

## **“Old-Time Negroes”: Nostalgic Ex-Slave Narratives in New York Newspapers of the Gilded Age**

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### **Abstract**

In the field of social memory of slavery, a growing body of scholarship on the Jim Crow North has complicated the notion of white supremacy as a specifically Southern ideology, locating what historians view as a “missing link” in the history of race in America. This study examines a corollary gap in American journalism history—the role that white Northern newspapers played a generation after Emancipation in softening white memory of slavery and hardening discourse toward African Americans. This article applies narrative analysis to sample five large-circulation white New York City newspapers from 1889 to 1910, some employing white Southern expatriates, along with a contemporary Black city newspaper that wrote back against the trend. The study concludes that white newspapers of varied political stripes, by perpetuating racist tropes upstreamed from literature, ushered Jim Crow ideology onto media’s center stage in a new century, beyond the former Confederacy. The purpose is to help fill in the timeline of Black Americans’ struggle for media representation and gain understanding of journalism’s intertextual role in shaping social memory.