

Seeds of Destruction: Homicide, Race, and Justice in Omaha, 1880–1920

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Colored Man Pulls His Revolver and Quickly Shoots Down the Ranchman From Colorado

Omaha World Herald, April 4, 1903¹

H. J. WALKER, the victim mentioned in the *Omaha World Herald* headline, had arrived in Omaha from Ouray, Colorado, a few hours previous to the shooting and had been drinking heavily all day. After entering Garrity's Saloon on Friday evening, Walker took a table and told stories about ranch life on the high plains. He was soon surrounded by "women with painted cheeks and scarlet dresses and rough men who laughed long and loudly at the coarse jests and uncouth stories he told." When Pat Jackson, an African-American entertainer hired to provide music, contributed a personal story about horses and cattle, the boisterous rancher made some racial remarks. A witness stated: "The cow puncher didn't like having him butt in that way and called the coon names."² Walker threatened to teach Jackson some manners. According to a witness, "Jackson wouldn't stand for that kind of talk and says, 'I guess you won't,' and with that he pulls out a gun and plugged the puncher." Jackson fired two shots in quick succession from a Smith and Wesson .38 revolver. Walker slumped to the floor, mortally wounded.³

This shooting in Garrity's Saloon at Tenth Street and Capitol Avenue, in the middle of the brothel district, typified violent behavior in Omaha at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since men visited saloons armed with concealed weapons, particularly handguns, it is not surprising that violent confrontations often ended in death. However, this homicide is particularly significant because of the interracial factor—black kills white.

It is the thesis of this paper that a subculture of violence existed within African-American society in Omaha during the period 1880 to 1920. By using comparative social history techniques we can test this

thesis and place homicide, race, and justice into proper perspective. An examination of statistical data collected from Douglas County district court records⁴ will provide keys to understanding the handling of homicide defendants within the criminal justice system, with particular attention given to a discussion of African-American defendants.

During the period 1880–1920, Douglas County officials indicted 196 whites, 6 Hispanics, 67 African Americans, 9 Italians, and 2 Greeks (see table 1). A racial breakdown for Omaha's population indicates that African Americans accounted for 3 percent in both 1890 and 1900, about 3.5 percent in 1910, and just over 5 percent by 1920. Considering these low percentages, the racial representation of African Americans within indictment data for Douglas County are revealing when compared to the dominate white population. The indictment percentage for each group is whites 70, African Americans 24, Italians 3.2, Hispanics 2.1, and Greeks .7 (see table 1). This significant disparity in the indictment versus population percentages for African Americans suggests a need to explore homicide in Omaha to determine whether a subculture of violence existed within the black community.

Black Migration

Omaha experienced significant population growth, particularly after 1880, with the railroads and stockyards providing the economic impetus by offering employment opportunities for European immigrants and African Americans. Ethnic groups proliferated within Omaha, where Bohemian, German, Irish, Danish, and Swedish neighborhoods developed in the 1880s and 1890s.⁵ Black Americans first began to enter Omaha in the late 1880s and also developed their own neighborhoods west of the Union Pacific railroad yards. The railroads provided the largest number of job opportunities for African Americans recently arriving from the South and, to a lesser extent, the East. Many of them became porters, cooks, and common laborers.⁶

Black migration to Omaha increased dramatically during the 1880s, increasing from 881 to 4,665 by 1890. By 1900 their numbers remained stable with 4,014, rising gradually to 5,143 in 1910 (28 percent gain), before doubling to 10,315 by 1920. This explosion of population during the era of World War I brought with it accompanying signs of unrest among the white, as well as African-American population. Their rapid increase in numbers made them more visible to white citizens, and more vulnerable to discrimination, something that many had experienced in the South.

TABLE 1
Homicide Indictments Douglas County, 1880–1920

Ethnic	N=	%
White	196	70
Hispanic	6	2.1
African American	67	24
Italian	9	3.2
Greek	2	.7
Total	280	100

Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets, Douglas County, 1880–1920

Census data confirms that, similar to northern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago, Omaha received the majority of its black population from the South. A 1900 and 1910 manuscript census sample reveals that 79 and 77 percent respectively of the African Americans in Omaha were born in southern states.⁷ In 1900, 9.4 percent of the black population traced their heritage from “deep south” states, but in 1910 that number had increased to 22.9 percent. This pattern reflects changes occurring in that region during the first decade of the twentieth century and the effect of push-pull factors that operated in the South and the North to either drive out or lure African Americans.

Although historians have cited natural disasters, such as droughts, floods, and boll weevil infestations as major migration motivations,⁸ others also can be identified. For example, the nature of local southern law enforcement had an important impact. Many African Americans viewed police power as repressive and unjust. Police brutality in Atlanta, Richmond, and other cities created unrest among southern urban blacks, who on occasion resisted. Atlanta particularly experienced violent reactions by African Americans.⁹

Lynchings provided another push factor. “Black flight” increased after the beginning of the twentieth century, with 170,000 leaving the South in the first decade and an additional 450,000 in the next. Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck discovered “a very striking relationship between migration and lynching in Georgia and South Carolina.”¹⁰ Sanctioned lethal violence against African Americans in the form of lynching became commonplace in the South, with at least 2,409 victims (1889–1918).¹¹ Similarly, the South had a high execution rate for blacks convicted of capital offenses. One researcher concluded that “a ‘legal lynching’ [ex-

ecution] is little, if any, improvement over an extra-legal lynching."¹² Overt violence forced many African Americans to leave the South to seek a safer environment.

Negative factors were not the only influences that brought about out-migration. Pull factors such as job opportunities, better living conditions, and the absence of racial persecution also contributed to the movement of new migrants into Omaha. The Union Pacific Railroad, Union Stock Yards Company, and Cudahy, Armour, and Swift meat packing companies offered job opportunities.¹³ Omaha did not have Jim Crow laws to restrict blacks in housing or other accommodations. However, this began to change by the first decade of the twentieth century, with rental "listings especially for blacks [that] implied a restricted market for that group."¹⁴ Blacks moved into the region just west of the Union Pacific railroad yards and began to adjust to urban life that offered job opportunities.

Economic growth that encouraged the "Great Migration" of African Americans to Omaha also provided opportunities for entrepreneurs who developed service-related industries such as saloons, houses of prostitution, gambling parlors, and pool halls. Saloons served as the social gathering places for hundreds of stockyard and railroad workers. In some ways they were one of the few social settings where integration occurred. They also became centers for urban violence that usually spilled out onto the streets.

Omaha's Tenderloin District

By 1900, Omaha's redlight district developed in a core of city blocks that extended from Davenport south three blocks to Douglas, and from Eighth Street west six blocks to Fourteenth Street. Prostitutes were numerous in 1900, and within a decade their cribs and houses became heavily concentrated within an even smaller core district. The northern and southern boundaries (Davenport and Douglas) remained the same, but now they extended westward only three blocks from Ninth Street to Twelfth Street.¹⁵ Although it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics, in 1900 at least 266 women could be identified as working in Omaha's cribs or brothels. A decade later only 116 women in the same region could be recognized working their trade in the redlight district. African-American prostitutes numbered 18 and 26 percent respectively for the two decades, much higher than their proportion within the general population.¹⁶

African Americans, who recently migrated into Omaha, lived mixed within and around the periphery, and radiated mainly northward and westward from this redlight district.¹⁷ On the eastern flank of this region lie the main railroad center and depot, the major employer of black men. Mixed in with the brothels were numerous saloons that offered workers a place to spend their leisure time. In 1911 there were fifty-eight saloons in the redlight district, and another sixty-four bars within three blocks of the brothel region.¹⁸ Saloon owners and bartenders, however, were not hospitable to all ethnic groups. African Americans found themselves unwelcome in some saloons. For example, the *Omaha Monitor*, a black weekly newspaper, complained of discrimination by saloon keepers practiced against prospective black patrons. "Today many of the saloons refuse to serve colored men, and others break glasses in the presence of colored men they have served. . . . In still other saloons signs are posted which read 'Negroes not Wanted.'"¹⁹

