 1st Session, no 14; 40th Congress, 3rd Session, no 15; 43rd Congress, 2nd Session, nos 13, 17; 44th Congress, 2nd Session, nos 2, 30; *House Miscellaneous Documents*, 41st Congress, 1st Session, nos 12, 13, 16; 41st Congress, 2nd Session, no 154 (2 parts); 44th Congress, 2nd Session, no 34 (4 parts); The House

Executive Document no 30 was particularly important as it furnished 150 pages of tables and lists of victims of homicides and violence.

48. More than 50 state and local newspapers were consulted.

49. Murders, homicides, manslaughters and all other forms of violent deaths produced quite a local sensation. It follows that a homicide index gives a more accurate picture of the actual level of violence. We must, however, define what we mean by "homicide" because under that definition lie the factors that will directly affect our data interpretation. As the number of arrests or judicial prosecutions does not coincide with the real number of incidences of homicides, we have chosen here to use the word "homicide" in its broadest sense and to collect information on each and every violent act that ended with a death, with the exception of accident and suicide. Roger Lane, *Violent Death in the City: Suicide, Accident & Murders in 19th Century Philadelphia* (Cambridge, MA, 1979); Eric Monkonen, "Systematic Criminal Justice History: Some Suggestions," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* IX-3 (Winter 1979): 451-464; Robert A. Nye, "Crime in Modern Societies: Some Research Strategies For Historians," *Journal of Social History* XI-4 (Summer 1978): 491-507.

50. Local newspapers and the Congressional reports contained countless notices such as: "Last Saturday night a colored man name Bryant Offort, who lived on Samuel McLean's plantation in this parish was taken from his home by some unknown persons and killed in the most brutal and atrocious manner". In 1874, the number of people killed by unknown parties became so alarming that the parish coroner, afraid for his life, preferred to resign rather than carry out his duties in the countryside. 39th Congress, 1st sess., House Report no 30, 153; 43rd Congress, 2nd sess., House Report no 261, 783, 787-88; 44th Congress, 2nd sess., House Exec. Doc., no 30, 77; 41st Congress, 2nd sess., House Misc. Doc., no 154, part 2, 117; Supplemental Report, 265; *Opelousas Journal*, May 7, 1875; *Shreveport Southwestern*, Sept. 16, 1868; *N. O. Republican*, Aug. 20, 1874; *Redfield, Homicides, North And South*, 150.