

Black and White Workers in

SHOPKEEPING IN MILAN

American Exceptionalism?

US Working-Class Formation in an
International Context

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WORLD

See Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Cambridge, 1982), 125–6; Joshua Freeman, 'Delivering the Goods: Industrial Unionism in World War II', in Daniel J. Leab, ed., *The Labor History Reader* (Urbana, 1985), 398–400.

90. David R. Colburn and George E. Pozzetta, 'Race, Ethnicity, and the Evolution of Political Legitimacy', in David Farber, *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 130–8.

10 'Amiable Peasantry' or 'Social Burden': Constructing a Place for Black Southerners*

James R. Grossman

Booker T. Washington knew his white neighbours well. Southern employers and landlords might incessantly complain about their black labour force; various white southerners might repeatedly warn of the inability of African-Americans to reach the Anglo-Saxon level of civilisation; legislators might translate an ideology of racial hierarchy into spatial distance by mandating segregation. 'But when there is work to be done about the plantation, when it comes time to plant and pick the cotton the white man does not want the Negro so far away that he cannot reach him by the sound of his voice.'¹ During the half-century between emancipation and the publication of this insight in 1914, black southerners on the move tended to remain – at least metaphorically – within hailing distance. Two years later, however, a vast social movement known as the Great Migration signalled the beginning of very different, and less accommodating, patterns of African-American migration. White southerners responded in ways that reveal not only the extent of their dependence on black labour, but also the ideological, political and economic underpinnings of social relations and order in much of the South.

The roots of this inquiry lie in my attempt to understand the ambiguous and ambivalent response of white southerners to the Great Migration. At first there was little reaction, even as it began to appear that black southerners were leaving for the North in considerable numbers. Some whites blithely observed that only the riffraff were leaving. Others assumed that jobs in the North would become scarce, as northern employers grew dissatisfied with lazy black workers. The 'Negro's love of travel' abounds in the sources. The general tone tended to be either dismissive, or confident that the northern chill (meteorological and metaphorical) would send the migrants scampering home in no time.²

But they did not return. And as the magnitude of the exodus became clear, reassurances predicting the imminent return of 'our negroes' increasingly

yielded to dire warnings about the threat to the labour supply. What soon emerged was a three-cornered debate whose positions can be summarised crudely: let the migrants go; stop them from leaving, using all repressive tools at hand; or institute reforms likely to convince blacks to stay.³

The content of this debate opens a window onto the very essence of social order in the South. Not all white southerners thought alike; but it is clear that among white southerners who exercised influence there existed a set of assumptions about community and order that defined a place for African-Americans in the New South. To understand that place is to understand the continuing salience of racial ideology as an integral element of social structure and relations of production rather than merely an artefact of class formation, a set of ideas, a psychological problem or a cultural flaw. In his recent presidential address to the American Historical Association, Thomas Holt argues that 'to re-think how race is made and thus might be un-made', we need to explore 'how racism is reproduced in American society'. This essay emerges from similar concerns, but is less ambitious, focusing only on the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines not how race was 'made' or 'unmade', but rather on how its reproduction might be understood through an exploration of its role as a force for order and stasis.⁴

Fixing our gaze on white southerners and listening to their responses to the threat of black 'emigration' impels us to interrogate a phrase that jumped out from the sources: white southerners did not want to lose their grip on what one Georgia cotton merchant referred to as 'a very amiable peasantry'.⁵ His colloquial use of the term peasantry arouses as little curiosity now as it did then. But what does 'amiable' mean? That black southerners were willing to work under the particular conditions defined by their 'place' in the South? Or that they could be compelled to? Or a little bit of both? Recent historiography on tenant farmers, domestic servants and other African-American workers in the South teaches us that these people resisted conditions of labour and protocols of race. So why did white people think them 'amiable'? Why did this observer and so many others assume that only blacks could occupy this position in the southern economy?

The answers to these questions provide a framework for a much broader understanding of the fabric of southern society. In 1901 a delegate to Virginia's Constitutional Convention declared that to give 'the negro' the right to vote would mean 'unfitting him in every way for his station in life to which alone he can hope to aspire'. If the grammar is precise then it was the only station to which 'the negro' could aspire; if not, the speaker was declaring that only 'the negro' could aspire to that station.⁶ The ambiguity points to a circular logic, but that circularity perhaps permits an almost

seamless integration of race and class: tenants (and other African-American workers as well) were designated as particularly amiable because they were black; being black made them amiable because of both allegedly inherent racial characteristics and their peculiar relation to the legal system; the labour market itself was structured partly by the fact that racial discrimination limited their alternatives elsewhere; and their amiability was essential because of the particular nature of the southern economy. There were plenty of white workers and tenants; and a small black middle class occupied a central role in black communities. But the place of these two groups in the system could be accommodated without unravelling the essence of what made the South different from the North – a difference that historians have often understated in their dismissal of the North as equally racist and the South as equally capitalist. Anyone who has examined the Great Migration from the perspective of the migrants cannot privilege structure in this cavalier fashion; the difference mattered. The South depended not only on the presence of people a landlord or employer would call 'my niggers'. It depended on the idea of 'nigger' being more than a racial epithet – more like a description of a person's natural location as a man or woman in a social and economic order which had particular places for its 'niggers'. The South needed people who could fill those places; and only African-Americans could fill those places.