This highly concentrated redlight district was a ghetto within a ghetto. Since crime usually flourishes within such districts, it should be no surprise that residents within or around the area were labeled as the criminal elements of society or what Eric Monkkonen and others have called the "dangerous classes."²⁰ To some extent this was true, the region did entice and cater to the criminal elements who pimped, sold drugs, and committed violent crimes. However, there was a tendency to blame African Americans for most crime—real or imagined. As black newspaper editor H. J. Pinkett noted: "So eager are they [editors of Omaha's white newspapers] to find something degrading in Negro life that the history of the Negro of the city of Omaha is being written very largely from the records of the police court."²¹ Although Pinkett admitted that African Americans committed violent crimes, in most cases he viewed it as "relative killing a relative" or a similar situation.²² The editor of the *Monitor* bitterly protested that disreputable saloons created problems for neighboring black residents. Pinkett ran editorials calling for the cleaning up of the "bootlegging and gambling joints" that were "rapidly multiplying in the northern section of Omaha, where many of our race reside."²³ He denounced the availability of morphine, opium, and cocaine on the streets of Omaha and called for the enforcement of laws against the sale of drugs.²⁴

Interracial Homicides

Homicide studies have found that most murderers seldom selected victims from other racial groups.²⁵ That was not the case for African-

American defendants indicted for murder in Omaha. Thirty-two percent killed white victims (see table 2). On the other hand, 4 percent of the white murderers killed out of their racial group.²⁶ A few case histories will illustrate the implications of a typical Omaha interracial homicide scenario and its consequences.

Interracial homicides involving African-American perpetrators and white victims can be divided into three basic categories; saloon related fights, those involving women, and robberies. Alcohol served as a common denominator and saloons provided the arena for many killings. They usually occurred in the evening and often began as minor incidents, such as a jostle, verbal epithet, or some real or imagined damage to honor. For example, on 15 February 1888, William Ferguson, an African American born and raised in the South, entered a saloon and began to play pool. The pool attendant, who recognized Ferguson from a previous fight, asked him to leave. Ferguson refused. Quickly the two became involved in a fight and Joe Holmes, a black pool attendant, beat and ejected Ferguson from the saloon. Within minutes Ferguson returned, sneaking in the back door, and opened fire at Holmes. The pool attendant ducked as a bullet whizzed by, struck, and instantly killed Ole Olson, a white patron.²⁷ County authorities tried, convicted, and sentenced Ferguson, just eighteen years old, to life in prison for second degree murder.²⁸

In a similar case William Fouse, an African American, visited Levy's and the Midway Saloon in the 300 block of North Twelfth Street. He met James Bowles, a white soldier from the Sixteenth Infantry, in one of the saloons, and they began to walk back and forth between the two saloons drinking and arguing. Bowles allegedly struck Fouse with a knife. Fouse, who quickly retaliated, grabbed a brick and caved in his victim's head. A jury found him guilty of first degree murder and sentenced him to death.²⁹ On 18 October 1913, Tom Jones entered the Leoneo pool hall/saloon at 1006 Capitol and began to play pool and drink beer. Jones began arguing with white owner Samuel Leoneo over a fifty cent bet, with tempers flaring quickly. Jones pulled a revolver and fired, killing Leoneo instantly. A jury convicted Jones of first degree murder and the judge sentenced him to death.³⁰

There is a dominant theme in all three cases: they involved drinking, they occurred in saloons, and they started with minor incidents. In the first case the victim had the misfortune to be present in a saloon that acted as a social gathering place for the interaction of the races in Omaha. Although an innocent bystander, he paid with his life for a fight

TABLE 2
Omaha Homicides Perpetrator/Victim Relationship

Relationship	%
Black/Black	52.3
Black/White	32.3
Black/Unknown	15.4

Source: Douglas County District Court Cases, 1880–1920

that did not concern him. In the second case Fouse frequently drank heavily when visiting Omaha. Bowles, his victim, also became inebriated and a petty argument turned to blows and death. The third case seems even more incomprehensible, ending in death over a fifty cent bet. This seems bizarre, but it was a common denominator in many homicides that occurred in Omaha. Oddly enough, these three cases are quite typical homicides.

Two cases involving women suggest prostitution related issues or the possibility of an insult. One occurred on the night of 27 July 1905, in front of the Cambridge Hotel, at the corner of Thirteenth and Capitol Streets. William Miles, African American, and Florence Flick, a white woman, had been living together for two years in the redlight district. Miles and Flick, a cocaine addict, were well known to the police. Apparently Harry McGechin won favor with Flick and then moved in with her. Miles and McGechin met in front of the hotel and began to argue. Miles pulled a knife and cut his victim's throat from ear to ear. McGechin died within minutes.³¹ In another case, on the night of 15 October 1913, an unidentified African American took offense to remarks made by three men at Twenty-sixth and N streets about a woman he was escorting. The three white companions, under the influence of alcohol, stopped the black woman and made some derogatory remarks. The unknown assailant, referred to in the press as "Lucky Brown," attacked and soon the white victim lay dying in the street. Police failed to apprehend the perpetrator.³²

These two cases display some of the aspects of southernness—that is they reflect a heightened degree of honor. A careless comment, an unintended jostle on the street, or a gesture could bring a quick response from blacks conditioned by living in the South. Southerners had a strong sense of honor that dared not be sullied. Both cases also suggest prosti-

tution-related behavior. Since they lived in the redlight district, it is very possible that Miles had been keeping Flick as a prostitute. The second case occurred in an area of South Omaha also noted for prostitution. Pimps protected their prostitutes and their territory, and anyone viewed as a threat would be dealt with quickly.

Several homicide cases involved robbery. On 14 May 1906, Harrison Clark, Calvin Waln, and Clarence Gathright, all African Americans, robbed a street car conductor. During the scuffle, Clark fired at Edward Flury with a revolver, and the conductor fell dead. A Douglas County jury found the three men guilty of murder in the first degree, sentenced two to life in prison, but recommended the death penalty for Clark.³³ In a similar case, Governor Hall, Luther Hall, and William Collins robbed Nathan Shapiro's store on the night of 27 August 1919. During a struggle with Shapiro, Collins shot the store owner with a .38 caliber revolver. All three received short sentences.³⁴

In the first case only Clark received the death penalty. This might seem surprising considering that the victim was white. In the second case the age of the three perpetrators (fourteen, fifteen, and seventeen) may explain why they received relatively light punishment for a homicide during a robbery. However, Clarence Gathright, Governor Hall, Luther Hall, and William Collins all plea bargained guilty. This explains the lighter sentences for Gathright and the teen-aged boys. In both cases all parties were carrying handguns.

Weapon Choice

Although a wide variety of weapons were available to perpetrators, handguns proved to be the favorite. By the late 1880s cheap handguns could be purchased for an average of two to three dollars in any gun store or pawn shop. They were usually five-shot, double-action weapons with short barrels that could be concealed easily in any pocket. A discussion of several homicide cases offers an opportunity for further analysis of handgun use.

