

## PART ONE

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# After the Civil War

## *New South and New West*

Although slavery effectively ended in April 1865, the Union victory in the Civil War did not resolve questions about the roles that African American men and women would play in American society. White Southerners like Caleb Forshey refused to accept the realities of the Yankee victory and the legal change in the status of former slaves, while black Southerners like Felix Haywood rejoiced in their newfound freedom, even as they continued to face racism and prejudice on a regular basis.

The first attempts to secure rights for the former bond servants, which occurred during the postwar Reconstruction period, produced three new amendments to the Constitution but no lasting consensus about how to treat blacks in daily life. Despite federal laws mandating economic freedom for blacks, violent opposition from white Southerners blunted the radical edge of Reconstruction. In part, this resistance took legal forms, such as marshaling public opinion, applying economic power, and organizing politically. But a resort to terror came early and continued for generations. The Ku Klux Klan, arising soon after the war, was an extralegal group that intimidated, whipped, and killed African Americans and their white allies who dared speak out for freedom. Ida B. Wells, a black journalist from Mississippi, took on the Klan. In print and on the stump, Wells denounced lynching and demanded federal intervention on behalf of blacks. Her efforts and those of countless other protesters, however, failed to eliminate racial violence, as demonstrated by the rise of lynching as a public spectacle.

In the end, three institutions replaced slavery in the postwar South: segregation in social affairs, a whites-only Democratic Party in politics, and sharecropping and tenant farming in the economy. Southern farmers developed arrangements such as the Grimes family's sharecrop contract, which offered participants land and supplies in exchange for a large portion of their crops, while

in the North parallel restrictions on free labor, such as the Swindell Brothers' contract, appeared.

At the same time that the former slaves' hopes for freedom were being dashed in the South, the West drew capital and immigrants from far and wide and stirred the American imagination, as illustrated in the Visual Portfolio "The Peopling of the West" on pages 51–57. However, this renewed attention to the region and the opportunities it presented brought disastrous consequences for many Native Americans.

The completion of the first transcontinental railroad link in 1869, which accelerated newcomers' movement to the West, along with the collapse of the buffalo herds that fed and sheltered the Plains Indians, helped to decimate the remaining independent Native American peoples. The Battle of Little Bighorn (1876), remembered here in accounts by the Italian soldier-for-hire Charles DeRudio and by two Native Americans, *She Walks with Her Shawl* and *One Bull*, was the last Native American victory in centuries of sporadic warfare with settlers over ownership of land and natural resources. As Native Americans were shunted to reservations often far from their ancestral homes, their young people were placed in boarding schools for education in the ways of the settler society. The struggles of Zitkala-Sa, a Sioux from the Yankton reservation in South Dakota, to find her place in both the Sioux and the white worlds reveal the complexities behind the stereotypes.

POINTS OF VIEW  
The Battle of Little Bighorn (1876)

I

SHE WALKS WITH HER SHAWL AND ONE BULL

Victory at Greasy Grass

*Americans vividly remember the Plains Indians, whose last great victory came at Little Bighorn in 1876, as the “feather-streaming, buffalo-chasing, wild-riding, recklessly fighting Indian of the plains,” as one historian describes their young male warriors. In most American imaginations, they are the archetype of the American Indian.*

*The reality is far more complex, however. The Plains peoples’ religion, elaborate warrior code, fierce grief for the dead, and stunning rituals and visions of other worlds were largely borrowed from the many Indian cultures these nomads had briefly conquered as they swept across the Plains in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on horses first brought to the Americas by the Spanish conquistadors. The rifle, acquired from French, English, and, later, American traders, was one of their most cherished cultural symbols, though, as noted in this account, the less expensive and easily crafted tomahawk was also employed in battle. And their beads were all from Europe. To describe the culture of nomadic Plains Indians like the Lakota Sioux, anthropologists use the term syncretic, meaning that the culture represented an amalgam of all the peoples the Plains Indians had encountered. The Plains Indians were indigenous, surely, but in this syncretic quality, they were also quintessentially American.*

*The horse and rifle brought wealth and military might. The Plains became a terrain of ritual hunting and warfare, and prosperity permitted extensive trade and the elaboration of Indian cultures. For about a century, competing powers hindered conquest of the Plains Indians. But over time, migrants to the West Coast, wasteful white buffalo hunters, ambitious miners, the railroads, rushes of settlers, and a determined U.S. Army all disrupted Indian life. A series of Indian wars, beginning during the Civil War, rapidly pushed all but a few Plains Indians onto reservations.*

*By 1876 the great Western saga appeared to be about over. That year, thousands of Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, still living off or escaping from the reservations, gathered briefly at the Little Bighorn River, which they called the Greasy Grass, to enjoy religious rituals and to hunt, in defiance of the U.S. Army. General George Armstrong Custer and his premier Indian fighters, the Seventh Cavalry, found them there and promptly attacked.*

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Jerome A. Greene, ed., *Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 42–46, 54–59.

*In this excerpt, we see the ensuing battle through the eyes of a Hunkpapa Lakota woman, She Walks with Her Shawl, and a Minneconjou Lakota man, One Bull, the adopted son of Sitting Bull. Keep in mind that both accounts are filtered through white interviewers.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What was the role of She Walks with Her Shawl in battle? How does this role fit with popular representations of Native American women during the late nineteenth century?
2. The account of She Walks with Her Shawl was given many years after the battle. What evidence do you find that she was arguing with historical representations?
3. On the basis of these accounts, how accurate is the popular characterization of the Battle of Little Bighorn as an Indian “massacre” of brave federal troops led by General Custer? Why does the “massacre” label persist today?

### SHE WALKS WITH HER SHAWL (HUNKPAPA LAKOTA)

*Account given to Walter S. Campbell in 1931*

I was born seventy-seven winters ago, near Grand River, [in present] South Dakota. My father, Slohan, was the bravest man among our people. Fifty-five years ago we packed our tents and went with other Indians to Peji-slawakpa (Greasy Grass). We were then living on the Standing Rock Indian reservation [Great Sioux Reservation, Standing Rock Agency]. I belonged to Sitting Bull's band. They were great fighters. We called ourselves Hunkpapa. This means confederated bands. When I was still a young girl (about seventeen) I accompanied a Sioux war party which made war against the Crow Indians in Montana. My father went to war 70 times. He was wounded nearly a dozen times.

But I am going to tell you of the greatest battle. This was a fight against Pehin-hanska (General Custer). I was several miles from the Hunkpapa camp when I saw a cloud of dust rise beyond a ridge of bluffs in the east. The morning was hot and sultry. Several of us Indian girls were digging wild turnips. I was then 23 years old. We girls looked towards the camp and saw a warrior ride swiftly, shouting that the soldiers were only a few miles away and that the women and children including old men should run for the hills in an opposite direction.

I dropped the pointed ash stick which I had used in digging turnips and ran towards my tipi. I saw my father running towards the horses. When I got to my tent, mother told me that news was brought to her that my brother had been killed by the soldiers. My brother had gone early that morning in search for a horse that strayed from our herd. In a few moments we saw soldiers on horseback on a bluff just across the Greasy Grass (Little Big Horn) river. I knew that there would be a battle because I saw warriors getting their horses and tomahawks.

I heard Hawkman shout, Ho-ka-he! Ho-ka-he! (Charge.) The soldiers began firing into our camp. Then they ceased firing. I saw my father preparing to go to battle. I sang a death song for my brother who had been killed.

My heart was bad. Revenge! Revenge! For my brother's death. I thought of the death of my young brother, One Hawk. Brown Eagle, my brother's companion on that morning, had escaped and gave the alarm to the camp that the soldiers were coming. I ran to a nearby thicket and got my black horse. I painted my face with crimson and unbraided my black hair. I was mourning. I was a woman, but I was not afraid.

By this time the soldiers (Reno's men) were forming a battle line in the bottom about a half mile away. In another moment I heard a terrific volley of carbines. The bullets shattered the tipi poles. Women and children were running away from the gunfire. In the tumult I heard old men and women singing death songs for their warriors who were now ready to attack the soldiers. The chanting of death songs made me brave, although I was a woman. I saw a warrior adjusting his quiver and grasping his tomahawk. He started running towards his horse when he suddenly recoiled and dropped dead. He was killed near his tipi.

Warriors were given orders by Hawkman to mount their horses and follow the fringe of a forest and wait until commands were given to charge. The soldiers kept on firing. Some women were also killed. Horses and dogs too! The camp was in great commotion.

Father led my black horse up to me and I mounted. We galloped towards the soldiers. Other warriors joined in with us. When we were nearing the fringe of the woods an order was given by Hawkman to charge. Ho-ka-he! Ho-ka-he! Charge! Charge! The warriors were now near the soldiers. The troopers were all on foot. They shot straight, because I saw our leader killed as he rode with his warriors.

The charge was so stubborn that the soldiers ran to their horses and, mounting them, rode swiftly towards the river. The Greasy Grass river was very deep. Their horses had to swim to get across. Some of the warriors rode into the water and tomahawked the soldiers. In the charge the Indians rode among the troopers and with tomahawks unhorsed several of them. The soldiers were very excited. Some of them shot into the air. The Indians chased the soldiers across the river and up over a bluff.

Then the warriors returned to the bottom where the first battle took place. We heard a commotion far down the valley. The warriors rode in a column of fives. They sang a victory song. Someone said that another body of soldiers were attacking the lower end of the village. I heard afterwards that the soldiers were under the command of Long Hair (Custer). With my father and other youthful warriors I rode in that direction.

We crossed the Greasy Grass below a beaver dam (the water is not so deep there) and came upon many horses. One soldier was holding the reins of eight or ten horses. An Indian waved his blanket and scared all the horses. They got away from the men (troopers). On the ridge just north of us I saw blue-clad men running up a ravine, firing as they ran.

The dust created from the stampeding horses and powder smoke made everything dark and black. Flashes from carbines could be seen. The valley was dense with powder smoke. I never heard such whooping and shouting. "There was never a better day to die," shouted Red Horse. In the battle I heard cries from troopers, but could not understand what they were saying. I do not speak English.

Long Hair's troopers were trapped in an enclosure. There were Indians everywhere. The Cheyennes attacked the soldiers from the north and Crow King from the South. The Sioux Indians encircled the troopers. Not one got away! The Sioux used tomahawks. It was not a massacre, but [a] hotly contested battle between two armed forces. Very few soldiers were mutilated, as oft has been said by the whites. Not a single soldier was burned at the stake. Sioux Indians do not torture their victims.

After the battle the Indians took all the equipment and horses belonging to the soldiers. The brave men who came to punish us that morning were defeated; but in the end, the Indians lost. We saw the body of Long Hair. Of course, we did not know who the soldiers were until an interpreter told us that the men came from Fort Lincoln, then [in] Dakota Territory. On the saddle blankets were the cross saber insignia and the letter seven.

The victorious warriors returned to the camp, as did the women and children who could see the battle from where they took refuge. Over sixty Indians were killed and they were also brought back to the camp for scaffold-burial. The Indians did not stage a victory dance that night. They were mourning for their own dead. . . .

### ONE BULL (MINNECONJOU LAKOTA)

*Account given to John P. Everett in the 1920s*

I was in Sitting Bull's camp on [Little] Big Horn River, One Horn Band Hinkowoji [Minneconjou] Tepee. They were called that because they planted their gardens near the river. Itazipco (Without Bow [Sans Arc]) was another band. Ogalala [Oglala] was the Red Cloud band. Another band, Schiyeio means Cheyenne. They were a different tribe, not Lakota. They were friends of Lakota.

Pizi (Gall) had another band. All the different bands camped together. There were many other chiefs with their bands. Four Horn and Two Moon and many others. Whenever the chiefs held a council they went to Sitting Bull's camp because he was a good medicine man.

Lakota and Cheyennes had gone to this camp to look after their buffalo and so young men and women could get acquainted. White men had driven our buffalo away from Lakota land. So we went where buffalo were to take care of them and keep white men away.

