

# THE 1917 RACE RIOT IN CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

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## I

Race riots are historical events most Americans would rather forget. Although public memory might be altered, they remain forever etched in the annals of American history. Some African-American historians go so far to say “race riots are the dramatic hallmark of the injustices of race relations in America.”<sup>1</sup> The Keystone State had its share of race riots in the twentieth century and one of the earliest ones occurred in the city of Chester in Delaware County in 1917. Richard E. Harris’s 1991 book, *Politics and Prejudice: A History of Chester, Pennsylvania Negroes* is a local history book that briefly mentions the Chester riot but fails to place it into historical perspective.<sup>2</sup> One might ask, for instance, how was the Chester civil disturbance similar or different from other race riots? Joseph Boskin, author of *Urban Racial Violence*, theorizes that twentieth century American race riots have the following six general characteristics:

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1. In each of the race riots, with few exceptions, it was white people who sparked the incident by attacking black people.
2. In the majority of riots, some extraordinary social condition prevailed at the time of the riot: prewar social changes, wartime mobility, post-war adjustment, or economic depression.
3. The majority of riots occurred during the hot summer months.
4. Rumor played an extremely important role in causing many riots. Rumors of some criminal activity by Blacks against whites perpetuated the actions of white mobs.
5. The police force, more than any other institution, was invariably involved as a precipitating cause or perpetuating factor in the riots. In almost every one of the riots, the police sided with the attackers, either by actually participating in it, or by failing to quell the attack.
6. In almost every instance, the fighting occurred within the black community.<sup>3</sup>

Boskin's postulates are necessary but not sufficient schemata for understanding all American race riots. However, not all of Boskin's criteria are applicable to the 1917 Chester race riot. Furthermore, ethnic and labor conflicts helped incite the riot. This essay begins with a profile of Chester circa 1920, examining its demographics, its housing, and its labor situation during the Great Migration followed by a narrative of the riot itself, utilizing primary sources such as newspapers, court records, city council minutes, and oral history accounts. Last, the essay will use Boskin's theorems to compare the 1917 Chester race riot and four other riots around the time of the First World War. These are the 1917 riot in East St. Louis, the 1918 riot in Philadelphia, and the 1919 riots in Chicago and Omaha, Nebraska.<sup>4</sup> Thus a study of the dynamics of the 1917 Chester race riot may lead to a better understanding of the complexity of race relations in Pennsylvania.

## II

Pennsylvania's strategic position on the Atlantic seaboard made it a magnet for both Southern black migrants and European immigrants during the early twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Sam Cimino, an Italian American now living in Delaware County, recalls that "the immigrants first came to Chester because it was a booming industrial town, as was the Port of Philadelphia."<sup>6</sup> Between 1908 and 1925, some Italian immigrants came to Chester via steamship service

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from southern Italy to Philadelphia. From Philadelphia, Italians traveled by train to Chester.<sup>7</sup> Railroads also played a major role in the Great Migration. About 12,000 Southern blacks came to the North compliments of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company until railroad officials realized that it was cheaper to make the travelers pay their own way.<sup>8</sup> Although most African-Americans in Chester lived in the Eighth and Ninth wards where the 1917 riot occurred, numerous European immigrants lived there as well. Tables 1 and 2, compiled from 1920 United States Census data, illustrate the ethnic diversity of the city of Chester. Table 1 shows that in the Eighth ward, native whites were the dominant group, followed by foreign born whites and African Americans a distant third. On the other hand, in the Ninth ward, African Americans were the dominant group followed by native whites and then foreign-born whites. Table 2 shows Italians were the major white ethnic group in the Eighth ward. Out of 1154 foreign born whites, 688 were of Italian descent. Out of the total Ninth ward population of 4555, 2966 were of African-American descent. Due to the racial and ethnic demographic mix in Chester's Eighth and Ninth wards in 1920, these wards did not represent a "black community" or "ghetto" as understood by historians of the 1960s riots.

Most Chester citizens seemed to have a favorable view of African-American southern migrants. They were seen as "industrious, thrifty, unskilled workers' who came north, found steady work, and eventually saved enough to send for their wives and children."<sup>9</sup> Single women could find temporary shelter at the Ruth L. Bennett Home for Negro Girls at Second and Reaney Streets that opened in 1917. While the response of all Chester African-American churches to the Great Migration is unknown, it is likely that the Calvary Baptist Church, headed by Mrs. Bennett's husband, the Reverend J. R. Bennett, welcomed black migrants. Most were single men who discovered jobs were plentiful in

TABLE 1, 1920 Population for Chester City Wards  
where 1917 race riot occurred

	Eighth Ward	Ninth Ward
Total population	5789	4555
Native white	3524	1339
Foreign born white	1154	245
African-American	1096	2966
Asian	15	3

Source: Table 13, Composition and Characteristics of the Population for Wards of Cities of 50,000 or more, Chester (Pa). *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Volume III, Population, 1920* (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922, 13.

Country	Eighth Ward	Ninth Ward
Austria	34	10
Canada	9	6
England	103	32
France	1	2
Germany	21	9
Greece	0	1
Ireland	155	92
Italy	688	22
Mexico	0	3
Norway	8	4
Poland	32	13
Russia	53	36
Scotland	18	8
Spain	3	0
Sweden	10	0
US Blacks	1096	2966

Source: Table 13, Composition and Characteristics of the Population for Wards of Cities of 50,000 or more, Chester (Pa). *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Volume III, Population, 1920* (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922, 890.<sup>10</sup>

Chester but decent affordable housing was not. They lived wherever possible, in rooming houses, converted garages, or abandoned buildings. In the center of town single black males might lodge in the neighborhood called "Bethel Court."<sup>11</sup> Bethel Court, now demolished, was considered Chester's "red-light" district. It was situated in the area bordered north and south by Front and Third Streets and east and west by Market and Welsh Streets.<sup>12</sup> Observers claimed that "at night the Court resembled a lawless, licentious 'carnival town' where everything was for sale—liquor, drugs, numbers, sex, and protection."<sup>13</sup> Its beer gardens, pool halls, and bawdy houses did a brisk

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business. Bethel Court was considered unsafe for Chesterites due to nightly reports of robberies, shootings, and assaults in the district. The company work camps built for black laborers were often even worse places to live. One such camp was that of the Keystone Paving and Construction Company in Essington, near Chester. It housed 1100 workers or nearly half of the camp dwellers in the Chester area.<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania State Department of Labor and Industry officials visited the camp around 1917 and after its investigation took action to clean up the camp. A state official wrote of the Keystone Paving and Construction camp:

Here about 400 Negroes were housed in ten rough shacks, 10 by 30 feet in size. Wooden bunks were built closely, in tiers of 3 and 4, housing about 35 men in a shack. One larger shack of 40 by 40 feet, of similar bunk construction, housed 45. [The] mattresses were filthy and verminous [sic]; old clothes, cans, and whisky bottles were thrown about and the shacks had not been cleaned for days. The toilets and washroom were open sheds, and no sanitary plumbing facilities were provided. The commissary privilege was let to an Italian commission firm of south Philadelphia. There were three men in the store and three Italian policemen on duty when the camp was visited at lunch time. No mess hall was provided, but in the store there were a few crowded tables. The stench and flies made it impossible to stay in the room.<sup>15</sup>

Black workers for other employers encountered racial discrimination in housing. For instance, when the Westinghouse Electric Company built housing for its workers, white laborers lived in houses that were "sturdier, better equipped, and less expensive than those ordinarily available to blue-collar families." On the other hand, Westinghouse black laborers lived in "shabby, segregated dwellings."<sup>16</sup> The more fortunate southern black migrants could find lodging in the homes of Chester's African Americans. For example Henry James, a steel mill laborer from Georgia, was a lodger living with an African American couple, Pitman and Tiny Bradford at 1526 W. Third Street. Bradford, a native of Indiana, worked at Penn Steel and his wife Tiny from Georgia was a homemaker.<sup>17</sup>

For both European immigrants and African Americans, a boom in the shipyard business meant steady work. In 1917 the Harriman family, noted for developing the Union Pacific Railroad, bought out John Roach's shipyard, which "covered 32 acres and 1,200 feet of riverfront." The Harrimans

changed the name of the shipyard to Chester Shipbuilding Company.<sup>18</sup> A year earlier, the Sun Shipbuilding Company shipyard opened and “produced tankers and freight ships for private industry.”<sup>19</sup> When America entered the First World War, federal contracts for warships were issued to Chester area shipyards and this spurred a need for laborers.<sup>20</sup> European immigrants were among those hired to work in the Chester shipyards. For example there were Italian shipyard workers. Joseph Caletti emigrated from Italy to the United States in 1908. Samuel DiPaul was a native of Italy who arrived in 1915. There were shipyard workers from Austria-Hungary. Joseph Knopp immigrated to the States from Austria-Hungary in 1902 while Michael Sasa came later on in 1913. Other shipyard workers were originally from northern Europe. For instance, Charles Cassell emigrated from Sweden in 1890 and found work in Chester as a pipe fitter in a shipyard.<sup>21</sup>

African Americans also found employment at the Sun Shipbuilding Company. They were, however, not hired for management positions but only as laborers.<sup>22</sup> One thousand African Americans worked at the Atlantic Refining Company and another thousand worked at Keystone Paving and Construction Company. The Eddystone Munitions Corporation and the Westinghouse plant in nearby Essington each employed 600 blacks.<sup>23</sup> In all of these industries black workers worked alongside white ethnic laborers. But the workers did not always get along. Tiny Bradford said that her husband made more money than the white workers at the Baldwin Railroad Works. This caused racial tension since “they hadn’t been used to black men doing that kind of work,” she said.<sup>24</sup> Chester’s newspaper lamented the Great Migration, claiming that the city “has been invaded by the southern Negro brought [here] because of the abnormal industrial situation which made his services necessary.”<sup>25</sup> Even some middle-class black residents of Chester resented the black migrants and held them responsible for crime.<sup>26</sup> For instance, after the 1917 Chester race riot, a black physician, George M. Thomas claimed that Chester city officials have “given us [blacks] a square deal and also ample protection.” Dr. Thomas blamed the riot on the “great influx of colored people from the South.”<sup>27</sup> It should be noted, however, that some Chester blacks armed themselves not to commit crimes but to protect themselves. Black Chester resident James Brown said in an oral history interview that “you could find a shotgun hanging over the door in most Negroes’ homes.”<sup>28</sup> The climate of fear among blacks and whites alike was fueled by the biased reporting of the local newspaper, the *Chester Times*. During World War I, the newspaper tended

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to report more "black on white" crime than "white on black crime." In this respect the *Chester Times* was typical of American newspapers of the day, relaying stories about black criminal suspects and convicts in degrading, stereotypical terms. For instance, Charles Lloyd, described by reporters as a "colored desperado," was sentenced to ten years in prison for gagging and robbing a white woman and attacking a white man in the Delaware County town of Marcus Hook. The headline read: "Negro Thug Convicted."<sup>29</sup> In July 1917 before the outbreak of the actual race riot, there were at least four crimes reported in Chester with interracial or ethnic overtones. On July 3, 1917, a street confrontation between white men and black women drew the attention of the Chester police:

A near race riot took place about 7 o'clock last evening at the southwest corner of Fourteenth Street and Edgemont Avenue, when a crowd of corner loungers [young white males] started an argument with three colored girls. The girls, while passing the grocery store on that corner, undoubtedly made some remark, for one young white fellow picked up a brick and threw it at the trio. The girls returned the brick, which landed in the plate glass window of McGovern's store. At this juncture, the crowd became excited and used much abusive language with the result that someone telephoned police headquarters that a riot was in progress. A cordon of police appeared but the trouble makers had by then disappeared.<sup>30</sup>

On the evening of July 7, 1917, two white people, Margaret Ewing and her fiancé, were walking along Concord Road when they were accosted by what the Chester press called "a gang of negro rowdies." The gang separated the couple and took the woman into a nearby cornfield. But the woman's fiancé escaped and summoned the police who arrived on the scene in time to rescue Ms. Ewing from her captors.<sup>31</sup> On July 15, William E. Turner, a white man who was foreman of a construction crew for Westinghouse, was shot to death at night while walking with an Italian laborer along the Philadelphia and Reading railroad tracks at North Essington. It is not known whether the killer, Samuel Washington was an employee of Turner.<sup>32</sup> About a week later, with the memory of the kidnapping of Margaret Ewing fresh in the minds of Chester citizens, another white woman, Mrs. David Ross, was assaulted in her home on Ulrich Street during the early hours of July 23. She told police that a stranger appeared in her bedroom, grabbed her around the waist, covered

her mouth, and hit her over the head with a blackjack before fleeing. Because the room was dark, Mrs. Ross could not tell what race her attacker was, although many Chester residents probably assumed the man was black. These crime stories, involving black criminals and white victims and sensationally reported by the local press, created anger and apprehension among both blacks and whites in Chester on the eve of the 1917 race riot.

