

# *The “Camp Grant Massacre” in the Historical Imagination*

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## HISTORICAL TEXTS AND HISTORICAL IMAGINATIONS

Remembering and recording the past is fundamental to the human experience. From the chronicles of Herodotus to the origin stories of the Hopi, humans have long found the need to understand how the moments of the past have shaped the present (Vaughn 1985). History, as the attempt to construct a narrative of past events, is an interpretive exercise fashioned from bits of empirical data, memories, conjectures, ideas, and arguments. As the stories of the past enter a community’s collective memory, it becomes part of the historical imagination, the shared mental images a people possess of the past (Lowenthal 1985: 213). Novels or ancient myths may nourish the historical imagination, as it may be grounded in scholarly research or family photo albums. When history is written down, the text itself becomes a kind of cultural artifact that can help us excavate not simply the past as it happened, but also the present in which the moments of the past were imagined. Thus historical writings often tell us as much about the world of the author as it does the world depicted in the text.

That history is imagined and not simply a duplicate of past events challenges several centuries of Western historiography, which has proceeded as if the past is wholly concrete and knowable. Nicholas Thomas has written that the “orthodox historical imagination” habitually fails “to acknowledge that versions of the past are always recreated for the here and now, are always politically inflected, partial, and interested” (Thomas 1991: 298). Such statements have now been amply borne out through case studies that have illustrated the intentional and unintentional manipulations of history to myriad social and political ends (e.g., Kammen 1991; Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996; Plumb 1970; Schmidt and Patterson 1995; Wallace 1996). Conceiving of history as a manufactured object does not so much support an extreme relativist

position, as speculate that if a “real” past has happened, such an occurrence may be unknowable so long as it depends on subjective human perceptions. However, even as scholars are coming to recognize that a historical text is necessarily a product of its broader social context, it remains difficult to recognize when history has been massaged to better fit the zeitgeist of the political present.

In this paper I examine the use of numbers in the historical texts of the “Camp Grant Massacre” to illustrate that even numbers can be encoded with political meanings. The Camp Grant Massacre is an ideal subject for this analysis because it involves what at first seems to be a single discrete event, which dozens of authors have written about for over a century. My own partiality in this endeavor is to reveal how historical texts represent not just a range of possible stories, but a struggle of power and politics to elevate some version of the past while diminishing competing claims. I am also deeply concerned with trying to understand the massacre itself, its meaning and consequences, and part of that effort entails better discerning the biases of the historical record. Although no memorial marks its ground and no holiday has been proposed to remind us of what passed, the Camp Grant Massacre remains a salient moment in Southwestern history in general and for living Western Apaches in particular (see Allen 1995; Bowden 1984; Valkenburgh 1948; Volante 1982). Not only is it important to keep learning from this heartrending event, it is as equally crucial to appreciate that the extant corpus of historical texts does not provide an immutable window to what went before. Realizing that western historical texts may not be the only “true” history opens up novel ways of knowing the past, such as collating oral histories of native peoples, whose own understanding of history has largely been dismissed as unreliable, subjective, and unfixed (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Vansina 1985). Yet if western historical texts suffer from the same disorders, then perhaps both ways of knowing the past might be given if not equal skepticism, at least equal consideration.

### THE “CAMP GRANT MASSACRE”

Hayden White (1973) has argued that historians do not simply reveal history; they also create it through the processes of transforming a chronicle of events into an intelligible narrative prose. In a given study, the historian selects a particular arrangement of events, choosing what to include and exclude, highlight and attenuate. However, White posits, these decisions are not self-evident and even answering the most elementary historical questions—of what? who? when? why? how?—demands a concentrated effort to compose a cohesive and logical account. This, nevertheless, does not mean that the past is an infinitely plastic resource, as our interpretations of the past may be constrained by the actual progression of events as well as socially bound mechanism that dictate how the past may be conjured (Appadurai 1981, 2001).

The historical texts of the Camp Grant Massacre tell many different stories, varying by the authors' choices of tone, genre, events, characters, dates, and numbers. After examining archives, libraries, and the Internet, I was able to locate 68 texts<sup>1</sup> written between 1871 and 2003 that include a narrative of what has been uniformly called, the "Camp Grant Massacre" of 1871.<sup>2</sup> The number of published texts have increased over time, as 21 pieces were written between 1871 and 1937 and at least 44 were made available between 1938 and 2003 (Figure 1). The texts constitute a range of print media, including newspaper articles, books, book sections, websites, and various kinds of manuscripts (Table 1). Although this group undoubtedly does not comprise the entire body of literature on the Camp Grant Massacre, following concerted searches at libraries and archives,<sup>3</sup> at the very least, this list represents the broad range of available texts. These writings can be seen to shift from news stories, to historical analyses, to a miscellany of analyses, news, and fictional accounts. In the time immediately following the events, the historical texts were largely "news" items, that is, stories about the event either from eyewitnesses or reporters. Although William Oury, a participant in the massacre, presented one version of the events to the Society of Arizona Pioneers<sup>4</sup> in 1885, the first in depth analysis by a professional historian may be George Hammond's (1929) *The Camp Grant Massacre: A Chapter in Apache History*. Hammond's small booklet ushered in a period of more objective historical investigations combined with a number of newspaper reports rehashing the massacre. The intentional transformation of reality to fancy, non-fiction to fiction, began with Don Schellie's (1968) *Vast Domain of Blood*, an invented narrative based on in-depth research. In the last three decades, readers have seen an increasing number of texts belonging to a range of genres, including newspaper articles (e.g., Bowden 1984; Pavillard 1971), magazine commentaries (e.g., Alexander 1969; Banks 2002), academic treatments (e.g., Langellier 1979; Record 2000), novels (e.g., Browning 2000; Kitzmiller 1997), and now, even websites (Alonzo 2003; Sheldon 1998).

Although these narratives differ quite dramatically in particular details, the typical story begins in the winter of 1871 when a group of Pinal and Aravaipa Apaches settled near Camp Grant on the San Pedro River in an apparent truce with the U.S. military (Figure 2). Despite this peaceable settlement, depredations continued throughout southeastern Arizona and many residents believed the Apache groups living near Camp Grant were responsible. On April 28, 1871, a group of nearly 150 men, Anglo-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Tohono O'odham,<sup>5</sup> set off under stealth with the intent to make war with the Apaches at Camp Grant. This group was composed of some of the most eminent men in southern Arizona, including Tucson's first Mayor and the "chief" of San Xavier.<sup>6</sup> After two days of near constant travel, the outfit arrived at the Apache ranchería before the sun rose above the nearby Galiuros Mountains. In less than a half hour, the assailants murdered—raping and mutilating some—around 100 Apaches, mostly women and children. Nearly 30 Apache children were taken captive. Only

seven people survived the massacre, including the leader Eskiminzin, who was able to flee with his infant daughter. Although the Tucsonans returned home to great celebration, the reaction in the eastern United States was revulsion. Less than a year later, 100 men were put on trial, charged with 108 indictments for murder, and three misdemeanors. The trial lasted over a week, but focused almost entirely on previous Apache raiding in Arizona Territory. Judge Titus instructed the jury that based on this evidence they only had to decide if the defendants acted *defensively* or by *malice*—in other words, if the massacre could be justified. After nineteen minutes of deliberation, the jury read a verdict of “not guilty.” And here, most typically, the story of the Camp Grant Massacre ends.

