

Chapter 6 Power of Terrorism

Native American John R. Salter, Jr., a 1960s Tougaloo College sociology professor and Jackson civil rights leader, wrote an early book on the Jackson Civil Rights Movement, suggesting the importance of looking back into early state history to understand better what took place during the modern civil rights movement.

One critical period began around 1890, Salter (aka Hunter Bear) believed, as Mississippi took the lead in a massive and successful campaign to disenfranchise Southern blacks, a period when lynching became the most popular method used by whites to reinforce white supremacy.ⁱ

Throughout the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, two or three black Southerners were lynched nearly every week. Frequently, the killings were well-attended entertainment events – photos often show cheerful, complacent faces of the onlookers. Jacob Jacoby looked back to these times through the eyes of people in attendance to produce a book of lynching photography.

"Neither crazed fiends nor the dregs of white society, the bulk of the lynchers tended to be ordinary and respectable people," historian Leon Litwack wrote in his introduction to Jacoby's pictorial book "Without Sanctuary." In one Charleston lynching, according to Jacoby:

The local newspaper praised the "prominent citizens" involved for having carried it out in the "most approved and up-to-date fashion." Most of those people who were lynched were innocent of any crime [and] all were denied due process, an impartial judge and jury, an able defense, the right to appeal. Their executions were acts of revenge and hate.ⁱⁱ

Not surprisingly, lynching often arose around arguments about money due sharecroppers and laborers by planters. (In 1905, Federal courts tried to ease such conflicts by outlawing debt peonage and allowing guilty landlords to be heavily fined. Officially, laborers could now leave in the middle of a crop to search for better contracts, creating shortages for landlords.)

Desperate for laborers, some planters lured men, women and children under false promises, and then held them at gunpoint to work the fields with no pay. Some

planters crossed state lines to track down and bring back sharecroppers who left the plantation or even the state.ⁱⁱⁱ

Reports of such entrapment continued, even into the 1970s, with some farm workers being held at gunpoint and/or whipped for various reasons, including staying at home when sick. Moving away from a plantation in the middle of the night was not uncommon.

Starting around 1900, one reaction to the times came in the form of the blues, music shared in little bars called Jukes that were frequented on Saturday nights. Speaking out against the racist tyranny was taboo in Jukes as elsewhere in the daily life of black Mississippians; instead, many blues musicians cloaked their feelings about race in metaphors that described conflicts between the sexes. Lyrics, in fact, could be coded for various types of messages unsafe to talk about, otherwise.

Researcher Ethan Crosby, studying post Civil War Delta blues, found structures of this music close to earlier work songs and field hollers of antebellum slaves – “when the labor was hard, and workers sang the blues to make themselves feel better and to work their brain as they worked their bodies.”

First notation of Delta blues lyrics was reportedly made in 1903 by Charles Peabody, an archaeologist who hired a team of blacks to dig at a site near Stovall, Mississippi and took note of the music the crew sang while working. Peabody wrote down some of the song lyrics these workers sang, many of which were improvised on the spot.^{iv}

Delta-born journalist crusades against lynching

In 1901, Ida B. Wells, a daughter of Mississippi Delta slaves, published a significant work demanding federal intervention to stop Southern lynching. Born in Holly Springs several months before Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Wells wrote an impassioned directive “Lynching and the Excuse For It” stressing that, “Nowhere in the civilized worlds save the United States of America, do men, possessing all civil and political power, go out in bands of 50 to 5,000 to hunt down, shoot, hang or burn to death an individual, unarmed and absolutely powerless.”

Wells was the oldest of eight children. When her parents died in 1880 during a yellow fever plague, she became a teacher in Holly Springs to support her younger siblings. Despite the hardship, Wells completed her studies at Rust College in 1888 to become a teacher in Memphis, Tennessee where she also owned and edited a

local black newspaper called "*The Free Speech and Headlight*," writing her editorials under the pen-name "Iola."