### III

On Tuesday, July 24, 1917, near midnight, four young African Americans—Arthur Thomas, Josephine Hudson, Grant Fisher and Viola Daniels—were returning home. As they approached the corner of Third and Reaney streets, a white man, William McKinney, accidentally brushed against one of the black women. Thomas asked McKinney if he ‘wanted to buy a girl?’ McKinney kept walking toward his home a few doors south of Third Street on Reaney Street. His sister Mattie McKinney said that Hudson and Daniels kept taunting McKinney with insults and urging Thomas to “get him.” Hudson put her arms around McKinney’s neck to hold him while Thomas proceeded to attack him. Thomas stabbed McKinney with a pocket knife. McKinney died few minutes later.<sup>33</sup> In court, Thomas defended himself and gave a different version of events. He said he was walking with Fisher, Hudson and Daniels on Reaney Street, when “McKinney came along on the opposite side of the street, crossing over and insulted the Daniels girl. The Daniels girl replied: ‘If I was a white girl you would not make such a remark to me.’ Then McKinney went into his yard, took off his coat and came back yelling out bad names to them and telling them to stop, which they did. Thomas said McKinney then came up and punched him so badly about the head he feared for his life, so he pulled his penknife and defended himself.”<sup>34</sup> A neighbor of McKinney, Jerry Thompson, however gave a still different and apparently incomplete version of the episode. Thompson told the court that “he heard him [McKinney] say he did not want any trouble as he was going home. Mr. Thompson said he heard one of the colored women say ‘Get the white \_\_\_\_\_ [sic]! He said that he heard the sounds of a struggle but as this happened in the shade of a tree near the McKinney home, he could not tell anything about it.” The victim’s sister Mattie McKinney gave her version of the event. “I was sitting on my porch when I saw my brother walking down the street. As he passed the two couples it looked as though he unintentionally brushed against one of the women.” Ms. McKinney insinuated that



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one of the black women responded by (she did not say which one) taunting her brother.

One of the women told the men to 'go get him' and an answer came back (perhaps from William McKinney) that 'he was all right and not to bother him.' The women kept up their abusive language and my brother again answered them. This probably made them angrier and one shouted, 'go fix him.' The small crowd went for my brother and as they did I called my mother in the house. She walked down to the sidewalk and brought my brother in the house and he died a few minutes after being brought in.<sup>35</sup>

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, July 25, 1917, news of the McKinney murder drew a crowd of 100 people outside his home at 215 Reaney Street. Meanwhile, Chester policemen were "on the lookout for any suspicious looking colored men or women and to place them under arrest." They did not have to look for long. About two o'clock in the morning Arthur Thomas, Grant Fisher, Josephine Hudson and Viola Daniels were arrested. Hudson and Daniels said that Thomas did the stabbing so he was arraigned at City Hall, and held in the Delaware County jail at Media without bail.<sup>36</sup> Ironically Chester Mayor Wesley S. McDowell had asked city council two weeks earlier for more police, not for law enforcement but rather for "traffic work."<sup>37</sup> McDowell alluded to "the congested traffic conditions on Market Street." In an editorial about the McKinney killing the *Chester Times* declared the town was out of control and that "apparently law-abiding persons are not safe in this city. But this state of affairs must not last. It is up to the authorities to act accordingly."<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately the newspaper's call for law and order would come too late for Chester.

On Wednesday July 25, 1917 some white men in Chester who were friends of McKinney plotted revenge for his death, according to a former member of the gang.<sup>39</sup> That evening these men and other whites began to riot in the Eighth Ward along West Third Street, home to black-owned barbershops, beauty shops, restaurants, pool halls, beer gardens and pharmacies.<sup>40</sup> Rioters seemed to target African-American men going to or from work.

At Third and Fenhall Streets three colored workmen on their way home from work were attacked by a crowd of twenty-five whites. Cries of 'kill the black snakes' rang out and a chase began which drove the

trio of blacks to the Reading Railroad barrier. Here the refugees crawled into boxcars, but were pulled out [by the mob] and thoroughly mauled. Refusing to go to a hospital when the rioters let up, the Negroes painfully made their way to the homes of friends nearby.<sup>41</sup>

Later that night a mob of whites stopped a trolley car on Third Street and pulled down the pole. They then entered the trolley car and began to beat up three black men. When rioters heard that the State Constabulary was on the way, the rioters fled the scene. "In Thurlow Park, a group of black men and women were attacked and beaten up. One of them crawled to Jeffrey Street and sat on the steps of the library building until he could recover sufficient strength to make a getaway."<sup>42</sup> As many as eighty people, both white and black, were beaten up by mobs.<sup>43</sup> A white man who voiced sympathy for the blacks almost became a riot victim himself. Whites chased him up to Croser Park where, fortunately, the man escaped his assailants. Mayor McDowell assembled a posse of 150 and called out the Chester Company of the National Guard at the Armory at Eighth and Sproul Streets. Troop C of the Pennsylvania State Police was also summoned. "By one o' clock in the morning, the worst of the rioting had passed. Three men had been shot and hundreds beaten. Several houses in the black sections had been vandalized."<sup>44</sup> It is not clear what "sections" or wards the newspaper was referring to. The *Chester Times* appealed for public calm and an end to the so-called "reign of terror" on July 25.<sup>45</sup>

The Chester police wasted little time in bringing the accused to justice. On Thursday, July 26, 1917, Police Magistrate William J. Leary heard forty-eight court cases. "Lying on the judge's desk was a heap of revolvers, brick bats, pocket knives, butcher knives, molders, tools and other iron and brass instruments." Judge Leary also released innocent bystanders who had been picked up by police and taken to City Hall for their own protection. These included Malvin Jones, a black man and two Cubans, Joseph Rose Corron and Andrew Lorenx. Late Thursday afternoon, July 26, 1917, Mayor McDowell prepared for another night of rioting with forty Eddystone Ammunition Corporation guards, four State Police, numerous police deputies and volunteers.

About 8:45 pm, "four Negroes closeted behind locked doors in the Florida Restaurant at Third and Howell Streets started the race rampage again at that intersection. They made their last stand when Desk Sergeant 'Bob' Law and Patrolmen Kealey and Hager with drawn

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revolvers, keeping up a rapid fire, crashed down the restaurant door and rounded up four Negroes. [The suspects] were taken to the City Hall in a special trolley car amide a continuous volley of stones hurled by members of the mob who begged for the men."<sup>46</sup>

Twelve State Police troopers with their horses arrived on a train from Pottsville at nine o'clock that night. Tiny Bradford remembered that the situation in Chester was so out of hand that "they had to call out the mounted police. They were just up and down there at nights on their horses, you know." A Pennsylvania State Police report told what troopers saw when they arrived in Chester.

