

# **NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE: THE PRESS, PERCEPTION, AND NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH, 1932**

**BY THOMAS AIELLO**

RESEARCH ESSAY

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“Only in a Negro newspaper can a complete coverage of ALL news effecting or involving Negroes be found,” argued a Southern Newspaper Syndicate advertisement. “The good that Negroes do is published in addition to the bad, for only by printing everything fit to read can a correct impression of the Negroes in any community be found.”<sup>1</sup>

Another argued that, “When it comes to Negro newspapers you can’t measure Birmingham or Atlanta or Memphis Negroes by a New York or Chicago Negro yardstick.” In a brief section titled “Negroes Are Different in Dixie,” the Syndicate’s evaluation of the Southern and Northern black newspaper readers was telling:

Northern Negroes may ordain it indecent to read a Negro newspaper more than once a week—but the Southern Negro is more consolidated. Necessity has occasioned this condition. Most Southern white newspapers exclude Negro items except where they are infamous or of a marked ridiculous trend...

While his northern brother is busily engaged in ‘getting white’ and ruining racial consciousness, the Southerner has become more closely knit.<sup>2</sup>

The advertisement was designed to announce and justify the Atlanta World’s reformulation as the Atlanta Daily World, making it the first African-American daily. This fact alone probably explains the advertisement’s “indecent” comment, but its “necessity” argument seems far more legitimate.<sup>3</sup> For example, the 1932 Monroe Morning World, a white daily from Monroe, Louisiana, provided coverage of the black community related almost entirely to crime and church meetings. The resentment that Southern blacks felt toward northerners not suffering under Jim Crow segregation, translated, at least to the Atlanta World’s readership, as “getting white.” In this formulation, integration was tantamount to “ruining racial consciousness.”<sup>4</sup>

The one exception to the Morning World’s coverage for 1932 was the paper’s treatment of the Monroe Monarchs, the town’s black baseball team. And 1932 would be a banner year for Southern black baseball teams. The “major” Negro league before and after 1932 was the Negro National League, but the Great Depression and declining revenues forced the circuit to close operations that year. In its absence rose the Negro Southern League (NSL) and the East-West Colored League. The former included the small-town Monarchs; it would be the team’s first and only year of major league baseball. Monroe had been decidedly “minor” in the early 1930s, but most Southern teams had been minor, and whether in big-city Atlanta or small-town Monroe, fans were excited about the possibilities for Southern black baseball. The black press, however, within the South and without, greeted the season with skepticism.

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**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**

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The topography of baseball newspaper reporting in 1932 is herein defined through the analysis and statistical sampling of a set of nineteen black newspapers. Those newspapers are then divided into various regional locations in some instances and circulation coverage areas in others. (See Table 1) The sample is largely the result of availability. Each of the newspapers listed in Table 1 provides either complete or near-complete surviving coverage for the 1932 calendar year. Availability, of course, necessarily omits some publications that would immensely benefit such a study. Nashville, Tennessee and Monroe, Louisiana, for example, play significant roles in the 1932 season, and yet the black newspapers for those towns (the Nashville Globe and Independent and the Southern Broadcast, respectively) no longer survive. The absence of the Southern Broadcast, in fact, is perhaps the most significant reason why the Monarchs' 1932 season has largely been ignored in the Negro Leagues historiography. But coverage in Monroe's white dailies and the black weeklies in the sample set, along with articles in the scattered issues of rarer black newspapers like the Nashville Globe and Independent do provide a full account of the team's season<sup>5</sup> Only the NSL completed league play for a full season. The East-West folded before the close of the season's first half. The league worked, as did many leagues of the era, on a split schedule. The first half of the season had a pennant winner, as did the second half. The two pennant holders would then play each other for the league championship. As a consequence, the statistical analysis only treats coverage of the Southern League. Categorizations and calculations that follow all stem from the original core list of nineteen.<sup>6</sup>

SAMPLE SET, DIVIDED BY REGION AND CIRCULATION LEVEL

South	North	Border	West
Memphis World	Indianapolis Recorder	Louisville Leader	California Eagle
Shreveport Sun	Chicago Defender	Kansas City Call	Houston Informer
Louisiana Weekly	Pittsburgh Courier	Baltimore Afro-American	
Atlanta Daily World	New York Amsterdam News		
Birmingham Reporter	New York Age		
	Negro World		
	Philadelphia Tribune		
	Boston Chronicle		
	Cleveland Gazette		
National Editions	Regional Editions		
Atlanta Daily World	Memphis World		
Chicago Defender	Shreveport Sun		
Pittsburgh Courier	Louisiana Weekly		
New York Amsterdam News	Birmingham Reporter		
Baltimore Afro-American	Indianapolis Recorder		
California Eagle	New York Age		

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**



Negro World  
Philadelphia Tribune  
Boston Chronicle  
Cleveland Gazette  
Louisville Leader  
Houston Informer  
Kansas City Call

TABLE 1: 1932 Black Press Sample Set, Divided by Region of Origin and Circulation Category

When the Southern's first half ended, the Monarchs led Chicago's American Giants by a slim margin. But league President Reuben B. Jackson ruled that, due to its use of players claimed by other teams, some Memphis Red Sox games would be forfeited -- two, in fact, two victories against the American Giants, which Jackson ruled to be Chicago wins. The decision gave Chicago the first half pennant in a move some papers chose to ignore, and some openly chose to question.<sup>7</sup> It led to confusion throughout the second half of the season, and at its conclusion, it led to rival championship games, with the Nashville Elite Giants and Chicago American Giants playing in the Negro Southern League championship, and Monroe's Monarchs and the Pittsburgh Crawfords playing in what was billed as the Negro World Series. This muddled conclusion only exacerbated the historiographical lapse in coverage of the 1932 season.