Attempts to understand post-Reconstruction southern society tend to cluster around two closely related historiographical controversies. One is a general attempt to disentangle the relationship between race and class in understanding social relations in a region where politics and culture have clearly divided along each of these fault lines. The other is more specific and is familiar through a classic text: C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South*. Rejecting an insular regional history characterised by continuity, Woodward turned away from the Lost Cause of ante-bellum life and offered an essentially Beardian interpretation of the Civil War. The Old South, he declared, had not survived to reclaim its birthright. The planter class, ravaged by Civil War and emancipation, had been forced to adapt to a plantation system underpinned by capitalist principles of free labour. The New South, dominated by a new elite, located political and economic power in cities and industry. By the end of the nineteenth century, a regional bourgeoisie, newly risen and subservient to northern capital, dominated the South's political economy. Discontinuity was the central theme, with a capitalist class replacing what Eugene Genovese later described as a 'prebourgeois' slaveholding elite.⁷

Woodward's identification of a new ruling class and a new ideological foundation for class rule set the agenda for most of what has followed

– a plethora of explorations of the implications of a transforming process (hence the discontinuity) defined by a transition from an agrarian society based on non-wage labour to a wage economy dominated by merchants and other capitalists. In this scheme race was 'a smokescreen', obscuring the more fundamental class issues. Lynchings, discrimination and racist rhetoric were instruments mobilised at various levels of society, but served the hegemony of the new ruling class.⁸

Following in Woodward's substantial wake, one historiographical stream encompasses a series of powerfully argued analyses of the relationship between modes of production and ideologies of race. These scholars have argued that the very category of race, as well as racism and its manifestations, is best understood as an evolutionary construct rooted in the history of class relations. To understand the origins of slavery one should look first not to English attitudes regarding race, nationality or physical attributes, but rather to the implications of labour shortages and traditional English assumptions about the likelihood of inducing the lower orders to work without compulsion. 'Race' was invented as slaveholders gradually sorted out the relationship between property, equality, liberty and production. It emerged as a vocabulary only when a generation of bourgeois revolutionaries needed to resolve the contradictions between class exploitation and radically new notions of universal liberty. As Barbara Fields succinctly puts it, 'race explained why some people could rightly be denied what others took for granted; namely liberty, supposedly a self-evident gift of nature's God'.⁹

Subsequently, emancipation and Reconstruction were shaped less by the dynamics of race relations than by the class experiences and imperatives of various actors, North and South. Acknowledging their debt to W.E.B. Du Bois's magisterial *Black Reconstruction*, Armstead Robinson and others placed 'class development at the center of the study of Reconstruction'.¹⁰ The drive for new methods of control initiated in the South towards the end of the nineteenth century, including segregation and disfranchisement, was rooted in the changing imperatives of class hegemony in the face of economic change and resistance on the part of black and white farmers. Race and racism thus emerge as ideological constructs capable of legitimising and buttressing the power of ruling elites, in part by obscuring the objective reality of class relations. White farmers and workers shared their oppression with blacks; their fear of sharing the degradation of African-Americans provided fertile soil for what would become stereotyped condescendingly as redneck racism.¹¹ With a comparable orientation toward the salience of capitalist development, labour historians interested in black workers have begun looking at the early twentieth-century South

in terms of the process of proletarianisation, rather than focusing exclusively on racial discrimination in workplace and union hall.¹²

Class analysis, however, can be equally compatible with an emphasis on continuity. The 'New South' of the late nineteenth century, according to some historians, was itself more an ideological construct than a reality. This was simply one of a succession of New Souths proclaimed in the interest of an attempt to liberate the region (or at least the region's image) from its past, without changing fundamental relations of power. According to this argument, the planter class 'persisted'. This might mean that individuals maintained their land and their influence; it might refer to families. More convincingly it refers to a political culture and a social structure based on the plantation, which was the essence of continuity. The South's plantation society, this argument contends, looked more like its ante-bellum predecessor than any northern contemporary.¹³

The core of this pattern, argues Jon Wiener, lies in systems of labour relations, constituted in the South by what he calls 'labor repressive capitalism'. A distinctive political economy arose, based on a system of bound labour controlled by a remarkable corpus of legislation encompassing vagrancy laws, contract enforcement statutes, convict labour, enticement laws and emigrant laws. The levels of coercion and control, and the means of control, differed fundamentally from what northern capitalists had at their disposal. Alex Lichtenstein's study of convict labour takes this one step further to argue that because this particular mode of repressive labour relations was eagerly employed by 'some of the most prominent industrialists and financiers . . . the quintessential New South entrepreneurs', the continuity and regional distinctiveness posited by Wiener implies neither the hegemony of antibourgeois types nor hostility to industrial development. Premodern forms of class relations, based on dependence, isolated labour markets, and notorious levels of coercion existed within a modernising capitalist society.¹⁴

How could this mixture of continuity and discontinuity coexist? Wiener says that 'part of the answer . . . lies in the social origins of the postwar planter class – rooted in the slaveholding elite families, with a tradition and a way of life that committed them to a repressive racial order in agricultural labor'.¹⁵ But his analysis says little about what white southerners actually thought about race, about how the content of their ideas about race affected how this system worked and flourished. Fields offers an explanation consistent with the vast literature emphasising the role of race as a legitimating ideology and mobilising force in the service of southern capital: the post-bellum South was in a 'transition period between one dominant mode of production [slavery] and another [capitalism]'. The

result was a hybrid intermediate stage which seems less important historically than what came before and what followed.¹⁶

A look at the dynamics of southern labour relations suggests that Wiener is on the right track when he says that 'Southern distinctiveness arose out of the labor-repressive nature of Southern production and the direct participation of the state in enforcing restrictions on the mobility of labor.'¹⁷ But the chemistry is incomplete without a more complete understanding of the racial component of this solution (not a *mixture*). What was continuous with the ante-bellum South in one way, and analogous to patterns elsewhere in the United States in another way, was the centrality of race to both labour markets and modes of labour management. The importance of race to labour markets and labour relations is not confined to the South; but it did operate differently in that region.

The tendency of some scholars to look to factors other than (or analytically prior to) race and racism is partly a reaction to historians who insist that despite the transformation of the southern economy, racism remained the central and overriding organising theme in southern history. This argument epitomises a long tradition in southern historiography and its resilience is readily comprehensible. The region's defining characteristics have rested on issues easily understood in racial terms. The formative experience was slavery, and for most of its life the slave regime defined a person's presumed status according to physical characteristics associated with African descent. For most of the present century, social, legal, and political distinctions based essentially on race continued to define for many the region's distinctiveness. A struggle for equality based on opposition to racial oppression occupied the nation's attention for a decade and fundamentally transformed southern life. Whether it is Ulrich B. Phillips seeking to justify both slavery and the plantation system of the early twentieth century by pointing to the value of 'race control', or the innumerable scholars who in recent decades have pilloried white supremacists, heroicised African-American resistance and written compassionately of the victims of racial oppression, race occupies centre stage.¹⁸