Parties of 200 to 300 white men roamed at will throughout the city of Chester, and whenever they found colored persons [they] assaulted, and in some cases, severely injured them. The colored people, on the other hand, were just as determined to fight as the whites, and the result was an intolerable condition which prevailed in the city until [the] arrival of State troopers.<sup>47</sup>

"At 10:30 p.m. [the same evening] one hundred and fifty Negroes massed in Bethel Court and charged Market Square" in downtown Chester. A witness claimed that blacks were shooting from the Old St. Paul's Burying Ground at the corner of Third and Welsh Streets. After a while, convinced that the bullets were having "no effect" on their targets, the blacks invaded the square to confront the whites face to face. But "four auto loads of police sped down Market Street and got between the whites, who had sought places of advantage with their guns in doorways, and the Negroes. First, the whites were rushed by the Chester police and scattered. The Negroes were turned and sent scurrying back to the [Bethel] 'Court'"<sup>48</sup> Twelve black men who were arrested were recent migrants from Florida and Georgia.<sup>49</sup> The *Chester Times* and the court records made a point of identifying the home state, nationality, and race of the arrested.

Later that evening there was another fatality. The alleged killer, Charles Lucas explained in court his version of what happened.

I was working at the Baldwin Locomotive Works at the time this trouble happened. I had gone to work with my lunch box that afternoon and finding the boss over me was not there, I returned home.

When I was standing on the corner of Third and Lloyd, I did not have my hand on my gun. Then there came a rush of men and someone struck me over the head with something so quick I did not see what it was. I rushed up on the steps of the Lloyd house and when the crowd started to follow me, I shot into the crowd.<sup>50</sup>

One of the gunshots hit and killed Joseph McCann, a white man. This so outraged the crowd that they chased Lucas into a Lloyd Street house and set it on fire “to smoke out the slayer. Strenuous efforts by State Police and local officers prevented a lynching.” Police officer Charles Cannon broke down the door of the house and “took the Negro at the point of a gun.” Cannon later testified Lucas was grateful to be arrested, saying to him, ‘I’m the man, please don’t let them kill me.’<sup>51</sup> Lucas was arraigned without bail at Chester City Hall but later transferred to the Delaware County jail in Media for his personal safety. “In the meantime, numerous blacks and whites all over the city suffered injuries at the hands of rioters. Reporters said that the “scenes at the Chester Hospital ...were in a measure reminiscent of the Eddystone explosion.” All night the hospital operation room was busy filled with patients with gunshots and other injuries suffered during the riot. The scene at Chester Hospital, like the housing in the work camps, underscored the racial discrimination suffered by Chester blacks. The *Chester Times* reported

As fast as one would be shunted out of the room on a wheeled table, the screen door at the side would open, and volunteers carrying an unanimated form would invariably say, quietly, some passionately, ‘Here’s another, Doc., ‘got him in the stomach,’ or “got him in the leg.’ Most of the victims brought to the hospital were white.<sup>52</sup>

At the corner of Third Street and Central Avenue “shooting was in full force at 11 o’clock, principally between blacks and Italians.” That evening, deputy sheriffs arrested three rioters of Italian descent and state troopers nabbed seven African-American rioters.<sup>53</sup> On Friday July 27, 1917, “quietness reigned supreme throughout the morning, for as far as business activity, the city’s business district reminded one of a graveyard.”<sup>54</sup> Many blacks took advantage of the calm to get out of town. “In the Ninth Ward from two hundred to two hundred and fifty colored residents packed up their belongings and departed for parts unknown. [Black neighborhoods such as] Black Haven, Bethel Court, Longbortham’s (sic) Court, Buffalo Row, Golden Alley,

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Seventh Street and Central Avenue, Deshong Street, Stone Row, and other settlements were minus good sized groups of residents.” Chester trains and trolley cars were full of African-Americans traveling north and south of the city carrying suitcases, packages, and bundles. Some people were going to stay with relatives in Philadelphia or Wilmington. Others, with no clear destination, faced uncertainty and hardship. But that was better than facing possible death in Chester. The exodus meant that “hundreds of colored men failed to report for work at the plants, entailing much labor hardship.”<sup>55</sup> It is not known precisely how many blacks stayed home from those companies. But it is clear that at least some African Americans reported for work during the riot. Tiny Bradford says in an oral history interview:

my husband was working at Penn Steel at that time...And he used to carry a lunch kettle and he had a gun and he'd put his gun in the bottom of the kettle....So then his lunch was packed on top of this, you know.” According to Mrs. Bradford, her husband's black co-workers also took guns to work. “Yeah, any way they could conceal it, they did,” “They were afraid because there were more whites in the plant than there was black. And they didn't know when it was going to start, you know, in there.”<sup>56</sup>

At noon on July 27, 1917, Mayor McDowell ordered all hotels, pool rooms, liquor stores and bottling establishments closed, prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages, forbade people from carrying weapons, ordered a curfew for citizens after sundown, and banned driving after seven o' clock at night. Delaware County Sheriff John H. Heybrun Jr. declared a “state of riot” in Chester and forbade any public assembly on the streets, highways and public places.<sup>57</sup> Blacks defended their homes and themselves. Mrs. Bradford describes what it was like.

“During the riot we couldn't come out in the street after six o'clock in the evening because up and down the street they were just shooting at people. And the women would all go upstairs in one room of a home and they would have a gun or something and someone would be kneeling down to the window so if they [the rioters] would start [trying to break] in, the women would try to stop them. They were afraid. Everybody was just scared to death.”<sup>58</sup>

On the evening of Friday, July 27, 1917, the violence in Chester escalated with more violence occurring among black and white workers. Frank Meddoss, an African-American employee of the American Dyewood Company, stepped outside his home at 267 Edgmont Avenue. Suddenly he found himself being chased by a mob of Chester Shipbuilding Company workers, at Kerlin and Second Streets. Meddoss ran for his life. "Get the nigger was the cry which rang out." The whites divided, forcing Meddoss to run a gauntlet. Thus he was captured before he could proceed far and was kicked and rolled in the street. Upon rising, a revolver creaked, and Meddoss sank to the ground again writhing in agony. "The Chester police," said the *Chester Times*, "are working on a clue that identified the shooter as a 14-year-old white boy, an Italian handing him the gun." A police car appeared after Meddoss fell. Then the shipyard whistle blew, calling the workers back to work. In the confusion, "the officers could make no headway in seeking the shooter." Meddoss died the next day of a gunshot wound in the back, the first black man to die in the riot.<sup>59</sup> But his killer was never brought to justice. "Little trouble was experienced after seven o'clock last evening," said the *Chester Times*. This caused Mayor McDowell to say: "I am perfectly satisfied with conditions. I think the backbone of the race riots has been broken."<sup>60</sup> The Mayor's optimism could be explained because apart from the shootings that occurred early in the day, only "four arrests made up the sum total of the police net [in the evening] and these were precautionary arrests and not arising from violence."<sup>61</sup>

