# and Blacks IMAGE OF BLACKS IN THE WHITE PRESS in Champingn - Urbana, Illinois

Rhonda Payne December 20, 1988 U.P. 199M Prof. R. Mattson

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The topic of this paper is the image of blacks as portrayed and black white press specifically in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. by the is basically how the newspapers of this town portray The scope stereotype blacks as a specific ethnic group in America. I Οľ intend to show the changes in the viewpoints that the press had blacks over a 63 year period. The methodology I employed of involved searchin through several newspapers from the Champaign-Urbana area intermittently from 1925 to 1988. The newspapers I used are as follows; Champaign News Gazette, Urbana Daily The Daily Illini, Illinois Times and the Plain Truth. Courier, The Champaign News Gazette, Urbana Daily Courier and The Daily are papers that were owned by and employed whites as Illini to the Illinois Times and Plain Truth which were papers opposed the blacks in this community. In using papers of the run by white and black persuasion, I was able to compare and contrast the views held by both parties of blacks.

For each newspaper, with the exception of The Daily Illini, Times and the Plain Truth, I looked at 1925(pre-war & Illinois pre-depression era), 1968-69 and 1988. I decided to use a 67 year period in which to compare my material so that I would have broad framework as a reference thereby enabling me to see how perspectives changed more effectively than I could if I had used reference. In outlining my paper, I decided to more narrow 1968-69 and 1988 respectively then I will summarize 1925, the years used then I will draw conclusions compare/contrast material I found and ultimately summarize my based upon the findings.

1925. Nineteen hundred twentyfive on average was a stable

year for America, not too much was happening. When looking at terms of articles on blacks, it was the press in 1925in interesting to find that first of all there weren't too many articles to begin with and second the articles that I did find portrayed blacks in a negative manner, relative to today. The two articles that ľ will use sound basically the same. One article that l used was taken from the February 2, 1988 Champaign News Gazette and it was titled,"Hang Negro For Woman's Death". The second article came from the January 6, 1925 Urbana Daily Courier and was titled, "Negro Cause of Panic In Two Hospitals". All the articles I found on blacks or "negroes" in 1925 came from these two papers. When I looked through The Daily Illini I couldn't find any articles and the Illinois Times and the Plain Truth had not been established yet. The first article titled, "Hang Negro For Woman's Death", was basically about a man or "negro" who was hung for killing a woman three years prior to his hanging. The second article was basically about a negro who just appeared in two different hospitals (Robert Burns & Garfield Park) and terrorized patients and used shoes as weapons and escaped with three watches. The his article also states how "scores of police and citizens organized posses and made a systematic search hunt for the negro". First, these articles share a common theme which is negroes committing Not only do these people seem to commit crimed but crimes. they are commonly referred to as "negroes". The problem with theme of these articles is obvious. Blacks in the 1920's the weren't considered important enough to write about. Second if were mentioned in the paper, they were committing crimes. they This type of action led to the reinforcement of negative attitudes towards blacks or "negeoes" as it was commonly used at this point in time. As for the term negro, that is just a sign Negro stems from the word Negroid which is of the times. defined as: of or pertaining to or designating a major ethnic division of the human species whose members are characterized by brown to black pigmentation and often by tight curled hairm thick lips (879:The American Heritage broad noses and Dictionary). Even though it may appear that an empirical definition of Negro/Negroid may justify being labeled as one, alot of blacks don't really like being called "negro" just because it reminds them of the past and all the evils associated with it. When reading through the newspapers in order to find articles on blacks, I found a myriad of articles that didn't pertain to blacks. Strangely enough though the articles that weren't about blacks didn't state the ethnicity of the group they were about but somehow one knows that they were about should I say Caucasians. It is obvious that the whites or articles about negroes had to stand out just because there were so few among an innumerable amount of articles not pertaining to blacks.

