

Harlem Renaissance Great Migration Documents

I, Too

Langston Hughes

1926

I, too, sing America

I am the darker brother,
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well, And
grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll sit at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed,—

I, too, am America.

Document 1–A

LETTER TO *The Crisis*

November 1919, XIX, 339

The Washington riot gave me a thrill that comes once in a life time. I was alone when I read between the lines of the morning paper that at last our men had stood like men, struck back, were no longer dumb, driven cattle. When I could no longer read for my streaming tears, I stood up, alone in my room, held both hands high over my head and exclaimed aloud: “Oh, I thank God, thank God!”
...

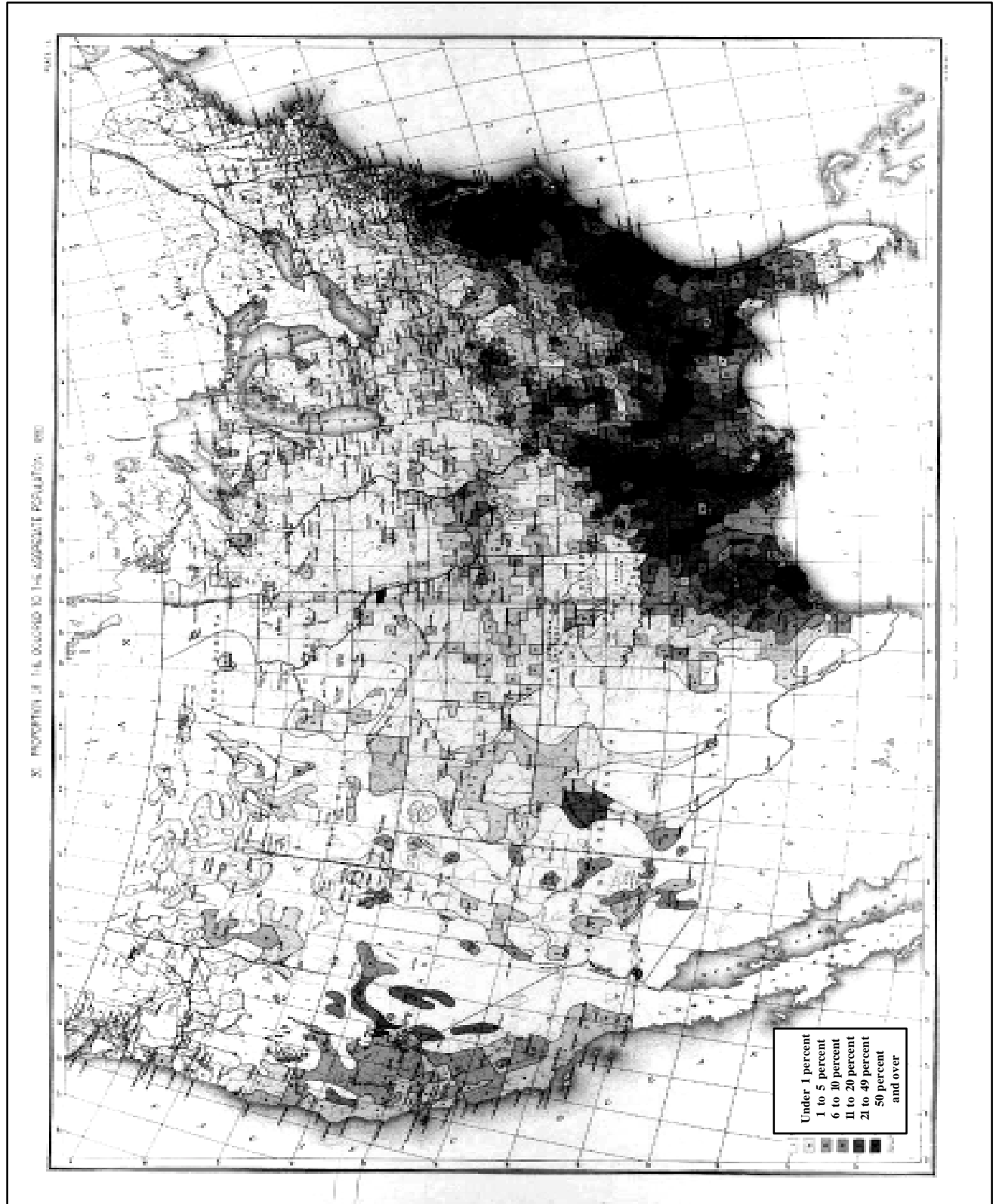
We know how many insults we have borne silently, for we have hidden many of them from our men because we did not want them to die needlessly in our defense; we know the sorrow of seeing our boys and girls grow up, the swift stab of the heart at night at the sound of a strange footstep . . .