Wells printed the first statistical record of lynching in the South in 1890. Two years later, when three of her good friends were lynched in Memphis, Wells used her power of the press to attack a practice that treated blacks as less than human. Wells was disgusted that lynching had become a public spectacle and she began to investigate false accusations of rape against black men that were used to justify lynching.

When she wrote an editorial that stated some "rape" cases may concern white women who preferred black men, her offices were burned. Attending an editors' convention in New York, Wells learned her life would be in danger if she returned to Memphis, so moving to England, she soon earned a reputation as a courageous leader. After returning to the United States, Wells settled in Chicago and in 1895 wrote and published *A Red Record*, a recording of race lynching in America.^v

Despite the efforts of Wells and others, the destitute condition of the Delta black was not recognized as a problem. In 1910, the Illinois Central Railroad actually marketed the Delta as a "reincarnation" of the antebellum South, "where the negro is naturally gregarious in instinct and is never so happy as when massed together in large numbers as on the Delta plantation."^{vi}

Sharecroppers or renters, of whom 95 percent were black, operated 92 percent of the Delta farms; their seemingly "natural" gregariousness noted in this marketing literature was only a mask covering anger and despair that resulted from the intense violence and fraud blacks faced from the white Delta planters, who kept demanding their labor for little or nothing, as their own profits rolled in.^{vii}

Eastland family lynching

"In the years following the Civil War, lynching eventually came to be presented differently—a theatrical spectacle that said, 'The community has come together in a spontaneous outpouring of outrage against an African-American who committed an atrocity.' Rather than receiving a secretive visit from the KKK at night, victims of terrorism were lynched in public by a mob. Often the victims were taken from a jail where they awaited legal punishment."

Eliza Steelwater

Close investigation of individual lynching cases indicates that the guiding hand in community lynching was local leadership of cotton planters, merchants, bankers, according to author Eliza Steelwater.

“Both elite and lower-income European-Americans felt threatened after slavery ended. African-Americans were only able to improve their lot when they began to migrate north in great numbers between 1900 and 1930. No longer were they the South's most abundant and most intimidated labor force.”^{viii}

Perhaps no better example of Steelwater's *community lynching* can be found than in what has been called Mississippi's worst recorded lynching that took place in 1904 in Sunflower County on the Eastland plantation in Doddsville. As Vardaman was campaigning for office, the uncle of the future U. S. Senator James O. Eastland – his namesake, James Eastland – was killed and two blacks were blamed and lynched.^{ix} But not without a massive search followed by a community lynching – an event practiced at the Eastland plantation most Sundays, some Sunflower County observers say.

Senator Eastland was born nine months after the lynching, which was led by Eastland's father, a pharmacist and planter. Since lynching was often accompanied by celebrations and parties for the white persons attending, as Steelwater and others have observed, perhaps the Senator was conceived on this occasion.

Eastland's uncle may have actually been killed by white neighbors during a business argument, and not by the black couple who became the target of a manhunt and then a gruesome lynching. But the formal newspaper reports, stick with the status quo ...

The February 8 *New York Tribune* reported the lynching was attended by 1,000 people: “Luther Holbert, a Doddsville (Mississippi) Negro and his wife were burned at the stake for the murder of James Eastland, a white planter, and John Carr, a Negro. The planter was killed in a quarrel that arose when he came to Carr's cabin, where he found Holbert, and ordered him to leave the plantation. Carr and a Negro named Winters were also killed. Holbert and his wife fled the plantation but were brought back and burned at the stake in the presence of a thousand people.... There is nothing ... to indicate that Holbert's wife had any part in the crime.”