On numerous occasions in 1908, Jess Brown, an African-American dining car waiter for the Union Pacific Railroad, fought with Carrie Carter, the black woman who lived with him. After a bitter quarrel she finally left him and moved into separate living quarters. Brown discovered her new residence and tried to convince her to return and live with him. She refused. On 8 February 1909, apparently exasperated by her refusals, Brown visited a neighborhood pawnshop where he hocked his overcoat in exchange for a handgun and a box of shells. He loaded the

weapon and walked to Carter's new residence at 1223 Capitol Avenue. After a brief argument in front of her house, Brown fired two shots.³⁵

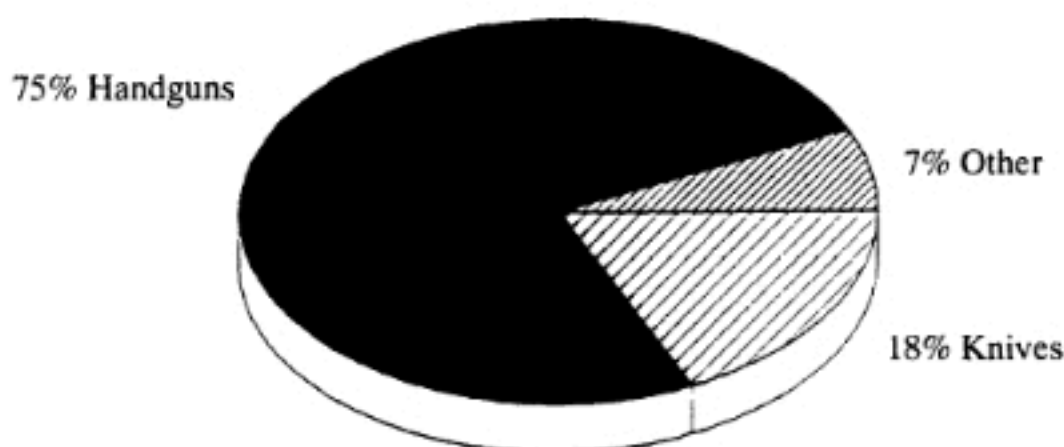
This case displays the ease with which individuals could obtain handguns in Omaha. Jess Brown, in the dead of winter, walked into a pawnshop and traded his overcoat for a handgun and a box of shells. It also indicated the single-mindedness and the premeditation of this particular perpetrator. There are other similar cases involving African-American perpetrators and black victims. On 12 May 1906, Robert Johnson used a Russian Bulldog .32 caliber to kill his brother in a boarding-house quarrel. Both had been drinking. George Johnson killed his wife with a similar .38 caliber revolver on 25 August 1910.³⁶ This homicide scenario was repeated over and over again throughout the period under study.

A breakdown of weapons employed by African Americans accused of homicide is remarkable (see figure 1). Seventy-five percent chose handguns, compared to about 57 percent for their white counterparts indicted for murder (see figure 2). Both racial groups used knives about 17 percent of the time and chose other means to kill their victims 7 and 26 percent of the time respectively for African Americans and whites. Roger Lane, in his study of black crime in Philadelphia, found that African-American murderers chose handguns in only 37 percent of the homicide indictments during 1881–1901.³⁷ Although the time period is not exactly the same, the disparity between the two cities is quite striking.

The common habit of carrying weapons by African Americans led to many lethal incidents. This practice may have originated in the South where blacks had to contend with overt threats of violence from white citizens. What is surprising is that whites were less likely to be armed with handguns than blacks. This may indicate the influence of southernness among blacks who recently migrated from the South. With many carrying handguns, the addition of alcohol turned minor squabbles into lethal shootings.

Comparisons with recent studies covering the twentieth century suggest that the Omaha handgun homicide rates were very high. For example, in 1980 an average 52 percent of African Americans indicted for homicide in the United States used handguns in the commission of their crimes.³⁸ Handguns were readily available in Omaha, but why would blacks turn to them in such large numbers? Perhaps they felt threatened by outside forces they could not control. African-American migration patterns may help to account for this propensity to carry handguns. Many blacks were recent arrivals from the South where they witnessed blatant racism, including violence.³⁹ The handgun provided them with some security

FIGURE 1
Weapon Use
African Americans
Douglas County, 1880–1920



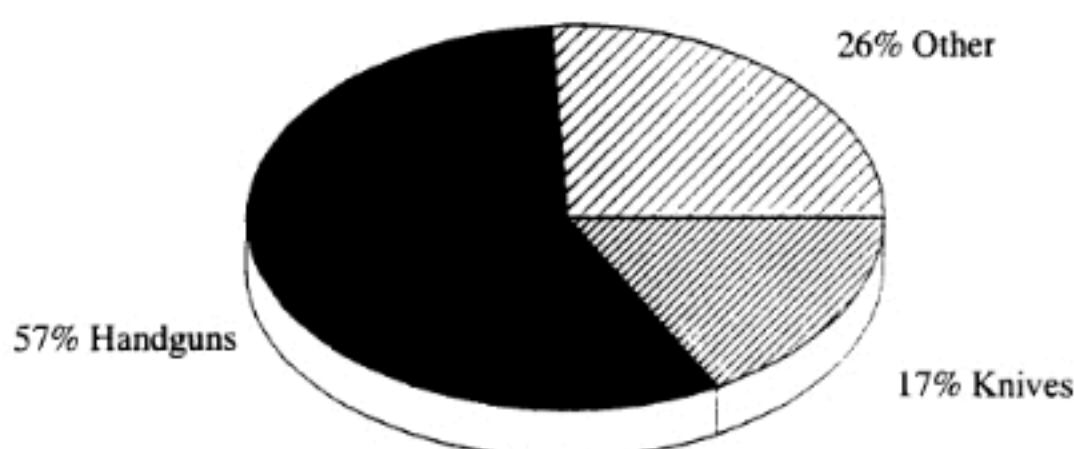
Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

against violence by whites or other blacks. High handgun homicide rates for both races also might indicate the lax enforcement of gun regulations in Omaha.⁴⁰

Most defendants selected cheap handguns patterned on the Webley British Bulldog double-action revolver (patented in 1883). This particular model, with a two- or three-inch barrel, allowed for easy concealment in a coat pocket. American arms manufacturers copied this design and produced large quantities of five-shot revolvers in several models, including .38 and .32 calibers. In the 1880s, Iver Johnson Arms Company named its versions the American Bull Dog and Boston Bull Dog. During the same era the Harrington and Richardson Company, noted for making "Suicide Specials," switched to a similar design. Many of these cheaply produced handguns sold for under three dollars.⁴¹ Smith and Wesson, Colt, and other gun manufacturers produced a steady stream of readily available handguns that could be concealed upon one's person. Handguns could be purchased in gun shops and pawnshops almost anywhere in Omaha,⁴² and provided quick solutions for quarrels.

Alcohol also proved to be a common component in Omaha's deadly confrontations. Saloons provided a social gathering place for the work-

FIGURE 2
Weapon Use
White Defendants
Douglas County, 1880–1920



Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

ing class of Omaha.⁴³ Although the data on alcohol is sketchy, 26 percent of the homicides committed by African Americans occurred in saloons. At least 75 and 65 percent of the perpetrators and victims respectively were drinking.⁴⁴

Indictment Data

Males dominated violent crime in Omaha. Ninety-two percent of the indicted whites and 89 percent of the indicted African Americans were male. Most female perpetrators killed their husbands, just as female victims commonly were killed by their spouses. Victims and perpetrators usually knew each other.

