5-2018

The Power of Leaving: Black Agency and the Great Migration in Louisiana, 1890 - 1939

M. Kay Brown
University of New Orleans

The Power of Leaving: Black Agency and the Great Migration in Louisiana, 1890 - 1939

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of History

of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

with Honors in History

by

M. Kay Brown

May 2018

Acknowledgments

This undergraduate Honors thesis is dedicated to Louie B. Brown, Sr., the author's great-grandfather, and to her parents, siblings, and partner, who have supported her on this long journey.

Special thanks is also given to Dr. Nikki Brown, advisor and mentor, who provided invaluable feedback and helped hammer these ideas into submission. The author also thanks Dr. Connie Atkinson, who provided insightful feedback.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Figures

Abstract

The Great Migration is the largest self-initiated movement of Black Americans in United States history. By leaving behind the rural areas which were familiar but offered little or no opportunities for advancement out of poverty and journeying to major urban centers, Blacks were able to exercise their individual and collective agency. Many thousands of Black Southerners chose to remain below the Mason-Dixon line: the populations of Atlanta, Houston, and New Orleans swelled during the 1910s and through the 1930s, due largely to an influx of Blacks from other areas of the South. These stories often get lost among the millions of other records about migration to the North. New Orleans offered an enticing compromise between remaining in rural poverty and relocating thousands of miles from home: Black Louisianans could stay relatively close to loved ones while gaining new opportunities for employment and economic stability. Furthermore, the city's vibrancy and reputation for Black solidarity and community support helped draw those who sought to escape the race-based violence of the Jim Crow countryside. Lastly, New Orleans' Black neighborhoods had always been and continued to act as hotbeds of cultural evolution, and in areas such as the Tremé and Central City, it was easy to find others who shared similar backgrounds and values. Louisiana's Great Migration helped stimulate Black culture within New Orleans and across the nation.

Keywords: Great Migration, Black history, Louisiana, New Orleans

Introduction

This thesis began as an investigation into the author's paternal genealogy. Louie B. Brown, Sr., in the first decade of the twentieth century, moved his family from St. Francisville, Louisiana, approximately 100 miles further South to New Orleans. Though the exact cause of the Browns' journey remains unknown, their family's relocation was nevertheless part of the monumental, collective shift in Black consciousness that occurred between 1890 and the 1970s. Most of the work surrounding the Great Migration, scholarly and otherwise, has focused on Black inter-state migration to the Northeast, Midwest, and West between 1916 and the 1970s.[1] This thesis concentrates on *intra-state* migration within Louisiana and argues that one can trace the beginnings of the Great Migration (at least in this state) to an earlier time. Family questions about motivations for the move led to broader inquiries: what inspired Black rural Louisianians to resettle in New Orleans during the early twentieth century? How do individual circumstances relate to and correspond with the historical context of the time?

In the following analysis, the author draws upon James Griffin's definition of agency and his association between "capacity" for agency and the right to act to protect that agency. These definitions from Griffin's *On Human Rights* serve as part of the framework for this study of the both individual and communal initiatives that are necessary for claiming one's various rights in the face of adversity.[2] For example, according to Griffin, Louie Brown's departure from St. Francisville was an actualization of his agency. As a Black man in the South at the beginning of the twentieth century, his options for agency expression were limited; however, Brown and

---

[1] See Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010); Jacob Lawrence, *The Great Migration: An American Story* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995); Sarah-Jane (Saje) Mathieu, "The African American Great Migration Reconsidered," *OAH Magazine of History* 23, no. 4, North American Migrations (October 2009): 19-23, accessed April 10, 2018, (http://www.jstor.org/stable/40506010).

[2] James Griffin, *On Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

hundreds of thousands more in similar situations used their capacity for movement to better their circumstances and exercise agency. This paper applies Griffin's conception of agency to Black life in post-Reconstruction Louisiana and the phenomenon of Black movement, in the context of the Great Migration as a whole, to New Orleans between 1890 and 1939.

Findings include motivations for Black relocation to New Orleans during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as economic incentives and cultural inspiration. In addition, sources such as newspaper articles provide evidence of Black Louisianians exercising their agency through, for example, political engagement, social activism, writing and other creative endeavors, and movement from one place to another. Data will show that the Black populations of major urban centers across Louisiana grew during the time in question, due in large part to migration between cities and from the countryside.

The standard narrative of Black life in rural Louisiana during this time, particularly from white authors, is one of inescapable poverty and deadly racial tensions.[3] Black people did indeed contend daily with economic oppression and race-based violence well into the twentieth century, and the situation in urban areas did not always improve. Nevertheless, the history of Black Louisianians is also one of active resistance and challenges to the hostile power structure. Focusing only on oppression in examinations of Black life post-Reconstruction and during the Jim Crow era is dangerous and a detriment to Black history. From the 1890s to 1939 and for decades thereafter, Black men and women exercised individual and collective agency against the white-dominated system through creative endeavors, political action, and the movement of their bodies.

---

[3] See, for example, Leon F. Litwack, "Jim Crow Blues," *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 2, JIm Crow (January 2004): 7-11, accessed April 10, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25163654.

Chapter 1 provides further discussion of James Griffin's concept of agency and its applications to Black Louisiana history. It also explores the historical aftermath of federal Reconstruction and the changes that took place during the early twentieth century in the context of Black experiences from 1890 through 1910. Chapter 2 considers the cultural and economic development of Black life in New Orleans during the 1920s, and continues to examine Black migration to the city through the lens of agency. Lastly, Chapter 3 analyzes the impact of the Great Depression on Black Louisianians in the countryside and in New Orleans during the 1930s. All three chapters include extensive analysis of forms of Black resistance and agency expression during these decades.

Chapter 1

A Desperate Situation: Rural Louisiana and Migration, 1890 - 1919

Applications of Griffin's Agency Theory to Black History

Historians, other social scientists, politicians, and artists often frame Black American experiences in terms of struggle and hardship. This paper argues that Black American history also tells the stories of success, and of the myriad defiances which Black Americans executed over the course of their four-hundred-year existence on this continent. Rather than forces beyond their control, the determination to craft their own destinies also shapes their history.

James Griffin's *On Human Rights,* an examination of the nature of and qualifications for human rights, includes lengthy discussions on his idea of agency and its significance for debates over social justice. He argues that

> By 'agency' we must mean not just having certain capacities (autonomous thought, executive action) but also exercising them. One can trample on a good many of a person's human rights...without in the least damaging these *capacities*. In general, all that a person needs in order to *have* human rights is these capacities, but what human rights *protect* is something more: their exercise as well.[4]

Though Griffin draws primarily upon literature and ethical philosophy to form his arguments, the relationship he draws between the capacity for agency (Griffin's "capabilities") and the necessity of protecting that agency (or those "capacities") is appealing to scholars of Black American history. To have agency, one must also have the freedom to exercise that agency through the action of one's choice. Black American history is not merely a history of oppression and violation of agency: it is also the study of and appreciation for the reclamation of that agency.

---

[4] Griffin, 47.

Scholars generally estimate the Great Migration to have taken place between 1916 and 1970.[5] During this time, millions of Southern Blacks chose to leave their systematically oppressive circumstances in hopes of making better lives elsewhere for themselves and their families. This monumental, self-initiated, collective exercise of race-centered agency is the largest in United States history and the most impactful in analyses of Black history that span the nation. The Great Migration, along with more localized events including the Harlem Renaissance and the flourishing of jazz and blues music in the Southeast, redefined Black agency. It did not cure the oppression that many sought to escape, but it did demonstrate to the entire country that Black Americans were an unconquerable force. And, as Isabel Wilkerson so aptly wrote, "it was the first big step the nation's servant class ever took without asking."[6]

"We Protest"

New Orleans claims a long history of Black resistance to injustice and political and social engagement. A major example of this defiance is the "Star Car" protests. The so-called star cars were the only streetcars that Black New Orleanians were allowed to ride between 1864 and 1867; they were often the third streetcar in a sequence (though they sometimes came less frequently) and were marked by a black star.[7] C. Vann Woodward wrote about Black New Orleanians' response to the Reconstruction Act in March of 1867, focused on these star cars: they "demonstrated so vigorously and persistently against the Jim Crow 'Star Cars' established in 1864 that General Phil Sheridan ordered an end to racial discrimination on streetcars in May

[5] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *s.v.* "The Great Migration," accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/event/Great-Migration.
[6] Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 11.
[7] Kevin J. Brown, "Joseph Guillaume: The Star Car, Part 1 of 3," *New Orleans Historical*, accessed March 13, 2018, http://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/545.