Further details came from the *Vicksburg Evening Post*: “When the two Negroes were captured, they were tied to trees and ... forced to suffer the most fiendish tortures. The blacks were forced to hold out their hands while one finger at a time was chopped off. The fingers were distributed as souvenirs.... Holbert was beaten

severely, his skull was fractured, and one of his eyes, knocked out with a stick, hung by a shred from the socket.... The most excruciating form of punishment consisted in the use of a large corkscrew [that] was bored into the flesh of the man and woman ... and then pulled out." This was neither the first lynching on the Doddsville plantation nor would it be the last; rumors persisted around Sunflower County about other lynchings that took place later and involving the senator, himself.

The February 12, 1904 *Waxahachie State Enterprise* reported: "The young planter, James Eastland, who was assassinated by a Negro named Holbert near Doddsville, Miss., Wednesday, Feb. 3, was related to Capt. M. Eastland and Mrs. Charley Crocker of Waxahachie. Mr. Crocker, who returned from a visit to Forest, Miss., says the killing of young Eastland created wild excitement in that part of the state. When Crocker left Mississippi on his return home more than a thousand men were scouring the country for the Negro, and he was not surprised Monday when he read of the capture and burning of Holbert and his wife. Eastland was about twenty years old and was engaged to be married this spring."

The lynching of Charley Shepherd in adjacent Bolivar County, reported in the *Jackson Daily News*, might have been close in style to the Eastland event: "Over a seven-hour period, the enraged farm and townspeople of the Delta went about their work of torturing." Before Shepherd was soaked with gasoline, "the mob saw to it that his mouth and nose were partially filled with mud so that the inhalation of the gas fumes would not bring his agony to a premature end."^x

The NAACP later compiled statistics showing that during the first three decades of the twentieth century, "... the seventeen counties lying wholly or partly in the Delta witnessed a total of sixty-six lynchings. This figure accounted for over 35 percent of the 188 confirmed lynchings in the state (for which the county where they occurred could be identified) during this period. From 1900 through 1930, this seventeen-county area averaged a lynching every 3.5 months."^{xi}

Years later, as James O. Eastland became a powerful Delta planter and an even more powerful U. S. Senator, he kept himself and other planters wealthy while most of the Delta including his hometown was left impoverished. Cobb, Woods, and other historians give countless examples of Eastland's on-going greed that kept money in his family's pockets while Delta children literally starved – some starving to death.^{xii}

Black people kept leaving the Delta because of such mistreatment, both physical and financial. The situation for laborers only got worse when Mississippi

elected racist Governor James Kimble Vardaman, who in 1906 denounced black men as “fiends” and argued that lynching was the only way to control a “barbarous” race.

In 1907, the boll weevil destroyed most of the state's cotton crop, causing thousands more blacks to move North seeking work, if they had not already left the state anyway by the time Vardaman took command.

Great White Chief

Banks and lumber companies had ruled Mississippi Democrats prior to 1902. Candidates for statewide office were chosen by a convention of delegates from each county, controlled by power brokers representing bankers and lumbermen. When a Supreme Court decision changed these rules, Mississippi adopted a primary system forcing Democratic Party candidates to be chosen by direct vote of all registered Democrats. This resulted in the 1904 gubernatorial election of Vardaman, a bitter and violent Mississippian who came out of the hills in Yalobusha County where he was born in 1861, the son of a common Confederate soldier.

Vardaman’s political opponents had warned that more black laborers would move out of the state if “The White Chief” was elected, leaving plantations and the lumber districts of South Mississippi without enough workers, and this proved true.

Described as a “huge man with shoulder-length hair and a limp right arm that had been mangled years before in a corn sheller,” thousands would come out to see Vardaman at barbecues, fairs and church suppers.

“Dressed in a white linen suit and a black broad-brimmed hat, he would stand atop a makeshift platform, often a cotton bale, and speak for hours until exhaustion set in.”^{xiii}

Vardaman must have been an overwhelming figure who could easily most any audience. At first, the Delta elite supported him, because planters agreed with Vardaman’s levee board appointments and because of their racial ignorance.