But Mayor McDowell's optimism about the city's situation proved premature. Saturday, July 28, 1917. Chester police arrested fifty-four white and black people of which forty being charged with illegal possession of alcohol. Alcohol would provide the backdrop for the background of the deaths of the final riot victims. On Saturday night Sheriff Heybrun and his deputies found two African-American men "drinking out of a bottle" under the Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge at Tilghman Street. Surprised by the posse, the men ran off while the sheriff fired bullets into the air. Security guard James Riley heard the gunshots and walked in the direction of the shooting. Believing that someone was shooting at him, Riley fired back. In return he was struck by a bullet from an Eddystone Ammunition Corporation plant guard, a white man named Fred Orfield. "From forty to eighty shots were fired, according to varying estimates."<sup>62</sup> "Up to this time, David Schwartz, a white Chester police chauffeur, was in his vehicle parked over a hundred yards away from the intersection of Seventh and Central Avenue when a Eddystone

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guard put his Enfield rifle to his shoulder and fired two shots. One of the two bullets pieced the windshield killing Schwartz. Later on Sheriff Heybrun could give no reason why the guard, Newman Stokesdale, did this." In court, Stokesdale said that he fired his gun because he was told by "colored men a crowd of white people were coming down to create trouble."<sup>63</sup> He said Eddystone guards had instructions that "if anything went wrong for them to give a signal by firing off their rifles." Paradoxically, the Pennsylvania State Police later played down the shootings at the Eddystone plant. They claimed the gunfire was "entirely accidental" and "had no bearing on the racial troubles."<sup>64</sup> The following day, Chester Police Magistrate William J. Leary submitted his resignation to Mayor McDowell. The mayor accepted Leary's resignation and appointed Thomas Holt as Leary's successor.<sup>65</sup> On the evening of July 29, 1917, Mayor McDowell and Police Chief John Vance each received letters warning them not to continue "to block the dealings of whites with the blacks, [or else] trouble would be brewing for him." The note, signed "X, Y, and Z" was postmarked "West Market Street Station." "Part of the message said 'we are going to run the Negroes out of Chester, [even] if it takes six months. If you stop us, we will give you twenty-four hours to resign.'" Ostensibly the authors of the letters believed that African Americans, both law-biding and criminal, were being protected by the mayor since the Chester police did not join whites in attacking blacks"<sup>66</sup> This sentiment was also felt in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia *North American* blasted the McDowell administration, especially Judge Leary, accusing them of allowing the "processes of justice against Negro offenders [to be] paralyzed by political influence."<sup>67</sup> But it was not just the "Negro offenders" who escaped punishment. Whites charged with "incite to riot" would later be freed by the Grand Jury.<sup>68</sup> Yet despite the threats and criticism leveled against him, Mayor McDowell refused to resign.

On the night of Monday, July 30, 1917, calm reigned in Chester. "Deputy Sheriffs, special State Troopers and the extra shifts of city patrolmen were on duty, scattered throughout the city ready to check the slightest disorder." Confident that the city was safe now, "some of the colored people who fled the city last week, are returning," said the *Chester Times*.<sup>69</sup> On Tuesday, July 31, the Chester City Council granted Mayor McDowell's request for fifteen additional policemen and the creation of the city's first mounted patrol.<sup>70</sup> The *Chester Times* now declared that the riot was over and "the State Police were withdrawn soon after this."<sup>71</sup> But Chester resident Tiny Bradford says "it took at least a couple of weeks to get [the town] quieted down."<sup>72</sup> One of the



incidents took place at the Beacon Light Plant on August 7, 1917. A black employee of the Reading Railroad, Henry Jones, claimed "he left the Reading Railroad Tracks to go into the Beacon Light Company for a drink of water. He said he was set upon by three whites, and in self defense, pulled out a keen bladed knife and slashed the nearest one to him."<sup>73</sup> On August 8, 1917, there was another disturbance which could have become another riot. A fracas between civilians and soldiers from Camp Deshong at the corner of Seventh Street and Edgmont Avenue resulted in both soldiers and civilians receiving head injuries. One serviceman was arrested.<sup>74</sup> On the same day, Lewis Miles, armed with a butcher knife, was shot in the neck and shoulder by a black man, Henry Thomas. Thomas later claimed in court that he shot in self defense.<sup>75</sup> On Saturday, August 28, 1917, an African-American policeman, William H. Padgett was shot to death at the intersection of Eighth Street and Central Avenue by another black man, John J. Wood.<sup>76</sup>

The Delaware County District Attorney John B. Hanum Jr. began the September term of Criminal Court with more than 360 cases. The *Chester Times* declared "this is the largest term of criminal court since Delaware County became a County."<sup>77</sup> Delaware County Quarter Sessions Court records reveal that the cases included "inciting a riot," assault and battery, carrying a concealed weapon, public intoxication, resisting arrest, and homicide. In almost every case, the accused were brought to justice. In October 1917 a jury found Charles Lucas not guilty of the killing of Joseph McCann.<sup>78</sup> That same month, a jury acquitted Fred Orfield of the slaying of James Riley and Newman Stokesdale was also found innocent in the death of David Schwartz.<sup>79</sup> In December 1917, the jury found Arthur Thomas guilty of voluntary manslaughter in the death of William McKinney. Thomas was sentenced to the state penitentiary for fifteen months.<sup>80</sup> Both the federal government and the city of Chester conducted investigations into the riot. While the reports of both investigations are now lost, newspaper reports provide insight into what they entailed. Mayor McDowell's police investigation of the riot concluded that it occurred because of a conspiracy. Police Chief John Vance claimed a group of young white men conspired to riot. He said he had evidence that "Selimo Dinacio, James Riddles, white, and Joseph McCann, white, were members of the party that attacked Negroes with bricks during the first two nights of the riot."<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Vance alleged that Riddles, McCann, and Dignacio were "X, Y, and Z," authors of the threat letters mailed to the mayor and Vance. Riddles and Dignancio had been arrested on August 3, 1917 with bail for each man was



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placed at \$3000. The third member of the trio, Joseph McCann could not be charged since he was killed on the second night of the rioting.<sup>82</sup> In September 1917 the Delaware County Grand Jury dismissed the bills of indictment against Riddles and Dignancio for inciting a riot.<sup>83</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor investigated the riot and concluded that the riot "seem to have had no basis whatever in the labor situation" even some of the rioting was between black and white workers!<sup>84</sup>

