

of the homicidal incident, had to be able to be read sequentially without interruption. An especially valuable feature of this data set is its extraordinary length. To make the data set continuous, the dates prior to 1900 had to be able to be read as sequential dates, as dates which identified the day of the week, and the day and the month.

Dates remained critical identifiers, and as such needed to be able to be read sequentially in Access, to be retrievable as dates in Excel, to be able to be used for time series analysis in SPSS, and to be retrievable as specific dates. Dates had to be transferable into other statistical packages. And the dates had to be capable of being linked to historical events and dates in other data sources and time series.

Reform governments took office at particular times, with the goal of reducing corruption in government. Hopefully there are a sufficient number of dates in the data set to support a research design comparing case progression through stages of legal decision tracking when different political regimes were in power: for example, time from incident or arrest to coroner's decision, to grand jury, to trial and sentence, or execution, in 1885-1900, in comparison to 1910-1925.<sup>23</sup>

#### CODING PROTOCOLS FOR RACE OF VICTIM AND DEFENDANT

Classifications according to race are at best problematic. The rules for racial classification changed during the time period and within the data set itself. There was no consistency among contemporaneous commentators. Many adopted the term Negro, which appeared more frequently later in the data set.<sup>24</sup> In the earlier years "colored" ("col.") is the most frequently used terms for Blacks.<sup>25</sup> The United States Census changed its method of classification of race and ethnic origin several times during the period.<sup>26</sup> The

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curate dates and data on location of homicide. Similarly, family homicides or incidents of domestic violence can now be analyzed in terms of day of the week, or month. Were people more likely to get drunk and kill on a Saturday, or at the end of the month, or on payday?

<sup>23</sup> See Derral Cheatwood, *Capital Punishment for the Crime of Homicide in Chicago: 1870-1930*, 92 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 843 (2002) (forthcoming in this volume).

<sup>24</sup> Towards the end of the period "colored" was replaced by "negro," although not consistently. Occasionally there will be a reference to "half breed." The classifications used by the police did not follow the U.S. Census categories for race and ethnicity during the period. Nor did they follow the terminology of the Chicago Crime Commission or other contemporaneous studies of crime which addressed crime and race, or crime and ethnicity. In this dataset "colored" and "negro" were both coded as African American under ethnicity and as black under race.

<sup>25</sup> In this publication, different researchers use different terms for these racial categories. In this Introduction, the term blacks is used to refer to those victims and defendants designated "colored" or "negro" in the dataset.

<sup>26</sup> The term "negro" actually appears for the first time in the 1930 census. In the 1890,

designations of race in the data set were coded at face value as they appeared in the police files. A number of contemporaneous commentators have noted that white police officers were reluctant or unwilling to enter some black neighborhoods, especially during times of racial conflict.<sup>27</sup>

For example, the previously listed case, No. 310, refers to the defendant and victim as “colored.” During this period the assumption is that the police department is entirely white, or “European,” and dominated by the Irish. Large discrepancies in homicide rates for race have emerged in the analyses of rates of homicide among “European immigrants” and “colored” victims and defendants.<sup>28</sup> If these racial and ethnic identifications are robust, the discrepancies are striking. They may also reflect changes in police practices or discontinuities in reporting of crimes by race in different periods of time. The accuracy and scope of the data on racial differences in this data set will be the occasion for much future discussion.

Importantly, these records contain information about the progress of cases through the stages of legal decision making. If a person was arrested, the record includes the name of the defendant, the date of the arrest, and often the name of the arresting officer. The record does not usually indicate the charge. The place of the arrest is typically listed as the precinct station, even if the apprehension occurred on the street or elsewhere. The inclusion of precinct is valuable for researchers interested in neighborhood patterns

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1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses the distinction is between “white” and “black” with the additional of “mulatto” and other “mixed” categories. Chinese, Japanese, and Indian also appear in all four censuses, with the addition of an “other” category in 1910 and 1920. “The separation of the US population into a dichotomy based on skin color (white and non-white) is perhaps the most enduring theme reflected in the census classifications of race examined in this article. See Sharon M. Lee, *Racial Classifications in the US Census: 1890-1900*, 16 *ETHNIC AND RACIAL STUDIES* 75, 78, 81 (1993). See also, MELISSA NOBLES, *The Tables Present Plain Matters of Fact: Race Categories in the U.S. Census*, in *SHADES OF CITIZENSHIP: RACE AND THE CENSUS IN MODERN POLITICS* (2000) (especially Ch. 2).