But at the season's inception, while the Atlanta World was criticizing those "engaged in 'getting white'," other papers targeted those who were already there. As preparations for the 1932 season got underway, for example, Ira F. Lewis of the Pittsburgh Courier published an editorial criticizing the white press, "who symbolize the word Negro with crime. The gentry of this ilk magnify our crime news and generally minimize or ignore any other news pertaining to us. This is unjust, un-American and manifestly unfair to the concepts of fair play." Normally, Lewis noted, the sports pages were a haven from this sort of behavior, blacks and whites being presented more or less on the basis of their performance. Now that was suspect, as well. Harry Boyle, Pennsylvania State Boxing commissioner and sportswriter, published an article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on "The Colored Man in Baseball." In it, Boyle "takes a reactionary step on the race question far beyond his intellect or ability. Mr. Boyle takes his place along side of the rednecks." The passage that most specifically drew Lewis's ire was:

Like the philosophical old colored mammy, Organized Baseball says to the colored boy:  
Go Out and Play Just as Much as You Please, but Stay in Your Own Backyard.<sup>8</sup>

Lewis's denunciation of the article is telling. The Post-Gazette obviously felt comfortable printing the piece, and a state employee felt comfortable writing it. The Courier, however, was not just upset at the reference, but surprised. Lewis understood that there were "rednecks," but precedent told him that such statements would not come from the statehouse or the Post-Gazette. It was certainly easier to be a black newspaper columnist in Pittsburgh than in the Mississippi delta, but the discrepancies in perception between the races were much the same. Jules Tygiel notes the reciprocal relationship of black baseball and newspapers, each helping create the success of the other. Baseball provided fodder for the sports pages of the weeklies, which in turn provided the publicity that teams needed to remain relevant in the community.

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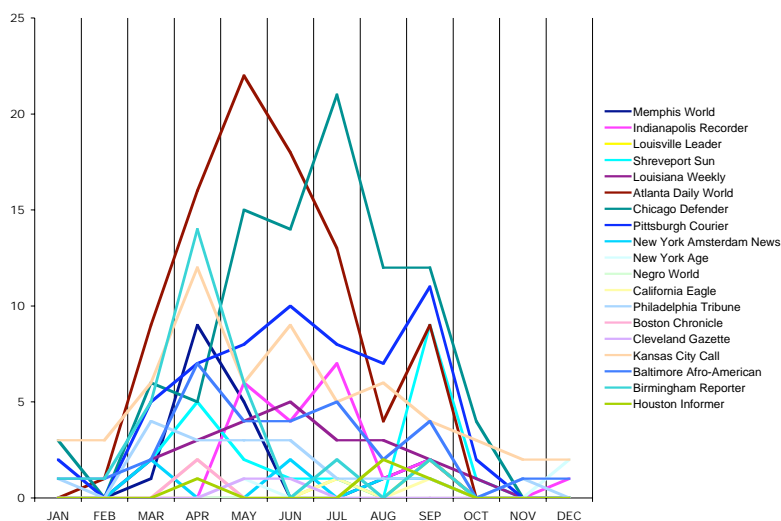
## NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:

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The black papers did not send beat writers to cover teams, relying on teams to send in statistics and scores. A Louisiana Weekly notice recommended its contributors that submitted articles about upcoming games “come under the head of advertisement and must be paid for as such.” Only reports of games already played would be printed free of charge. “ Write the articles in a legible hand and get them into the ‘Den’ before 7 o’clock Tuesday evening.”<sup>9</sup>

This was an obviously unreliable practice, but it certainly did not mean that the black press was a passive agent of sports promoters and booking agents.<sup>10</sup> A frustrated Earl Wright, sports editor of the Louisiana Weekly, writing during football season, explained the fine line reporters walked with their subjects. “So frequently our duty calls us to criticize folk, oftentimes they are our friends. When the story breaks, that friend, unless he can ‘take it’ is lost to us.”<sup>11</sup>

The monthly article tally for the sample set demonstrates clearly the effect of the first half criticism in the press. (See Table 2.1 and Graph 2.1) The bulk of Negro Southern League coverage was in April, May, June, and July, showing a palpable interest in the season and its progress. July coverage was devoted almost categorically to league pennant meetings and the choosing of a champion. In August, the total drops. The dual championship series between Monroe and Pittsburgh, Nashville and Chicago, generated a series of September articles in various sample papers—some reporting on the games, others arguing for the validity of one or the other. After September, only twenty-one more articles exist for the rest of the calendar year, as assorted reports on the possibility of a season in 1933 offered editorialists a final soapbox to fret over the state of baseball.