<u>1968-69.</u> Nineteen hundred sixtyeight and sixtynine was a time of radical change. The white papers started to realize the importance of black issues, negroes were more commonly referred to as "blacks" and blacks gained power in the press with the establishment of their own newspapers. Two newspapers runned by blacks were established. One was titled Illinois Times (established in 1949) and the Plain Truth (established in 1967). The first paper was the conservative paper and the latter was

the liberal paper of the times. The 60's were a time of political and social unrest. The death of Martin Luther King Jr. and the liberation of blacks fed the fires of racial prejudice that disrupted many black lives all over the country. For example, while thumbing through the January 15, 1969 Daily Illini, I found an article entitled, "Black Incidents". The article was basically about a fraternity man who felt as though he should express his feelings about the way blacks acted on the University of Illinois campus because he was sure others shared his feelings. He cited several incidents in which blacks apparently ousted other students (white students) from various facilities (i.e. snack bars and gymnasiums) in order to satisfy their own desires. The interesting thing about this article was the fact that I found it due to a rebuttal written in reply to it first. The rebuttal was printed in the February 1969 edition of the Plain Truth. The rebuttal was basically a black student, obviously upset by the article, expression of outrage/anger. The rebuttal attacked the person and the problem asking, "Are you ever going to stop lying so much through those gapped teeth yours.", and stating,"Look a here, gone is the negative of mannerisms of the blacks that you have been used to seeing in the past.". This article is evidence of one of the first few times that blacks were given the opportunity to defend themselves through writing. Years prior to that incident, blacks wouldn't have been able to defend themselves publicly. So, in a way, this goes to show that blacks were slowly moving away from the limitations from the past.

looking through the Illinois Times, I made a major While discovery which was, while reading it I felt so relaxed. It was if I had entered another dimension, almost like a fourth as dimension, where life as a Black American was wonderful. It was if black life mattered and was considered a relevant part of asThe Illinois Times attempted to publicize american society. black's accomplishments. The topics of discourse in this paper were black men and women as role models for black youths and other peers. Two articles that I found, for example, were about the positive aspects of the lives of two black men. One article from the February 10, 1969 Illinoia Times was simply titled, "Candidate". It was about Marshall Britt, a man from Champaign, Illinois who was running for committeeman in the first precinct. He told how he planned to represent all citizens of the precinct regardless of political contacts or religious affiliations. The next article, which came from the same newspaper was about a man named Charles E. Phillips. This article basically discussed his accomplishments, a souple of which are: founder and President of the Negro Business League and he was State Chairman of the Republican Party in Illinos through two national campaigns. Overall it seems as though the Illinois Times is a paper that attempts to show that the secret of black's success is strong organization through vision and thought.

The next newspaper I looked at was the Champaign News Gazette. While thumbing through this paper, I found an article from an April 1969 edition entitled, "Plan Black Homecoming For Thursday.". The title speaks for itself. It was nice to see something of a positive idea on blacks in the newspaper. This article is one of the few that I found that didn't deal with political, social or the economic unrest between blacks and whites. It's not even as if this type of article is extremely important-importance usually being associated with political or economic topics-it's just an article showing how blacks are starting to climb the social ladder of success and it shows how white owned newspapers are starting to pay attention to things important to the black community.

Nineteen hundred eighty-eight is a year of 1988. incredible change. Blacks are no longer referred to as negro. They are now referred to as "black" or "Afro-american". This year a black man was a candidate for the president of the United States of America. If that doesn't speak for itself, then I don't know what does. Even though a black man did run for President of the United States and there are a large number of black men in business and politics, blacks still have a long way to go. Blacks have been given rights in the U.S. that have enabled them to pull themselves up by the bootstraps but alot of the stereotypes/prejudice of the past still exist today. For example, even though more and more blacks are attending college, there is still alot of prejudice on college campuses. An article I found in "InPrint", The Daily Illini magizine was "Racism: nationwide". The article was about specific titled, racist incidences on various college campuses nationwide. According to this article, racism is back in style on college campuses. There was also and atricle in the November 9, 1988 Daily Illini titled, "Racism Cannot Be Taken Lightly", written by Monica Copeland, a black student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This article is basicly about some fraternity men committed racist acts byn acting out

demeaning skits (to blacks) to raise funds to have a pledge class retreat. This just goes to show that some people are mean and others are ignorant when it comes to sparing people's feelings and when it comes to knowing what it's like to be black Afro-american. Subjectively speaking, there is no way the οr members of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity couldn't see that their idea fun and games was a derrogatory and resentful act. As proof of a sign of the times, the fraternity was under investigation of bу the Committee on Student Organizations which eventually cleared thefraternity of racial charges and sexual discrimination. Years ago, if this has happened, I doubt very seriously that a white fraternity would have had charges brought against them because they offended some black students. The previous article can be looked at in two ways. One, it can be looked at as whites committing racist acts against blacks or it could be looked at as an article written by a black student, a black college student. A black person who has been enabled by the american political and social system to attend an institution of higher learning enabling her to ultimately compete with other people on a more professional level, a priviledge that blacks didn't have 100 years ago.