God grant that our men everywhere refrain from strife, provoke no quarrel, but that they protect their women and homes at any cost.

SEE POWERPOINT FOR SIGNATURE.

Document 1-B

PERCENTAGE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN TOTAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1890



LYNCHING IN THE SOUTH

A Protest Against the Burning and Lynching of Negroes

Within the last fortnight three members of my race have been burned at the stake; of these one was a woman. Not one of the three was charged with any crime even remotely connected with the abuse of a white woman. In every case murder was the sole accusation. All of these burnings took place in broad daylight and two of them occurred on Sunday afternoon in sight of a Christian church.

In the midst of the nation's busy and prosperous life few, I fear take time to consider where these brutal and inhuman crimes are leading us. The custom of burning human beings has become so common as scarcely to excite interest or attract unusual attention.

I have always been among those who condemned in the strongest terms crimes of whatever character committed by members of my race, and I condemn them now with equal severity; but I maintain that the only protection of our civilization is a fair and calm trial of all people charged with crime and in their legal punishment if proved guilty.

There is no shadow of excuse for departure from legal methods in the cases of individuals accused of murder. The laws are as a rule made by the white people and their execution is in the hands of the white people; so that there is little probability of any guilty colored man escaping.

These burnings without a trial are in the deepest sense unjust to my race; but it is not this injustice alone which stirs my heart. These barbarous scenes followed, as they are, by publication of the shocking details are more disgraceful and degrading to the people who inflict the punishment than those who receive it.

If the law is disregarded when a Negro is concerned, it will soon be disregarded when a white man is concerned; and, besides, the rule of the mob destroys the friendly relations which should exist between the races and injures and interferes with the material prosperity of the communities concerned.

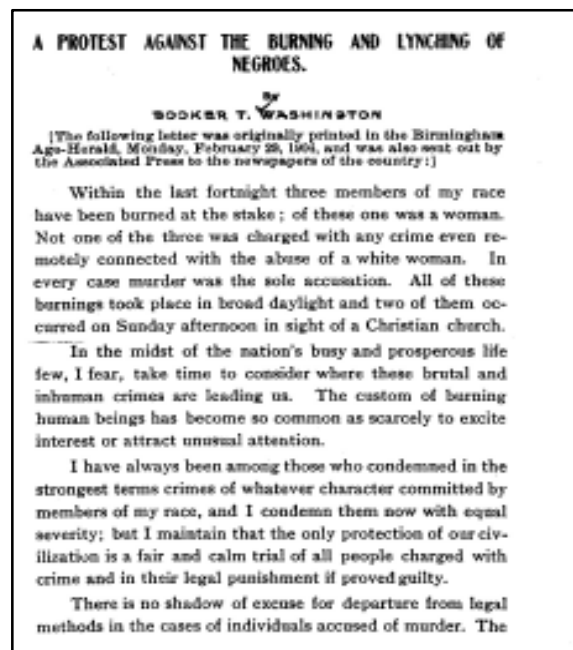
Worst of all these outrages take place in communities where there are Christian churches; in the midst of people who have their Sunday schools, their Christian Endeavor Societies and Young Men's Christian Associations, where collections are taken up for sending missionaries to Africa and China and the rest of the so-called heathen world.

Is it not possible for pulpit and press to speak out against these burnings in a manner that shall arouse a public sentiment that will compel the mob to cease insulting our courts, our Governors and legal authority; cease bringing shame and ridicule upon our Christian civilization.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.
Tuskegee, Ala., February 22, 1904.

This letter was originally printed in the Birmingham Age-Herald, Monday, February 29, 1904. Reprinted in the Library of Congress, African American Perspectives: Pamphlets from the Daniel A. P. Murray Collection, 1818–1907.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aaphome.html>



Document 1—D

LYNCHING STATISTICS FROM THE CRISIS (1920)

According to THE CRISIS records, 77 Negroes were lynched during the year 1919, of whom 1 was a colored woman and 11 were soldiers; 4 white persons and 3 Mexicans also were lynched, —a total of 84 lynchings.

