

**Caseload Report for County Legal Operations: Child Welfare Cases
Office of Chief Counsel**

4th Quarter Report, SFY 2016-2017

Introduction

The Office of Chief Counsel's County Legal Operations section (CLO) represents the Arkansas Department of Human Services ("the Department") in child welfare and adult protective services cases and appeals from such cases. CLO also represents the Department in administrative hearings involving the placement of individuals on the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and the Arkansas Adult Maltreatment Central Registry where the individual challenges the Department's true finding of maltreatment and is represented by an attorney, as well as appeals of administrative hearings to circuit courts and appellate courts.

CLO employs 51 attorneys and 28 legal support specialists. The attorneys consist of the Deputy Counsel who supervises the CLO section, 4 attorney supervisors, 2 appellate attorneys, and 44 field attorneys. Of the 44 field attorneys, 1 serves as Assistant Deputy Counsel, which is the operational liaison between CLO and the Department's Division of Children and Family Services and Adult Protective Services unit. The remaining 43 field attorneys are housed with their legal support specialists in 19 county offices around the state. Of the 43 field attorneys, approximately 36 represent the Department in child welfare cases.

Currently, 12 attorneys are housed in Pulaski County; 6 in Sebastian County; 4 in Craighead and Independence counties; 3 in Benton and Miller counties, 2 in Boone, Faulkner, Garland, Pope, St. Francis, and Washington counties, and 1 in Clark, Conway, Crawford, Drew, Grant, Union, and White counties.

Number of Pending Child Welfare Cases

As part of CLO's representation in child welfare cases, CLO attorneys represent the Department in dependency-neglect cases held before circuit courts across the state. CLO attorneys also provide legal services related to family-in-need-of-services cases where a circuit court orders a juvenile into the custody of the Department or otherwise orders the Department to provide services. The numbers presented in this section include dependency-neglect and family-in-need-of-services cases.

As of the end of the fourth quarter of state fiscal year 2016-2017 (SFY17), the number of child welfare cases decreased from 3,567 to 3,555. This represents a net loss of 12 cases, or 0.34%. The loss corresponds to 582 cases opened, 588 cases closed, and a correction of 6 cases that were confirmed as closed, but not reflected in previous closed-case reports. The number of child welfare cases during SFY17 to date peaked in September 2016 with 3,744 cases. During the fourth quarter, the average number of child welfare cases was approximately 3,555.

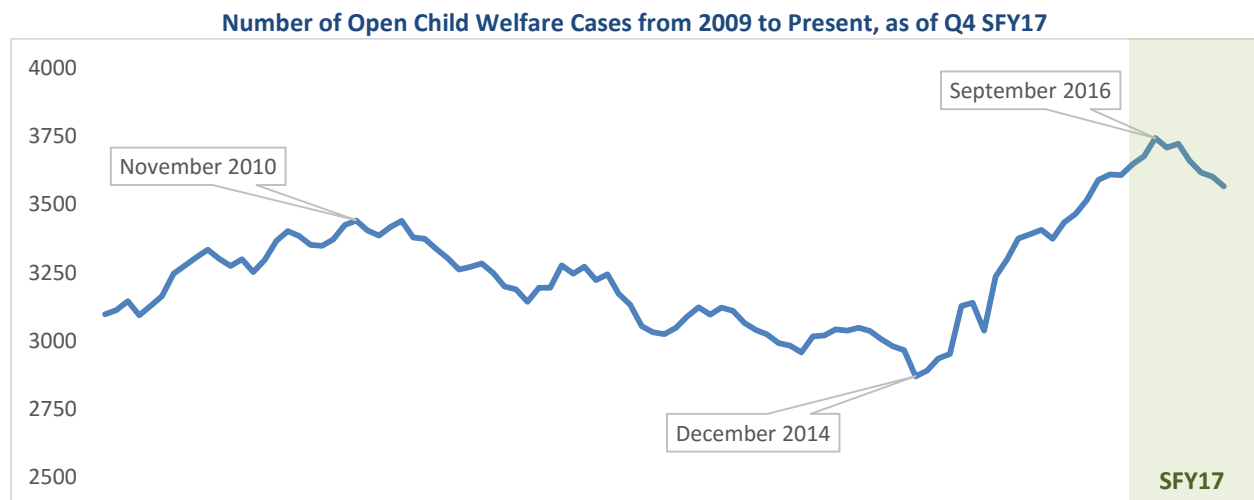


Figure 1.