I was a strong young man 22 years old. On the day of the fight I was sitting in my tepee combing my hair. I don't know what time it was. About this time maybe. (Two P.M.) Lakota had no watches in those days. I had just been out and picketed my horses and was back in my tepee. I saw a man named Fat Bear come running into camp and he said soldiers were coming on the other side of the river

and had killed a boy named Deeds who went out to picket a horse. Then I came out of my tepee and saw soldiers running their horses toward our camp on same side of the river. We could hear lots of shooting. I went to tepee of my uncle, Sitting Bull, and said I was going to go take part in the battle. He said, "Go ahead, they have already fired."

I had a rifle and plenty of shells, but I took that off and gave it to Sitting Bull and he gave me a shield. Then I took the shield and my tomahawk and got on my horse and rode up to where the soldiers were attacking us. They were firing pretty heavy. They were all down near the river in the timber. Lakota were riding around fast and shooting at them. I rode up to some Lakota and said, "Let's all charge at once." I raised my tomahawk and said, "Wakontanka<sup>1</sup> help me so I do not sin but fight my battle." I started to charge. There were five Lakota riding behind me. We charged for some soldiers that were still fighting and they ran to where their horses were in the timber. Then the soldiers all started for the river. I turned my horse and started that way too and there was a man named Mato Washte (Pretty Bear) right behind me and he and his horse were shot down. I followed the soldiers. They were running for the river. I killed two with my tomahawk. Then the soldiers got across the river. I came back to where Pretty Bear was and got him up on my horse. He was wounded and covered with blood. I started my horse toward the river where the soldiers were trying to get across.

Then I let Pretty Bear get off my horse and I went across the river after the soldiers. I killed one more of them with my tomahawk.

Then I saw four soldiers ahead of me running up the hill. I was just about to charge them when someone rode along beside me and said, "You better not go any farther. You are wounded." That was Sitting Bull. I was not wounded but I was all covered with blood that got on me when I had Pretty Bear on my horse. So I did what Sitting Bull told me. Then Sitting Bull rode back but I went on. Another Lakota went after these four soldiers. He had a rifle and shot one of them off his horse. One of the soldiers kept shooting back but without hitting us. The man that was with me was a Lakota but I did not know who he was. Now the soldiers were getting together up on the hill and we could see the other soldiers coming with the pack mules a long way off.

Then I went back across the river and rode down it a way, then I rode with the man who was shooting at the four soldiers and we crossed the river again just east of Sitting Bull's camp. We saw a bunch of horsemen up on a hill to the north and they were Lakotas. We rode up to them and I told them I had killed a lot of soldiers and showed them my tomahawk. Then I said I was going up and help kill Custer's soldiers, but Sitting Bull told me not to go so I didn't go but we rode up where we could see the Lakotas and Cheyennes killing Custer's men. They had been shooting heavy but the Indians charged them straight from the west and then some rode around them shooting and the Indians were knocking them off their horses and killing them with tomahawks and clubs. **THEY WERE ALL KILLED.** There were a lot of Sioux killed. The others were picking them up on their horses and taking them back to camp.

1. **Wakontanka:** Sioux name for the Great Spirit.

Then we had a war dance all night and in the morning we heard that the soldiers with the pack mules were up on the hill and the Sioux started up after them. I went with Sitting Bull and volunteered to go help kill these soldiers but Sitting Bull said no. So we watched the fight from a hill. I didn't have my rifle with me then, just my tomahawk. The Sioux surrounded them and they fought that way all day. The soldiers had ditches dug all around the hill. Then along towards sundown the Sioux broke camp and went [south] to the mountains.

The Sioux did not take any prisoners that I know of. I didn't see any. I don't know how many Indians there were, but it was a very big band. Many bands together. The Indians had rifles with little short cartridges. I didn't use mine.

After the fight we all stayed in the Big Horn Mountains about ten days. After that they broke camp and went north following along the Tongue River. Then we went to the Little Missouri, and we found a place where there must have been some soldiers for we found a lot of sacks of yellow corn piled up. Then some of the bands went one way and some went another. One little band went to Slim Buttes and they were all killed by soldiers.

I was with Sitting Bull all the time we were in camp on the [Little] Big Horn and saw him during the battle. He was telling his men what to do. The first I knew of any soldiers was when they killed the boy who went to picket his horse across the river from Sitting Bull's camp. Before we broke camp that night we saw the walking soldiers coming from down the river but my uncle said, "We won't fight them. We have killed enough. We will go. . . ."

## 2

CHARLES DERUDIO

### Witness to Custer's Last Stand

*The Battle of Little Bighorn was not the U.S. Army's biggest defeat at the hands of Native Americans, but it was the most famous. On June 25, 1876, the Seventh U.S. Cavalry rode into battle in Eastern Montana Territory, led by Civil War general George Armstrong Custer. When the smoke had cleared the next day, 268 members of the U.S. Army lay dead, including Custer and his entire battalion. Though it is known historically as Custer's Last Stand, Little Bighorn (or Greasy Grass, as the Plains Indians called it) was in many ways the last stand for Native Americans on the Great Plains. It would be the last time Native Americans posed a significant threat to the U.S. military.*

*Historians have long argued about the legacy of Little Bighorn. There are thousands of works debating what happened on that summer day in Montana, what went wrong, whether it was Custer's fault, and why the battle ended so disastrously for the U.S.*

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*The Custer Myth: A Source Book of Custerania*, written and compiled by Colonel W. A. Graham (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1953), 76–78.



*military. Nearly every person connected to Little Bighorn published an account, including Custer's widow. The narrative that follows was written and sent to the New York Herald by Charles DeRudio, who witnessed the activities of Lakota women also described by She Walks with Her Shawl.*

*Born in northern Italy in 1832, Count Carlo Camillo di Rudio, or Charles DeRudio as he called himself in the United States, was one of the many foreign-born soldiers who fought under Custer. He began his strange journey to Little Bighorn as an antimonarchist who fought for a unified and free Italy (then under the control of Austria). After the antimonarchists were defeated, DeRudio went into exile in London, where he became involved in a failed plot to kill Emperor Napoleon III at the opera in Paris. Sentenced to life imprisonment at the French penal colony on Devil's Island, DeRudio escaped and found his way to New York City on the eve of the Civil War. There he joined the army and, owing to his swarthy complexion, became an officer in an all-black regiment. DeRudio continued in the army after the war and was assigned as a lieutenant in the Seventh Cavalry, under Custer. Perhaps because of the Italian's radical politics, Custer disliked DeRudio, who at forty-four was the oldest officer under his command. Just before the attack, Custer moved DeRudio to another company—ultimately saving DeRudio's life and enabling him to write his account of the Battle of Little Bighorn.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what ways might the fact that DeRudio was a foreigner, a radical, and an enemy of General Custer have influenced his account of the battle?
2. What might have motivated Lakota women to act in the way that DeRudio describes?
3. In what ways does DeRudio's account contribute to determining what went wrong for the U.S. Army at Little Bighorn?

Camp on N. side Yellowstone, July 5, '76

I had a narrow escape at the battle of the Little Bighorn on the 25 & 26 of June and I will endeavor to give you my experience of Indian fighting. At about 10 A.M. on the 25th June, Gen. Custer's scouts returned and reported that they had discovered an Indian village about 15 miles distant, on the Little Bighorn, and that from what they had seen, they supposed the Indians to be retreating before our advance. We continued our march two or three miles farther when a halt was ordered and Gen. Custer began preparations for attacking the enemy. He detailed Co's. H, D & K, under the command of Col. F. W. Benteen to take the left of our route, with orders, so I hear, to sweep everything in his way: Co's. M, A, & G were put under the command of Col. Reno; and being temporarily attached to Co. A, I found myself with this division. Gen. Custer took Co's. E, I, F, L & C, and occupied the right of the line of attack. The remaining Company, B, was left to guard the packtrain. After marching two or three miles, our command, the center, was ordered to trot and hold the gait until we reached the river, six or seven miles distant. Having reached the river, we forded, and on reaching the plain beyond the opposite bank, we were ordered into line of battle.

Everything being as was ordered, we started on a gallop and for two miles pursued on the verge of an immense and blinding cloud of dust raised by the madly flying savages ahead of us. The dust cloud was so dense that we could distinguish nothing, so Col. Reno halted the battalion and after dismounting, formed a skirmish line—the right flank resting on the edge of a dry thickly wooded creek. While the horses were being led to shelter in the wood, the Indians opened a galling fire on us which was immediately responded to, the skirmish continuing for about one-half hour. It was now discovered that on the other side of the creek, in a park-like clearing, there were a few lodges, and the whole line crossed the creek to find the lodges deserted, and be received by about two hundred yelping, yelling redskins. The fire from the numerically superior force necessitated a retreat which was almost impossible, as we were now surrounded by warriors. When we entered the engagement we were only 100 strong and the fire of the enemy had made havoc in our little band. When we were half way over the creek, I, being in the rear, noticed a guidon<sup>1</sup> planted on the side we had left and returned to take it. When coming through the wood, the guidon entangled itself in the branches and slipped out of my hand. I dismounted to pick it up and led my horse to the south bank of the creek. As I was about to mount, my horse was struck with a bullet, and becoming frightened, he ran into the Indians, leaving me dismounted in the company of about 300 Sioux not more than 50 yards distant. They poured a whistling volley at me, but I was not wounded, and managed to escape to the thicket near by, where I would have an opportunity of defending myself and selling my life at a good high figure. In the thicket I found Mr. Girard [Fred Gerard], the interpreter; a half-breed Indian; and Private O'Neill [Private Thomas F. O'Neill], of Co. "G," 7th Cav. The first two of the quartet had their horses, while O'Neill like myself, was dismounted. I told the owners of the horses that the presence of the animals would betray us, suggesting at the same time that they be stampeded. They declined to act on the suggestion and I left them and crawled through the thick underwood into the deep dry bottom of the creek, where I could not easily be discovered, and from whence I hoped to be able under cover of darkness to steal out and rejoin the command. I had not been in this hiding place more than 10 minutes when I heard several pistol shots fired in my immediate vicinity, and shortly thereafter came the silvery, but to me diabolical voices of several squaws. I raised my head with great caution to see what the women were at and to discover their exact location. I found the women at the revolting work of scalping a soldier who was perhaps not yet dead. Two of the ladies were cutting away, while two others performed a sort of war dance around the body and its mutilators. I will not attempt to describe to you my feelings at witnessing the disgusting performance. Finally the squaws went away, probably to hunt for more victims and I employed the time thinking of my perilous position.

While thus engaged, I heard a crackling noise near me, which upon investigation I found proceeded from burning wood, the Indians having ignited a fire. The wood being very dry, the fire made rapid headway, and I was forced from my

1. **guidon:** A military flag or battle standard.

hiding place. I crawled out of the creek bottom the same way I had approached, and as I was about to ascend the bank, I heard a voice calling "Lieutenant, Lieutenant." I could see no one, but the call was repeated, and advancing a few yards in the direction from which it proceeded, I found all three of the party I had left a short time before, hidden in the bottom of the creek. Mr. Girard told me he had left the horses tied together, where I had seen them, and followed down after me. I found that the party, like myself, was afraid of the progress of the fire; but fortunately for us, the wind subsided, and a little rain fell which, thank God, was sufficient to arrest the flames. . . . Finally the time came when under the protection of night (it was very cloudy) we were able to come out of our hiding places and take the direction of the ford, which was two miles to the south, through an open plain. Mr. Girard and the scout mounted their horses and the soldier and myself took hold, each one, of a horses tail, and followed them. . . . During our transit through the open plain we passed many Indians returning to their village and could hear but not see them as the night was very dark. We reached the wood near what we took to be the ford we had passed in the morning, but we were mistaken and had to hunt for the crossing. Once we forded the stream but found it was at a bend and that we would have to ford it again. When we recrossed the river, we ran full into a band of eight savages. The two mounted men ran for their lives, the soldier and myself jumped into the bushes near us. I cocked my revolver and in a kneeling position was ready to fire at the savages if they should approach me. They evidently thought, from the precipitate retreat of the two mounted men, that all of us had decamped; and began to talk among themselves. In a few minutes to my surprise they continued their course, and soon after went out of hearing. I raised up from my position, approached the bank of the river and called to the soldier, who immediately answered. We then saw that all the fords were well guarded by the savages, and it would be very dangerous to attempt to cross any part of the river. The night passed and in the dim dawn of day we heard an immense tramping, as of a large cavalry command, and the splashing of the water convinced us that some troops were crossing the river. I imagined it was our command, as I could distinctly hear the sound of the horses shoes striking the stones. I cautiously stepped to the edge of the bushes to look out (I was then no more than three yards from the bank of the river), and thought I recognized some gray horses mounted by men in military blouses, and some of them in white hats. They were, I thought, going out of the valley, and those that had already crossed the river were going up a very steep bluff, while others were crossing after them. I saw one man with a buckskin jacket, pants, top boots and white hat, and felt quite sure I recognized him as Capt. Tom Custer<sup>2</sup> which convinced me that the cavalrymen were of our command.