Juries or judges in Douglas County convicted 85 percent of the African-American defendants, found 6 percent not guilty, and dismissed 9 percent (see figure 3).⁴⁵ Whites experienced very different results. The criminal justice system convicted 34 percent of the white defendants, while 38 percent were found not guilty and 28 percent were dismissed. Although females were not prominently represented either as perpetrators or victims, there is a disparity in conviction rates between the two races for females. Juries found only four women guilty of murder or

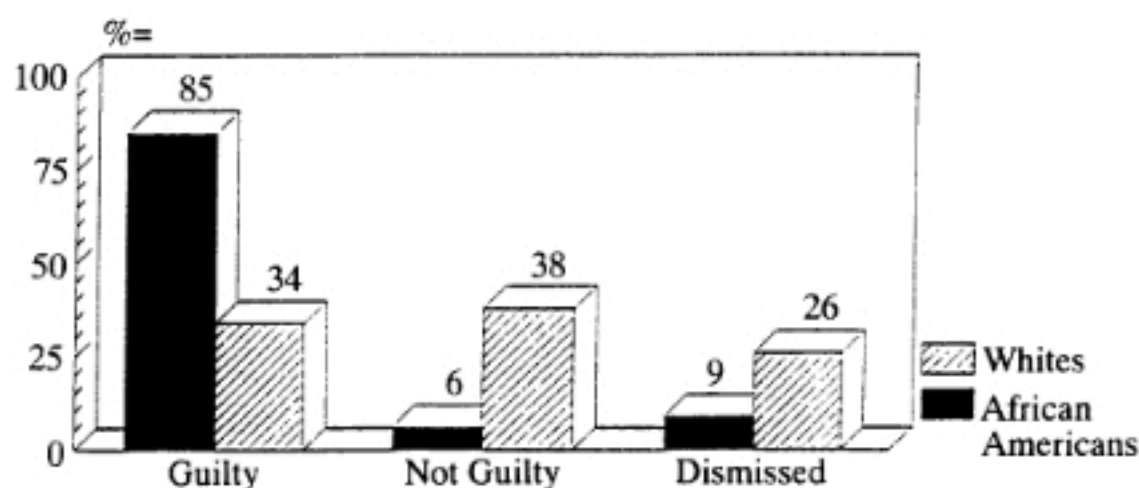
manslaughter (16 percent). African-American females experienced a 60 percent conviction rate (three cases), while white females experienced a 5.5 percent conviction rate (one case). In some ways the not guilty verdicts are most revealing. The white not guilty verdict rate was six times that of the African American. One might be inclined to assume that there was an inherent bias in the criminal justice system. To a certain extent that is true, but other factors help explain the results.

Historians disagree on the definition of plea bargaining. For example, Lawrence M. Friedman asks the question: "Can we be sure we know plea bargaining when we see it? The answer for the most part is yes. Some cases have unambiguous signs—more notably a change in plea from *innocent to guilty of a lesser charge*."⁴⁶ All of the African-American plea bargains (21 cases) in Omaha involved a change of plea from not guilty to guilty. Mark H. Haller adds an observation that also applies to this study. While discussing two possible types of nineteenth-century plea bargains he noted that "one stemmed from the fact that defendants were generally poor, sometimes foreign-born, and frequently unrepresented by an attorney. Their guilty pleas often reflected a railroading of the defendant by a variety of threats and promises that the defendant would be in no position to evaluate or resist."⁴⁷ This certainly was the case for African-American defendants in Omaha. For example, after police investigators applied heavy pressure, Luther Hall, Governor Hall, and William Collins all plea bargained guilty. In the case of the 1906 street car conductor robbery Clarence Gathright also plea bargained, possibly due to fear of the death penalty.⁴⁸

Plea bargaining helps illuminate the high conviction rates for African Americans. Thirty-two percent of black defendants plea bargained during the judicial process (see figure 4).⁴⁹ Less than 5 percent of the white defendants chose that option. It is significant that African-American defendant plea bargains are almost perfectly split between white and black victims. This suggests that race of the victim was not the main consideration.

Any admission of guilt during a preliminary hearing heavily favored the county attorney. Nebraska law did not require providing indigents with legal counsel until the trial stage. At that point if the defendant lacked counsel the court appointed an attorney. Few black defendants had the financial means to employ legal counsel. By being economically disadvantaged they received unequal treatment in the Douglas County criminal justice system. On the other hand, the prosecutor used it as a means to save time and money.

FIGURE 3
Homicide Verdict
By Race
Douglas County, 1880–1920



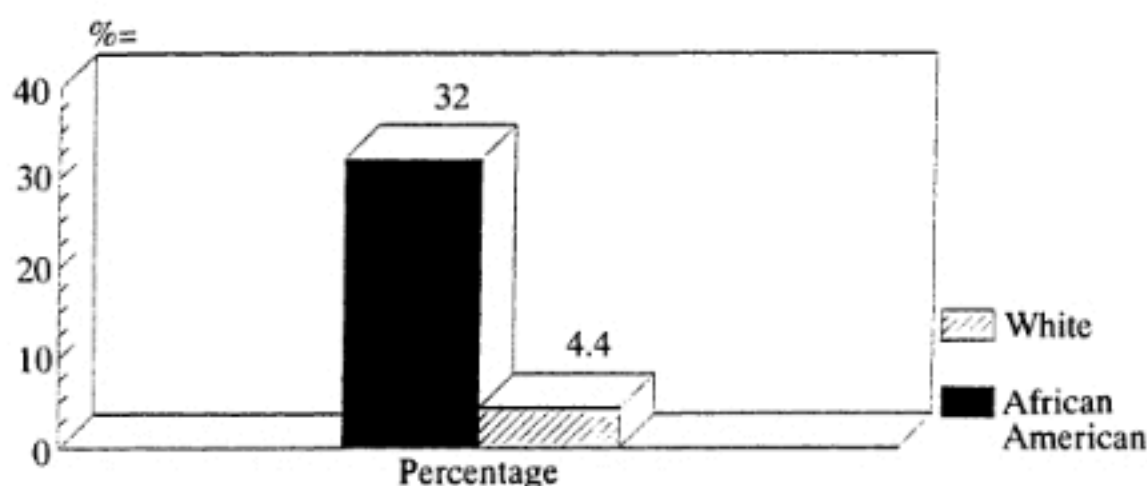
Omaha homicide indictment rates per 100,000 population provide a revealing contrast. These are not actual homicide rates, but only represent indictments. The high rates for African Americans in Omaha are remarkable (see figure 5). The lowest homicide indictment rate for blacks in any decade was 32.6 indictments per 100,000 (1890–1899), while the highest reached 56.8 during the decade 1900–1909. White homicide indictment rates in Omaha, however, averaged 3.8 (see figure 5) per 100,000 population and never exceeded 4 (1900–1909). African-American homicide indictment rates consistently exceeded white rates by a factor of ten or more.

Omaha, however, was not the only city that displayed such disparate figures. Roger Lane discovered that indictment rates among African Americans in Philadelphia reached 11.4 per 100,000, five times the white rate (2.1), during the period 1890–1900.⁵⁰ Another earlier study indicates that homicide rates for blacks continued to be high during the 1920s, with Nebraska urban rates reaching 68.9 in 1920 and 1925.⁵¹ The Omaha rates for African Americans have seldom been equalled.⁵²

Homicide Locations

Analysis of the Douglas County data poses an important question: Why did blacks kill outside their race so frequently? One factor could be the mixing of racial groups in Omaha's urban core. There are no