From a very different perspective, but with a similar view of race as the South's distinctive characteristic, economic historians working in neoclassical frameworks have identified racism as the single greatest barrier to southern economic development. Rejecting Woodward's jaundiced view of New South capitalists, these scholars have emphasised economic growth and pointed to impressive gains made by freed slaves and their children. The irrationality of racial discrimination, the tragic flaw of southern history, distorted markets and inhibited rational economically calculated behaviour, thereby impeding even more rapid progress.¹⁹

Historians of black workers have found it equally difficult to resist the explanatory power of racism: black workers have suffered discrimination at the expense of employers and unions; black and white workers have seldom lived, worked or organised together. Trade union history either comprises histories of exclusion and discrimination or laments the fate of interracial solidarity (or merely co-operation) crumbling under the force of corporate pandering to racial jealousies and suspicions.²⁰

In general, the American obsession with race, combined with the visibility and codification of racial distinctions, has yielded primary sources more likely to underscore the ubiquity of racial discrimination than to highlight such factors as class and gender as salient social categories. Scholars working in the tradition of the 'caste/class' model popular among social scientists in the 1930s look first at racial ('caste') divisions, and then analyse class structure and its significance *within* each race.²¹ Even historians who have tried to integrate class imperatives and racism have in the end frequently placed race on top: William Cohen's exhaustive study of labour markets, coercion, and black labour finds its bottom line in 'a society where the ideology of white supremacy reigned almost unchallenged . . . a world where white hegemony was complete'. As George Fredrickson has observed, 'when push came to shove, race-relations historians have assumed, this basic commitment to white supremacy was likely to take priority over economic or class interests'.²²

All this adds up to two different ways of thinking about two concepts: race and class. To state it crudely, either the South's commitment to white supremacy structured its modes of production, stifled all change, dominated the world view of most of the population and defined its distinctive regional character, or, race is an ideology that exists because a capitalist mode of production requires inequality and an ideology that defines and justifies that inequality; as phenomena contingent on historical process, neither race nor racism can have independent historical impact. One approach too readily assumes the fundamental – if not primordial – nature of race as a basis of identity; the other denies a turn-of-the-century reality perhaps foreign to post-modern sensibilities: most southerners – both black and white – thought, acted, lived and worked in racial terms.²³

To many white southerners at the beginning of the twentieth century white supremacy was a goal in and of itself. These individuals might not have known the origins of either their or their society's commitment to white supremacy, but they tied social order so closely to white supremacy that one seemingly could not exist without the other. Conversely, many black southerners identified white supremacy as the one overwhelming reality limiting their ability to 'better their condition'. Within this world, it did not

matter whether or not race was a 'constructed' category. It had been reified; it had become part of the context within which people lived and made their history.²⁴

Moreover, black and white southerners tied community to race: for black southerners, their historical experience and understanding of their own culture taught them that theirs was what Elsa Barkley Brown has called a 'community of struggle'. Brown is referring to the emergence of African-American communities after the Civil War, but her notion of what it takes to create and hold together a community has more general application. Brown insightfully argues that community does not require unity; difference can be accommodated within various commonalities, including common purpose or a common discourse. In the case of white southerners that common discourse was an ideology of race, one that assumed that blacks possessed certain characteristics and were naturally fitted to a particular role in economy, polity and society. In part because of black resistance, white southerners constantly worried that black people were, in fact, dangerous; did in fact, reject their place – and therefore constituted a threat to the community. The effort to keep blacks in their places constituted for whites a 'community of struggle' united by a common discourse. Maintaining the system – especially in the face of black resistance – was hard work, part of the 'social burden' borne by the white South.²⁵

With race and class so embedded in both the sources and the historiography, scholars have recognised the dangers inherent in relegating either to a subordinate role in southern history. Research agendas point instead to an understanding of how race, class – and, increasingly gender – interact. But even studies that focus on the articulation of these factors tend (often implicitly) to situate them hierarchically, implying their existence as separable historical forces.

By the early twentieth century, however, racial ideology and a mode of production were intertwined in a particular form of social relations that cannot – even analytically – be disentangled to yield independent and comparable evaluations of the impact of class on the one hand, and the impact of race on the other.²⁶ White supremacy was neither merely a tool employed in the interest of class domination nor largely a discourse that obscured the real terrain of conflict. It formed an integral part of white southern elites' understanding of social order, and that social order both sustained and was sustained by systems of class relations which were themselves partly defined by ideas about particular characteristics imputed by race, class and gender. Rather than frame a hierarchy of historical influence, or establish one category of social relations as 'fundamental', it seems more useful to understand the peculiar imbrication of the material and the

ideological. Race neither constituted the basis for relations of production nor was an artefact of those relations; race was part of the relations of production which in turn constituted an element of a broader social order understood by most southerners largely in terms of race. This was a society in which 'nigger' and 'place' not only constituted central components of a discourse of power; these terms also were essential to the operation of the system itself. Southerners, white and black, used the term 'place' to situate themselves and others within a framework of both social relations and individual relationships. Black southerners recognised that framework as that which they had to deal with culturally, economically, socially and politically. Their refusal to accept 'place' as normative placed an enormous burden on those white southerners who could not envision order without place (or without 'niggers').

Testing this approach leads first to the southern labour market, an economic institution so deeply influenced by ideologies of race that its functioning cannot be assessed independent of race. Whether distributed efficiently or inefficiently, labour had racially defined characteristics which skewed the market itself while contributing to the effects that the market had on southern society.

By the turn of the century the South was committed to a low wage economy. As Gavin Wright has shown, this commitment had multiple reverberations, from the need to restrict mobility within and out of the region, to the need to maintain a surplus based partly on household units. To some historians the message is clear: here lies an example of how an economic institution shaped social institutions and laid the foundations of black poverty. But why the depth of that commitment? And how was the market kept isolated?