### THE POLITICS OF NUMBERS

Numbers are often thought of as raw “facts” that exist in the real world as concrete unassailable objects. Because counts and figures seem to have an absolute nature that persists independent of the writer and reader, numerals are imbued with a distinct sense of authority. In historical texts numbers are often regarded as a type of bare “empirical data.” In historical research “empirical data” are the selected elements of a chronicle that form the foundation for claims of historical truths. While these data may involve biography (she had “red hair”) or geographical descriptions (he climbed “steep cliffs”), numerical stipulations (there were “23 people”) as empirical data may often be seen as more an intrinsic part of the universe than such facts as “red hair” or “steep cliffs,” which depend in part on subjective judgments; “red hair” could perhaps also be described as “auburn tresses” and “steep cliffs” could be “vertical crags.” But “23 people” cannot easily be interpreted as “24 people” or “22.5 people.” It is in this way that numbers are intuitively conceived of as more concrete than other forms of historical empirical data. Nevertheless while arithmetic and statistics may possess a certain intrinsic truth in higher mathematics, as we will see such assumptions do not hold when numbers are used in portraying social interactions.

With few exceptions, hardly any new empirical data of the Camp Grant Massacre have surfaced in the last century. Indeed, nearly every historical account recycles the first Anglo-American versions of the massacre and proximate events (but see Record 2000; Valkenburgh 1948). Most notably, writers have long drawn much material from the very people who were deeply invested in the affair, characters far from impartial witnesses, such as William Oury, John Wasson, and Lieutenant Royal Whitman. Even as writers have repeatedly returned to the same basic source material, the empirical data associated with the events have visibly shifted in substantial and patterned ways. Part of the varied use of the basic historical data is due to the chaos of the events themselves—the incertitude, even in 1871, of what happened and why. However if this was the only cause of the discrepancies in empirical data, one could expect

*consistent* confusion from 1871 to the present. Instead the systematic shifts of empirical data used in these texts require more compelling explanations. Other possible reasons come to mind, such as the differences in genres, between scholarly and popular texts. Yet the same basic problem persists that if the bare empirical facts of the world exist, should not all writers, whether journalists or professors, draw from the same pool of facts to construct their narratives? Historical “facts” are supposed to be incontrovertible, not changeable to the whims of each raconteur.

While it is impossible (and undesirable) to conduct psychoanalyses of authors to reveal their personal motives, these transformations of facts may be comprehended through a study of the *effects* of their written texts: that is, the impression a given work of literature produces on the reader (see Bernard and Ryan 1998). A textual analysis of historical prose is thus a study of the way in which the locutions of authors simultaneously represent and sway the historical imagination. The predicament of validation, *locus desperatus*, is chronic in content analysis for this method inherently centers on not just any impression of a text, but the analyst’s individual reading of it (Eco 1990). But discourse analysis is not simply like reporting the feelings inspired by a Van Gogh landscape, an utterly private and personal reaction, because these rational interpretations are based on logical explanations of visible changes and asymmetries in texts. In this way a person could not legitimately tell me that my fondness for Van Gogh is incorrect, but I could be informed that the presented data does not support my analytical interpretations. A difference becomes apparent then between singular emotive reactions and generalizable claims built from evidentiary criteria. Thus textual analyses attempt to link data presented in the texts themselves to the analyst’s interpretation, to move beyond personal and idiosyncratic opinion.

### *Numbers and Murders*

Today we can say without hesitation that any act of murder—the killing of innocent people with premeditated malevolence—is as horrifying as it is deplorable. And yet, there are distinct differences between the murder of 1 or 20 or 120 people. The implications consist in how we view the act, as well as our ideas of what might justify such behavior. Consequently, the way writers have represented the number of people murdered during the Camp Grant Massacre is not incidental. Of the historical texts examined here, the number of victims range from 30 to 195 individuals (Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> Even after the massacre, much uncertainty surrounded the number killed. The U.S. Army soldiers stationed at Camp Grant were well positioned to count the number of killed given that they initially buried the dead. But United States Army documents are contradictory, escalating from 21 to 30 to 63 to 80 to 100 to “125 in all missing.”<sup>8</sup> In texts, the number of dead may have sometimes been compounded when they were combined with the number of children captured, or confused with the number of legal indictments, 108,<sup>9</sup> which

were approximate at best. Conspicuously, from 1969 to 2003, not a single author suggests there were no fewer than 85 and no more than 144 Apaches killed, whereas earlier from 1871 to 1968 there is a much wider range from 30 to 195 human beings.

When authors use a low number of murders and do not mention the possibility of a higher number they are not simply reporting a historical fact—for the “fact” is that the total number of murders is so far unproven—but they are subtly downplaying the violence against the Apaches. Conversely, when only a high number is used, the authors are suggesting the more abominable possibilities of the massacre. For instance, in a deposition published in the *Arizona Citizen* a month after the massacre, a participant James Lee claimed that in the aftermath of the attack, he counted 35 dead.<sup>10</sup> Although no numbers of killed are discussed anywhere else in that edition of the *Arizona Citizen*, accompanying the deposition were articles almost exclusively devoted to justifying the murders. However, in other editions the *Arizona Citizen* published the number killed at 85 and the *Arizona Miner* at 125.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is significant that in the month of May, the number of victims was set at the higher numbers, but then by June, as it became clear that the news of the massacre was not well received in the East,<sup>12</sup> the number of dead was put much lower and the higher numbers were not used again until the newspapers report the indictments in the fall of 1871. The contortions of the number killed, first high and then low, seem to correlate with the kinds of arguments being made in the months following the massacre.

Another important aspect of the number of murders is the way in which the *same* number can be used to convey opposite meanings. In a May 27, 1871 article entitled, “125 Indians Killed, Righteous Redistribution,” the author writes that, “we applaud and glorify the deed, and rejoice in the establishment of the reservation in Arivipa [sic] Canyon, where 125 good Pinals shall rest without hunger or thirst till resurrection.”<sup>13</sup> In contrast, a website designed in part to examine the Carrillo legacy, cites the same figure (125) admonishing the Carrillo family for their role in the events surrounding the massacre.<sup>14</sup> In this case, the effect of alluding to the higher number does not inspire celebration of the deaths, but castigation towards those responsible.