During the year 1918, 64 Negroes were lynched, 5 of whom were colored women; 4 white men were lynched.

Georgia still leads, with an increase of 2 lynchings; Mississippi takes second place, instead of Texas, with 5 more lynchings; Alabama, by an increase of 5 lynchings, ties with Louisiana. In methods of torture, burnings have increased from 2 in 1918 to 14 in 1919.

January 18, Shreveport, La., Henry Thomas; murder.
 January 20, Hillsboro, Tex., Bragg Williams, burned; murder
 January 29, Monroe, La., Sampson Smith; murder.
 February 6, Newburn, N. C., John Daniels; murder
 February 14, Bossier, La., Will Fortner; murder.
 March 2, Belzoni, Miss., Eugene Green; assault on man.
 March 12, Greenville, Fla., Joe Walker; shooting.
 March 13, Tuscaloosa, Ala., Cicero Cage, cut to pieces; pulling woman from horse.
 March 14, Pensacola, Fla., Bud Johnson, soldier, burned; attempt to rape.
 April — Blakely, Ga., Wilbur Little, soldier, beaten; wearing U. S. A. uniform too long. . . .

<i>According to State</i>		<i>Methods of Torture</i>	
Georgia..... 22	Missouri..... 2	Hanging..... 43	Drowning..... 2
Mississippi..... 12	Colorado..... 2	Shooting..... 23	Beating..... 1
Alabama..... 8	West Virginia..... 2	Burning..... 14	Cutting..... 1
Louisiana..... 8	Nebraska..... 1		
Arkansas..... 7	Washington..... 1		
Texas..... 5	Tennessee..... 1		
Florida..... 5	Kansas..... 1		
North Carolina..... 4	Sonora (Mexico)..... 1		
South Carolina..... 2			
		<i>Negroes Lynched By Years, 1885–1919</i>	
		1885..... 78	1903..... 86
		1886..... 71	1904..... 83
		1887..... 80	1905..... 61
		1888..... 95	1906..... 64
		1889..... 95	1907..... 60
		1890..... 90	1908..... 93
		1891..... 121	1909..... 73
		1892..... 155	1910..... 65
		1893..... 154	1911..... 63
		1894..... 134	1912..... 63
		1895..... 112	1913..... 79
		1896..... 102	1914..... 69
		1897..... 84	1915..... 80
		1898..... 102	1916..... 55
		1899..... 84	1917..... 44
		1900..... 107	1918..... 64
		1901..... 107	1919..... 77
		1902..... 86	
			TOTAL 3,052
<i>By Race</i>			
Negro..... 77	Mexican..... 3		
White..... 4			
<i>By Sex</i>			
Male..... 83	Female..... 1		
<i>Alleged Crimes</i>			
Murder..... 28	Shooting and assault		
Rape and attempted	to murder..... 7		
Rape..... 19	Insulting women..... 7		
Trivial causes..... 9	Labor trouble..... 1		
Intimacy with women. 4	Quarrel..... 1		
Bandits..... 3	Insurrection..... 1		
Unknown..... 2			
Burglary..... 2			

Document 1–E

FIELD WORK IN THE SOUTH



Smithsonian Institution



Smithsonian Institution

These pictures were part of the exhibit, “Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940,” at the National Museum of American History.

Document 1–F

EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

The education in southern schools was extremely poor. The rooms were overcrowded, they had few resources, and the buildings were very dilapidated. As Hughes Child said, "When I was a boy, the state didn't even give you but three months to go to school. That's all. Three months . . . you could barely learn the alphabet in three months."