To some scholars the obsession with the low wage economy stemmed from the imperative to maintain white supremacy. To keep blacks dependent, they had to be kept poor.²⁷ This begs the question of *why* they had to be kept dependent, an imperative whose relationship to white supremacy is inextricably entangled with gender and class. By nineteenth-century standards of manhood, dependent black men lacked the essential perquisite of independence. Their dangerous sexuality could be submerged in an image of dependence and docility, and their second class citizenship could be justified. And keeping entire black households dependent served the needs of the labour market: a surplus that could be mobilised according to the seasonal demands of the cotton cycle. Dependence on the employer rather than the market is also a characteristic of plantation systems in general. The relationship between a system of production (the plantation), the needs of a particular crop and the imperatives of race and gender

cannot be reduced to a prioritised scheme that measures the separate impact of race, class and gender.

The Great Migration introduced a complicating factor: once jobs opened up in the North the isolation of the South's labour market broke down. The repressive legislation was utterly ineffective, as were the various entreaties to the kinds of local and personal loyalties characteristic of plantation ideology. Still, some would argue, these were merely straightforward economic processes providing new alternatives which opened the market. But why had the market been relatively closed? Race. In the North an ideology of race had, for industrial managers, defined which European immigrants were likely to be proficient at which jobs. Lithuanians were 'good at trucking barrels or cases but mediocre at shoveling', and Ukrainians 'splendid under dusty and smoky conditions'. Italians were untidy, 'but not destructive'. Slavs were docile, bringing a 'habit of silent submission' to the strict supervision and long hours. Consigned to the lowest positions, southern and eastern Europeans were considered the bottom of the barrel. But they, at least, were in the barrel; northern industrialists assumed that African-Americans lacked not only 'the mechanical idea', but also the personal characteristics qualifying them for even the worst factory jobs. African-Americans were 'inefficient, unsuitable, and unstable', fit only for pushing a broom or a mop. As white southerners were fond of reiterating, in the North blacks had no 'place'.²⁸

Moreover, the very functioning of the southern labour market was intertwined with race. White workers would seldom work with black workers. Planters often found that white farmers would not rent from landlords who also rented to blacks. Perhaps Steven Hahn is right to attribute what we call racism to the fear of poor whites that association with a degraded and dependent class of people would only accelerate their own immiseration and dependence – a condition actually rooted in incursions of the market economy. But by the turn of the century the association of race with dependence and degradation was deeply ingrained. It was so deeply ingrained, in fact, that it legitimated a system of legal and extralegal controls and limitations on black southerners. These constituted the extraordinary means by which blacks could be controlled so effectively that many southern landlords and employers considered them 'the best labor the South can get'. 'The Negro's redress is merely theoretical', recalled William Alexander Percy, whose father's Arkansas experiment with Italian sharecroppers had led to complaints that these immigrant labourers protested too much and were too 'enterprising'. As one Mississippi employer put it, 'when you just have Negroes, you can make them work by cussing and cuffing them . . . But with whites you can't do that.'²⁹

The reason northern employers did not share this assessment of black labour owed less to differences in ideologies of race than to differences in the institutionalisation of those differences. Northern foremen frequently cussed but they seldom cuffed. Nowhere outside the South did race sanction the kind of repressive apparatus available to southern employers.³⁰

Indeed, despite their ready inclination to use whatever force at their disposal to crush unionisation, and their well-documented, heavy-handed methods of labour management, it is doubtful that northern employers considered managing as their contemporaries did in the South during this period. Midwestern agricultural employers rejected full-time workforces as too expensive, preferring to hire wage labourers at peak times for threshing and harvesting. But even seasonal workers could – and did – organise. They also were troublesome because their transience limited the types of informal community pressures likely to impel appropriate behaviour. Hence the concern with the social costs attached to sudden influxes of young, unmarried men, whose counterparts in the South were controlled through racial protocols.³¹

Midwestern farmers also worried about keeping their workers on hand through the harvest, often holding out pay until the crop was gathered. What one does not see, however, are coercive assumptions (or even a coercive discourse) comparable to the observation of a labour recruiter in the *Atlanta Constitution* around the turn of the century: 'there are farmers that would not hesitate to shoot their brother were he to come from Mississippi to get "his niggers," as he calls them, even though he had no contract with them'. Few northern farmers could realistically envision this level of proprietary claim over hired labour.³²

Obviously there were many reasons why mechanisation proceeded more rapidly in the wheat belt; but the 'labor problem' clearly yielded solutions different from those found in the South. There, rural industry provided alternatives for men during agricultural lulls; and the assumption that black women and children constituted part of the labour force guaranteed extra harvest labour. Regionally recognised racial protocols governing the interactions of black men with white women minimised the threat that even transient black labour would pose to agricultural communities.³³

Even in the West and Southwest, where racism and exclusions from citizenship rendered particular racialised groups subject to comparable levels of coercion, no system of social and economic relations so tightly bound together race, order and labour management. In the West (and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the nation), employers in the 1870s looked to the Chinese as a potential pool of casual labour who, as perpetual noncitizens, could be exploited almost at will. The Chinese, according to Ronald Takaki,

seemed to offer a 'permanently degraded caste labor force . . . a unique "industrial reserve army" of migrant laborers forced to be foreigners forever, aliens ineligible for citizenship'. But no part of the nation's economy depended on them and they were new enough to the continent for racist movements to demand exclusion rather than massive instruments of control. In the Southwest, according to Josef Barton, Mexican-American farmers in the late nineteenth century 'found themselves bound by landowners and credit merchants in a knot of constraints'. Racism and citizenship issues left most Mexican-Americans little legal recourse. Yet extralegal resistance does not seem to have regularly provoked the levels of violence, hysteria and intimidation that were pervasive in the South. Barton points to a traditional 'weave of rights and obligations, a set of alliances and allegiances, on which was based a social order'. This foundation established a basis for the assertion of legal rights in addition to 'the placing of barriers across newly-cut roads to Anglo-American ranches; the destruction of new boundary markers . . . [and] the endemic rebellion of fence-cutting'. Moreover, there is little evidence that the existence of a Mexican-American middle class itself posed a threat to the system of social and economic relations.³⁴

The isolation of southern management culture, both on and off the plantation, is most striking in comparison with trends in northern industry. Management culture was as isolated in the South as the region's labour market. The continued dominance of plantation-based assumptions about labour management was rooted in both a particular system of production and the heritage of dealing with a racially defined (and therefore readily marginalised legally) workforce. Historian Edward Ayers has recently referred to 'a lost plantation ideal' as more relevant to southern mill village paternalism than historians have suggested. But the notion of a lost ideal is somewhat misleading, masking an important degree of continuity; where African-Americans were involved the plantation constituted a cultural inheritance in the arena of labour relations, bequeathing assumptions about how to manage particular workers.