FIGURE 4
Plea Bargaining
By Race
Douglas County, 1880-1920



Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

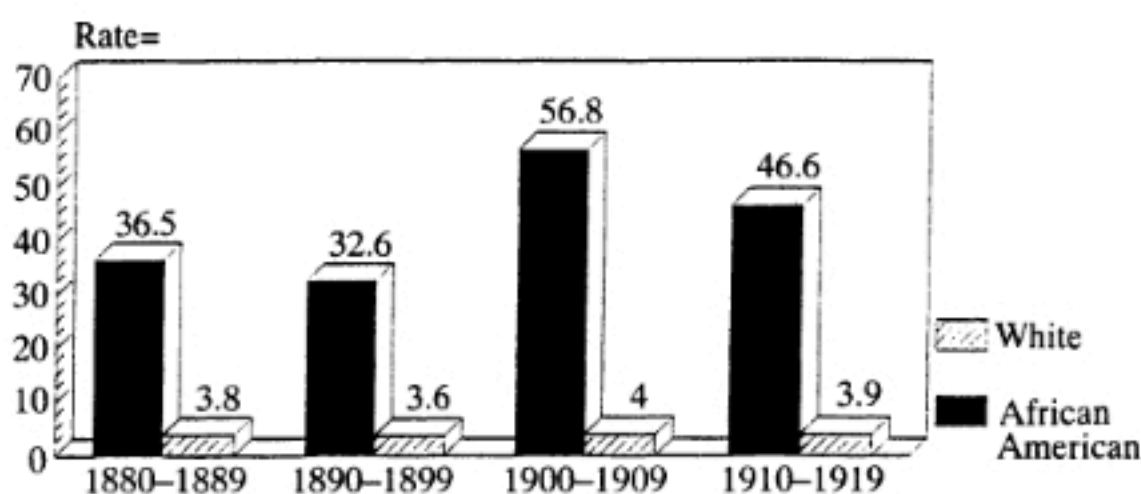
studies that adequately document African-American movement within Omaha. Recent homicide studies indicate that perpetrators usually kill their victims in their own neighborhoods. The location of homicides committed by African Americans in Omaha clearly supports this premise. African Americans killed sixteen of the eighteen white victims within or near the redlight district. African-American defendants also murdered nineteen black victims in the central business district. South Omaha provided the other location where African-Americans homicides occurred, with two white and nine black victims.

In terms of physical setting, African Americans killed whites in the following locations; four in saloons, five on streets near them, two robbery victims by the railroad center, and one robbery victim on a street in South Omaha. Whites and African Americans normally mixed on a regular basis only in or near saloons in this one largely black neighborhood that whites apparently frequented because of brothels and saloons. With prospective perpetrators and victims under the influence of liquor and well-armed, minor disagreements often ended in death.

Indictments vs. Coroner's Inquests

Indictment data have particular limitations that can best be explored with a discussion of coroner's inquests involving interracial killings.

FIGURE 5
Homicide Indictment
Rates Per 100,000 Population
Douglas County, 1880-1920



Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

Previous analysis of Douglas County indictment statistics revealed high interracial homicide rates for African Americans. However, when coroner's inquests are used to authenticate such rates, black interracial homicide rates dropped significantly from 32 to 21 percent, while white interracial homicide rates increased from 4 to 5.6 percent. The reason for this change is simple. African Americans who killed whites were almost always indicted, but if a black killed another black, the chances of being indicted declined. For white perpetrators, however, the ratio for killing outside of their race increased because police who shot African Americans or mobs who lynched blacks were virtually never indicted. In such cases, the coroner filed reports and usually exonerated whites accused of killing blacks.⁵³ Nevertheless, with twenty-two African Americans killing white victims and fourteen white perpetrators slaying blacks, there is ample evidence of racial animosity that ended with homicides in Omaha.

Homicide Rates

Homicide rates, however, provide the best measure of violence levels. Douglas County (essentially Omaha) homicide rates are higher than those experienced in eastern cities such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. A comparison of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and

Omaha show significant differences between eastern and western homicide rates in an urban setting.⁵⁴ The Omaha homicide rates begin at 2.6 per 100,000 in the early 1880s and continue upward reaching an apogee at 9.7 during the period 1915 to 1919 (see figure 6).⁵⁵ The high levels for the period 1905 to 1919 reflects the extremely high homicide rates for African Americans in Omaha. On the other hand, the rates for the other three cities throughout the four decades maintain a more even level. Only Philadelphia showed a marked increase that leveled off in 1900.

However, a final comparison of African American and white homicide rates in Douglas County shows the peril of making such blanket comparisons with eastern cities. If you separate the two rates the difference between African American and white rates appears dramatic (see figure 7). Because of the sheer number of homicides committed by whites, their low rates tend to "flatten out" the African-American homicide rates. Although white homicide rates were essentially double the rates of Boston and New York during a similar period, they are overshadowed by the African-American homicide rates that reach an incredible 113 per 100,000 during 1905 through 1909 and remain 80 or more for the last decade.

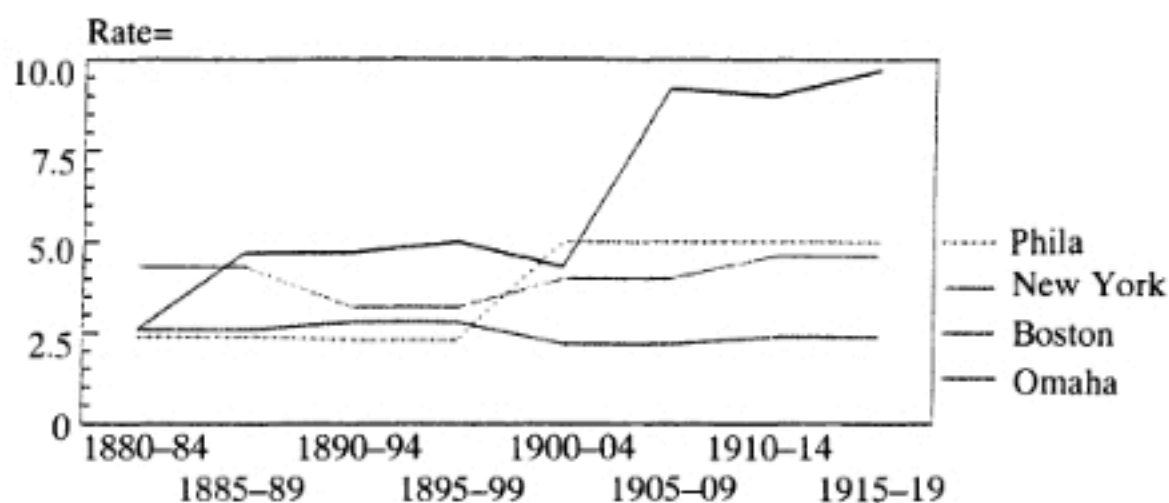
Southern Subculture of Violence

Is there an explanation for African-American homicide rates so dramatically higher than white rates and why were blacks more likely to turn to violence? In a discussion of lethal black violence in Philadelphia, Roger Lane offers the following observation.

The roots of blame crime are threefold: a different social psychology resulting from blacks' exclusion from the dominant experience with factory, bureaucracy, and schooling; a heritage of economic and other insecurities; and a long and complex experience with criminal activity.⁵⁶

In support of this, African-American newspapers in Omaha often complained of segregation and job discrimination. For example, in 1910 the *Omaha Enterprise* criticized a Douglas County grand jury report that recommended "that the cells [of the county jail] be so arranged that white prisoners may be together and colored prisoners confined by themselves." Other editorials complained about Omaha companies that failed to hire African Americans or, in some cases, fired them without redress.⁵⁷ Equally important, Omaha's residential segregation trapped African Americans in an area where physical violence was deemed

FIGURE 6
Homicide Rates
Per 100,000 Population
Boston, N.Y., Philadelphia, & Omaha