1867."[8] Direct protest against the established system is a form of agency expression now considered classic after its extensive use during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. However, Black people in Louisiana had long recognized their power to disrupt the *status quo*: acts of resistance took many forms, from the German Coast slave revolt in 1811 to Black women's subversion of the notorious tignon edict, which prohibited them from wearing their hair uncovered.[9]

An example of increased Black agency during Reconstruction is the number of Black men in Louisiana who held political office from 1862 to 1877, established newspapers, and voted to further their interests.[10] For example, Louisiana elected Oscar J. Dunn, a Black man born into freedom in New Orleans, as Lieutenant Governor in 1868.[11] Less confrontational than the star car instance, these methods of expression still indicate agency. Establishing periodicals, publishing books, running for office, and voting (though these were enterprises traditionally reserved for men) all prove the desire to act upon the power Black people had long recognized within themselves. Furthermore, these men's drive to better the communities in which they lived is the complement to migration: it exemplifies a similar worldview that envisions a better place for Black people in general. Individuals' goals often spurred these political and social endeavors, but

---

[8] C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 27.
[9] See: Marissa Fessenden, "How a Nearly Successful Slave Revolt Was Intentionally Lost to History," *Smithsonian.com*, January 8, 2016, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/its-anniversary-1811-louisiana-slave-revolt-180957760/; and Jeila Martin Kershaw, "Tignon of Colonial Louisiana," *Media NOLA, A Project of Tulane University*, March 7, 2013, http://medianola.org/discover/place/945/Tignon-of-Colonial-Louisiana-.
Black women, especially female Free People of Color, resisted Governor Miro's edict by wrapping their hair in elaborate scarves in order to express themselves.
[10] Justin A. Nystrom, "Reconstruction," in *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, October 30, 2015, accessed February 8, 2018, http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/reconstruction.
[11] Charles Vincent, "Oscar Dunn," in *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, August 1, 2013, accessed February 1, 2018, http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/oscar-dunn-2.

the results also benefited Black Louisiana communities at large. Enfranchisement and the ability to affect community through policy or public opinion are generally considered requirements for political agency.

However, whites in New Orleans and Louisiana generally enforced their resistance to Black agency through the political power they maintained. May 14, 1881 issue of the *Weekly Louisianian*, a New Orleans-based Black newspaper, ran a fiery editorial under the title "We Protest." The tone of the piece reverberates with frustration: the writers accuse the administration of contemporary Governor Louis A. Wiltz of purposefully driving out the Black officials who had acquired positions in the state education department under former governor Francis T. Nicholls.[12] They explain that "Our representation in the Educational Department has been entirely destroyed. We have no representation on the State or City Boards and but little if any on the parish Boards."[13] The editors' anger is understandable: many Black men and women living at the time still recalled slavery, and the writers view this expulsion as an attempt to rescind what progress Black Louisianians had made since the end of the Civil War. Though the Wiltz administration ended in October of 1881 after that governor died of tuberculosis, his administration had set the precedent for eradicating Black men from positions of authority and Louisiana felt the impact of this purge for decades thereafter.[14]

Constant, systematic efforts to keep Black people from accessing influence intensified after Reconstruction and continued well into the reign of Jim Crow. One can easily view these measures as calculated attempts by whites to diminish Black people's capabilities for agency.

---

[12] "We Protest," New Orleans *Weekly Louisianian,* May 14, 1881.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Sidney J. Romero, "Louis Wiltz," in *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, September 20, 2011, accessed February 1, 2018, http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/louis-wiltz.

White newspapers also recognized their power and wielded it against Blacks. In 1874, for example, the Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate* ran its endorsement of several candidates for political office under the headline "The White People's Ticket."[15] However, as late as 1890, Black Louisianians continued to vote and sixteen Black men served in the Louisiana General Assembly that year.[16] Furthermore, over the course of the following years, thousands made the choice to leave the towns and plantations of their birth to pursue economic opportunities and to realize their hopes for a more dignified life.

Black newspapers during Reconstruction were necessary to the cultural and intellectual growth of Black America. Through regular, community-controlled publications, Black Americans advocated for themselves in their own voices while both exercising and protecting their agency. The 1864 foundation of *La Tribune de la Nouvelle Orleans*, published both English and French, heralded New Orleans' first Black newspaper and the country's first Black daily.[17] Especially in New Orleans, where the Black Creole population had long felt a strained independence from whites, newspapers facilitated Black expression and political engagement on their terms. The *Weekly Louisianian* example above illustrates the power of the Black voice in print.

Alongside politicians, the prominent Black writers, thinkers, and activists of the time (W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, T. Thomas Fortune, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, and Rodolphe Desdunes, for example) were also

---

[15] Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate*, October 26, 1874.
[16] Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 54.
[17] Elliot Partin, "Tribune de la Nouvelle Orleans (1864-1868)," in *BlackPast.org*, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.blackpast.org/aah/la-tribune-de-la-nouvelle-orleans-1864-1868.

influential among educated Blacks. In his 1884 essay "Political Independence of the Negro," Fortune wrote,

> The Independent colored man, like the Independent white man, is an American citizen who does his own thinking. When someone else thinks for him he ceases to be an intelligent citizen and becomes a dangerous dupe — dangerous to himself, dangerous to the State.[18]

Rodolphe Desdunes in New Orleans, along with his partner Louis Martinet, succeeded in advocating for the rights of Blacks in the city through their newspaper, the New Orleans *Courier*. Desdunes was a fierce French Creole activist whose best-known work today is *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* (*Our People and Our History*), originally published in French in 1911, which chronicles the beauty and complexity of Black French Creoles through detailed portraits of fifty individuals. In 1902, Frances Joseph-Gaudet, an influential Black champion of juvenile prisoners, founded the Gaudet Normal and Industrial School in New Orleans. The school's mission was to provide decent housing and employment opportunities for previously incarcerated young people.[19] It also functioned as a safe location for mothers to leave their children while they worked.[20] These efforts demonstrate the fervor with which Black Americans actively considered their position in society as they entered the twentieth century, as well as the consistent and intense determination to accomplish positive change in their communities. Even where they did not succeed, their endeavors emphasized the possession and exercise of agency.

---

[18] T. Thomas Fortune, "Political Independence of the Negro," 1884, *TeachingAmericanHistory.org*, accessed February 20, 2018, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/political-independence-of-the-negro (last accessed Mar. 1, 2018).
[19] "Notable Louisiana Women," *Tulane University*, accessed March 12, 2018, http://www.tulane.edu/~wc/text/pathfinders/LAwomen.html.
[20] Ibid.

Escape

The advent of the First World War and the consequent pause in European immigration to the United States, along with increased demand for war materials in northern factories, opened previously unknown opportunities for Black Southerners in industrial jobs.[21] This shift in employment patterns was one of the major factors in the early Great Migration of Black men and women from the South to the North.

On May 13, 1917, forty years after the official end of Reconstruction and when the Redemption (or "Bourbon") era was well underway in the South, a Black farmworker from Lutcher, Louisiana wrote a letter to the editor of the Chicago *Defender*, one of the country's most prominent Black newspapers. He expressed his desperate desire to escape the cycle of crushing poverty and the pervasive atmosphere of racial terrorism which trapped him and his family. The letter resonates with diminished hope and one perceives that this plea for aid to a stranger hundreds of miles away is perhaps one of his last resources for salvation. Many Black people across the American South wrote similar letters to friends, family members, and newspaper editors, outlining their despair or inquiring about "agents" who could provide railroad passes to the North.[22] Above the Mason-Dixon line or in the West, they might find a job that would pay them a living wage and decreased chances of lynching.

"I am working hard in the south and can hardly earn a living," this man explained. "I have a wife and one child and can hardly feed them."[23] The tone of this letter conveys the grinding, entrenched poverty of the rural South in the first decades of the twentieth century.

---

[21] James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1989), 13-14.
[22] Hundreds such letters have been catalogued in early twentieth-century volumes of *The Journal of Negro History.*
[23] Emmett J. Scott, "More Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918," *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 4 (October 1919): 417, The Chicago University Press, accessed October 9, 2017, doi: 10.2307/2713449.

