

Task 1: Research a biography using the following databases: Ancestry Library, Chronicling America, Kentucky Digital Newspapers, and Newspapers.com

Research for professors and graduate interns

Create a folder for the student in the Google Drive under Documenting Racial Violence in Kentucky

Show students how to log into Ancestry Library, Chronicling America, Kentucky Digital Newspaper Program, and Newspapers.com.

or the), that is preferable because it removes any copyright worries.

Introduce students to Jennifer Hootman's library research guide, [Documenting Racial Violence in Kentucky](#). It contains links to tools that will help you reconstruct the events of the lynching and find out as much as possible about the victim.

Introduce students to the Tuskegee Institute News Clipping File, the microfilm collection with five reels dedicated to newspaper accounts of lynching.

Research for undergraduate interns

Identify individuals who have not yet been researched. The [project spreadsheet can be found here](#). It has been drawn from the Louisville *Courier-Journal* based on Dr. George Wright's research.

Identify 3 – 5 people you will work on this semester. One easy way to choose is to look for people in the county in which you grew up or in neighboring counties. Please color code the sheet to show bios that are in progress and completed. There is a "Researcher" column on the right side of the spreadsheet where you can put your name to claim an individual.

Read newspaper coverage carefully, considering how racial stereotypes and the interests of the white community shaped the accounts. Look for words that commonly appear, such as fiend, brute, rapist, savage, innocent, outrage, and Judge Lynch. Note: as you are doing your research, you should get in the habit of saving images of your sources by clipping the articles and downloading them to your Google Drive folder.

For biographical information on your individual, Ancestry.com (available for free through UK Libraries and through most public libraries) is definitely your best starting point. Through this platform, you can find census data, death records, Find a Grave information, and a variety of other useful sources. Maybe you can find a city guide or directory.

Doing this research is like doing detective work. You have to be willing to try many options. Say the person's name out loud. Can you imagine alternative spellings? Play with expanding the date out or narrowing it in. Don't just limit your searches to Kentucky. Often these events were being reported outside the state. If you are not having any luck, try searching generic terms like "Colored," "Negro," "mob," "lynch," along with references to the place where the events occurred.

Try to clip at least five articles. Save the articles in PNG or JPG format. These formats are easier to upload to the Wordpress side.

Many articles were posted on the “wire” and were reprinted exactly as they were originally written. This means that a newspaper in Wisconsin will have the exact same article as a newspaper in western Kentucky. There’s no need to print these articles more than once. You can make a note to yourself that the story of the racial violence was printed across the United States.

Brief summary of writing biographies

In this task, students have two goals to accomplish – answer the journalist questions and fill in the biography template. The journalist questions help students look for the facts and help them cut through the racially biased language. The first paragraph of the biography always speaks to the personal information of the victim. It focuses on family connections, work, residential location, and amount of education.

In the second paragraph, the student focuses on the lynching incident. Providing as much detail as possible, the student describes what happened to the extent that this is knowable and verifiable. The student also keeps track of the ways the newspaper depicted the victim and the incident. Many newspapers blamed the victim for the lynching and described the lynching as part of the normal judicial process. Prejudicial language is tagged for the transcription side of the archive.

Close scrutiny is paid to the tense the student uses to write the biography. Posted biographies avoid passive language, such as “the victims were lynched” or “the victims was taken from the jail.” Instead, the editorial team corrects biographies so that they say, “a mob gathered in front of the victim’s house” or “a mob stormed the jail and kidnapped the victim.”

Student draft and revise their biographies until they are satisfied with the final product. Then students submit the draft to me using the [biography template](#). They also submit their information to the mapping intern.