URBAN LIFE AND URBAN LANDSCAPE
Zane L. Miller, Series Editor
A LITTLE MORE FREEDOM

African Americans Enter the Urban Midwest, 1860—1930

JACK S. BLOCKER

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS / COLUMBUS
TO SUSAN AND DAVID, FOR ALL THE REASONS;
AND TO THE MEMORY OF

*Katherine Irene (Blocker) Anderson (1952–2004)*
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AH  Agricultural History
AnRS  Annual Review of Sociology
ASR  American Sociological Review
BMOHP  Black Muncie Oral History Project, Archives and Special
Collections, Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana
BMP  Black Middletown Project, Archives and Special Collections,
Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana
BOHCO  Black Oral History of Canton, Ohio, Stark County District Library,
Canton
C&C  City and Community
CC  Charities and the Commons
CDP  Contemporary Drug Problems
CHS  Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois
CHSB  Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin
CO  Camera Obscura
CWH  Civil War History
EEBH  Essays in Economic and Business History
EEH  Explorations in Economic History
EG  Economic Geography
Eb  Ethnohistory
GHQ  Georgia Historical Quarterly
GR  Geographical Review
HM  Historical Methods
HS/SH  Histoire sociale/Social History
IHJ  Illinois Historical Journal
IHS  Indiana Historical Society
IJSF  International Journal of Sociology of the Family
IMH  Indiana Magazine of History
IMR  International Migration Review
IWP  Illinois Writers Project Collection, Vivian G. Harsh Research
Collection, Chicago Public Library, Chicago
### List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>JAEH</td>
<td>Journal of American Ethnic History</td>
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<td>JAH</td>
<td>Journal of American History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEH</td>
<td>Journal of Economic History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JES</td>
<td>Journal of Ethnic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JIH</td>
<td>Journal of Interdisciplinary History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JIIH</td>
<td>Journal of Illinois History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JISHS</td>
<td>Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>JMF</td>
<td>Journal of Marriage and the Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>JNH</td>
<td>Journal of Negro History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSohH</td>
<td>Journal of Social History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSH</td>
<td>Journal of Southern History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUH</td>
<td>Journal of Urban History</td>
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<tr>
<td>LH</td>
<td>Labor History</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHR</td>
<td>Missouri Historical Review</td>
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<td>MVHR</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</td>
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<td>NCHR</td>
<td>North Carolina Historical Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHB</td>
<td>Negro History Bulletin</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>New Politics</td>
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<td>OH</td>
<td>Ohio History</td>
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<td>OHS</td>
<td>Ohio Historical Society, Columbus</td>
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<tr>
<td>OH-TPL</td>
<td>Oral History Collection, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, Toledo, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHUIS</td>
<td>Oral History Office Collection, University of Illinois–Springfield Archives, Brookens Library, University of Illinois–Springfield (formerly Sangamon State University), Springfield</td>
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<td>OVH</td>
<td>Ohio Valley History</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCS</td>
<td>Politics, Culture, and Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMHB</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography</td>
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<td>SF</td>
<td>Social Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>SJOHP</td>
<td>St. James AME Church (Cleveland) Oral History Project, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSH</td>
<td>Social Science History</td>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>Southern Workman</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHQ</td>
<td>Western Historical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUL</td>
<td>Wilberforce University Library, Wilberforce, Ohio</td>
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s is perhaps appropriate for a study of migration, this book has traveled the longest road of any of my projects, and the debts incurred along the way are correspondingly numerous. I might not have tried to retool from a historian of alcohol and temperance into a student of African American migration had it not been for the example of my departmental colleague Gary Owens, who negotiated the transition from Tudor-Stuart history to modern Ireland with blazing success. For the methods and approaches used I credit most of the inspiration to the late Dick Alcorn. Dick not only helped to initiate me into quantitative analysis, but also accustomed me to thinking about towns and cities as parts of urban systems and taught me the importance of human mobility across the historical landscape. At about the same time as I was learning from Dick Alcorn, I read Lawrence Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. This pioneering work both revealed new possibilities in studying African American life at the grassroots and boldly proclaimed the centrality of agency in African American migration.

The route from inspiration to interesting and useful findings lay through numerous archives, and I would certainly have lost my way without the assistance of their custodians. I wish particularly to thank three guides who went out of their way to help: Nancy Turner, former curator of the Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University; Wilma Gibbs, archivist at the Indiana Historical Society and editor of *Black History News and Notes*; and Lena Calhoun at the Stark County District Library in Canton, Ohio, whose job description did not include enthusiastically providing crucial help to visiting researchers, but who did anyway. Mrs. Carrie Pope Banks in Champaign, Illinois, and Dr. Norma Snipes Marcere in Canton, Ohio, graciously consented to be interviewed.

Equally necessary to the success of this project was the diligent, efficient, and thoughtful work of my research assistants. The principal contributors,
who now know more than they ever wanted to learn about the vagaries of the U.S. federal manuscript census, were Rebecca Surtees, Stacey Demay, Shannon Stettner, and Jennifer Carson. Colin Fitzsimons drew the maps, and Laura Wackman and Kirk Hammond also made significant contributions.

Long as it was, the road from initial questions to final manuscript would have been even longer without the funding generously provided by the Canadian people through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Faculty of Arts and Social Science of Huron University College, and by the people of Indiana through an Indiana Historical Society Director’s Grant. In addition, the Conference on Race, Ethnicity, and Migration at the University of Minnesota furnished support for travel to read a paper at that conference.

At the Minnesota conference and others where I presented work in progress, discerning scholars did their best to keep me on the right track. I would especially like to thank S. Charles Bolton, Marvin McInnis, Kimberley Phillips, Spencer Crew, Felix Armfield, Joe Trotter, and Walter Kamphoefner. Nelson Ouellet also gave me helpful feedback. Shirley Portwood and Sundiata Cha-Jua invited me to their stimulating second conference on African Americans in Illinois history, and I benefited both from the opportunity to present preliminary findings and from the chance to discuss my work with these pioneers in midwestern African American community history. My always dependable critics in the American historians’ seminar at the University of Western Ontario read several papers and chapters in draft; suggestions by Monda Halpern, George Emery, and Margaret Kellow were particularly helpful. As I neared the end of the trip, David Gerber and David MacLeod read a very long manuscript in its entirety and made many useful suggestions, as did Zane Miller and an anonymous reader for The Ohio State University Press. At Huron University College, Julie Bennett cheerfully provided crucial late-stage assistance with file conversion. My wife, Susan, and my son, David, were tolerant of, and supportive despite, long absences from home during research trips. If, despite the guidance and assistance given by all these companions on the journey, this traveler has lost his way, the responsibility is mine alone.

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Acknowledgments

Collections, Brookens Library, University of Illinois at Springfield, for the Oral History Collection; the Chicago History Museum; the Stark County (Ohio) District Library; the Western Reserve Historical Society for the St. James AME Church Oral History Project; and the Local History and Genealogy Department, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library.
INTRODUCTION

This project began with the bullet holes in the courthouse door. Nearly thirty years ago, research on another topic brought me to Washington Court House, a small town in southwestern Ohio. Most of my work was conducted in the Fayette County courthouse, an impressive sandstone building of 1880s vintage. While passing back and forth to the various county offices where the records were stored, I noticed about a dozen small holes irregularly spaced across the pair of tall, heavy oak doors in one of the main entrances. Inquiring, I was told that the holes were caused by the National Guard firing through the doors during “the race riot in 1894.” Race riot? My research focused on the 1870s, and I knew that during the Civil War and postwar years Washington Court House had attracted a substantial African American cohort, who by 1880 made up more than 13 percent of the town’s population. At the time, African Americans represented less than 3 percent of Ohioans. Looking around me in the Washington Court House of a hundred years later, I could see that the African American presence was now only a fraction of what it had been.¹ Could there be some connection, I wondered, between the “race riot” and the decline of this small-town African American community? In the Midwest, and across the United States as well, African Americans were now an overwhelmingly metropolitan people. Their movement from country to big city had been rapid in historical terms. Certainly it had been swifter than that of European Americans, whose metropolitan shift had occurred through stages encompassing a protracted period in small towns, an “age of the village.” Could the African American experience in Washington Court House be in any way typical of the African American experience in other midwestern small towns? Was there an age of the village for African Americans, a forgotten stage between ruralism and the big city? And, most intriguing, could
African Americans’ village experience offer any clue to the historical rapidity of their movement to the metropolis?

Curiosity about the bullet holes in the courthouse thus had led me to questions about one of the most significant chapters in African American history. The migrations from the rural South to the metropolitan North arguably represent, along with the civil rights movement, one of the principal changes that African Americans wrought in their lives since emancipation. Furthermore, metropolitan migration and the civil rights movement were indissolubly linked as complementary strategies. Urbanization in both the South and the North created new kinds of African American communities, not only more densely populated but also wealthier, better organized, and more diverse than southern rural communities. Movement to the North regained political rights stolen in the South, which could then be exercised to good effect by the new metropolitan communities. In the absence of the African American vote concentrated in key states, the national administrations since 1940 would have been far more reluctant to listen to demands for civil rights. To explain how and why African Americans moved so rapidly up the urban hierarchy is therefore to open a new window on a critical phase of African American history. Some inkling of the possibilities behind the bullet holes registered in my mind at the time, but meanwhile I had another book to write.

Returning to the question years later, I discovered that Washington Court House was indeed representative, not in the size of its postbellum African American population, which was proportionately larger than most, but in its pattern of rise and decline. The same pattern occurred in many small towns and midsize cities in Ohio and Indiana before 1910. As fine studies by historians David Gerber and Emma Lou Thornbrough demonstrated, during the 1880s African Americans began to move from the rural areas and smaller communities where they had previously settled to the metropolitan centers of Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, and Indianapolis. Gerber and Thornbrough believed that the African American metropolitan shift was part of a general cityward movement involving whites as well as blacks, but their focus on African Americans prevented them from making the detailed comparisons necessary to document this. Early indicators I found suggested that this movement was distinctively African American. In order to understand why African Americans left nonmetropolitan communities for large cities, it would be necessary for me to examine closely both black and white mobility between 1860 and 1910 across these two states.

As if this were not a sufficiently daunting task, I quickly added Illinois to the study area. In terms of their African American migration experience, the
three states seemed to form a natural unit, since they stood apart from the other midwestern states by virtue of the larger size of their migration flows. Together, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois received an estimated total of more than 750,000 African American migrants between the outbreak of the Civil War and the eve of the Great Depression, more than one-third of all those who left the South. In 1860 African Americans represented a tiny minority in each of the three states, but seventy years later migration had made them a significant factor within the region, a mixture of a few old and many new midwesterners whose presence had begun to reshape culture, politics, and urban geography. Another reason to include Illinois was Chicago, the metropolis not only for its state but for the region as a whole, as well as a powerful magnet for African American migration. The unity of the three states in terms of their African American migration history was reinforced by a rough similarity among their economies, all diversified but fairly balanced, with strong agricultural, commercial, and industrial components. Their urban systems, however, were quite different. Ohio contained a multiplicity of dynamic cities, the Big Three before 1900 joined by fast-growing upstarts Akron, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown afterward. In Indiana, the most rural of the three states, the urban hierarchy was dominated by a single center, Indianapolis, but rapid growth occurred in the Calumet region in the state’s northwestern corner near Chicago after 1900. Chicago overshadowed all other urban places in Illinois, but downstate towns also felt the influence of St. Louis across the Mississippi River. Both the similarities and the differences among the three states of what I was now calling the Lower Midwest encouraged comparison.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois reached the apex of their collective importance and influence in American society and politics. A region already populated by the “old” immigration from northwestern Europe attracted “new” immigrants from southern and eastern Europe to fill the industrial jobs that multiplied in its cities. Meanwhile, native-born sons and daughters of the Lower Midwest moved on to the fertile agricultural territory further west. In 1900 Illinois was the nation’s third most populous state, Ohio fourth, and Indiana eighth. The region formed a key sector on the battleground of national politics, and both major parties recognized this fact by regularly calling its sons to head their ticket. Between 1860 and 1928, the Lower Midwest had produced eight of the thirteen victorious presidential candidates. Because of the region’s political importance, its role as conveyor of American values to new immigrants, and its fecundity in producing migrants to other regions, the pattern of race relations hammered out within its borders could well have influenced the nation's.
Introduction

To explain why the African American metropolitan shift occurred, then, a regional framework would be appropriate. Only a regional study could both analyze the shifting channels of migration within a state and compare these changes to patterns in other states. Regional studies have not been common in American urban history, and in research on African American urbanization they represent a new and as yet rarely used approach. Historians have preferred instead to examine single communities, but such a focus, while allowing considerable descriptive depth, forecloses the possibility of explaining why migrants chose one destination over another. For such a task, comparison is essential. When combined with well-chosen local case studies, a regional focus might provide the graphic detail available in a single-community monograph together with the broad comparative reach necessary for analysis.

With the issue of the proper spatial context in which to place Washington Court House’s bullet holes settled, the question of time required consideration. The Civil War clearly formed a watershed in the history of African American migration by endowing African Americans with a degree of choice unprecedented in their history. Indeed, the war itself stimulated the largest black influx to that point in the history of the Lower Midwest. The contrast between the numbers who came to the Midwest after 1860 and the few who resided in the region when the war began clearly indicated the opening of a new chapter in Afro-Midwesterners’ story. Within the region, the metropolitan shift that began in the 1880s was measurably well under way by 1910 (at least in Ohio and Indiana), so the study period could have ended there. A good reason to go on lay in the fact that the relation of the volume of African American migration to the Midwest before 1915 to that of the ensuing fifteen years—the First Great Migration period—was as a trickle to a flood. Why African Americans began to abandon smaller urban places for larger ones before the Great Migration, while a fascinating question in itself, would become even more fruitful if that current could be placed in relation to the larger tide that followed. The most prominent scholars who had studied African American migration on a large scale hypothesized that the earlier migration streams “developed pathways and linkages that served as mechanisms for facilitating and even encouraging later movements.” Neither they nor anyone else, however, had found a way to test this proposition empirically on anything more than the local level. Once my research had delineated patterns of African American mobility before the First Great Migration of 1916–1930, I would be in a good position to do so. The Great Depression temporarily diminished the appeal of the North in African American eyes, so 1930 seemed a good place to stop.
Within my chosen space and time, research began to focus on three questions. What was life like for African Americans in small towns and other nonmetropolitan urban communities? What relation did African American movement within the North bear to migration into the region? What role did antiblack violence play in relation to other factors in stimulating African American mobility? At the time this project began, all these questions were drastically underresearched.

Since 1990, however, we have learned much about the African American small-town experience in the North through studies that have ranged from America’s premier resort towns through gritty industrial communities, from places in which blacks represented a tiny minority to all-black communities. The rich and complex picture that has begun to emerge shows that the quality of African American life in small towns depended upon the interaction of many factors. Following historian Kenneth Kusmer, these can be grouped into three categories. First, structural factors such as the nature of the local economy or the town’s location in relation to networks of transportation and communication placed limits on the options available to blacks as well as whites. Second, the attitudes and actions of the European American majority, whether on the local, state, or national level, represented forces to which African Americans often had to respond. Third, the past and present condition of the African American community framed choices. Relations between transient and stable community members; divisions of class, gender, color, and religion; the sex ratio and family structure; the density of the institutional network; and the character of leadership, together with other factors internal to the black community, all could play a role in shaping its history.

My goal is to add to this picture by constructing a comprehensive portrait of small-town life in the Lower Midwest, particularly for the crucial years between 1860 and 1910. Since in 1910 the region held 364 communities containing a population between 2,500 and 100,000, this is no small task. I have collected information bearing on dozens of these towns and have relied on historical studies of the few that have been closely examined. In addition, I will present in-depth studies of four towns distinguished by various combinations of local economy, race relations, and migration history. Washington Court House must be included, if only because of the bullet holes. The Fayette County seat was a market center for a rich agricultural hinterland. Its “race riot” in 1894—actually a foiled lynching—coincided with an African American exodus that followed a period of strong inflow. Springfield, Ohio, a larger industrial city, experienced a pair of true race riots in 1904 and 1906, which similarly capped a period of powerful black
inflow and tarnished Springfield’s luster in the eyes of would-be migrants. The third town is another Springfield, Illinois’s state capital, whose local economy was based on government and coal mining. Its vicious race riot in 1908 set off a national shock wave that culminated in the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Before the riot, the African American community in Springfield grew, but more slowly than the state’s black urban population as a whole. This pattern continued after the riot. The fourth case study, Muncie, Indiana, was a small industrial city with a steadily growing African American community. No antiblack collective violence is known to have marred race relations in Muncie, although during the 1920s, when it became famous as the site and subject of Robert and Helen Lynd’s sociological classic *Middletown*, the town was divided between fervent support for and outspoken opposition to the Ku Klux Klan. Through a close examination of the status and behavior of the African American community in each of the four towns I hope to provide contexts for both white violence and African American decisions to stay or to move on. More generally, I wish to bridge the gap between migration researchers who focus on movement and those who study processes of integration and assimilation within settlement communities.

The question I posed as I pondered the shrunken African American community of Washington Court House centered upon intrastate and intraregional migration. Why did African Americans abandon the small towns of the Lower Midwest for the region’s large cities? But I soon realized that this issue was inseparable both conceptually and empirically from the question of interstate and interregional migration flows. A metropolitan shift could have occurred only if both residents of small towns and new southern emigrants chose big-city destinations. Otherwise the places in small towns of veteran black Midwesterners who moved to the city would have been filled by new migrants from the South. Both types of mobility therefore had to be considered in relation to each other.

The question of the contributions made to the metropolitan shift by interstate and interregional migration opened a Pandora’s box of collateral issues. We know that the sources of northern migration steadily shifted southward. Before 1915, the border states were the prime generators; afterward, the Deep South. What implications did the changing backgrounds of interregional migrants hold for the metropolitan shift? Another possibly significant facet of the migration stream was its sex composition. Were men or women more likely to migrate into the Lower Midwest early or late in the period, and how could any such change have affected destination choices? Transportation and communication also figured in the rapidly expanding equation. Did changes in the transportation system predispose
travelers toward certain destinations? If conditions in small towns became increasingly inhospitable to African Americans, could potential migrants in the South have known this? Finally, there was the question of migration sequences. Did interregional migrants habitually travel to the Midwest in a single jump, or did they carry out step migration, moving up, down, or across the urban hierarchy? Answers to these and other questions were necessary before I could identify which migrants were making what decisions, and for what reasons.

Reflection on these questions led me to define a central goal of the project as delineation of the migration field of African American migrants to and within the Lower Midwest. The concept of a migration field was inspired by the notion of a “mental map” employed by geographers, psychologists, and other social scientists. Each resident of a community, it is said, carries about inside his or her head a map of that community defined by his or her work, history, interests, and connections. Each mental map is therefore personal and may bear little resemblance either to the mental maps of other community residents or to published maps—which of course are themselves arbitrary in selecting which features of a community to include. Nevertheless, comparison of individuals’ mental maps generally reveals some degree of correspondence, both with those of other local residents and with real features of the landscape or cityscape.16

This concept can be extended to migrants. Potential migrants must have a mental image of the area to which they consider migrating. This image may be scant and totally inaccurate for those with little or no background information, or it may be rich in detail and chronologically deep for those with long residence in the general area and access to the best intelligence. For much human travel, “route knowledge,” which consists of awareness of landmarks and turning directions at each landmark, is sufficient. When information about distances and different routes is added, we have acquired “survey knowledge.”17 Whatever its amplitude or quality, the image of the area to be traversed guides decisions about whether, when, and where to move. For all migrants during a period of time, the aggregate of their images of the region of interest is the migration field of that cohort.

