

Some Race Related Deaths in the United States

(1955-1965)

These are cases involving violent death between the races in the South. The list is of course not complete; it is not restricted to cases involving civil rights. It is compiled from newspaper accounts, and in some instances, where cooperation could be obtained, reports from officials.

1965

- Freddie Lee Thomas (N) 9-3-65** Near Greenwood, Miss. Body found on highway. Thomas' half brother claimed victim was slain to deter voter registration efforts. Coroner's inquest ruled hit-and-run accident. No arrests.
- Thad Christian (N) 8-28-65** Near Anniston, Ala. Allegedly shot by white man while fishing. Suspect charged with murder in arrest warrant.
- Perry Smau (N) 8-27-65** Greensboro, Ala. The 87-year-old victim had voiced opposition to demonstrations. He was beaten and tongue cut out. Civil Rights groups denied complicity. Two Negro suspects in custody, one indicted on murder charge. Victim was robbed of \$26.
- Arthur James Hill (N) 8-20-65** Villa Rica, Ga. Shot during argument with whites. One white suspect held for grand jury action on voluntary manslaughter charge.
- Jonathan M. Daniels (W) 8-20-65** Hayneville, Ala. Episcopal seminarian slain after release from jail for civil rights demonstration. White man, member of prominent family, accused of shootings that killed Daniels and wounded a Catholic priest.
- 8-22-65** Suspect Tom L. Coleman, arraigned for murder and assault with intent to kill; jailed for 11 hours, released on bonds of \$10,000 and \$2,500. Grand jury brought indictment for manslaughter, and assault and battery. Defendant acquitted of manslaughter charge.
- Johnny Queen (N) 8-8-65** Fayette, Miss. White off-duty constable named in the pistol slaying, which was not connected with any arrest.
- Andrew Whatley Jr. (W) 7-29-65** Americus, Ga. Shot from passing car during racial disturbance. Two Negro men indicted by grand jury as murder suspects.
- Robert Wilder (N) 7-18-65** Ruston, La. White policeman accused in pistol slaying. Coroner's jury ruled justifiable homicide.
- Willie Brewster (N) 7-15-65** Anniston, Ala. Shot while driving home from work. Three white men indicted by grand jury on murder charges. Shooting climaxed a week of anti-Negro rallies by National States Rights Party. One of the men, Hubert Damon Strange, was convicted of second degree murder and given a ten (10) year prison sentence. All-white jury. The other two, Johnny Ira DeFries and Lewis Blevins, still face murder charges.
- James Waymers (N) 7-10-65** Allendale, S. C. White man charged with murder in shotgun slaying. Area was scene of recent civil rights demonstrations. Accused acquitted Oct. 21, 1965, after entering a plea of self-defense.
- O'Neal Moore (N) 6-2-65** Bogalusa, La. Victim was one of city's first two Negro deputy sheriffs and was shot by a white man while walking beat in Negro community. Suspect charged with murder, released on bail.
- Frederick L. Humphrey (W) 3-26-65** Hattiesburg, Miss. Shot after the victim, a constable, stopped car of Negro suspect during racial unrest. Murder charge pending.
- Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo (W) 3-25-65** Shot on Hwy. 80 between Selma and Montgomery, Ala. Detroit housewife returning to Montgomery to transport civil rights marchers. Three klansmen charged with murder.
- 10-2-65** Collie Leroy Wilkins tried for murder. Jury hung. Mistrial declared.
- 10-19-65** In a second trial Wilkins acquitted. Charges still pending against other two suspects, William O. Eaton and Eugene Thomas. All three received 10 year sentences for conspiracy to violate Federal civil rights statute. Bond set at \$10,000. The three will appeal. All-white jury.
- Rev. James Reeb (W) 3-12-65** Selma, Ala. Four white men accused in bludgeon death of white civil rights sympathizer; three indicted on murder charges. Three defendants acquitted.
- Jimmie Lee Jackson (N) 2-18-65** Marion, Ala. Slain by white state trooper as victim, according to witnesses, tried to shield his mother from beating during demonstration. No arrest. Grand jury cleared trooper, identified only by surname.