With this conviction I stepped boldly out on the bank and called to Capt. Custer, "Tom, don't leave us here." The distance was only a few yards and my call was answered by an infernal yell and a discharge of 300 or 400 shots. I then discovered my mistake and found the savages were clad in clothes and mounted

2. **Capt. Tom Custer:** Tom Custer was the brother of General George Custer and a two-time Medal of Honor winner.

on horses which they had captured from our men. Myself and the soldier jumped into the bushes (the bullets mowing down the branches at every volley), and crawled off to get out of range of the fire. In doing so we moved the top branches of the undergrowth, and the Indians on the top of the bluff fired where they saw the commotion and thus covered us with their rifles. We now decided to cross a clearing of about twenty yards and gain another wood; but before doing this, I took the precaution to look out. The prospect was terribly discouraging for on our immediate right, not more than fifty yards distant, I saw four or five Indians galloping toward us. . . . [But they] had not seen us and when the foremost man was just abreast of me and about ten yards distant, I fired. They came in Indian file, and at my fire they turned a right-about and were making off when Pvt. O'Neill fired his carbine at the second savage, who at that moment was reining his pony to turn him back. The private's eye was true, and his carbine trusty, for Mr. Indian dropped his rein, threw up his paws and laid down on the grass to sleep his long sleep. The gentleman I greeted rode a short distance and then did likewise. The rest of the party rode on, turned the corner of the wood and disappeared. During all this time the fire from the bluffs continued, but after we had fired our shots, it ceased, and we retired to the thicket. From our position we could see the Indians on the bluffs, their horses picketed under cover of the hill, and a line of sharpshooters, all lying flat on their stomachs. We could hear the battle going on above us on the hills, the continued rattle of the musketry, the cheering of our command, and the shouting of the savages. Our hopes revived when we heard the familiar cheer of our comrades, but despondency followed fast for we discovered that our wood was on fire and we had to shift our position. We crawled almost to the edge of the wood, when we discovered that the fiends had fired both sides. We moved around until we found a thick cluster of what they call bulberry trees, under which we crept. The grass on the edge of this place was very green, as it had been raining a little while before, and there was no wind. When the fire approached our hiding place it ran very slowly so that I was enabled to smother it with my gauntlet gloves. The fire consumed all the underwood around us and was almost expended by this time. There we were in a little oasis, surrounded by fire, but comparatively safe from the elements, and with the advantage of seeing almost everything around us without being seen. We could see savages going backward and forward, and one standing on picket not more than 70 or 80 yards from us, evidently put there to watch the progress of the fire. At about 4 o'clock P.M. this picket fired 4 pistol shots in the air at regular intervals from each other and which I interpreted as a signal of some kind. Soon after this fire we heard the powerful voice of a savage crying out, making the same sound four times, and after these two signals, we saw 200 or more savages leave the bluffs and ford the river, evidently leaving the ground. About one hour after, the same double signals were again repeated, and many mounted Indians left at a gallop. Soon the remainder of those left on the bluffs also retired.

Hope now revived, the musketry rattle ceased and only now and then we could hear a far off shot. By 6 o'clock everything around us was apparently quiet and no evidence or signs of any Indians were near us. We supposed the regiment

had left the field, and all that remained for us to do was to wait for the night and then pass the river and take the route for the Yellowstone River, and there construct a raft and descend to the mouth of the Powder River, our supply camp. Of course during the 36 hours that we were in suspense, we had neither water nor food. At 8 P.M. we dropped ourselves into the river, the water reaching our waists, crossed it twice and then carefully crawled up the bluffs, took our direction and slowly and cautiously proceeded southward.

After marching two miles, I thought I would go up on a very high hill to look around and see if I could discover any sign of our command; and on looking around I saw a fire on my left and in the direction where we supposed the command was fighting during the day, probably two miles from us. Of course we made two conjectures on this fire: it might be an Indian fire and it might be from our command. The only way to ascertain was to approach it cautiously and trust to chance. Accordingly we descended the hill, and took the direction of the fire. Climbing another and another hill, we listened a while and then proceeded on for a mile or more, when on the top of a hill we again stopped and listened. We could hear voices, but not distinctly enough to tell whether they were savages or our command.

We proceeded a little farther and heard the bray of a mule, and soon after, the distinct voice of a sentry challenging with the familiar words "Halt; Who goes there?" The challenge was not directed to us, as we were too far off to be seen by the picket, and it was too dark; but this gave us courage to continue our course and approach, though carefully, lest we should run into some Indians again. We were about 200 yards from the fire and I cried out: "Picket, don't fire; it is Lt. DeRudio and Pvt. O'Neill," and started to run. We received an answer in a loud cheer from all the members of the picket and Lt. Varnum. This officer, one of our bravest and most efficient, came at once to me and was very happy to see me again, after having counted me among the dead.

My first question was about the condition of the regiment. I was in hopes that we were the only sufferers, but I was not long allowed to remain in doubt. Lt. Varnum said he knew nothing of the five companies under Custer and that our command had sustained a loss in Lts. McIntosh and Hodgson. It was about 2 A.M. when I got into camp, and I soon after tried to go to sleep; but though I had not slept for two nights, I could not close my eyes. I talked with Lt. Varnum about the battle and narrated to him adventures and narrow escapes I had had. Morning soon came and I went to see the officers, and told them that the Indians had left.

At 8 o'clock we saw cavalry approaching, first a few scouts and then a dense column and soon learned it was Gen. Brisbin's command coming up to our relief. Presently a long line of infantry appeared on the plain and Gen. Gibbon came up. Ah! who that was there will ever forget how our hearts thrilled at sight of those blue coats! And when Gens. Gibbon and Terry rode into our camp, men wept like children.

Yours truly,  
CHARLES C. DeRUDIO

### FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. The U.S. Army lost many battles to Native Americans. Why did the Battle of Little Bighorn catch people's imagination?
2. Both Native American documents were published in the twentieth century, many decades after Little Bighorn. Why might Native Americans have wanted to tell a different story half a century later? What evidence do you find in the passages that suggests a desire to correct or change the record?

## 3

FELIX HAYWOOD ET AL.

### African Americans during Reconstruction

*After the Civil War, freedmen struggled to define their freedom. Some left the plantations to which they had been bound and found family members from whom they had been separated by slavery and war. Many—perhaps most—saw freedom in the ownership of land, a dream encouraged by a field order issued by General William Tecumseh Sherman in January 1865 that assigned some vacant lands to former slaves. As a black soldier told his white officer, “Every colored man will be a slave and feel himself a slave until he could raise his own bale of cotton and put his own mark upon it and say, ‘Dis is mine!’”*

*Yet soon after the first jubilee of freedom, the Andrew Johnson administration, falling under the influence of former Confederates, revoked Sherman's order assigning land to former slaves. The administration stood by as white Southerners began to force the freedmen back into old patterns—assigning them work under coercive labor contracts and allowing states to govern their daily activities by “black codes” that denied them their civil rights. When these policies provoked a political reaction in the North, Republicans in Congress took control of Southern policy through a series of Reconstruction acts. While restoring civil rights and providing military protection, these laws failed to provide land to the freedmen.*

*The Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth Amendments (1870) to the U.S. Constitution came into being in the aftermath of the war. Although the so-called civil rights amendments decreed equality between the races, equal status did not become a reality in African Americans' daily lives in either the North or the South. For about a decade, the federal government made vigorous efforts to help freedmen gain education, legal and medical services, reasonable employment contracts, and a measure of political power.*

“African Americans React to Reconstruction,” in B. A. Botkin, ed., *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 65–70, 223–24, 241–42, 246–47.

*But those efforts were abandoned once the Northern public, tired of disorder in the South and wary of government intervention, abandoned the former slaves to their old masters. African Americans were soon left to respond however they could to the social revolution brought about by emancipation, the war's impoverishment of the South, and the violence of groups like the Ku Klux Klan.*

*Historians have pieced together the story of the freedmen's actions from a multiplicity of sources. Interviews with former slaves collected in the 1930s, a sample of which you will read here, are an important source for comprehending the lives of those freed, and then abandoned, after the Civil War.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Judging from these accounts, what major problems did former slaves face after the war?
2. What did these former slaves expect of freedom?
3. Why did some freedmen continue to work for their former masters?

### FELIX HAYWOOD

*San Antonio, Texas. Born in Raleigh, North Carolina. Age at interview: 88.*

The end of the war, it come just like that—like you snap your fingers. . . . How did we know it! Hallelujah broke out— . . .

Everybody went wild. We felt like heroes, and nobody had made us that way but ourselves. We was free. Just like that, we was free. It didn't seem to make the whites mad, either. They went right on giving us food just the same. Nobody took our homes away, but right off colored folks started on the move. They seemed to want to get closer to freedom, so they'd know what it was—like it was a place or a city. Me and my father stuck, stuck close as a lean tick to a sick kitten. The Gudlows started us out on a ranch. My father, he'd round up cattle—unbranded cattle—for the whites. They was cattle that they belonged to, all right; they had gone to find water 'long the San Antonio River and the Guadalupe. Then the whites gave me and my father some cattle for our own. My father had his own brand—7 B)—and we had a herd to start out with of seventy.

We knowed freedom was on us, but we didn't know what was to come with it. We thought we was going to get rich like the white folks. We thought we was going to be richer than the white folks, 'cause we was stronger and knowed how to work, and the whites didn't, and they didn't have us to work for them any more. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud, but it didn't make 'em rich.

Did you ever stop to think that thinking don't do any good when you do it too late? Well, that's how it was with us. If every mother's son of a black had thrown 'way his hoe and took up a gun to fight for his own freedom along with the Yankees, the war'd been over before it began. But we didn't do it. We couldn't help stick to our masters. We couldn't no more shoot 'em than we could fly. My

father and me used to talk 'bout it. We decided we was too soft and freedom wasn't going to be much to our good even if we had a education.

### WARREN MCKINNEY

*Hazen, Arkansas. Born in South Carolina. Age at interview: 85.*

I was born in Edgefield County, South Carolina. I am eighty-five years old. I was born a slave of George Strauter. I remembers hearing them say, "Thank God, I's free as a jay bird." My ma was a slave in the field. I was eleven years old when freedom was declared. When I was little, Mr. Strauter whipped my ma. It hurt me bad as it did her. I hated him. She was crying. I chunked him with rocks. He run after me, but he didn't catch me. There was twenty-five or thirty hands that worked in the field. They raised wheat, corn, oats, barley, and cotton. All the children that couldn't work stayed at one house. Aunt Mat kept the babies and small children that couldn't go to the field. He had a gin and a shop. The shop was at the fork of the roads. When the war come on, my papa went to built forts. He quit Ma and took another woman. When the war close, Ma took her four children, bundled 'em up and went to Augusta. The government give out rations there. My ma washed and ironed. People died in piles. I don't know till yet what was the matter. They said it was the change of living. I seen five or six wooden, painted coffins piled up on wagons pass by our house. Loads passed every day like you see cotton pass here. Some said it was cholera and some . . . consumption [tuberculosis]. Lots of the colored people nearly starved. Not much to get to do and not much houseroom. Several families had to live in one house. Lots of the colored folks went up North and froze to death. They couldn't stand the cold. They wrote back about them dying. No, they never sent them back. I heard some sent for money to come back. I heard plenty 'bout the Ku Klux. They scared the folks to death. People left Augusta in droves. About a thousand would all meet and walk going to hunt work and new homes. Some of them died. I had a sister and brother lost that way. I had another sister come to Louisiana that way. She wrote back.