Turn-of-the-century northern managers operated from a different set of assumptions about their labour force. In company towns, the steel industry encouraged transiency as a defence against organisation. In contrast to the South where 'the more blacks strived, the more white anger they confronted', northern employers fed even the most unrealistic hopes of upward mobility as a means of encouraging loyalty and regularity. In the South the defence against organisation was more likely to emphasise the stasis of place. According to David Carlton, South Carolina's mill owners assumed that their white 'mill hands posed no threat to the social order

because of their racial heritage'.³⁵ Their location in some place other than the bottom of southern society was guaranteed by dint of their race, which also held out the promise – if not the reality – of escaping their class. Those who did make noise were reminded of the dangers of associating with those who occupied a degraded place. The mobilisation of gendered familial metaphors tied them to a community defined essentially by its whiteness.³⁶

African-Americans, on the other hand, were assumed to pose a threat more as dangerous individuals than as part of organised social movements. Ideas about racial characteristics bred assumptions (assumptions often at odds with reality) that organisation would happen only when outside agitators were involved; and if it did happen landlords and employers had access to a repressive apparatus that would have made most northern employers jealous. Unlike the manager of a northern factory or a northern farmer employing casual labour, a landlord could wipe out months of a tenant's investment through arbitrary eviction. The conventional shorthand is appropriate: black southerners had no rights that a white man need respect. In a local community a bad reputation had drastic implications in terms of credit. For a black southerner, 'being acceptable' carried enormous meaning. As Arthur Raper learned during his time in the Georgia black belt in the 1920s, 'it means that he is considered safe by local white people – he knows his place and stays in it'. Indeed, only blacks willing to accept this 'submerged status' were permitted to purchase land in that community.³⁷ Even if few black southerners accepted that status as just – or even inevitable – it is clear that many were pragmatically willing to operate within what one might describe as the discourse and etiquette of place.

Here was a different inflection in the use of the possibility of upward mobility as a means of control. The place of blacks in southern agriculture and in rural industry was permanent; education was useless and docility, rather than ambition, was rewarded. In mill towns, employers assumed that their legitimacy as paternalists required that they provide schools; even southern white mill workers might look to education as the next generation's path to the world beyond. Not so where black labour forces predominated. Schools were dangerous; they encouraged unrealistic expectations and could lead black labourers away from their work. Historian James Anderson, in his comprehensive study of southern black education, summarises the perspective of the 'southern white leadership': 'Any large-scale expansion of black education, even industrial education, would set in motion a revolution in race relations that would undermine the South's existing political and economic arrangements.' Where northern employers

embraced education which would Americanise the workforce and imbue the proper habits of industry and lessons of citizenship, southern employers considered these very functions as not only irrelevant to black life but contradictory to the place blacks inevitably occupied in southern society.³⁸

Equally important to an understanding of how deeply embedded race was in southern labour relations was a set of assumptions about black character. Surveys conducted in 1910 and 1912 revealed sentiments that had changed little since the Civil War: blacks would not respond to market incentives; they would not work except under compulsion. Give them a chance to earn too much money and they will lay off for a while. In Mississippi, an agricultural extension worker described as 'prevalent' the assumption that 'the negro must be kept ignorant and destitute in order to manage him safely'.³⁹

These are, of course, familiar sentiments, recognisable in the literature on early industrial workforces in a variety of settings. And I sympathise with Thomas Holt's caution that although 'putative racial deficiencies provided a justification for maintaining a highly coercive labor discipline . . . the crux of the problem was the need for labor discipline regardless of the racial character of the work force'.⁴⁰ But racial perceptions affected how discipline was to be achieved and systems of race relations affected the boundaries of enforcement. Carrots, sticks or indoctrination? By the early twentieth century, northern capitalists increasingly were adding the kinds of incentives that even Frederick W. Taylor's ape-like shovel handler could appreciate. Welfare capitalism (which is very different from mill village paternalism) emerged as both a set of incentives and a mode of indoctrination. One finds little of this in the South, where a culture of management was shaped by a plantation culture and strategies to deal with black workers.⁴¹ If northern industrial employers had embarked on a campaign to eliminate casual labour as dysfunctional, to be replaced with a 'state of mind' that emphasised thrift, regularity and initiative, southern employers remained wedded to a dependence on casual labour. This was not unusual in agriculture; what was different was the assumption that thrift and initiative could pose a threat. On the one hand it was widely advertised that blacks were incapable of thrift or initiative; on the other it was generally recognised that those who were thrifty threatened the system, and those who took initiative could be dangerous. The ability of black workers to respond to modern methods of management was considered questionable; the availability of coercive mechanisms provided cheaper and customary alternatives that would not threaten social order.⁴²

This relatively isolated culture of management was most permeable in cases where corporations operated with labour forces within and outside

the South, with African-Americans prominent among southern employees. A survey of employment practices on the Illinois Central Railroad suggests how a northern company modified its practices despite a commitment to uniform shop rules and personnel policies. Headquartered in Chicago, the Illinois Central took in more than a thousand black workers when in 1883 it formally absorbed southern lines that it had controlled for some years. Problems recurred in the southern units, attributable to 'local custom' and to assumptions about the capabilities of black workers. The response suggests an inclination to 'interpret' rules on an ad hoc basis; in other words to adapt to regional patterns. The general manager of these roads repeats a language common to the southern discourse on black labour, but irrelevant among northern employers at the time unwilling to hire black workers for anything other than service positions: 'We find them especially amiable, docile, and obedient . . . There is no better labor among any race in the world', he declared in 1883.⁴³

African-Americans had a place that was defined not only by their role in the system of production, and their status as second class citizens, but also by a conventional wisdom – at least among whites – that attributed to them a set of characteristics that implied their acceptance of that place. On the plantation, in the railroad yard, black workers were available and pliable. More so than any other potential labour force possibly could be. 'The Negro is our ward . . . He will follow the white folks into the very jaws of hell if need be' declared a Mississippi newspaper in 1918.⁴⁴ A year after condemning peonage in 1903, one southern moderate declared that the Negro 'will accept in the white man's country the place assigned him by the white man'.⁴⁵ Given the actual levels of black resistance documented by historians, this seems a rather odd statement. But in many cases the 'hidden transcripts' recently described by scholars analysing such resistance were indeed hidden to whites, who read resistance as recalcitrance or some other form of collective racial deficiency (hence the burden endured by the South). Even if such sentiments might sound more like efforts at reassurance than deeply held beliefs, what matters is that they were considered plausible as reassurance. And their ubiquity cannot be discounted.