Vardaman’s interests eventually clashed with planters like Leroy Percy of Greenville, who had worked hard to attract and keep black laborers in Mississippi, usually in positive ways. Percy and his cohorts could not afford to allow Vardaman to send more black laborers from the Delta, even if they had voted for him.

Percy and the other Delta *aristocrats* wanted their workforce for free, and wanted them intimidated – but could not afford to have them lynched or so terrified they would leave.

Along the campaign trail

Tagged the “White Chief” by his supporters, Vardaman had campaigned on the slogan, “If necessary, every Negro in the state will be lynched; it will be done to maintain white supremacy.” His politics threatened financial ruin to those Delta planters who helped elect him; an increase in lynching would hit planters in their pocketbooks.

Influenced by Vardaman’s propaganda, before and after his election, Mississippi topped the list for the number of people lynched well into the 1930s. During Vardaman’s initial 1904 campaign for governor, after a lynch mob in the town of Rocky Ford chained African-American J. P. Ivy to a woodpile and doused him with gasoline prior to roasting him alive, Vardaman stated,

“I sometimes think that one could look upon a scene of that kind and suffer no more moral deterioration than he would by looking upon the burning of an Orangutan that had stolen a baby or a viper that had stung an unsuspecting child to death.”^{xiv}

Vardaman, the husband of a wealthy widow and a newspaper publisher in Greenwood, campaigned as the “champion of common whites,” promising to tax the planters, regulate the railroads, and provide services to the poor. According to Wilbur J. Cash, a Vardaman-type rally was far more than a political event: “It swept back the loneliness of the land, it brought men together under torches, it filled them with the contagious power of the crowd, it unleashed emotion and set [men] to leaping and dancing.”^{xv}

DURING THE 1903 campaign hype two black men were lynched in separate incidents in Sunflower County. Then Vardaman discovered a Delta issue he could really dig his heels into – forcing the resignation of Indianola’s black postmistress, Minnie Cox. Mrs. Cox reportedly did her job well.

“Her patrons, black and white, described Mrs. Cox as a ‘model of efficiency, tidiness, and good service.’... When Vardaman campaigned in Indianola, he chided the white crowds for ‘receiving mail from the hands of a coon.’”^{xvi} The candidate incited large crowds to shout for Cox to quit her job, while portraying the hard-working postmistress as “proof” that African Americans had “too much power.”

The town’s mayor and sheriff refused to protect Cox from increasing crowd violence.^{xvii} Vardaman even joined with the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, calling

President Theodore Roosevelt a *Negrophile* after he appointed a black person as collector-of-the-port of Charleston, South Carolina.

Cox tried to resign from the job one year prematurely, but Roosevelt had campaigned on a “square deal” for Americans and intervened. The president declined Mrs. Cox's resignation, continued her salary, and closed the Indianola post office January 2, 1903, forcing Indianola residents to collect their mail at Greenville, 25 miles away, for the next year. Some hired an “old negro” to transport their mail to and from the other town.

As a county seat, Indianola was entitled to a post office, and President Roosevelt eventually re-opened the service. Cox would not accept reappointment, so Roosevelt named a white Democrat who was her friend and her bondsman. The President demoted the post office from third-class to fourth-class, since no revenues had come in during the year of closure. Her struggle is commemorated on historical markers in the small Delta city.

When he took office in 1905, Governor Vardaman sent an urgent message to the “law officers” of Mississippi regarding the “vast increase of criminal negroes.” They had become a “peril to the peace of the community and a menace to the safety of the white man’s home.” Vardaman urged a hard crackdown by police and prosecutors.^{xviii}

Well into the twentieth century mob violence was openly tolerated, and too often actively encouraged by the state’s highest public officials, led by the governor. By the early 1900s, lynching in Mississippi had taken “a ghoulish turn,” as mobs grew larger, often including women and children and a ritual of torture often prevailed.^{xix}

Mississippi’s new governor, still liked to stir up crowds to frenzy, once announcing that constitutional protections “did not apply to wild animals and niggers.”