Today's newspapers aren't just filled with racist acts taking place on college campuses, they are also filled with positive accomplishments by blacks. In the March 2, 1980 edition of the Champaign News Gazette, I found an article about two black women, the first was being honored as an "Outstanding Black Woman" and the second was a sorority member who was being honored as an "Outstanding Youth". This article proves that blacks `have come a long way' in terms of how people feel and act towards them. Hopefully it's the beginning of something very big.

The history of blacks in the United States hasn't been a Blacks were `sold out' by `their own kind' or other good one. blacks for greedy and selfish reasons to whites who in turn brought them to america to be used as slaves. For 200 years blacks were violated, tortured, used and thought to be lower life that served only one purpose which was to serve. forms of It wasn't until the abolition of slavery by President Abraham Lincoln in 1865 that black's lives began to change. Although the change for the better wasn't immediate, the abolition of slavery set the wheels in motion that enabled blacks to get to today. Today blacks have the same rights and where they are priviledges as any other ethnic group in america. Blacks are still sterotyped just as many other ethnic groups are but these ignorant/spiteful beliefs are minor disturbances in the lives of blacks when compared to how they used to be treated. Granted sterotypes, prejudice and discrimination should in no way be justified it helps to know that these feelings are remnants of past problems of a greater magnitude.

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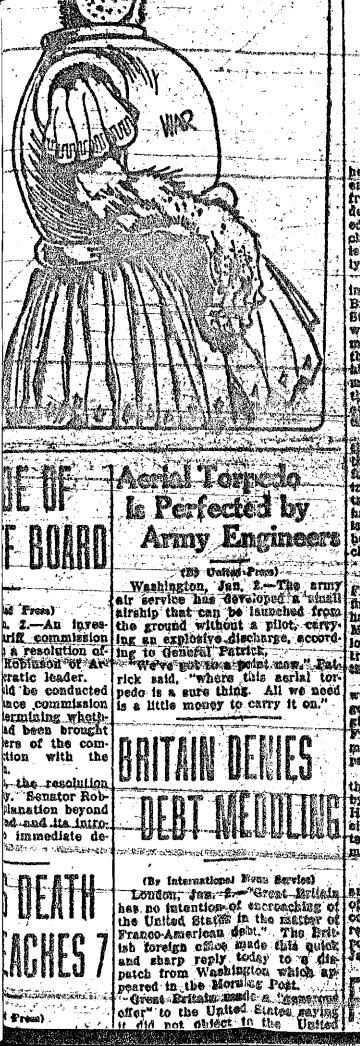
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#### (By Agroclated Press)

Wechington, Jan. 2.—Officiels here apparently see hopeful tondendes in the New Year depatches from Great Britain reparding war debts, although they have received thus far no communication declaring the willingness of the British government to approve specially induigent terms for France. —When showt is story published in London to the short that Great Britain and common the United Britain and terms more icalent then the Angle-American approve that the unit for statut in the sector state of the statement, and buildwitted the statement that the short and the statement additionality of the statement additionality of the statement

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Vovember 11, 1988 The Daily Illini Page 3

## UI student assaulted in Urbana

#### by Julie Keller

A 20-year-old University student was the victim of a sexual assault in Urbana Monday night, an Urbana Police report said.

According to the report, the student was riding her bicycle to her boyfriend's residence between 8 and 8:30 p.m. Monday when she was pulled off of her bicycle and pushed to the ground by a man on the 100 block of North Mathews Avenue.

### Police Round-up

The student reported the man then held her to the ground and fondled her. The student struggled with the man and was able to get on her bicycle and attempt to escape, the report said.

According to the report, the man caught the student again several blocks away and attacked her in an alley north of the 200 block of West Stoughton Street, Urbana. The man then sexually assaulted the student, but no rape occurred, the report said.

The student struggled with the man and was able to escape to her boyfriend's residence after hitting the man with a U-shaped bicycle lock, the report said.

The man was described as a black male in his 20s, 180 to 200 pounds. with short black hair and "scruffy" facial hair, wearing dark work pants, a crew-neck shirt and a zipper-style jacket. Racism cannot be taken light

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### Column Monica Copeland



University of Wisconsin-Madison officials are investigating a "slave auction" held by the Wisconsin chapter of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. The

newspapers say five fraternity members dressed in black Afro-style wigs and black face makeup mimicked the Jackson Five. Another member dressed as talk show host Oprah Winfrey was beaten to the cries of "bitch, bitch." After these skits the actors/slaves were auctioned off to the highest bidder.