When due allowance is made for transportation corridors that channel human mobility, a cohort’s migration field should be definable by inference from its locational choices. That is, among the array of potential destinations enjoying equality of access, the places chosen should be the locations preferred. For historical actors, inference will probably be the only guide, since extant records rarely contain anything more than tantalizing clues to the size, shape, or configuration of anyone’s mental map. Even when asked directly, “Why did you choose this destination?” respondents to oral history
interviews usually offer answers that are no more than implicitly comparative and therefore reveal only a glimpse of a small portion of her or his personal map of accessible terrain. Whatever method is used, defining the migration fields of one’s subjects must be a central task of migration research. As a recent review of the scholarly literature on African American migration concludes, “There is much more that we need to learn about the processes that led migrants to select particular destinations in the North and about the wide-ranging consequences of their choices.”

The potential motive for migration that initially caught my attention was, of course, white violence. A substantial scholarly literature on racial violence appeared during the twentieth century, focused first on lynching and later on race riots. Most of this literature sought to explain the actions of lynchers or rioters, whether white or black. The most recent historical scholarship on lynching portrays antiblack violence as arising from interaction between black aspirations and behavior and white repression. As George Wright states, “Afro-Americans were lynched for getting out of the place assigned them by white society.” Definition and enforcement of that place could vary across both space and time. After tracing a “geography of lynching” in Georgia and Virginia, Fitzhugh Brundage concludes:

Lynch mobs seem to have flourished within the boundaries of the plantation South, where sharecropping, monoculture agriculture, and a stark line separating white landowners and black tenants existed. In such areas, mob violence became part of the very rhythm of life.

Based on a sophisticated statistical analysis of lynchings across ten southern states, sociologists Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck agree. “Mob violence,” they write, played a “fundamental role . . . in the maintenance of southern society and economy. . . . Lynching was an integral element of an agricultural economy that required a large, cheap, and docile labor force.” Existing tallies indicate that lynchings in the North followed a similar chronological pattern to those in the South, with the peak of violence occurring in the two decades around the turn of the century. My own count for Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois shows more than thirty lynchings, attempted lynchings, mobbings, and race riots between 1885 and 1910. No one has yet conducted an analytical study of antiblack violence in the North, where none of the specific conditions cited to explain southern lynching existed. A long step toward such an analysis has been taken, however, in a book published after my research was nearly completed, sociologist James Loewen’s Sundown Towns. According to Loewen, the heightened white racism across the United States
at the turn of the twentieth century led many European Americans in towns and suburbs outside the Deep South to regard the mere presence of African Americans in their communities as unacceptable. As a result, through discrimination, harassment, and violence, African Americans were driven from such places.\textsuperscript{24} Loewen's argument, which is both complementary and competitive to mine, will be addressed in chapters to follow. Here I will simply note my belief that, without excusing the racist attitudes that motivated white actions, a full explanation should take into account the dynamics of racial interaction, including the struggles of African Americans for the freedoms they had left the South to find. If northern whites did assign African American a “place” in their communities and society and African Americans in search of full citizenship, not merely a subordinate place, transgressed their prescribed boundaries, then the fundamental trigger of southern lynching may well have produced racial explosions in the North as well. Assessing this hypothesis will require both a comparative examination of violent and peaceful communities and in-depth analysis of specific events.

In contrast to the issue of lynching motivation, fewer historians have attempted to explore how African Americans responded to racially motivated violence. Brundage describes how African Americans in Virginia and Georgia organized politically against lynching, and Wright portrays a range of responses in Kentucky, from lobbying and petition campaigns to armed self-defense.\textsuperscript{25} Tolnay and Beck add outmigration to the list of responses, concluding that “blacks were more likely to leave areas in which lynching was more common.” Furthermore, across the South a justified fear of lynching acted independently of other variables such as urban or rural residence, illiteracy, and factors influencing both black and white migration.\textsuperscript{26} The first post–Civil War mass migration to the North, the Kansas Exodus of 1879, has been portrayed as in part a response to European American violence and intimidation.\textsuperscript{27} How much of this repertoire of responses was relevant to northern communities, where antiblack violence is generally considered to have been less common and African American communities were usually smaller, but where the vote offered a political channel to reply? As in the case of lynching motivation, an answer should be based both on comparative analysis across communities and close examination of specific events.

Answering the questions outlined above is the goal of this book. As I suggested above, my purpose in constructing answers is to shed light on some of the most powerful forces shaping American society in the twentieth century. For example, the story of African Americans’ movement to large cities forms a significant part of the larger history of the transformation of the United States from a rural to an urban, and then a metropolitan
and suburban society. As African Americans changed the setting in which they lived, from the rural South to the metropolitan North, they altered the patterns of their lives through both personal and institutional transmutation. Their movement into northern cities in turn triggered responses from their European American co-residents ranging across a wide spectrum from neglect through cooperation to violent resistance and suburban mobility. Metropolitan migration spread cultural forms born or nurtured in the South—music, dance, and language, for example—not only across the nation, but also into the society’s most dynamic cultural centers. As northern migration regained the suffrage for African Americans, metropolitan concentration amplified the power of their vote, a development eventually to carry important consequences for the prospects of the civil rights movement. The full flowering of African American metropolitan migration took place after the end of my story, but its seedtime and germination before 1930 set the pattern for its later growth.

The methods used to answer my questions will become clear as the book proceeds, but here I want to make clear my stance on two basic issues of historical research: quantitative versus qualitative approaches and the truth value of what we as historians produce. This study seeks to explain the attitudes and behavior of ordinary people by defining the conditions under which they lived and the choices they made about their lives. Of the 750,000 African Americans who migrated to the Lower Midwest between 1860 and 1930, the voices of only a small fraction can be heard in surviving sources. To elucidate the locational choices of the multitude and the experiences of those whom history has rendered silent, quantitative evidence is unavoidable, despite its deficiencies, and quantitative analysis is useful, in spite of its tendency to obscure through aggregation. I have consciously tried to counter the homogenizing effect of a quantitative approach by searching in memoirs, newspapers, and, above all, oral history sources for individual voices, and paying attention to what they have to say. As one student of African American migration has observed, “the pattern of movement and the experiences of the individuals involved are both essential to an adequate understanding of the dynamics of human migration.”

My approach, therefore, is eclectic and inclusive, rather than methodologically focused.

I have tried to tell the story of the African Americans who came to the Lower Midwest, but in the end I do not pretend that it is their story. Instead, it is my story about them. The facts of this story are as true as any set of facts can be. Their selection and arrangement, however, represent only one of an infinitude of possible interpretations.

A word about terminology. “African American” and its parallel term,
“European American,” will be used to designate Americans of African and European descent, respectively, but since I cannot establish a full and accurate genealogy for any of the actors in this story, the application of these terms must necessarily depend upon how they were perceived during their lifetimes. Those who were seen and treated as “Negroes” or “colored people” or “Afro-Americans” will be considered to be African Americans. Those who were considered to be “white” will be described here as European Americans. The terms “black” and “white” will be used as interchangeable, respectively, with “African American” and “European American.” The noun “race” and its adjectival forms are unavoidable in describing relations between African Americans and European Americans, but I shall try to avoid using them in any way that asserts the reality of discrete racial groups. It should be understood that in this study the terms “race,” “racial,” “interracial,” and the like refer to contemporary perceptions and behaviors, not biological entities. As anthropologist Malcolm Chapman notes, “[T]he notion of a finite, biologically defined and biologically self-reproducing population as the basis of an ethnic group is largely fictional.” A burgeoning volume of historical scholarship now treats “whiteness” and “blackness” as social constructions, linguistic and conceptual weapons deployed to create and maintain a relationship of domination by one set of Americans over another. Demonstrating the historical contingency of that relationship is precisely a goal of this study.

Through the bullet holes in the court house doors in Washington Court House I perceived an ever-widening historiographic space. I have tried to furnish as much of that space as possible, but I do not pretend that I have filled it all. This is the first analytical study to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to study African American migration over such a large area and such a long time. I hope it will not be the last.

Chapter 1 identifies and charts the first two waves of migration into the Lower Midwest: the rush of the Civil War years and the more deliberate movement during the quarter century that followed. Migrant characteristics and patterns of mobility are delineated, a sketch of the Lower Midwest and its race relations is drawn, and migrant choices of destination are traced. Chapters 2 through 5 focus on the conditions migrants found in nonmetropolitan communities and how they dealt with those conditions, emphasizing family life, jobs, wealth, housing, and politics. Within this section, the story proceeds from matters of everyday life to the sporadic outbreaks of violence directed against African Americans and how they responded. In the final three chapters, the focus widens to encompass not
Introduction

only the case study communities, but also the choices made by migrants before leaving the South as well as those that brought them to some destinations rather than others in the Lower Midwest. Locational choices within Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois are examined both during the period of accelerated immigration around the turn of the twentieth century and during the even more stepped-up surge of the Great Migration period, after 1910. A brief conclusion reflects on the meanings and implications of the story the book tells.
PART ONE

*Getting There, 1860–1890*
African American migration to the Lower Midwest between 1860 and 1890 responded to changes forced by the Civil War on both sides of the Ohio River. A deluge poured into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois during the terrifying yet liberating turbulence of the war, but the stream slowed to a dribble afterward, as most African Americans chose to test the limits of their new freedom in the South. The war and its attendant changes altered much in the Midwest, stimulating its farms and industries and stretching the narrow limits within which Euro-Midwesterners had historically confined their African American neighbors. With mixed hope and prudence, African American newcomers seized the new opportunities they and their fellows North and South had helped to create.

TWO MIGRATIONS

The wartime migration to the Lower Midwest probably began as soon as troop movements, pitched battles, and internecine conflict in the disputed states of Kentucky and Missouri disrupted slaveholders’ patterns of control. As Union troops moved farther south in the war’s western theater, more
slaves grasped the opportunity for freedom. Some walked or rode to free states on their own. One such pair were Missouri slave Henry Clay Bruce and his betrothed, who took his master's horse, rode to a railway line, and caught a train to the Missouri River, where they crossed to free territory in Kansas. Other ex-slaves were gathered by the Union army and, beginning in 1862, were held at a huge contraband camp in Cairo, at the southernmost tip of Illinois. As historian Michael Johnson points out, “[T]hese refugees from Dixie comprised the largest voluntary interstate migration of African Americans in the first century of the nation’s history, over 80,000 in all.” About 21,000 came to Ohio, more than 11,000 to Indiana, and 20,000 to Illinois. The wartime migrants may have planned their departure or even made more than one attempt before succeeding, but in the end it was the war’s convulsive impact that provided the catalyst for their movement.

Three other characteristics marked the wartime migrants. First, having seized war-generated opportunities to escape from slavery, they were dirt poor. Second, evidence from Kansas and Iowa indicates that they tended to move as families. Oral histories from the Ohio Valley states, too, reflect family migration. For Adah Isabelle Suggs, the actions of her mother, Harriott McClain, were crucial. Born in slavery in Henderson County, Kentucky, in the early 1850s, Adah was taken from her mother at the age of four and put under her mistress’s care. Adah’s mother attempted several times to escape with Adah to save her daughter from the threat of sexual assault by her master when the girl reached puberty, but her initial efforts were unsuccessful. Although the enlistments of Harriott’s husband and son in an African American Union regiment should have brought emancipation for Adah and Harriott, Adah’s owner refused to comply with the federal law. When Adah was about twelve, Harriott McClain finally succeeded in escaping with her daughter. They were transported across the Ohio River by federal troops and taken in by the African American community in Evansville, Indiana. Much of that community consisted of newly arrived fellow Kentuckians, and most lived in black-headed households. Fleeing guerrilla-war-torn Missouri, the Blue, Barnett, and Mallory families migrated together from Paris to Jacksonville, Illinois; so did the Kirk family from Carrollton. Migrants to rural Pulaski County, Illinois, tended to arrive in family groups and to settle near relatives. As in slavery, the family served as a buffer against a threatening world.

Finally, the wartime migrants were distinguished from all succeeding waves by the role played by whites in aiding their flight. White help was especially useful because established midwestern African American communities were relatively small and the likelihood of slaves’ contact with them correspondingly slight. Most slaves had probably never visited free
Reconnaissance Parties

territory. With little or no knowledge of the terrain, no money, and few or no family or friends to assist upon arrival, help from European Americans was no doubt welcome. Migrants, especially those on their own, therefore sometimes sought out white assistance, but the circumstances under which it was sought and rendered suggest exchange and mutuality as much as charity and dependence. After running away from his Missouri plantation, William Nelson hunted for turtle eggs until he filled a bucket. Taking the bucket to the river, he found Yankee soldiers who bought his eggs and took him on board a boat. A Union officer, whom Nelson referred to as “Mars Ben,” “tol’em he take cair me and he did. Den Marse Ben got sick and cum home and brung me along [to Ohio] and I staid with ’em ’til I was about fo’ty, when I gets married and moved to Wyllis Hill.” David A. Hall was “brought north” to Ohio by a Union soldier named Kuhns, whom he had met in North Carolina during the war. Hall found work in a flour mill in Tiffin. When he moved to Canton in 1866, Kuhns offered him a job in a mill of which he was part owner. Hall worked in the mill for the next seventy years. In this exchange, Hall received the help he needed to find his way north (but perhaps not to find a job); Kuhns obtained an experienced and loyal employee. In Ohio Union officers and abolitionist and humanitarian organizations were active in recruiting and transporting African Americans to work as domestic servants. At the war’s end, the Union commander in northern Kentucky issued free travel passes—via rail or steamboat if necessary—to both free blacks and slaves, and many used the passes to travel north.

In a few cases, family support and white assistance were the same. Orville Artis’s grandmother, a slave on a Kentucky plantation, was brought with her four children to Logan County, Illinois, by her master, the father of Orville’s mother. The children called him Dr. George, and Artis’s mother, Georgiana, was named after him. Dr. George moved on to Chicago, but he provided Georgiana’s mother with a house and regular financial support, returning periodically for visits. When Georgiana married Tom Artis, Dr. George bought first a sixty-acre, then a two-hundred-acre farm for his daughter and her husband. “He’s one white man,” Orville Artis recalled of his grandfather, who “tried to set a record straight as he could.”

The sheer volume of wartime migration represented an unprecedented turn in midwestern history. Ohio’s prewar African American population of 36,673, by far the largest of the three states, leaped by 72 percent during the decade. Indiana’s more than doubled, from 11,428 to 24,560. The tiny African American population of Illinois, only 7,628 at the war’s outset, nearly quadrupled to 28,762. In significant ways, however, the wartime flood, by compressing them in time, only underscored prewar patterns. European
Americans had historically played a significant role in facilitating African American migration and settlement in the region. Repentant slaveholders such as Dr. George had settled their slave mistresses, natural children, and other manumitted bondspeople on midwestern lands. Abolitionists had assisted in creating Underground Railroad routes that whisked some fugitives through to Canada and encouraged others to settle nearby. Quaker settlements became well known for their sympathy, and many black communities grew up in their vicinity. As the war to preserve the Union became a war of liberation, northern white opinion toward blacks polarized, largely along partisan lines. Many of those who took the side of the freedpeople accepted the duty of manifesting their principles in deeds.

For every slave who escaped before the war, flight was more than fulfillment of a personal need; it was a form of active resistance to a system grounded upon denial of African American volition. Once the seceded states mobilized for war, escape took on an even more portentous political dimension. Every fugitive deprived the Confederacy of a badly needed worker. When the Union armies began to enlist African Americans on a large scale in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation, flight from slavery became for many only the first phase of a campaign to destroy the slave system. In the border slave states, the message sent by the fugitives was slightly different but no less political: The end of slavery was at hand. When nearly 24,000 Afro-Kentuckians gained legal freedom for themselves and their dependents—totaling 71 percent of Kentucky’s slaves—by leaving their farms and plantations to enlist in the Union army, they all but guaranteed its realization. A step toward African American freedom during the antebellum years, flight in the wartime crisis quickened the pace toward that elusive goal.

The wartime migration probably extended into 1867, when the rapid turn toward Radical Reconstruction began to open new opportunities in the South. It was succeeded during the following quarter century by a different kind of movement, more tentative and gradual than the sometimes precipitate departures of the apocalyptic wartime years. The Lower Midwest experienced nothing like the sudden surge of migrants who left the Deep South for Kansas in the spring of 1879. Because it was incremental, the new migration usually attracted far less notice and much less support or opposition from whites. African American migration could generate intense reactions during these years, as became clear during the Kansas Exodus, when newspapers across the country dissected the motives and probed the political implications of the movement. Some of the fallout splashed across the Midwest, as Democratic charges that Republicans were importing voters into closely divided Indiana sparked a congressional
Reconnaissance Parties


investigation. But this was the exception to the rule. The Gilded Age migration was far more under African American control than any previous African American migration. Its political implications for the migrants and their new communities were left unexplored by Congress or anyone else, and other consequences it might bring in its train were probably equally unanticipated by blacks and whites alike as the migration proceeded.

African American migration to the Lower Midwest during the Gilded Age brought about the same number of migrants to the region as the wartime movement, but the flow extended over a period nearly four times as long (1867–1890). The Civil War flood dwindled to a trickle. Nevertheless, by the time the current began to flow more strongly in the 1890s, the trickle had made significant additions to the region’s African American populations. Population growth, most of which was provided by migration, added 38 percent in Ohio between the censuses of 1870 and 1890, 84 percent in Indiana, and 98 percent in Illinois. In Ohio black population growth kept pace with white. In Indiana and Illinois the African American growth rate substantially exceeded the European American.

Most of the Gilded Age migrants were former slaves, young, and male. Evidence on individual migrant histories comes from the ex-slave
interviews conducted by the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) during the 1930s (see appendix C). Of thirty-three oral history respondents for whom an age at the time of their migration to the North can be calculated, all but three were under thirty years. Their median age was eighteen years. Of forty-three whose sex is known, 70 percent were male. The male majority among the FWP migrants is also apparent in the census, which shows extremely high sex ratios in the migrant streams for all three states during the 1870s, in excess of three males for every two females. More women and girls came during the 1880s, but not enough to produce parity (figure 1.1). In moving north, the FWP migrants also moved townward. More than 90 percent of oral history subjects were born in rural areas (thirty-four of thirty-seven), but only one-third made their first northern stop a rural one (six of seventeen). Fewer than one-fifth were still living in a rural community when they were interviewed (six of thirty-five).

For some migrants, migration was initiated or accelerated by the sort of dramatic incident that plays a central role in the literary and artistic representations of African American migration. African American migration narratives are marked by a “pivotal moment” in which “an event . . . propels the action northward.” For some Gilded Age migrants, literature reflected life. Mrs. Preston, a migrant from Kentucky to Indiana, reported that Klansmen gave her family ten days to leave their land, and then burned their home when her father dared to return. Another Kentuckian told how white farmers organized in an attempt to deny their black sharecroppers a share of the crops, and how his family left for Indiana as a result.

Other migrants recalled conflicts with individual whites that figured in their decisions to move on. Ex-slave Kisey McKimm and her mother left the farm in Bourbon County, Kentucky, that they had been given by their former master after the master died and his son threatened to burn them out. After emancipation another Kentuckian, young Watt Jordan, was bound out by his mother to Matt Clay. After about ten years working for Clay, Jordan left.

I left Clay’s after he flew en er rage one day en wuz goin’ ter whip me. I wuz eighteen den, en I knowed I wuz jes’ as good er man as Clay wuz; so, when he started en ter whip me, I jes’ whipped him en left. He tried ter git me back, en come to town en raised er racket, but folks all tole him I wuz free ter do what I wanted, en so he left me erlone.