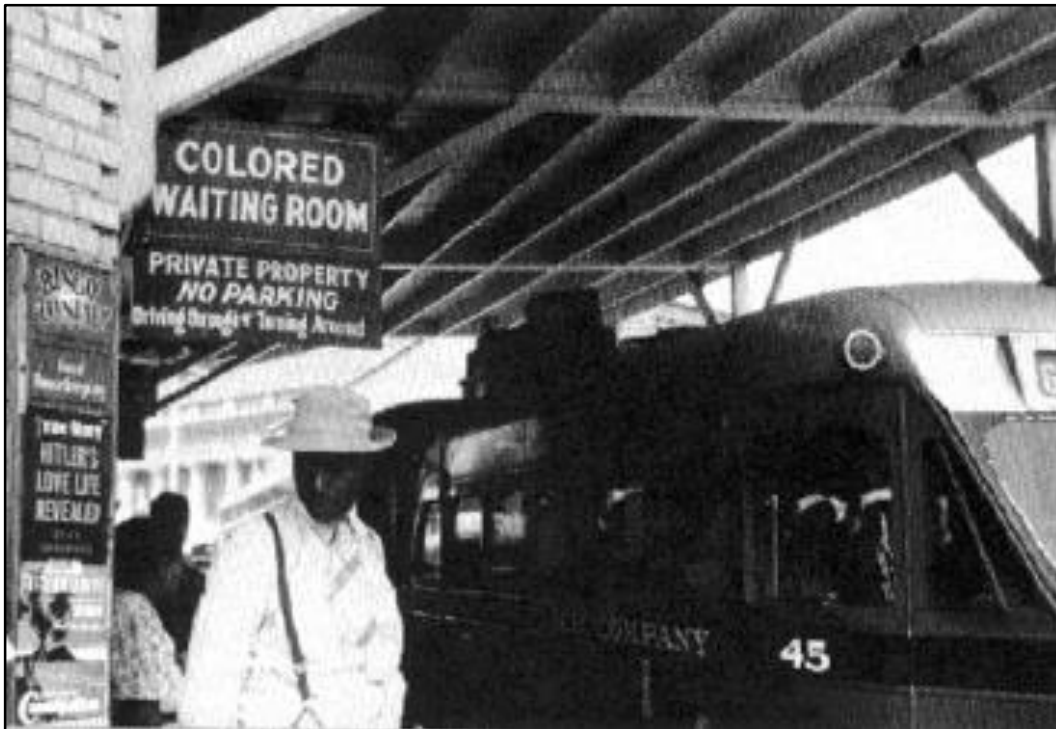
Source: <http://otal.umd.edu/~vg/msf95/ms20/education1.html>



Smithsonian Institution

This picture was part of the exhibit, “Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940,” at the National Museum of American History.

Document 1-G
JIM CROW LAWS



National Park Service

Colored Waiting Room at the train station, ND. Presented by Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm



Farm Security Administration



Farm Security Administration



Farm Security Administration

Segregated drinking fountains and a colored only waiting room, examples of the segregated facilities in the South that persisted into the 1960s.

Document 1-H

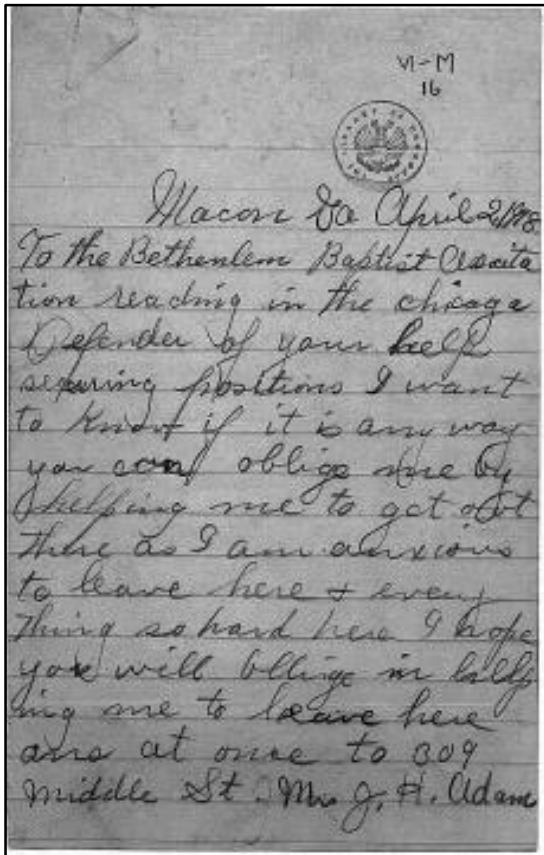
LETTERS TO THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

Mobile, Ala., 4-26-17

Dear Sir Bro:

. . . I am writing to you for advice about comeing north. I am a brickmason an I can do cement work an stone work. . . if there nothing there for me to make a support for my self and family. My wife is seamstress. We want to get away the 15 or 20 of May so please give this matter your earnest consideration an let me her from you by return mail as my bro. in law want to get away to. He is a carpenter by trade. so please help us as we are in need of your help as we wanted to go to Detroit but if you says no we go where ever you says. There is nothing here for the colored man but a hard time which these southern crackers gives us. We has not had any work to do in 4 wks. and every thing is high to the colored man so please let me hear from you by return mail. Please do this for your brother.