### *Missing Numbers and Forgotten Captives*

One of the many tragedies that followed the morning of April 30, 1871 was the enslavement of Apache children whose parents had either fled the attack or been murdered. Like the number of those killed, it was never clear how many children the attackers abducted. Hints of the children’s fate are scattered in various documents, such as Rueben A. Wilbur’s—Indian agent to the Tohono O’odham—record on October 14, 1871 that he learned two captives died, five were in the homes of Mexican families, and “the remaining 21 were sold into Sonora and sold somewhere in the Altar District.”<sup>15</sup> Two weeks later, Wilbur wrote that he discovered in fact at least eight children were in the homes of Tucson families, including the prominent households of

Leopoldo Carrillo and Francisco Romero.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the enslavement of these children was not a secret even in 1871, as the *Arizona Citizen* and *Arizona Miner* reported the capture of children several times.<sup>17</sup> The disappearance of the children weighed heavily on the surviving Apaches. Royal Whitman reported that one chief, imagining the worst, begged: “Get them back for us; our little boys will grow up slaves, and our girls, as soon as they are large enough, will be diseased prostitutes to get money for whoever owns them” (Clum 1872: 69). A year later peace talks almost collapsed when only six children were returned (Marion 1994; Clum 1963: 85).<sup>18</sup>

According to the historical texts in this study, somewhere between 11 and 35 children were seized following the massacre (Figure 4). Like the number of Apaches killed, there is a much larger range before 1969 than following it. One reason early writers had a reason to downplay the enslavement was because the children, as Wilbur found out, went to some of the most respected men in Southern Arizona. Even today, children attend Carrillo Elementary School (as I did) and tourists visit Romero Ruins and hike up Romero Canyon (as I often do).<sup>19</sup> Given the prominence of the people complicit in the injustices of the massacre, perhaps it is not entirely shocking that only 39 of 65 texts (60%) mention the number of children abducted. Thus, although the number of captives and who took them was never kept secret, some forty percent of the writers examined here failed to comment on it. Slavery in the United States, perhaps it needs not to be said, was outlawed long before these events<sup>20</sup> and today slavery is generally held in utter contempt. It is hard for me to imagine even a cursory discussion of these events without at least mentioning the captives. Yet many texts fail to confront these facts, and such silences in consequence help erase memories from the historical imagination. And when those lost children are no longer recalled in the minds of the living, it is then that they have finally and completely disappeared.

Authors of the massacre convey the moral and historical ambiguity of the captured children when they present these numbers not in absolute terms, but in ranges or with qualifying provisos. Most frequently writers offered a single number, but also ranges like “28 to 32” or qualifiers like “nearly 30” or “about 28.” When we examine how authors used these linguistic devices across different categories of empirical data, we see that the number of killed and captured are least often phrased in absolute terms (Figure 5). However, even as the use of absolute numbers seem to render some parts of the massacre as more patent, the true number of participants is just as unclear as the number of murdered and captured. An author’s choice to use ranges or qualifying terms is not in itself problematic, for it is a reasonable approach to acknowledge different versions of the same event. But these strategies also have the effect of relativizing the authority of the numbers, to convey a sense of uncertainty and historical ambiguity. In this way, it is noticeable how the number of murders and captured are more

frequently instilled with these uncertainties while other categories of data are presented more as unequivocal “facts.”

Scholars of the uses of history have emphasized that it is important to examine not only what is added to history, but also what is subtracted (e.g., Anderson 1983). When we look at the patterns of inclusion and exclusion of other numbers, we see a patterned rise in the explicit use of these historical data over the last 65 years (Figure 6). Perhaps, by excluding the numbers involved in the massacre earlier texts tried to downplay the horrifying violence of the massacre—particularly the number killed and captured. A recent example of this tactic is a 1996 editorial in which the author argues in defense of the attackers and does not mention the number of Apaches killed and captured (Vokac 1996). This intentional or unintentional maneuver of historical subtraction greatly bolsters the author’s arguments, for clearly readers would be less sympathetic to a defense of the attackers if they knew the possible number of victims. In turn, many of the later texts have highlighted these empirical data because it is precisely the implications of the numbers that justify why 132 years later we still talk about the morning of April 30, 1871.

#### *Numbers and Collusion*

The number of participants in the attack is important because of its connotations for who may have been culpable. However, even those who participated in the attack have trouble with consistency. William Oury, who wrote several first-hand accounts (on which many later writings have been based), in 1879 wrote, “The whole command numbered 140 men, divided as to the nationality as follows; Ninety-two Papago Indians, 42 Mexicans, and six Americans” (Oury 1879). In 1885, the number grew (cf. Figure 7) as he presented a paper before the Society of Arizona Pioneers: “Papagoes 92, Mexicans 48, Americans 6, in all 146 men good and true” (Oury 1885).<sup>21</sup>

Despite such ambiguities, many authors cite these and other numbers without a discussion of the insecurity of these “facts,” offering claims between 100 to 154 attackers. Many authors go at length to describe the ethnic mix of the attackers, as well as the dynamic among them. In lots of texts the authors chose to repeat Oury’s story of how when the different groups first met, Jesús María Elías, a rival leader, ridiculed Oury by reminding him how his “countrymen are grand on resoluting [sic] and speechifying, but when it comes to action they show up exceedingly thin” (Oury 1885: 9). What was an embarrassment for Oury is a recurring theme in the texts, and the number of Anglo-Americans is time and again contrasted to the Mexican-American, and even more frequently with the Tohono O’odham participants (see Figure 6). It is interesting how consistently writers put the number of Anglo-Americans at six, while varying in larger degree in the number of Mexican-Americans and O’odham conspirators



(Figures 8, 9, 10), even though all these numbers as “facts” are equally unsubstantiated. Out of the 44 texts that cite the number of Anglo-American participants, 42 (95.4%) quote the number at six.<sup>22</sup> In comparison, authors place the number of Mexican-Americans collaborators at 48, 85.7% of the time. In referencing the O’odham, there are still larger inconsistencies ranging from 100 to 92 participants. Of the texts that cite a specific figure: 51.2% give the number of Tohono O’odham at 92, 26.8% state 94 O’odham participants, 12.2% cite 100 O’odham participants, and in smaller percentages 93, 95 and 98. While such variability for the O’odham and Mexican-Americans is not by itself that large, it stands out in stark contrast to the uniformity at which the number of Anglo-Americans is set at six.

Undoubtedly witnesses to these events could have counted, remembered, and documented six Anglo-Americans much easier than scores of Mexican-Americans and O’odham combatants. Furthermore, it could be suggested that because the first written sources were authored predominately by Anglo-Americans, they would have been more likely to recognize and care about the Anglo-American participants than the O’odham and Mexican-Americans, who were perhaps more socially distant. However, even as it is a distinct possibility that the number of Anglo-American participants is so consistently set at six because quite simply this was the true number, this position is not without controversy. Atanacia Santa Cruz Hughes—whose husband Samuel Hughes supplied rifles and other provisions for the raid—recalled in 1926 that “Juan Elias was one of the leaders and of course Bill Oury was the leader of them all... I don’t know how many Americans went. I am sure there were more than six” (Hughes 1935: 72). At the murder trial, Charles Tanner Etchels, a participant, while on the witness stand suggested that all those indicted were in the attacking party: “So far as I know the names of them, I think all of the defendants were with the party from Tucson to the San Pedro.”<sup>23</sup> Contrarily, James Lee, another participant, in sworn testimony hinted that accused did not mirror the actual participants: “There are parties indicated who were not there at all. [Only] a portion of them were those indicted.”<sup>24</sup> When we look at the *total* number of participants irrespective of ethnicity given in various historical texts, the average number of total attackers is 141.7 (see Figure 11). Yet these same texts steadily report that only 100 individuals were put on trial. Therefore, a gap of some forty people needs to be accounted for and explained. Although I do not necessarily subscribe to a theory of conspiracy for the massacre (see Record 2000: 149-159), there are still some tantalizing clues of intentional obfuscation by the accomplices. For instance, Leander Spofford allegedly declared in an interview, “All participating in that raid swore to never state who took part in it.... I will tell the story and mention no names other than those who have told of their part in it.”<sup>25</sup> And in an exchange years after the massacre with William Bailey, an historian reported a conversation in which it was said:

“Did you ever hear of the Arivaipa Massacre?” [asks the interviewer]

“Yes I have heard of it.” [Bailey replied]

“Were you in it?”