<sup>27</sup> Consider, for example, the following comment by a knowledgeable observer:

Notoriously certain police departments are anything but complete and accurate in their reports on crimes of violence when Negroes are both the perpetrators and the victims. Thus an entirely distorted picture of a local situation may emerge, and this is particularly serious because it is entirely possible that there may be a real improvement in policing at the very time when the statistics show an increase in crime. The old regime that was more concerned with brushing the dirt under the carpet than it was with repressing crime, which may have made in the statistics a much better showing than the administration that is frankly and honestly trying to remedy the situation and that recognizes that its first obligation is to bring the truth out into the open.

ERNST W. PUTTKAMMER, *ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL LAW* 53 (1953).

<sup>28</sup> For an illuminating, detailed and careful analysis of the changes in homicides by and among African Americans up to 1910, based upon this dataset, see Jeffrey S. Adler, *The Negro Would Be More than An Angel to Withstand such Treatment—African American Homicide in Chicago: 1875-1910* in *LETHAL IMAGINATION—VIOLENCE AND BRUTALITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY* 295-314 (Michael V. Bellisiles, ed., 1999).



and in differences between police practices in different parts of the city. Most cases include a number for police precinct.<sup>29</sup> Further dispositions after arrest are frequently included: for example, the date of the appearance before the coroner, the coroner's disposition, date of the grand jury decision, the trial date, the name of the trial court judge and the date of disposition at trial, and whether the defendant was sent to prison. The term of years is not often recorded, perhaps because the typical sentence for murder was for an indefinite term, or for life. If a death sentence was imposed, that was recorded.<sup>30</sup>

For the great majority of cases, the victims and defendants had no racial identification, and were coded white, with ethnic identification listed as "European." European whites were the dominant social group.<sup>31</sup> During this period the census classified according to immigration status, and whether or not a person's parents or grandparents were foreign born. The homicide records do not use that category. Much of the contemporary analysis also focused on whether people were recent immigrants, on immigration patterns, on whether or not a person's parents were "foreign born," not surprisingly since immigration patterns drastically changed the demographic composition of the city. All racial identifications other than white or black, for example, Chinese or Indian, were sparse to the point of non-existence.<sup>32</sup> The police records occasionally included the name of the hospital where the victim was taken. If the victim was identified as "colored" and taken to a segregated hospital that could be an additional check on cod-

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<sup>29</sup> There were several reorganizations of the police department during this long period, increasing the number of precincts and redrawing the boundaries. This is another fruitful area for additional research: how the history of the police department itself is reflected in this dataset.

<sup>30</sup> The defendant file indicates 80 persons were executed. The SCDI identifies more than 100 death sentences imposed, with 73 death sentences being carried out. *See* discussion of verification of death sentences and executions in Cheatwood, *supra* note 23.

<sup>31</sup> The criminal justice system was overwhelmingly male and white, although the social workers and social reformers who participated in the activities of the municipal court included many prominent women. Women were very active as researchers in the Progressive era. For example, the extensive and detailed crime statistics in the 1915 Chicago City Council Report were compiled by Miss Edith Abbott, Ph.D. Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. 1915 CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL REPORT, *supra* note 168, at 17. The criminal justice system was also probably dominated by whites who were of English, German or Irish heritage, since these were the groups which dominated the political process. There was a great deal of social discrimination against Italians and Eastern Europeans.

<sup>32</sup> Race of victim was coded for 11,268 cases, with 65 victims being listed as "Asian," and 243 coded "other." The number of blanks for race of victim was only 63 cases, and recoding could reduce that number. Race of defendant was coded for 8,747 cases in the Defendant File. A total of 40 defendants were recorded as "Asian," and 140 as "other." Some duplicates are included in these numbers.

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The design of the quantitative data collection was to identify basic data of interest to criminologists, legal scholars, and historians. These data points included quantitative information on the demographics of victims and defendants, outcome variables, dates for judicial disposition, basic data on the circumstances of the crime and string files with brief verbal descriptions of circumstances and relationships. The flexibility of the data processing programs currently available allowed for these goals to be accomplished simultaneously in widely available data processing programs. Subsequent researchers will be able to create additional variables, or recode and combine the small number of variables created here. The present form of the data allows for many future iterations, and for the incorporation of information from other archives.