I don't think the colored folks looked for a share of land. They never got nothing 'cause the white folks didn't have nothing but barren hills left. About all the mules was wore out hauling provisions in the army. Some folks say they ought to done more for the colored folks when they left, but they say they was broke. Freeing all the slaves left 'em broke.

That reconstruction was a mighty hard pull. Me and Ma couldn't live. A man paid our ways to Carlisle, Arkansas, and we come. We started working for Mr. Emenson. He had a big store, teams, and land. We liked it fine, and I been here fifty-six years now. There was so much wild game, living was not so hard. If a fellow could get a little bread and a place to stay, he was all right. After I come to this state, I voted some. I have farmed and worked at odd jobs. I farmed mostly. Ma went back to her old master. He persuaded her to come back home.



Me and her went back and run a farm four or five years before she died. Then I come back here.

### LEE GUIDON

*South Carolina. Born in South Carolina. Age at interview: 89.*

Yes, ma'am, I sure was in the Civil War. I plowed all day, and me and my sister helped take care of the baby at night. It would cry, and me bumping it [in a straight chair, rocking]. Time I git it to the bed where its mama was, it wake up and start crying all over again. I be so sleepy. It was a puny sort of baby. Its papa was off at war. His name was Jim Cowan, and his wife Miss Margaret Brown 'fore she married him. Miss Lucy Smith give me and my sister to them. Then she married Mr. Abe Moore. Jim Smith was Miss Lucy's boy. He lay out in the woods all time. He say no need in him gitting shot up and killed. He say let the slaves be free. We lived, seemed like, on 'bout the line of York and Union counties. He lay out in the woods over in York County. Mr. Jim say all the fighting 'bout was jealousy. They caught him several times, but every time he got away from 'em. After they come home Mr. Jim say they never win no war. They stole and starved out the South. . . .

After freedom a heap of people say they was going to name theirselves over. They named theirselves big names, then went roaming round like wild, hunting cities. They changed up so it was hard to tell who or where anybody was. Heap of 'em died, and you didn't know when you hear about it if he was your folks hardly. Some of the names was Abraham, and some called theirselves Lincum. Any big name 'cepting their master's name. It was the fashion. I heard 'em talking 'bout it one evening, and my pa say, "Fine folks raise us and we gonna hold to our own names." That settled it with all of us. . . .

I reckon I do know 'bout the Ku Kluck. I knowed a man named Alfred Owens. He seemed all right, but he was a Republican. He said he was not afraid. He run a tanyard and kept a heap of guns in a big room. They all loaded. He married a Southern woman. Her husband either died or was killed. She had a son living with them. The Ku Kluck was called Upper League. They get this boy to unload all the guns. Then the white men went there. The white man give up and said, "I ain't got no gun to defend myself with. The guns all unloaded, and I ain't got no powder and shot." But the Ku Kluck shot in the houses and shot him up like lacework. He sold fine harness, saddles, bridles—all sorts of leather things. The Ku Kluck sure run them outen their country. They say they not going to have them round, and they sure run them out, back where they came from. . . .

For them what stayed on like they were, Reconstruction times 'bout like times before that 'cepting the Yankee stole out and tore up a scandalous heap. They tell the black folks to do something, and then come white folks you live with and say Ku Kluck whup you. They say leave, and white folks say better not listen to them old yankees. They'll git you too far off to come back, and you freeze. They done give you all the use they got for you. . . .

**TOBY JONES**

*Madisonville, Texas. Born in South Carolina. Age at interview: 87.*

I worked for Massa 'bout four years after freedom, 'cause he forced me to, said he couldn't 'ford to let me go. His place was near ruint, the fences burnt, and the house would have been, but it was rock. There was a battle fought near his place, and I taken Missy to a hideout in the mountains to where her father was, 'cause there was bullets flying everywhere. When the war was over, Massa come home and says, "You son of a gun, you's supposed to be free, but you ain't, 'cause I ain't gwine give you freedom." So I goes on working for him till I gits the chance to steal a hoss from him. The woman I wanted to marry, Govie, she 'cides to come to Texas with me. Me and Govie, we rides the hoss 'most a hundred miles, then we turned him a-loose and give him a scare back to his house, and come on foot the rest the way to Texas.

All we had to eat was what we could beg, and sometimes we went three days without a bite to eat. Sometimes we'd pick a few berries. When we got cold we'd crawl in a brushpile and hug up close together to keep warm. Once in a while we'd come to a farmhouse, and the man let us sleep on cottonseed in his barn, but they was far and few between, 'cause they wasn't many houses in the country them days like now.

When we gits to Texas, we gits married, but all they was to our wedding am we just 'grees to live together as man and wife. I settled on some land, and we cut some trees and split them open and stood them on end with the tops together for our house. Then we deadened some trees, and the land was ready to farm. There was some wild cattle and hogs, and that's the way we got our start, caught some of them and tamed them.

I don't know as I 'spected nothing from freedom, but they turned us out like a bunch of stray dogs, no homes, no clothing, no nothing, not 'nough food to last us one meal. After we settles on that place, I never seed man or woman, 'cept Govie, for six years, 'cause it was a long ways to anywhere. All we had to farm with was sharp sticks. We'd stick holes and plant corn, and when it come up we'd punch up the dirt round it. We didn't plant cotton, 'cause we couldn't eat that. I made bows and arrows to kill wild game with, and we never went to a store for nothing. We made our clothes out of animal skins.

## 4

### IDA B. WELLS

#### African American Protest

*Like few Americans of her day, Ida B. Wells (1862–1931) not only spoke out against the lynching of blacks but also orchestrated a vigorous public campaign to end the lynchings. Born during the Civil War in Holly Springs, Mississippi, to slave parents, she attended Shaw University (now Rust College) in her hometown. As an adult, she relocated to Memphis, Tennessee, where she worked first as a schoolteacher and later as a journalist. In 1889 she became an editor at the Free Speech and Headlight, an anti-segregationist newspaper. Wells focused her reporting on contemporary Southern politics and wrote movingly about the steady decline of African American liberties and the rise of violent white supremacy groups like the Ku Klux Klan. The fierce attacks against the lynching of black citizens that she first mounted from her editorial chair continued throughout her life.*

*One of Wells's most famous writings is Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases, published in 1892. In this pamphlet, excerpted here, Wells undercut the growing white rationalization for the lynching of black men—that they had raped white women. She argued that the real cause of the rise in extralegal racial violence was the growing economic power of African Americans. In the pamphlet, Wells also encouraged fellow blacks to respond aggressively. Gone were the days, she wrote, when an African American might simply ignore politics and hope that a studied indifference to the white-ruled Democratic Party would eventually end the escalating violence. Instead, she asserted, blacks must arm themselves and be willing to put their rifles and revolvers to use in self-defense.*

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In Ida B. Wells's view, who was to blame for the rise in the number of lynchings in the late-nineteenth-century South?
2. What were the various solutions to the decline of black civil rights, according to Wells?
3. What was religion's role in Southern society in the late 1800s?
4. How would you describe the tone of Wells's writing? Was she hopeful for positive change for black citizens? Explain.

One by one the Southern States have legally(?) [*sic*] disfranchised the Afro-American, and since the repeal of the Civil Rights Bill nearly every Southern

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Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892; Project Gutenberg, 2005), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14975/14975.txt>.

State has passed separate car laws<sup>1</sup> with a penalty against their infringement. The race regardless of advancement is penned into filthy, stifling partitions cut off from smoking cars. All this while, although the political cause has been removed, the butcheries of black men . . . have gone on; also the flaying alive of a man in Kentucky, the burning of one in Arkansas, the hanging of a fifteen-year-old girl in Louisiana, a woman in Jackson, Tenn., and one in Hollendale, Miss., until the dark and bloody record of the South shows 728 Afro-Americans lynched during the past eight years [from 1884 to 1892]. Not fifty of these were for political causes; the rest were for all manner of accusations from that of rape of white women, to the case of the boy Will Lewis who was hanged at Tullahoma, Tenn., last year for being drunk and “sassy” to white folks.

These statistics compiled by the *Chicago Tribune* were given the first of this year (1892). Since then, not less than one hundred and fifty have been known to have met violent death at the hands of cruel bloodthirsty mobs during the past nine months.

To palliate this record (which grows worse as the Afro-American becomes intelligent) and excuse some of the most heinous crimes that ever stained the history of a country, the South is shielding itself behind the plausible screen of defending the honor of its women. This, too, in the face of the fact that only one-third of the 728 victims to mobs have been charged with rape, to say nothing of those of that one-third who were innocent of the charge. A white correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun* declares that the Afro-American who was lynched in Chestertown, Md., in May for assault on a white girl was innocent; that the deed was done by a white man who had since disappeared. The girl herself maintained that her assailant was a white man. When that poor Afro-American was murdered, the whites excused their refusal of a trial on the ground that they wished to spare the white girl the mortification of having to testify in court.

This cry has had its effect. It has closed the heart, stifled the conscience, warped the judgment and hushed the voice of press and pulpit on the subject of lynch law throughout this “land of liberty.” Men who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage. They do not see that by their tacit encouragement, their silent acquiescence, the black shadow of lawlessness in the form of lynch law is spreading its wings over the whole country.

Even to the better class of Afro-Americans the crime of rape is so revolting they have too often taken the white man’s word and given lynch law neither the investigation nor condemnation it deserved. They forget that a concession of the right to lynch a man for a certain crime, not only concedes the right to lynch any person for any crime, but (so frequently is the cry of rape now raised) it is in a fair way to stamp us a race of rapists and desperadoes. They have gone on hoping and believing that general education and financial strength would solve the difficulty, and are devoting their energies to the accumulation of both.

1. **car laws:** Laws passed in the 1890s assigning whites and blacks separate railway cars.

The mob spirit has grown with the increasing intelligence of the Afro-American. It has left the out-of-the-way places where ignorance prevails, has thrown off the mask and with this new cry stalks in broad daylight in large cities, the centers of civilization, and is encouraged by the “leading citizens” and the press. . . .

[The South’s] white citizens are wedded to any method however revolting, any measure however extreme, for the subjugation of the young manhood of the race. They have cheated him out of his ballot, deprived him of civil rights or redress therefore in the civil courts, robbed him of the fruits of his labor, and are still murdering, burning and lynching him.

The result is a growing disregard of human life. Lynch law has spread its insidious influence till men in New York State, Pennsylvania and on the free Western plains feel they can take the law in their own hands with impunity, especially where an Afro-American is concerned. The South is brutalized to a degree not realized by its own inhabitants, and the very foundation of government, law and order, are imperiled.

Public sentiment has had a slight “reaction” though not sufficient to stop the crusade of lawlessness and lynching. The spirit of christianity of the great M[ethodist] E[piscopal] Church was aroused to the frequent and revolting crimes against a weak people, enough to pass strong condemnatory resolutions at its General Conference in Omaha last May. The spirit of justice of the Grand Old Party asserted itself sufficiently to secure a denunciation of the wrongs, and a feeble declaration of the belief in human rights in the Republican platform at Minneapolis, June 7. Some of the great dailies and weeklies have swung into line declaring that lynch law must go. The President of the United States issued a proclamation that it be not tolerated in the territories over which he has jurisdiction. Governor Northern and Chief Justice Bleckley of Georgia have proclaimed against it. The citizens of Chattanooga, Tenn., have set a worthy example in that they not only condemn lynch law, but her public men demanded a trial for Weems, the accused rapist, and guarded him while the trial was in progress. The trial only lasted ten minutes, and Weems chose to plead guilty and accept twenty-one years sentence, than invite the certain death which awaited him outside that cordon of police if he had told the truth and shown the letters he had from the white woman in the case.

The strong arm of the law must be brought to bear upon lynchers in severe punishment, but this cannot and will not be done unless a healthy public sentiment demands and sustains such action.

The men and women in the South who disapprove of lynching and remain silent on the perpetration of such outrages, are participant criminals, accomplices, accessories before and after the fact, equally guilty with the actual law-breakers who would not persist if they did not know that neither the law nor militia would be employed against them. . . .

In the creation of this healthier public sentiment, the Afro-American can do for himself what no one else can do for him. The world looks on with wonder that we have conceded so much and remain law-abiding under such great outrage and provocation.