“Yes, I was. There were a great many more men in that party—W.S. Oury and Jesus Maria Elias originated it. I signed an oath and promised never to tell anything about it or tell the name of anybody that took part in it; but as twenty years have passed since then, I think I am at liberty to speak about it.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus there are seeds of doubt about the number six, the number of Anglo-American participants. And so it is consequential that this uncertainty does not emerge in the historical texts of the Camp Grant Massacre.

Part of the variability among these categories of empirical data may involve the ways in which race and ethnicity is represented in the texts. The O’odham, in particular, have an ambiguous role in the events as they are frequently portrayed as wavering between the twin stereotypes of the “Noble Indian” and the “Savage Indian.” This idea is captured in a single sentence when Jerry O’Neil describing the Tohono O’odham wrote, “The Papagos were known to be peaceful Indians, but they were still Indians” (O’Neil 1985: 24), meaning that even nonviolent Indians have some kind of core ferocity that is inborn to *all* Indians. In Elliott Arnold’s historical novel, *The Camp Grant Massacre*, he describes the Tohono O’odham waiting in quiet repose when the attackers first assembled:

The Papago young men, who could not as yet be called Enemy Killers, were gathered along the bank of the Rillito when Bill Oury rode up. They were dressed in white cotton. They were sitting on the ground, their legs crossed under them, their faces turned toward the morning sun, their heads bowed.... No one talked. No one looked up when Bill Oury’s horse brought him up to the pleasant riverbank. (Arnold 1976: 352)

With the motifs of the white robes and silent meditation, Arnold at first paints the Tohono O’odham as a strange kind of holy set. But then, despite this façade of tranquility, during the attack on the Apache ranchería, the Tohono O’odham become transformed into cold and savage war machines:

Don Guillermo [William Oury] had cautioned them [Papagos] to use their clubs first, to kill as many of the Enemy as possible before the village was aroused. The Papagos took that as a needless command. Bullets were impersonal. What joy was there in slaying an enemy from a long way away? (Arnold 1976: 404)

Arnold goes on to describe the chaos of the massacre in too gruesome detail to repeat here, but the acts of the Tohono O'odham are described as systematic, savage, and above all, violent. Based on the recollections of Oury and other participants, historical texts almost always place the Tohono O'odham at the front of the carnage and horrific slaughter while the Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans sit on a nearby ridge coolly (and more distantly) shooting at fleeing Apaches. Furthermore, placing the O'odham at the front of the assault serves to imply that the O'odham were also responsible for the rapes and mutilations. Elliott, as well as Schellie and others, understood this inference and openly attributed the rapes to the O'odham, which only further reinforced his depictions of the O'odham's savage traits.<sup>27</sup>

The descriptions of the attack in historical texts have been based almost entirely from the perspective of the Anglo-Americans who had a vested interest in placing the murders squarely on the Tohono O'odham. But there are suggestions in historical documents, which hint at a greater involvement from the Anglo- and Mexican-Americans. For instance, an Anglo-American man William Bailey later reportedly said that during the attack, "Naked Indians rushed in all directions, Papago clubs swung, Apaches fell. At that time I was with Bill Oury's Papagos. I stopped some of the Apaches with my saber. That was the only time I had use for a saber, and I made good use of it then."<sup>28</sup> Similarly pointing to an attack of more than just O'odham soldiers, Sherman Curley, an Apache man told Grenville Goodwin in 1932 that during the massacre assault, "I ran into an arroyo. I had my bow and arrows, and I pointed at them as if I was going to shoot. This scared some Mexicans and Papagoes back, who were after me."<sup>29</sup> However, when the historical texts do not challenge previously published accounts and place the O'odham at the front of the battle, they perpetuate the notion that the O'odham were primarily responsible and obscure the involvement of Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans. In part, the number of Anglo-American participants in historical texts has remained so steady for 132 years because the authors can intimate that undoubtedly Anglo-Americans played a part in the massacre, but it was *only* six people, no less and certainly no more. This number is implicitly contrasted against the Mexican-Americans and especially the O'odham who not only purportedly far outnumbered the Anglo-Americans, they also are nearly always described as committing most of the terrible acts. At the same time, in the midst of this characterization, the O'odham are described as a peaceful people, who murder only out of necessity and a tinge of ingenerate violence. Perhaps, then, the

Tohono O’odham numbers vary in part to this ambiguous dual role they are assigned—both as “Savage” and “Noble” Indian.

### HISTORY AS A CONTESTED FIELD: SOME CONCLUSIONS

David Lowenthal once suggested that history, as the story of what went before is simultaneously “less than the past” and “more than the past” (Lowenthal 1985: 214-219). History is less than the past because it turns on the biases of the storyteller and listener who simply cannot objectively replicate the infinite whole and complexity of past events. Concurrently history supersedes the past precisely because, “it is organized by and filtered through individual minds... subjective interpretation gives it life and meaning” (Lowenthal 1985: 218). Thus, historians and their audiences together bend and warp the strings of a real past to weave a story that has value and vitality. However, in this paper I have tried to show that history is not just an empty stage on which any tale may be told, but rather that historical texts constitute a domain of competing claims of “facts,” each vying for its own legitimacy at distinct social and historical moments. This assertion resonates with Nicholas Thomas, who wrote that, “The cultural differences between different narratives emerge from political situations, from interests in particular constructions of the past. What confronts us is not merely a plurality of accounts, but a contested field” (Thomas 1991: 303). Indeed, as we come to understand the numbers of the Camp Grant Massacre, we see that even arithmetic casts not inviolable truths, but mutable devices essential to the stories of the past imagined in the political present.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Three of these texts could not be dated, and so for this reason were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Although the first published reference to the phrase “Camp Grant Massacre” may be found in the *Arizona Citizen* on June 3, 1871, even before the attack itself, on April 29, 1871, Captain Dunn wrote a warning to Captain Stanwood at Camp Grant saying, “I am informed that a body of citizens have organized for the purpose of massacring all indians at your post” (U.S. Army, Correspondence Concerning the Camp Grant Massacre, 1871, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson; emphasis in original). Hence, it was called a “massacre” before the event even transpired.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, I worked at the Arizona Historical Society, Arizona State Museum, Hayden Library at Arizona State University, University of Arizona Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, and the World Wide Web.

<sup>4</sup> The Society of Arizona Pioneers was the forerunner to the Arizona Historical Society.