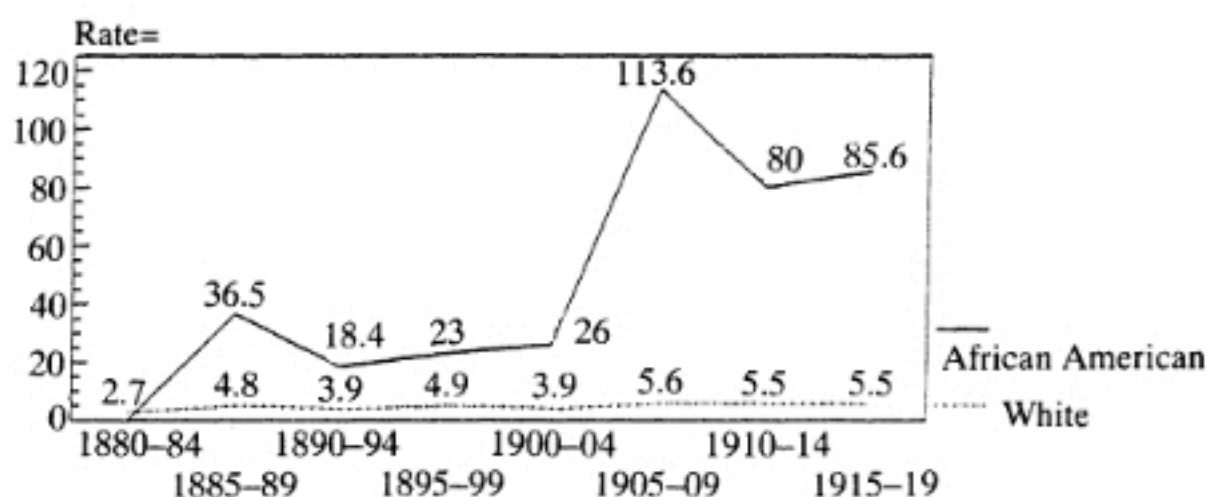
Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

appropriate action by some individuals. With handguns readily available African Americans carried and used them, first in self-defense against white aggression—real or imagined—and second to settle disputes.⁵⁸

There are, however, other more elaborate and meaningful theories that explain the high homicide rates for African-American males. A majority of the blacks in Omaha migrated from the South, with 79 and 77 percent for the 1900 and 1910 census, respectively.⁵⁹ They came to Omaha not only looking for economic opportunity, but also to escape an oppressive system of tyranny enforced by white lynch law. They brought with them a heritage of violence—in essence a “subculture of violence.”⁶⁰ Two sociologists found that African Americans born in the South and who moved to the North had higher homicide rates than blacks born and raised in the North.⁶¹ It is quite probable that African Americans who migrated into Omaha brought with them this “subculture of violence” born of their southern experience. Young black men involved in homicides witnessed violence or knew relatives who experienced violence at the hands of southern whites.

Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti believe that certain societies develop a distinctive “subculture of violence.” Sheldon Hackney applied this theory to the South suggesting that southerners identified with certain forms of violence, but rejected others. He discovered high homicide

FIGURE 7
Homicide Rates
By Race
Douglas County, 1880-1920



Source: Criminal Appearance Dockets

rates among southerners. The region also displayed moderate property crime rates. With a wry touch of humor, Hackney concluded "high murder and low suicide rates constitute a distinctly southern pattern of violence, one that must rank . . . ahead of mint juleps in importance as a key to the meaning of being southern."⁶²

Sociologist Raymond D. Gastil critiqued earlier studies of the "subculture of violence" and developed a modified form labeled "regional culture of violence." Gastil criticized the "subculture of violence" suggesting that his "regional culture of violence" concept is superior because it "will help to explain why subcultures of violence do not develop equally everywhere under apparently similar conditions."⁶³ Gastil used the term "southernness" to help identify the persistence of southern culture in transplanted members of that society who moved to other regions.⁶⁴ They carried with them their cultural tradition that included a propensity to settle problems, especially those that concerned "honor," with force, that often could be lethal. Gastil established high correlations of southernness with African Americans and high homicide rates. These data support Wolfgang's conclusions that African Americans who had recently migrated from the South had the highest homicide rates.

In *The Mind of the South*, Wilbur J. Cash suggests that high violence levels can be explained by exploring southern historical traditions. Honor

became a cult in the South that had to be defended at all costs. Hackney agreed and suggested that slavery and the plantation "reinforced the tendency toward violence."⁶⁵ Edward L. Ayers also offers some important clues to the puzzle of southernness and why African Americans might have accepted it as part of their culture.⁶⁶ Ayers claimed that the foundation of southernness lies in the attitudes of whites who dominated blacks. White southerners developed their own unwritten "ten commandments." The first four dealt with the "protection" of women against "rape, adultery, seduction, or 'slander against chastity.'"⁶⁷ Physical violence by a male relative of the offended woman was the only acceptable response for any of these offenses. Any lie or "opprobrious epithets" were considered insults and each one was "equal to a blow" or any other form of assault.⁶⁸ It was common to use physical force, often lethal, to settle any of these forms of grievances. John Shelton Reed theorized that southerners are more likely to be violent when "honor" is at stake, particularly in love triangles or family disputes. "Violence and the conditions that call for it," says Reed, "will be *learned* in childhood."⁶⁹ African Americans accepted this "code of honor" within their culture.

Handguns and murder in Omaha are intertwined with this southern theory. Ayers found that it was common practice for southerners to carry handguns, and he concludes that "an acute sensitivity to insult and a propensity for violence—the manifestation of honor—came with each passing decade to be identified more and more with . . . poor urban blacks."⁷⁰ A small push or a derogatory remark quickly brings reaction. "A male is expected to defend the name and honor of his mother, the virtue of womanhood . . . and to accept no derogation about his race . . . or his masculinity."⁷¹ Ayers believed that African-American migrants from the South, isolated in ghettos, continued to display these facets of southernness. In fact they "generate an honor of their own."⁷²

In Philadelphia during the 1890s, W. E. B. DuBois discovered within the black population what he called the "real Negro criminal class."⁷³ He also found that of those who had been arrested, 54 percent had recently migrated from the South.⁷⁴ The southernness connection of blacks living in northern cities was apparent in Philadelphia. Many had a great disdain for white imposed law. African Americans from the South viewed southern courts as "instruments of injustice and oppression and upon those convicted in them as martyrs and victims."⁷⁵

Frustrated by being trapped within a ghetto controlled by an unjust system and carrying with them a "code of honor," Omaha's African Americans often reacted by resorting to violence, sometimes with the

slightest provocation. The results can be seen in the African-American homicide rates. In support of this hypothesis, the black population reached 4,665 by 1890, remained relatively stable at 4,014 in 1900, and increased slowly to 5,143 in 1910, yet the number of actual homicides did not increase dramatically until the period, 1902–1910. A decade or more confined to low-paying, demeaning work, segregated housing, racist behavior by saloon keepers and other white merchants, and racial mistrust created tremendous pressure on Omaha's black population. In conjunction with southernness exhibited by blacks, these factors may have caused an increase in the socialization of aggression, with African-American hostility then turning outward against both black and white victims.⁷⁶

Do conviction rates of African-American defendants who killed black victims differ from those of white victims? The conviction rates for cases with white and black victims were 91 and 79 percent respectively.⁷⁷ Throw out the one dismissal for a case involving a white victim (the evidence was so flimsy that there probably should have been no indictment) and you have a 100 percent conviction rate for black defendants who killed whites. All three not-guilty verdicts and the other four dismissals of African-American defendants involved black victims. It made no difference whether the homicide involved a robbery—the victim only need be white to assure a conviction.

To put this into perspective, we need to evaluate the treatment of white defendants who killed black victims. There were seven cases involving white perpetrators and African-American victims. Four of the white defendants were found not guilty, while the other three cases were dismissed. Clearly, it was the race of the victim that counted most.⁷⁸ This analysis of the indictment data verifies that African-American defendants did not receive equal justice within the Douglas County criminal justice system.

Conclusions

Although more whites were indicted for committing homicides (207 cases compared to 67 for blacks) African Americans had a much higher representation with 24 percent of the actual indictments (see table 1). This high percentage is remarkable considering that the population figures for blacks within Douglas County were 3, 3, 3.5, and 5 percent respectively for the four decades studied. The evidence suggests that a subculture of violence existed within the black ghetto that developed in downtown Omaha. The rapid relocation of thousands of blacks, mostly

from the South (79 and 77 percent respectively for 1900 and 1910 census) included many individuals who witnessed violence at the hands of whites. They brought with them an exaggerated sense of honor that would not tolerate a careless comment, a jostle on the street, or a derogatory gesture. Such behavior could bring a quick violent response.