Another kind of Delta farm

Parchman Farm, the state’s once-atrocious penitentiary that replaced an earlier, inhumane system of convict leasing, must have looked from the road like a typical cotton plantation, and not a prison, “with cattle barns, vegetable gardens, mules dotting the landscape and cotton rows stretching for miles.”

Established in 1905, as Vardaman first came into office, the Sunflower County farm was self-sufficient, with a brickyard, sawmill, slaughterhouse, vegetable canning

plant and two cotton gins – “practically an ante-bellum plantation” with convicts serving as slaves.^{xx}

The state legislature had already purchased more than twenty thousand acres for the construction of several prison farms; the biggest tract was in Sunflower County at the Gordon Station railroad spur. Locals called it the Parchman place, after the family that originally owned the land.

Vardaman, who opposed the earlier practice of convict leasing “personally saw to it that the land was drained and cleared, and a sawmill was built to cut timber for prison buildings. Cotton was planted on several thousand acres, along with crops to feed the convicts, the mules, the hogs, and a dairy herd. In 1905, less than one year later, Parchman had turned a profit of \$185,000.”^{xxi}

David M. Oshinsky contributed to Mississippi history collection by researching and writing about this penal icon, the prison where many blues players spent too many years, and where conjugal visits were first introduced – “to keep black prisoners under control.”

Parchman was "a giant money machine: profitable, self-sufficient and secure," Oshinsky wrote. For its imprisoned residents, 90 percent of them black, it was hell. Those sentenced to Parchman (mostly men but some women) worked endless days under the Mississippi sun. Food was filthy and germ-ridden.

“Men were shot at whim, dragged through the heat until they collapsed and died, whipped into submission by a leather strap, three feet long and six inches wide, known as 'Black Annie,' which hung from the driver's belt.”^{xxii}

For those who found themselves in Mississippi’s prison hospital, “the unspeakable horrors suggested a living death.” Once during a surprise visit to the prison hospital, then in Jackson, the Hinds County grand jury found evidence of the most brutal and inhuman treatment:

“Most of them have their backs cut in great wales, scars, and blisters, some with the skin peeling off in places as the result of severe beatings.... All of them [have] the stamp of manhood blotted out of their faces.... They are lying there dying, some of them on bare boards ... with live vermin crawling over their [bodies].”^{xxiii}

THE EARLIER PRACTICE of convict leasing was even worse. That system came about in the 1870s and 1880s to serve as the dominant policy of the penal system in many southern states, including Mississippi. Convicts labored in mines

and sawmills, laid railroad track, built levees, grew cotton, and cleared treacherous, malaria-infested swamplands.^{xxiv}

Under this system private contractors – mostly cotton planters and merchants – purchased months or even years of the lives of black prisoners, paying a commission to the state and taking the responsibility (but not seriously) for feeding, clothing, and sheltering the prisoners.^{xxv}

Convict leasing provided a steady source of young, cheap labor that could be worked anywhere at a demanding pace; two-thirds to more than three-fourths of the convicts were in their twenties or younger. Prisoners were horribly abused, unfed, unsheltered, and usually died before the end of their sentence. In Mississippi in the 1880s, the annual death rate among convict laborers ranged from 9 to 16 percent but “most investigators agreed that the mortality figures would have been far higher if they had included the broken-down men who obtained pardons and went home to die.”^{xxvi} Convict labor not only resembled slavery but was often even worse:

Clearing swampland south of Hattiesburg for the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad, convicts were chained in knee deep pools of muck. The men’s thirst drove them “to drink the water in which they were compelled to deposit their excrement.” No wonder doctors and health officials were sometimes as occupied with signing death certificates as with treating prisoners, most of the victims suffering from exhaustion, malaria, frostbite, pneumonia, consumption, sunstroke, edema (dropsy), chronic diarrhea, dysentery, scurvy, gunshot wounds, “wound miscellaneous,” and “shackle poisoning” (caused by the chains and leg irons biting into the bare flesh). In many instances the cause of death was listed as “not stated.” The convicts who tried to escape were whipped “till the blood ran down their legs” and some had metal spurs riveted to their feet.^{xxvii}