GRAPH 2.1: Production of Articles About the Negro Southern League by Various African-American Publications

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**

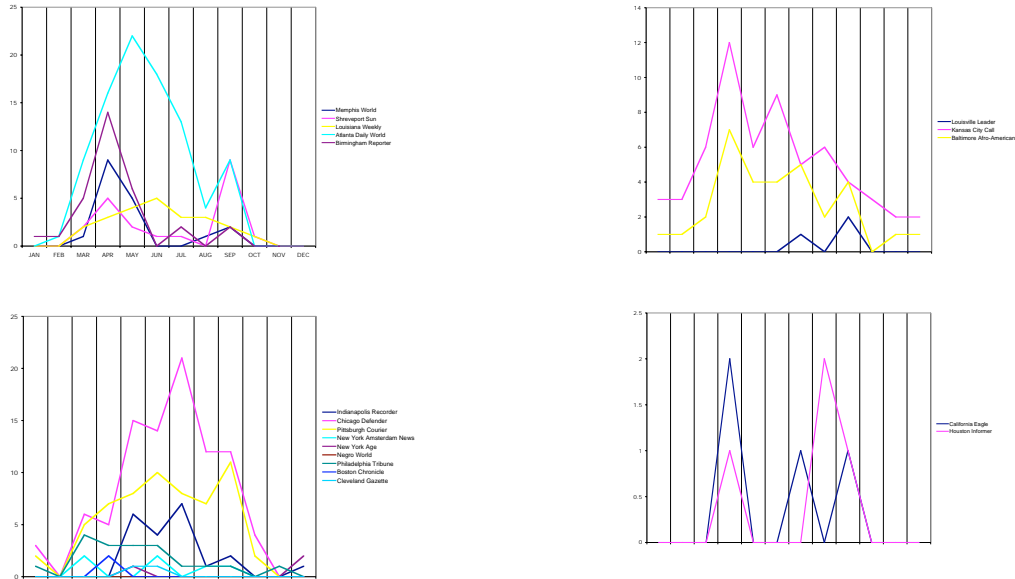


SOUTHERN LEAGUE ARTICLE COUNTS THROUGH THE 1932 CALENDAR YEAR

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Memphis World	0	0	1	9	5	2 NS	[NS]	1	2	0	0	0	20
Indianapolis Recorder	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	6	4	7	1	2	0	0	1	21
Louisville Leader	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
Shreveport Sun	0	0	2	5	2	1	1	0	9	1	0	0	21
Louisiana Weekly	0	0	2	3	4	5	3	3	2	1	0	0	23
Atlanta Daily World	0	1	9	16	22	18	13	4	9	0	0	[NS]	92
Chicago Defender	3	0	6	5	15	14	21	12	12	4	0	0	83
Pittsburgh Courier	2	0	5	7	8	10	8	7	11	2	0	0	60
New York Amsterdam News	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
New York Age	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Negro World	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
California Eagle	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Philadelphia Tribune	1	0	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	18
Boston Chronicle	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cleveland Gazette	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kansas City Call	3	3	6	12	6	9	5	6	4	3	2	2	61
Baltimore Afro-American	1	1	2	7	4	4	5	2	4	0	1	1	32
Birmingham Reporter	1	1	5	14	6	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	31
Houston Informer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
TOTAL	8	6	38	86	83	73	68	40	63	11	4	6	486

TABLE 2.1: *Articles About the Negro Southern League by Various African-American Publications*

When broken down into regional location, the numbers become more telling. (See Table 2.2 and Graph 2.2) The August coverage drops significantly in the South, particularly in the South's largest black newspaper (and only daily paper in the sample), the Atlanta Daily World. Also, the coverage decline begins much earlier. New Orleans, home of the Louisiana Weekly, and Shreveport did not have teams in the NSL. Memphis's June and July tallies have not survived. Atlanta and Birmingham's teams stopped league play prior to the Monroe-Chicago controversy of early July. The Northern papers with a surviving stake in the outcome of the Southern—the Indianapolis Recorder, Chicago Defender, and Pittsburgh Courier—remain truest to the pattern set by the sample in its entirety. Notably, these three publications carry the most Southern League coverage in a regional category without many concerned newspapers. In the border region, the Kansas City Call and Baltimore Afro-American, playing to a large circulation but without a direct hometown interest in the outcome, kept a generally consistent coverage pattern throughout. The west's coverage existed almost entirely in the form of wire service reprints.