Ollie W. Shelby (N) 1-22-65

Jackson, Miss. White sheriff's deputy accused of shooting 18-year-old Negro in prison. Coroner's jury ruled justifiable homicide.

1964

Frank Morris (N) 12-10-64

Ferriday, La. Died of burns suffered when his shoe repair shop was fired by arsonists in area of racial unrest. No arrests.

Frank Andrews (N) 11-28-64

Lisman, Ala. Choctaw County. Shot in back by white sheriff's deputy. County solicitor said victim was attacking another deputy. No arrests.

Charles Sammie Marrow, Jr. (N)
10-29-64

Chattanooga, Tenn. Shot in back by a white man reportedly "to protect an attractive white waitress in a downtown restaurant." Acquitted in criminal court.

Hubert Orsby (N) 9-9-64

Near Pickens, Miss. Body of 14-year-old youth found in Big Black River wearing CORE T-shirt. Coroner's jury ruled death by accidental drowning.

James Andrew Miller (N) 8-30-64

Jackson, Ga. Shot by white man during racial flare-up. Victim had been beaten by whites a few days prior to shooting. Coroner's jury ruled slaying a case of self-defense. Shooting suspect cleared.

Billy Wayne Wallace (W) 8-9-64

Dallas, Tex. Shot during racial row in city park. Two Negroes arrested. One indicted for murder with court action pending; the other suspect was no-billed by the grand jury on same charge.

Charles E. Moore (N) 7-12-64
Henry Hezekiah Dee (N)

Meadville, Miss., near Tullulah, La. Both bodies mutilated. Recovered from Mississippi River. Had been missing since May 2, 1964. Charges against two white men dismissed without prejudice Jan. 12, 1965. Prosecution said lacked enough evidence.

Lemuel Penn (N) 7-11-64

Near Colbert, Ga. Victim was Washington, D. C., educator. Shot by whites while returning from Army reserve duty at Fort Benning, Ga. Four Klansmen arrested; three indicted for murder; two tried and acquitted. Federal indictments against six white men charging conspiracy to deprive Penn of civil rights dismissed in district court, appealed to U. S. Supreme Court.

James E. Chaney (N) 6-21-64
Andrew Goodman (W)
Michael H. Schwerner (W)

Philadelphia, Miss. Three civil rights workers slain after their release from jail. 21 white men arrested, charges dismissed by U. S. Commissioner. Federal grand jury later indicted 18 white men on felony and misdemeanor charges of conspiring to violate the victims' civil rights. Federal judge voided felony charges against 17. Misdemeanor charges pending. Justice Department is appealing the rulings. Trial of the 18th suspect pending in federal court in Atlanta.

Mrs. Johnnie Mae Chappell (N)
3-23-64

Jacksonville, Fla. Shot while walking along street during racial unrest. Young white man sentenced to 10 years in the shooting.

Louis Allen (N) 2-1-64

Liberty, Miss. Civil rights worker slain some time after testifying against a white man charged with killing another Negro. No arrests.

1963

William Kinard (W) 10-18-63

St. Augustine, Fla. Victim slain as he and two other whites drove with shotgun through Negro area. Two Negroes arrested on murder charges. Court action pending.

E. B. Bryant (W) 10-18-63

Jackson, Miss. White gas station attendant slain after squirting water from hose on Negro drinking from "white" fountain. Negro suspect charged with murder, sentenced to life imprisonment.

Virgil Ware (N) 9-15-63

Birmingham, Ala. Thirteen-year-old youth killed by two white teen-agers while riding his bicycle in suburban area following downtown church bombing. Defendants received probated seven-month sentences and a stern lecture on second-degree manslaughter charges.

Johnny Robinson (N) 9-15-63

Birmingham, Ala. Killed by police after church bombing and rioting. No arrests.

Denise McNair (N), age 11, 9-15-63
Addie Mae Collins (N) age 14
Cynthia Wesley (N), age 14
Carol Robertson (N), age 14

Birmingham, Ala. Killed while attending Sunday School by exploding bomb at church where civil rights rallies were held. No arrests.