<sup>5</sup> Defining and labeling ethnic groups is never easy, but for the purposes of this paper, I will use the messy terms Anglo-American, Mexican-American, and (Tohono) O’odham to describe the

participants in the massacre. Of note, “Papago” is the older phrase used to describe the Tohono O’odham. In quotes I preserve the terms originally used by the authors.

<sup>6</sup> Sidney R. DeLong was elected mayor of Tucson in 1871 and 1872. He was the chief defendant in the trial following the massacre, *The United States v. Sidney R. DeLong et al.* (Kane 1978: 299). According to William Oury (1879), Francisco, a participant, was the “chief” of San Xavier.

<sup>7</sup> In order to quantify these data systematically, several approaches were taken. For instance, in reporting empirical data, several authors would say something like, “between 10 and 30 children were captured.” In these cases I averaged the two numbers—so in this example, it would be 20—with the thinking that a reader might suppose that if two numbers are given, the mean might be an approximation of the truth. Other authors would make a reference to numerical data without talking about specific numbers, for instance, “a mob left Tucson” or “a few escaped.” In these cases, such references could not be consistently quantified and so were not considered in the graphs. Finally, authors often gave qualifiers to numbers such as “approximately 21,” “almost 100,” “nearly 125,” and so forth. In these cases, I used the number without incorporating the qualifier under the assumption that the general reader will gloss over the qualifier and more likely recall the number itself. This approach fits the overall study as it aims to understand not so much the complex *intended* meanings of the authors, but rather the *effects* of their writings.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Army, Correspondence Concerning the Camp Grant Massacre, 1871, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

<sup>9</sup> See *Arizona Citizen*, October 28, 1871

<sup>10</sup> *Arizona Citizen*, June 10, 1871

<sup>11</sup> The *Arizona Citizen* claimed the number of killed was “85” and “not less than 85” on May 6, 1871 and June 3, 1871 respectively. The *Arizona Miner* varied more, putting the number of murdered at “125” (May 5, 1871), “123-125” (May 27, 1871), and “85” (June 3, 1871). It is noteworthy I think that two later *Arizona Miner* articles that attempted to mount a defense for the attackers, “The Camp Grant Massacre” (June 10, 1871) and “The Alleged Arizona Massacre” (July 8, 1871) do not even mention the number killed.

<sup>12</sup> Consider the articles in the *Arizona Citizen*, “Premeditated Falsehoods” (June 3, 1871), “Criminal Ignorance” (June 24, 1871), and the brief note, which reported that, “The President in conversation with a correspondent at West Point, characterized the attack on the Apaches at Camp Grant as purely murder” (June 24, 1871).

<sup>13</sup> *Arizona Miner*, May 27, 1871

<sup>14</sup> (Consulted January 2003: [www.u.arizona.edu/~eryn/camp\\_grant.htm](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~eryn/camp_grant.htm))

<sup>15</sup> Reuben A. Wilbur Collection, University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson.

<sup>16</sup> Reuben A. Wilbur Collection, University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the *Arizona Miner* mentions “28” captives on May 27, 1871 and June 3, 1871 and the *Arizona Citizen* notes “23 children prisoners” on May 6, 1871.

<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Contreras, daughter of Jesus Maria Elias, in 1927 gave one a detailed accounts of what happened to some the captives (Contreras, Biographical File, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson). Her perspective insinuates that stealing the children following the massacre was not reprehensible, but on the contrary, a noble act of rescue. Interestingly Contreras begins her tale by suggesting that one of the captives was not Apache, but in fact a Mexican who the Apaches themselves captured only a week earlier:

My father was in the Camp Grant Massacre and has often told about it.... Father brought home a captive, a young girl about 18. He was about to shoot her when she called to him in Spanish, "Don't kill me. I am not an Indian. I am a captive." Father saved her and set her up on a cliff and put his own hat on her head so that the other men would not shoot her. She was dressed as an Indian and was somewhat tanned but naturally she was very good looking with grey eyes and a clear complexion. She said that she had been a captive only about a week. That the Indians had attacked her father's ranch in Mexico and killed all of her family and taken her captive. She was only with us a short time when a man came up looking for her.... He was her brother-in-law and he took her home.

Many of the men brought back captives but most of them were later returned to the reservation. Jimmie Lee brought back two which he gave to his sister, Mrs. R. G. Brady and she raised them. They were later married to Mexicans and the daughter of one of them is now chambermaid at the Congress Hotel. The captives who were not returned stayed of their own will and not because they were forced to.

<sup>19</sup> The number of landmarks around Tucson that still bear the names of those complicit in the Camp Grant Massacre is worth noting: Wasson Peak, Sam Hughes Elementary School, Sam Hughes Neighborhood, Hughes Street, Oury Street, and Elias Avenue. There is no Eskiminzin Street, although there is Apache Drive.

<sup>20</sup> In 1865, the 13th amendment to the United States constitution outlawed slavery.

<sup>21</sup> This growth in numbers is hardly restricted to Oury's historical writings, as Figure 6 sufficiently demonstrates. It seems that in every category of empirical data—with the exception of the number of Tohono O'odham participants—the numbers have increased over the years. Even the number of Anglo-American participants rises just barely from 5.9% to 6.0%.

<sup>22</sup> The other two texts posit that there were five and seven Anglo-Americans.

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Alta California*, February 3, 1872.

<sup>24</sup> *Daily Alta California*, February 3, 1872.

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds, Albert S., Papers 1926-1936, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

<sup>26</sup> William H. Bailey, Hayden Files, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

<sup>27</sup> In his novel, Elliott described a scene in which the doctor Brierly coming upon the ranchería hours after the attack observes that several female victims are naked and have sperm on their bodies: "It is quite interesting," Surgeon Brierly said. "There must have been primitives involved in this. They raped the women but they considered them unworthy to receive their seed" (Arnold 1976: 413-414). Schellie (1968: 149) even more bluntly describes two O'odham men violently raping and mutilating "an Apache girl, yet in her teens." To my knowledge C.B. Brierly, Acting Assistant Surgeon of the United States Army never suggested who committed the acts of rape. He did report that "Two of the best looking of the squaws were lying in such a position, and from the appearance of the genital organs and of their wounds, there can be no doubt that they were ravished, and then shot dead" (Clum 1872: 72; see Hastings 1959).

<sup>28</sup> William H. Bailey, Hayden Files, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

<sup>29</sup> Goodwin Papers, Arizona State Museum Files, MS 17, Box 2, Folder 32.