Source: Deirdre Mullane, ed. Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of African-American Writing (New York: Anchor Books, 1993), p. 458.



Macon, Ga. April 2, 1918

To the Bethenlem Baptist Association reaching in the Chicago De- fender of your help securing positions I want to know if it is any way you can oblige me by helping me to get out there as I am anxious to leave here & everything so hard here I hope you will oblige me in helping me to leave here ans[wer] at once to 309 Middle St. Mrs. J. H. Adams.

Letter from Mrs. J. H Adams, Macon, Georgia, to the Bethlehem Baptist Association in Chicago, Illinois, 1918 Holograph, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Document 1-I

LETTER TO THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

Granville Mississippi, May 16, 1917

Dear Sir: This letter is a letter of information of which you will find stamp envelop for reply. I want to come north some time soon but I do not want to leave here looking for a job where I would be in dorse all winter. Now the work I am doing here is running a guage edger in a saw mill. I know all about the grading of lumber. I have been working in lumber about 25 or 27 years. My wedges here is \$3.00 a day 11 hours a day. I want to come North where I can educate my 3 little children also my wife. Now if you cannot fix me up at what I am doing down here I can learn anything any one else can. also there is a great deal of good women cooks here would leave any time all they want is to know where to go and some way to go please write me, at once just how I can get my people where they can get something for their work. There are women here cookeing for \$1.50 and \$2.00 a week. I would like to live in Chicago or Ohio or Philadelphia. Tell Mr. Abbott that our pepel are tole that they can not get anything to do up there and they are being snatched off the trains here in Greenville and a rested but in spite of all this, they are leaving every day and every night 100 or more is expecting to leave this week. Let me here from you at once.

Emmett J. Scott, "Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918," *Journal of Negro History*, 4 (July, 1919), p. 435.

[The "Mr. Abbott" referred to is the African American owner of the Chicago Defender who encouraged the migration.]

Document 1-J

FACTORY WORK IN THE NORTH

Ads for Laborers



These pictures were part of the exhibit at the National Museum of American History, entitled "Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940." They were used to illustrate factory life in the north.

Document 1–K

THE CRISIS



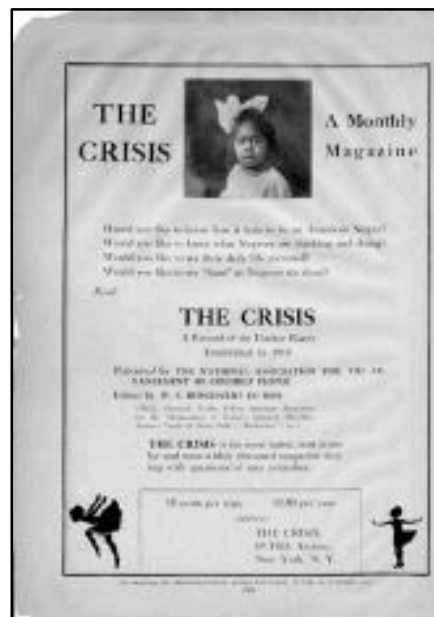
“The Crisis is the official monthly publication of the NAACP. It began in 1910 with William Edward Burghardt DuBois as editor, and became a leading periodical for African Americans. It was known for its radical position against lynching and racial prejudice and reflected the ideology of Dr. DuBois. Until 1919 it sold for 10 cents a copy and boasted a monthly circulation of 80,000 copies. In the 1920s, literary contributions to the magazine increased in keeping with the cultural explosion known as the Harlem Renaissance.”

Source: <http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/text/NAACP.html>