We can only speculate how the black churches and civil rights groups reacted to the 1917 riot because local church histories and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) records are not available. Within the national NAACP records in the Library of Congress, there is no investigative report of the 1917 Chester race riot. In fact, the Chester chapter of the NAACP was not even founded until 1921. Historian John McLarmon says when the chapter was initiated, "from the start it suffered from internal dissention and public apathy. By 1923, Ruth Bennett, the chapter's guiding spirit, was thoroughly discouraged." Her threat to close down the Chester NAACP branch resulted in new board officials and some new members. McLarmon adds that "the chapter recognized the need to 'affect a remedy,' but it would be decades before any real progress was made."<sup>85</sup>

### IV

We are now able to place the 1917 Chester race riot into historical perspective by comparing it with other riots: the race riot in E. St. Louis in 1917, the race riot in Philadelphia in 1918, and the race riots in Omaha and Chicago in 1919. Boskin's first theorem is that "in each of the race riots, with few exceptions, it was white people who sparked the incident by attacking black people."<sup>86</sup> In the 1917 Chester riot, whites began rioting in revenge for the murder of a white man, William McKinney. The East St. Louis race riot of 1917 erupted after

two local white police detectives were accidentally shot and killed by blacks defending their neighborhood against a white gang which had driven through the streets that night, firing into black homes. Local whites struck out the following day, in revenge for the attack on the police, which they interpreted as deliberate.<sup>87</sup>

The Philadelphia riot of 1918 began when whites mobbed the home of a black woman who had just moved into the West Philadelphia neighborhood. They threw a rock through a window of her home. Mrs. Adella Bond said, "I didn't know what the mob would do next, and I fired my revolver from my upper window to call the police. A policeman came, but wouldn't try to cope with the mob alone, so he turned in a riot call."<sup>88</sup> In the 1919 Omaha riot, whites stormed the county courthouse to seize and lynch a black man, Will Brown, accused of raping a white woman. The mob then began attacking blacks on the street.<sup>89</sup> The Chicago riot of 1919 began when white gangs began attacking black stockyard workers as they passed through the yard gates.<sup>90</sup>

Boskin's second point is "In the majority of riots, some extraordinary social condition prevailed at the time of the riot: prewar social changes, wartime mobility, post-war adjustment, or economic depression." The Chester, East St. Louis, and Philadelphia riots occurred during wartime while the Omaha and Chicago riots ignited after World War I ended. All the cities experienced the Great Migration which stressed urban housing and city services and increased racial tension in the workplace as native whites and European immigrants competed with blacks for jobs.

Boskin's third theory is that all the riots took place in the summer. This is generally true. The East St. Louis riot broke out on July 2, 1917; the Chester riot on July 25, 1917, the Philadelphia riot on July 16, 1918, the Omaha riot on September 28, 1919, and the Chicago riot on July 27, 1919. Therefore, four of the riots, including the Chester riot, did happen in the summer months.

Boskin's fourth postulate that "rumor played an extremely important role in causing many riots," is true of all of the riots studied here.<sup>91</sup> During the Chester riot of 1917 there was a rumor that "another white man had been shot in the stomach while standing at Third and Fennel Streets. An investigation disclosed the fact that a number of shots had been fired but none of the bullets hit their mark." It was also rumored "that a colored man and a white woman had been murdered on the Fair Grounds. Soon a large crowd headed for the grounds only to find everything was in order." "Wild reports were heard during the night of various horrible murders, little girls being shot, prominent men of the city beaten or shot, and other gossip which was no more the imaginations of excited residents."<sup>92</sup> Another rumor had it that five carloads of blacks from Philadelphia were coming to Chester to "shoot up the town." This rumor reached City Hall and Mayor McDowell reacted by dispatching police to the East Ninth Street Bridge and the bridge at Chester Pike, major gateways to the city. But "the Negroes failed to show up."<sup>93</sup> In the Philadelphia race riot

"several newspapers [reported] that the riot started because two white girls had been insulted by a group of black men."<sup>94</sup> In the Chicago riot, rumors helped foster misunderstanding of the facts. "The *Chicago Tribune* issue of July 29, 1919 alleged that "before 3:00 a.m., July 29, twenty persons had been killed, of whom thirteen were white and seven colored. The truth was that of twenty killed, seven were white and thirteen colored."<sup>95</sup> Similar exaggerations of fact were rampant during the East St. Louis riot. It was rumored that the rioters consisted of "10,000 blood-crazed whites." According to historian Elliott Rudwick, "in actuality the assaulting gangs were small, usually not containing more than twenty-five persons."<sup>96</sup> In the Omaha riot a rumor spread that several white women were raped by black men.

One of the most prevalent beliefs about American race riots is that the police or the militia either begin riots or foster them. Boskin's fifth characteristic of riots says "The police force... was invariably involved as a precipitating cause or perpetuating factor in the riots. In almost every one of the riots, the police sided with the attackers, either by actually participating in it, or by failing to quell the attack."<sup>97</sup> This statement would seem to be true of the East St. Louis riot, during which the police "simply stood back and watched while some even joined the rioters."<sup>98</sup> When the Omaha police got word that a riot was in progress, police officers were sent to the scene and talked with members of the crowd who did not appear threatening. The officers reported back to police headquarters that "all was well." After this message fifty Omaha policemen held in reserve were sent home. "But the action proved to be a serious error in judgment."<sup>99</sup> The Omaha police on duty did their best to cope with the riot but they were outnumbered by the rioters. In the Philadelphia riot "police from all over the city were ordered into the riot zone to bolster the police of the area."<sup>100</sup> In Chester, as we have seen, the Chester police and the Pennsylvania State Police tried to break up the riot. Chester policemen picked up blacks and other dark-skinned persons such as Mexicans and Cubans threatened by rioters and took them to City Hall for their safety. The *Philadelphia Tribune* complimented Chester Mayor McDowell who "in contrast to the outright negligence or vacillation shown by some authorities in other cities during this 'Red Summer,' displayed forthright courage and impartial action in handing the riots."<sup>101</sup> In the 1918 Philadelphia race riot police acted quickly to put down the riot but there was at least one incident of police brutality. A black Philadelphian, Riley Bullock, was stopped on Point Breeze Avenue by Patrolmen Roy Ramsey and John Schneider. Upon searching Bullock, they found a pocket knife and they

decided to beat him and arrest him. Bullock was in the process of entering the police station when he was shot down by a bullet. At first it appeared that Bullock was shot by a black man seen fleeing from the scene, but an investigation showed that the fatal bullet had come from Ramsey's gun. Ramsey and Schneider also arrested and beat up another black man, Preston Lewis. "It was alleged that Lewis was beaten so badly that he had to be taken to Polyclinic Hospital. There, [policeman] Schneider began striking Lewis as he lay on the operating table. [But] white officers present did nothing to stop him."<sup>102</sup> A black police officer finally intervened and the white policemen escorted Schneider out of the operating room.