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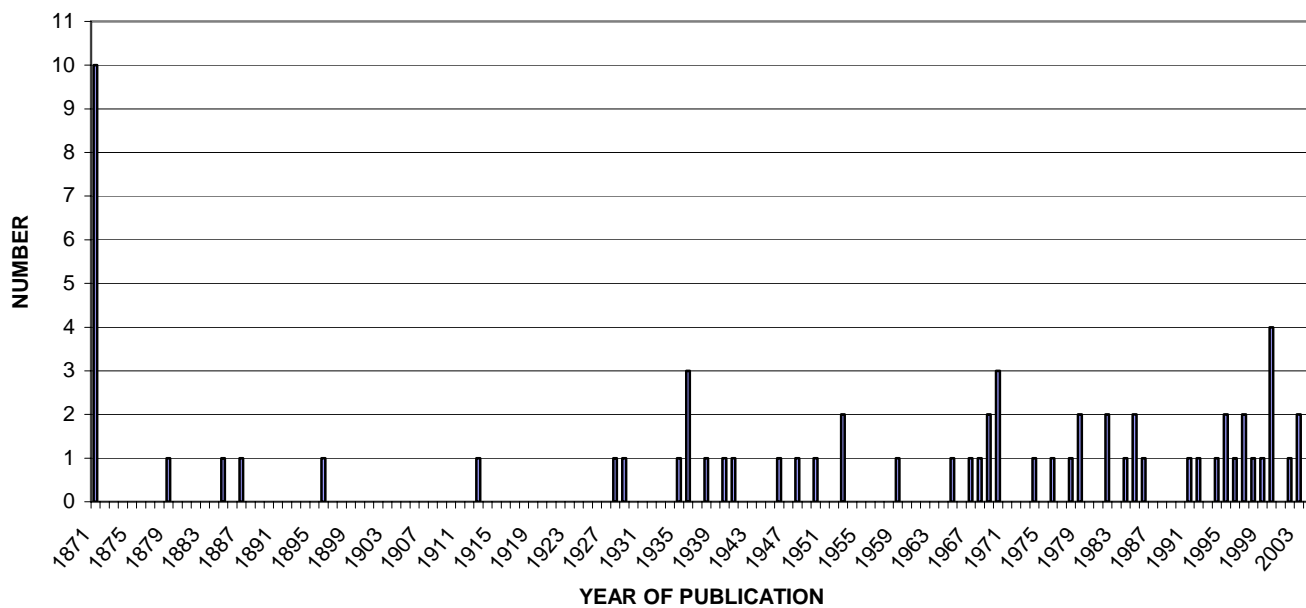


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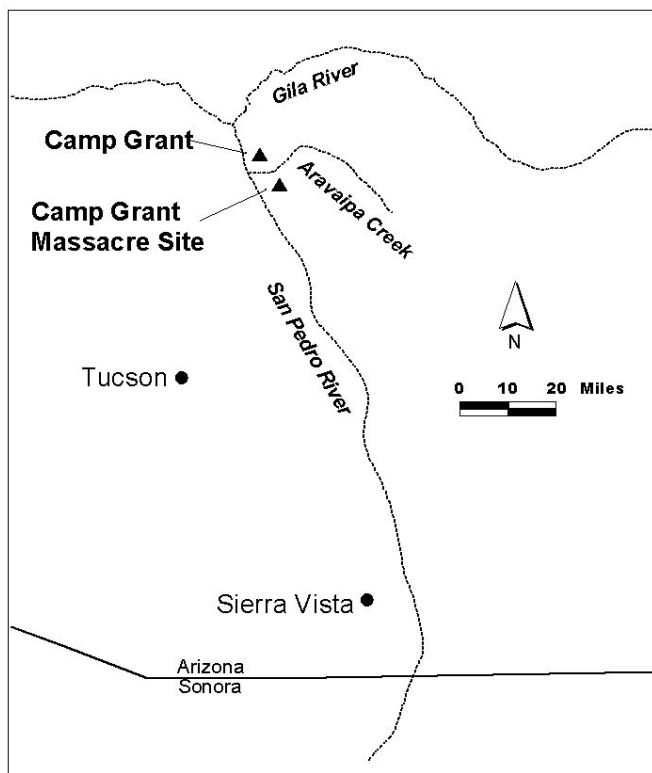
**Table 1.** Publications Addressing Camp Grant Massacre between 1871 and 2003.

<b>Publication Type</b>	<b>Number</b>
Newspaper Article	22
Article in Academic Journal	7
Article in Public Journal	6
Section of Book for Public	5
Book for Public	4
Section of Book for Academics	4
Website	3
Manuscript, Masters Thesis	2
Manuscript, Public Lecture	2
Newspaper Editorial	2
Book for Academics	1
Book Review for Academics	1
Manuscript, Academic Report	1
Manuscript, Contract Report	1
Manuscript, National Register Nomination	1
Manuscript, Oral History	1
Manuscript, School Project	1
Manuscript, Trial Testimony	1

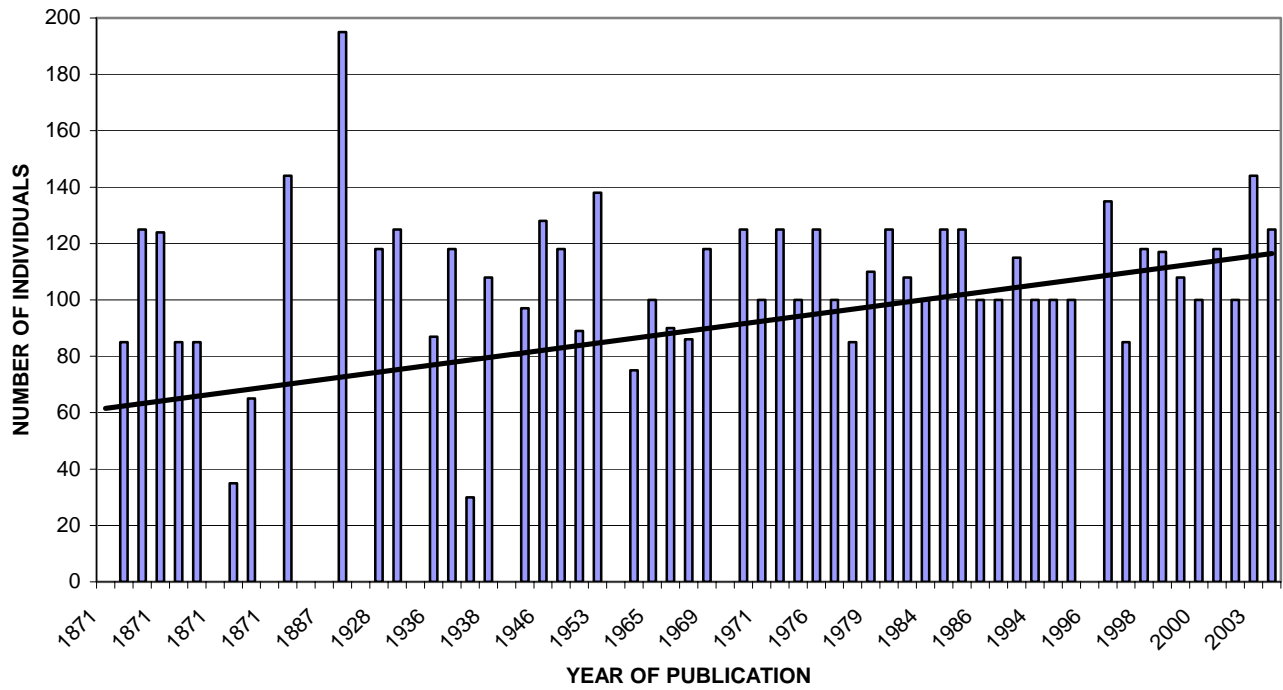
**Figure 1.** Number of Texts Examining the Camp Grant Massacre between 1871 and 2003.