Employers ran no risk of losing their investment if a convict died; they simply “replenished the supply with fresh bodies.” ... “Before the war we owned the negroes,” one convict leasing planter stated in 1883. “If a man had a good nigger he could afford to take care of him; if he was sick get a doctor. He might even put gold plugs in his teeth. But these convicts; we don’t own ‘em. One died, get another.”^{xxviii}

When prisons could not meet demands for convict laborers, the police would conduct a sweep, arresting blacks on simple misdemeanors.^{xxix} Many convicts tried to escape and some actually succeeded. Most accommodated to convict lives by some means and some managed to kill prison guards before forfeiting their own lives.

“Seeking to establish a sense of community among themselves, they employed a variety of ways to articulate their resentments and to ease the pain of their confinement. The religion many of them embraced in prison provided some escape and solace, even as it often justified and encouraged acts of resistance.”^{xxx}

Convict leasing finally became an embarrassment to Mississippi in the early twentieth century when it was widely publicized by government investigations, the press, and organized labor. Reformers began to win public support to change the system, “[B]ut even when the system came under heavy criticism and declined, new or revived methods of punishment proved hardly more humane. Rather than dispatch convicts to plantation farms, they would now be used on county chain gangs for road construction and maintenance. The objective did not change. Both convict lease and the chain gang stood as constant reminders to blacks of their vulnerability and subordination.”^{xxxi}

World War One

As the First World War broke out in 1914, the cotton-consuming countries of Europe halted all transatlantic commerce for three months, and the bottom fell out of the cotton market. In the Delta, it was “business as usual” when government and philanthropic aid in the form of credit and low interest loans went almost exclusively to white farmers rather than the poor; planter domination operated at full speed as relatives and friends took care of their own.

Adding to the black farmers’ troubles in this downturn, most African American banks failed; by 1918, only two black banks remained in Mississippi, down from a 1911 peak of eleven.

Meanwhile, a huge demand for labor in Northern urban industrial areas brought labor agents into the South to recruit blacks; agents promised employment and supplied free railroad transportation. Hence, thousands of black people began to leave the Delta in large numbers once again. Planters resented the loss of cheap labor and passed oppressive rules and laws to try halting the exodus. In some communities such as Clarksdale, planters and their representatives stopped trains and halted the sale of railroad tickets to blacks. Nevertheless, thousands of blacks fled, typically to Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Gary, Indiana.

W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of the NAACP *Crisis* Magazine,^{xxxii} by 1916 was publicly encouraging blacks to fight back: “If we are to die, in God’s name let us not perish like bales of hay.” Du Bois asserted that lynching would stop in the South

“when the cowardly mob is faced with effective guns in the hands of the people determined to sell their souls dearly.”

Later in the modern Civil Rights Movement, a Louisiana group calling itself the *Deacons for Defense and Justice* would take heed of Du Bois’ message by defying the non-violence policy of the mainstream civil rights movement to form an armed self-defense organization. Deacons were quickly effective in the Delta and elsewhere around Mississippi through their aggressive and defensive means.

The U. S. finally entered World War I in 1917 and again, planters faced severe labor shortages as cotton prices soared from 11 cents per hundred pounds in 1915, to 43 cents per hundred pounds in 1919. True to form, most planters “remedied” this labor shortage by bullying their workers with violence and debt.

In Coahoma County stories circulated that five laborers were severely beaten by a planter when they questioned the price paid for their cotton. Another Delta cropper tried to sell his cotton elsewhere and was shot and killed by the employer. In Hollywood, Mississippi, a white physician allegedly killed an African American for arguing over a small amount of money, shooting the man three times in the back and then beat his head with an axe handle. None of the murderers were investigated and no one was punished.