Bostkin's final point deserves some consideration. He asserts that "in almost every instance, the fighting occurred within the black community." Thus the *New York Times* said the Chester riot started "when a mob of 500 whites invaded the districts inhabited by Negroes."<sup>103</sup> Yet the Chester race riot cannot be so easily described. Chester's wards such the Eighth ward where rioting began July 25, 1917, were in fact were racially mixed. [See Table 1] Furthermore all of the principals in the July 25 1917 killing of William McKinney—Arthur Thomas, Josephine Hudson, Viola Daniels, Grant Fisher and William McKinney—lived near one another.<sup>104</sup> Even though Chester's Eighth and Ninth wards were racially "integrated," rioting started when whites attacked black homes on or near West Third Street<sup>105</sup> The Chicago race riot was triggered by the drowning of seventeen year old Eugene Williams. The black youth was swimming offshore at the foot of Twenty-Ninth Street which is in the middle of the oldest and most densely black population in Chicago. "[The beach] was used by both races... The part near Twenty-Seventh Street had by tacit understanding come to be considered as reserved for Negroes, while the whites used the part near Twenty-Ninth Street. Williams, who had entered the water at the part used by Negroes, swam and drifted south into the part used by the whites."<sup>106</sup> Other blacks entered the "white" area of the beach and fights broke out between the races. Black witnesses claimed that Williams drowned because whites on the beach were throwing stones at him and they identified one particular white man as ringleader. But the policeman at the beach refused to arrest the man. This infuriated the African Americans.<sup>107</sup> "The Negro crowd from Twenty-Ninth Street got into action and white men who came in contact with it were beaten." The 1919 Omaha race riot began downtown at the courthouse and not in the black residential area. In 1918, Philadelphia's black community in 1918 was still centered in the Thirteenth ward. The 1918 riot started outside

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of Mrs. Adella Bond's house in West Philadelphia but later spread to Philadelphia's Thirteenth ward.<sup>108</sup> In the East St. Louis riot, whites invaded the black neighborhood.

### V

In summary, it can be said that the 1917 Chester race riot is fairly typical of the civil disturbances during and after World War I. In most of these riots, whites were the aggressors. A white mob roamed West Third Street in Chester, attacking homes of African Americans. A noticeable exception to this tendency is the case of the Chicago riot where black people assaulted whites. In all of the riots, the Great Migration was a factor. It created a surge in black urban centers and racial tension due to contested housing, public services and employment. In the case of the Chester riot, Mrs. Tiny Bradford testified that whites in her husband's workplace felt threatened by his presence. All of the riots occurred in the summer, with the exception of the Omaha riot. Rumor played a prominent role in all of the riots with the exception of Omaha. In the Chester race riot, for instance, an unfounded rumor circulated that carloads of blacks from out of town were coming to aid blacks in Chester. Police brutality or police compliance with rioters also characterizes American race riots during the Great Migration as seen in the Philadelphia riot. However, on this issue, the Chester riot differs from the other riots of the era. Mayor McDowell orchestrated city police and the state police to quell the riot. Finally, Boskin claims that all the riots began within the black community. Once again the Omaha riot demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case. Even the heavily black Eighth and Ninth wards of 1917 Chester cannot be defined as the black community or "ghetto" because census records reveal that blacks lived all over Chester. In reality, African Americans and European immigrants lived and worked side by side although not always harmoniously. The rise of blacks as the dominant population group in Chester would occur decades later. Viewed within the context of other race riots during the Great Migration, the Chester 1917 race riot can be understood as part of a large national perspective. But more importantly for Pennsylvania history, the episode of the 1917 Chester race riot is a reminder of how racial injustice and troubled race relations in the twentieth century were not just characteristic of southern states but of Pennsylvania as well.

## NOTES

1. Lee E. Williams and Lee E. Williams Jr., *Anatomy of Four Race Riots: Racial Conflict in Knoxville, Elaine, Arkansas, Tulsa and Chicago, 1919–1921* (Jackson, MS: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1972) 99.
2. Richard E. Harris, *Politics and Prejudice: A History of Chester (Pa) Negroes* (Apache Junction, AZ: Relmo Publishers, 1991). (Hereafter *Politics and Prejudice*)
3. Joseph Boskin, *Urban Racial Violence* (Beverly Hills, CA: Glencoe Press, 1969) 37. (Hereafter *Urban Racial Violence*).
4. I have selected these race riots for analysis because there are significant differences between race riots during the Great Migration and those occurring in the 1960s.
5. Beamish, *Philadelphia Press*, August 8, 1917; William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970) 88.
6. Susan Greenspan, "Italians Add to County's Rich Tapestry," *News of Delaware County*, Boroughs Edition, October 5, 2005.
7. "Job 66: Italians in Philadelphia," In Record Group 13, WPA Ethnic Study Project, 1938–1941, microfilm reel 0272, page 21, Pennsylvania State Archives. (Hereafter PSA)
8. For instance see W. B. Rogers to Pennsylvania Railroad President Samuel Rea, 1916; K. N. Burley to Rea, 1916–17, Daniel Reyes to Rea, 1917. In Samuel Rea correspondence, Subject File "colored employees," MG 286, PSA.
9. Henderson H. Donald, "The Negro Migration of 1916–1918," *Journal of Negro History* 6 (October 1921): 383–498.
10. The 1920 Census is used here for approximating the racial and ethnic composition of Chester circa 1917.
11. Ibid; John Morrison McLarnon, "Ruling Suburbia: A Biography of the McClure Machine of Delaware County, Pennsylvania," Ph'd dissertation, two volumes, University of Delaware, 1997, Volume 1, 121. (Hereafter *Ruling Suburbs*.)
12. Robert F. O'Neill, "Legendary Pocket of Vice in Chester Is Now a Parking Lot," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 18, 1993.
13. *Ruling Suburbs*, Vol. 1, 157.
14. Employee statistics for the Keystone Paving and Construction Company of Chester are taken from United States Department of Labor, Division of Negro Economics, *Negro Migration in 1916–17*. (Washington, GPO, 1919) Reprint 1969 by Negro Universities Press: 157. (Hereafter *Negro Migration*).
15. Ibid: 148.
16. Ronald W. Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor At General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923–60* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 21.
17. There is a discrepancy about Tiny Bradford's birthplace. In the 1920 census, her home state is given as Georgia, while in an oral history interview she claims to be from Florida. Tiny Bradford interview by John Turner, December 2, 1976, Tape 3. In Manuscript Group 409, *Oral History Collection, Oral History Project: Chester Black Experience*, PSA.
18. Chester Historical Preservation Committee, *Images of America: Chester*. (Arcadia Publishing Company: Charleston, SC, 2004) 16.