The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races

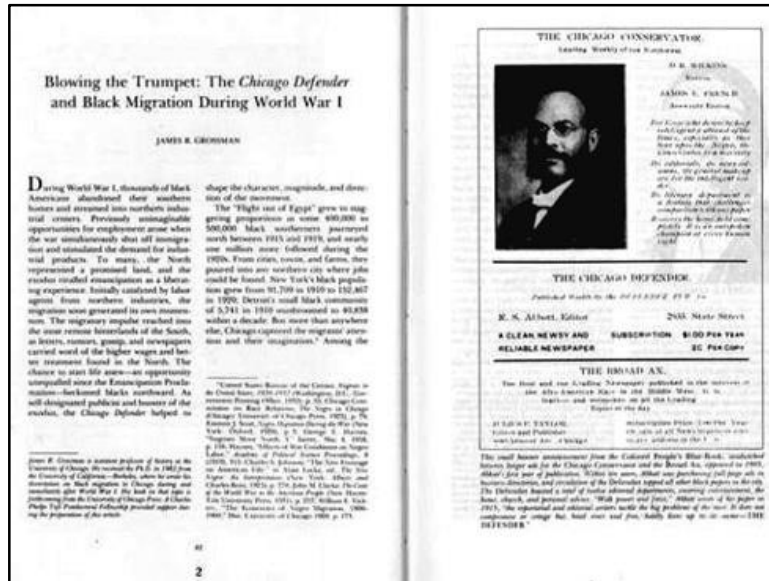


W. E. B. DuBois was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University (1896). He founded The Crisis.



Advertisement for The Crisis which appeared in Survey Graphic Harlem Number (March 1925) Vol. VI, No. 6. This historic issue is presented digitally by the University of Virginia Library's Electronic Text Center:
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/harlem/index.html>

THE CHICAGO DEFENDER



African-American journalist Robert Sengstacke Abbott (1868-1940) founded the Chicago Defender on May 6, 1905, with a capital totaling twenty-five cents. His editorial creed was to fight against "segregation, discrimination, disenfranchisement . . ." The Defender reached national prominence during the mass migration of blacks from the South during World War I, when the paper's banner headline for January 6, 1917, read "Millions to Leave South." The Defender became the bible of many seeking "The Promised Land." Abbott advertised Chicago so effectively that even migrants heading for other northern cities sought information and assistance from the pages of the 'World's Greatest Weekly.'

Kenneth L. Kusmer, ed. The Great Migration and After, 1917-1930, vol. 5, p. 4 Black Communities and Urban Development in America, 1720-1990 (New York: Garland, 1991) Reprinted by the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/west.html>.



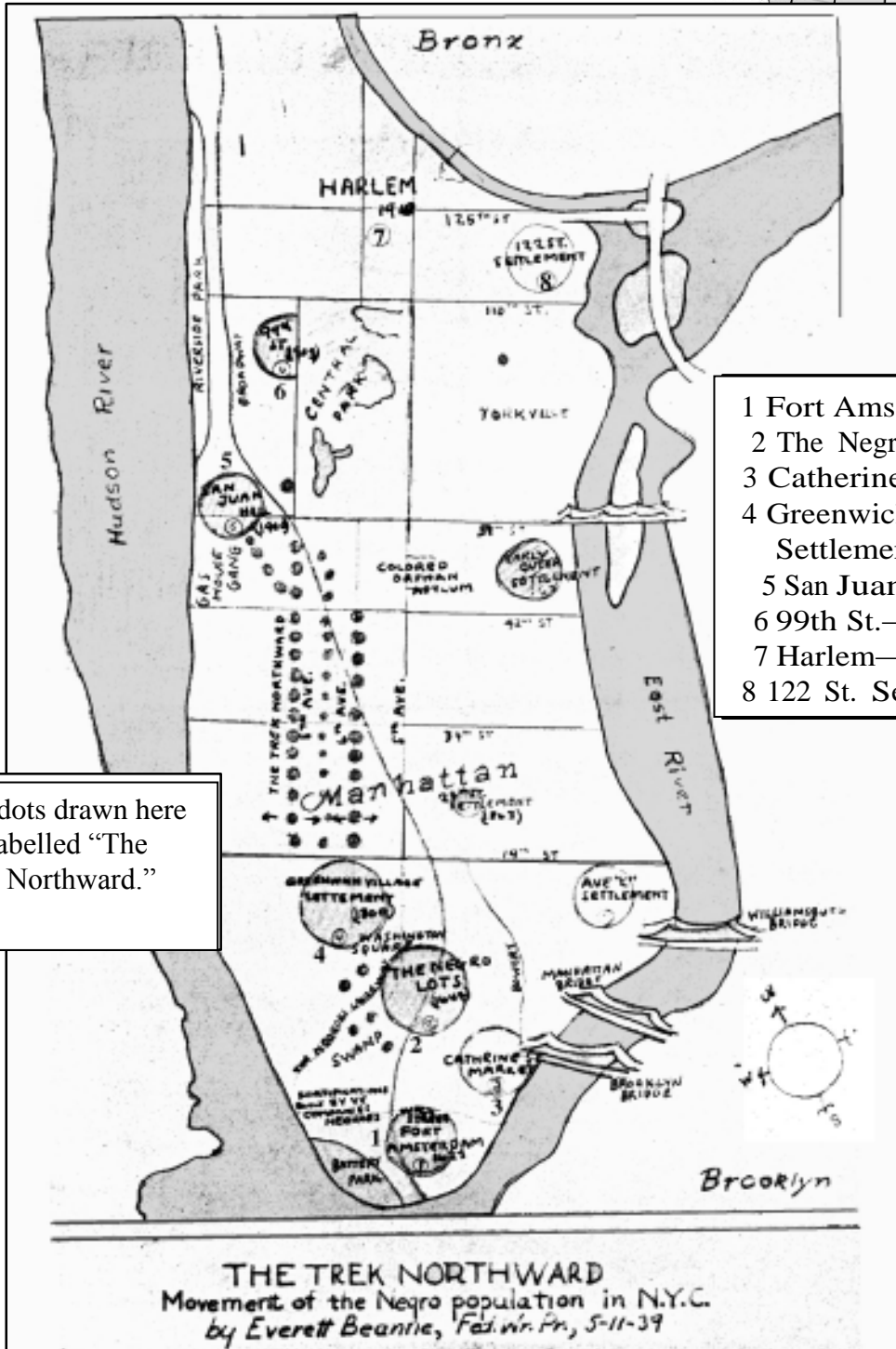
This headline announces the election of Oscan DePriest to alderman. Later, on November 6, 1928, Oscar DePriest became the first African American to win a seat in the United States House of Representatives in the twentieth century.