Since January 2009, the number of child welfare cases has increased from 3,098 at the end of January 2009 to 3,555 at the end of June 2017, which represents a net gain of 457 cases, or 14.75%. During the same period, the average number of child welfare cases was approximately 3,263.

The data distribution from January 2009 to the end of the fourth quarter of SFY17 presents three notable modal shifts. The first mode occurred in November 2010,

when the number of child welfare cases rose to 3,442. The second mode occurred in December 2014, when the number of child welfare cases fell to 2,871. The third mode occurred in September 2016, when the number of child welfare cases rose to 3,744.

Number of Opened and Closed Child Welfare Cases Per Month

From January 2009 to the end of the fourth quarter of SFY17, the number of cases opened per month averaged 181.10 and the number of cases closed per month averaged 175.64. The peak in the number of cases opened occurred in April 2015 with 323 cases, and coincided with a drop in the number of cases closed to 147 cases. The April 2015 peak, therefore, created a net increase of 176 cases in one month, which is the largest single net increase of case ever recorded.

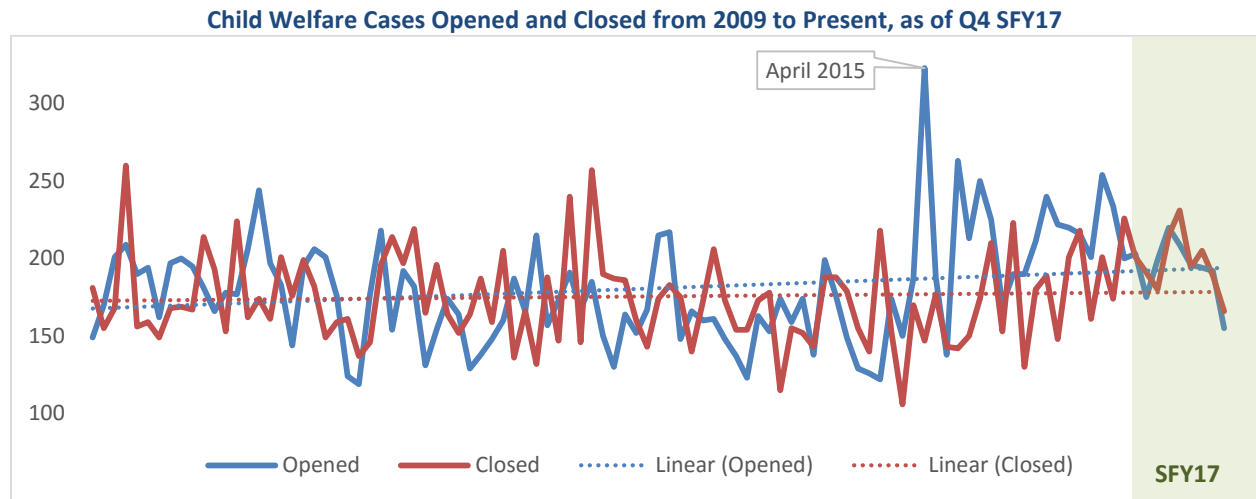


Figure 2

In addition, from March 2015 to September 2016, the average number of cases opened was 217.63 and the average number of cases closed was 170.21. This represented a 28.3% increase in the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to February 2015 (169.59) and a 1.5% decrease in the number of cases closed from January 2009 to February 2015 (172.88).

From October 2016 to June 2017, the average number of cases opened was 198.67 and the average number of cases closed was 203.85. This represented a 17.1% increase from the average number of cases opened from January 2009 to February

2015 and a 17.7% increase in the number of cases closed from January 2009 to February 2015.