GRAPH 2.2: Production of Articles About the Negro Southern League based on paper location

SOUTHERN LEAGUE ARTICLE COUNTS BASED ON PAPER LOCATION

	AU													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	G	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total	
<b>SOUTH</b>														
Memphis World	0	0	1	9	5	2	NS	[NS]	1	2	0	0	0	20
Shreveport Sun	0	0	2	5	2	1	1	0	9	1	0	0	0	21
Louisiana Weekly	0	0	2	3	4	5	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	23
Atlanta Daily World	0	1	9	16	22	18	13	4	9	0	0	[NS]	0	92
Birmingham Reporter	1	1	5	14	6	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>NORTH</b>														
Indianapolis Recorder	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	6	4	7	1	2	0	0	1	1	21
Chicago Defender	3	0	6	5	15	14	21	12	12	4	0	0	0	83
Pittsburgh Courier	2	0	5	7	8	10	8	7	11	2	0	0	0	60
New York Amsterdam News	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
New York Age	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Negro World	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philadelphia Tribune	1	0	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	18
Boston Chronicle	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cleveland Gazette	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>195</b>

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**



**BORDER**

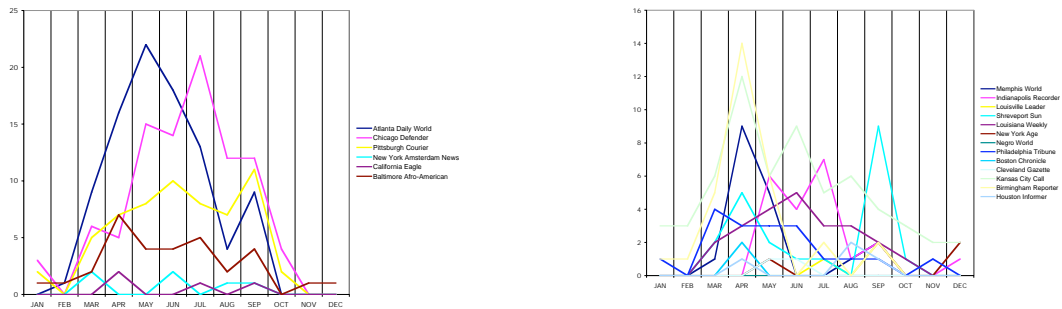
Louisville Leader	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
Kansas City Call	3	3	6	12	6	9	5	6	4	3	2	2	61
Baltimore Afro-American	1	1	2	7	4	4	5	2	4	0	1	1	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96</b>

**WEST**

California Eagle	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Houston Informer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

TABLE 2.2: Production of Articles About the Southern League Quantified by Location

When broken down into national and regional circulations, the pattern remains constant. (See Table 2.3 and Graph 2.3) Notably, only the Kansas City Call had a higher number of August articles than it did July articles. The paper’s hometown team, the Kansas City Monarchs, took the opposite route of the other teams in Negro League baseball for 1932. The Monarchs did not field a team for the first half of the season, and when they did begin play, they barnstormed independently. In August, their opening games against the Chicago American Giants counted toward the Giants’ second half total, and so are included in the sample’s August total. When those contests are eliminated, the August total becomes markedly lower.<sup>12</sup>



GRAPH 2.3: Production of Articles About the Negro Southern League based on paper location

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**



SOUTHERN LEAGUE ARTICLE COUNTS BASED ON PAPER CIRCULATION

NATIONAL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Tot al
Atlanta Daily World	0	1	9	16	22	18	13	4	9	0	0	[NS]	92
Chicago Defender	3	0	6	5	15	14	21	12	12	4	0	0	83
Pittsburgh Courier	2	0	5	7	8	10	8	7	11	2	0	0	60
New York Amsterdam News	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
California Eagle	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Baltimore Afro-American	1	1	2	7	4	4	5	2	4	0	1	1	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>277</b>

REGIONAL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
Memphis World	0	0	1	9	5	2	NS	[NS]	1	2	0	0	20
Indianapolis Recorder	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	[NS]	6	4	7	1	2	0	0	1	21
Louisville Leader	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
Shreveport Sun	0	0	2	5	2	1	1	0	9	1	0	0	21
Louisiana Weekly	0	0	2	3	4	5	3	3	2	1	0	0	23
New York Age	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Negro World	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philadelphia Tribune	1	0	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	18
Boston Chronicle	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cleveland Gazette	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kansas City Call	3	3	6	12	6	9	5	6	4	3	2	2	61
Birmingham Reporter	1	1	5	14	6	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	31
Houston Informer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>209</b>

TABLE 2.3: *Production of Articles About the Southern League Based on Paper Circulation*

There is no such sample available for white dailies. In Monroe, Louisiana, the Morning World and Monroe News Star covered the majority of Monarch games, particularly those played at home. They also commented on the state of the Negro Southern League standings. But, in comparison, the Louisville Courier-Journal, Arkansas Gazette, Arkansas Democrat, and New Orleans Times-Picayune carried two black baseball articles through the entire year. The Chicago Tribune carried three articles about the local team. The Austin Statesman carried four, the Austin American carried five. The Nashville Banner and Birmingham Age-Herald had no coverage of their respective local teams. The New York Times and New York Herald Tribune carried no news of black baseball either, although articles appeared on their sports pages reporting on the results of fishing, rugby, lacrosse, cricket, outboard motorboating, clay target shooting, Gaelic football,