Source: Ernest R. Rather Chicago Negro Almanac and Reference Book (Chicago: Chicago Negro Almanac Publishing Co., 1972).

Document 1-M

THE TREK NORTHWARD

The Geography of the Great Migration
The Migration of African Americans from the American South (1910-1970)



- 1 Fort Amsterdam—1627
- 2 The Negro Lots—1644
- 3 Catherine St. Market
- 4 Greenwich Village Settlement—1800
- 5 San Juan Hill—1900
- 6 99th St.—1903
- 7 Harlem—1910
- 8 122 St. Settlement

The dots drawn here are labelled "The Trek Northward."

THE TREK NORTHWARD
Movement of the Negro population in N.Y.C.
by Everett Beattie, Fed. Wk. Pr., 5-11-39

EDITORIAL IN THE CRISIS

THE CRISIS

Vol. 16—No. 1

MAY, 1918

Whole No. 91

Editorial

SAVE

I BELIEVE that this is Our War and not President Wilson's War and that no matter how many blunders the administration makes, or how many obstacles it puts in our way we must work the harder to win the war.

I want to urge the importance of advertising in every way you can the campaign for War Savings—savings of money, of food, of labor. In doing so you kill three birds with one stone:

1. Promote the success of the war.
2. Increase the individual wealth of your constituency.
3. Put them on a common footing with other patriotic American citizens and promote those common bonds that gradually break down prejudice.

If the colored citizens of the country seize this opportunity to emphasize their American citizenship by effective war activities, they will score tremendously. When men fight together and work together and save together, this foolishness of race prejudice disappears.

GEORGE G. BRADFORD.

THE NEGRO AND THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

IT seems to be necessary to insist upon justice toward the Negro from the War Department. We are well aware that much of this injustice is incidental and not intentional. As Negroes, we propose to fight for the right, no matter what our treatment may be; but we submit to the public

that intentional injustice toward colored soldiers is the poorest investment that this nation can make just now.

First, let us recall the position of Colonel Young: he is still imprisoned in Ohio on full pay with nothing to do. The Examining Board recommended that Colonel Young be "retained in active service." The Secretary of War approved this recommendation and directed that "Colonel Young be placed on active duty." The Adjutant General, knowing the difference between "active service" and "active duty" immediately retired Colonel Young from active service and placed him on active duty with nothing to do.

Twelve million Negroes demand that Colonel Young be restored to "active service!"

Again, the Ninety-second Division of Negro troops was established by the Secretary of War and approved by President Wilson over the protest of the General Staff: but no effort was made to secure for this division certain necessary persons of technical training. The colored officers at Fort Des Moines were given no artillery training. Farmers from the South, largely illiterate and without mechanical skill or education, were assigned to the artillery in the first draft. This, however, could easily have been remedied by transferring from other regiments in this division and from other divisions, educated and technically trained colored men. The permission to make such trans-

PROTESTS 1917–1925



Library of Congress

The Ku Klux Klan parading in full regalia in 1925 down Pennsylvania Avenue from the capitol to the White House.