John William Matheus stayed after emancipation on the West Virginia farm of his former owners, until a verbal conflict with his former master brought him to the decision to leave.
I stayed with Michael and Mary Blue till I was nineteen. They were supposed to give me a saddle and bridle, clothes and a hundred dollars. The massa made me mad one day. I was rendering hog fat. When the crackling would fizzle, he hollo [sic] and say “don’t put so much fire.” He came out again and said, “I told you not to [p]ut too much fire” and he threatened to give me a thrashing. I said, “If you do I will throw rocks at you.”

After that I decided to leave and I told Anna Blue I was going. She say, “Don’t do it, you are too young to go out into the world.” I say, I don’t care. . . .

Clearly the migrants felt such incidents to be important turning points in their personal lives, as they recalled them many years later for interviewers who were often strangers.

Although such dramatic incidents were connected in the migrants’ minds with a decision to move, they were not always, or even often, related to a decision to move north. After receiving the Klan’s warning, Mrs. Preston’s family did take what the Klan paid them for their farm and came north. But after a period in the North, her father returned to Kentucky. When the Klan burned his house, he and part of his family remained in their old neighborhood under the protection of their former owner. Under threat of being burned out, Kisey McKimm and her mother abandoned their Kentucky farm, but they went only as far as Paris, Kentucky. Kisey McKimm did not move north until after she had married and borne two children. After beating Matt Clay, Watt Jordan did not go north right away; instead he moved to Carlisle, Kentucky, only later migrating to Ohio. John William Matheus left the Blues’ farm in about 1879 after arguing with his former master, but he went only as far as his uncle’s farm nearby. He worked in a tannery and presumably husbanded his resources, then Matheus crossed the Ohio River to Steubenville. After eighteen months working in Steubenville, Matheus returned to West Virginia, moving permanently to Steubenville only in 1884, five years after the conflict he remembered so clearly more than half a century later. For Jordan and Matheus, the successful dispute with a white man probably symbolized coming to manhood, a transition that, for Matheus at least, also embraced migration north. Like Jordan’s stay in Carlisle, the time that elapsed between the clearly remembered incident and the final relocation, the testing of northern waters in Steubenville followed by Matheus’s return to home ground, suggest a deliberate process of decision making. John Matheus himself noted a possible reason for his hesitation: “The old folks told me they were stoned when they came across the river to Ohio after the surrender and that the colored people were treated like cats and dogs.”
Chapter 1

Table 1.1 Step Migration in Three Periods

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<td>36.7</td>
<td>39.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Made stops in the South</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Made stops in the North</td>
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<td>26.7</td>
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<td>26.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.9*</td>
<td>100.1*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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* Does not equal 100.0 because of rounding

Note: A migrant was considered to have made a stop if he or she indicated living in a place rather than merely stopping over, but no precise quantitative distinction was possible.

Source: Oral history respondents (see appendix C).

Step migration—movement by stages, usually from smaller to larger places—does seem to have been characteristic of Gilded Age migrants to the Lower Midwest. Pre-1890 migrants were less likely than later ones to make the move north in a single jump (table 1.1). Lloyd Phillips escaped from slavery in Kentucky in 1864. Eight years and two Ohio stops later, he arrived in rural Paulding County in northwestern Ohio. Elizabeth Russell took three years to work her way north from Georgia to Kentucky. After staying “awhile” in Covington, she finally crossed into Indiana. William Williams’s journey from rural North Carolina to Canton, Ohio, included stops in both the South and the North:

I did not stay with my father and mother long as I was only about 14 when I started north. I worked for farmers every place I could find work and sometimes would work a month or maybe two. The last farmer I worked for I stayed a year and I got my board and room and five dollars a month which was paid at the end of every six months. I stayed in Pennsylvania for some years and came to Canton in 1884.

Step migration is a common pattern in rural-urban migration. But it was especially useful, indeed necessary, when potential migrants had to rely upon word-of-mouth communication to gain knowledge of potential destinations. During these years few northern African American newspapers circulated in the South, and widespread illiteracy restricted the impact of those that did. Southern newspapers sometimes received correspondence from the North, but this was rare and less authoritative than a northern
newspaper. Communication by letters and personal contact was less common than it would become when northern black communities grew and north–south railway links multiplied. The prevalence of step migration among the early migrants suggests how much they needed and valued foreknowledge of potential northern destinations.

Long-distance transportation was also problematic, although one must be careful not to judge nineteenth-century facilities by twenty-first-century standards. The southern railway network, much less extensive than in the North at the war’s outset, was systematically destroyed by both Union and Confederate forces seeking to deny each other use of the railways. Rebuilding was delayed during the 1870s by the South’s credit shortage and the severe national depression of 1873–1879. Only during the 1880s did significant expansion and harmonization with the northern system take place. The southern system was realigned from east–west to north–south, and in 1886 most of the South’s trackage was changed to the northern standard gauge. The first railway bridge across the Ohio River was built at Louisville in 1870, the second seven years later at Cincinnati, and in 1889 the Illinois Central bridge at Cairo connected Illinois with the South. By 1890, then, all three states of the Lower Midwest enjoyed southern rail connections. Whether southern blacks in large numbers could afford to ride them—or wished to endure long-distance travel in Jim Crow cars—was another question.

Railway travel for African Americans from the Deep South to the North during the 1870s and 1880s generally meant discomfort at best and conflict at worst. Humiliation was likely in either case. As the southern rail system was extended, the railroads became a focus of struggle between whites demanding separation and blacks insisting on equal rights. The upshot was state laws requiring the railroads to provide separate and equal accommodations for African Americans, which began to spread across the South during the late 1880s. The accommodations, however, were not equal. In the North by the 1880s, Pullman Palace Cars were transforming long-distance travel into an adventure that was not only fast but comfortable, but southern black emigrants traveling by train experienced an entirely different sort of adventure. To travel from, say, Selma, Alabama, to Toledo, Ohio, in 1893 meant a thirty-one-hour, twenty-minute journey sitting up on wooden benches and eating and drinking only what the traveler could manage to bring along. Along the way were two changes from one railway line to another—fortunately, in the same stations—in Chattanooga and Cincinnati. A traveler from Clarksdale, Mississippi, to Chicago needed to make only one change, but had to endure the same conditions for about the same length of time.
Railroads, however, were not the only way to leave the South. Despite increasing competition from railroads, steamboats cruised the Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri, and other midwestern rivers throughout the nineteenth century, and carried passengers more cheaply than the railways. Steamboats played an indispensable role in the most widely publicized African American migration of the Gilded Age, the “Exodus” to Kansas in 1879. When the Exodus began in the early spring, Exodusters flocked to the Mississippi River ports and riverbanks, hoping to catch steamboats that would take them to St. Louis. From St. Louis they could embark by rail or Missouri River steamer to Kansas. The steamboat fare was four dollars from Vicksburg to St. Louis, and another $2.50 from St. Louis to Wyandotte, Kansas. Threatened by the loss of their labor force, planters and merchants sought to stop the movement. For about a month beginning in late April 1879, the principal Mississippi River steamboat companies refused to carry would-be migrants, and the steamboat boycott effectively interdicted African American mobility from the Deep South to Kansas. Historians agree that more African Americans tried to leave the Deep South in 1879 than were able to do so, and one argues that the impetus of the movement was broken by the migrants’ stranding on the river banks. What the flood and ebb of the Kansas exodus demonstrate is that in normal times the steamboat offered a relatively inexpensive means of long-distance travel out of the South. More than 7,500 migrants from the Deep South states managed to reach Kansas during the 1870s, and most of these traveled by water. Its value decreased, however, with a would-be migrant’s distance from a navigable river. On the other hand, a penniless but able-bodied man who was able to reach a steamboat landing might be able to pay for his passage by helping to load fuel or cargo.

During the Kansas Exodus, public discussion focused primarily on migrants from the Deep South. In fact, many more migrants to Kansas during the 1870s hailed from the Upper South states of Kentucky and Tennessee than from the Deep South states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Kentucky was also the leading source of Gilded Age migrants to the Lower Midwest, and Tennessee was not far behind. Compared to later migratory streams, the Lower Midwest’s Gilded Age migrants traveled shorter distances, but, despite their proximity to their destinations, they were more likely to travel in stages.

When all the evidence is weighed, the migration of the 1867–1890 period looks more like a deliberate movement in search of opportunity than a headlong flight from oppression. The fact that greater numbers came to the Lower Midwest during the wartime years than during the postwar period tends to discount the deterrent effects of absent railroad links and few
sources of information. More could have moved than did. Those who did migrate were predominantly young men, typically the group that responds most readily to the lure of new opportunities. They left the South during a time when most African Americans still retained the right to vote, before the wave of disfranchisement legislation stimulated by the Mississippi Plan of 1890. The migrants effectively counteracted the scarcity of information through step migration. The relatively short range of their migration, from the border states to the Lower Midwest, facilitated communication with families and kept open the possibility of return. If conditions in their new homes proved welcoming, they could serve as a reconnaissance party for larger detachments to follow. Whether any individual migrant stayed or returned south, the migration widened the scope of informed choice for African Americans collectively by exploring new territory.

THE LOWER MIDWEST

During the postwar years the prospects of that new territory—the Lower Midwest—certainly generated abundant optimism among its residents. The Midwest in general, and the states of the Lower Midwest in particular, were entering their peak years of wealth and national influence, emerging economically and politically from the shadow of the older states to the east. In Lincoln the Lower Midwest had elected its first president, and five more followed him to the White House before the century ended. A maturing agricultural economy and a lusty, youthful industrial one shaped the region’s population dynamics. Yet Midwesterners were forced to temper their optimism when boom regularly turned to bust. Native-born women and an increasingly foreign-born industrial working class challenged the order ruled by native-born white men. Deep and persistent partisan divisions both reflected other conflicts and generated their own. As the Midwest gained power to shape the nation’s course, no one could easily foretell what heading the region would choose.

The Midwest’s historic strength stemmed from its bountiful land. During the Gilded Age, its regional metropolis, Chicago, acquired dominance because of the city’s ability to control markets for the massive quantities of grain, livestock, and timber produced on that land. Supplies of coal and natural gas and ready access to iron ore fueled the growth of manufacturing. The Midwest was distinguished by “the sustained, simultaneous growth of agriculture and industry.” All three states consistently ranked among the nation’s leaders in agriculture, and Ohio and Illinois repeated the achievement in manufacturing. Agriculture and industry, however, produced
different effects upon population movements. Even as midwestern agriculture came to lead the nation, rising land prices and high machinery costs drove the sons and daughters of farm families to seek opportunity in states farther west. During the decades from the Civil War to the eve of the Great Depression, each state typically lost more native-born white males and females than it gained. Industry, in contrast, attracted to the region large numbers of immigrants, mostly to Ohio and Illinois, an influx that sustained the white population's growth rate.\textsuperscript{53} Urban growth, another notable feature of the region's history during this period, resulted from the convergence in the cities of immigrants and the stay-behind surplus agricultural population.\textsuperscript{54}

Urbanization provides as good a gauge as any of the explosive growth of the Lower Midwest. Between 1860 and 1890, the number of urban places (those of 2,500+ population) more than doubled in Illinois, tripled in Ohio, and quadrupled in Indiana. Urban populations grew at a similar pace. In 1860 Indiana contained no city larger than 25,000, but by 1890 Indianapolis had passed the 100,000 mark. Cleveland joined Cincinnati at the apex of Ohio's urban hierarchy, and Chicago swelled from a population smaller than Cincinnati's in 1860 to more than one million residents by 1890, a size that dwarfed all other midwestern cities. Hamlets blossomed into villages, villages grew into towns, and towns became cities. Washington Court House and Muncie, beneath the urban threshold in 1860, expanded respectively from 1,035 and 1,782 to 5,742 and 11,345. Springfield, Illinois, grew from 9,320 to 24,963, but even so found itself surpassed by the Ohio Springfield, which multiplied its 7,002 into 31,895. Within each state, population, agriculture, industry, and wealth were beginning to shift north from the Ohio River valley as the draining of northern swamplands, the growth of Chicago, and the building of new rail lines along the southern shores of Lakes Erie and Michigan created mutually reinforcing incentives for development.\textsuperscript{55}

Midwestern politics shared the dynamism of the midwestern economy. No other subject received such consistent and dramatic coverage from the region's flourishing and omnipresent newspaper press. Frequent elections mobilized virtually all of the able-bodied adult males, as well as some who were not so able. Fixed during the Civil War, partisan loyalty formed a major component of male identity.\textsuperscript{56} Political partisanship became the lens through which events were commonly viewed. The cause of the Kansas Exodus, for example, to Republicans was southern white oppression of the freedpeople; to Democrats, it was Yankee meddling. During the Exodus, several hundred African Americans migrated from North Carolina to Indiana, which had narrowly voted Democratic in the previous presidential election. Democrats perceived the migration as a nefarious attempt by Republicans to tilt the state's electoral balance, and some Republicans fed their suspicions. The
resulting investigation by a U.S. Senate committee predictably produced diametrically opposed conclusions by its Democratic majority and Republican minority. 57

Given the white South’s growing attachment to the Democratic party and New England’s and the West’s solid Republican loyalties, the Midwest and the Middle Atlantic states became the main battleground of national politics. Within the Midwest, the three states of the Lower Midwest formed the front lines. Early southern migration to the lower reaches of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois created fertile soil for Democratic doctrines. The peopling of their northern sectors by New Yorkers and New Englanders did the same for Republican principles. Still, within most communities could be found thriving detachments of both major parties, with the minority biding its time until the right combination of local, state, and national conditions allowed it to turn out the current governing party. Factions thrived in both Democratic and Republican ranks. 58 Complicating the picture still further, the Prohibition Party, formed in Chicago in 1869, gained strength throughout the 1870s and 1880s by attracting dissident Republicans, especially in the prohibitionists’ Lower-Midwestern heartland. 59

The partisan political spectacles worn by nearly all native-born male Midwesterners equipped them poorly to comprehend challenges that arose during the Gilded Age from sources beyond party and governmental machinery. The first of these appeared in the winter of 1873–74, when tens of thousands of women—mostly white, native-born, and middle-class—suddenly began to march on saloons and other liquor retailers in hundreds of towns across the region and beyond. 60 Simultaneously, what was to become a severe economic depression commenced with the unexpected failure of one of the country’s largest banking houses. The Women’s Crusade ended by the summer of 1874, but it left behind a new national women’s temperance organization, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), organized in Cleveland in the fall of that year and later headquartered in Chicago. The Lower Midwest formed the seedbed for both the Crusade and the WCTU, as temperance women energized the antiliquor cause in communities across the region for years after the marches ended. 61 The depression lingered nearly through the end of the decade, annually generating thousands of unemployed workers who traveled the countryside seeking work. In 1877 hard times helped to bring on the nation’s first national railway strike.

The railway strike was only the most visible early conflict between capital and labor during the Gilded Age. African Americans had already been brought to Ohio’s Hocking Valley and other places in the Lower Midwest in 1873–74 to supplant European American coal miners. 62 Strife in the
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coal-mining regions of all three states continued through the century’s end, and it often pitted black miners against whites.\textsuperscript{63} In 1886, Chicago police attacked eight-hour-day protestors, and the subsequent bombing of police in Haymarket Square brought midwestern newspapers’ routine antianarchist hatred to fever pitch.\textsuperscript{64} Eight years later, another national railway strike spread outward from Chicago after the American Railway Union chose to support striking workers at George Pullman’s suburban plant and model town.\textsuperscript{65} If the Midwest represented America’s future, as many Midwesterners liked to believe, then from the perspective of the Gilded Age that future appeared to be conflict ridden.

On the question of African Americans in the Midwest’s—and, by extension, America’s—future, white Midwesterners were not only divided, as responses to the small black migration of 1879–80 showed, they were changeable. Ohio’s relatively large African American population in 1860 could be traced in large part to the fact that the Buckeye State was the only one of the three that had not prohibited African Americans by constitution or statute from entering the state. Ohio also allowed African Americans to enter the state without having to post a bond for good behavior, to testify in court, and to attend publicly supported separate schools. The schools, however, were generally inadequate, and state law prohibited African Americans from serving on juries or in the militia or receiving public relief.\textsuperscript{66} In 1851 Indiana’s new state constitution had ratcheted up its antiblack legal prescriptions by adopting, with enthusiastic popular support, an article that read, “No negro or mulatto shall come into, or settle in the State, after the adoption of this Constitution.”\textsuperscript{67} As a result, as Indiana’s governor pointed out in 1865, “No negro who has come into Indiana since 1850 can make a valid contract; he can not acquire title to a piece of land, because the law makes the deed void, and every man who gives him employment is subject to prosecution and fine.”\textsuperscript{68} Black Hoosiers were banned by state law from voting, serving in the militia, attending public schools, and testifying in cases involving whites. Intermarriage between whites and persons having one-eighth or more “Negro” blood was prohibited.\textsuperscript{69} Illinois’s Black Laws generally echoed those of Indiana.\textsuperscript{70}

These structures of legal discrimination, built up piece by piece during the half century since Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois achieved statehood, eroded rapidly in the tumult of change brought by the Civil War. Most white Midwesterners at the war’s outset did not expect the conflict to expand black freedom. In fact, they steadfastly resisted such an outcome. During the war’s first year, Illinois led in the ratification of a proposed but abortive U.S. constitutional amendment that would have prevented the Emancipation Proclamation or any other federal action toward abolition. Illinois voters
followed the path charted by their legislature by approving incorporation of the state’s Black Laws into the constitution. Ohio’s legislators responded to the possibility of former slaves migrating into the state by passing a new law forbidding all sexual contact, including marriage, between blacks and whites. White dock workers in Toledo and Cincinnati attacked African American workers and property during the summer of 1862, as did a mob in New Albany, Indiana. The secretary of war’s order in September 1862 to disperse African Americans from the massive contraband camp in Cairo evoked racist fears that swept Democrats into office across the Lower Midwest in the subsequent elections. The 1862 elections, however, proved to be the high-water mark for midwestern racism.

Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg in July 1863 turned the tide, not only of the war itself, but also of European American opinion in the Lower Midwest. “Carried along by the religious and patriotic currents that swept in the wake of Gettysburg and Vicksburg,” Jacque Voegeli writes,

more and more people viewed the war as a fight for liberty and embraced the idea that the antislavery policy had endowed the Union with moral superiority that would help to conquer the South and also ultimately elevate the national character by purging the country of its sole remaining defect.

In January 1865 the Illinois legislature repealed the exclusion law and gave African Americans access to the courts. Five years later, Illinois voters adopted a new state constitution incorporating the principles of universal public schooling and a desegregated militia. Indiana took no steps toward legal equality during the war, but in 1866 the Indiana Supreme Court ruled that the constitutional exclusion clause was void in light of the recently passed federal civil rights act granting African American citizenship. Three years later, the Indiana legislature required local authorities to provide schooling for African American children. Ohio removed the ban on relief and improved facilities for separate black schools.