To Northern capital and Afro-American labor the South owes its rehabilitation. If labor is withdrawn capital will not remain. The Afro-American is thus the backbone of the South. A thorough knowledge and judicious exercise of this power in lynching localities could many times effect a bloodless revolution. The white man's dollar is his god, and to stop this will be to stop outrages in many localities.

The Afro-Americans of Memphis denounced the lynching of three of their best citizens, and urged and waited for the authorities to act in the matter and bring the lynchers to justice. No attempt was made to do so, and the black men left the city by thousands, bringing about great stagnation in every branch of business. Those who remained so injured the business of the street car company by staying off the cars, that the superintendent, manager and treasurer called personally on the editor of the *Free Speech*, asked them to urge our people to give them their patronage again. Other business men became alarmed over the situation and the *Free Speech* was run away that the colored people might be more easily controlled. A meeting of white citizens in June, three months after the lynching, passed resolutions for the first time, condemning it. But they did not punish the lynchers. Every one of them was known by name, because they had been selected to do the dirty work, by some of the very citizens who passed these resolutions. Memphis is fast losing her black population, who proclaim as they go that there is no protection for the life and property of any Afro-American citizen in Memphis who is not a slave.

The appeal to the white man's pocket has ever been more effectual than all the appeals ever made to his conscience. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is to be gained by a further sacrifice of manhood and self-respect. By the right exercise of his power as the industrial factor of the South, the Afro-American can demand and secure his rights, the punishment of lynchers, and a fair trial for accused rapists.

Of the many inhuman outrages of this present year, the only case where the proposed lynching did *not* occur, was where the men armed themselves in Jacksonville, Fla., and Paducah, Ky, and prevented it. The only times an Afro-American who was assaulted got away has been when he had a gun and used it in self-defense.

The lesson this teaches and which every Afro-American should ponder well, is that a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give. When the white man who is always the aggressor knows he runs as great [a] risk of biting the dust every time his Afro-American victim does, he will have greater respect for Afro-American life. The more the Afro-American yields and cringes and begs, the more he has to do so, the more he is insulted, outraged and lynched.

The assertion has been substantiated throughout these pages that the press contains unreliable and doctored reports of lynchings, and one of the most necessary things for the race to do is to get these facts before the public. The people must know before they can act, and there is no educator to compare with the press.

The Afro-American papers are the only ones which will print the truth, and they lack means to employ agents and detectives to get at the facts. The race must

rally a mighty host to the support of their journals, and thus enable them to do much in the way of investigation.

Nothing is more definitely settled than he must act for himself. I have shown how he may employ the boycott, emigration and the press, and I feel that by a combination of all these agencies can be effectually stamped out lynch law, that last relic of barbarism and slavery. "The gods help those who help themselves."

## 5

### CALEB G. FORSHEY AND THE REVEREND JAMES SINCLAIR

#### **White Southerners' Reactions to Reconstruction**

*Like their former slaves, white Southerners at the end of the Civil War exhibited a wide variety of attitudes. Granted generous surrender terms that protected them from charges of treason and allowed them to keep horses and mules "to put in a crop," returning Confederate soldiers at first were more resigned to the war's outcome than those who had stayed at home and who had therefore had less opportunity to discharge their anger during the war. Although many in the South had initially been ready to accept peace on the conqueror's terms, Northern uncertainty as to what these terms should be made those Southerners waver and encouraged others who were already angry. The president called for one policy and Congress for another. Northerners elected a Republican Congress that demanded freedom, civil rights, and even the franchise for former slaves living in the South, and yet the same Northerners tolerated the denial of civil rights to African Americans living in the North. In the fall of 1865, three Republican states—Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Minnesota—voted down amendments to their constitutions that would have enfranchised blacks. This development fueled resistance to Republican demands among white Southerners.*

*Assembled to examine Southern representation in Congress, the Joint Committee of Fifteen was part of the Republican Congress's opposition to President Andrew Johnson's plan of Reconstruction. In 1866 the committee held hearings as part of its effort to develop the Fourteenth Amendment. Despite the president's veto, Congress had already enlarged the scope of the Freedmen's Bureau to care for displaced former slaves and to try by military commission those accused of depriving freedmen of their civil rights.*

*Of the two white Southerners whose interviews with the committee are included here, Caleb Forshey had supported secession, while James Sinclair, though a slaveholder, had opposed it. A Scottish-born minister who had moved to North Carolina in 1857, Sinclair*

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*The Report of the Committees of the House of Representatives Made during the First Session, Thirty-Ninth Congress, 1865–1866, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 129–32, 168–71.*

*expressed Unionist sentiments that led to the loss of his church and then to his arrest during the war. In 1865 he was working with the Freedmen's Bureau.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What did Caleb Forshey think of Union efforts to protect former slaves through military occupation and the Freedmen's Bureau?
2. What were Forshey's beliefs about African Americans?
3. What was the plight of former slaves and white Unionists, according to James Sinclair?

### CALEB G. FORSHEY

*Washington, D.C., March 28, 1866*

*Question:* Where do you reside?

*Answer:* I reside in the State of Texas.

*Question:* How long have you been a resident of Texas?

*Answer:* I have resided in Texas and been a citizen of that State for nearly thirteen years.

*Question:* What opportunities have you had for ascertaining the temper and disposition of the people of Texas towards the government and authority of the United States?

*Answer:* For ten years I have been superintendent of the Texas Military Institute, as its founder and conductor. I have been in the confederate service in various parts of the confederacy; but chiefly in the trans-Mississippi department, in Louisiana and Texas, as an officer of engineers. I have had occasion to see and know very extensively the condition of affairs in Texas, and also to a considerable extent in Louisiana. I think I am pretty well-informed, as well as anybody, perhaps, of the present state of affairs in Texas.

*Question:* What are the feelings and views of the people of Texas as to the late rebellion, and the future condition and circumstances of the State, and its relations to the federal government?

*Answer:* After our army had given up its arms and gone home, the surrender of all matters in controversy was complete, and as nearly universal, perhaps, as anything could be. Assuming the matters in controversy to have been the right to secede, and the right to hold slaves, I think they were given up tee-totally, to use a strong Americanism. When you speak of feeling, I should discriminate a little. The feeling was that of any party who had been cast in a suit he had staked all upon. They did not return from feeling, but from a sense of necessity, and from a judgment that it was the only and necessary thing to be done, to give up the contest. But when they gave it up, it was without reservation; with a view to look forward, and not back. That is my impression of the manner in which the thing was done. There was a public expectation that in some very limited time there would be a restoration to former relations. . . . It was the expectation of the people that, as soon as the State was organized as proposed by the President,



they would be restored to their former relations, and things would go on as before.

*Question:* What is your opinion of a military force under the authority of the federal government to preserve order in Texas and to protect those who have been loyal, both white and black, from the aggressions of those who have been in the rebellion?

*Answer:* My judgment is well founded on that subject: that wherever such military force is and has been, it has excited the very feeling it was intended to prevent; that so far from being necessary it is very pernicious everywhere, and without exception. The local authorities and public sentiment are ample for protection. I think no occasion would occur, unless some individual case that our laws would not reach. We had an opportunity to test this after the surrender and before any authority was there. The military authorities, or the military officers, declared that we were without laws, and it was a long time before the governor appointed arrived there, and then it was sometime before we could effect anything in the way of organization. We were a people without law, order, or anything; and it was a time for violence if it would occur. I think it is a great credit to our civilization that, in that state of affairs, there was nowhere any instance of violence. I am proud of it, for I expected the contrary; I expected that our soldiers on coming home, many of them, would be dissolute, and that many of them would oppress the class of men you speak of; but it did not occur. But afterwards, wherever soldiers have been sent, there have been little troubles, none of them large; but personal collisions between soldiers and citizens.

*Question:* What is your opinion as to the necessity and advantages of the Freedmen's Bureau, or an agency of that kind, in Texas?

*Answer:* My opinion is that it is not needed; my opinion is stronger than that—that the effect of it is to irritate, if nothing else. While in New York City recently I had a conversation with some friends from Texas, from five distant points in the State. We met together and compared opinions; and the opinion of each was the same, that the negroes had generally gone to work since January; that except where the Freedmen's Bureau had interfered, or rather encouraged troubles, such as little complaints, especially between negro and negro, the negro's disposition was very good, and they had generally gone to work, a vast majority of them with their former masters. . . . The impression in Texas at present is that the negroes under the influence of the Freedmen's Bureau do worse than without it.

I want to state that I believe all our former owners of negroes are the friends of the negroes; and that the antagonism paraded in the papers of the north does not exist at all. I know the fact is the very converse of that; and good feeling always prevails between the masters and the slaves. But the negroes went off and left them in the lurch; my own family was an instance of it. But they came back after a time, saying they had been free enough and wanted a home.

*Question:* Do you think those who employ the negroes there are willing to make contracts with them, so that they shall have fair wages for their labor?

*Answer:* I think so; I think they are paid liberally, more than the white men in this country get; the average compensation to negroes there is greater than

the average compensation of free laboring white men in this country. It seems to have regulated itself in a great measure by what each neighborhood was doing; the negroes saying, "I can get thus and so at such a place." Men have [been] hired from eight to fifteen dollars per month during the year, and women at about two dollars less a month; house-servants at a great deal more.

*Question:* Do the men who employ the negroes claim to exercise the right to enforce their contract by physical force?

*Answer:* Not at all; that is totally abandoned; not a single instance of it has occurred. I think they still chastise children, though. The negro parents often neglect that, and the children are still switched as we switch our own children. I know it is done in my own house; we have little house-servants that we switch just as I do our own little fellows.

*Question:* What is your opinion as to the respective advantages to the white and black races, of the present free system of labor and the institution of slavery?

*Answer:* I think freedom is very unfortunate for the negro; I think it is sad; his present helpless condition touches my heart more than anything else I ever contemplated, and I think that is the common sentiment of our slaveholders. I have seen it on the largest plantations, where the negro men had all left, and where only women and children remained, and the owners had to keep them and feed them. The beginning certainly presents a touching and sad spectacle. The poor negro is dying at a rate fearful to relate.

I have some ethnological theories that may perhaps warp my judgment; but my judgment is that the highest condition the black race has ever reached or can reach, is one where he is provided for by a master race. That is the result of a great deal of scientific investigation and observation of the negro character by me ever since I was a man. The labor question had become a most momentous one, and I was studying it. I undertook to investigate the condition of the negro from statistics under various circumstances, to treat it purely as a matter of statistics from the census tables of this country of ours. I found that the free blacks of the north decreased 8 per cent.; the free blacks of the south increased 7 or 8 per cent., while the slaves by their sides increased 34 per cent. I inferred from the doctrines of political economy that the race is in the best condition when it procreates the fastest; that, other things being equal, slavery is of vast advantage to the negro. I will mention one or two things in connexion with this as explanatory of that result. The negro will not take care of his offspring unless required to do it, as compared with the whites. The little children will die; they do die, and hence the necessity of very rigorous regulations on our plantations which we have adopted in our nursery system.

Another cause is that there is no continence among the negroes.<sup>1</sup> All the continence I have ever seen among the negroes has been enforced upon plantations, where it is generally assumed there is none. For the sake of procreation, if nothing else, we compel men to live with their wives. The discipline of the

1. **no continence among the negroes:** By this Forshey meant that they did not rein in their sexual impulses.

plantation was more rigorous, perhaps, in regard to men staying with their wives, than in regard to anything else; and I think the procreative results, as shown by the census tables, is due in a great measure to that discipline. . . .

*Question:* What is the prevailing inclination among the people of Texas in regard to giving the negroes civil or political rights and privileges?

*Answer:* I think they are all opposed to it. There are some men—I am not among them—who think that the basis of intelligence might be a good basis for the elective franchise. But a much larger class, perhaps nine-tenths of our people, believe that the distinctions between the races should not be broken down by any such community of interests in the management of the affairs of the State. I think there is a very common sentiment that the negro, even with education, has not a mind capable of appreciating the political institutions of the country to such an extent as would make him a good associate for the white man in the administration of the government. I think if the vote was taken on the question of admitting him to the right of suffrage there would be a very small vote in favor of it—scarcely respectable: that is my judgment.

### THE REVEREND JAMES SINCLAIR

*Washington, D.C., January 29, 1866*

*Question:* What is generally the state of feeling among the white people of North Carolina towards the government of the United States?