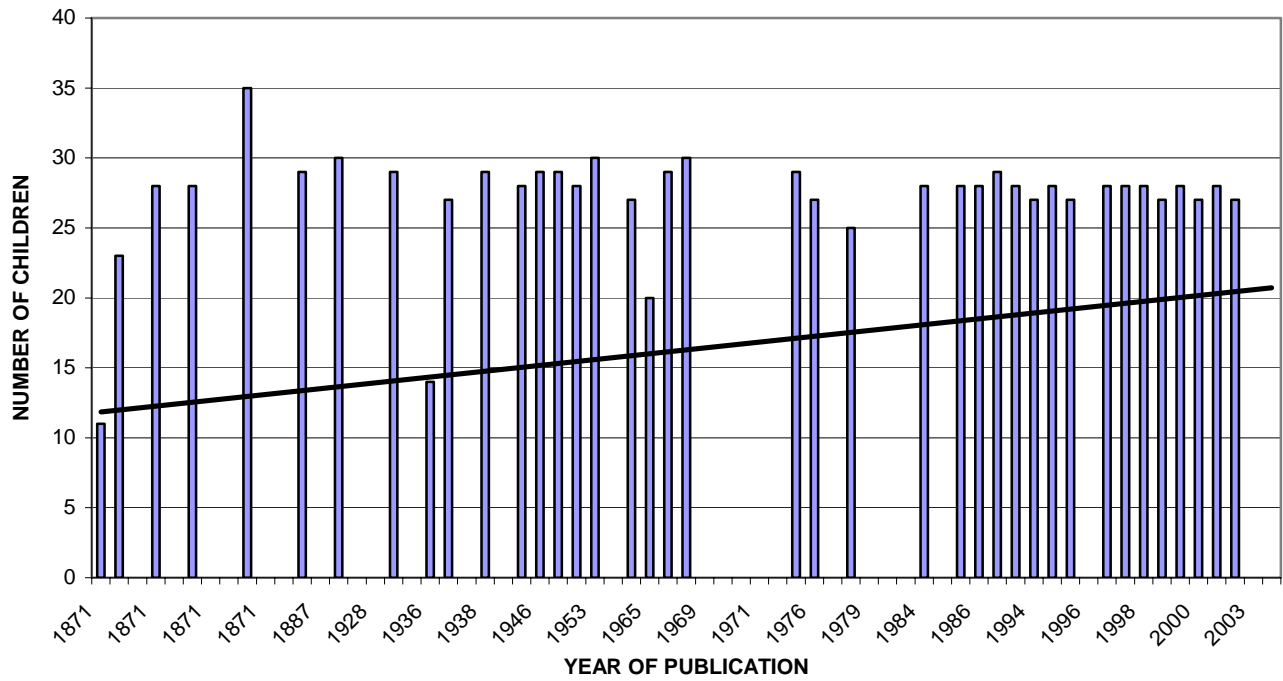
**Figure 2.** Schematic Map of Camp Grant and the Camp Grant Massacre Site.



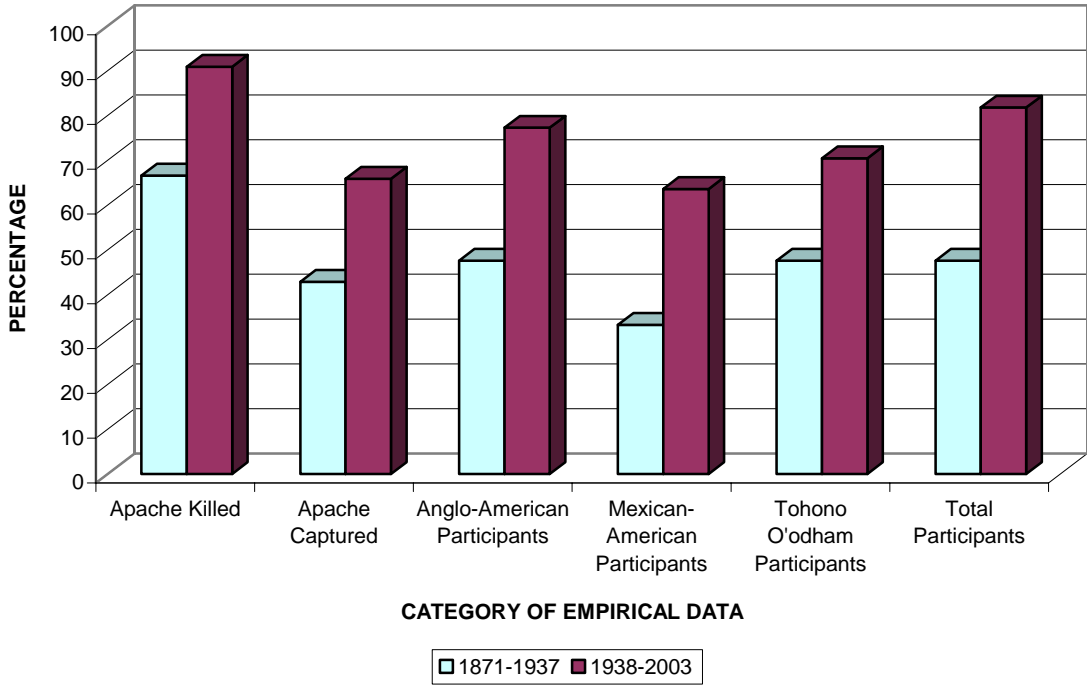
**Figure 3.** Number of Apache Murder Victims According to Historical Texts (with linear trend line).



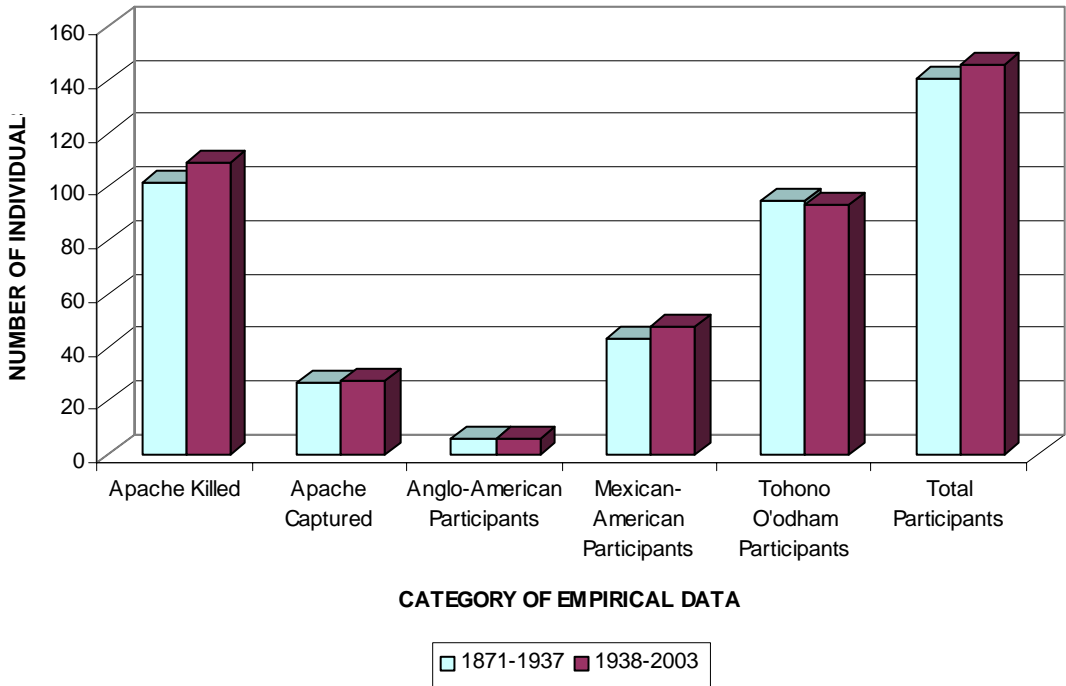
**Figure 4.** Number of Apaches Taken Captive According to Historical Texts (with linear trend line).