Often, Blacks in rural areas could only attain liberation through a sponsored railroad pass. Those who managed to acquire a pass, or who found another means of escape, took their hard-won freedom to what they hoped would be a better life. By 1917, white planters and politicians had firmly established Jim Crow poverty and terror in Louisiana, with the state's landmark history of Black politicians and civil servants seeming a distant memory to its Black residents.[24]

Griffin's discussion of agency necessitates protection thereof: it necessitates action. Protection and exercise of, for example, one's rights or one's liberties under a certain government, or protesting a certain government, are active endeavors. The execution both of rights within the system and protest against the system is key to the success of an individual or group's civil or human rights. No records indicate whether the man from Lutcher died in St. James Parish or found a way out. However, this letter serves as a lasting witness to his courage. According to Griffin's definition, while others may attempt to quash an individual's or group's ability to execute inherent power, they cannot revoke knowledge of that power or the inherent ability to act. This anonymous man's exercise of agency came in the form of a dangerous, illicit prayer for assistance. For others, agency came through movement from one place to another. The Black men and women who fled the rural South in the first decades of the twentieth century had tried to survive within the frame of existence that they knew. However, every person who packed up his or her family for a different place had reached a breaking point. They left with no guarantee that the place with its new structure would be better, but the act of taking that chance indicates personal and collective agency.

---

[24] Charles Vincent, "'Of Such Historical Importance…': The African American Experience in Louisiana," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 151, accessed February 2, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478640.

Problems arise, however, when the oppressors or members of the dominant power structure view the exercise of agency by the oppressed as an act of aggression. The letter-writer did not sign his request for aid in order to remain anonymous, explaining that "the white folks are angry now because the negroes are going north."[25] The loss of the hand labor force upon which the Louisiana agricultural economy relied was as much of an issue as the exercise of Black agency. The realization of migrants' hopes for better lives through movement often required bravery.

And yet, Black people continued to leave. Many Black men and women who wanted to leave, however, could not afford the railway fare or the expenses of settling in a large, unfamiliar city. The man from Lutcher wrote,"If there are any agents in the south there havent [sic] been any of them to Lutcher if they would come here they would get at least fifty men."[26] A combination of factors such as lack of education, inability to access funds or capital, the inability to save money for the journey, and severe white antagonism contributed to many rural African Americans remaining in poverty.

Labor under King Cotton and Queen Sugar

The man from Lutcher wrote his letter in the context of an economically depressed, racially volatile, post-Redemption Louisiana. Vann Woodward wrote, "The Redeemers who overthrew Reconstruction and established 'Home Rule' in the Southern states conducted their campaign in the name of white supremacy."[27] During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and into the first two decades of the twentieth century, white Southerners worked hard to reestablish their autonomy from the federal government.

---

[25] Scott, "More Letters of Negro Migrants," 417.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 31.

Technological advances in the harvesting and processing of sugar and cotton complicated this mission. Louis Ferlinger describes the way in which "the emergence of a dominant, oligopolistic sugar-refining industry within the sugar bowl, dramatically altered the business operations on Louisiana sugar plantations."[28] Traditionally, the sugar planters themselves controlled both the initial raw sugar and the final product. Around the turn of the century, however, the planters entered into competition with factories and refined sugar, both of which made domination of the full process increasingly difficult.[29] This economic conflict only contributed to whites' feelings of loss of power as they were forced to cut costs and corners in other areas of production.

Clearly at issue was the devaluing of Black labor, but another factor out of Black Southerners' control contributed to their collective poverty. In her examination of Depression-era labor in rural Louisiana, Greta de Jong wrote, "Faced with a chronic shortage of capital and the necessity of borrowing heavily themselves, planters concluded that the only way to make the production of the state's staple crops profitable was to keep labor costs as low as possible."[30] If cotton and sugar were not producing as they once had, the only logical solution appeared to be to reduce costs in areas which, to them, were expendable, such as their workers' wages. The man from Lutcher could barely feed his family because the white boss for whom he worked was unwilling to pay him a fair wage.

---

[28] Louis Ferlinger, "The Problem of 'Labor' in the Post-Reconstruction Louisiana Sugar Industry," *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 143, accessed December 11, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3744376.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Greta de Jong, "'With the Aid of God and the F.S.A.': The Louisiana Farmers' Union and the African American Freedom Struggle in the New Deal Era," *Journal of Southern History* 34, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 106, accessed December 11, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3789512.

More than greed, however, drove these sugar and cotton planters: the ignominy of defeat in the Civil War had not yet faded from the minds of the older generation and had indisputably influenced the mindset and policies of the younger. Across the South, the formation of secret white societies during Reconstruction targeting Northerners and Blacks indicated a disturbing level of resentment, the primary outlet for which was race-based violence. As John Hope Franklin wrote, white "Southerners expected to do by extra- or illegal means what had not been allowed by the law: to exercise absolute control over the Negro, drive him and his fellows from power, and establish 'White Supremacy.'"[31] Fatal levels of violence and physical expulsion from a given space or community were among the first reactions of these men to any Black alleged criminality or insubordination, indicating the loss of control many Southern whites felt during and after Reconstruction.

The constant chafing at the changes to their politics and way of life imposed by northern Republicans, as well as the social and economic upheaval of Emancipation, was enough to send many southern whites over the edge of rational behavior. Where their power within the South had been absolute before the Civil War, white Democrats found themselves labeled backwards traitors by the new overlords who had taken away their precious ability to self-govern. Vann Woodward explains that

> If the psychologists are correct in their hypothesis that aggression is always the result of frustration, then the South toward the end of the 'nineties was the perfect cultural seedbed for aggression against the minority race. Economic, political, and social frustrations had pyramided to a climax of social tensions. No real relief was in sight from the long cyclical depression of the 'nineties….There had to be a scapegoat. And all along the line signals were going up to indicate the Negro was an approved object of aggression.[32]

---

[31] John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 327.
[32] Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 81.

Vann Woodward's analysis clearly indicates that the increases in race-based violence and oppression were a direct and intentional consequence of renewed white loss of control.

A Violent Answer to an Old Question

The fundamental issue at the heart of powerful white men's problems was how to keep Black workers docile while ensuring a consistent and profitable labor supply. They employed familiar weapons in this war: forced poverty and economic dependence and, as an added deterrent, race-based terrorism. These methods had at their core the principle of forced revocation of agency. Fear has proven to be a highly effective method of cultural and social control and, by extension, political exclusion. When people in a position of almost supreme power implement systemic fear, it typically has the effect of silencing those it intends to intimidate.

This power structure did not only seek to maintain its absolute authority; in many instances, white mobs succeeded in completely destroying Black lives. Whites lynched 353 Black Louisianians between 1878 and 1946.[33] An NAACP report found that 264 of those killings occurred between 1889 and 1918.[34] As Michael J. Pfeifer wrote, the practice of "collective murder," though long established, "surged in the 1890s as mob violence became a central means by which white Louisianians sought to impose white supremacy and to respond to African American resistance and criminality in the Jim Crow era."[35] For those who felt that their society was changing too rapidly, mob violence was a sound method of restoring order.

---

[33] Michael J. Pfeifer, "The Origins of Postbellum Lynching: Collective Violence in Reconstruction Louisiana," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 189, accessed November 12, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478643.

[34] *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889 - 1918* (New York, NY: Arno Press and the New York *Times*, 1969).

[35] Pfeifer, "The Origins of Post-Bellum Lynching," 190.

Beyond physical intimidation, rural whites diminished Blacks' political recourse by preventing physical access to the polls and, later, through segregation ordinances. Once Black voters gained a certain level of political power by becoming the swing vote between the two major parties, whites grew frightened enough to organize *de facto* disenfranchisement.[36] Violence, poll taxes, the deliberate inconvenience of polling locations, literacy requirements, and "grandfather clauses" such as the one included in Louisiana's constitution of 1898 all discouraged or prevented Blacks from attempting to vote.[37] Practical concerns such as preservation of life and property, especially in an era when many Black Louisianians could not read or were barely literate, took precedence. Furthermore, when Blacks did attempt to exercise resistance and agency through white-controlled channels (such as the court system), they were met with extensive and open discrimination. The landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896 (a case which originated from a conflict in Louisiana) had the effect entirely opposite to the plaintiff's intentions and opened the door to legalizing "separate but equal" segregation ordinances across the country.

The dominance of tenant farming and sharecropping systems in the northern, cotton-producing part of the state and the exceptionally low wages paid to sugar plantation workers ensured Black workers' consistent economic and social reliance on the antagonistic white power structure. Two of the many ways rural whites prevented the mobility of Black sharecroppers and tenant farm workers was to limit their financial resources and consequently, their paths of escape. Considering that a prerequisite to practices of agency is the ability to survive, these measures were especially debilitating. The man from Lutcher writing his letter to

[36] Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 338.
[37] Ibid.

the editor was an act of bravery, as white bosses habitually provided rewards to Black workers on their land for providing information on other Black people and the community in general.[38] Furthermore, in an effort to both restrict workers' movement and inflict humiliation on their Black tenants, landlords maintained control of phone and mail access.[39] Though less immediately dangerous to Black survival, the pervasive diminishment of every aspect of their lives to dependence on the openly hostile plantation system demonstrates whites' obsession with blaming Blacks for their social woes. These and other humiliations, especially when combined with threatened and realized racial violence, assuredly took a mental and physical toll.