*Answer:* That is a difficult question to answer, but I will answer it as far as my own knowledge goes. In my opinion, there is generally among the white people not much love for the government. Though they are willing, and I believe determined, to acquiesce in what is inevitable, yet so far as love and affection for the government is concerned, I do not believe that they have any of it at all, outside of their personal respect and regard for President Johnson.

*Question:* How do they feel towards the mass of the northern people—that is, the people of what were known formerly as the free States?

*Answer:* They feel in this way: that they have been ruined by them. You can imagine the feelings of a person towards one whom he regards as having ruined him. They regard the northern people as having destroyed their property or taken it from them, and brought all the calamities of this war upon them.

*Question:* How do they feel in regard to what is called the right of secession?

*Answer:* They think that it was right . . . that there was no wrong in it. They are willing now to accept the decision of the question that has been made by the sword, but they are not by any means converted from their old opinion that they had a right to secede. It is true that there have always been Union men in our State, but not Union men without slavery, except perhaps among Quakers. Slavery was the central idea even of the Unionist. The only difference between them and the others upon that question was, that they desired to have that institution under the aegis of the Constitution, and protected by it. The secessionists wanted to get away from the north altogether. When the secessionists

precipitated our State into rebellion, the Unionists and secessionists went together, because the great object with both was the preservation of slavery by the preservation of State sovereignty. There was another class of Unionists who did not care anything at all about slavery, but they were driven by the other whites into the rebellion for the purpose of preserving slavery. The poor whites are to-day very much opposed to conferring upon the negro the right of suffrage; as much so as the other classes of the whites. They believe it is the intention of government to give the negro rights at their expense. They cannot see it in any other light than that as the negro is elevated they must proportionately go down. While they are glad that slavery is done away with, they are bitterly opposed to conferring the right of suffrage on the negro as the most prominent secessionists; but it is for the reason I have stated, that they think rights conferred on the negro must necessarily be taken from them, particularly the ballot, which was the only bulwark guarding their superiority to the negro race.

*Question:* In your judgment, what proportion of the white people of North Carolina are really, and truly, and cordially attached to the government of the United States?

*Answer:* Very few, sir; very few. . . .

*Question:* Is the Freedmen's Bureau acceptable to the great mass of the white people in North Carolina?

*Answer:* No, sir; I do not think it is; I think that most of the whites wish the bureau to be taken away.

*Question:* Why do they wish that?

*Answer:* They think that they can manage the negro for themselves: that they understand him better than northern men do. They say, "Let us understand what you want us to do with [the] negro—what you desire of us; lay down your conditions for our readmission into the Union, and then we will know what we have to do, and if you will do that we will enact laws for the government of these negroes. They have lived among us, and they are all with us, and we can manage them better than you can." They think it is interfering with the rights of the State for a bureau, the agent and representative of the federal government, to [overrule] the State entirely, and interfere with the regulations and administration of justice before their courts.

*Question:* Is there generally a willingness on the part of the whites to allow the freedmen to enjoy the right of acquiring land and personal property?

*Answer:* I think they are very willing to let them do that, for this reason; to get rid of some portion of the taxes imposed upon their property by the government. For instance, a white man will agree to sell a negro some of his land on condition of his paying so much a year on it, promising to give him a deed of it when the whole payment is made, taking his note in the mean time. This relieves that much of the land from taxes to be paid by the white man. All I am afraid of is, that the negro is too eager to go into this thing; that he will ruin himself, get himself into debt to the white man, and be forever bound to him for the debt and never get the land. I have often warned them to be careful what they did about these things.

*Question:* There is no repugnance on the part of the whites to the negro owning land and personal property?

*Answer:* I think not.

*Question:* Have they any objection to the legal establishment of the domestic relations among the blacks, such as the relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, and the securing by law to the negro the rights of those relations?

*Answer:* That is a matter of ridicule with the whites. They do not believe the negroes will ever respect those relations more than the brutes. I suppose I have married more than two hundred couples of negroes since the war, but the whites laugh at the very idea of the thing. . . .

*Question:* What, in general, has been the treatment of the blacks by the whites since the close of hostilities?

*Answer:* It has not generally been of the kindest character, I must say that; I am compelled to say that.

*Question:* Are you aware of any instance of personal ill treatment towards the blacks by the whites?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* Give some instances that have occurred since the war.

*Answer:* [Sinclair describes the beating of a young woman across her buttocks in graphic detail.]

*Question:* What was the provocation, if any?

*Answer:* Something in regard to some work, which is generally the provocation.

*Question:* Was there no law in North Carolina at that time to punish such an outrage?

*Answer:* No, sir; only the regulations of the Freedmen's Bureau; we took cognizance of the case. In old times that was quite allowable; it is what was called "padding."

*Question:* Did you deal with the master?

*Answer:* I immediately sent a letter to him to come to my office, but he did not come, and I have never seen him in regard to the matter since. I had no soldiers to enforce compliance, and I was obliged to let the matter drop.

*Question:* Have you any reason to suppose that such instances of cruelty are frequent in North Carolina at this time—instances of whipping and striking?

*Answer:* I think they are; it was only a few days before I left that a woman came there with her head all bandaged up, having been cut and bruised by her employer. They think nothing of striking them.

*Question:* And the negro has practically no redress?

*Answer:* Only what he can get from the Freedmen's Bureau.

*Question:* Can you say anything further in regard to the political condition of North Carolina—the feeling of the people towards the government of the United States?

*Answer:* I for one would not wish to be left there in the hands of those men; I could not live there just now. But perhaps my case is an isolated one from the position I was compelled to take in that State. I was persecuted, arrested, and they tried to get me into their service; they tried everything to accomplish their

purpose, and of course I have rendered myself still more obnoxious by accepting an appointment under the Freedmen's Bureau. . . .

*Question:* Suppose the military pressure of the government of the United States should be withdrawn from North Carolina, would northern men and true Unionists be safe in that State?

*Answer:* A northern man going there would perhaps present nothing obnoxious to the people of the State. But men who were born there, who have been true to the Union, and who have fought against the rebellion, are worse off than northern men.

## 6

### UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

#### Picturing Violence

*Few events captured the savagery of racial injustice like the public lynching of a black man. As black liberties came under withering attack during the decades following the Civil War, white vigilantes perpetrated barbaric acts of violence to demonstrate their indifference to federal and local law, as well as to cow blacks. While African Americans turned to the courts and local law enforcement for justice, and frequently raised arms to protect themselves, lynchings grew steadily in number throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From 1884 to 1904, for example, a lynching was recorded on average once every third day, mainly concentrated in the former Confederate states. Equally disturbing, lynching became a spectator sport in many communities. As word spread about an upcoming lynching, white men, women, and children flocked to the appointed place, cheered the event, posed for pictures with the victims, and sometimes cut up the corpses for souvenirs.*

*In this photo, a raucous crowd of whites revels in a recent lynching. Though snapped in 1930, the image captures the essence of the public thirst for blood that regularly accompanied lynchings.*

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How would you describe the crowd's mood?
2. What social classes seem to be represented in the crowd?
3. What might have allowed people to suspend any sense of goodness and democracy they had in order to participate in a lynching?

"Marion Lynching, 1930," PO411, box 19, folder 15, General Picture Collection, Indiana Historical Society, [http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/V0002&CISOPT R=1463&CISOBOX=1&REC=1](http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/V0002&CISOPT R=1463&CISOBOX=1&REC=1).



Grant County Jail, Marion, Indiana, 1930, where a mob overpowered officers and battered its way in to lynch two blacks accused of murdering a young white man and attacking his nineteen-year-old girlfriend.

## 7

### GRIMES FAMILY AND SWINDELL BROTHERS

#### Work under Sharecropper and Labor Contracts

*The end of slavery and the impoverishment of the South in the aftermath of the Civil War seriously disrupted Southern agriculture. Five years after the war's end, Southern cotton production was still at only about half its level in the 1850s. The large plantations, no longer tended by gangs of slaves or hired freedmen, were broken up into smaller holdings, but the substantial capital required for profitable agriculture dictated that control of farming remained centralized in a limited elite of merchants and large landholders.*

Grimes Family Papers #3357, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Wayne Moquin, ed., *Makers of America*, vol. 4, *Seekers after Wealth* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational, 1971).

*Various mechanisms arose to finance Southern agriculture. Tenants worked on leased land, and small landowners gave liens on their crops to get financing. But the most common method of financing agriculture was sharecropping. Agreements like the Grimes family's sharecrop contract determined the economic life of thousands of poor rural families in the South after the Civil War. Lacking capital for agriculture, families—both African American and white—were furnished seed, implements, and a line of credit for food and other necessities to keep them through the growing season. Accounts were settled in the winter after the crops were in. Under these conditions, a small number of farmers managed to make money and eventually became landowners, but the larger part found themselves in ever deeper debt at the end of the year, with no choice but to contract again for the next year.*

*In another form of labor contract, employers such as the Swindell Brothers agreed to pay an immigrant's passage to America in exchange for that individual's promise to work for the employer for a fixed period of time. Under pressure from labor organizations, this type of contract, legalized during the Civil War, was banned in 1885.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What restrictions on the freedom of sharecroppers were built into the Grimes family's contract?
2. Which restrictions might have been the most significant in preventing sharecroppers from achieving independence? Why?
3. Why would labor organizations object to agreements like the Swindell contract?
4. What would motivate a worker to enter into such a contract?

### GRIMES FAMILY PAPERS

To every one applying to rent land upon shares, the following conditions must be read, and *agreed to*.

To every 30 or 35 acres, I agree to furnish the team, plow, and farming implements, except cotton planters, and I *do not* agree to furnish a cart to every cropper. The croppers are to have half of the cotton, corn and fodder (and peas and pumpkins and potatoes if any are planted) if the following conditions are complied with, but—if not—they are to have only two fifths (2/5). Croppers are to have no part or interest in the cotton seed raised from the crop planted and worked by them. No vine crops of any description, that is, no watermelons, muskmelons, . . . squashes or anything of that kind, except peas and pumpkins, and potatoes, are to be planted in the cotton or corn. All must work under my direction. All plantation work to be done by the croppers. My part of the crop to be *housed* by them, and the fodder and oats to be hauled and put in the house. All the cotton must be topped about 1st August. If any cropper fails from any cause to save all the fodder from his crop, I am to have enough fodder to make it equal to one half of the whole if the whole amount of fodder had been saved.



For every mule or horse furnished by me there must be 1000 good sized rails . . . hauled, and the fence repaired as far as they will go, the fence to be torn down and put up from the bottom if I so direct. All croppers to haul rails and work on fence whenever I may order. Rails to be split when I may say. Each cropper to clean out every ditch in his crop, and where a ditch runs between two croppers, the cleaning out of that ditch is to be divided equally between them. Every ditch bank in the crop must be shrubbed down and cleaned off before the crop is planted and must be cut down every time the land is worked with his hoe and when the crop is "laid by," the ditch banks must be left clean of bushes, weeds, and seeds. The cleaning out of all ditches must be done by the first of October. The rails must be split and the fence repaired before corn is planted.

Each cropper must keep in good repair all bridges in his crop or over ditches that he has to clean out and when a bridge needs repairing that is outside of all their crops, then any one that I call on must repair it.

Fence jams to be done as ditch banks. If any cotton is planted on the land outside of the plantation fence, I am to have *three fourths* of all the cotton made in those patches, that is to say, no cotton must be planted by croppers in their home patches.

All croppers must clean out stables and fill them with straw, and haul straw in front of stables whenever I direct. All the cotton must be manured, and enough fertilizer must be brought to manure each crop highly, the croppers to pay for one half of all manure bought, the quantity to be purchased for each crop must be left to me.

No cropper to work off the plantation when there is any work to be done on the land he has rented, or when his work is needed by me or other croppers. Trees to be cut down on Orchard, House field & Evanson fences, leaving such as I may designate.

Road field to be planted from the *very edge of the ditch to the fence*, and all the land to be planted close up to the ditches and fences. *No stock of any kind* belonging to croppers to run in the plantation after crops are gathered.