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**





airplane racing, fencing, archery, snooker, and ping pong, among others. Even the Memphis Commercial Appeal, which included a far broader scope of coverage for black baseball, did not come close to reaching the reporting level for the Monroe dailies.<sup>13</sup> The racial divide, however, seems just as prominent when viewed from the other side of the prism. Eight of the sample papers gave page space to white baseball. (See Table 3)

The Atlanta Daily World, mentioned the town's white team sporadically, and only in passing. Most of the eight simply made mention of the New York Yankees' victory over the Chicago Cubs in the World Series. Those that did cover white area teams were large market papers without a viable black baseball team, like the sample weeklies from Philadelphia, Boston, and Cleveland. The Houston Informer was the only sampled weekly that gave any concentrated page space to its white hometown team, the Houston Buffaloes. It was also the only paper to include photos of the hometown squad.<sup>14</sup> But the principal emphasis of all the black weeklies that covered baseball was black baseball, and the image they attempted to focus remained frustratingly blurred throughout.

BLACK PRESS COVERAGE OF WHITE BASEBALL, 1932

Coverage of White Baseball	No Such Coverage
Houston Informer	Memphis World
Atlanta Daily World	Indianapolis Recorder
New York Age	Shreveport Sun
California Eagle	Louisiana Weekly
Philadelphia Tribune	Chicago Defender
Boston Chronicle	Pittsburgh Courier
Cleveland Gazette	New York Amsterdam News
Birmingham Reporter	Negro World
	Kansas City Call
	Baltimore Afro-American
	Louisville Leader

TABLE 3: *Black Press Coverage of White Baseball, 1932*

For the whole of the 1932 season, different black audiences received different black messages about the state of their black baseball, leaving both contemporary and historical observers with different perceptions of what really occurred. In Monroe, however, the surviving press coverage is decidedly white. Monroe's black newspaper, the Southern Broadcast, founded by Sherman Briscoe in 1932, similarly survives in only a handful of issues dating from 1936 and 1937.<sup>15</sup> The town's remaining press coverage comes from the Monroe Morning World and its afternoon organ the Monroe News Star, and, as mentioned, the Morning World's coverage of the black community, the Monarchs excepted, was generally negative, consisting primarily of arrest reports, prohibition violations, and patronizing caricatures of the southern black dialect.<sup>16</sup> Positive portrayals of black life revolved around religious and civic meetings. Negative coverage

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**



of the black community grew steadily in the Morning World from January to April, finally peaking in May. (See Table 4) When murder, robbery, and other crime statistics are added to reports of drunkenness, bootlegging, and general condescension, the total monthly negative stories for the first five months of 1932 runs from 3, 17, 17, 38, to a high of 56. Positive portrayals of the black community's church and civic meetings remained infrequent, running from 3, 3, 3, 15, to 25 in the corresponding months.<sup>17</sup> Some of the murder stories did not occur in Monroe or Ouachita Parish. The portrayal of the criminality of the black populace, however, did not rest on regional variation. Negative depictions of what it meant to be black contributed to the white image of African-American inferiority and the need for continued segregation. But as the Monarchs' season progressed, the frequency of those negative depictions markedly decreased. From June through August, the negative coverage numbers ran from 50 to 32 to 16. The Monarchs' series with the Crawfords ended on September 12, and the negative portrayals decreased to 11 in the first half of that month. Additionally, the reports of prohibition violations for this time span numbered 23, as the violent crimes of murder and robbery decreased to yearly lows. The Morning World reported only thirteen other African-American prohibition violations for the eight-and-a-half other months of the year. The negative coverage numbers again increased after the season's conclusion, from the second half of September to the New Year, moving from 22, 35, 39, to, finally, 36 in December. The slightly lower number in December was accompanied by no positive coverage in the month.<sup>18</sup>

And so it seems the black community responded to its team's success with a dramatic decrease in violent crime.<sup>19</sup> The white newspaper decreased its negative representations of the black community as the Monarchs continued to win. There is, of course, no quantifiable connection between newspaper representation of the black community and the success of the town's black baseball team. But the Morning World's numbers are the only available and show a negative correlation of black crime with team performance. As the Monarchs accumulated victories, Briscoe gave the African-American community the Monroe Broadcast, its first black-owned publication of the decade. Stovall added seats to Casino Park, which signaled his belief that the black community could afford the fifty-cent entry fee. Whether the newspaper's reporting was accurate or not, the black population of Monroe was doing better.

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## **NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**

THE MONROE MORNING WORLD'S PORTRAYAL OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIFE

<u>January</u>			Other	20	
Negative Coverage			Drunkenness	2	
Crime			Other	7	
Murder	2		<b>Total</b>	56	
Robbery	1		Positive Coverage		
Other	0		Church-related	9	
Drunkenness	0		Other	16	
Other	0		<b>Total</b>	25	
<b>Total</b>	3		Ratio	2.240	
Positive Coverage			<u>June</u>		
Church-related	1		Negative Coverage		
Other	2		Crime		
<b>Total</b>	3		Murder	8	
Ratio	1.000		Robbery	5	
<u>February</u>			Other	18	
Negative Coverage			Drunkenness	12	
Crime			Other	7	
Murder	1		<b>Total</b>	50	
Robbery	4		Positive Coverage		
Other	6		Church-related	11	
Drunkenness	1		Other	13	
Other	5		<b>Total</b>	24	
<b>Total</b>	17		Ratio	2.0833	
Positive Coverage			<u>July</u>		
Church-related	1		Negative Coverage		
Other	2		Crime		
<b>Total</b>	3		Murder	2 (1)	
Ratio	5.666		Robbery	8	
<u>March</u>			Other	9	
Negative Coverage			Drunkenness	6	
Crime			Other	7	
Murder	5		<b>Total</b>	32 (33)	
Robbery	2		Positive Coverage		
Other	6		Church-related	1	
Drunkenness	0		Other	4	
Other	4		<b>Total</b>	5	
<b>Total</b>	17		Ratio	6.400 (6.600)	
Positive Coverage			<u>August</u>		
Church-related	0		Negative Coverage		
Other	3		Crime		
<b>Total</b>	3		Murder	1 (5)	
Ratio	5.666		Robbery	7	
<u>April</u>			Other	4	
Negative Coverage			Drunkenness	2	
Crime			Other	2	
Murder	11		<b>Total</b>	16 (21)	
Robbery	9		Positive Coverage		
Other	9		Church-related	1	
Drunkenness	0		Other	4	
Other	9		<b>Total</b>	5	
<b>Total</b>	38		Ratio	3.200 (4.200)	
Positive Coverage			<u>September 1-12</u>		
Church-related	8		(the Crawfords series ended on the 12 <sup>th</sup> )		
Other	7		Negative Coverage		
<b>Total</b>	15		Crime		
Ratio	2.533		Murder	1 (5)	
<u>May</u>			Robbery	3	
Negative Coverage			Other	3	
Crime			Drunkenness	3	
Murder	6		Other	1	
Robbery	21		<b>Total</b>	11 (16)	

**NEGROES ARE DIFFERENT IN DIXIE:**



Positive Coverage					Total	3
Church-related	1				Ratio	11.666
Other	0					
	<u>Total</u>	1				
	Ratio	11.000	(16.000)			
<u>September: the remainder of the month</u>						
Negative Coverage						
Crime						
Murder	5					
Robbery	7					
Other	3					
Drunkenness	1					
Other	<u>6</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	22				
Positive Coverage						
Church-related	1					
Other	<u>2</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	3				
	Ratio	7.333				
<u>October</u>						
Negative Coverage						
Crime						
Murder	7					
Robbery	9					
Other	8					
Drunkenness	2					
Other	<u>9</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	35				
Positive Coverage						
Church-related	1					
Other	<u>2</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	3				
	Ratio	7.333				
<u>November</u>						
Negative Coverage						
Crime						
Murder	17					
Robbery	3					
Other	6					
Drunkenness	3					
Other	<u>10</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	39				
Positive Coverage						
Church-related	1					
Other	<u>6</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	7				
	Ratio	5.571				
<u>December</u>						
Negative Coverage						
Crime						
Murder	11					
Robbery	8					
Other	7					
Drunkenness	2					
Other	<u>8</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	36				
Positive Coverage						
Church-related	0					
Other	<u>0</u>					
	<b>Total</b>	0				
	Ratio	36.00				

TABLE 4: *The Monroe Morning World's Portrayal of African-American Life*

All, however, was not progress. Though the Class D minor Cotton States League's Monroe Twins lost consistently in an aggregation that would not survive the summer, stories of its camp, its trades, its games, and its league dominated the Morning World and News Star headlines, leaving Monarchs write-ups to languish below the fold. The slight could be frustrating, noted Ollie Burns, a college student at the time, "but we couldn't let it get us down in our thinking."20 Shreveport Sun sports editor Pitman E. Nedde similarly bemoaned the balance of power in Shreveport sport. The town "doesn't seem to be interested in a baseball team enough to support it through a full season. And especially this is true of Negro teams that are organized here. On the other hand, the Sports (white team) can go through a full season at the bottom of the league (as is usually their standing), nevertheless they have almost as many Negro fans in the bleachers attending their games as whites." Shreveport not only had a larger black community than Monroe, but its mouthpiece, the Shreveport Sun, had been operating successfully since November 6, 1920. Still, two months later, Nedde still keenly felt the problem. "The question before us is, why Negroes of Shreveport will flock to the Biedenharn park to see ball games, and won't go to Negro ball games at all."21

That said, there was something to be said for winning. The Morning World coverage of the Monarchs far exceeded the coverage the white papers offered in the "minor" years prior. Throughout the late 1920s, only a rare national boxing match between black opponents merited coverage by the white papers of Monroe. Only one notice of Jack Thompson and Joe Dundee's 1928 Comiskey Park bout took up more space than an

advertisement one year prior for a special meeting of the Ku Klux Klan at the Monroe Woodmen of the World Hall. In 1930, coverage of the Monarchs was sparse, but generally available for team victories. When the team was successful, the team became newsworthy.<sup>22</sup>

The divide between white and black coverage becomes even clearer when the news priorities of Monroe's Morning World and the black population's only black daily, the Atlanta Daily World, are evaluated. (See Table 5) An analysis of the top line of each front-page column in the newspapers for the sample month of May 1932 demonstrates different above-the-fold emphases. Of the 147 such articles in the white Morning World, 52 covered local stories (35.4%), 60 covered national stories (40.8%), 26 (17.9%) covered state stories, and a few scattered articles covered regional and international news. A similar perusal of the 153 such articles in the Daily World demonstrates that 79 covered local stories (51.6%), 54 covered national stories (35.3%), and a small handful covered state, regional, and international news.