Thus for white southern landlords and employers African-Americans did indeed seem to constitute the perfect labour force. Joel Williamson, in his massive study of southern theories of race, has identified a widespread notion – especially among elites – that each race had its own essence; there was white soul and black soul. At best, white southerners acknowledged that blacks might not be inferior, while assuming that they would (and should) remain subordinate and have a place aside – on the farm, which was

an especially suitable environment for Negroes because agriculture would cultivate virtues of thrift, morality and hard work. Blacks would grow the cotton; whites would process it.⁴⁶ African-Americans would perform the heavy tasks in sawmills and extractive industries that would otherwise require an influx of immigrants who would be less tractable than what southern journalists described as 'the best class of labor of its kind in the world'.⁴⁷ All was as it should be, and everybody supposedly knew their place in the system. Social order depended on it, and for those who needed to be reminded of the centrality of race to social order there was always a legend of Reconstruction familiar to us through the literature and historiography – and a central theme in hundreds of amateur local histories written in the late nineteenth-century South.

What threatened order – both the naturalised ideology of race and the operation of the labour market – were transgressions of place. A Louisiana newspaper understood what was at stake: 'a younger generation of negro bucks and wenches have lost that wholesome respect for the white man, without which two races, the one inferior, cannot live in peace and harmony together'. The behaviour signalling such a threat included servants addressing one another as 'Miss' or 'Mr'. Other dangerous young turks resisted being addressed as 'auntie' or 'uncle'.⁴⁸ It was not the content of the behaviour that mattered; it was the meaning, an implication of a refusal to accept the etiquette of place.

Given what was at stake, it is not surprising that transgressing place could incur consequences. The quickest route to a lynching was excessive ambition or a comparable challenge to subordination or dependence. Ida B. Wells stated it clearly – and dangerously: lynching was not the work of rabble; she found that men of property and standing were involved. Nor was lynching a response to threats to white womanhood. Less than one lynching in five involved even an accusation of rape. Even those could easily resemble the case of Robert Cromwell who in 1880 fell to a Texarkana lynch mob after allegedly attacking his white neighbour's wife; coincidentally the feisty Cromwell had recently had the temerity to sue that very same neighbour over a property dispute.⁴⁹ If historian Elliott Gorn is right that nineteenth-century southern white men affirmed their manhood by committing acts of violence against other men, then the obverse makes considerable sense: the manhood – and therefore the citizenship – of black men could be diminished through lynchings whose rituals could include accusations of sexual crimes and actual or symbolic castration of victims. In this sense lynching was less about sex than it was about gender; it cannot be separated from nineteenth-century assumptions about the relationship between manhood, citizenship and independence. The southern

rape fantasy, Wells declared, was 'an excuse to get rid of Negroes who were acquiring wealth and property and thus keep the race terrorised'.⁵⁰ Not for the sake of terror itself, or out of loyalty to an idea: but to maintain order as they knew it. If, as one historian has recently put it, lynchings were 'communal' rather than 'aberrant' acts, they reaffirmed a community based partly on a discourse of place.⁵¹

But something else threatened the ideological underpinnings of the system. The Great Migration not only threatened the labour surplus that was central to the workings of the labour market, but it brought into question the very assumption that black southerners were by nature unambitious – that they envisioned any other place than their role in southern society and had the drive and initiative to act on that vision.

The southern economy, Booker T. Washington recognised in 1914, was 'based on the Negro and the mule'.⁵² If there was an overriding theme that dominated southern white reactions to the Great Migration it implied agreement with the sage of Tuskegee. But the Negro and the mule each had a role, and dependence implied an assumption that each would continue to play that role. 'I know men who won't keep a horse', explained a member of the Tuskegee Institute staff in 1912. 'If they get one they will sell it. If you ask such a one why he sold his horse, he will very likely say: "white man see me 'n dat 'ere horse, he look hard at me. I make my min' a mule good 'nugh for a ole nigger like me.'" ⁵³

Corollary to this relationship between dependence and the imperative of immobility was the relationship between dependence and subordination. Economic dependence might have been mutual but it was not equal; as long as white southerners lived in a plantation society and in a culture that took for granted particular definitions of racial categories it would be essential that blacks have a particular and subordinate place. Because blacks could occupy only that place, and nobody else seemed able to occupy that place, migration posed a threat. To render migration harmless it was necessary to define it as passive, to attribute it to outside forces rather than to dissatisfaction with place, and to limit its impact on the labour market. To do otherwise was to lose control over the labour force and over a potentially dangerous population that always sat at the brink of cultural regression. Indeed, one whole strain of thinking on these issues that lies outside the purview of this paper rejected the assumption that blacks were essential to social order and economic prosperity in the South. Arguing that the place occupied by blacks benefited only a small elite, and that the region as a whole could do without them, white southerners lacking ties to black labour markets cheered the Great Migration. But in the 'Black Belt', because of the way that 'place' had been defined, legitimated and enforced by

the entanglement of class and race relations, white labour literally could not 'replace' black.