African Americans played an active role in changing white public opinion and dismantling the structures of midwestern discrimination. During the war, African Americans moved into the Lower Midwest in numbers large enough to disprove racist claims that slavery was their natural condition and to provide badly needed laborers for manpower-depleted midwestern farms. But the migration was insufficiently voluminous, and the migrants’ behavior insufficiently threatening, to fulfill Democratic predictions of job competition, declining wage levels, rising criminality, and proliferating immorality. African Americans did act, however, so as to realize one Democratic
nightmare, the entry of a new political force into the volatile midwestern polity. They organized conventions and petition campaigns and lobbied for equal rights. The crucial decision by the Indiana Supreme Court was delivered in a suit brought by an African American, Jacob Smith of Marion County, and appealed by him to the court. Most important, African Americans contributed to the war effort. Only six weeks after Cincinnati’s antiblack riot, almost a thousand African American men, dubbed the “Black Brigade,” worked for three weeks to build fortifications to protect the city against an approaching Confederate army. Once the Emancipation Proclamation cleared their way, a substantial proportion of the African American population of military age enlisted in the region’s black regiments. When African American enlistments reduced the need for European Americans to fight and die, whites were forced to recognize the African American contribution to the struggle to save the Union. 79

Given the degree of antiblack prejudice in the antebellum Lower Midwest, the changes of the Civil War and Reconstruction were indeed dramatic. Yet their cumulative effect was only to grant to African Americans a “cramped, meager degree of equal rights.” 80 Through the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the federal government had forced African American citizenship and suffrage on the region. Ohio voters, in fact, explicitly rejected African American male suffrage in 1867, only to have the Fifteenth Amendment impose it three years later. 81 Much remained to be done. The meaning of the wartime and postwar changes and the European American will to support the new order were unclear. The new order itself left African Americans with significant disabilities. White racism had been “tempered,” but not “purged.” 82

DESTINATIONS SOUGHT AND SHUNNED

Although white racism lingered in both midwestern law and custom during the late nineteenth century, the legal and institutional changes that had occurred as a result of the Civil War gave grounds for hope that racist structures and practices could be further eroded in the years to come. The postwar period was “a time of unparalleled hope, laden with possibility, when black men and women acted to shape their own destiny.” 83 To those who lived through the titanic struggle that brought about the death of slavery and the winning of citizenship and suffrage by those who only a few years before had been declared by the nation’s highest court to have “no rights that the white man was bound to respect,” the changes were breathtaking, even if incomplete. Nor did that sense of expanding possibilities die with those
who experienced personally the transition from slavery to freedom. They inculcated in their children born in freedom an expectation of exercising full civil rights.\textsuperscript{84}

In this atmosphere of cautious hope, the wartime and postwar migrants entered the Lower Midwest and chose destinations. The patterns of their locational choices are clear and consistent across all three states.\textsuperscript{85} In each state at least two-thirds of the African American population had lived in rural areas on the eve of the Civil War, but African Americans were still a more urban people than European Americans. Although the wartime and Gilded Age migrations bolstered African American rural populations, in no state did rural populations grow as rapidly as the number of urban dwellers. African American rural population growth did, however, nearly match the increase in the largest cities of Ohio and Indiana, and in Illinois substantially exceeded Chicago's gain.\textsuperscript{86} Although the largest cities attracted African American migrants, the migration stream did not concentrate there either. Instead, African Americans distributed themselves across the urban hierarchy, settling in small towns and midsized cities as well as in Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland and Cincinnati, and the rural areas.\textsuperscript{87} As a result, in 1890 blacks were a significantly more metropolitan population than whites only in Indiana, where Indianapolis held one-fifth of blacks compared to one-twentieth of whites.\textsuperscript{88} Yet even in Indiana, twice as many African Americans lived in other urban places as in Indianapolis. In Ohio African Americans were only slightly more concentrated in Cincinnati and Cleveland than European Americans. In Illinois, despite the fifteenfold multiplication of Chicago's African American population, a larger proportion of the state's European American population (29 percent) than its African American population (25 percent) lived in the regional metropolis in 1890 (tables A.1--A.3).

As they scattered across the landscape of the Lower Midwest, African American migrants generally bypassed prewar centers of African American population. In 1860 New Albany held 23 percent of Indiana's African American urban population, the largest share of any community. By 1890, despite tripling the number of its African American citizens, New Albany's share dropped to less than 7 percent. The story was the same upriver in Cincinnati, which in 1860 contained one-third of Ohio's African American urbanites, the region's largest concentration. Despite tripling their numbers over the next thirty years, Afro-Cincinnatians in 1890 represented 10 percent less of their state's African American urban dwellers than they had in 1860. Chicago varied from the pattern, however, increasing its share of Illinois's African American urban population from 39 to 42 percent. In Ohio and Indiana, African American urban growth was most rapid in the towns that
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contained fewest African Americans on the eve of the Civil War. In Illinois the same trend appears outside of Chicago. Beyond Chicago, Gilded Age migrants to the Lower Midwest dispersed themselves across a rapidly growing urban system. They avoided existing black clusters and instead selected communities where few or no African Americans had lived before.89

Some historians believe that African American migrants were deterred from locating in communities containing large numbers of European immigrants, and they explain this by the threat of job competition. To the extent

Figure 1.2 Gainers and Losers in African American Urban Population Share in Ohio, 1860–1890.
that both migration streams were composed of former agricultural workers, they might have been expected to compete with each other in the industrializing Lower Midwest for lower-skilled jobs.\textsuperscript{90} If the Gilded Age African American migrants to the Lower Midwest anticipated such competition, however, they seem not to have expected to lose. Migrants chose destinations without reference to the size of their immigrant populations.\textsuperscript{91}

Migrants also did not make their locational choices in accordance with gross spatial changes in the regional economy. In all three states, the locus

\textbf{Figure 1.3} Gainers and Losers of African American Urban Population Share in Indiana, 1860–1890.
of state economies was shifting northward from the Ohio River valley. In Ohio, however, most of the significant gains and losses in African American population took place among towns and cities in the southwest quadrant of the state, where most African Americans lived (figure 1.2).

Indiana’s principal gainers and losers were more scattered, but the biggest gain appeared in Evansville on the Ohio River, and the losses were distributed across the entire state (figure 1.3).

In Illinois, too, the largest share gain took place in an Ohio River town, Cairo. The principal losers were dispersed across the central part of the state.

Figure 1.4 Gainers and Losers of African American Urban Population Share in Illinois, 1860–1890.
except for the biggest, Galena, which was located in the extreme northwest corner (figure 1.4).

Migrants made more precise choices than those dictated by large-scale economic shifts. In every state they chose rapidly growing villages, towns, and cities and rejected slowly growing ones. In other words, within Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, African American migration streams flowed parallel to European American ones. New Albany and Cincinnati were bypassed by many African American migrants at least partly because they were their respective states’ biggest losers of total urban population share. Chicago’s gain in African American urban population share rested upon its huge jump in its proportion of Illinois’s urban dwellers, from 46 to 65 percent. Whatever sources of information about the dynamics of midwestern economies migrants managed to unearth, the leads they obtained were usually accurate.

African American migrants to the Lower Midwest may well have been dislodged from their southern homes by Civil War fighting, by the wave of terrorism launched by white southerners to halt black progress after the war, or by the threat of such violence. Their locational choices in the Lower Midwest, however, suggest that their primary concern in the North was jobs, not security in numbers. If so, they seem to have expected the North to be less threatening than the South. The migrants proceeded cautiously, to be sure, and chose the kinds of places and sought the type of work with which they were familiar. Favorite destinations Evansville and Cairo lay just across the Ohio River from families and friends in central and western Kentucky. Landscapes and climate north of the Ohio were similar to those to which they were accustomed. The small towns to which so many traveled, urban settings tightly enmeshed within an agricultural economy and culture, represented continuity with rural backgrounds.

The white worlds within those towns, however, were something new. In 1860, one out of five Kentuckians was African American, and the proportion was much higher in the parts of the state where African Americans were concentrated. In contrast, only 3 of the 236 urban places in the Lower Midwest held as large a proportion of African Americans in 1890 as the entire state of Kentucky thirty years before. The old abolitionist strongholds, such as Oberlin in Ohio and Galesburg in Illinois, and the welcoming Quaker communities of the antebellum years, such as Richmond, Indiana, did not attract the new migrants. Instead they pioneered settlements in places where African Americans before the war had been less welcome—but where expanding economies demanded workers. If the migrants manifested caution in remaining close to rural roots, they also showed daring in venturing into those hitherto white worlds.
CONCLUSION

We found a little more freedom in Toledo, Ohio than in Camden, Arkansas.
—Welton Barnett, Toledo, 1976

In the very process of being transplanted, the Negro is becoming transformed.
—Alain Locke, 1925

All those who have studied African American migration agree that the mobility choices made by several hundred thousand ordinary people in the aggregate produced a profound impact upon the history of the United States in the twentieth century. Culture, politics, and urban geography were all reshaped in significant ways. The migrants did change their own situation, and for many of them the alteration was for the better. In changing their own lives, they also transformed both the places they entered and the places they left.

This book has attempted to define the outlines of the age of the village for African Americans and to estimate the impact of their nonmetropolitan experience upon their metropolitan era. I hope it will lay to rest any doubts that African Americans did have their own age of the village, an intervening stage between the rural world in which most lived at the Civil War’s onset and the metropolitan society that encompassed the vast majority at the beginning of the twenty-first century. To be sure, the small-town period for African Americans represented a much more compressed part of their history than it did for European Americans. On the other hand, it lasted longer than most have previously recognized. In the Lower Midwest, the eve of the Great Depression found numbers ranging from one-fifth in Ohio to one-quarter in Indiana and Illinois still living in nonmetropolitan urban places (tables A.15–A.17). Furthermore, a minority of those normally counted as part of metropolitan populations found or created settings within the world of the large cities that nurtured as much as possible the lifestyle of the small town.

African Americans found some aspects of small-town society appealing, which explains why a significant minority continued to reside there or tried
The answer to my initial question about whether the bullet holes in the courthouse doors at Washington Court House offered an explanation for the decline of African American nonmetropolitan populations is yes and no. Antiblack collective violence did play a role in convincing African Americans that their future lay elsewhere, but it is only one part of a much larger and more complex story. Seen from an African American perspective, the Lower Midwest was a violent place, and most of the attacks between 1885 and 1910—all of those that occurred in Ohio and Indiana—took place in small towns and midsize cities. But such violence was reported in only a small minority of towns, and some black residents chose to stay even in towns where a mob had gathered or a lynching was organized, while other African Americans decided to move to such places, including even young, newly married couples, such as John and Victoria Oatmeal in Washington Court House. One factor that may have played a large part in such decisions was the greater ease of acquiring ownership of a family home in smaller urban communities. Access to home ownership was offset, however, by the limited range of job opportunities, especially for women. Therefore, as women came to fill a larger place in the migration stream from the South, the flow was nudged cityward.

Classic migration theory distinguishes between “push” and “pull” factors, but today, migration scholars recognize that these categories are interdependent. A “push” may only become strong enough to propel migration when a “pull” becomes sufficiently attractive to offer a reasonable alternative, and the same holds true in reverse for a “pull” factor. The locational choices of African American migrants in the Lower Midwest from the Civil War to the Great Depression fit comfortably within this new perspective. Nonmetropolitan communities in the Midwest became attractive
destinations during the Civil War and the postwar years because they offered the appeal of a prosperous urban setting in a nonsouthern state, yet one tightly bound to familiar agricultural cycles, and in a climate and topography similar to those of the border states from which most migrants originated. For some, the decision to settle in a nonmetropolitan community paid off, especially when compared to the worsening racial atmosphere in the South. For many others, however, the restricted job opportunities and the threat of violence in small towns and midsize cities burnished the appeal of a larger African American urban community. Their decisions to move cityward augmented the size, widened the range of backgrounds, and amplified the economic, social, and cultural resources of metropolitan African American populations. Meanwhile, migrants from the Deep South began to join the migration stream, mainly to Illinois and the Calumet region of Indiana. At first, they followed the earlier path of their border state predecessors to nonmetropolitan communities, before joining the latter in turning cityward during the twentieth century’s second decade. By the time cessation of European immigration and multiplying wartime needs opened industrial jobs to African Americans on a large scale, many migrants from the South had already tasted urban life in either the South or the North—or both. For them, the immediate “push” came, not from cotton, sugar, or tobacco fields, but from smaller black communities under constant white surveillance, and the relevant “pull” emanated from metropolitan black communities so large as to enjoy an unprecedented degree of autonomy from white control. The appeal of formerly attractive small towns and midsize cities in both the South and the North diminished relative to the magnetism of the new African American metropolitan culture.

If one term had to sum up why African Americans rejected the midwestern small towns and cities to which they were initially attracted, I think the best one would be “variability,” both geographic and temporal. Small towns and small cities were unpredictable places, precisely because they were white worlds. Some small-town environments were unquestionably hospitable to some, most, or perhaps even all of their African American residents. Testimony to this effect is not hard to find. The sterling example of racial egalitarianism is Covert Township, Michigan, where radical white abolitionists and black settlers determined on equality established during the Civil War decade an atmosphere of racial harmony that persisted through the nineteenth century’s end. Although individual whites in Monroe, Michigan, acted out their prejudices toward blacks, the courts evidently dealt fairly. During the 1860s Steubenville, Ohio enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for racial tolerance. Orphaned in the tiny hamlet of
Ellettsville, Indiana, Jeremiah Jackson received indispensable help from his European American neighbors, which allowed him to become the first African American graduate of the Indiana University School of Medicine. Throughout his many years as a physician in Evansville, Jackson returned regularly to Ellettsville for ceremonial occasions. In Tuscola, Illinois, Bruce Hayden passed the civil service examination with flying colors to become the first African American letter carrier. Disappointed whites were appalled that the postmaster would even consider appointing “a nigger on the post office,” but the postmaster replied, according to Hayden, that “you had no business letting a nigger get smarter than you.” Hayden held the job for thirty-two years. Even in Springfield, Illinois, Phoebe Mitchell Day, who lived through the 1908 riot, reported of her co-workers in the state office building, her white neighbors, and nurses who cared for her at the local hospital, “they all treated me lovely.”

Small towns and small cities differed from each other. Some treated African Americans comparatively well, while others barred them completely. European Americans pondering a move had to consider only the general economic condition of a prospective destination, but African Americans’ prospects depended as well upon the local racial atmosphere. Tuscola was good to Bruce Hayden’s family, but when he moved sixty miles west to Springfield, he found it a terribly prejudiced town. Worse, a single community’s racial atmosphere could change almost overnight. By the 1880s Steubenville’s reputation for tolerance had begun to tarnish, and when new roller-skating rinks opened, their proprietors refused to admit African Americans. Black Altonians no doubt thought their schools were safely integrated until local officials decided to resegregate them. No one was prepared for the lynchings and race riots that boiled up like summer tornadoes in midwestern communities. When one’s family’s welfare depended on the goodwill of individual European Americans, and one’s safety rested upon the attitudes of a small European American community, it must have been disconcerting to watch individual moods and the communal temper shift in response to stimuli emanating from mysterious local or extralocal sources. European Americans in large cities may have been equally unpredictable, but spatial differentiation of residential, commercial, and industrial zones, de facto residential segregation, and congregation of African Americans limited daily interaction with whites, while larger African American populations provided greater security in numbers.

The role played by nonmetropolitan urban communities in channeling African American migration restores to the European American residents of those communities a degree of agency that is often missing in histories of
the small town. Instead, small towns are commonly seen as victims of inexorable forces of centralization.\textsuperscript{15} By making their towns inhospitable places for African Americans, whether through unwillingness to share well-paying occupations, segregation of theaters and restaurants, or mobs and lynchings, European Americans injured their communities economically and culturally. They needed people, as their editors incessantly proclaimed, to support local markets. The worst of them, the sundown towns and suburbs that succeeded in driving out all African Americans or banning them from entering, fostered—and sometimes continue to foster—prejudice, paranoia, and parochialism.\textsuperscript{16} In addition, nonmetropolitan communities in the Lower Midwest could have nourished, instead of persecuting, the creators and purveyors of new musical and cultural modes. By encouraging the interpenetration of African and European styles, small towns could have put themselves in the vanguard of cultural change in modern America instead of the rear guard. Had they done so, they might have escaped the overblown but deeply hurtful indictments by modernist intellectuals during the twenties.\textsuperscript{17}

If white racism had been tempered, even the great numbers of migrants who came during the First Great Migration could have been absorbed into the growing populations of the nonmetropolitan urban communities of the Lower Midwest. This can be demonstrated by estimating the size of the influx to metropolitan centers beyond what would have occurred if African American urban population growth had been spread evenly across the urban hierarchy of each state. Population growth thus attributable to the African American metropolitan shift amounts to about 27,000 in Indiana and 82,000 in Ohio during the period 1890–1930, and approximately 77,000 in Illinois during 1910–1930.\textsuperscript{18} During the corresponding periods, the white nonmetropolitan population of Indiana grew by roughly 500,000, that of Ohio by 900,000, and that of Illinois by more than 800,000.\textsuperscript{19} This means that in every state, if nonmetropolitan towns had maintained the attraction they had held for African Americans before the metropolitan shift, African American newcomers would have represented less than 10 percent of the actual growth in European American population such places sustained. This fact implies that rather than structural conditions in play across midwestern urban systems, forces within communities played the key role in channeling African American migration. African Americans whose achievements fell short of their aspirations within nonmetropolitan towns and cities left, not because the communities were faltering, but because they were not prospering within them.\textsuperscript{20}

In considering the full sweep of African American migration to the Lower Midwest from the Civil War to the eve of the Great Depression, it
is hard to escape the conclusion that the movement was for the most part a deliberate and orderly one. This view contrasts, of course, with a common image of headlong flight from southern oppression. It differs as well from the portrait of a black exodus from the vicious prejudice of northern communities—sundown towns and suburbs—recently painted by James Loewen. Such images figure large because of the dramatic conventions of literary representation or, in Loewen’s case, the need to evoke full sympathy for the victims of white racism to support a praiseworthy call for reform. In other words, it makes a much better story than a gradual transition governed by sober consideration of available alternatives. But the facts that the flood of the Great Migration years was preceded by a half century trickle; that migrants from the Deep South began to enter the region in significant numbers at least twenty years before the major movement erupted; that personal communication between earlier and later migrants played a large part in channeling migration flows; that mass migration to the metropolitan North was only one among an array of strategies for dealing with oppression; and, most important, that migration responded to identifiable disappointments, dangers, and opportunities, all argue for placing African American migration firmly within the picture painted by modern historians of human mobility. As one such historian writes of late nineteenth-century migrants in general, “Rarely [did they] leave home without a clear idea of where they were going and how they would get there.”

Finally, the findings of this study are consistent with the view that African American experience since the Civil War produced a new race consciousness by the 1920s. Among intellectuals the new perception appeared in the concept of the New Negro, and among the masses it underlay the outpouring of support for Marcus Garvey’s black nationalism. Little race consciousness seems to be evident in the locational choices made by the first wave of migrants to the Lower Midwest, those who came between 1860 and 1890, but their experience in small towns and small cities probably contributed significantly to the process of forming such an outlook. It did so negatively, by demonstrating durable white hostility to black achievement. But the nonmetropolitan experience also contributed positively to formation of racial consciousness, by introducing migrants from diverse backgrounds to each other and by providing the setting in which they created, in cooperation with their new acquaintances, the institutional sinews of community. By the twentieth century’s second and third decades, the unprecedented African American worlds in metropolitan centers exerted a powerful magnetism, in part by exhibiting wider opportunities for community building. Even those who sought to recreate a small-town lifestyle in metropolitan
Conclusion

suburbs clustered with other African Americans. Garveyism attracted mass support in the Midwest: in Cleveland, in Gary, and in Chicago, despite a feud between Garvey and the *Defender’s* Robert Abbott. In light of three factors—the treatment African Americans received in midwestern urban worlds; the convergence in metropolitan destinations of people from various origins; and the vision of a vibrant African American urban culture emerging in such cities as Chicago, Cleveland, and Indianapolis—such a perceptual change seems quite likely. Just as African American migrants altered their new environment, the Midwest changed its new African American citizens.
APPENDIX B

Histories of African American Life in Northern Nonmetropolitan Communities,* 1860–1930, and Oral History Collections Consulted

HISTORIES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE IN NORTHERN NONMETROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES, 1860–1930

Illinois


* “Nonmetropolitan” is defined as having more than 2,500 and less than 100,000 population in 1930.
Appendix B


Indiana


Michigan


Appendix B

**New Jersey**


**New York**


**Ohio**


**Rhode Island**


**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS**

**Manuscript Collections**

Black Middletown Project. Archives and Special Collections, Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

Black Oral History of Canton, Ohio. Stark County District Library, Canton, OH.

Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL.

Appendix B

Crawfordsville Black Oral History Project. William Henry Smith Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.
Illinois Writers Project Collection. Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL.
Muncie Black History Project. Archives and Special Collections, Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, IN.
Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH.
Oral History Collection, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, Toledo, OH.
Oral History of the Champaign-Urbana Black Community. Douglass Branch Library, Champaign, IL.
Oral History Office Collection, University of Illinois-Springfield Archives, Brookens Library, University of Illinois-Springfield (formerly Sangamon State University), Springfield, IL.
Oral History Research Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
St. James AME Church (Cleveland) Oral History Project. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH.

Published Collections

Volume 6, “Indiana Narratives”
Series 2, Volume 16, “Ohio Narratives”
Supplement, Series 1, Volume 5 of The American Slave
Migration is an extremely complex process, but the tools with which we try to understand it are primitive.¹ The first blunt instrument to hand is always the census, which is essential in measuring volumes of movement from one set of places to another. Indispensable as it is for analyzing migration patterns, however, the use of census data leaves serious gaps in our knowledge of the perceptions, values, and motivations of migrants. At the same time, it tends to homogenize and to simplify the migrant experience.

The flattening effect of statistical data can occur across both space and time. Using the common state-of-birth method, an increase between censuses in the number of Mississippi-born persons, say, in Illinois leads too easily to a conclusion that such migrants traveled directly from Mississippi to Illinois in a one-step, long-distance migration rather than using multiple steps, through, perhaps, Tennessee, Kentucky, and even Indiana or Missouri. In the former case, migration seems to result from a single decision, a choice between Mississippi and Illinois; in the latter, migration is produced by a series of decisions made at different times and perhaps for different reasons. Furthermore, when census data for large cities show increases in the numbers of persons from predominantly rural states, we tend to characterize their movement as rural-to-urban mobility, and to portray the decisions behind the migration in those terms. But again, a longitudinal perspective may show earlier movements to urban places of smaller or even similar size as the census destination.² If such movements are not noted, mobility from rural to urban environments may be characterized as a more abrupt transition than it actually was. Compression of migration in space or time heightens the historian’s temptation to produce simple, monolithic explanations for choices that were in fact complex and various.
Appendix C

Oral history evidence offers the possibility of providing detailed information about the movements of individuals and families from one place to another, both the movements that were captured by the census and those that were not, the latter left unrecorded because they occurred between censuses or because the census failed to enumerate the persons concerned. Furthermore, oral history can convey information on the subjective side of the migration experience, affording the investigator an opportunity to share the perspective of the migrant. For these reasons, oral history can and should be used to supplement quantitative evidence on migration.

To explore the African American migration experience, I sought out oral histories in published works and archives. I found tapes or transcripts of interviews with migrants in two kinds of sources. A prolific source was the multivolume collection of ex-slave interviews edited by George Rawick. In three volumes containing interviews with ex-slaves living in Ohio or Indiana, I found usable information on about forty migrants who traveled from the South to each state during the period of my study. Since the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP) focused on the slavery experience, information on migration was usually slender. Nevertheless, the transcripts often contained useful biographical data and sometimes included reflections on the migration experience as well. The second type of source was archived collections of interviews with African American residents of various communities, which added another 234 migrants to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, including a handful of intraregional migrants. Most of these interviews were conducted during the 1970s and 1980s, although I found in the records of the National Urban League (NUL) reports of interviews made during the early years of the First Great Migration. This second type of record was generally more ample in the information it provided on both the process of migration and migrants’ perceptions of their experience.

For the historian of migration, these materials present an opportunity to correct the defects of the census, so long as certain limitations are kept in mind. The problems of the ex-slave interviews are well known from the extensive debates over slavery that have gone on among historians over the past thirty-five years, for which the Rawick collection has provided much of the tinder. Many of the respondents were too young during slavery times to have experienced much of the peculiar institution, the selection criteria are unknown and the geographic distribution of the interviewees was not the same as that of the slave population, many of the interviewers were unsympathetic or uncomprehending, and many of the respondents were too old at the time of the interview to remember much of slavery. Some of these prob-
lems are less severe, however, for the historian who wishes to use the FWP interviews to understand migration. Migration was a more recent experience in the respondents’ lives than slavery, and it was more likely to have occurred in adulthood. For the ex-slaves, migration north took place at a median age of twenty years. Although the FWP collection yields less information on migration than on slavery, what it does provide may be more reliable.

The archived interviews from the 1970s and 1980s also have limitations. Their principal focus was usually life in the local African American community rather than migration, although information about community life can be revealing about the migrants’ reception in and adjustment to their new homes. Reasons for selection of the respondents are unknown. For interviewees providing information during the 1970s or 1980s about their lives before 1930, migration was a distant memory. In comparison to the ex-slave narratives, the recent interviews have both a liability and some advantages. Migration typically occurred at an earlier point in the respondent’s life than it did for the ex-slaves; median age at migration for the respondents was fifteen years. On the other hand, their interviewers were more likely to be African Americans, and the interviewing protocols were more sophisticated. Additionally, migration was not for most as temporally distant an experience as slavery.

The advantages and disadvantages of the interviews in the NUL collection are virtually a mirror image of those of the 1970s–1980s interviews. All of the early interviews took place in Chicago, while only one of the later ones did. All of the respondents were adults who had very recently migrated, so the migration experience was quite fresh in their minds, and that experience represented the primary focus of the reports. While the interviews often contain useful information on the migrants’ southern context, however, basic background information such as age and place of birth is missing. Information is rarely presented verbatim. These lacunae, together with the short time span of the interviews, emphasize the need to gather oral histories from as many sources as possible.

Clearly the ex-slave interviews and the archived interviews “represent” the African American migration experience to the Lower Midwest only in the sense that they are the only firsthand testimony on that experience I have been able to locate. They should not be treated as a random sample in a statistical sense. To be used effectively, they must be placed in context. In relation to the temporal flow of African American migrants from the South to the Lower Midwest, the interviewees’ experience does seem broadly to reflect the overall pattern (table C.1).
### Table C.1 Pace of Oral History Interviewees’ Migration (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>All “Nonwhite” Migrants</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
<th>Indiana</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860–1869</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870–1879</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880–1889</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890–1899</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900–1909</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910–1919</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920–1929</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>279,975</td>
<td>126,592</td>
<td>343,980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Estimates for 1860–1869 are for net migration, while those for 1870–1929 are for gross migration.


### Table C.2 Origins of Oral History Interviewees (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>All “Nonwhites” Born Out of State, 1930</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
<th>Indiana</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99*</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>207,900</td>
<td>76,300</td>
<td>253,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Does not equal 100 because of rounding
** Less than 1 percent

The migrations of every decade between 1860 and 1930 are reflected in the interviews, and in roughly similar proportions to the actual flow. The only decade to be seriously underrepresented by the migrant interviews is the 1890s, but the balance between the “trickle” before 1916 and the “flood” afterward is about the same for the respondents as for the general migrant population.

The geographical origins of the respondents, known of course from their self-reports, appear at first glance to be less reflective of the main migrant stream, with a disproportionate number from the Upper south states (table C.2).

The actual distribution, however, is more balanced. A large number of interviews of migrants to Canton, Ohio, and to Chicago from National Urban League collections did not include information on place of birth; most of the Urban League respondents, however, reported their last southern residence in Mississippi, and most of these were almost certainly native Mississippians. The distribution of respondents’ communities of residence at the time of their interview generally corresponds to the representation of African Americans across the urban hierarchies of their states at the study’s conclusion in 1930 (see table C.3). There is, however, some clustering in nonmetropolitan urban places, especially those between 10,000 and 100,000 population. While this distribution makes them somewhat less representative of the overall migration stream, it makes their evidence about their community experience of particular interest to this study.

Table C.3 Oral History Interviewees’ Community of Residence in the Urban Hierarchy (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
<th>Indiana</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100,000+</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000–99,999</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–24,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500–9,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>309,304</td>
<td>111,982</td>
<td>328,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. In 1980 the census recorded five hundred African Americans in Washington Court House, representing about 4 percent of a town population that had more than tripled over the past century. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population*, vol. 1, part 37, table 15.


5. Missouri had a larger gross immigration than Indiana, but I consider it a southern state because of its history of slavery.

Notes to Introduction


10. The percentage of the African American population living in the South, which had fallen by 3.8 percent during the 1910s and by 6.5 percent during the 1920s, decreased by only 1.7 percent during the 1930s. Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration in America, 73.

11. For a listing of historical studies on African American life in northeastern nonmetropolitan communities, see appendix B.


14. I initially made a tentative selection of Muncie in the expectation that its prominence as a result of the Lynds’ attention would have generated a useful set of studies of its African American residents. That hope turned out to be unfounded until the publication in 2004 of the innovative ethnographic study *The Other Side of Middleton: Exploring Muncie’s African American Community*, ed. Luke Eric Lassiter, Hurley Goodall, Elizabeth Campbell, and Michelle Natasya Johnson (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004). A closer look, however, revealed a rich collection of oral histories of its African American community plus good grounds for comparison in its rising curve of African American population growth, industrial economy, and less violent history of race relations.


Notes to Introduction

Geography No. 8 (Melbourne: Monash University, 1974), and John R. Clark, *Turkish Cologne: The Mental Maps of Migrant Workers in a German City*, Michigan Geographical Publications No. 19 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977). For a recent attempt to reconstruct the mental maps of residents of antebellum southern small towns, see Lisa Tolbert, *Constructing Townscapes: Space and Society in Antebellum Tennessee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).


18. This conclusion is based on reading transcripts and listening to tapes of the several hundred oral history interviews of African American migrants to, and community residents within, the Lower Midwest collected for this study. The collections are listed in appendix B.


24. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York and London: New Press, 2005). Sundown towns and suburbs are those communities that do not allow African Americans to remain within their boundaries after sunset. Loewen finds such communities, in startlingly large numbers, located across the country, but nearly all are located outside the Deep South. Violence directed against African American “interlopers” or potential interlopers, Loewen argues, has been a common means for making and keeping such towns lily-white.


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29. A considerable literature could of course be cited here, but I will refer only to the work that has most strongly influenced my thinking: R. F. Atkinson, Knowledge and Explanation in History: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

CHAPTER ONE

3. Austin Andrews, interview, no date, BOHCO.
9. Adah Isabelle Suggs, interview, no date, AS, vol. 6: 189–91. For other examples of family migration, see undated interviews of George Taylor Burns, Matthew Hume, Henry Clay Moorman, and Billy Slaughter, in AS, vol. 6: 39, 109–10, 140,
Notes to Chapter 1


17. *Orville Artis Memoir* (Springfield, IL: Sangamon State University, 1985). The interview was conducted in Springfield in May 1974.


30. Preston, interview.

31. McKimm, interview.

32. Jordan, interview.

33. Matheus, interview.


40. During the second half of 1886, the Cleveland Gazette had correspondents in three West Virginia and two Kentucky towns, plus one each in Maryland, Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas. Contrast this with the number of communities represented by correspondents in the following northern states: Pennsylvania, eighteen; New York, nine; Indiana, five; Illinois, three. Cleveland Gazette, June 26–December 26, 1886. For an emphasis on the importance of illiteracy in deterring migration, see Robert Higgs, Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy, 1865–1914 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 120.

41. For an example of early northern correspondence, see Arkansas Freeman (Little Rock), October 5, 1869.

42. Studies emphasizing restricted communication as a factor in maintaining distinct northern and southern unskilled labor markets include Gavin Wright, Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 1982).
Notes to Chapter 1


46. Travelers’ Official Railway Guide for the United States and Canada (June 1893), timetables for the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia; Queen & Crescent; Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton; Yazoo & Mississippi Valley; and Illinois Central railroads.


54. Nelson, in Farm and Factory, 10, argues that “the Midwest would have no surplus of underemployed farmers until well into the twentieth century.” This may be true for the Midwest as a whole, but the consistent pattern of outmigration by native-born whites seems to indicate otherwise for Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

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Notes to Chapter 1


67. Thornbrough, Negro in Indiana, 68.


69. Ibid., 119–33, 160–66.


71. Ibid., 83–84. The new constitution, however, was not adopted.

72. Gerber, Black Ohio, 27–29; Thornbrough, Negro in Indiana, 185–86.

73. Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 60–64.

74. Ibid., 119.


76. Thornbrough, Negro in Indiana, 235.


78. Gerber, Black Ohio, 36.


80. Voegeli, Free but Not Equal, 177.


82. Ibid., 182.


84. Glenda E. Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White
Notes to Chapter 1


85. The data set for this analysis includes all towns in each state that reached 2,500 population by 1890 and for which the requisite data are available for both 1860 and 1890. The sources are published census data on town populations and are cited in tables A.1–A.3. Since I am interested in explaining migrant choices, I employ as the dependent variable a measure of the relative attractive power of all urban places in each of the three states across the period 1860–1890. I compute the change in each town’s percentage share of the state’s African American urban population by subtracting its share at the beginning of the period from its share at the period’s end. The same procedure will be used in later chapters for the periods 1890–1910 and 1910–1930. This measure of course includes population changes resulting from both net migration and net natural increase. Probably most of the urban population changes in the African American population of the Lower Midwest during the years between the Civil War and the eve of the Great Depression did result from shifts in the flow of migration. But in fact no measure of net natural increase on the level of the local community is available; therefore, the two components of population change cannot be separated in any study of local destination choices. The same procedure is used to calculate each town’s change in share of its state’s total urban population.

Using the census for historical analysis of African American migration presents problems as well as opportunities. First, the census missed African Americans in large numbers. Black numbers seem to have been undercounted by at least 15 percent in late nineteenth-century censuses. Worst in this regard were the census counts of 1870 and 1890 in the South, but blacks, including even property holders, were missed in the North as well. See John B. Sharpless and Ray M. Shortridge, “Biased Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts: Methodological Implications,” JUH 1 (1975): 409–39; Jack S. Blocker Jr., “Bias in Wealth and Income Records: An Ohio Case Study,” HM 29 (Winter 1996): 25–36. This is not a problem, however, for a study comparing distribution of African American populations among communities so long as it can be assumed that undercounting was either consistent across communities or randomly distributed across them.

Another problem is that the census gives us only a snapshot of mobility, hiding from view many intercensal moves and intermediate stops between census locations. The only resolution to this problem is tracking individual or family movements, for which the best source is migrant oral histories.

86. The black populations of Cincinnati and Cleveland increased by 10,114, while the number of rural dwellers expanded by 10,375. Indianapolis acquired 8,635 new African American citizens, while rural Indiana added 7,951. Chicago gained 13,613 African Americans, but rural Illinois increased by 17,997. Since the larger rural populations in each state grew more than the metropolitan populations through natural
increase, the number of *migrants* who chose large cities was no doubt larger in Ohio and Indiana, but probably not in Illinois.

Exodusters who remained in Kansas are reported to have settled in rural areas and small towns. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan*, 171.

88. In this study, “metropolitan” is used to designate the largest cities within a regional hierarchy. In a national urban hierarchy, such cities would be classified according to central-place theory as second- or third-order places. For the period 1860–1930, a population size of 100,000 has been used as an arbitrary cutoff between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan urban places.


91. In none of the three states was there a statistically significant correlation between change in African American urban population share, 1860–1890, and the percentage of foreign-born white population in 1870. The analysis included forty-four towns and cities in Ohio, twenty-four in Indiana, and twenty-eight in Illinois. Analyzing sixty-nine cities over the period 1890–1950, Collins uses estimated African American migration rates as his dependent variable and the rate of foreign-born immigration as an independent variable (“When the Tide Turned,” 626). I chose the proportion of immigrants because I believe this, rather than the rate of immigration, would have been likely to matter more to an African American potential migrant.

Comparing two New Jersey towns during the late nineteenth century, Spencer Crew finds that African American occupational opportunities were better in Elizabeth, which held a larger immigrant population than Camden. Spencer Crew, *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Camden and Elizabeth, N.J., 1860–1920* (New York: Garland, 1993), 93–95, 112.

92. Figures 1.2–1.4 show the relative size of gains and losses for all towns and cities that experienced a change in African American urban population share of more than 1 percent.

93. This conclusion is based on correlation analysis comparing towns’ changes
between 1860 and 1890 in African American and European American urban population share. These patterns are complicated in Illinois and Ohio by extreme outliers, the largest cities. In Illinois, Chicago is an outlier primarily because of its extraordinary gain in share of the state's total urban population (18.6 percent). The share change of most communities fluctuated within the range +1 to –1 percent. With Chicago excluded from the analysis, however, the correlation between change in black urban share and change in total urban share becomes even more strongly positive ($r = +.54$, $p < .001$). In Ohio, Cincinnati is an extreme outlier primarily because of the opposite situation, its huge loss in share of the state's total urban population (20.5 percent). When Cincinnati is excluded, the correlation between change in black urban share and change in total urban share remains positive, but becomes nonsignificant ($r = +.18$, $p > .10$). Cleveland is another outlier because of its large gain in share of Ohio's total urban population (6.75 percent). With Cleveland excluded, the correlation between change in black urban share and change in total urban share becomes strongly positive ($r = +.51$, $p < .00001$).

94. New Albay dropped from 12 percent to less than 4 percent of Indiana’s urban population. Cincinnati fell from more than 40 percent to 20 percent of Ohio’s.

95. George C. Wright, _Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and “Legal Lynchings”_ (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1990), demonstrates the forms and scope of white terrorism in Kentucky, the state that provided by far the largest number of Gilded Age migrants to the Lower Midwest.

96. They were Cairo, Illinois (35.7 percent); Xenia, Ohio (25.6 percent); and Gallipolis, Ohio (20.9 percent).


CHAPTER TWO

1. “Seek Their Rights,” clipping from _Daily Inter Ocean_, October 21, 1895, Negro in Illinois File, IWP.

2. _The Freeman_ (Indianapolis), February 10, 1894.


5. A later chapter will analyze the place of African Americans within the social structure of the fourth case study community, Muncie, after the onset of the Great Migration.

6. _Fayette County Herald_, November 5, 1874; _Cyclone_ (Washington Court House,
Notes to Chapter 2


8. The statistical descriptions and analyses that follow are based upon the U.S. federal census manuscript population schedules for 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900 for Fayette County. Quantitative statements made about Washington Court House population in 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900 are based on examination of the entire population. The census schedules for 1890 were destroyed. An attempt has been made, however, to reconstruct as much as possible of the 1890 census through use of a city directory published in 1890—which, perhaps significantly, did not distinguish persons by “color” or “race”—the county tax assessment list for 1890, and the manuscript census schedules for 1880 and 1900. Persons whose names appeared in the directory or tax list were manually linked backward to the 1880 census and forward to the 1900 census. This procedure produced a list of 1,391 names, which was incorporated into an SPSS file with background characteristics from the census schedule(s), tax list, and directory. This probably represents a little less than one-half the adult population of Washington Court House in 1890. These data will be referred to as the “1890 census reconstruction.” Since to join this file a person had to appear in at least two lists, in 1890 and either 1880 or 1900, the reader should keep in mind that this population was distinguished by its persistence in Washington Court House.