Of the total, 56.5% of the Morning World's articles covered politics. Of that number, 8.4% covered the Democratic presidential campaign, 13.3% covered prohibition legislation, and 22.9% covered tax and budget concerns. The Daily World devoted only 19% of its coverage to politics. None of that number concerned the Democratic campaign or tax and budget issues. Only one article covered prohibition. Two of its articles, however, offered in-depth analyses of the convicted rapists in Scottsboro, Alabama. Not surprisingly, the white Morning World made no mention of the Scottsboro Boys.

In another editorial difference, the Morning World devoted 27.9% of its top line stories to violence and crime. Of the Daily World's May sample, 43.8% dealt with crime. Of course, May 1932 was notorious as the month when the body of the kidnapped child of flyer Charles Lindbergh was discovered. 29.3% of the Morning World's coverage of violence dealt with the Lindbergh baby (8.7% of the total). The Daily World also covered the kidnapping, but to a lesser degree. 11.9% of its violence coverage involved the Lindberghs (5.2% of the total)

Finally, 15.7% of the Daily World's coverage was church-related, ranging from guest speakers coming to local churches to blanket coverage of the national African Methodist Episcopal church conference. None of the Morning World's May coverage catered to such religious interests. These papers catered to what their subscribers wanted to read. The black daily's consistent emphasis on violence and church-related matters has been covered in a number of different studies specific to these issues. But more importantly for this analysis, the coverage discrepancy demonstrates that the white and black audiences were receiving two different messages—were developing (or continuing to develop) two different mindsets.

	Monroe Morning World	Atlanta Daily World
Total Articles	147	153
COVERAGE LOCATION		
Local	52	79
National	60	54
State	26	7
Regional	4	8
International	5	5
POLITICS		
Dem. Campaign	7	0
Taxes and Budget	19	0
Prohibition	11	1
Scottsboro	0	2
VIOLENCE/CRIME		
Lindbergh	12	8
SPECIAL INTEREST		
Church Related	0	24

Table 5. Coverage Comparison

"The greatest and most successful newspapers both white and black have followed the trend of the human mind and are devoting more space, and more careful attention to their sports and theatrical sections than ever before in the history of journalism," wrote Harry Levette, sports editor of the California Eagle.

Our papers were naturally the last to fall into line for in the past, the race editors were influenced by narrow-minded egotistic persons or groups who felt a newspaper should be subsidised [sic] for their particular laudation or personal interests. But year by year sports took a greater hold on the nation and brainy men found in them not only the foundation for the health of the nation's offspring but the development of mental qualities gained by clean competition, manliness, fairness and consideration of others.

Now large colored papers with great circulations like the Chicago Defender, N.Y. Amsterdam News, Baltimore Afro-American and Pittsburgh Courier devote two or more pages to sports, chock full of news of all sorts, carefully made up and reveal the importance in which they are held as pabulum of reader interest....23

Sport and sport coverage was growing everywhere in 1932, in white and black newspapers, in southern and northern newspapers. But the sport people saw and the perception they received depended on the location of the paper they read and the race (and race assumptions) of its

editor. The advertisements for the Southern Newspaper Syndicate seem to be justified. Negroes—or, perhaps, the sporting and journalism assumptions of Negroes—really were different in Dixie.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> *Atlanta World*, 5 January 1932, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlanta World*, 28 February 1932, 6.

<sup>3</sup> The Atlanta paper, the flagship of the Southern Newspaper Syndicate, owned by W.A. Scott, made the move to daily circulation on 14 March 1932. *Atlanta World*, 26 February 1932, 1; and *Atlanta Daily World*, 22 July 1932, 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the *Monroe Morning World*, see the analysis later in this chapter at notes 13-17.

<sup>5</sup> There are four 1932 issues of the *Nashville Globe and Independent* surviving, and available for viewing in the Tennessee State Library and Archives. The scarcity of the sample, however, omitted the paper from the sample. The *Southern Broadcast* is available for the years 1936 and 1937 at the Shomberg Center at the New York Public Library. As 1936 was Monroe's last year to field a team, however, even the later year does not give an accurate representation of the paper's coverage in 1932. Arkansas and Mississippi also had black weeklies in 1932, but none survive. See Julius Eric Thompson. *The Black Press in Mississippi, 1865-1985* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 16-17.

<sup>6</sup> While the distinction in Table 1 (and later tables) of "National" and "Regional" is relatively easy to determine based on circulation figures and the presence of a national edition, the breakdown of the newspapers into "South," "North," "Border," and "Other" is entirely the responsibility of the author—an attempt to quantify regional and cultural value placed on the fluctuations of the season.