NOTES

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1. Booker T. Washington, 'The Rural Negro and the South', *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 41 (1914), 122.
2. Charles S. Johnson, 'Efforts to Check the Movement', 1, in folder marked 'Migration Study, Draft (Final)', Chapters 7-13, Box 86, Series 6, National Urban League Records, Library of Congress; Jackson *Daily Clarion-Ledger* quoted in Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana, 1989), 262; Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration*, 72; Howard L. Clark, 'Growth of Negro Population in the U.S. and Trend of Migration from the South Since 1860', *Manufacturers Record*, 83:4 (25 January 1923), 61; Southerner, 'Exodus Without Its Canaan - But Not Without its Lessons', *Coal Age*, 11 (10 February 1917), 258; Baton Rouge *State Times*, quoted in *Chicago Whip*, 6 November 1920.
3. James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989), 38-56.
4. Thomas C. Holt, 'Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History', *American Historical Review*, 100:1 (February, 1995), 1-20; quotations are from 18. For the most powerful statement of the distinction between class as a material reality versus race as an ideological construction that is an artefact of class relations, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, 'Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America', *New Left Review*, 181 (May-June, 1990), 95-118; and Fields, 'Ideology and Race in American History', in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds, *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (NY, 1982), 143-177. The literature on racial ideology as a psychological problem is as vast as it is outdated. An interesting place to begin is E. Franklin Frazier's pioneering essay, 'The Pathology of Race Prejudice', which characterised white racism as a form of paranoia. See G. Franklin Edwards, ed., *E. Franklin Frazier on Race Relations; Selected Writings* (Chicago, 1968). Social, psychological and political aspects of southern racism during this period are explored in Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (NY, 1984), 79-323, 414-482. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (NY,

- 1976) maps out a progressive and broad-based democratic political culture in parts of the South during this period, with racism as the tragic flaw undermining this strand of populism. C. Vann Woodward's *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel* (NY, 1938) has a similarly tragic theme.
5. [Frank B. Stubbs], 'Memorandum of Southern Trip', 3 November 1923-5 December 1923, Folder 1006, Box 99, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, Rockefeller Archives Center, Tarrytown, NY.
 6. Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (NY, 1992), 306.
 7. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951); Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974).
 8. Ayers, *Promise*, 488.
 9. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975); Fields, 'Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States'; Thomas C. Holt, "'An Empire Over the Mind': Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South', in Kousser and McPherson, eds, *Region, Race and Reconstruction*, 283-313. The quotation is from Fields, 'Slavery, Race and Ideology', 114. The most comprehensive treatise on the relationship between bourgeois liberalism and ideologies of race remains David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1883* (Ithaca, 1975). The classic text establishing the formative influence of English attitudes regarding race, nationality and physical attributes is Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968).
 10. Armstead Robinson, 'Beyond the Realm of Social Consensus: New Meanings of Reconstruction for American History', *Journal of American History*, 68:1 (June 1981), 297; W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* (New York, 1935). See also Fields, 'Ideology and Race', 162-9; David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (New York, 1967). For some historians of this era, even when race seemed to be the central issue, as in the New York City draft riots, class tensions and imperatives lay underneath, finding expression through a language of race. See Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1990).
 11. See Dwight B. Billings, *Planters and the Making of a 'New South': Class, Politics, and Development in North Carolina, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1979), 92; Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890* (New York, 1983). See also George M. Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (Middletown, CT, 1988), 157-8. My purpose in this essay is less to debate the roots and implications of racial attitudes among the powerless (e.g. Hahn's yeomen) than to probe into the implications of racial ideology and class imperatives among the powerful (especially the planter class).
 12. Particularly notable examples include Joe W. Trotter, *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915-32* (Urbana, 1990); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30* (Urbana, 1987); Daniel Letwin, 'Race, Class, and Industrialization in the

- New South: The Coal Miners of Alabama, 1871–1921' (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1991).
13. Jonathan M. Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860–1885* (Baton Rouge, 1978).
 14. Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (London, 1995). For a comprehensive examination of southern legislation designed to limit the mobility of black labour, see William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861–1915* (Baton Rouge, 1991).
 15. Jon Wiener, 'Reconsidering the Wiener Thesis', comments presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, 1991, 13.
 16. Fields, quoted in Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor*, 11.
 17. Wiener, 'Reconsidering the Wiener Thesis', 15.
 18. Whether one is inclined to conceptualise a 'ruling race' a 'ruling class', or some combination of these, what is clear is that both academic and popular history has tended to emphasise American slavery as a racial phenomenon. On Phillips see James Oakes, 'The Present Becomes the Past: The Planter Class in the Postbellum South', in Robert Abzug and Stephen Maislish, eds, *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America* (Lexington, KY, 1986), 158.
 19. See e.g. Robert Higgs, *Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy, 1865–1914* (Chicago, 1977); Higgs, 'Race and Economy in the South, 1890–1915', in Robert Haws, ed., *The Age of Segregation: Race Relations in the South, 1890–1945* (Oxford, MS, 1987), 111–15; Stephen J. DeCanio, *Agriculture in the Postbellum South: The Economics of Production and Supply* (Cambridge, MA, 1974). Higgs ('Race and Economy', 90) argues that southern economic development 'solved' the 'race problem' because the system of race relations required continued isolation from the market. For a more complex analysis on the relationship between race and flawed economic institutions that relies on neoclassical models without apotheosising the market, see Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1977).
 20. William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War* (New York, 1982); Robert J. Norrell, 'Caste in Steel: Jim Crow Careers in Birmingham Alabama', *Journal of American History*, 73:3 (December 1986), 669–694; Charles H. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States* (New York, 1927); Sterling Spero and Abram Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York, 1931); Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1973* (New York, 1974).
 21. The seminal texts include John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York, 1937); Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago, 1941); and Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York, 1944). For more sophisticated applications of this model to northern cities see Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto* (Chicago, 1967); David Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, 1973); and Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870–1930* (Urbana, 1976).

22. Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge*, 221; Fredrickson, *Arrogance of Race*, 155.
23. So did many other Americans. But given the distribution of population, most white Americans outside the South more often thought about what we would now call ethnicity when they thought about 'race'. And because race (however defined or categorised) was less important to social order outside the South, it is arguable that southerners thought in racial terms more often and more significantly than other Americans. They certainly thought more dichotomously.
24. On the importance of this idea among black southerners in the early twentieth-century South, see Grossman, *Land of Hope*, 34–37.
25. Elsa Barkley Brown, 'Uncle Ned's Children: Negotiating Community and Freedom in Postemancipation Richmond' (PhD dissertation, Kent State University, 1994), viii.
26. This is not to say that racial and class consciousness cannot be disentangled. Although these orientations toward social identity cannot be examined in isolation from one another, and most individuals perceive themselves in different ways at different times and in different contexts, there are occasions which require forms of behaviour or expression that imply a statement of the relative salience of various sources of identity. Moreover historians who have emphasised the salience of class as the structure of domination in the South have argued that race consciousness has been the very force impeding either effective African-American resistance or forms of class organisation against the white elite. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Robinson, 'Beyond the Realm of Social Consensus'; Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise*. On the problematic aspects of the search for interracial class consciousness see Leon F. Litwack, 'Trouble in Mind: The Bicentennial and the Afro-American Experience', *Journal of American History*, 74:2 (September 1987), 317; and Fredrickson, *Arrogance of Race*, 156–8.
27. See, for example, McMillen, *Dark Journey*.
28. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (Cambridge, 1987), 243; John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Urbana, 1982), 59; Gerd Korman, *Industrialization, Immigrants, and Americanizers: The View from Milwaukee* (Madison, 1967), 44–46, 65; John R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America* (New York, 1907), 46–49. See also Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: The Origins of the Factory System in the United States, 1880–1920* (Madison, 1975), 81.
29. Columbia, SC State, 1917, quoted in Emmett J. Scott, *Negro Migration During the War* (New York, 1920), 156; Percy quoted in Lawrence J. Nelson, 'Welfare Capitalism on a Mississippi Plantation in the Great Depression', *Journal of Social History*, 50:2 (May 1984), 227. Leroy Percy quoted in Bertram Wyatt-Brown, 'Leroy Percy and Sunnyside: Planter Mentality and Italian Peonage in the Mississippi Delta', in *Shadows over Sunnyside: An Arkansas Plantation in Transition, 1830–1045* (Fayetteville, 1993), 88; Mississippi employer quoted in McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 159. See also Jones, *The Dispossessed*, 120. This sentiment outlasted the legal framework of Jim Crow. As late as 1971, a study of Mississippi could observe that 'even today many planters will admit they still prefer Negroes as tractor drivers and farm

- workers to whites, for they are less troublesome and can be fired if necessary, with fewer repercussions'. See James Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 201.
30. Harold Woodman, 'Post-Civil War Southern Agriculture and the Law', *Agricultural History*, 53:1 (January 1979), 319-37.
 31. Tobias Higbie, 'Indispensable Outcasts: Harvest Laborers in the Wheat Belt, 1895-1925', paper presented at Newberry Seminar in Rural History (1993), 20, 26.
 32. Letter from Peg Leg Williams to *Atlanta Constitution*, quoted in Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line: American Negro Citizenship in the Progressive Era* (New York, 1964; orig. pub. 1906), 80. Landlords' sense of tenants as 'their niggers' is discussed in McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 125.
 33. Jones, *The Dispossessed*, 89.
 34. Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America* (New York, 1979), 236; Josef Barton, 'Capitalism and Community: Mexican Peasants and Southwestern Migrants, 1880-1930', paper presented at Newberry Seminar in American Social History (1992), 27-9.
 35. David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (Cambridge, MA, 1960); David Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge, 1982), 112. The quotation is from Ayers, *Promise*, 430.
 36. Jacqueline Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill, 1987).
 37. Arthur Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill, 1936), 122.
 38. Carlton, *Mill and Town*, 92-103; James P. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1880-1935* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 96; McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 93.
 39. Charles Flynn Jr, *White Land, Black Labor: Caste and Class in Late Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Baton Rouge, 1983); Mississippi State Extension Director R.S. Wilson quoted in McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 122.
 40. Holt, 'An Empire Over the Mind', 298.
 41. According to the historian of Birmingham's Sloss Furnace, what mattered about the management there around the turn of the century was that it came 'from a plantation background' and therefore was 'imbued with what can only be described as racist attitudes common at the time'. Lewis has correctly identified the culture of labour relations that influenced the management at Sloss, but has too readily attributed it merely to racism, rather than a combination of ideas about race and ideas about managing labour. W. David Lewis, 'Sloss Furnaces: The Heritage and the Future', paper presented at Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark, Birmingham, Alabama, 5 March 1992.
 42. On management reform in the North see Montgomery, *Fall of the House of Labor*, 236; David Montgomery, 'Workers' Control of Machine Production in the Nineteenth Century' in *Workers' Control in America* (New York, 1979), 32-3.
 43. James Clarke to T. Morris Chester, 29 April 1886, Illinois Central Archives, IC 5.2, v. 9, Newberry Library, Chicago IL. For a similar perspective expressed in the 1930s by a transplanted northern manager adapting to southern

- traditions of labour management, see Jones, *The Dispossessed*, 185-6. My understanding of Illinois Central policies has been enhanced by correspondence with Paul Taillon.
44. Gulfport and Biloxi *Daily Herald*, 11 April 1918.
 45. Edgar Gardner Murphy, quoted in Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York, 1971), 287.
 46. Williamson, *Crucible*, 439-42.
 47. Tifton (GA) *Gazette*, reprinted (approvingly) in the *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 December 1916.
 48. Lafayette (LA) *Gazette*, quoted in St Landry *Clarion*, 5 October 1895, quoted in Ayers, *Promise*, 133-34.
 49. Little Rock *Gazette*, 1 June 1880.
 50. Quoted in Thomas C. Holt, 'The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Struggle for Black Leadership', in John Hope Franklin and August Meier, eds, *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, 1982), 47.
 51. Stephen Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (New York, 1988), 4.
 52. Clark Wissler, 'Report of the Committee on the American Negro', Hanover [NH] Conference, 10-13 August 1926, 4, Folder 1020, Box 101, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Rockefeller Archives Center, Tarrytown NY; Booker T. Washington, 'Rural Negro and the South', 122. See also Jay R. Mandle, *The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War* (Durham, 1978), 69, 75.
 53. Robert E. Park, 'The "Money Ralley" at Sweet Gum. The Story of a Visit to a Negro Church in the Black Belt, Ala.', typescript (ca. 1912), 11, Folder 10, Box 1, Robert E. Park Papers, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago IL.