This black subculture developed within the redlight district that blossomed around a core of saloons and brothels concentrated between Douglas and Davenport from Eighth to Fourteenth Streets. This region became Omaha's "tenderloin" district, an area heavily involved in vice, crime, and alcohol. The large number of homicides that occurred within or near this area involving African Americans reveals the effects of the subculture of violence. Whether the victims were white or black the killings usually included alcohol and handguns. The large number of saloons within the redlight district (fifty-eight in and an additional sixty-four within a three block radius) acted as the only place where African Americans and whites mixed on a social level and, in some cases, bar owners practiced discrimination. Saloons became the "hot points" for racial interaction that could become violent.

Many who visited these saloons came armed. The availability of cheap handguns encouraged black men to walk around "ready for action" against whites or anyone who might accost them. With an exaggerated southern code of honor that required a man to stand up for his rights or protect his woman, a gun in his pocket, and a drink in his hand there was bound to be action that often led to a deadly conclusion. The homicide statistics confirm this. Interracial killings involving white victims occurred mainly on black "turf" in and around the redlight district. They involved alcohol and usually took place within or near a saloon. However, blacks did not commit all of the homicides. But their homicide rates were dramatically higher than those of whites, reinforcing the theory that a subculture of violence existed within the black community.

It should not be surprising that the Douglas County criminal justice system, dominated by a white society, convicted African Americans at a much higher rate than whites. Racism might not have been as openly blatant or as vicious in Omaha as it was in the South, but it did exist. Saloon keepers refused to serve blacks; landlords forced them to settle into downtown areas and used covenants that prevented them from buying homes, except in limited areas; businessmen only hired them in the lowest-paying jobs; some companies fired employees without just cause; and police officers singled out blacks for "special" treatment, including physical violence. This lack of job mobility coupled with racial dis-

crimination against African Americans became the seeds of their destruction. But, in the final analysis, what is terribly disturbing and ironic is that African Americans left the South and moved to Omaha to escape "injustice in the courts."⁷⁹

Notes

1. *Omaha World-Herald*, 4 April 1903.

2. *Ibid.* This racial term used by the white observer may help to explain the volatility of this and other situations between African Americans and whites. The newspaper did not repeat verbatim the words used by the white victim.

3. *Ibid.*

4. For a discussion of the pros and cons of using indictments versus coroner's inquests, see Roger Lane, *Violent Death in the City: Suicide, Accident, and Murder in 19th Century Philadelphia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp. 143–59.

5. For a discussion of ethnic demographics, see Kathleen Fimple, "An Analysis of the Changing Spatial Dimensions of Ethnic Neighborhoods in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880–1900," (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1989).

6. Howard P. Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880–1920* (New York, 1972), pp. 13–23.

7. The author surveyed a 20 percent random sample of heads of household to determine sex, age, nativity, place of residence, and occupation of Omaha's African-American population. Most were concentrated in the 3rd ward in 1900, but showed a marked shift northward by 1910. See U.S. Bureau of Census, RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1900, S 6, Box 1900–08–11; and RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1910, S 7, Box 1910–06–08, National Archives.

8. H. Donald, "The Negro Migration of 1916–1918," *Journal of Negro History*, 6 (October 1921): 383–498; Thomas J. Woofter, Jr., *Negro Migration: Changes in Rural Organization and Population of the Cotton Belt* (New York, 1920); and Louise V. Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migration to Northern Centers* (New York, 1930).

9. Howard N. Rabinowitz, "The Conflict between Blacks and the Police in the Urban South, 1865–1900," *The Historian*, 39 (November 1976): 62–76. Rabinowitz discovered a significant number of examples of "the effective use of intimidation by blacks against white policemen."

10. Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, "Black Flight: Lethal Violence and the Great Migration, 1900–1930," *Social Science History*, 14 (Fall 1990): 360–61.

11. NAACP, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1918* (New York, National Association For the Advancement of Colored People, 1919), p. 31. See also Arthur F. Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933); Robert P. Ingalls, "Lynching and Establishment Violence in Tampa, 1858–1935," *Journal of Southern History*, 53 (November 1987): 613–44; James M. SoRelle, "The 'Waco Horror': The Lynching of Jesse Washington," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 86 (April 1983): 517–37; and Ray Stannard Baker, "What is a Lynching?: A Study of Mob Justice, South and North," *McClure's Magazine*, 24 (1904–1905): 300–14.

12. Raper, *Tragedy of Lynching*, p. 33. See Tolnay and Beck's discussion of how southern courts "victimized blacks and represented a lethal threat." Tolnay and Beck, "Black Flight," p. 357.

13. Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans*, pp. 14–16.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 127. Chudacoff notes that "the housing market began to push blacks into the Near North Side" with the segregation index increasing from "36.5 in 1910 to 47.9 in 1920 (p. 155). At the same time Jim Crow discrimination against African Americans began to increase.

15. See the U.S. Bureau of Census, RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1900, S 6, Box 1900-08-11; and RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1910, S 7, Box 1910-06-08. The third ward proved to be the location of virtually all the brothels (South Omaha was not surveyed). Information collected included name, age, race, address, nativity, and occupation.

16. See *ibid.* African Americans constituted 3 and 3.5 percent of the total population in 1900 and 1910 respectively. An increase in African-American women does not reflect population changes during that decade. See Anne M. Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90* (Urbana, Ill., 1985); and Clare V. McKanna, Jr., "Prostitutes, Progressives, and Police: The Viability of Vice in San Diego, 1900-1930," *Journal of San Diego History*, 35 (Winter 1989): 44-65.

17. African-American ghettos in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York often developed around redlight districts. See George E. Haynes, "Conditions Among Negroes in the Cities," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 49 (September 1913): 105-19.

18. In 1901 and 1911, Omaha boasted 284 and 293 saloons and liquor stores respectively. See *McAvoy's Omaha Street Directory for 1901* (Omaha, Neb., 1901), pp. 965-67; and *Omaha Street Directory Including South Omaha 1911* (Omaha, Neb., 1911), pp. 1454-56.

19. *Omaha Monitor*, 5 August 1910.

20. See Eric Monkkonen, *The Dangerous Class: Crime and Poverty in Columbus, Ohio, 1860-1885* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975); and Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years Working Among Them* (New York, 1872).

21. *Omaha Monitor*, 14 January 1910.

22. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1910; and 24 February 1911.

23. *Ibid.*, 19 April and 17 August 1919.

24. *Ibid.*, 20 January 1919.

25. Marvin Wolfgang, *Patterns in Criminal Homicide* (Philadelphia, 1958), pp. 308-09; and Roger Lane, *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), p. 166.

26. Nebraska, Douglas County, District Court, *Criminal Appearance Dockets, 1880-1920*.

27. *Omaha Daily Bee*, 16 February 1888.

28. Ferguson died in the Nebraska State Penitentiary on 15 February 1890, after serving two years. See Nebraska, State Prison, *Descriptive Records to Inmates, 1880-1920*, Inmate No. 1384, RG 86, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

29. *Omaha World-Herald*, 14 December 1907; and Nebraska, State Prison, *Descriptive Records to Inmates*, No. 5005.

30. *Omaha World-Herald*, 19 October 1913; and Nebraska, State Prison, *Descriptive Records to Inmates*, Inmate No. 6285.

31. *Omaha World-Herald*, 28 July 1905; and Nebraska, State Prison, *Descriptive Records to Inmates, 1880-1920*, Inmate No. 4542.

32. *Omaha World-Herald*, 16 August 1913.