The fraternity's president issued a statement that said: "On Oct. 20, the current ZBT pledge class held a <u>pledge auction to raise money for a pledge class</u> retreat," and the skits "were not meant in a racist manner and were certainly not intended to be offensive."

I find the skits racist, offensive and an outrage.

What makes this offensive, racist and outrageous action even more outrageous is that the fraternity doesn't even recognize it as racist.

Some reports say that this fraternity, which has several Jewish members, was the victim of anti-Semitic slurs last year. I wonder if they would consider it "offensive" if a fraternity that had mostly black members raised money by having a "Gas a Jew Night" or if they had "Spanish Inquisition Night—Torture a Jew for \$5."

I think they would be offended, and rightly so. As a matter of fact, all decent human beings should be offended and upset.

The Holocaust was an atrocity. Millions of human beings suffered and died. The memory of that tragic event should be respected and the pain inflicted upon Jewish people should never be forgotten, demeaned, belittled, understated or lampooned.

On the front page of newspapers there would be stories about the virulent anti-Semitism gripping college blacks. Political leaders would call for action. Maybe there would be protests, or interracial groups to deal with antiSemitism would be formed.

But what happened at the University of Wisconsin? When a fraternity makes fun of the pain and suffering of black Americans, where was the outcry? Where was the public outrage? Where were the political leaders and the newspaper editorials?

Wednesday, No

Why is slavery not given the same importance as the Holocaust or other historical events? Does a body wrapped in black skin have less value? That's what society always seems to be telling me. We dismiss slavery as something that happened in the past. It's over and done with. We don't have to talk about it any more. Ha, ha, ha. No hard feelings, guys.

Neither black nor white Americans are able to deal with slavery. It hits us too close to home. Millions of people were stolen from their homeland and enslaved in this country. Proud people that had great civilizations when Europe was still in the Dark Ages were treated like animals.

Africa's most valuable resource was taken. Not the weak or the old, but the young and strong. The labor of young Africans was used to build up the Americas, instead of Africa.

The bodies of millions of Africans who were thrown overboard so they would not infect the cargo are on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Countless numbers were lynched during and after slavery, and isolated reports continue today.

Slavery was not one of the more glorious pages in our country's history. We try to forget it. Or, in ZBT's case, belittle

History tells us if blacks could learn to be white we wouldn't have any problems. We have to believe "his story" because we don't know our story.

Let's take a test. When did the firs Africans land in the colonies? Who wa the first black man to die in the Revolutionary War? Who chopped down the cherry tree? If you got No. 3 right yo probably got an "A" in American his tory.

All Americans need to know that blacks and other minorities are a part of this country too.

The first Africans landed in Americ June 20, 1619, in Jamestown, Va., a yea before the Pilgrims landed at Plymout Rock, Crispus Attucks, a black man, wa one of the first fatalities of the Revolu tionary War. Black servicemen fough against racist enemies in World War 1 while serving in a segregated army Countless others have made contributions to American culture, and society Where are their names in my histor book?

History tells us that our families ar falling apart. Our story tells us of ou strong tradition of extended family Blacks do not have the same famil structure as whites because we came ou of a different experience. The auctio block separated children from their pa rents and men and women from their spouses. Slaves created families—pla cousins, aunts, uncles—and most impor tantly our churches. That's how we su vived, and just because it's not "trad tional" does not make it inferior, jus different.

All of us need to learn and respect th history and culture of others. We need t know all of our histories—black, white American Indian, Chinese, Japanes and Jewish, because all of these group make up our country.

When we know who we are, we'l stand up and say we will not be silen when these types of racial incidents han pen on our college campuses. When w know who we are we'll stand up just lik Rosa Parks did and say we aren't goin to sit in the back of the bus anymore.

And not just black students will stan up and tell the administrators at the University of Wisconsin and here that thes types of incidents will not be allowed, bu concerned whites, Hispanics, Jews and others will stand up too.

And when we stand up and say we'r not going to sit in the back of the bu anymore, we'll find out there are plent of seats in the front.