Library of Congress

At its headquarters, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City, the NAACP flew a flag to report lynchings, until, in 1938, the threat of losing its lease forced the association to discontinue the practice.

PROTESTS 1917–1924



Smithsonian Institution


UNIA parade organized in Harlem, 1924
The sign reads: "THE NEW NEGRO HAS NO FEAR."



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

The Silent Protest parade organized by Harlem religious and civic leaders and the NAACP, 1917.

ANTI-LYNCHING BILL



A TERRIBLE BLOT ON AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

3424 Lynchings in 33 years

The Judiciary Committee, reported the Anti-Lynching bill to the Senate, on July 28, 1922, as "appropriate legislation" to cure or prevent the evil of lynching wherever in the United States that evil exists or is committed.

On January 28, 1922, the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill passed the House of Representatives, by the following record vote: Yeas 220, Nays 115, Absent "Present" 4, Not voting 77.

Congressmen who voted against the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill

Alabama (9)	Georgia (12)	Maine (1)	Oklahoma (1)	Texas (15)
Arkansas (7)	Illinois (17)	Massachusetts (1)	Oregon (1)	Vermont (1)
California (3)	Indiana (11)	Michigan (1)	Pennsylvania (11)	Virginia (10)
Colorado (3)	Iowa (11)	Minnesota (1)	Rhode Island (1)	Washington (1)
Connecticut (1)	Kentucky (9)	Missouri (1)	South Carolina (9)	West Virginia (1)
Delaware (1)	Louisiana (1)	Montgomery (1)	Tennessee (1)	Wisconsin (1)
District of Columbia (1)	Maine (1)	Nebraska (1)	Utah (1)	Wyoming (1)
Florida (1)	Massachusetts (1)	Nevada (1)	Washington (1)	
Idaho (1)	Michigan (1)	New Hampshire (1)	West Virginia (1)	
Illinois (17)	Minnesota (1)	New Jersey (1)	Wisconsin (1)	
Indiana (11)	Missouri (1)	New York (1)		
Iowa (11)	Montgomery (1)			
Kentucky (9)	Nebraska (1)			
Louisiana (1)	Nevada (1)			
Maine (1)	New Hampshire (1)			
Massachusetts (1)	New Jersey (1)			
Michigan (1)	New York (1)			
Minnesota (1)				
Missouri (1)				
Montgomery (1)				
Nebraska (1)				
Nevada (1)				
New Hampshire (1)				
New Jersey (1)				
New York (1)				
North Carolina (9)				
Ohio (1)				
Oklahoma (1)				
Oregon (1)				
Pennsylvania (11)				
Rhode Island (1)				
South Carolina (9)				
Tennessee (1)				
Texas (15)				
Vermont (1)				
Virginia (10)				
Washington (1)				
West Virginia (1)				
Wisconsin (1)				
Wyoming (1)				

* Republican

Two victims always of a lynching—a human being and civilization

Prepared by The Committee on Public Affairs, The Inter-Federal Council
Issued by District Columbia Anti-Lynching Committee, North Eastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs

A terrible blot on American civilization. 3424 lynchings in 33 years. . . Prepared by the Committee on Public Affairs, the Inter-federal council. Issued by District of Columbia anti-lynching committee, Northeast- ern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. [1922]

This pamphlet was one of many publications by anti-lynching crusaders.

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill

The Dyer Anti-Lynch Bill passed the House of Representatives but was killed in the Senate.

FILIBUSTER BLOCKS ANTI-LYNCHING BILL

House Democrats Succeed in Preventing Debate on Measure Until After Holidays.

WIN BY BREAKING QUORUM

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA. SATURDAY
DECEMBER 17, 1921
Lynchings Continue
As Congress Debates

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, SATURDAY DECEMBER 17, 1921


Lynchings Continue As Congress Debates Anti-Lynch Bill

New York.—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, today made public a statement to the effect that since the introduction of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill in Congress on April 11, 1902, there had been 28 persons murdered in the United States.

have been seven lynchings, one had been public in some.

Among these lynchings, a white girl is noted as having been lynched.


EXERCISING THE RIGHT OF PETITION



A SILENT PARADE

Vote Against Those Who Voted To Protect The Lynching Industry.

EXERCISING THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE



Join This Silent Parade