33. Clark was executed at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln. See Ne-

- braska, State Prison, *Descriptive Record to Inmates*, 1880–1920, Inmate No. 5005.
34. *Omaha World-Herald*, 28 August 1919; and Nebraska, State Prison, *Descriptive Records to Inmates*, Inmates Nos. 7567, 7568, and 7569.
35. *Omaha World-Herald*, 9 February 1909.
36. *Ibid.*, 13 May 1906 and 25 August 1910.
37. Lane, *Roots of Violence*, p. 136.
38. Darnell Hawkins, ed., *Homicide Among Black Americans* (Washington, D.C., 1986), p. 49. See also Margaret A. Zahn, "Homicide in the Twentieth Century: Trends, Types, and Causes," in *Violence in America: The History of Crime*, ed. Ted Robert Gurr (Newbury Park, Ca., 1989), 1: 215–34.
39. For an example of recent research on violence against blacks, see Gilles Vandal, "'Bloody Caddo': White Violence Against Blacks in a Louisiana Parish, 1865–1876," *Journal of Social History*, 25 (Winter 1991): 373–88.
40. African-American newspapers ran editorials complaining about the carrying of handguns in Omaha. One suggested that "any boy who pleases can find someone to sell him a gun." *Omaha Monitor*, 4 September 1919 and 21 August 1919. See Phillip Jordan, *Frontier Law and Order* (Lincoln, Neb., 1970), pp. 1–22; and Lee Kennett and James LaVerne Anderson, *The Gun in America: The Origins of a National Dilemma* (Westport, Conn., 1975), pp. 133–64.
41. A. W. F. Taylerson, *Revolving Arms* (New York, 1967), pp. 32–44; Geoffrey Boothroyd, *The Handgun* (London, 1970), pp. 221–24 and 345–57. One could purchase handguns through Sears, Roebuck for less than two dollars. In their 1902 catalog, Sears offered forty-five different models ranging from \$1.60 for a .32 caliber 5-shot pocket pistol with a 2-inch barrel to a Smith & Wesson .38 revolver for \$12.75. See *The Sears, Roebuck Catalog* (Chicago, 1902), pp. 316–21.
42. For a listing of gun shops and pawnshops, see *McAvoy's Omaha Street Directory for 1901*, p. 919; and *Omaha Street Directory 1911*, pp. 1381 and 1430.
43. Saloons were abundant in Omaha with 284 in 1901 and 293 in 1911. *Omaha City Directory for 1901*, pp. 965–67; and *Omaha City Directory, 1911*, pp. 1454–56.
44. Newspapers and criminal case files often do not provide information on the condition of the victim or perpetrator.
45. Hispanics had 100 percent conviction rates, but there were only six cases, a rather small sample upon which to base any meaningful conclusions.
46. Lawrence M. Friedman, "Plea Bargaining in Historical Perspective," *Law & Society Review*, 13 (Winter 1979): 249. Emphasis in the original text.
47. Mark H. Haller, "Plea Bargaining: The Nineteenth Century Context," *Law & Society Review*, 13 (Winter 1979): 278.
48. See *Omaha World-Herald* 15, 16 May 1906; and 28 August 1919.
49. Fifty percent of the Hispanic defendants (three cases) also plea bargained.
50. Lane, *Roots of Violence*, pp. 142–43.
51. H. C. Brearley, *Homicide in the United States* (Montclair, N.J., 1969), p. 99. Brearley uses homicide statistics (actual homicides) collected from the federal government, not homicide indictments.
52. Today, researchers use FBI homicide statistics instead of indictments; therefore a comparison would not be reliable. For comparisons and differing analysis, see Harold M. Rose and Paula D. McClain, *Race, Place, and Risk: Black Homicide in Urban America* (Albany, N.Y., 1990). Also, see Zahn, "Homicide in the Twentieth Century United States," in *History and Crime: Implications for Criminal Justice Policy*, ed. James A. Inciardi and Charles E. Faupel (Beverly Hills, 1980), pp. 111–32; William Wilbanks, *Murder in Miami: An Analysis of Homicide Patterns and Trends in Dade County (Miami) Florida, 1917–1983* (New York, 1984); and Wolfgang, *Patterns in Criminal Homicide*, pp. 361–83.

53. See Nebraska, Douglas County, *Coroner's Inquest Logs*, bodies of Leon St. Clair, 4 October 1891, James Smith, 14 August 1899, Minnie Wilson, 18 June 1916, William Brown, 29 September 1919, and William Jones, 15 February 1908, Coroner's Office, Omaha, Nebraska.

54. The comparison seems appropriate because virtually all of the homicides in Douglas County occurred within the city limits of Omaha.

55. The number of homicides in Douglas County totaled 391 with 65, 27, 6, 1, and .7 percent for whites, African Americans, Italians, Hispanics, and Greeks respectively.

56. Lane, *Roots of Violence*, p. 173. For an earlier study on homicide and aggressive behavior that Lane used to develop his conclusions, see Martin Gold, "Suicide, Homicide, and the Socialization of Aggression," *American Journal of Sociology*, 58 (May 1958): 651-61.

57. *Omaha Enterprise*, 11 March 1910; *Omaha Monitor*, 16 September 1919, 9 December 1916, and 18 December 1919. Such examples of discrimination were not unusual in the Great Plains region. See for example, Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 1865-1915: A Social History* (Baton Rouge, La. 1982), particularly pp. 115-25; and Allan Spear, "The Origins of the Urban Ghetto, 1870-1915," in *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, ed. Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, and Daniel M. Fox (New York, 1971), 2: 153-66.

58. Many of the African Americans had recently moved to Omaha from the South, where they witnessed examples of verbal and physical abuse, including lynchings. See Vandal, "Bloody Caddo," pp. 373-88; Tolnay and Beck, "Black Flight," pp. 347-70; Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th-Century American South* (New York, 1984); Rabinowitz, "Conflict between Blacks and Police in Urban South, 1865-1900," pp. 62-76; and Michael S. Hindus, "Black Justice Under White Law: Criminal Prosecutions of Blacks in Antebellum South Carolina," *Journal of American History*, 63 (December 1976): 575-99.

59. See U.S. Bureau of Census, RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1900, S 6, Box 1900-08-11; and RG 513, Nebraska State and Federal Census, SG 2, Federal Census, 1910, S 7, Box 1910-06-08.

60. For a discussion of this theory, see Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, *The Subculture of Violence: Towards an Integrated Theory of Criminology* (London, 1967).

61. See Thomas F. Pettigrew and Rosalind Barclay Spier, "The Ecological Structure of Negro Homicide," *American Journal of Sociology*, 68 (May 1962): 621-29.

62. Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *American Historical Review*, 74 (February 1969): 908.

63. Raymond D. Gastil, "Homicide and the Regional Culture of Violence," *American Sociological Review*, 36 (June 1971): 416.

64. Gastil discovered that "the correlation of Southernness with homicide was obviously high . . . and there were also high correlations with Negro mobility when the homicidal culture index was held constant." *ibid.*, p. 421.

65. See Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York, 1940); and Hackney, "Southern Violence," p. 920.

66. Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, pp. 177-81. Also, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York, 1982).

67. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, p. 266.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

69. John Shelton Reed, "Below the Smith and Wesson Line: Reflections on

Southern Violence," in *Perspectives on the American South*, ed. Merle Black and John Shelton Reed (New York, 1981), 1: 12.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*, p. 275.

73. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 261 and 257.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 261 and 253.

75. W. E. B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1969), p. 201. Also, see Lane, *Roots of Violence*, p. 148; Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst, Mass., 1988), pp. 91-157; and Woofert, *Negro Migration*, pp. 141-44.

76. See Gold, "Suicide, Homicide," pp. 651-61.

77. For those five cases involving black perpetrators with the victim's race unknown there was a 100 percent conviction rate.

78. For a study on interracial homicides in California that confirms this thesis, see Clare V. McKanna, Jr., "Red, White, and Dead: Interracial Homicides in California, 1850-1900," pp. 1-25, manuscript in author's possession.

79. Tolnay and Beck, "Black Flight," p. 354.