9. Columbus’s, Cincinnati’s, and Cleveland’s African American population shares ranked well behind Washington Court House, at 6, 4, and 1 percent, respectively.

10. Among African Americans, 83.8 of males and 84.7 percent of females lived with at least one other family member, compared to 88.5 percent of males and 91.1 percent of females among European Americans. The difference among males was caused by a larger percentage of African American boarders, and among females by a larger percentage of African American servants. The percentages are lower when children are excluded from the analysis.

11. U.S. federal census manuscript schedules, Fayette County, Ohio, 1860–1880. All statements made about geographic persistence and mobility in the case study communities are based on nominal record linkage between census schedules. The linkage was done manually using information on name, sex, “color,” age, place of birth, and relations to other household members. Only definite matches were considered to reflect persistence. Manual linkage was preferred to computer linkage precisely because the
former allowed consideration of both contextual clues and more extensive background information.

12. There were seventeen Ohio-born persisters among a total 269 African American adults, and 335 Ohio-born persisters out of 1,756 European American adults.

13. Among African American adult female newcomers since 1870, 76 percent lived with another family member in 1880, compared to 86.5 percent among European American adult female newcomers. Among African American adult male newcomers, 73 percent lived with family, compared to 78 percent for European American adult male newcomers.

14. The occupational categories used in table 2.1 are the same employed with the 1900 census in Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality: Urbanization, Industrial Development, and Immigrants in Detroit, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). See appendix 3.

15. The most common occupation of African American girls and women in 1880, domestic servant, was not likely to appear in the city directory, which was intended to list only those perceived as household heads and their spouses. A listing based on a directory therefore drastically understates the actual extent of labor force participation by African American girls and women.

16. Women holding or seeking gainful occupations, according to census designations, included 34 of 115 adult African American women (29.6 percent) and 143 of 801 European American women (17.8 percent).

17. A study of Xenia, Ohio, in 1902 found a more diversified occupational structure for African American women than Washington Court House. Most notably, 17 women worked as teachers, 5 percent of the 333 women who reported gainful occupations. The largest occupational groups were laundresses (26 percent), day workers (24 percent), cooks (10 percent), and domestic servants (10 percent). Despite the greater diversity in Xenia, a significant number of young women were unemployed and living at home, many of whom had attended high school and some of them high school graduates, because they were trying to avoid domestic service. Richard R. Wright Jr., *The Negroes of Xenia, Ohio: A Social Study*, Bulletin of the U.S. Department of Labor, No. 48 (September 1903), 1023–30. At 8,696 population in 1900, Xenia was larger than Washington Court House, with a larger African American population (1,991).


19. This is exactly what a U.S. Department of Labor researcher found in Xenia, Ohio, twelve years later: “[T]here is as yet no large and successful venture outside of the lines of business with which the Negro slave was familiar.” Wright, *Negroes of Xenia*, 1027.


21. See the use of the concept of “opportunity structure” in Theodore Hershberg, Alan
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25. The power of “whiteness” may be quantitatively demonstrated by a stepwise multiple-regression analysis in which the variable “color” is allowed to compete freely with the variables “persistence,” “age,” and “origin.” For males, color is the most powerful variable in explaining variation in wealth holding in 1890, and persistence the second most powerful, adding about half as much as color to the (weak) explanatory power of the model. R² for the model with two variables is .018. For females, age was the most powerful variable, but color added about one-third as much. R² for this model with two variables is .04. The other variables were not related to wealth holding at the .05 level of significance (also known as the .95 level of confidence).


30. African Americans in Xenia, Ohio, in 1902 had a family home ownership rate

31. Daniel McLean, the longtime president of the Peoples’ and Drovers’ Bank until his death in the 1880s and one of the town’s wealthiest citizens, was very active in land speculation. So was Madison Pavey, president in 1889–90 of the only other bank in Washington Court House, the Merchants’ and Farmers’ Bank. See R. L. Polk & Co., *Directory for Washington C. H., 1889–90* (Washington Court House, OH: Sandy Fackler, 1995); Fayette County Auditor’s Tax Duplicate, 1870, 1880, 1890.


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35. U.S. federal manuscript census of free population, Granville County, NC, 1860.


37. Ohio Auditor of State, Special Enumeration of Negroes Emigrating to Ohio between 1861 and 1863.

38. The 1870 census described Whiteman as “black,” while the other household members were listed as “mulatto.”


42. The crusade in Washington Court House is described in detail by a leading participant in Matilda Gilruth Carpenter, The Crusade: Its Origin and Development at Washington Court House and Its Results (Columbus, OH: W. G. Hubbard & Co., 1893). For a history of the movement at the local, state and national levels, see Jack S. Blocker Jr., “Give to the Winds Thy Fears”: The Women’s Temperance Crusade, 1873–1874 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985).


44. The jail register has been examined for the years 1870–1875, 1878, 1881, 1884, 1887, 1890, 1893, 1894, 1896, and 1899, in addition to the records of the Fayette County Court of Common Pleas, 1868–1874, and a local newspaper that for a time printed reports of arrests, Fayette County Herald, May 21–July 30, 1868.

45. Blocker, “Artisan’s Escape.”


47. Doucet and Weaver, “Material Culture,” 574–76.


49. The most extended account of Andersonville is a retrospective newspaper article in Kelley, Down Through the Golden Years, 875–76.

50. I cannot prove that Dora Anderson was the one who paid for King’s monument. The circumstantial evidence points that way, however. She received or inherited the family property, and her sister Emily (who seems to have used “Emma”) appears to have died only two years after Dora. If it were Emma who was responsible for King’s marker, she would presumably also have purchased a more impressive monument for her sister. Emma was also under ten years old and about twenty years younger than Dora when
King and Emily separated. Possibly King bought the monument himself in a final flamboyant gesture. But since he seems to have generously provided for Dora when the marriage broke up, I surmise that he would have willed his remaining property to her and her sister.

51. Burnett, *Remember?*

52. It is possible that Lewis Chester was the first Granville Countian to travel to Washington Court House, as there was a Chester family, perhaps headed by a brother of Lewis, in that county in 1860.

53. Burnett, *Remember?* See also Duffee, *As I Remember,* 66. Duffee was born in 1880, and remembered Eugene and his sisters more than forty years after they had left Washington Court House.


55. Burnett, *Remember?*

56. A biographical sketch is in *Cleveland Gazette,* November 11, 1899.

57. Burnett, *Remember?*


59. Widows, widowers, and divorced persons were much more common among adult blacks in Xenia, Ohio, in 1900 than among whites nationally. Disproportionate numbers of widowed or divorced persons were also present among African Americans in Farmville, Virginia, and Sandy Spring, Maryland. Wright, *Negroes of Xenia,* 1019. Patterns of marital status in Springfield, Ohio, and Springfield, Illinois, exhibited a slight tendency in the same direction, but the differences between African Americans and European Americans in these two communities were not statistically significant.

60. Crude birth and death rates were calculated for three-year periods straddling or close to census years. The periods used were 1879–1881, 1889–1891, and 1898–1900. The number of white births per 1,000 population was 22.5, 19.2, and 15.9; the number of black births was 21.0, 14.9, and 16.4. The number of white deaths per 1,000 population was 7.8, 7.9, and 7.5; the number of black deaths was 8.3, 13.5, and 12.2. Figures were obtained from the annual volumes of *Ohio Statistics,* published by the office of the Ohio secretary of state. Higher death rates for African Americans were also the norm in Evansville, Indiana. Darrel E. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community in Evansville, Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 50. Stewart Tolnay points out in his study of the African American family that death was the most common form of marriage disruption. Stewart Tolnay, *The Bottom
Notes to Chapter 3


61. African American men made up 13 percent of the males twenty years and over in Washington Court House in 1900, but represented 33 percent of the widowers.


64. Butler, An Undergrowth of Folly, 120.


CHAPTER THREE


2. Reverend Harry Mann Memoir, April 8, 1974, OHUIS, 24.

3. Mrs. Mary Blue Wynne, interview, January 15, 1987, SJOHP.


6. The analysis that follows employs a stratified random sample drawn from the 1900 U.S. federal manuscript census schedules for Clark County, Ohio. The sample was stratified to reflect the distribution of both European American and African American populations among Springfield’s six wards and twenty-nine census enumeration districts. A quota was set for each enumeration district according to its proportion of the total European American population. To select European American members of the sample, in each enumeration district research assistants began at a line number selected
at random. If the entry at that line number was listed as “white” and twenty-one years of age or over, that person was taken for the sample. If not, the researcher moved up the page until someone was found who fit these criteria. We then skipped ahead eighty-five lines and repeated the procedure, moving alternately up and down the page if the initial entry did not qualify. After filling the sample quota for each enumeration district, we moved on to the next district. This procedure produced a sample of 187 men and 214 women, representing in total 1.2 percent of the European American population. This sample was designed to be accurate within a margin of error of ±.05 at the .95 level of confidence in estimating the proportion of the population living in family-owned homes. For sixteen cases, data were missing on home ownership. As a result, the sample should be considered as accurate within a margin of error of ±.06 at the .95 level of confidence.

To select the African American sample members, we simply moved through the entire census schedule for Springfield, selecting every fifth person designated as “black” or “colored” or “mulatto” who was listed as twenty-one years of age or older. This yielded a sample of 270 men and 243 women, which represents 12.1 percent of the African American population (probably about one-quarter of the adult population). Data were missing on homeownership for forty-nine cases. In estimating the proportion of the total population living in family-owned homes, this sample size should be accurate within a margin of error of ±.05 at the .95 level of confidence.

The percentage of adult women living with at least one other nuclear or extend- ed family member was 79.8 percent for African Americans and 91.6 for European Americans. Among European American men, 88.2 percent lived with another family member.

7. Among African American adult female newcomers since 1880, 79 percent lived with another family member in 1900, compared to 91 percent among European American adult female newcomers. Among African American adult male newcomers, 68 percent lived with family, compared to 86 percent for European American adult male newcomers. Given the longer time period for families to form than in Washington Court House (twenty years versus ten), this evidence for family migration is not as strong. The male–female comparison, however, is not affected by the differing periods used to measure persistence.

8. The index of segregation measures how much greater a proportion of African Americans than European Americans would have to move in order to achieve an equal distribution among wards. It is calculated according to the formula in Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, Historian’s Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), 125–26. The index for Washington Court House in 1900 is 29, for Springfield, Ohio, 14, and for Springfield, Illinois, 35. Comparable indexes for three southern cities in 1900 show that Richmond, Virginia, was more segregated than any of the northern communities; Louisville, Kentucky, was at about the level for Washington Court House, and New
Notes to Chapter 3


10. Ibid., 67.
11. Nineteen of twenty machinists were white, but seven of fifteen iron molders and two of four undifferentiated molders were black. The occupations of barber, teamster, and waiter were dominated by African Americans.
13. Except older southern-born African American women. In the analysis of home ownership in the 1900 samples for the two Springfields, 1880 had to be taken as the base year because of the missing 1890 manuscript census schedules.
14. The procedure used was logistic regression, employing a maximum likelihood ratio. Logistic regression is the appropriate tool when analyzing problems in which the dependent variable, in this case home ownership, is measured at the nominal level. Home ownership as a nominal variable is dichotomous (“yes” or “no”). The analysis of wealth holding in Washington Court House employed ordinary least squares regression, since the dependent variable, assessed wealth, was measured at the ratio level. For an introduction to logistic regression, see Thomas J. Archdeacon, Correlation and Regression Analysis: A Historian’s Guide (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), chap. 14.
15. Again, a stepwise logistic regression program was used. The complete model with the two variables “persistence” and “color” produced a Cox and Snell $R^2$ of .074. Color contributed nearly as much as persistence to this coefficient. Among all women, color was not a factor in home owning, only persistence and age, in that order.
19. Among the African American newcomers since 1880, 77 percent of the women and 71 percent of the men were living with at least one other nuclear or extended family member in 1900. The comparable figures for European Americans were 92 percent for women and 83 percent for men.

The analysis to follow is based on a stratified random sample drawn so as to reflect the distribution of populations among Springfield’s seven wards and eighteen enumeration districts. The samples of African Americans and European Americans
were drawn in the same manner as in Springfield, Ohio. The European American sample produced a file of 403 cases, 180 men and 223 women. This represents 1.3 percent of the European American population in 1900. The sample was designed to be accurate within a margin of error of ±.05 at the .95 level of confidence when estimating the proportion of the adult population living in family-owned homes. Despite missing data on home ownership for twelve cases, the sample does meet that criterion. The African American sample numbers 498, 283 men and 215 women, or 22 percent of Springfield’s African American population, and probably close to half of its adult African American population. To estimate the proportion of the adult population living in family-owned homes, a sample of this size should be considered accurate with a margin of error of ±.05 at the .95 level of confidence. The accuracy of the estimate is not affected by missing data on home ownership for 44 cases.

20. Leota Harris Memoir, February 5, 1975, 2 vols., OHUIS. Quotation is from vol. 1: 14.

21. Clarence Liggins Memoir, March 8, 1974, OHUIS.

22. Eighty-five percent of African American men and 87 percent of women were newcomers since 1880, compared to 78 percent of European American men and 84 percent of women.


24. Ibid., 63.


26. The only exceptions were older southern-born African American newcomers of both sexes.


30. The correlation is not perfect. In tiny Brooklyn, Illinois, a dormitory town for the metro-east industrial region across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, only 18 percent of African Americans lived in family-owned homes in 1910, a lower rate than in Washington Court House and the Springfield's ten years before, although still marginally higher than any of the large cities. In Evansville, Indiana, a city of 59,000 in 1900, black home ownership stood at 9 percent. Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830–1915* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 169–70; Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial*, 69.


33. In the late twentieth century, urban places of different size continued to vary in the risks and opportunities they presented to African Americans. “Large cities,” sociologist Seth Ovdia writes, “tend to have high levels of residential segregation and low levels of occupational segregation; smaller cities tend to have the opposite pattern.” Seth Ovdia, “The Dimensions of Racial Inequality: Occupational and Residential Segregation across Metropolitan Areas in the United States,” C&C 2 (December 2003): 313–333. The quotation is on p. 329.


CHAPTER FOUR


4. Free American (Columbus, OH), March 19, 1887.


10. A federal income tax was levied in the North during the Civil War and nationally afterward, but only a tiny minority were required to pay it, and it was discontinued in 1872. It was briefly resurrected in 1894 before being ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Robert H. Stanley, *Dimensions of Law in the Service of Order: Origins of the Federal Income Tax, 1861–1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

11. For an inside look at this process from a wandering manufacturer's perspective, see Frank Clayton Ball, *Memoirs of Frank Clayton Ball* (Muncie, IN: Privately printed, 1937).


14. Ibid.


20. Bridges, “Equality Deferred,” 94–97; Robert L. McCaul, *The Black Struggle for Public Schooling in Nineteenth-Century Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), chaps. 8–9. The school law may be found in *Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois, 1874* (Springfield: Illinois Journal Co., 1874), 983. After these changes, according to historian Robert McCaul, Afro-Illinoisans believed they had gained all the statutory support possible for equal rights at the state level, and now turned their efforts to progress within their local communities. African American efforts at the state level
level did not end, however, with the schools law of 1874, nor with the civil rights act of 1885.


25. Gerber, Black Ohio, 337.

26. Ibid., 243–44.


30. McCaul, Black Struggle, chaps. 8–9. Quotation is from p. 142. The schools law may be found in Harvey B. Hurd, comp. and ed., Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois, 1874 (Springfield: Illinois Journal Co., 1874), 983.
Notes to Chapter 4

40. *Illinois Record*, June 25, 1898; *Recorder* (Indianapolis), January 7, 1899.
42. Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 274–76.
45. I recorded all arrests during every third year beginning in 1875. In addition, I recorded all arrests in 1894 because it was the year of the lynching mob. Figure 4.1 reports the total number of jailings, not the number of individuals arrested. Some persons were arrested more than once in the same year, but the numbers generally fluctuate together. In any case, the same procedure was used for blacks and whites.
48. Pauline Parker, interview, no date, BOHCO; Geraldine Daniels, interview, October 28, 1986, SJOHP.
49. The Arnett Law repealing the law conferring power to create separate schools is House Bill 71, passed February 22, 1887, in General and Local Acts . . . Adopted by the 67th General Assembly . . . of Ohio (Columbus: Columbian Printing, 1887). The repealed section may be found in Ohio Revised Statutes, 1884 (Columbus: H. W. Derby & Co., 1884), 823.


52. Squibb, “Roads to Plessy,” 188.


55. Kousser, Dead End, 5.

56. Ibid., table 1. Some of the cases are described in greater detail in Squibb, “Roads to Plessy.”


61. Cleveland Gazette, June 26, 1886. Other, similar incidents are described in Squibb, “Roads to Plessy,” 190–92.

62. Charles F. Bunch Sr. Memoir, August 20, 1974, OHUIS.

63. In Ohio resegregation is known to have been carried out in only one community, but the exception is a significant one: Columbus, the state capital, where gerrymandering and a new black junior high school segregated many African American students in 1911. Gerber, Black Ohio, 266–67.

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76. For examples, see *Indianapolis Leader*, July 17, 31, and August 7, 1880; *Illinois Record*, May 21 and September 17, 1898.


81. William B. Hubbard Memoir, January 28, 1975, OHUIS.


83. *Indianapolis Leader*, January 17, 1880. For other examples of political independence on the local level, see *Weekly Review* (New Albany, IN), April 16, 1881; *Freeman* (Indianapolis), September 8, 15, 1888; *Illinois Record*, January 29, August 27, and September 10, 1898.


87. *Cleveland Gazette*, July 24 and November 13, 1886, and April 16, 1887; *Free American* (Columbus, OH), March 19, 1887; *Xenia Semi-Weekly Gazette*, June 24, 1887. Tuppins was not the first African American mayor of a biracial town, as John Evans had become mayor of the village of Brooklyn the year before. Ten years after Tuppins’s election, Mason, Tennessee, elected an African American mayor, J. W. Bush. Cha-Jua, *America’s First Black Town*, 243n11.

88. *Cleveland Gazette*, April 11, 1891, and May 6, 1893.

89. Gutman, “The Negro and the UMWA.”

90. See any issue of the *Ohio State Register* during the period.


92. Jack S. Blocker Jr., “Give to the Winds Thy Fears”: The Women's Temperance Crusade, 1873–1874 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 130. For other examples of African American charges of Republican betrayal, see *Illinois Record*, January 29, March 12, April 9, August 20 and 27 (Springfield, IL), and September 10, 1898 (Cairo).

93. My model thus differs from that of James Loewen in *Sundown Towns*. Where Loewen views African Americans as victims of such forces beyond their control as
white desires for reconciliation of Civil War divisions, imperialism, anti-immigrant prejudice, and final destruction of Native American resistance, I see African American actions as threatening whites’ exclusive control over local communities. Where Loewen portrays nationwide factors influencing behavior on the local level, I emphasize as well the effect of local conflicts in making white Midwesterners receptive to racist doctrines emanating from elsewhere. Racist actions in the Lower Midwest, including denial of equal rights, rejection of African American demands for change, reduction of black political influence, and antiblack collective violence, in turn encouraged white racists in other regions to push forward their offensives against African Americans’ constitutional rights.