John L. Coley (N) 9-4-63

Birmingham, Ala. Suffered fatal wounds from shotgun pellets during rioting after a race bombing. No arrests.

Andrew Lee Anderson (N) 7-17-63

Near Marion, Ark. Slain by group of white citizens and sheriff's deputies after white woman said he had molested her 8-year-old daughter. Coroner's jury ruled justifiable homicide. No arrests.

- Medgar W. Evers (N) 6-12-63** Jackson, Miss. Shot in back as he arrived home from civil rights rally. He was field secretary for NAACP. White man tried twice, but hung jury brought mistrials. Accused Byron de le Beckwith now free.
- Frank G. Link (W) 6-7-63** Lexington, N. C. Killed during rioting. Three Negroes convicted—one sentenced to serve four to seven years for second-degree murder, and two sentenced to six-month terms on charges of engaging in a riot.
- William L. Moore (W) 4-23-63** Near Attalla, Ala. Mailman from Baltimore, Md., making one-man protest march across Alabama slain by bullet. Grand jury failed to indict white suspect.
- 1962**
- Paul Guihard (W) 10-30-62** Oxford, Miss. Guihard (news reporter from France) and Gunter (local TV repairman) slain during white rioting over admission of James Meredith to University of Mississippi. No arrests.
- Ray Gunter (W)**
- Leroy Parks (W) 9-6-62** Dallas, Ga. Victim was among masked nightriders calling on a Negro woman who was charged in the slaying. Coroner's jury ruled shooting justifiable homicide. Suspect moved North after release from jail.
- Cpl. Roman Ducksworth Jr. (N) 4-9-62** Taylorsville, Miss. Shot by white policeman when the Negro refused to move to rear of interstate bus. No arrests.
- 1961**
- Eli Brumfield (N) 10-31-61** McComb, Miss. Shot by policeman during racial unrest. No arrests.
- Herbert Lee (N) 9-25-61** Liberty, Miss. Civil rights worker shot by a white state legislator. Coroner's jury ruled justifiable homicide.
- Frank Coleman Dumas (W) 6-1-61** Shot to death in his home. Preston Cobb, Jr., 15 year old Negro, found guilty of murder Aug. 16, 1961, and sentenced to die. Case retried, ending in sentence to life imprisonment. Motion for new trial pending.
- 1960**
- William Nance (N) 8-27-60** Near Winchester, Tenn. Body found in Lakeview Lake with slugs from three different guns and weighted with large rock. No arrests.
- Albert Pitts (N) 7-23-60** Monroe, La. White employer arrested, then released in the shooting of five of his employees; four died. Victims accused of making threats.
- David Pitts (N)** Records of Dist. Court, Parish of Ouachita, Monroe, La., reveal that no bill of indictment or information was ever filed.
- Ernest McPharland (N)**
- Marshall A. Johns (N)**
- Mrs. Mattie Greene (N) 5-20-60** Ringgold, Ga. Died under falling debris when her home was dynamited. No arrests.
- 1959**
- William Roy Prather (N) 11-1-59** Corinth, Miss. The 15-year-old boy was killed in anti-Negro "Halloween prank." Eight white youths charged with the slaying, six of whom were turned over to juvenile court. One indicted on manslaughter charge.
- Tommy Dwight (N) 6-13-59** Dalton, Ga. Four white men fired supposedly over the heads of a group of Negroes intending to "scare" them, but four fatal buckshots hit the 11-year-old victim. The four were indicted on charges of involuntary manslaughter. Charges reduced to misdemeanor and three of the men sentenced to serve one year. One of these permitted to serve the year outside jail.
- Jonas Causey (N) 5-10-59** Clarksdale, Miss. NAACP requested investigation and action against 15 policemen accused of the slaying. No arrests.
- Mack Charles Parker (N) 4-25-59** Poplarville, Miss. Abducted from unguarded jail cell and shot to death. No arrests.
- 1958**
- James Henry Ellison (N) 9-20-58** Chattanooga, Tenn. Shot from a passing car occupied by two white couples. No arrests.
- Ernest Hunter (N) 9-13-58** St. Mary's, Ga. Slain while in jail. White policeman accused of shooting reported that he and victim engaged in a struggle. No arrests.
- Joe Franklin Jeter Sr. (N) 9-13-58** Atlanta, Ga. Shot by white policeman who said victim was resisting arrest. Grand jury returned "no bills" on three charges.