Agency through Migration

Since the 1870s, migration had been a method of agency expression in the lives of Black Louisianians. During that decade and the 1880s, 25,000 Black Southerners moved to Kansas in the Exoduster movement following the Homestead Act of 1862.[40] Then, on January 30, 1904, the *New York Sun* ran an article entitled "NEGROES IN KEEN DEMAND," which outlined the shortage of Black laborers in Louisiana due to a prosperous cotton harvest the year before.[41] The reporter describes the unusual good fortune of Black Louisianians that year, and professed that "Very few of the great mass of negro workers will migrate to the North. Conditions are too prosperous in the South this year." He also illustrates how "every train is filled with negroes moving from one part of the State to another." While this intra-state migration was surely not unique in 1903-1904, its cause was notable. Black farm workers were not leaving because they were poor; they were leaving because slightly increased revenue did not compensate for evil

[38] De Jong, "'With the Aid of God and the F.S.A.'," 107.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Robert Fink, "Homestead Act of 1862," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 12, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Homestead-Act#ref1233741.
[41] "NEGROES IN KEEN DEMAND," The *New York Sun*, January 30, 1904.

treatment. Furthermore, this northern reporter devotes a considerable amount of text to demonstrating a simple truth: Black laborers were still property. He explains that the planters and overlords made an unwritten pact "to employ no negro who is in debt and under contract to another planter." [42] Black land workers in Louisiana lived in a frustrating limbo between legal freedom and bondage. This forced condition did not, however, completely rob them of their agency.

Despite numerous impediments to personal and economic success, some Blacks in rural Louisiana did have a successful method of exercising agency: the movement of their bodies. Since the days of the Exodusters, Black Southerners had exercised their agency by leaving one place, sometimes with few possessions, and claiming new space. In her analysis of Black women's history in the South, Jacqueline Jones writes that

> By 1910 about 18 percent of the Southern black population lived in towns of 2,500 inhabitants or more (an increase of 11 percent over 1860). Since emancipation, small but steadily increasing numbers of former slaves had made their way cityward. As wives, widows, and daughters, black women participated in this gradual migration in disproportionately large numbers.[43]

Women helped form many of the cultural aspects of the Great Migration, and expressed their agency in numbers equal to or greater than those of men. In Jim Crow Louisiana, where lynching and court-ordered whippings remained commonplace, survival and the act of leaving one existence to pursue a better one was often a revolution in itself.[44] The exercise of agency through the choice to leave one place for another one takes courage. This mass demonstration of courage

---

[42] "NEGROES," The *New York Sun*, January 30, 1904.
[43] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 93.
[44] On May 18, 1909, *The New Advocate*, a Baton Rouge newspaper, published a front-page article entitled "NEGRO BOY NEEDS ROPE." The piece described how John Landry, a sixteen-year-old Black boy, was sentenced by a judge in a court of law to whipping and expulsion from town for allegedly "making indecent proposals to a young Italian girl" and blatantly called for his execution.

during the decades of the Great Migration is a major part of what makes the initiative exceptional.

For those who could not afford or who did not desire to leave the state, New Orleans provided an attractive opportunity for increased economic prospects and a new, yet solid, community. In the Crescent City, where A.P. Tureaud developed the first Louisiana chapter of the NAACP in 1915, Blacks organized within a community that held a long tradition of protest and resistance.[45] Tureaud's chapter included female members as early as 1916, the first branch in Louisiana to do so (although women were largely excluded from leadership or authority positions within the organization during the 1920s and 1930s).[46] The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the Black population of New Orleans swell with migrants from across the state who made a choice to improve life for themselves and their families.

---

[45] "A century of standing up, speaking out: The history of the NAACP in New Orleans," *Nola.com/The Times-Picayune*, August 10, 2017, accessed March 12, 2018, http://www.nola.com/300/2017/08/naacp_new_orleans_chapter_foun.html.

[46] Lee Sartain, "'Local Leadership': The Role of Women in the Louisiana Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1920-1939," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 46, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 312, 315, accessed March 12, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4234124.

Chapter 2
For the Culture: Migration to New Orleans in the 1920s


MOB KILLS NEGRO HIGHWAY ROBBER AS HE FALLS IN CANAL

Pulled Out of Water to Die on Bank as Result of Bullet Wound.

Headline from the day following Fred Johnson's murder, *The Times-Picayune*, October 28, 1917.

If the anonymous man from Lutcher had been able to resettle his family in New Orleans in the 1920s or even the 1930s - a closer and more familiar option than Chicago, Detroit, or New York - he still would have encountered racial strife and violence. In October, 1917, an angry white mob chased and shot to death Fred "Mano" Johnson following his alleged snatching of a white woman's purse.[47] The crowd, led by a barber named Henry Cook and composed of "a dozen others," chased Johnson after someone spotted him in the vicinity of a white woman whose purse was stolen from her hand.[48] An unknown gunman shot Johnson multiple times and he died hours after being pulled from the New Basin Canal.[49] Regardless of whether Johnson actually stole the purse, there is no indication that police charged anyone involved in the shooting with a crime.

[47] "Mob Kills Nero Highway Robber As He Falls Into Canal: Pulled Out of Water to Die on Bank as Result of Bullet Wound," *The Times-Picayune*, October 28, 1917, A-6.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

This instance was one of several that followed the Robert Charles riots of 1900. Charles, himself a Black migrant to the city from Mississippi, shot three white New Orleans police officers on the night of July 23-24, 1900, killing two of them.[50] What followed was one of New Orleans' most influential race riots, the aftershocks of which the city still felt in 1917. Violence exploded on the night of July 25, when white New Orleanians began roaming the city and dragging Black streetcar riders into the street, where they publically beat and shot them.[51] The New Orleans Police Department, unsurprisingly, "did little to intervene on behalf of the city's Black population."[52] K. Stephen Prince explains that, while white New Orleanians did everything in their power to suppress Charles' memory and devalue his actions, he remained a legendary, positive figure in the city's Black consciousness.[53] However, the determination with which the city's whites refused to discuss the Charles riot appears to be an indication that they understood the implications of those July nights as an inspiration to the city's Black population. Such an upheaval is not easily forgotten, even by those who sought to repress it. Migrants to the city found the racial tensions heightened by this and other events and experienced the consequences along with natives of the city.

Besides rampant instances of police brutality, the New Orleans government clearly did not have Black residents' interests in mind. In 1924, the city of New Orleans enacted its first segregation law one week after a state law granted approval.[54] The ordinance, introduced in the

---

[50] K. Stephen Prince, "Remembering Robert Charles: Violence and Memory in Jim Crow New Orleans," *Journal of Southern History* 83, no. 2 (May 2017): 302-303.
[51] Ibid., 303.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Prince, 304-315.
[54] Joseph Logsdon and Carolyn Cosse Bell, "The Americanization of Creole New Orleans, 1850-1900," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 268.

New Orleans Commission Council on September 9, 1924, and which the Council unanimously adopted on September 16, not only allowed residential segregation based on race but mandated it.[55] Cities and states often enacted segregation laws under the guise of keeping whites safe from Black residents, and the reasons in New Orleans were no different. In a city where Black and white residents had traditionally lived in close proximity to one another, it is unsurprising that one of the first measures enacted under the Jim Crow mindset was separation of the races.

Cultural and Intellectual Innovations

Still, New Orleans maintained a vibrant Black community that, while culturally divided between Black Americans and Afro-French-Creoles, thrived on internal support. Cultural measures and efforts outside the court or political system were staples of New Orleans' Black communities. Social aid and pleasure clubs, the fledgling NAACP office, and the extensive Black Creole history of resistance to institutional racism helped foster a culture of alliance and collective agency that was highly appealing to outsiders.[56]

Thanks to World War I's globalizing influence and the development of the "New Negro" life philosophy, Black citizens across the country experienced a new cohesiveness of consciousness and an expansion of their agency. Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois, T. Thomas Fortune, Ida B. Wells, and numerous other Black writers and activists continued to produce groundbreaking work during the 1920s. Many more, including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Aaron Douglas, and Zora Neale Hurston, came to prominence during the same decade that produced F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Progress felt attainable to some

---

[55] Donald E. DeVore, *Defying Jim Crow: African American Community Development and the Struggle for Racial Equality in New Orleans, 1900 - 1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 174.
[56] Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 271.