CHAPTER FIVE

1. Recorder (Indianapolis), January 7, 1899.
2. “The Industrial and Social Conditions of the Negro,” a Thanksgiving sermon at Bethel AME Church, Chicago, November 26, 1896, Box 15, Reverdy C. Ransom Papers, WUL.
3. Illinois Record (Springfield), December 17, 1898.
7. Luther Wheeler Memoir, October 17, 1983, OHUIS.
9. I counted lynchings and other incidents of antiblack collective violence during the period 1885–1910. These years were chosen because they enclose the period when African Americans in the Lower Midwest were making the crucial locational choices that would lead them away from the nonmetropolitan places where so many of them initially settled. An act of “antiblack” violence is indicated by an intended or actual African American victim or victims; “collective” means three or more attackers. European American initiative is presupposed, except where the evidence indicates otherwise. But while casting a wider net for antiblack violence makes better analytical sense—at least for my project—it virtually guarantees the incompleteness of the catch. Violent attacks by groups of European Americans upon African Americans no doubt went unrecorded or were noted only in fugitive sources. Indeed, careful students of lynching agree that even this more commonly reported form of violence is quite likely underrecorded. See Tolnay and Beck, *Festival of Violence*, 261; Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 295; George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and *Legal Lynchings*” (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 5; Waldrep, “War of Words,” 99–100; Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 229. My tally, therefore, should be regarded as no more than a minimum estimate.

The list in table A.4 was constructed by beginning with the list of lynchings compiled by the NAACP and the annual tally of lynchings published on or shortly after the first of January in each year, beginning in 1882, by the *Chicago Tribune*. Each incident was then traced to at least one local newspaper and a full description recorded, or, in the case of fraudulent reports, the listing was discarded. Violent occurrences other than lynchings were recorded from a variety of primary and secondary sources, and, where possible, reports were filled out from local newspapers. Three attempted lynchings in Ohio were reported by Marilyn Kaye Howard after my database and analysis were completed and were not added to the database. These took place in Hicksville, Defiance County, October 21, 1894; Lorain, Lorain County, July 28, 1903; and Lockbourne, Franklin County, March 15, 1904. Marilyn Kaye Howard, “Black Lynching in the Promised Land: Mob Violence in Ohio, 1876–1916” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1999), 144–46, 197–201.


11. Ibid., chap. 1.


Notes to Chapter 5

16. Copies of articles from the Chicago Tribune, August 5, 7, 8, and 10, 1895, and Daily Inter Ocean, October 21 and November 2, 18, and 25, 1895, in Box 27, Negro in Illinois File, IWP.
17. Copy of article from Daily Inter Ocean, October 21, 1895, Box 27, Negro in Illinois File, IWP.
19. West Union Scion, January 4 and 18, 1894.
23. State Capital (Springfield, IL), December 3, 1892.
24. Broad Ax (Chicago), September 30, 1899.
25. Broad Ax, July 25, 1903.
27. Freeman (Indianapolis), December 2, 1893.
30. Ibid.
31. Only two sheriffs were removed from office in the Lower Midwest under the provisions of an antilynching law. The first was Sheriff John Dudley of Sullivan County, Indiana, who was removed from office under the state’s recently strengthened antilynching law after failing to protect James Dillard from a lynch mob in November 1902. He was removed by Republican governor Winfield Durbin. The incident is described in Sullivan Democrat, November 20, 1902; Sullivan Union, November 19 and 26, December 3, 1902; and Indianapolis News, November 21, 1902. Dudley’s removal is reported in Emma Lou Thornbrough, The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority (1957; reprint, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 283.

The second was Sheriff Frank E. Davis of Alexander County, Illinois, who was
dismissed by Governor Charles S. Deneen after failing to protect William James, who was on a train in Davis's custody, and European American Henry Salzner, who was seized from the county jail and lynched on suspicion of a crime unrelated to James's. The lynchings are described in *Cairo Bulletin*, November 10–20, 1909, and Davis's dismissal is noted in *Illinois State Journal*, January 12, 1910. Davis's successor, Sheriff Fred D. Nellis, successfully defended John Pratt, a suspected purse snatcher, from a lynch mob three months after the James and Salzner lynchings by ordering his deputies, including several African Americans, to fire into the mob, killing one man and wounding four others. *Illinois State Journal*, February 18–22, 1910.

33. *Chattanooga Daily Times*, January 29, 1901. I am indebted to Darrel Bigham for this reference.
34. Fayette County Jail Register, 1894, Fayette County Jail, Washington Court House; *Ohio State Journal*, October 17, 1894.
38. *Cyclone and Fayette County Republican*, October 11, 1894.
39. See two documents in the library of the Ohio Historical Society: *Argument of Judge Joseph Hidy Before the Judiciary Committee of the Ohio Senate On the proposed Bill to reimburse Col. Coit. . . . ;* and *Protest To the Seventy-second General Assembly of the State of Ohio. . . . (by a meeting of the Board of Trade and other citizens of Washington Court House and Fayette County).*
40. *Cyclone and Fayette County Republican*, September 4, 1889, and April 23, 1890; Fayette County Jail Register, 1881, 1884, 1887, 1890, and 1894.
41. Harry M. Daugherty to Ray Baker Harris, June 7, 1938, Ray Baker Harris Collection, Warren G. Harding Papers, OHS.
42. *Cleveland Gazette*, November 3, 1894.
43. *Cleveland Gazette*, October 20 and November 10, 17, and 24, 1894.
44. Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line*, 254. In 1900 there were only 525 African Americans in Akron, 1.2 percent of the population.

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49. Bigham, We Ask Only a Fair Trial, 107.

50. See, e. g., Gerber, Black Ohio, 249; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, introduction to Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 4. In contrast, however, James Loewen argues that the violence that played a part in creating “sundown towns” where blacks were unwelcome was more common outside the most southern parts of the South. James Loewen, Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism (New York and London: New Press, 2005), chap. 3.

51. Tlnay and Beck, Festival of Violence, 32–34, 142–49.

52. Brundage, Lynching in the New South, 106.


59. Loewen, Sundown Towns.

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60. For a recent discussion of this point, see James H. Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 16, 156n6. On p. 72, Madison quotes a Georgia newspaper in 1930 claiming that the “only reason there are more lynchings in the South than in the balance of the country is because there are more negroes in the South.”

61. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky*, 5. My count is based on confirmations in local newspapers, but I began with the same sources used for other inventories: reports in the metropolitan press. I have not made an exhaustive search of local sources. Tolnay and Beck point out (*Festival of Violence*, 262) that inventories based on the metropolitan press overcount a significant number of lynchings (one-sixth of their initial list), but this point does not apply to Wright’s locally based tally or my locally confirmed count.


63. For examples, see *Freeman*, June 12, 1897; *Cleveland Gazette*, January 21 and April 21, 1894, August 31, 1895, July–August 1897, and September 1, 1900; *Illinois Record*, December 11, 1897, and September 17, 1898; *Broad Ax*, May 2, June 13, and August 15, 1903.


65. *Cleveland Gazette*, January 20 and April 21, 1894, August 31, 1894, and June 12, 1897.


68. *Freeman*, July 11, 1903.


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71. Conservator (Chicago), September 8, 1883; Recorder, April 22, 1899; Broad Ax, June 6, 1899, July 4, 1903, March 26, 1904, and August 22, 1908.

72. Cleveland Gazette, July 17, 1897.

73. Freeman, March 3, 1906. For Knox’s urgings against violence, see the same issue and that of August 29, 1908.


76. For an example of reflexive and personal (and successful) armed self-defense, see Rosetta Lacey Ellis, interview, no date, BOHCO. For an incident in which the threat of violence stopped harassment, see Albert Harris Memoir, March 28, 1974, OHUIS.

77. Cleveland Gazette, January 27, 1906.

78. Leader, August 30, 1879.


83. Senechal, Sociogenesis of a Race Riot, 41.

84. Quoted in ibid., 42.

85. Ibid., 73–84.

86. Ibid., chap. 4; Margaret Ferguson Memoir, February 11, 1975, OHUIS; Marie Cunningham Memoir, December 7, 1971, OHUIS; Albert Harris Memoir, March 28, 1974, OHUIS.

87. The projects were directed by Professor Cullom Davis, and the transcripts of the interviews are held at the Oral History Office, University of Illinois–Springfield.

88. Broad Ax, August 22, 1908.

89. See chapter 4 above.

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95. _New Outlook_ 89 (August 22, 1908): 869.

96. _Freeman_, August 22, 1908.

97. Ibid.

98. Mattie Hale Memoir, April 30, 1974, OHUIS.

99. Edith Carpenter Memoir, January 1975, OHUIS. For another account of armed self-defense, see the William B. Hubbard Memoir, January 28, 1975, OHUIS.

100. Rev. Harry Mann Memoir, April 8, 1974, OHUIS.

101. John and Hazel Wilson Memoir, March 25, 1971, OHUIS. Allie Hopkins, who came to Springfield in 1923, was also told that “there was quite a few white people killed.” Allie Hopkins Memoir, August 16, 1974, OHUIS.

102. LeRoy Brown Memoir, April 29, 1974, OHUIS.

103. Albert Harris Memoir.

104. Margaret Ferguson Memoir.

105. See, e.g., LeRoy Brown Memoir.

106. Springfield’s share of the state’s African American urban population dropped 1.8 percent, from 5.3 in 1890 to 3.5 in 1910. Cairo lost 4.5 percent and Quincy 3.4. See chapter 7.

107. Margaret Ferguson Memoir; LeRoy Brown Memoir.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Letter to editor, _Chicago Defender_, March 31, 1917, copy in IWP.


4. To examine northern migration solely from a northern perspective is “methodologically wrong,” writes Nelson Ouellet, because to do so “neglects how African Americans coped with similar situations before their arrival in cities of the North and how earlier experiences were tools to improve their condition, whether socially,


8. Urban places were one kind of transition zone to urban-industrial ways, but they were not the only such setting. As Joe William Trotter has pointed out, extractive industries such as mining and lumbering “operated at the interface between the black agricultural experience . . . and the black transition to an urban-industrial foundation.” Joe William Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 232.

(Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 105–18. After describing the slow pace of black urbanization and the limits to black achievement in cities, however, Goldfield adds that “this restricted urban life was still better than what the countryside offered them” (117). Other treatments include Zane Miller, “The Black Experience in the Modern American City,” in The Urban Experience, ed. Raymond Mohl and James Richardson (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1973), 50; and Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865–1890 (1978; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).


18. My conclusions about population shifts across the urban hierarchies in the four east south central states are based on tables similar to tables A.1–A.3 constructed from published federal census data for the periods 1860–1890 and 1890–1910.


20. For an examination of African American life in Louisville, see George C.
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22. Between 1860 and 1890, Kentucky’s African American population grew by only 13.5 percent, while its European American population increased by 73 percent. Between 1890 and 1910, the African American population dropped 2.4 percent, and the European American population grew by 27.5 percent.

23. This movement will be closely analyzed in chapter 7.


25. Ibid., 64.


30. For a discussion of Mississippi urbanization and outmigration, see McMillen, Dark Journey, chap. 8.

31. For a more detailed breakdown of migration destinations by decade for the east south central states, see William Edward Vickery, The Economics of the Negro Migration (New York: Arno, 1977), tables 49–52.

32. Goldfield, Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers, 131.


Whether life in small and midsize towns and cities provided migrants with training in industrial skills as well as exposure to urban ways of life cannot be answered without examination of the specific places through which they moved. The local economies of some nonmetropolitan urban places were heavily based on industry, but others were primarily commercial centers.

34. Calculated from sources used for the tables tracing movement across the urban hierarchies of the east south central states and from Vickery, Economics of the Negro Migration, table 37. Some of the outmigrants, especially during the early years of the period, of course traveled to other east south central states.

35. Mrs. Jimmie D. Smith, interview, no date, BMP.

36. Jack E. Martin Memoir, October 25, 1974, OHUIS.


38. Barbara J. Fields has criticized historians who picture black Southerners as “perpetually poised on the edge of migration.” She claims that “[f]reedmen and their descendants went to extraordinary lengths to gain an independent base on the land and persisted in the teeth of repeated defeats . . . For them, . . . mass migration or emigration was the last resort when the rural economy could no longer accommodate them.” Barbara J. Fields, “The Advent of Capitalist Agriculture: The New South in a Bourgeois World,” in Essays on the Postbellum Southern Economy, ed. Thavolia Glymph and John J. Kushma (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1985), 94n37. Data from the published census on rural population changes in the four states of the east south central region furnish an opportunity to test this claim. Eight comparisons are possible: for each state during 1860–1890 and 1890–1910. If black farmers went to “extraordinary lengths” to remain on the land, then black rural populations should have increased faster or declined more slowly than white rural populations. In seven out of eight cases, however (Mississippi during 1860–1890 is the sole exception), this was not true. Black rural populations nearly always grew more slowly than white rural populations or shrank while white rural populations grew, suggesting higher rates of African American than European American outmigration from rural districts. This is a crude comparison since it may have been affected by differential fertility and mortality as well as migration. While completed families of black farm families were larger than those of white farm families, however, child mortality among rural black southern families was also higher than among rural white southern families. See Stewart E. Tolnay, The Bottom Rung: African American Family Life on Southern Farms (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 75–79; Samuel H. Preston and Michael R. Haines, Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), table 3.2. The comparison here at least throws some empirical light on an obscure area. I do not view black Southerners as “perpetually
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poised on the edge of migration,” but rather as continually exploring the various options available to them.


CHAPTER SEVEN


6. Illinois Record, September 17, 1898.


10. Compare Lee et al., Methodological Considerations, 314, with George C. Wright,


12. Midwestern newspapers regularly reported violent incidents as well as discussing possible responses. See, for example, Freeman (Indianapolis), June 12, 1897; Cleveland Gazette, July 10, 1897; Illinois Record, September 17, 1898; Indianapolis Recorder, December 22, 1900, March 2, 1901, November 22–December 6, 1902, June 13, and July 11, 1903; Broad Ax (Chicago), August 1, 1903.


14. For a description of the population examined, see appendix C. For 1860–1930, \( n = 160 \); for the period 1890–1915, \( n = 30 \).


16. Clyde Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to City: A Study of St. Helena Islanders in Harlem and Other Urban Centers (1932; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1967), 166–67. Joe Trotter points out that during the entire pre-Great Migration movement, African American women dominated the migration stream to the older northeastern coastal cities of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, while men were more numerous among those traveling to the newer, dynamic industrial cities of the Midwest. This differential he attributes to the greater availability of domestic and personal service jobs for women in the older cities. Joe William Trotter Jr., “Blacks in the Urban North: The ‘Underclass Question’ in Historical Perspective,” in The ‘Underclass’ Debate: Views from History, ed. Michael B. Katz (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 59. Further research is required, however, to determine whether a low sex ratio characterized the northeastern metropolitan migration consistently throughout the period 1860–1915 or if a shift took place at some point from a high to a low sex ratio.


18. John Lucas, interview, no date, BMP. For other accounts of family migrations during 1890–1910, see Elva Williams, interview, July 16, 1980, BMP; Mrs. Mayhouse, interview, July 1 and 8, 1980, BMP; Carl Boone, interview, no date, AS, vol. 6: 16; Louis Watkins, Henry Bedford, Wade Glenn, and Tap and Susie Payne Hawkins, interviews,
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all no date, *AS, Supplement, Series 1*, vol. 5: 231, 281, 348–51, 355–58; Celia Henderson, interview, no date, *AS, Series 2*, vol. 16: 42–43; Clarence Liggins Memoir, March 8, 1974, OHUIS; and Bruce K. Hayden Sr. Memoir, January 31, 1975, OHUIS.


20. Carter Woodson described northern migration during the years before the Great Migration as “mainly due to political changes.” Carter Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (New York: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918), 159.

21. William C. Mace, Glasgow, Kentucky, to Martha Lattimore, Noblesville, Indiana, January 9, 1880, Martha Lattimore Papers, IHS.

22. Bruce K. Hayden Sr. Memoir. For Fulton County’s lynching record, see Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky*, 72–73.


24. Ibid., 30.


26. George Wright shows that the number of legal executions of African Americans in Kentucky remained fairly steady as lynching declined. Wright, *Racial Violence*, 227. An exception, however, is the decade 1900–1909, when the number of legal executions fell.


32. As we shall see below, the biggest gainers of African American urban population share in Illinois were Chicago and East St. Louis. Other towns besides East St. Louis in the metro-east region may also have drawn African American migrants because of the pull of St. Louis across the Mississippi River. Madison and Venice may have gained African American share, although Belleville, Collinsville, and Edwardsville definitely lost share. The attraction of East St. Louis seems to allow an argument that
Illinois experienced a metropolitan shift toward its two regional centers, Chicago and St. Louis. Even when the attraction of the metro-east region is taken into account, however, the overall pattern of parallel black and white flows to places distributed across the urban hierarchy remains unchanged, since other urban places beyond the urban shadow of St. Louis also attracted significant numbers of African American migrants.

33. Compare the state totals in Lee et al., Methodological Considerations, 310–11, 332.


36. In her posthumously published history of African Americans in twentieth-century Indiana, Thornbrough suggests that, in addition to the factors cited above, “white hostility was also sometimes a factor.” Emma Lou Thornbrough, Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century, ed. and with a final chapter by Lana Ruegamer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 3.


39. Ibid., 16, 73–122.

40. Data on state-by-state origins of native-born African Americans are not given for any place below the state level in the federal censuses of 1890 and 1900, but they can be calculated for many large towns by subtracting the native-born whites of native parentage and native-born whites of foreign parentage from the total of native-born persons.


42. There were only 216 out-of-state newcomers in Terre Haute and 173 in Fort Wayne.

43. For a careful and thorough portrait of the African American community in the late nineteenth century, see Darrel E. Bigham, We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), chaps. 2–6.
44. The dependent variable is absence from a subsequent census of individuals present in the community ten years before. Since data were not available to identify those who died, one should keep in mind that some of those who are recorded as missing did not leave the community through choice. This problem can be addressed, however, by including age among the variables to be examined.

45. Chi-square for cross-tabulation of persistence with “color” among both men and women is significant at the .05 level.


47. Chi-square for the cross-tabulation of persistence and “color” is significant at the .05 level for women, but not for men.


49. *Slave and Freeman*, 16, 133–34.

50. The list is as follows, with year of violence in parentheses, followed by the percentage share loss in black population: Coshocton (1885, –.02), Washington Court House (1894, –.61), Urbana (1897, –.59), Akron (1900, –.09), Springfield (1904, 1906, –1.01).

51. Because of this the overall correlation between violence and change in black urban share, while negative, is not statistically significant.

52. Change in share of the state’s African American urban population during 1890–1910 correlated positively and significantly with size of African American population in 1890 across one hundred urban communities; $r = +.42$, significant at the .05 level.


54. In figures 7.5–7.6 and 7.13, circles are proportional to the increase or decrease in share of the African American urban population. Only towns and cities that experienced a change of more than one percent are shown.

55. Across one hundred urban places, change in African American urban share correlated positively and significantly with change in total urban share during 1890–1910; $r = +.29$, significant at the .05 level.

56. Across thirty-five urban places for which data on manufacturing employment are available, change in African American urban share during 1890–1910 is positively
and significantly correlated with change in share of the state's manufacturing work force during 1899–1909; \( r = +.47 \), significant at the .05 level. Among the same places, change in share of Ohio's manufacturing work force, 1899–1909, is correlated positively and significantly with change in share of total urban population, 1890–1910; \( r = +.74 \), significant at the .05 level.


59. Ibid., 296.

60. The regional dimension is emphasized in Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 2.

61. Although changes in total urban share and African American urban share varied together, the swings in the latter were much wider than those in the former. Regression analysis shows that for every change of one percent in total urban share, African American urban share changed by 2.7 percent in the same direction.