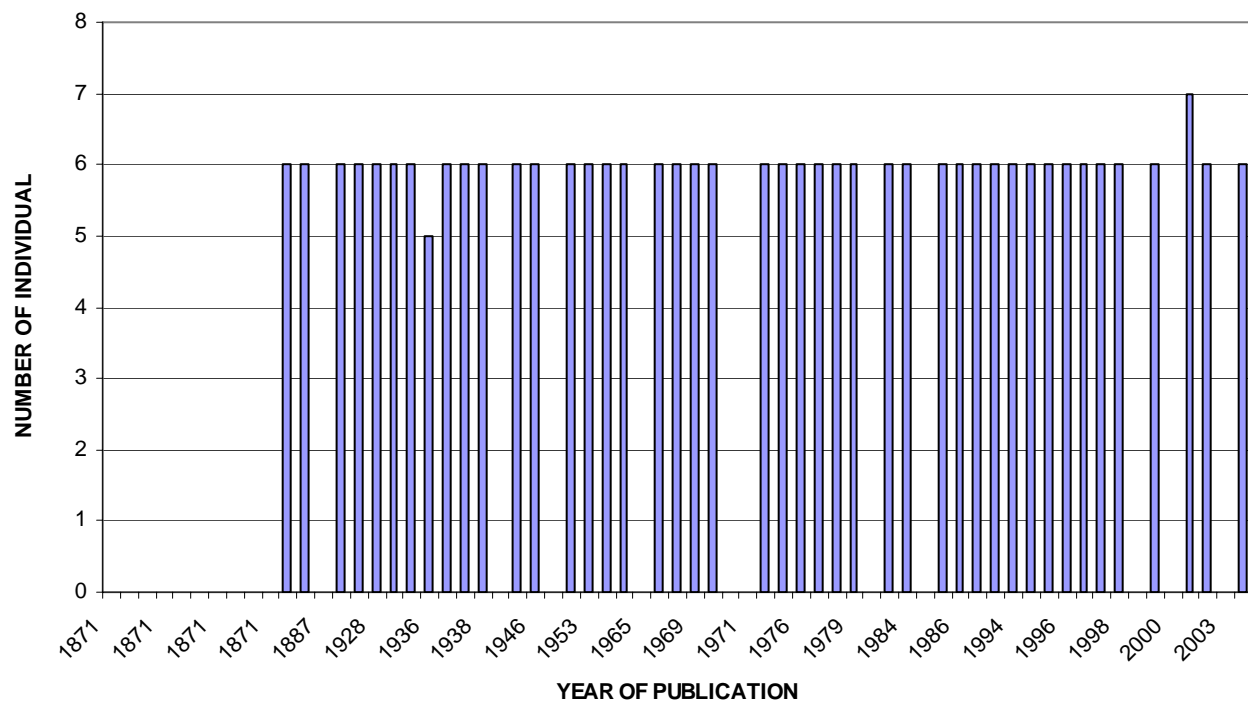
**Figure 5.** Percentage of Historical Texts with Explicit Use of Numbers, 1871-1937 and 1938-2003.



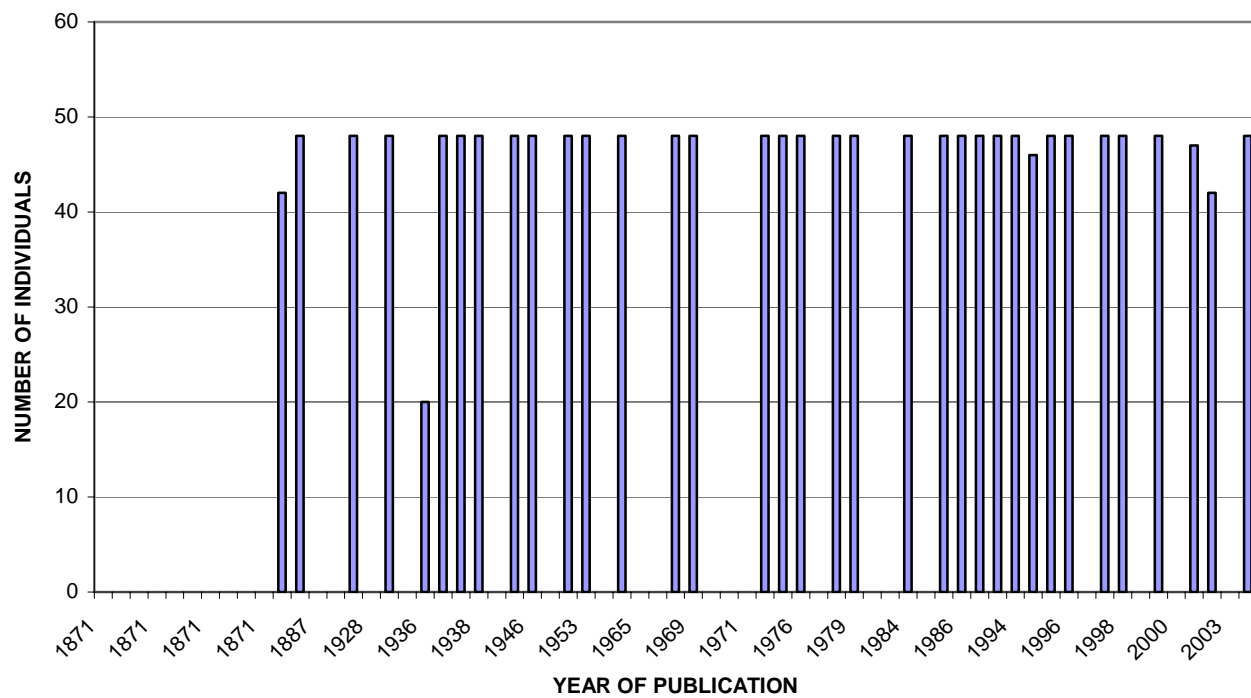
**Figure 6.** Average Numbers Used as Empirical Data, 1871-1937 and 1938-2003.



**Figure 7.** Number of Anglo-American Participants According to Historical Texts.



**Figure 8.** Number of Mexican-American Participants According to Historical Texts.



**Figure 9.** Number of Tohono O'odham Participants According to Historical Texts.