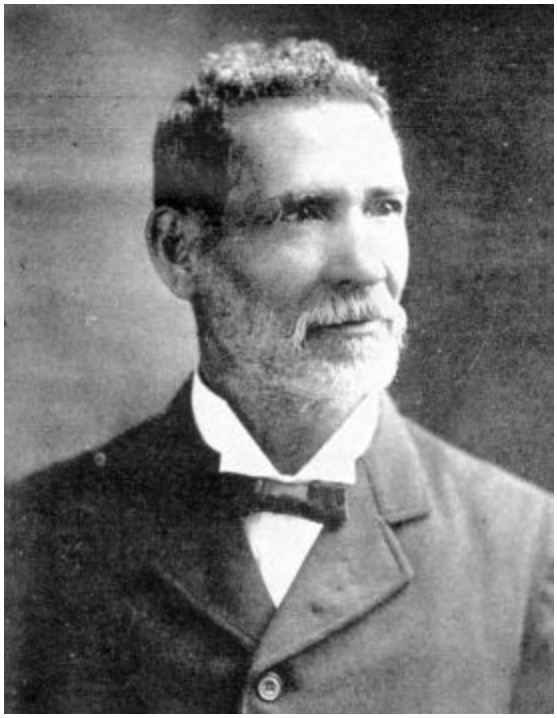
Black Americans, even as violence and hate remained a tangible reality. The man from Lutcher, who had probably spent his entire life to that point in relative rural isolation, also knew that circumstances for Blacks were changing across the nation.

While the standard narrative of the Great Migration in Louisiana is that of the Black men and women who left the state completely for the North, East, or West, a great many remained within Louisiana's borders. However, they could still hope to find increased autonomy, better jobs, and greater security of life in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, or Shreveport. Expenses for travel to New Orleans was cheaper than a journey to Los Angeles, Philadelphia, or Pittsburgh, and the money saved there could go toward a house or room. Furthermore, as Mark Robert Schneider argues, "[in] Southern cities, black migrants could more easily maintain ties with their rural relatives."[57] In New Orleans, migrants would be able to write and visit home much more easily than if they moved to a northern metropolis and, just as importantly, they may not have felt such severe isolation and culture shock. Moving to a big city is always an adjustment, but at least in New Orleans it would be easier to find Black people who came from the same parish or knew how to cook gumbo.

New Orleans' tradition of jazz music, tradition of Black social aid and pleasure clubs, and the formation of the city's NAACP chapter in the early 1920s were not innovations created in a vacuum. These institutions succeeded a long tradition of initiatives centered around securing livelihoods and agency for New Orleans Blacks. Rodolphe Desdunes and Louis A. Martinet, for example, were not only influential in the public mindset through the New Orleans *Crusader* but also had an impact on law and policy through their work on the "Separate Car Act" of 1890 and

[57] Mark Robert Schneider, *African Americans in the Jazz Age: A Decade of Struggle and Promise* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 27.

the nationally important *Plessy v. Ferguson* case throughout the first half of the following decade.[58] Though both of these challenges failed to yield the desired results, Desdunes' writings had a major impact on Black consciousness in New Orleans. Desdunes was light-skinned and of French Creole descent. He spoke and wrote in both French and English. His education, talents, and countenance allowed him an advantageous position to challenge the system.



Rodolphe Desdunes[59]

Similarly, though operating decades earlier and with different methods, Henriette Delille worked to establish safe havens for women and children of African descent.[60] Delille was born a free woman of color and possessed the resources to establish the Sisters of the Holy Family in

[58] Rich Mealy, "Desdunes, Rodolphe Lucien (1849 - 1928)," in *BlackPast.org*, accessed February 21, 2018, http://www.blackpast.org/aah/desdunes-rodolphe-lucien-1849-1928.
[59] Rich Mealy, "Rodolph Desdunes," *BlackPast.org*, accessed April 12, 2018, http://www.blackpast.org/aah/desdunes-rodolphe-lucien-1849-1928.
[60] "Paper Monuments," Daniela Marx, Artist, and Virginia Gould, Narrative, "Henriette Delille," *New Orleans Historical*, accessed February 21, 2018, http://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/1390.

1842.[61] These Black and Creole women ministered to those in New Orleans who needed care the most, and their mission survives through the Sisters to this day.[62]

Municipal Developments

Between 1893 and 1897, the country experienced a significant economic depression. This crisis had severe consequences for New Orleans' port economy, not the least of which was racial tension among workers on the docks along the Mississippi River.[63] However, dire circumstances in rural Louisiana and Mississippi, from both financial hardships and increasing race-based violence, "drove many Louisiana and Mississippi blacks to New Orleans, a city with a reputation for relative racial liberalism and available work." While not all of these migrants were successful in finding sustainable work and crafting a permanent new life in the Crescent City, New Orleans' appeal was evident.[64]

After the end of that depression and during the first two decades of the twentieth century, New Orleans underwent several major renovations of its docks, ports, and other industrial areas. The result was a demonstrable upturn in the city's economy. On April 2, 1924, the *Times-Picayune* ran a report entitled "BUSINESS INDEX SHOWS THIS CITY LEADING SOUTH." The article explained that "New Orleans led all Southern cities in bank deposits and percentage of gain in this branch of finance during the first three months of 1924, as well as for 1922 and 1923, according to statistics just compiled by the research department of the Association of Commerce."[65] These economic developments coincided with the flourishing of

---

[61]Ibid.
[62]Ibid.
[63] Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans; Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 121.
[64] Ibid., 126.
[65]"BUSINESS INDEX SHOWS THIS CITY LEADING SOUTH: First Quarter's Bank Debits Total Indicates Prosperity Here," *The Times-Picayune*, April 2, 1924.

jazz music, resulting in many incentives for migration to New Orleans. The racial situation in the city was by no means perfect: there were few schools providing post-elementary education for Black youth, relations between Black and white residents were tense both in political circles and in everyday life, and those in power consistently refused to acknowledge the needs of Black residents. However, Black New Orleanians consistently crafted alternative paths to success for themselves and their community.

Technology and Housing

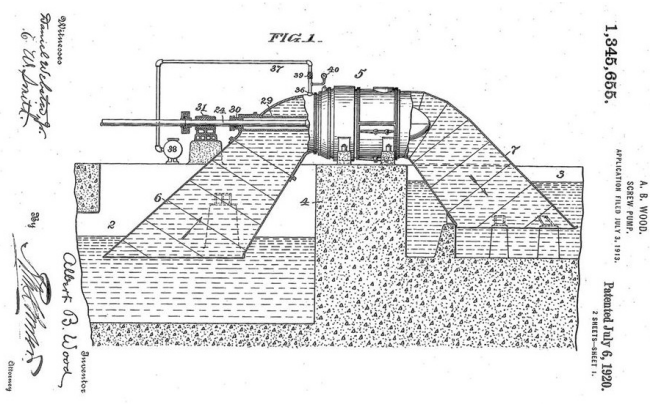
Quick and extensive housing enterprises accompanied these industrial efforts. Among the most impactful municipal projects were the revamping of Mid-City and, later, the expansion of Lakeview and Gentilly areas closest to Lake Pontchartrain.[66] A revolutionary, industrial pumping system, developed and pioneered by A. Baldwin Wood in the 1890s, facilitated the emergence of these new neighborhoods.[67] Wood's "screw pump" (diagrammed below) allowed New Orleans to drain Mid-City and the lakeside neighborhoods by pushing the large volumes of water into the lake.[68] The aforementioned economic enterprises made New Orleans an increasingly viable and legitimate destination for Louisiana Black migrants during the 1920s.

---

[66] Richard Campanella, "New Orleans: A Timeline of Economic History," *The New Orleans Business Alliance*, 9, n.d., accessed March 1, 2018, http://www.richcampanella.com/assets/pdf/article_Campanella_New%20Orleans%20Timeline%20of%20Economic%20History_NOBA.pdfhttp://www.richcampanella.com/assets/pdf/article_Campanella_New%20Orleans%20Timeline%20of%20Economic%20History_NOBA.pdf.

[67] Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, "Introduction to Part III: Franco-Africans and African-Americans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 198.

[68] "Draining the Swamp: A. Baldwin Wood and the pump that built New Orleans," *Nola.com/The Times-Picayune*, June 14, 2017, accessed February 20, 2018, http://www.nola.com/300/2017/06/a_baldwin_wood_pumps_new_orlea.html.



A. Baldwin Wood's "screw pump," implemented in New Orleans in 1915 and patented in 1920. (See footnote 48)

Predictably, however, the resulting housing boom served only a select, white segment of the city's population. Those who could afford to do so moved further North, closer to the lake, while most of the Black residents concentrated in the interior areas of the city. Black arrivals to the city were funneled into heavily segregated neighborhoods such as Mid-City, the Tremé and Seventh Ward, and areas of Uptown. These regions flooded first and drained last with the new technology and Blacks' housing needs were systematically disregarded by white politicians.[69] For example, the creation of the Vieux Carré Association (later the Vieux Carré Commission) in 1926 is indicative of the city's priorities: the Association's mission was to oversee the historical and architectural preservation of the French Quarter.[70] The municipal government provided funds and resources for the upkeep of one very small area of the city rather than addressing housing issues for low-income communities of color.