Richard Lillard (N) 7-26-58	Nashville, Tenn. Died after a beating in local workhouse by three white guards. They were indicted on murder charges on Aug. 15, 1958. Each was acquitted on Jan. 16, 1959.
Woodrow Wilson Daniels (N) 7-1-58	Water Valley, Miss. Died of brain injury nine days after beating. White sheriff acquitted of manslaughter charge.
Willie Countryman (N) 5-25-58	Dawson, Ga. Shot in his backyard by white policeman. Federal grand jury failed to indict the policeman, who had been accused in another death one month earlier.
John Larry Bolden (N) 5-3-58	Chattanooga, Tenn. The 15-year-old boy was shot by white policeman. No court action.
James Brazier (N) 4-25-58	Dawson, Ga. Victim died a few days after beating at hands of white policemen. Federal grand jury refused to indict four accused officers.
George Love (N) 1-8-58	Ruleville, Miss. Killed by 25-man posse. No arrests.
1957	
Willie V. Dunigan (N) 11-18-57	Lomax, Ala. Shot by sheriff's deputies outside his home. Deputies were looking for person(s) who earlier wounded another deputy. No arrests.
Charles Brown (N) 6-25-57	Near Yazoo City, Miss. White man charged with shooting the victim, a young airman, who was visiting at the home of the suspect's sister.
James Hollis (N) 2-3-57	Griffin, Ga. The 17-year-old boy was slain and a white housewife wounded by husband who found them together partially clothed in his home. A grand jury failed to indict the husband.
1956	
Mrs. Maybelle Mahone (N) 12-5-56	Near Molena, Ga. Shot by white man for "sassing" him. The 71-year-old suspect was first given a life sentence on a murder charge, Aug. 1, 1957, but was found "not guilty for reasons of insanity" the following March 21, 1958.
Mrs. Bessie McDowell (N) 6-14-56	Andalusia, Ala. Killed by white father and son, who were indicted on first and second degree murder counts.
Rev. C. H. Baldwin (N) 4-22-56	Near Huntsville, Ala. Victim struck by heavy rock. White man convicted of second-degree manslaughter, sentenced to 12 months at hard labor.
Dr. Thomas H. Brewer (N) 2-18-56	Columbus, Ga. Prominent physician and NAACP leader shot by white man. Grand jury refused to indict.
Milton Russell (N) 1-21-56	Belzoni, Miss. Burned to death in his home. Whites suspected of foul play. No arrests.
Richard King (N) 1-6-56	Eufaula, Ala. White man given life sentence for pistol slaying. He was later paroled, violated his parole and "might be back in prison," according to Barbour County's court clerk.
Edward Duckworth (N) 1-56	Raleigh, Miss. White man reportedly admitted the shooting but claimed self defense. Suspect died of heart ailment while awaiting grand jury action.
1955	
James E. Evanston (N) 12-24-55	Near Drew, Miss. Body of school principal found in Long Lake with neck broken and no water in lungs to indicate drowning. Negro press called it civil rights slaying. Death officially ruled suicide.
Clinton Melton (N) 12-3-55	Glendora, Miss. White suspect was indicted on a murder charge and later acquitted.
John Earl Reese (N) 10-22-55	Near Longview, Tex. The 16-year-old boy died of injuries from shotgun blast into cafe from a moving car. Two whites indicted for murder, one given a five year suspended sentence.
Emmett Till (N) 8-28-55	LeFlore County, Miss. The 14-year-old boy from Chicago was slain after "smart-alec" talk to a Mississippi white woman. Body found in a river, beaten and shot. Two white men indicted for murder and acquitted.
Lamar Smith (N) 8-17-55	Brookhaven, Miss. Victim was shot down on lawn of county courthouse in broad daylight. A grand jury failed to indict three accused white men.
Rev. George W. Lee (N) 5-7-55	Belzoni, Miss. Killed by a shotgun blast from a car carrying several whites. No arrests.