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19. Chester Historical Preservation Committee: 18; "Shipbuilding Plant Ready," *Chester Times*, July 12, 1917; *Politics and Prejudice*, 19, 61.
20. "Seaboard Transfer Means Much to Chester," *Chester Times*, June 11, 1917; "Chester Shipbuilding Co. Acquired by Great Interests," *Chester Times*, June 6, 1917; "Shipyards on Delaware Needs Many More Workers," *Chester Times*, August 7, 1917.
21. 1920 U.S. Census for Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.
22. "Shipbuilding Plant Ready," *Chester Times*, July 12, 1917; *Politics and Prejudice*, 19, 61.
23. "Appendix: Negro Migration in the North," In: *Negro Migration*, 157.
24. Tiny Bradford interview.
25. Editorial, "The Negro Problem," *Chester Times*, August 1917.
26. *Ruling Suburbs*, 122.
27. George M. Thomas to Roy Nash, 25 September 1917, *NAACP Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also *Ruling Suburbs*, 508.
28. James Brown interview by John J. Turner, 27 March 1977, Tape 5, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project*, PSA.
29. "Victim of Negro Thugs," *Chester Times*, March 9, 1917; "Two Holdups and a Robbery," *Chester Times* March 10, 1917; "Negro Thug is Convicted," *Chester Times*, March 16, 1917.
30. "Disturbing Element," *Chester Times*, July 5, 1917.
31. "Held Captive by Negroes: Young White Woman and Her Escort Victims of Highway Thugs on Concord Road," *Chester Times*, July 9, 1917.
32. "Foreman Shot to His Death," *Chester Times*, July 16, 1917; "Search for Negro Slayer," *Chester Times*, July 17, 1917; "Negro Slayer is Sentenced," *Chester Times*, Jan. 2, 1918.
33. "Negroes Stab to Death Young William McKinney," *Chester Times*, July 25, 1917; "The Murder of McKinney," *Chester Times*, December 18, 1917; "Conviction of Thomas," *Chester Times*, December 19, 1917.
34. "The Murder of McKinney."
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37. "City Needs More Police," *Chester Times*, July 10, 1917.
38. "Another Murder," *Chester Times*, July 25, 1917.
39. *Negro Migration*, 132.
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41. "Grim Particulars of Disorderly Street Scenes," *Chester Times*, July 26, 1917
42. Ibid.
43. "Wild Scenes of Disorder," *Chester Times*, July 30, 1917. *Negro Migration*, 132.
44. "Wild Scenes of Disorder."
45. *Ruling Suburbs*, Vol. 1, 125.

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48. "Wild Scenes of Disorder."
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50. "Wild Scenes of Disorder." Tiny Bradshaw interview. "Annual Report of Troop C."
51. "Jury Acquits Charles Lucas," *Chester Times*, October 18, 1917.
52. "Wild Scenes of Disorder." "Racial Outbreak in Control of Municipal Authorities," *Chester Times*, July 28, 1917; "Inquest in Murder Case," *Chester Times*, September 1, 1917; *Politics and Prejudice*, 12.
53. "Wild Scenes of Disorder."
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55. "Many Colored Men Depart," *Chester Times*, July 28, 1917.
56. Tiny Bradford interview.
57. "Sheriff's Proclamation," *Chester Times*, July 27, 1917.
58. Tiny Bradshaw interview.
59. "Bullets Drop Colored Men," *Chester Times*, July 28, 1917; "Colored Victim Dies," *Chester Times*, July 30, 1917.
60. "Mayor Satisfied With Conditions," *Chester Times*, July 28, 1917.
61. "Racial Outbreak in Control."
62. "Colored Man and White Youth Shot to Death," *Chester Times*, July 30, 1917.
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64. Annual Report of Troop C."
65. "Patrolman Shot and Killed on the Street," *Chester Times*, August 28, 1917; "Police find Gun That Killed Padgett," *Chester Times*, August 30, 1917.
66. "Alleged Rioters Under Heavy Bail," *Chester Times*, July 25, 1917; "Change at City Hall," *Chester Times*, August 1, 1917; "Good Order is Maintained," *Chester Times*, August 1, 1917. "Mayor and Chief Receive a Warning," *Chester Times*, July 30, 1917.
67. *Politics and Prejudice*, 12; The *Philadelphia Tribune* in an editorial also credited McDowell, saying "only a firm stand on the part of the Mayor saved the Day. "Riot at Our Door," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 28, 1917.
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82. "Police Authorities Investigating Riots," *Chester Times*, August 4, 1917.
83. "Riot Victim Buried Today," *Chester Times*, July 30, 1917.
84. "Grand Jury Rushes Work." "Police Authorities Investigating Riots," *Chester Times*, August 4, 1917.
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86. Boskin, 37.
87. Malcolm McLaughlin, "Reconsidering the East St. Louis Riot of 1917," *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002):187.
88. V. P. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," in Joe William Trotter and Eric Ledell Smith, eds. *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives* (Harrisburg: PHMC and Penn State Press, 1997) 319.
89. Orville D. Menard, "Tom Dennison, the *Omaha Bee*, and the 1919 Omaha Race Riot," *Nebraska History* 68 (1989):158–159. Lawrence H. Larson and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 169. (Hereafter *The Gate City*.)
90. *Race Riot*, 35–37.
91. *Urban Racial Violence*, 37.
92. "Wild Scenes of Disorder."
93. "Racial Outbreak in Control," There was a rumor that "another white man had been shot in the stomach while standing at Third and Fennel Streets. An investigation disclosed the fact that a number of shots had been fired but none of the bullets hit their mark." See "Wild Scenes of Disorder." It was also rumored "that a colored man and a white woman had been murdered on the Fair Grounds.

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Soon a large crowd headed for the grounds only to find everything was in order." See "Grim Particulars."

94. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," 319.
95. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1968) 26. *Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1919.
96. Elliot M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 44. *The Gate City*, 169.
97. *Urban Racial Violence*, 37.
98. McLaughlin, "Reconsidering the East St. Louis Riot of 1917," 188.
99. Menard, "Tom Dennison," 158-159.
100. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," 320.
101. *Politics and Prejudice*, 12; *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 28, 1917.
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105. *Politics and Prejudice*, 52.
106. *The Negro in Chicago*: 4.
107. *The Negro in Chicago*: 4, 109.
108. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," 319.