By the end of the 1920s, racial tensions had heightened in New Orleans. The mob rage surrounding Fred Johnson's alleged, minor, nonviolent offense is one indication of southern

[69] Hirsch and Logsdon, "Introduction to Part III," 198.
[70] Karen Kingsley, "Historic Preservation," in *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, March 11, 2011, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/historic-preservation.

whites' post-Reconstruction mindset. And yet, though whites often escaped consequences for crimes against Black people, Black citizens in New Orleans maintained a level of economic autonomy. The numerous social aid and pleasure clubs actively engaged in the betterment of Black life and, as Logsdon and Bell assert, "worked continuously to improve black schools and other public facilities" during the 1920s.[71] Almost all aspects of Black life and culture changed, flourished, and expanded during this time, and some areas progressed. If the Creoles of the nineteenth century did not need whites to make their own way, American and Creole Blacks of the early twentieth century were also able to make their own way.

\

[71] Logsdon and Bell, "The Americanization of Black New Orleans," 266.

Chapter 3
Changes During the Great Depression: Migration to New Orleans in the 1930s

In contrast to the economic opportunities of the 1920s, Black people suffered disproportionately during the Great Depression in Louisiana. The 1930s constituted an especially devastating period for the state, where the economy was still heavily based on traditional plantation farming and where existed few, if any, fallback measures for agricultural collapse. For example, at the beginning of the 1930s, sugar and cotton plantations across the state still relied on hand labor instead of industrial machinery.[72] One of the most marked indicators of the downfall of Louisiana agriculture was the decline in the price of cotton and its value on the stock exchange. On December 3, 1932, the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate* explained that the previous day's cotton market "closed steady and at the bottom, at net declines for the day of 11 to 14 points."[73] Such losses were common for the time and their consequences most deeply impacted the state's Black rural residents. However, analyses of life during the Great Depression have typically focused on white experiences, usually by omission of any discussion of race, and rarely has an essay or study made Black experiences during this period a narrative or investigative priority.[74]

---

[72] Ferlinger, "The Problem of 'Labor'," 142.
[73] "Cotton Declines," Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, December 3, 1932.
[74] See, for example, Winifred D. Wandersee Bolin, "The Economics of Middle-Income Family Life: Working Women During the Great Depression" (*The Journal of American History* 65, no. 1, June 1978, 60-74); Irvin M. May, Jr., "Cotton and Cattle: The FSRC and Emergency Work Relief" (*Agricultural History* 46, no. 3, July 1972, 401-413); and Price V. Fishback, Michael R. Haines, and Shawn Kantor, "Births, Deaths, and New Deal Relief during the Great Depression" (*The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89, no. 1, February 2007, 1-14).

The Depression in Rural Louisiana

Through migratory journeys, labor organization in the countryside, and political and economic activism in urban areas, many Black Louisianians exercised their agency as fully as possible during the Great Depression and pushed the boundaries of social and political acceptability under Jim Crow rule. Southern Blacks had expanded to every region of the United States: they had migrated West into Kansas, Missouri, and beyond since the beginnings of the Exoduster.[75] The movement of Black Southerners to the North, West, and Midwest, and especially the migration surges of the 1890s and 1920s, had ensured that the Black populations of cities from Philadelphia to Los Angeles expanded. In Louisiana, the Black populations of New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Shreveport increased dramatically over the preceding decades as men and women brought their families from plantations to urban centers to build a better life.

The Great Depression, however, stemmed the tide of migration for quite some time, until World War II. Historians must examine this unprecedented period in the country's history in conjunction with the Great Migration, which had begun at the end of the previous century and would continue into the 1970s. How did the Great Depression impact those who had already moved, those who stayed, and those who hoped to leave?

The Land Issue

A major part of life for many Black Louisianians was the land they worked. The struggle to escape tenant farming or sharecropping became all the more difficult during the 1930s. Lack of employment opportunities outside farm work imposed by Jim Crow social and legal restrictions became compounded by federal efforts that effectively prioritized white people's

[75] Glen Schwendemann, "St. Louis and the 'Exodusters' of 1879," *The Journal of Negro History* 46, no.1 (1961): 32, accessed March 1, 2018, doi:10.2307/2716077.

reentry to the workforce and, indeed, survival. While the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) worked to further the interests of farmers with large landholdings and in direct contradiction to the interests of tenant farmers, the New Deal resettlement program increased the number of small farmers and sharecroppers/tenant operators.[76] Franklin D. Roosevelt's Resettlement Administration (RA) began "optioning" land for the development of big agricultural communities and for the use of individual farmers or small-scale farming operations.[77]

Black farm workers were far more susceptible to displacement than whites when the federal government thought that evictions became necessary. In their study of federal evictions of sharecroppers during the New Deal Era, Jane Adams and D. Gordon wrote, "Tenants were evicted from newly acquired RA/FSA lands for two reasons: because they were of the wrong race in the segregated communities, and because they did not qualify as RA/FSA clients."[78] One of the best known and documented resettlement programs is that of Transylvania Plantation, which, when the land was developed as an all-white settlement in 1938, caused the displacement of all of the land's Black residents.[79]

---

[76] Donald Holley, "Old and New Worlds in the New Deal Resettlement Program: Two Louisiana Projects," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 11, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 138, accessed January 8, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231118.
[77] Jane Adams and D. Gordon, "'This Land Ain't My Land: The Eviction of Sharecroppers by the Farm Security Administration," *Agricultural History* 84, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 329, accessed December 11, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/378952.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Adams and Gordon, "'This Land Ain't My Land," 324. For an additional recounting, see John H. Scott and Cleo Scott Brown, *Witness to the Truth: My Struggle for Human Rights in Louisiana*, University of South Carolina Press, 2008.

Russell Lee, "Sharecropper and child who will be resettled Transylvania Project Louisiana"[80]

Adams and Gordon further explained that these "resettlement projects were part of larger efforts to modernize rural America."[81] One aspect of this initiative was planters' purchasing of tractors and other farming technologies with their subsidy funds from the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.[82] Such innovations lessened the need for hand labor even further, and resulted in increased displacement of Black farm workers. Furthermore, as only about 20 percent of Black farmers *across the entire South* owned the land they worked, few in Louisiana were eligible for government assistance.[83] At a time when most Black people still lived in the rural South, the fact that they were ineligible for federal aid due to systematic exclusion from ownership and self-determination was especially egregious.

---

[80] Louisiana Digital Library, "Sharecropper and child who will be resettled Transylvania Project Louisiana," accessed February 26, 2018. http://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/state-lhp%3A4537.
[81] Adams and Gordon, "'This Land Ain't My Land," 326.
[82] De Jong, "'With the Aid of God and the F.S.A.'," 110.
[83] Stephanie J. Shaw, "Using the WPA Ex-Slave Narratives to Study the Impact of the Great Depression," *The Journal of Southern History* 69 no. 3 (August 2003): 638, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040012.

It is important to consider the general climate of the 1930s and the preceding years in which white policy-makers lived. Louisiana Democrats, most of whom opposed President Roosevelt and his policies despite party affiliations, had regained almost absolute state power by the 1930s.[84] This was still the party that had spearheaded the post-Reconstruction backlash against racial progress, and that had actively sought to suppress and disenfranchise Black Louisianians These men were certainly not going to allow policies which they opposed to benefit people they despised.

As Glen Jeansonne wrote in his refutation of scholarship praising Huey Long's alleged progressive attitudes toward Blacks, "race...is an issue on which principles are important."[85] Jeansonne cites several instances of Long's direct and indirect racism and racial opportunism; these examinations analyze Long's public positions on everything from policy to the word "nigger." He portrays Long as a shameless opportunist, dispassionate on the subject of race, who "did not employ racism in Louisiana because it was not good politics."[86] Other contemporary politicians were more explicitly antagonistic to Blacks in the South (Jeansonne cites Theodore G. Bilbo and James Kimble Vardaman of Mississippi and Eugene Talmadge of Georgia). However, the Long administration in Louisiana certainly fostered the perpetuation of Black subjugation in the state.

Yet governmental adversity was not a novelty in Black communities. Exercising agency through movement became more difficult as the Depression progressed, as indicated by declining

---

[84] Roger Biles, "The Urban South in the Great Depression," *The Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1 (February 1990): 74, accessed December 18, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2210665.
[85] Glen Jeansonne, "Huey Long and Racism," in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, Volume XI: The African American Experience in Louisiana, Part C: From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 187.
[86] Ibid., 180.

numbers of migrants across the country, but many Black Louisianians still managed escape to larger cities within the state.