OCC does not have a comprehensive case management or reporting system. Consequently, OCC began an audit program in August 2016 to hand count each caseload at least once per year to ensure the accuracy of the reported caseload numbers and the consistency of those numbers month-to-month. Since August 2016, the audit reduced the number of reported cases by a net of 143 cases, which explains *Figure 1's* bend in the number of child welfare cases during SFY17 to date relative to the number of cases opened and closed illustrated in *Figure 2*.

Child Welfare Cases: April 2017, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	14	1	1	1	6	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ashley	10	17	1	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	36	1	3	2	18	6	0	1	0	0	2
Benton	19W	113	6	8	4	58	4	0	2	0	1	0
Boone	14	60	4	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Bradley	10	9	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	4	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	31	2	6	2	10	0	0	2	0	1	0
Chicot	10	11	1	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	12	1	1	1	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clay	2	26	1	1	2	12	7	0	1	0	1	0
Cleburne	16	39	7	3	5	27	1	0	0	0	0	3
Cleveland	13	11	1	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	33	3	2	2	18	0	0	2	0	0	0
Conway	15	54	1	3	3	17	3	0	1	0	2	0
Craighead	2	112	3	9	7	47	7	0	2	0	0	0
Crawford	21	100	1	3	4	42	2	0	0	0	0	0
Crittenden	2	45	1	5	2	23	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cross	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	13	7	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	11	0	1	1	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
Drew	10	26	1	1	1	14	1	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	84	5	8	5	46	4	0	2	0	3	1
Franklin	5	47	8	2	4	24	6	0	0	0	1	1
Fulton	16	35	1	3	2	17	2	0	1	0	1	2
Garland	18E	91	8	7	8	34	3	0	0	0	0	2
Grant	7	19	1	1	3	8	0	0	0	0	1	0
Green	2	122	15	4	3	33	10	0	0	0	0	0
Hempstead	8N	10	0	2	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	45	2	1	3	21	1	0	4	0	0	0
Howard	9W	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	64	3	2	3	25	2	0	1	0	0	2
Izard	16	18	2	1	3	14	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	3	45	6	4	3	17	3	0	0	0	0	0
Jefferson	11W	97	3	4	5	21	4	0	1	0	2	0
Johnson	5	32	3	2	3	20	2	0	0	0	1	0
Lafayette	8S	6	0	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lawrence	3	32	3	2	2	22	2	0	2	0	2	0
Lee	1	6	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	12	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	59	1	0	4	22	5	0	0	1	0	0
Lonoke	23	92	7	7	5	30	6	0	1	0	2	0
Madison	4	29	3	2	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marion	14	15	0	1	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Miller	8S	81	7	5	6	24	0	0	2	0	3	0
Mississippi	2	46	7	3	3	22	3	0	0	0	1	0
Monroe	1	8	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Nevada	8N	5	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	8	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	18	4	3	4	15	2	0	0	0	0	2
Perry	6	5	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	35	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	8	0	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	67	1	5	3	38	10	0	3	0	0	0
Polk	18W	18	1	2	1	5	1	0	1	0	1	0
Pope	5	46	1	1	4	18	3	0	2	0	0	0
Prairie	17	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	326	8	11	32	95	9	1	5	0	5	5
Randolph	3	28	3	3	2	15	2	0	1	0	0	0
Saline	22	49	3	2	3	17	4	0	2	0	0	1
Scott	15	35	2	2	2	10	3	0	0	0	0	1
Searcy	20	9	0	1	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sebastian	12	458	22	12	28	149	19	0	4	0	7	2
Sevier	9W	22	2	0	3	7	1	0	1	0	0	0
Sharp	3	38	2	1	3	23	4	0	2	0	1	0
St. Francis	1	31	2	0	3	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	16	0	1	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Union	13	48	1	2	2	16	0	0	1	0	0	1
Van Buren	20	20	1	3	2	11	3	0	2	0	0	0
Washington	4	211	9	21	21	71	20	0	3	0	10	3
White	17	91	7	5	6	56	14	0	2	0	0	0
Woodruff	1	13	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	37	1	1	4	19	1	0	2	0	0	0
Totals		3,558	196	194	257	1,394	194	1	59	1	48	31