If the fence should be blown down, or if trees should fall on the fence outside of the land planted by any of the croppers, any one or all that I may call upon must put it up and repair it. Every cropper must feed, or have fed, the team he works, Saturday nights, Sundays, and every morning before going to work, beginning to feed his team (morning, noon, and night *every day* in the week) on the day he rents and feeding it to and including the 31st day of December. If any cropper shall from any cause fail to repair his fence as far as 1000 rails will go, or shall fail to clean out any part of his ditches, or shall fail to leave his ditch banks, any part of them, well shrubbed and clean when his crop is laid by, or shall fail to clean out stables, fill them up and haul straw in front of them whenever he is told, he shall have only two-fifths (2/5) of the cotton, corn, fodder, peas and pumpkins made on the land he cultivates.

If any cropper shall fail to feed his team Saturday nights, all day Sunday and all the rest of the week, morning/noon, and night, for every time he so fails he must pay me five cents.

No corn nor cotton stalks must be burned, but must be cut down, cut up and plowed in. Nothing must be burned off the land except when it is *impossible* to plow it in.

Every cropper must be responsible for all gear and farming implements placed in his hands, and if not returned must be paid for unless it is worn out by use.

Croppers must sow & plow in oats and haul them to the crib, but *must have no part of them*. Nothing to be sold from their crops, nor fodder nor corn to be carried out of the fields until my rent is all paid, and all amounts they owe me and for which I am responsible are paid in full.

I am to gin & pack all the cotton and charge every cropper an eighteenth of his part, the cropper to furnish his part of the bagging, ties, & twine.

The sale of every cropper's part of the cotton to be made by me when and where I choose to sell, and after deducting all they owe me and all sums that I may be responsible for on their accounts, to pay them their half of the net proceeds. Work of every description, particularly the work on fences and ditches, to be done to my satisfaction, and must be done over until I am satisfied that it is done as it should be.

No wood to burn, nor light wood, nor poles, nor timber for boards, nor wood for any purpose whatever must be gotten above the house occupied by Henry Beasley—nor must any trees be cut down nor any wood used for any purpose, except for firewood, without my permission.

## SWINDELL BROTHERS CONTRACT

Antwerp, Dec. 15, 1882

Agreement between the firm of Swindell Bros. of the first part, and John Schmidt, gatherer, and Carl Wagner, blower, of the second part.

The undersigned, of the second part, covenants and agrees with the party of the first part that they will for two consecutive years, beginning January 1, 1882, work and duly perform such duties as instructed by the party of the first part or his superintendents. The party of the first part covenants and agrees to pay the undersigned, who may duly perform their duties, the price generally paid by Baltimore manufacturers for the size of 16 by 24 inches, and all sheets shall be estimated at eight sheet of 36 by 54 inches for 100 square feet. The party of the first part covenants and agrees that the wages of each glassblower shall be an average of \$80 per calendar month, on condition that he makes 180 boxes of 100 square feet per calendar month.

The gatherer shall receive 65 percent of the sum paid the blower for wages per calendar month for actual work performed during the fire. It is agreed that the party of the first part shall retain 10 percent of the wages of each and every workman until the expiration of this contract as a guarantee of the faithful performance of the provisions of this contract. The aforesaid 10 percent shall be forfeited by each and every workman who shall fail to comply with the provisions of this contract.

It is further agreed that the party of the first part shall advance the passage money for the parties of the second part.

It is further agreed that the party of the first part have the right to discharge any of the workmen for drunkenness or neglect of duty, or for disturbing the peace, or creating dissatisfaction among them, or for joining any association of American workmen.

The said Swindell Bros., their heirs, and assigns, shall be considered the parties of the first part, and they agree to pay each blower \$12 per week and the gatherer \$9.00 per week, on condition that each perform his work faithfully at every blowing. The parties of the first part agree to make monthly settlements for the parties of the second part, after the advances for the passage, etc., shall have been repaid. Provided you faithfully perform your work for the term of contract (two years), we will pay back the passage money from Europe to America.

Swindell Bros.  
Yohonn Schmidt, Gatherer  
Carl Wagener, Blower

## 8

### ZITKALA-SA (GERTRUDE SIMMONS BONNIN)

#### School Days of an Indian Girl

*From the mid-1880s to the 1930s, the thrust of American Indian policy was to assimilate Native Americans into the larger society. Boarding schools for Native American children became a common way to induct promising young Native Americans into white culture. Officials were particularly eager to educate girls, hoping through their influence to alter the domestic culture of the Indians.*

*In 1900 Zitkala-Sa, or Red Bird (1876–1938), a Sioux from the Yankton reservation in South Dakota, described in a series of Atlantic Monthly articles her experiences at a Quaker missionary school for Native Americans in Wabash, Indiana, which she attended from age eight to eleven. She returned to the school four years later to complete the course of study and then attended Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Zitkala-Sa somehow acquired the capacity to succeed in the white world without losing her Native American heritage. After returning to the Sioux country, she married a Sioux and began a lifetime of work to improve the status and condition of Indian peoples. In a long career that ended with her death in 1938, she played an influential role in the organization of Native*

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Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), "The School Days of an Indian Girl," *Atlantic Monthly*, January–March 1900, 45–47, 190, 192–94.

*American communities, which led to major, though not thoroughly satisfying, federal reforms in the late 1920s and 1930s. In the excerpts from her narrative reprinted here, she offers glimpses of her efforts to integrate her Native American identity with the shifting realities and pressures of the world around her.*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What did Zitkala-Sa mean when she said she returned to the reservation “neither a wild Indian nor a tame one”? What did she reject about her education, and what did she accept?
2. Given the pain of her school experience, what reasons can you suggest for Zitkala-Sa’s return to school?
3. What did Zitkala-Sa mean by her final comment about the Indian schools: “few there are who have paused to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization”?

The first turning away from the easy, natural flow of my life occurred in an early spring. It was in my eighth year; in the month of March, I afterward learned. At this age I knew but one language, and that was my mother’s native tongue. . . .

“Mother, my friend Judéwin is going home with the missionaries. She is going to a more beautiful country than ours; the palefaces told her so!” I said wistfully, wishing in my heart that I too might go.

Mother sat in a chair, and I was hanging on her knee. Within the last two seasons my big brother Dawée had returned from a three years’ education in the East, and his coming back influenced my mother to take a farther step from her native way of living. First it was a change from the buffalo skin to the white man’s canvas that covered our wigwam. Now she had given up her wigwam of slender poles, to live, a foreigner, in a home of clumsy logs.

“Yes, my child, several others besides Judéwin are going away with the palefaces. Your brother said the missionaries had inquired about his little sister,” she said, watching my face very closely.

My heart thumped so hard against my breast, I wondered if she could hear it.

“Did he tell them to take me, mother?” I asked, fearing lest Dawée had forbidden the palefaces to see me, and that my hope of going to the Wonderland would be entirely blighted.

With a sad, slow smile, she answered: “There! I knew you were wishing to go, because Judéwin has filled your ears with the white men’s lies. Don’t believe a word they say! Their words are sweet, but, my child, their deeds are bitter. You will cry for me, but they will not even soothe you. Stay with me, my little one! Your brother Dawée says that going East, away from your mother, is too hard an experience for his baby sister.”

Thus my mother discouraged my curiosity about the lands beyond our eastern horizon; for it was not yet an ambition for Letters that was stirring me. But on the following day the missionaries did come to our very house. I spied them coming up the footpath leading to our cottage. A third man was with them, but

he was not my brother Dawée. It was another, a young interpreter, a paleface who had a smattering of the Indian language. I was ready to run out to meet them, but I did not dare to displease my mother. With great glee, I jumped up and down on our ground floor. I begged my mother to open the door, that they would be sure to come to us. Alas! They came, they saw, and they conquered!

Judéwin had told me of the great tree where grew red, red apples; and how we could reach out our hands and pick all the red apples we could eat. I had never seen apple trees. I had never tasted more than a dozen red apples in my life; and when I heard of the orchards of the East, I was eager to roam among them. The missionaries smiled into my eyes, and patted my head. I wondered how mother could say such hard words against them.

“Mother, ask them if little girls may have all the red apples they want, when they go East,” I whispered aloud in my excitement.

The interpreter heard me, and answered: “Yes, little girl, the nice red apples are for those who pick them; and you will have a ride on the iron horse if you go with these good people.”

I had never seen a train, and he knew it.

“Mother, I’m going East! I like big red apples, and I want to ride on the iron horse! Mother, say yes!” I pleaded.

My mother said nothing. The missionaries waited in silence; and my eyes began to blur with tears, though I struggled to choke them back. The corners of my mouth twitched, and my mother saw me.

“I am not ready to give you any word,” she said to them. “Tomorrow I shall send you my answer by my son.” . . .

[The next day] my brother Dawée came for mother’s decision. I dropped my play, and crept close to my aunt.

“Yes, Dawée, my daughter, though she does not understand what it all means, is anxious to go. She will need an education when she is grown, for then there will be fewer real Dakotas, and many more palefaces: This tearing her away, so young, from her mother is necessary, if I would have her an educated woman. The palefaces, who owe us a large debt for stolen lands, have begun to pay a tardy justice in offering some education to our children. But I know my daughter must suffer keenly in this experiment. For her sake, I dread to tell you my reply to the missionaries. Go, tell them that they may take my little daughter, and that the Great Spirit shall not fail to reward them according to their hearts.” . . .

## THE CUTTING OF MY LONG HAIR

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt.

A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judéwin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes, — my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judéwin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged

out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

### IRON ROUTINE

A loud-clamoring bell awakened us at half past six in the cold winter mornings. From happy dreams of Western rolling lands and unlassoed freedom we tumbled out upon chilly bare floors back again into a paleface day. We had short time to jump into our shoes and clothes, and wet our eyes with icy water, before a small hand bell was vigorously rung for roll call. . . .

A paleface woman, with a yellow-covered roll book open on her arm and a gnawed pencil in her hand, appeared at the door. Her small, tired face was coldly lighted with a pair of large gray eyes. . . .

Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing; and as it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute. . . .

I grew bitter, and censured the woman for cruel neglect of our physical ills. I despised the pencils that moved automatically, and the one teaspoon which dealt out, from a large bottle, healing to a row of variously ailing Indian children. I blamed the hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant woman who was inculcating in our hearts her superstitious ideas. Though I was sullen in all my little troubles, as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman. Within a week I was again actively testing the chains which tightly bound my individuality like a mummy for burial. . . .

### FOUR STRANGE SUMMERS

After my first three years of school, I roamed again in the Western country through four strange summers. During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid. My brother, being almost ten years my senior, did not quite understand my feelings. My mother had never gone inside of a schoolhouse, and so she was not capable of comforting her

daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East, and the unsatisfactory "teenth" in a girl's years.

### INCURRING MY MOTHER'S DISPLEASURE

In the second journey to the East I had not come without some precautions. I had a secret interview with one of our best medicine men, and when I left his wigwam I carried securely in my sleeve a tiny bunch of magic roots. This possession assured me of friends wherever I should go. So absolutely did I believe in its charms that I wore it through all the school routine for more than a year. Then, before I lost my faith in the dead roots, I lost the little buckskin bag containing all my good luck.

At the close of this second term of three years I was the proud owner of my first diploma. The following autumn I ventured upon a college career against my mother's will.

I had written for her approval, but in her reply I found no encouragement. She called my notice to her neighbors' children, who had completed their education in three years. They had returned to their homes, and were then talking English with the frontier settlers. Her few words hinted that I had better give up my slow attempt to learn the white man's ways, and be content to roam over the prairies and find my living upon wild roots. I silenced her by deliberate disobedience.

Thus, homeless and heavy-hearted, I began anew my life among strangers.

As I hid myself in my little room in the college dormitory, away from the scornful and yet curious eyes of the students, I pined for sympathy. Often I wept in secret, wishing I had gone West, to be nourished by my mother's love, instead of remaining among a cold race whose hearts were frozen hard with prejudice.

During the fall and winter seasons I scarcely had a real friend, though by that time several of my classmates were courteous to me at a safe distance. . . .

. . . I appeared as the college representative in [an oratorical] contest. This time the competition was among orators from different colleges in our state. It was held at the state capital, in one of the largest opera houses.