The Situation in New Orleans

From 1920 to 1930, the recorded Black population of New Orleans grew from 100,930 to 129,632.[87] Though not all of these new additions were migrants, migration accounted for a significant number of the growing population. Even during the Great Depression, New Orleans, with its vibrant Black neighborhoods, unique cultural position within Louisiana and the South, historically bustling port, and established pockets of Black business continued to draw many across the state who sought opportunity as their world deteriorated. Black businesses had sprung up along South Rampart and Dryades Streets in the 1920s, and their success came both in spite of and due to segregationist measures within the city.[88] These enterprises concentrated within segregated neighborhoods had a guaranteed clientele, and, while times certainly became harder during the Depression, many were able to remain operational.

During the 1930s, however, new residents had as much trouble finding employment as locals. Urban unemployment rates across the country and through the decade of the 1930s were consistently higher for African American men and women than for whites.[89] Furthermore, William A. Sundstrom explains that in 1931, "the unemployment rates of black women ranged

---

[87] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States," *U.S. Census Bureau*, Population Division, Working Paper No. 76, February 2005, 59.
[88] John N. Ingham, "Building Businesses, Creating Communities: Residential Segregation and the Growth of African American Business in Southern Cities, 1880 - 1915," *The Business History Review* 77, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 650, accessed December 18, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30041232.
[89] William A. Sundstrom, "Last Hired, First Fired?: Unemployment and Urban Black Workers During the Great Depression," *The Journal of Economic History* 52, no. 2 (June 1992): 416, accessed January 9, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2123118.

from twice to more than four times the rates of white women" for a sample of 10 urban centers.[90]

DECOMPOSITION OF RACIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DIFFERENCE, 1931 UNEMPLOYMENT SAMPLE

	Both Sexes (%)	Males (%)			Females (%)		
		All	North	South	All	North	South
Black unemployment rate	40.7	39.2	39.8	35.8	43.0	46.8	30.9
White unemployment rate	27.2	30.7	31.1	21.9	18.0	17.9	18.1
Difference (black-white)	13.6	8.5	8.7	13.9	25.0	28.8	12.7
Within-occupation effect	9.8	4.4	4.6	1.5	24.1	24.9	6.2
Composition effect	2.0	6.4	6.2	14.2	−0.3	−0.9	1.7
Residual	1.7	−2.4	−2.1	−1.8	1.2	4.8	4.8
Number of occupation-city observations	490	358	289	69	132	102	30

Notes: North consists of Manhattan, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis; South consists of Birmingham, New Orleans, and Houston.
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census: 1930, Unemployment*, vol. 2, pp. 470–91; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census: 1930, Population*, vol. 4, table 12 for each city.

An analysis of national urban unemployment differences between Black and white workers in 1931.[91]

The federal government implemented the New Deal in 1933.[92] The resulting agricultural policies that had displaced many of the migrants initially came with urban counterparts that no one had designed to include Black Americans. Though language in the National Recovery Administration program banned discrimination based on race, white employers found numerous ways to circumvent racial provisions. White business owners fired Black workers either to give their jobs to whites or simply because they did not want to pay them as much as they would pay a white person.[93]

In addition to dismal employment prospects, Black residents of the Crescent City contended with a "sustained, routine" form of lynching: unpunished police brutality and

[90] Ibid., 418.
[91] Ibid., 424.
[92] *Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v.*"New Deal," accessed March 4, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/event/New-Deal.
[93]Luther Adams, "'Headed for Louisville': Rethinking Urban Migration in the South, 1930-1950," *Journal of Southern History* 40, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 410, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491901.

homicide.[94] Jeffrey S. Adler has extensively studied the intersection between race and the New Orleans Police Department. Though Adler's interpretation of the rampant police homicides among Black New Orleanians during the early twentieth century fails to take into account the underlying factors of exactly why white policemen considered dominating and often murdering Blacks as simply maintaining order (i.e., the criminalization of an entire race), his data are intriguing. During the twenty years between 1925 and 1945, Patrolman Charles Geurand was the only NOPD officer convicted for the murder of a civilian in New Orleans.[95] This conviction was for the very public murder and attempted rape of a fourteen-year-old Black dishwasher named Hattie McCray.[96] The fact that white New Orleans law enforcement officers were almost exclusively above the law highlights the similarities between violence in the countryside and the racial situation in the city.

Creative Resistance

Yet Black New Orleanians, new and native, persevered and helped their culture thrive during the 1930s. One can easily expand Griffin's definition of agency from only the historical implications to include cultural considerations. When oppressors deny certain groups civil, civic, and political rights, social and cultural expressions of agency are natural alternatives. Though there is no substitute for full civil rights, other avenues of expression can provide a reprieve. In New Orleans during the 1930s, jazz maintained its dominance of the music clubs and another generation of young people learned to cook using their forebears' traditional recipes. Mardi Gras

[94] Jeffrey S. Adler, "'The Killer Behind the Badge': Race and Police Homicide In New Orleans, 1925 - 1945," *Law and History Review* 30, no. 2 (May 2012): 497, accessed October 19, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23209692.
[95] Ibid., 502.
[96] Ibid., 502-503.

"Indians" and second line culture continued as a major form of cultural resistance to oppression and an explicit exercise of both limited agency and freedom. As George Lipsitz writes,

> The Mardi Gras Indian narrative takes many forms, but its central theme is the story of heroic warriors resisting domination. The Indians tell about past Mardi Gras days when challenges from other groups forced them to bring to the surface the bravery and solidarity that they must repress in everyday life.[97]

Cultural practices such as the Mardi Gras Indian tradition often provide relief for oppressed groups who are unable to act out their agency in other, more conventional ways (for example, direct political engagement). The photograph below depicts an example of the joy and fulfillment that can come from involvement with celebrations of cultural traditions that reflect resistance to the status quo and unjust domination.

Two young Black men in New Orleans demonstrating their Mardi Gras Indian attire, 1930s.[98]

[97] George Lipsitz, "Mardi Gras Indians: Carnival and Counter-Narrative in Black New Orleans," *Cultural Critique* no. 10, Popular Narrative, Popular Images (Autumn 1988): 103.
[98] Louisiana Digital Library, "Mardi Gras 'Indians' in New Orleans Louisiana in the 1930s," accessed February 26, 2018.

Perhaps one of the most important yet underrepresented instances of Black cultural agency in Louisiana during the Great Depression was the Dillard Project. Unemployed Black writers worked hard to organize this all-Black New Orleans arm of the Federal Writers Project, in operation from January of 1936 to 1942.[99] James B. LaFourche, a trained Black journalist whom Ronnie W. Clayton explains "WPA officials assigned to a manual labor job when he applied for work on the Writers' Project," petitioned for employment as a writer and was instrumental to the beginning of the Black Louisiana branch of the Federal Writers' Project.[100] Headquartered at Dillard University in New Orleans, these writers often focused specifically on questions of Black history and life in Louisiana, work that fell perfectly in line with the renewed interest in Black Americans' present and future.[101] Joan Redding explains that

> In their manuscript, "The Negro in Louisiana," they intended to correct common myths about black history, especially that of black passivity. Believing that accurate revelation of facts would eradicate racist attitudes, the Dillard writers intended to present a straight narrative, without interpretation.[102]

The Dillard Project was discontinued before they could publish their massive work on Black Louisiana history, "The Negro in Louisiana."[103] Though they encountered numerous practical and cultural obstacles, including repeated rejection from libraries and distrust even within the Black community, they nevertheless made remarkable headway in bringing legitimacy and understanding to Black lived experiences within the state.[104]

---

[99] Joan Redding, "The Dillard Project: The Black Unit of the Louisiana Writers' Project," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 47, accessed February 26, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4232864.
[100] Ronnie W. Clayton, "The Federal Writers' Project for Blacks in Louisiana," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 328, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231790.
[101] Redding, "The Dillard Project," 53-54.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Redding, "The Dillard Project," footnote 20, 53.
[104] Clayton, "The Federal Writers' Project for Blacks in Louisiana,"330.

Black Louisianans would continue to challenge racist systems and contribute to intellectual and creative fields in New Orleans until World War II. Although the Great Depression slowed the process of migration and brought changes to the economic and cultural landscape of Black New Orleans, men and women continued to travel to the Crescent City in an expression of collective agency. Relocating to the Tremé and Seventh Ward, Central City, and areas of Uptown, they brought hopes, dreams, and reminders of places so many had left before. Their bravery and willingness to risk the uncertainty of an unfamiliar city influenced generations to come. They helped these communities grow and flourish, and their impact remains with the city to this day.