Child Welfare Cases: May 2017, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	14	1	1	2	10	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ashley	10	17	1	1	1	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
Baxter	14	36	2	2	3	14	1	0	2	0	0	2
Benton	19W	109	6	10	5	75	8	0	3	0	2	0
Boone	14	62	4	2	3	16	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bradley	10	9	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	30	2	4	5	14	1	0	1	0	1	2
Chicot	10	10	0	2	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	13	1	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Clay	2	23	0	3	1	13	0	1	0	0	0	0
Cleburne	16	37	4	6	3	22	4	0	0	0	0	1
Cleveland	13	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	29	1	5	2	11	4	0	0	0	1	1
Conway	15	54	2	3	3	17	0	0	0	0	2	0
Craighead	2	111	7	8	8	36	5	0	2	0	0	0
Crawford	21	110	12	2	5	39	0	0	1	0	2	0
Crittenden	2	44	3	4	2	26	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cross	1	33	0	0	2	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	13	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	12	2	2	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0
Drew	10	29	4	1	1	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	86	9	7	5	31	4	0	2	0	3	0
Franklin	5	47	0	0	3	16	7	0	0	1	0	0
Fulton	16	35	1	1	1	13	2	0	1	0	1	1
Garland	18E	86	6	11	5	36	9	0	1	0	1	1
Grant	7	14	1	6	3	8	1	1	0	0	2	1
Green	2	114	3	11	4	65	9	0	2	0	2	0
Hempstead	8N	11	2	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	46	3	1	3	21	3	0	1	0	1	0
Howard	9W	6	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	68	6	2	3	25	4	0	1	0	0	2
Izard	16	21	1	0	4	16	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	3	46	3	2	5	53	11	0	1	0	0	0
Jefferson	11W	108	17	6	5	30	4	0	1	0	1	0
Johnson	5	33	3	2	2	16	2	0	0	0	1	0
Lafayette	8S	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	28	0	4	3	13	5	0	1	0	1	0
Lee	1	6	0	0	1	8	1	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	5	1	0	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	13	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	57	0	2	4	29	9	0	2	0	1	2
Lonoke	23	87	0	5	5	38	7	0	1	0	1	0
Madison	4	32	2	0	1	8	3	0	1	0	0	0
Marion	14	14	0	1	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	1
Miller	8S	84	6	3	7	40	0	0	4	0	0	0
Mississippi	2	43	2	5	3	22	3	0	1	0	1	0
Monroe	1	8	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	8N	5	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	9	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	21	4	1	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	33	2	3	3	32	6	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	10	2	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	66	2	3	3	18	3	0	1	0	1	0
Polk	18W	19	1	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pope	5	44	1	3	4	16	3	0	2	0	0	0
Prairie	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	329	17	14	40	126	14	2	9	0	5	2
Randolph	3	27	0	1	2	14	1	0	2	0	0	0
Saline	22	49	2	2	4	18	5	0	2	0	0	0
Scott	15	36	1	0	2	10	1	0	1	0	0	1
Searcy	20	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	457	15	17	32	186	26	0	8	1	10	3
Sevier	9W	21	1	2	2	9	1	0	1	0	0	0
Sharp	3	35	2	5	4	23	2	0	1	0	3	1
St. Francis	1	31	1	1	2	18	2	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	15	1	2	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	1
Union	13	50	4	2	5	29	1	0	1	0	1	0
Van Buren	20	19	0	1	1	5	0	0	2	0	0	0
Washington	4	210	8	10	20	69	7	0	4	0	5	4
White	17	92	7	6	9	45	8	0	2	0	1	0
Woodruff	1	13	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	37	2	1	4	15	1	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		3,550	194	205	278	1,538	200	4	67	2	51	28