C. District Control Strength in Provide Control Strength

Wednesday, January 15, 1969

## Letters to the Editor

#### Black incidents

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To the Editor: This letter is being written at This letter is being written at 2:30 early Sunday morning. I have just returned from another inci-dent in which my efforts to do something were completely thwart ed by local Negro students. Since the beginning of the se-mester, I have been subjected to numerous instances in which black students have all but denied me my rights as a student, as a clitzen, and as a human being. Now J feel that it is my right to speak out because I'm sure I am representative of hundreds more students like my self.

self. Several recent instances have prompted the to write this letter. First, on Wednesday evening of this week, while I was playing a game of baskethall at Huff gym nasium with seven other members of my house, approximately 12 Neg or students walked onto the court so which we were playing and forced us off of it. Then, Friday evening there was that at which several black students that at which several black students that result hat an arrest and an injury took place. Lastly, this pass evening, while wo other couples, were trying to study for final exams in one of the sections of the fish multi-purpose poon, approximately 25 blacks en-they sold us we didn't have for house for the several black students the result hat an arrest and an injury took place. They for one of them. They fold us we didn't have for house singent and dancing. Just before we left are heard two of hem say that they were going the bound of the fish we then to shout out if they needed any help before we left are heard two of hem say that they were going the outer room. Needless to say, we were all shuftly correct to leave the room The haps one of the most dis-tent was that they were going the outer room. Needless to say, we were all shuftly correct to leave the room The haps one of the most dis-tent was that these negroes, both boys and girls tised profanity fu-who shuft the compared that fire-who shuft the correct and send-the where thesk, the thing tells were still be avered any help when the inter of the things that is to college we are told. Turn while a sample of the things that have occurred somewhat obscurely uring the senester. This college we are told: Turn the inter check, the hild tells is that is compared and send-ing that all of these Negroes not another were show and what has it is the were show.

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Braun column To the Editor: I refer to Mr. Braun's colum

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printed on the editorial page of the January 8 issue of The Daily Illini. The false statements which Mr. Braun bilthely repeats warrant correction. Your length limitation on letters to the editor, however, renders it impossible to do justice to Mr. Braun's crass ignorance in a letter. a letter. The very fact that Mr. Braum's "statements" found their way into print brings to mind the words, of Mr. William Zukerman in the Jew-ish Newsletter of December 1958 which, apparently, are still highly pertinent: "To this observer, nothing dem-strates more sharply the terri-bly uncanny power of modern propaganda, to control minds, s w a y emotions and brutalize

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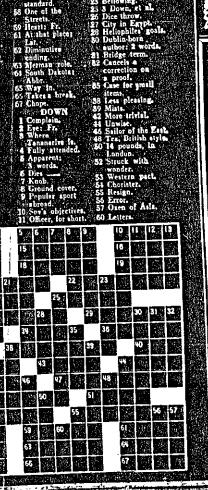
THE DAILY ILLINI

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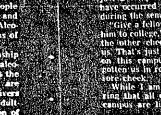


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are so holier-than-thou. Namely one, De Law, better known as Joe Somers, who is always in church, but is going with a certain lady in Dunbar Court and picks her up from work each day while his poor wife is working in his res- taurant. She is also or was going with Rever- end Asa Moore, so I think this is one of the reasons Joe is raising so much hell. Maybe	Word
the \$1,000 payoff is hush money. Have you noticed his teeth? You can imag- ine what he does in his spare time. Also he	
has used his office (court) as a haven to have affairs. He is constantly after young girls, but now that he has no real good income, his ole lady in Dunbar Court is trying to get rid	White just assume tha
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ass bigot. As always, you never play fair, sports-wise whenever a Black face is one of the players that you are playing against.	still othe the popula three Negro
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you're not hip to the fact, then you better get hipped, but fast.	degrees and fees, unre- constitutio
Yeah, we Blacks are out here on this campus, thanks to your supposedly good intentions, but we,know otherwise, and we are not going to	ment, frust many cases which creat
let you'stick your fingers up our ears, noses and a without retliating. Them days is over. Just because we are getting an opportun-	black commu
ity to go to the U of I, we are not going to let you destroy our pride and dignity as you have done in the past. It's a shame that you	Realizing to lieve that .is in fact
even used references from the Bible to fatten up your lies. How dare you!!! Don't you have any conscience?? No!! Especially you who	the black of tencion awa national la
wrote that article, T know you don't when it involves exploiting have against the Blacks.	ent to even confusion in abuse of No
You better stop listening to your ucid minded prejudiced friends, mama, papa, Senators, and others who fit the list. Next time you might	It is this power Struc
not get off so easy.	at the blac legal struc the Police
inally, hurrah for those few white brothers in the did have enough guts and conscience to	lowingvass

Plain Truth February 1969