Particularly upsetting to planters were labor recruiters for wartime industries. In Arcola, a recruiter was tarred and feathered for circulating fliers promising higher wages: “The labor agent was then arrested and interviewed by federal authorities for making seditious statements. In another county, two labor recruiters were arrested for carrying ‘several carloads of negroes to work’ on Arkansas plantations.”^{xxxiii}

Despite the military’s need for soldiers, Delta families learned how poorly their men were being treated by the Army through letters or sometimes by reading newspaper articles.

While the *Helena World* described how “well” white officers treated local recruits who were arriving at Camp Pike, outside of Little Rock, Arkansas, an investigation into war conditions at the camp in 1918 reported to the contrary:

“While the investigator found that black soldiers generally got along with their officers, at least a thousand men were held in a stockade, quarantined for venereal disease. Although rules for quarantine were the same regardless of race, black soldiers received different treatment. The men did not receive adequate medical care for their illnesses, and white officers beat defiant soldiers, referring to them as “you niggers.”^{xxxiv}

“We are in this organization taking all kinds of abuse,” a soldier from the 409th Reserve Labor Battalion wrote about conditions in Camp Pike his unit experienced even after the war ended. Working in the Camp for eight months, the soldier wrote that he and his comrades “want to go home to our families and start life anew. . . . We don’t believe that the Secretary of War or the Adjutant General knows that we are being treated so.”^{xxxv}

One sign of blacks’ determination to secure their citizenship rights was the organizing of NAACP chapters throughout the Delta.^{xxxvi} The first Mississippi chapter appeared in Vicksburg in 1918 and in the following year, another chapter was formed in the African American community of Mound Bayou. New NAACP members were not middle-class professionals as in cities like Memphis or Little Rock, but were laborers, domestics, and other members of the working class.

Elizabeth Woodruff wrote one of the first books on the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta *circa* 1865 to 1960, *American Congo*, and found that efforts to organize NAACP chapters, whether successful or not, “indicated that poor people knew of outside agencies that existed to secure their rights.” Most chapter offices were located in towns or cities, yet black rural workers still had access to the NAACP’s activities, an important new weapon.^{xxxvii}

ⁱ Salter, 9.

ⁱⁱ Jeff Jacoby, "An execution, not a lynching," *Jewish World Review*, May 15, 2001.

ⁱⁱⁱ Oral history of Dr. L.C. Dorsey, Tougaloo College Delta Collection.

^{iv} Ethan Crosby, "Rural Blues: Structure and Development in the Post-Civil War South," (online), cites William Barlow, "Looking Up at Down: the Emergence of Blue Culture," (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 27.

^v Sources: Lerone Bennett, Jr., "A History of Black America," (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, Millennium Edition, 2003); Woods.

^{vi} Cobb, 98. Cites Hudson, "The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta as Plantation Country," 82.

^{vii} Cobb, 99. Cites E.A. Boeger and E.A. Goldenweiser, "A Study of the Tenant Systems of Farming in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta," Bulletin 337 (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1916), 6-7.

^{viii} Steelwater, *ibid.*

^{ix} Cobb, 114.

^x Cobb, 115.

^{xi} *Ibid.*, 114.

^{xii} *Ibid.*, 259. Cobb explains that in later years and because of Eastland's agricultural influence in the U. S. Senate, Sunflower County planters received more than \$10.2 million in cotton program payments in 1967, while federal food program expenditures in the county totaled less than 5 percent of the amount. "The fact that acreage-reduction payments of farmers amounted to a total of twenty-three times greater than the expenditures to combat hunger in a county where 65 percent of the population was living in poverty was difficult to explain away."

^{xiii} Oshinsky, 85.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 100.

^{xv} *Ibid.*, 87.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 88.