Conclusion

Evidence of Black defiance to the political and social power structure stands in direct opposition to simplistic accounts depicting Black history in Louisiana as one of routine oppression and inactivity. In spite of rampant race-based terrorism and grinding poverty that disproportionately affected Blacks in the sharecropping and tenant farming systems, Black men and women found ways to engage in political and social activism, creative endeavors, and migration to new places to realize their hopes of bettering their lives.

The purpose of this thesis was to consider Black Louisianians' relocation to New Orleans as both individual expressions of agency and as part of the collective Great Migration. James Griffin's discussion of agency has been useful in describing the motivations for and capacities of Black rural farmworkers and small-town inhabitants who left their birthplaces to settle somewhere unfamiliar. Studying the intra-state movements of Blacks within Louisiana allows scholars to view the histories of Louisiana and specifically the state's Black inhabitants in the light of collective power and self-determination. The Great Migration within Louisiana from 1890 through the 1930s was an immense cultural phenomenon that demonstrates Black Louisianians' resilience and that changes the story of the Jim Crow era from one of abject oppression to a narrative of empowerment.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

"BUSINESS INDEX SHOWS THIS CITY LEADING SOUTH: First Quarter's Bank Debits Total Indicates Prosperity Here," *The Times-Picayune*, April 2, 1924.

"Cotton Declines as Stocks Give Bear Influence: New Orleans Market Closes Steady at Bottom with Losses of 11 to 14 Points." *Morning Advocate*. Dec. 3. 1932.

"Mob Kills Negro Highway Robber as He Falls Into Canal: Pulled Out of Water to Die on Bank as Result of Bullet Wound." *The Times-Picayune*, Oct. 28, 1917.

"NEGROES IN KEEN DEMAND - SOUTHERN PLANTERS COMPETING FOR THEIR SERVICES. A General Migration One Effect of Thirteen Cent Cotton -- The Negro Better Off Than Ever Before -- "Stealing" of Negroes Between States Going On," *The New York Sun*, JaNUARY 30, 1904.

Scott, Emmett J. "More Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918." *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 4 (October 1919): 412-465. Chicago: The Chicago University Press. doi:10.2307/2713449.

"The White People's Ticket." Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate*, October 26, 1874, 2.

"We Protest." New Orleans *Weekly Louisianian*, May 14, 1881.

Secondary Sources

"A century of standing up, speaking out: The history of the NAACP in New Orleans." *Nola.com/The Times-Picayune*. August 10, 2017. Url: http://www.nola.com/300/2017/08/naacp_new_orleans_chapter_foun.html

Adams, Jane and D. Gordon. “This Ain’t My Land: The Eviction of Sharecroppers by the Farm Security Administration.” *Agricultural History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 323-351. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/378952.

Adams, Luther. “‘Headed for Louisville’: Rethinking Urban Migration in the South, 1930-1950.” *Journal of Southern History* 40, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 407-430. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491901.

Adler, Jeffrey S. “‘The Killer Behind the Badge’: Race and Police Homicide In New Orleans, 1925 - 1945.” *Law and History Review* 30, no. 2 (May 2012): 495-531. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23209692.

Biles, Roger. “The Urban South in the Great Depression.” *The Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1 (February 1990): 71-100. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2210665.

Brown, Kevin J. “Joseph Guillaume: The Star Car, Part 1 of 3.” *New Orleans Historical*. url: http://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/545.

Campanella, Richard. “New Orleans: A Timeline of Economic History.” (New Orleans: New Orleans Business Alliance. n.d., http://www.richcampanella.com/assets/pdf/article_Campanella_New%20Orleans%20Timeline%20of%20Economic%20History_NOBA.pdf)

Clayton, Ronnie W. “The Federal Writers’ Project for Blacks in Louisiana.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 327-335. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231790.

De Jong, Greta. “With the Aid of God and the F.S.A.: The Louisiana Farmers’ Union and the African American Freedom Struggle in the New Deal Era.” *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 1 (Autumn 2000): 105-139. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3789512.

DeVore, Donald E. *Defying Jim Crow: African American Community Development and the Struggle for Racial Equality in New Orleans, 1900-1960*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015.

Ferlinger, Louis. “The Problem of ‘Labor’ in the Post-Reconstruction Louisiana Sugar Industry.” *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 140-158. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3744376.

Fink, Robert. “Homestead Act of 1862.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. url: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Homestead-Act#ref1233741.

Fortune, T. Thomas. “Political Independence of the Negro,” 1884, *TeachingAmericanHistory.org*. url: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/political-independence-of-the-negro.

Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

Gibson, Campbell, and Kay Jung. “Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities and Other Urban Places In The United States.” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

Griffin, James. *On Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Hirsch, Arnold R., and Joseph Logsdon, eds. *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Holley, Donald. "Old and New Worlds in the New Deal Resettlement Program: Two Louisiana Projects." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 11, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 137-165. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231118.

Ingham, John N. "Building Businesses, Creating Communities: Residential Segregation and the Growth of African American Business in Southern Cities, 1880-1915." *The Business History Review* 77, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 639-665. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30041232.

Jeansonne, Glen. "Huey Long and Racism." *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, Volume XI: The African American Experience in Louisiana, Part C: From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, ed. Charles Vincent, 178-187. Lafayette: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002.

Johnson, Jerah. "New Orleans's Congo Square: An Urban Setting for Early Afro-American Culture Formation." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 117-157. Url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4232877.

Jones, Jacqueline. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present*. New York: Basic Books, 2009.

Kingsley, Karen. "Historic Preservation." *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, March 11, 2011. url: http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/historic-preservation.

Lipsitz, George. “Mardi Gras Indians: Carnival and Counter-Narrative in Black New Orleans.” *Cultural Critique* no. 10, Popular Narrative, Popular Images (Autumn 1988): 99-121. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354109

“Notable Louisiana Women.” *Tulane University*. url: http://www.tulane.edu/~wc/text/pathfinders/LAwomen.html.

Mealy, Rich. “Desdunes, Rodolphe Lucien (1849 - 1928).” *BlackPast.org*. url: http://www.blackpast.org/aah/desdunes-rodolphe-lucien-1849-1928.

Nystrom, Justin A. “Reconstruction.” *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, October 30, 2015. url: http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/reconstruction.

Partin, Elliott. “Tribune de la Nouvelle Orléans (1864-1868).” *BlackPast.org*. url: http://www.blackpast.org/aah/la-tribune-de-la-nouvelle-orleans-1864-1868.

Pfeifer, Michael J. “The Origins of Postbellum Lynching: Collective Violence in Reconstruction Louisiana.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 189-201. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478643.

Prince, K. Stephen. “Remembering Robert Charles: Violence and Memory in Jim Crow New Orleans.” *Journal of Southern History* 83, no. 2 (May 2017): 297-328. url: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.uno.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=6&sid=89b6c70a-8d30-4016-8504-856df8fd83e5%40sessionmgr4010.

Redding, Joan. “The Dillard Project: The Black Unit of the Louisiana Writers’ Project.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 47-62. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4232864.

Romero, Sidney J. “Louis Wiltz.” *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, September 20, 2011. url: http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/louis-wiltz.

Sartain, Lee. “‘Local Leadership’: The Role of Women in the Louisiana Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1920-1939.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 46, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 311-331. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4234124.

Schneider, Mark Robert. *African Americans in the Jazz Age: A Decade of Struggle and Promise.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.

Shaw, Stephanie J. “Using the WPA Ex-Slave Narratives to Study the Impact of the Great Depression.” *The Journal of Southern History* 69, no. 3 (August 2003): 623-658. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30040012.

Schwendemann, Glen. “St. Louis and the ‘Exodusters’ of 1897.” *The Journal of Negro History* 46, no.1 (January 1961): 32-46. doi:10.2307/2716077.

Schweninger, Loren. “Black-Owned Businesses in the South, 1790-1880.” *The Business History Review* 63, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 22-60. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3115425.

Sundstrom, William A. “Last Hired, First Fired?: Unemployment and Urban Black Workers During the Great Depression.” *The Journal of Economic History* 52, no. 2 (June 1992): 416. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2123118.

Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889 - 1918. New York, NY: Arno Press and the New York *Times*, 1969.

Vann Woodward C. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Vincent, Charles. "'Of Such Historical Importance…': The African American Experience in Louisiana," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 133-158. url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478640.

Vincent, Charles. "Oscar Dunn." *knowlouisiana.org Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010–, August 1, 2013. url: http://www.knowlouisiana.org/entry/oscar-dunn-2.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.