Here again was a strong prejudice against my people. In the evening, as the great audience filled the house, the student bodies began warring among themselves. Fortunately, I was spared witnessing any of the noisy wrangling before the contest began. The slurs against the Indian that stained the lips of our opponents were already burning like a dry fever within my breast.

But after the orations were delivered a deeper burn awaited me. There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a "squaw." Such worse than barbarian rudeness embittered me. While we waited for the verdict of the judges, I gleamed fiercely upon the throngs of palefaces. My teeth were hard set, as I saw the white flag still floating insolently in the air.



Then anxiously we watched the man carry toward the stage the envelope containing the final decision.

There were two prizes given, that night, and one of them was mine!

The evil spirit laughed within me when the white flag dropped out of sight, and the hands which furled it hung limp in defeat.

Leaving the crowd as quickly as possible, I was soon in my room. The rest of the night I sat in an armchair and gazed into the crackling fire. I laughed no more in triumph when thus alone. The little taste of victory did not satisfy a hunger in my heart. In my mind I saw my mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against me.

### RETROSPECTION

. . . At this stage of my own evolution, I was ready to curse men of small capacity for being the dwarfs their God had made them. In the process of my education I had lost all consciousness of the nature world about me. Thus, when a hidden rage took me to the small white-walled prison which I then called my room, I unknowingly turned away from my one salvation.

Alone in my room, I sat like the petrified Indian woman of whom my mother used to tell me. I wished my heart's burdens would turn me to unfeeling stone. But alive, in my tomb, I was destitute!

For the white man's papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother's simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up, also. I made no friends among the race of people I loathed. Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God. I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for home and friends. The natural coat of bark which had protected my oversensitive nature was scraped off to the very quick.

Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be planted in a strange earth. Still, I seemed to hope a day would come when my mute aching head, reared upward to the sky, would flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens. With this dream of vent for a long-pent consciousness, I walked again amid the crowds.

At last, one weary day in the schoolroom, a new idea presented itself to me. It was a new way of solving the problem of my inner self. I liked it. Thus I resigned my position as teacher; and now I am in an Eastern city, following the long course of study I have set for myself. Now, as I look back upon the recent past, I see it from a distance, as a whole. I remember how, from morning till evening, many specimens of civilized peoples visited the Indian school. The city folks with canes and eyeglasses, the countrymen with sunburnt cheeks and clumsy feet, forgot their relative social ranks in an ignorant curiosity. Both sorts of these Christian palefaces were alike astounded at seeing the children of savage warriors so docile and industrious.

As answers to their shallow inquiries they received the students' sample work to look upon. Examining the neatly figured pages, and gazing upon the Indian girls and boys bending over their books, the white visitors walked out of

the schoolhouse well satisfied: they were educating the children of the red man! They were paying a liberal fee to the government employees in whose able hands lay the small forest of Indian timber.

In this fashion many have passed idly through the Indian schools during the last decade, afterward to boast of their charity to the North American Indian. But few there are who have paused to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization.

## VISUAL PORTFOLIO

# The Peopling of the West

The phrase “manifest destiny” was first made popular by journalist John L. O’Sullivan in 1845, when he argued that it is “our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty.” Shortly thereafter, the United States took much of the Southwest from Mexico. However, the Civil War and struggles over slavery, freedom, and the future development of the West prevented the nation from doing much overspreading and possessing during the following two decades.

When the Civil War ended, the nation turned its full attention to the West, finally making good on the countless economic development schemes that had been promoted since the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The transcontinental railroad and the Homestead Act defined this great shift westward. The Homestead Act of 1862 guaranteed 160 acres of public land to any family that had not taken up arms against the U.S. government during the Civil War, on the condition that they “improve” or farm the land. The news of this act spread throughout Europe and brought millions of immigrants from crowded cities, towns, and agricultural regions—with the poorest and most agricultural countries losing large percentages of their national populations.

Second only to Ireland in population lost to American immigration, Norway had whole regions stripped of people in the nineteenth century. The families pictured in Figure 1 exemplify the 800,000 Norwegians—a third of the population—who left Norway between 1825 and 1925, many to take up homesteads in America. The photo was carefully posed. What do you notice about the choices that were made in the placement of people, clothing, and objects? What do these choices reveal about this time and place and the lives of these immigrants?

The topic of westward migration excited artists, and many set out to capture the spirit and feel of the movement west, as seen in Figure 2. In 1869, Henry Hall published “Emigrants Crossing the Plains,” which communicates popular ideas about the West and the people moving into it. How does this image of settlers compare to Figure 1? What attitudes about the West does Hall’s work convey?

Reconstruction brought new opportunity to many former slaves, who built schools, farms, and community institutions and elected black senators and members of Congress. At various times during Reconstruction, blacks accounted for the majority of elected officials in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi. However, with little unclaimed land, the tiny Southern industrial economy was devastated by war and poor transportation networks. Financiers were afraid to invest in a region where big questions of landownership, citizenship rights, and control of the military were still unresolved.



**Figure 1.** Norwegian immigrant family in the Dakota Territory, 1898.



**Figure 2.** Henry Hall, "Emigrants Crossing the Plains," 1869.



**Figure 3.** Exodusters going west, late 1870s.

When President Rutherford B. Hayes removed the federal troops from the South in 1877, the balance permanently tilted back toward the plantation owners, who reclaimed title to their land and control over the government, often using violence and torture to deny freedmen their new rights. Driven by poverty and rumors of a restoration of slavery, ex-slaves known as “exodusters” migrated west to Kansas en masse. There they tried to set up utopian communities without masters or slaves.

Despite vigilante efforts by armed whites attempting to drive back the exodusters, more than fifty thousand made it to the Western states. Some prospered and stayed, but many arrived with few resources and little support from organized groups. Some of these refugees from slavery were forced farther west, and others returned to the South. The families in Figure 3 are waiting for a ferry on their journey to Kansas. What do you think the photographer wanted to communicate with this photograph? What do you notice about the possessions of these migrants?

For some of the roughly 200,000 black soldiers who had served in the Union Army, the political conflicts of Reconstruction held no appeal. They preferred to remain in the U.S. Army and become “buffalo soldiers,” fighting Indian wars to make the Western territories and states safe for homesteaders. They became some of the most feared and effective Indian fighters, eventually also waging battle in support of “manifest destiny” in Cuba and the Philippines during the Spanish-American War of 1898. The men pictured in Figure 4 are posed in a very different way from the subjects of most nineteenth-century photographic images, especially military photographs, where people stand stiffly in clean, starched uniforms. What do the soldiers’ informal, almost modern, poses convey? How would you explain the photographer’s decision to present them this way?



**Figure 4.** Buffalo soldiers, 1880s.

Finally, it is always tempting to identify African Americans with economic compulsion, political struggle, and racial tension, but blacks also were among the landless agricultural workers known as cowboys, whose lifestyle provided much of the romance invested in the old West. Young African Americans joined the world of rodeos, shooting, and wild horseback competitions, and they took up the often dangerous and poorly paid work of cattle herders. Figure 5 features Nat Love, the most famous black cowboy, who was known as Deadwood Dick for his shooting prowess.

Born a slave, Love had been freed by the Union Army at the age of fifteen and remade himself in the West as a popular rodeo performer. In his later years, he became a Pullman porter and, like many famous cowboys, wrote an autobiography. How does this image correspond to your vision of a cowboy? Some cowboys were known to be masters of self-promotion. In what ways does Nat Love seem to be marketing himself in this photo? Although photos of Deadwood Dick were common in the nineteenth century, many Americans today might be surprised to know that there were African American cowboys. Why might this be so?

The popular saying “Go West, young man” conjures up images of a long, dangerous, and romantic journey across the continent or many weeks at sea traveling from New York around the tip of South America and up to San Francisco. This vision of the settlement of the West by displaced workers escaping Eastern cities, African Americans escaping sharecropping, and Irish and Norwegian



**Figure 5.** Nat Love, 1870s.

immigrants escaping rural poverty in Europe is missing one of the crucial foundations of the fabulous wealth that continues to draw people from around the world to the Western states: the Pacific Ocean. Many nineteenth-century settlers made a relatively short boat trip up the West Coast from Chile, Colombia, or Mexico, and many others crossed the Pacific via well-traveled routes from China, Japan, India, the Philippines, and Australia.

No group was more important to the development of American life in the West than the Chinese. Among the first of the forty-niners who discovered gold in California, the Chinese migrated to that state by the tens of thousands in the ensuing three decades. Some got rich prospecting for gold; others did not find enough gold to make up for the high prospecting taxes that were unfairly levied on Chinese miners; and many built commercial enterprises connected to the growing wealth and Pacific trade that were developing in California. The transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, brought thousands of Chinese to the Western states to blast away mountains, build bridges, and lay tracks. It was dangerous, sometimes fatal, low-paying work, but it provided many opportunities not available in China's declining agricultural regions.

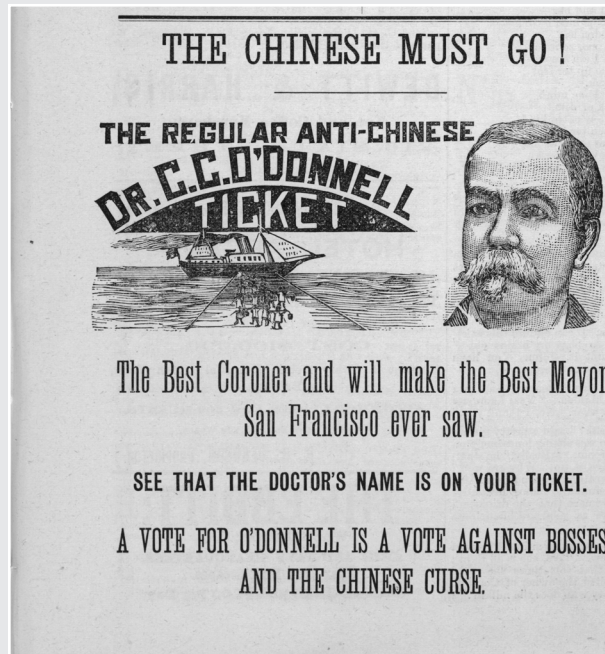


Figure 6. Anti-Chinese campaign ad, 1888.

By the 1870s, there were roughly seventy-five thousand Chinese in California, almost 10 percent of the state's population. With the end of the gold rush and the disappearance of the railroad jobs, the Chinese became the victims of probably the most well-orchestrated anti-immigrant campaign in American history. Politicians like Denis Kearney organized anti-Chinese political parties and violent anti-Chinese riots that killed many immigrants and diverted attention from the problems of rising inequality and unemployment in the Western states. Finally, in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which took the remarkable step of barring people of Chinese descent from entering the United States even if they were citizens of countries other than China. Figure 6 suggests the open hostility that became acceptable in the Western states, where Chinese were typically not allowed to vote, to work in dozens of occupations, or to testify in court in their own defense. Why did candidate C. C. O'Donnell make a connection between the "bosses" and the Chinese? In what ways does his slogan "The Best Coroner . . . will make the Best Mayor" suggest that the role of mayor has changed since the nineteenth century?

The West, like all economically developing regions, needed far more labor than could be provided domestically. The exclusion of the Chinese forced employers in the West to reach out to other countries across the Pacific for workers. Japanese migrants filled part of the gap created by Chinese exclusion, but this migration eventually slowed because of expanding economic opportunities in Japan. The Japanese who stayed in California often imported brides, started families, and established their own farms.





**Figure 7.** Sikh railroad workers, 1908.

The Indian subcontinent, then a British colony, also filled some of the labor demand in the Western states. Sikhs in particular came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and were employed in agriculture and other jobs requiring heavy manual labor, as shown in Figure 7. As was the case with many migrant laborers in the nineteenth century, nearly all Sikhs who came to the United States were male, and most expected to return to their native land. However, many ended up staying, building their own temples and either importing wives from South Asia or marrying into the large Mexican community.

### FOR CRITICAL THINKING

1. Why did people flock to the West? What factors—social, political, economic, and cultural—were most important in this migration? For which groups were these factors most pertinent?
2. What do these images suggest about gender roles? How might women's roles have changed as a result of their migration journeys?
3. Compare and contrast Figures 1 and 3.
4. Do the images in this portfolio challenge traditional notions about the American West in history? If so, how?