Child Welfare Cases: June 2017, by County

County	Judicial District	End-of-Month Caseloads			Hearing Details		Outcomes					
		Cases	New	Closed	Days	#	Adjudication		Termination		Adopt.	Guard. / Cust.
							Won	Lost	Won	Lost		
Arkansas	11E	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashley	10	17	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	1
Baxter	14	38	1	0	3	13	0	0	1	0	1	0
Benton	19W	111	9	7	4	41	3	0	2	0	2	1
Boone	14	59	0	3	2	10	2	0	0	0	0	0
Bradley	10	10	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calhoun	13	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carroll	19E	28	1	3	3	19	4	0	1	0	1	2
Chicot	10	10	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clark	9E	11	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clay	2	23	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cleburne	16	34	0	3	2	24	3	0	1	0	2	1
Cleveland	13	12	1	0	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia	13	28	0	1	2	20	4	0	1	0	0	0
Conway	15	53	4	5	2	16	1	0	1	0	0	0
Craighead	2	111	3	3	6	36	4	0	2	0	2	0
Crawford	21	113	8	5	7	57	9	0	2	0	1	1
Crittenden	2	45	5	4	3	19	1	1	0	0	0	1
Cross	1	34	1	0	1	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	13	7	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desha	10	12	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Drew	10	29	2	2	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faulkner	20	86	10	10	5	46	8	0	0	0	2	0
Franklin	5	45	2	4	3	18	2	0	1	0	2	2
Fulton	16	38	3	0	1	8	3	0	0	0	0	1
Garland	18E	87	6	5	4	29	7	0	0	0	1	1
Grant	7	16	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green	2	120	11	5	4	50	8	0	4	0	1	0
Hempstead	8N	11	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hot Spring	7	47	2	1	5	19	1	0	3	0	0	0
Howard	9W	5	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Independence	16	69	1	0	2	23	4	0	1	0	0	2
Izard	16	21	2	2	2	13	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson	3	47	2	1	2	12	2	0	4	0	0	0
Jefferson	11W	105	8	11	5	50	7	1	0	0	1	0
Johnson	5	29	1	5	4	22	5	0	1	0	0	0
Lafayette	8S	6	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lawrence	3	27	0	1	2	13	0	0	1	0	1	0
Lee	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Lincoln	11W	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little River	9W	11	1	3	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Logan	15	57	2	2	2	9	0	0	0	0	2	0
Lonoke	23	84	2	5	5	23	1	0	1	0	5	0
Madison	4	33	5	3	1	12	4	0	2	0	1	0
Marion	14	15	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Miller	8S	87	5	2	3	26	0	0	2	0	0	0
Mississippi	2	44	7	5	3	27	5	0	1	0	0	3
Monroe	1	7	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Montgomery	18W	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nevada	8N	7	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newton	14	9	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ouachita	13	19	0	2	2	19	7	0	0	0	0	0
Perry	6	7	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillips	1	34	1	0	1	6	3	0	0	0	0	0
Pike	9W	10	0	0	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	0
Poinsett	2	62	1	5	3	42	1	0	2	0	4	0
Polk	18W	21	3	1	2	13	1	0	1	0	0	0
Pope	5	46	3	1	3	31	3	0	2	0	0	0
Prairie	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pulaski	6	324	11	16	30	112	9	1	9	0	3	3
Randolph	3	29	4	2	2	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
Saline	22	50	5	4	5	27	3	0	2	0	0	1
Scott	15	36	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	0	0	0
Searcy	20	6	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sebastian	12	451	14	19	25	165	18	0	7	0	8	4
Sevier	9W	20	1	2	3	9	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sharp	3	33	2	4	2	18	4	0	0	0	2	1
St. Francis	1	33	3	1	3	19	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stone	16	14	1	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	1
Union	13	48	1	3	3	23	4	0	0	0	0	0
Van Buren	20	19	0	0	1	9	0	0	1	0	1	0
Washington	4	214	11	8	20	100	5	0	7	0	3	0
White	17	93	7	6	9	51	7	0	2	0	2	0
Woodruff	1	14	1	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yell	15	38	2	1	3	10	1	0	0	0	1	0
Totals		3,551	192	189	236	1,444	165	3	67	0	53	27