^{xvii} "Roosevelt is Roasted for Negrophile Policy," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 9, 1903, 1. This story is also told on the Theodore Roosevelt website.

^{xviii} Oshinsky, 92.

^{xix} *Ibid.*

^{xx} Yardley.

^{xxi} Oshinsky, 109. He cites William K. Holmes, *The White Chief* (Baton Rouge, 1970), 150-167; William B. Taylor, *Brokered Justice* (Columbus, 1003), 70-76; Paul Foreman and Julien Tatum, "The Short History of Mississippi's State Penal Systems," *Mississippi Law Journal* (April 1938), 267-269.

^{xxii} Parchman underwent some changes over the years, but on February 8, 1971, a suit was filed in federal court on behalf of inmates Nazareth Gates, Willie Holmes, Matthew Winter, and Hal Zachery. The plaintiffs charged that "deplorable conditions and practices" at Parchman deprived them of rights guaranteed by the First, Eighth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth amendments to the U. S. Constitution. The judge determined their case qualified as a class actions, covering all inmates at Parchman. He

added a subclass of black convicts, who faced additional mistreatment based solely on race. As of 2005, Mississippi had had not been dismissed from the case.

^{xxiii} Yardley.

^{xxiv} Margaret Block of Cleveland, a civil rights activist, remembered hearing stories told of convict leasing by Horace Lee Cox, a Cleveland resident. “He said that convict prisoners were kept in cages over on the railroad tracks going to Boyle. I thought he was just telling tales, but later I found out that he was right. Apparently, the convicts were only let out of the cages to work.”

^{xxv} Yardley.

^{xxvi} Ibid.

^{xxvii} Ibid. Cites Oshinsky, 44-45.

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} Ibid.

^{xxx} Ibid.

^{xxxi} Ibid. Parchman would later undergo change, but it was not until February 8, 1971, that a suit was filed in federal court on behalf of inmates Nazareth Gates, Willie Holmes, Matthew Winter, and Hal Zachery that forced significant change. The plaintiffs charged that “deplorable conditions and practices” at Parchman deprived them of rights guaranteed by the First, Eighth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth amendments to the U. S. Constitution. The judge determined their case qualified as class actions, covering all inmates at Parchman. He further added a subclass of black convicts, who faced additional mistreatment based solely on race. *Gates vs. Collier* remained open as of March 2005.

^{xxxii} Writing for the *Crisis* years later in 1997, David Levering Lewis, Ph.D., (“Du Bois and the Challenge of the Black Press”) described the startup issue that appeared on November 1910: “The editor announced the purpose of the fledgling NAACP's journal of opinion with a characteristic blend of vision, urgency, and precision. Calling his creation *The Crisis*, after a popular poem of the day by James Russell Lowell, Du Bois marked the moment of debut as ‘a critical time in the history of the advancement of men.’ The magazine was to be first and foremost a newspaper, he said. Secondly, it would serve as a review of opinion and literature. Thirdly, it would publish short articles. ‘Finally,’ the editorial page would stand ‘for the rights of men, irrespective of color or race,’ he declared, ‘for the highest ideals of American democracy, and for reasonable but earnest and persistent attempts to gain these rights and realize these ideals.’ The tone, during his twenty-four years at the helm, was stern, militant, and the agenda was one of human rights advanced through education, politics, and economic justice.”

^{xxxiii} Woodruff, 62.

^{xxxiv} Ibid., 64. Woodruff cites “Major W. H. Loving to the Chief, Military Morale Section, September 27, 1918, RG 165, Secretary of War Papers, Office of Chief of Staff, Military Intelligence Division, in Theodore Koenweibel, ed. *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans, 1916-1925* (Bethesda, Md.; University Publications of America, 1986), reel 22.

^{xxxv} Ibid., 65..

^{xxxvi} NAACP is the name for this organization. Letters stand for the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People.

^{xxxvii} Ibid., 64.