<sup>7</sup> *Chicago Defender*, 4 June 1932, 9, 11 June 1932, 9, 25 June 1932, 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, 30 April 1932, 2-5; and *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 26 April 1932, 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Louisiana Weekly*, 26 March 1932, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 119; Larry Lester, *Black Baseball's National Showcase: The East-West All-Star Game, 1933-1953* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 21-22, 24; and "The Golden Years," Kansas City: Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> *Louisiana Weekly*, 26 November 1932, 7.

<sup>12</sup> The same cannot be said for the national total when Chicago's Kansas City coverage is eliminated. The American Giants lost the series, and the *Defender's* only article on the games announced that they would take place—no reports of the outcomes were printed. This only reemphasizes the growth in journalistic apathy *Kansas City Call*, 5 August 1932, 2B, 12 August 1932, 1B; and *Chicago Defender*, 13 August 1932, 8.

<sup>13</sup> See *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 24 July 1932, 4-1, 25 July 1932, 7; *Arkansas Gazette*, 23 April 1932, 15, 24 April 1932, 15; *Arkansas Democrat*, 22 April 1932, 17, 23 April 1932, 6; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 13 August 1932, 8, 14 August 1932, 4-2; *Chicago Tribune*, 18 July 1932, 17, 19 July 1932, 19, 20 July 1932, 18; *Austin Statesman*, 18 August 1932, 9, 20 August 1932, 5, 21 August 1932, 4, 22 August 1932, 6; and *Austin American*, 18 August 1932, 9, 20 August 1932, 7, 21 August 1932, 4, 22 August 1932,



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6. Coverage of non-mainstream sporting events in the *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune* can be found throughout the year's sports coverage.

<sup>14</sup> Many of the newspapers in the "No Such Coverage" column, it should be noted, carried a wire story describing the experience of Alvin E. White, correspondent for the Associated Negro Press, the first African-American reporter included in the World Series press corps. He was "given a working table at the stadium and invited to join with the other writers in covering the series." Since the focus of the story was on the black presence in the larger white world, however, the publication of that item did not change the paper's place in the table. *Baltimore Afro-American*, 8 October 1932, 17; *Atlanta Daily World*, 15 April 1932, 6, 20 April 1932, 5; *Houston Informer*, 12 March 1932, 8, 9 April 1932, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Briscoe was born 15 December 1908 in Brunswick, Mississippi. In 1931, he graduated from Southern University in Baton Rouge before moving to Monroe to serve as Math, Chemistry, and General Science teacher at Monroe Colored High School. He also coached the football team. But Briscoe was a journalist, and a year after his arrival in Monroe he founded the *Broadcast*. He would maintain the paper until 1939, when he took a job as the national news editor of the *Chicago Defender*. In 1941, he became a press officer for the US Department of Agriculture, where he stayed for almost thirty years before becoming executive director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Jessie Parkhurst Guzman, ed., *1952 Negro Year Book: A Review of Events Affecting Negro Life* (New York: William H. Wise & Co., 1952), v; *Who's Who Among Black Americans, 1977-1978*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1 (Northbrook, IL: Who's Who Among Black Americans Publishing Company, 1978), 98; and *Southern Broadcast*, July 11, 1936, February 6, 1937. New Orleans had a population of 458,762 in 1930. Little Rock's population was 81,679. *Fifteenth Census*, vol. III, 194, 990; and *Louisiana Weekly*, various issues throughout 1932 and 1933.

<sup>16</sup> In 1909, Monroe's *Evening News* and *Daily Star* combined to form the *News Star*. Colonel Robert Ewing, publisher of the *New Orleans States* and *Shreveport Times* came to Monroe in 1929 and created the *Morning World*. In 1930, Ewing bought the *News Star*, as well, giving him a virtual monopoly on mainstream, white news in the region. "About Us," <http://www.thenewsstar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/99999999/CUSTOMERSERVICE/02/41202001>, accessed 12 January 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Naturally, some stories dragged on for days. Each day, each mention was logged, even if repetitive. Civic and church meetings often had newspaper notices days prior to the events, and each of those mentions were also logged. This data is based on the author's examination of each issue of the 1932 *Monroe Morning World*.

<sup>18</sup> See note 17.

<sup>19</sup> Lomax, *Black Baseball Entrepreneurs*, xvii; Danky, ed., *African American Newspapers and Periodicals*, record 3888; and *Chicago Defender*, 13 August 1932, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ollie Burns, interview with Paul J. Letlow, 13 May 1992.

<sup>21</sup> *Shreveport Sun*, 30 January 1932, 5, 2 April 1932, 3, 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Monroe News Star*, 18 August 1927, 2, 28 August 1928, 8, 29 August 1928, 8, 30 August 1928, 8, 31 August 1928, 10, 7 September 1928, 8, 11 January 1929, 11, 11 February 1929, 9, 5 July 1930, 9, 16 July 1930, 8; and *Monroe Morning World*, 14 July 1930, 9.

<sup>23</sup> *California Eagle*, 12 February 1932, 9.