62. Change in share of the state's African American urban population during 1890–1910 correlated positively and significantly with size of African American population in 1890 across 60 urban communities; \( r = +.45 \), significant at the .05 level.

63. For fifty-nine urban places, \( r = -.89 \), significant at the .05 level.

Stepwise regression analysis with Indianapolis included indicates the importance of the capital's large African American population. Change in total urban share by itself “explains” 66 percent of the variance in change in black urban share. With the effect of change in total urban share accounted for, size of black population adds another 14 percent to the equation's explanatory power. Size of black population was statistically unrelated to, and therefore acted independently of, change in total urban share. The equation is: Change in Black Urban Share = 0.19 + 2.6 \([.35]\) (Change in Total Urban Share) + .0005 \([.0001]\) (Size of Black Population). Standard errors for \( b \) are in brackets.

64. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial*, chap. 5.

the North, in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama; Monroe, Louisiana; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Tampa, Florida; Columbus, Georgia; Meridian, Mississippi; and Clarksville and Nashville, Tennessee.

66. Chicago increased its share of the Illinois black urban population from 42 percent in 1890 to 52 percent in 1910.


69. Reed, Black Chicago’s First Century, 406–407; Spear, Black Chicago, 95–96.


71. Chicago’s share of Illinois’s total urban population dropped from 64.8 percent in 1890 to 62.9 percent in 1910. This explains why the correlation between change in share of black urban population and change in share of total urban population is inverse for the period 1890–1910. For 75 urban places, $r = -.32$, significant at the .05 level.

72. Chicago’s increase in share of the state’s manufacturing workers, 5.26 percent, dwarfed all other places. The manufacturing census of 1910, which contains the 1909 figures, however, was less thorough than that of 1900, containing the 1899 statistics. The 1900 census counted industrial workers in seventy towns, whereas the 1910 census reported figures for only thirty-one.

73. Because of the Windy City’s much larger African American population, the number of violent incidents relative to population was actually smaller there than in Illinois’s other violent communities. But because lynchings of individual African Americans was the most common form of violence elsewhere, while mob attacks on groups of strikebreakers was the usual form taken in Chicago’s antiblack violence, the likelihood of any individual becoming a target of a white mob was probably higher in Chicago. My point in noting Chicago’s violence, however, is simply that it occurred and thereby demonstrated to potential migrants that Chicago was not free from mob attacks on blacks.

74. Those that lost share are Belleville (–0.46 percent), Cairo (–4.54 percent), Pana (–0.05 percent), and Springfield (–1.85 percent). In addition, the census enumerator in Cartherville, whose African American population was not recorded in 1890 since the town had less than 2,500 population, found no African Americans living there in 1910, although many had come in 1899 as strikebreakers. Furthermore, the 84 African Americans recorded in Spring Valley in 1910 are measured for this analysis as an increase over the one living there in 1890, but the 1910 figure represents a decline following the arrival of African American strikebreakers in 1894 and 1895. In 1900, 135
African Americans lived in Spring Valley. Those that gained share are Chicago (+9.43 percent), Danville (+0.99 percent), and Decatur (+0.21 percent). Virden's African American population was not recorded in 1890, but the nine African Americans enumerated there in 1910 undoubtedly represented a decrease from the number who came as strikebreakers in 1898.


76. With Chicago excluded, change in total urban population share and change in African American urban share during 1890–1910 were positively and significantly correlated across 74 urban places; $r = +.66$, significant at the .05 level.

77. As early as 1906, the pioneer African American sociologist Richard R. Wright Jr. wrote that “few women go to the rural districts, while there is great demand for men on the farms [of the North].” Richard R. Wright Jr., “Migration of Negroes to the North,” Annals of the American Academy 27 (May 1906): 564.


79. During the 1890s, Mississippians provided about 1,700 of the 22,200 black interstate migrants to Illinois, and about 1,500 of the 17,200 during the first decade of the twentieth century. Approximately 1,500 Alabamians came to Illinois during the 1890s, followed by about 800 during 1900–1910. All figures are minimum net estimates derived from the birth–residence index. Lee et al., Methodological Considerations, 310. See also William Edward Vickery, The Economics of the Negro Migration, 1900–1960 (New York: Arno, 1977), tables 34 and 52.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Kathleen Borboza, interview, no date, BOHCO.


6. Continuities are emphasized in Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 71; Gottlieb, Making Their Own Way.


8. Vickery, Economics of the Negro Migration, table 6.

9. Alonzo Parham, interview, October 4, 1996, in Black, Bridges of Memory, 117. For another example of step migration from Georgia—Albany to Macon to Atlanta to Chicago—see Wayman Hancock, interview, September 17, 1991, in ibid., 143. For another example of the men-first, women-later pattern of migration, in this case from New Orleans, see John Levy, interview, August 12, 1992, in ibid., 194. A concern for education similar to that shown by the Parham family is noted in Mildred Bowden and Hermene Hartman, interview, July 29, 1995, in ibid., 253.


United States and Canada (June 1893), timetables for the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia; Queen & Crescent; Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton; Yazoo & Mississippi Valley; and Illinois Central railroads; *The Official Guide of the Railways . . . of the United States . . ., January 1930* (New York: National Railway Publication Co.), timetables for the Southern; Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis; Yazoo & Mississippi Valley; and Illinois Central railroads.


17. For 128 urban places, the $r$ values for correlations between change in share of the state’s black urban population on one hand and change in share of the total urban population and size of African American population in 1910 on the other were +.23 and −.09 respectively. Only the first was significant at the .05 level. As in the previous periods, black migration during 1910–1930 was not deterred by the presence of proportionally large immigrant populations.


19. For thirty-three urban places, the correlation between change in share of black urban population, 1910–1930, and change in share of manufacturing workers, 1909–1929, was positive and significant; $r = +.50$, significant at the .05 level. See also William W. Giffin, *African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915–1930* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005), 14–15, 90.

20. During 1899–1909, Akron increased its share of the state’s manufacturing workers from 2.7 to 3.5 percent, but its share of the African American urban population fell from 0.9 to 0.8 percent between 1890 and 1910. Springfield’s share of manufacturing workers fell from 2.0 to 1.7 percent from 1899 to 1909, while its share of the African American urban population dropped from 7.0 percent to 6.0 percent during 1890–1910.


23. Between 1909 and 1929, Springfield's share of the state's manufacturing workers declined slightly from 1.66 to 1.62 percent, while its share of the total urban population fell from 1.8 to 1.5 percent between 1910 and 1930 and its share of the black urban population dropped from 6.0 to 3.0 percent.


25. Ibid., 163–73 and chaps. 10–11. For a biography of the founder of the Phillis Wheatley Association, see Adrienne Lash Jones, *Jane Edna Hunter: A Case Study of Black Leadership, 1910–1950*, vol. 12 of *Black Women in United States History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1990); and Jane Edna Hunter, *A Nickel and a Prayer* (N.p.: Elli Kani Publishing, 1940). The widespread impact of these institutions is evident in the oral history interviews collected by Cleveland's St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church during the late 1980s. See, for example, the interviews with Carrie Turner, August 27, 1986, SJOH; and Gwendolyn Lucille Stokes Williams, September 15, 1986, SJOH.


The rapid growth of Cleveland's African American population, together with the lack of correlation across the state between African American population size in 1910 and change in African American urban population share between 1910 and 1930, argues against a simplistic assumption that the operation of chain migration will make a destination's attraction proportional to the size of its black community. Instead, we must take into account the content as well as the quantity of communication.


30. This estimate is based upon patterns of net migration. See Lee et al., *Methodological Considerations*, 311.


32. For eighty-four urban places, the correlation between change in black urban population share and change in total urban share, 1910–1930, is positive and significant; $r = +.85$, significant at the .05 level. For twenty-four urban places, the correlations are positive and significant between change in share of the state’s manufacturing workers, 1909–1929, and change in share of black urban population ($r = +.56$, significant at the .05 level) and change in share of total urban population ($r = +.66$, significant at the .05 level).


35. For eighty-four urban places, the correlation between the incidence of antiblack collective violence, 1885–1910, and change in black urban share, 1910–1930, is negative and significant; $r = –.20$, significant at the .05 level.

36. Stepwise regression analysis supports the primacy of economic opportunity, as no other variable adds to the explanatory power of the equation once change in total urban population share has been entered. Change in share of manufacturing workers, 1909–1929, is too strongly correlated with change in total urban population share to exert an independent effect. The coefficient of determination is .71.

37. The changes in share of Indiana’s manufacturing workers between 1909 and 1929 were: Anderson, +1.75 percent; Muncie, +1.35 percent; Fort Wayne, +1.26 percent; South Bend, +1.87 percent. The changes in share of the state’s black urban population, 1910–1930, were: Anderson, +0.25 percent; Muncie, +0.49 percent; Fort Wayne, +1.11 percent; South Bend, +2.08 percent.

38. For the origins of Afro-Munsonians in 1920, see Jack S. Blocker Jr., “Black Migration to Muncie, 1860–1930,” *IMH* 92 (December 1996): 308. No data are available for Anderson, but I surmise that the origins of its African American population were similar, since the two towns were located in the same part of the state and their patterns of growth in black population were parallel.

39. The African American populations of the four cities in 1910 were: Anderson, 532; Muncie, 1,005; Fort Wayne, 572; South Bend, 604. By 1930 these figures had increased to 1,387, 2,646, 2,360, and 3,431, respectively.
40. Evansville lost 0.28 percent in share of manufacturing workers and lost 0.40 percent in share of total urban population between 1910 and 1930. These two factors combined with the race riot and the fact that few industrial jobs were open to African Americans to produce a loss of 6.62 percent in share of African American urban population.

41. Correlation analysis is of marginal utility in Illinois. This is because Chicago, when analyzed as part of the state’s urban system, is such an extreme outlier in every comparison. By itself, Chicago is capable of transforming a strong positive correlation into an equally strong negative and vice versa. To include Chicago, then, means obscuring the relationships between variables that obtain among the rest of the urban system. But to exclude Chicago distorts reality even more.


43. Chicago’s share of total urban population fell from 62.9 percent in 1910 to 60.25 percent in 1930, and its share of total manufacturing workers dropped from 63.1 percent in 1909 to 58.6 percent in 1929.


48. East St. Louis lost 0.36 percent of urban population share between 1910 and 1930 and its share of the state’s manufacturing workers fell by 0.16 percent.

49. The populations of all-white towns ranged from 2,504 (Riverdale) to 14,863 (West Frankfort). Over the years since 1860, the number and percentage of towns reporting less than ten African Americans also steadily increased: In 1860, four towns (12.1 percent); in 1890, 12 (15.6 percent); in 1910, 39 (27.1 percent); and in 1930, 78 (40.6 percent). James Loewen argues that Illinois contained even more towns where few or no African Americans were permitted to live. James Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York and London: New Press, 2005), 59–65.


52. For Robbins, see Tyrone Haymore, *The Story of Robbins, Il.* (Robbins, IL:

53. For the use of deed restrictions to control suburban development in Columbus, see Patricia Burgess Stach, “Deed Restrictions and Subdivision Development in Columbus, Ohio, 1900–1970,” JUH 15 (November 1988): 42–68.

54. For women’s part in building community in Chicago and across the state, see Anne Meis Knupfer, Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women’s Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago (New York: New York University Press, 1996), and Hendricks, Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest.


59. In each of the three states in all three periods correlation analysis reveals no inverse relationship between change in African American urban population share and percentage foreign-born. This finding, as noted above, directly contradicts the argument of William J. Collins, “When the Tide Turned: Immigration and the Delay of the Great Black Migration,” JEH 57 (September 1997): 607–32.


64. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis*, 159.


69. For the procedure to use in calculating the number of African Americans born in each state, see note 40 in chapter 7, above.


78. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census, 1920: Vol. 2: Population* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 1282. The census reported what proportion of homes were owned or rented, not what percentage of families owned their homes. Since more than one family could occupy a dwelling, the percentage of families owning their home would probably be lower than the percentage of homes owned by their occupants. Nevertheless, the contrasts drawn in the text should be sufficiently great to make the point that most migrants moved from a setting in which homeownership was more possible to one in which it was less so.

Notes to Chapter 8


80. Committee on Negro Housing, *Negro Housing* (Washington, DC: President’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1932), 81. Toledo in 1923 appears to have had a surprisingly high rate of African American home ownership, 27.6 percent. Williams, “Newcomers to the City.” 18. A sample of male and female “household heads” drawn from metropolitan areas outside the South in 1920 shows rates of homeownership ranging from 17 percent (southern-born) to 22 percent (non-southern-born). Gregory, *Southern Diaspora*, table A.15.

81. These processes are clearly described in such works as Spear, *Black Chicago*, and Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*.


86. LeRoy Brown Memoir, April 29, 1974, OHUIS; Allie Hopkins Memoir, August 16, 1974, OHUIS; Margaret Ferguson Memoir, February 11, 1975, OHUIS.

87. Milton Sernett points to another advantage of large cities for African American women: “Discouraged or proscribed from holding the office of ordained minister in the mainline denominations, women exercised their spiritual gifts by establishing independent Holiness, Pentecostal, and Spiritualist churches, often of the storefront and house varieties. Women needed no male approval to set up as mediums, healers, and spiritual leaders of congregations of the dispossessed.” Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 195.


89. In eleven cases, a falling sex ratio accompanied an increasing share of the state’s black urban population: Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo in 1890–1910 and Chicago, Cleveland, Akron, Gary, Dayton, and Youngstown during 1910–1930. In three cases, a falling sex ratio appeared while the city’s urban share was falling, in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Columbus in 1910–1930. In these periods for these three cities, urban share was being captured by more rapidly growing industrial cities, in the Calumet and northeastern Ohio respectively. In four cases, a rising sex ratio accompanied increasing urban share: Cincinnati, Dayton, and Youngstown in 1890–1910 and Toledo in 1910–1930. In one case, Akron during 1890–1910, a falling sex ratio occurred while urban share was declining. This of course was the period of Akron’s race riot.
90. As Florette Henri (Black Migration, 96) points out, census marshals probably substantially undercounted African American men in northern cities. For purposes of comparison, however, this is not a major problem, so long as we can assume that undercounting was fairly consistent from one midwestern city to another.

91. For oral history evidence on the gendered experience of women during the Second Great Migration after 1940, see Valerie Grim, “From the Yazoo Mississippi Delta to the Urban Communities of the Midwest: Conversations with Rural African American Women,” Frontiers 22 (2001): 126–44.


93. A minimum estimate of the number of Mississippi-born blacks living outside Chicago in 1910 can be obtained by comparing the number of Mississippi-born blacks living in Illinois (4,612) with the number of Mississippi-born persons living in Chicago (2,978), yielding 1,637. The maximum number of Mississippi-born blacks who could have been living outside Chicago is, of course, 4,612. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census, 1910, Vol. 1: Population (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 743, 776. The number of Mississippi-born blacks living in Illinois in 1930 was 50,851, of whom 38,356 resided in Chicago, leaving 12,495 in the remainder of the state. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Negroes in the United States, 1920–32, 30, 35–36. Subtracting the maximum and minimum estimates for 1910 from the non-Chicago number for 1930 produces the range of estimates for the increase in Mississippi-born nonmetropolitan black population between 1910 and 1930. Mississippians contributed 23 percent of Illinois’s African American migration during the 1910s and 27 percent during the 1920s.


95. [Scott], “Letters of Negro Migrants,” 436.

96. Phoebe Mitchell Day Memoir, March 25, 1974, OHUIS. A later migrant to Chicago from a small town recalled how hard it was for her to become accustomed to the “coolness”—the impersonality—of the metropolitan world. Edith Ellis, interview, June 14, 1995, in Black, Bridges of Memory, 30.

97. Jobs in coal-mining towns in western and southern Indiana were increasingly open to African Americans at the turn of the century. Thornbrough, Negro in Indiana, 350.

98. Elyria, Massillon, Middletown, and Warren all gained share of Ohio’s total urban population between 1910 and 1930, and as well increased their share of the state’s manufacturing workers between 1909 and 1929. Share changes in manufacturing workers cannot be calculated for Barberton, East Cleveland, and Niles because the census did not report their worker numbers in 1909, but in 1929 they all held a significant
share of industrial workers, in rough proportion to their growing share of total urban population.

99. The number of African American residents fell between 1910 and 1930 from ninety-nine to forty in Norwood, from seven to five in Cicero, from thirteen to nine in Blue Island, and from eighteen to five in Granite, while each city gained share of its state’s total urban population.

100. Edna Christian, interview, December 5, 1972, BOHCO.


105. James Davis, interview, June 6, 1980, BMP.


110. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen*, 54, 96. Goodall and Mitchell record only one quasi-violent incident, when in 1898 a group of whites threatened to burn a tavern owner’s shed to force him to fire his black porter. It is not known if the tavern owner complied. Goodall and Mitchell, *History of Negroes in Muncie*, 6.

111. Dorothy Armstrong, interview, no date, BMP; Thomas Wesley Hall, interview, no date, BMOHP; Mrs. Mayhouse, interview, July 1 and 8, 1980, BMP; Mrs. Geraldine Springer, interview, June 17, 1980, BMP; Elva Williams, interview, July 16, 1980, BMP.

112. Henry Sims, interview, June 10, 1980, BMP. Actually, the Klan paraded twice through Muncie, in 1920 and again in 1924. Goodall and Campbell, “A City Apart,” 60. Henry Sims recalled “a kind of a race riot,” “once at the fairgrounds,” in an unknown year in response to a question about antiblack violence in Muncie. Emma Lou Thornbrough describes the advance of segregation in some Indiana cities during the 1920s, but argues that this development, while motivated by the same racist attitudes that bolstered the Klan, was not produced by Klan activity. Emma Lou Thornbrough, “Segregation in Indiana during the Klan Era of the 1920s,” *MVHR* 47 (March 1961): 594–618.
116. African Americans’ mean age was about two and one-half years less than European Americans’; 86 percent of African Americans were southern-born while 64 percent of European Americans were northern-born; and only 26 percent of African Americans had lived in Muncie for at least ten years, compared to 34 percent of European Americans. Blocker, “Wages of Migration,” 128. Some information is available on the wealth of homeowners in local tax assessment records. Among 28 adult members of home-owning families in 1917, the median value of African American real estate stood at $600, compared to $900 for European Americans. Among 73 adult members of home-owning families in 1923, the African American median was $728.50 compared to $1,680 for European Americans. Neither difference, however, was statistically significant. Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List, 1917, Delaware County, Indiana, vols. 1 (last names A–G) and 2 (H–O); Tax Duplicate and Delinquent List, 1923, Delaware County, Indiana, vols. 1 (M–R) and 4 (S–Z), Archives and Special Collections, Bracken Library, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.
117. This is an inference from the ages and states of birth of the Blackburn children.
118. U.S. federal manuscript census, Delaware County, Indiana, 1910, 1920. The Whitely community was founded by William Whitely, the reaper manufacturer whose bitter conflict with the Knights of Labor in Springfield, Ohio, had destroyed his operation there, but the factory he built in his eponymous model town near Muncie burned in 1894, shortly after opening, and William Whitely played no further role in Muncie. The racially integrated character of the Whitely neighborhood, annexed to Muncie in 1919, is noted in Goodall and Campbell, “A City Apart,” 54–55.
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122. Wiese, “The Other Suburbanites,” 1500.
124. Wiese, “Life on the Other Side of the Tracks,” 179. These seem to have been located mainly in northeastern cities. YMCAs, YWCAs, and other community institutions probably developed somewhat later in the Midwest.
126. Since in 1910 a majority of each state’s African American population lived in nonmetropolitan places (57 percent in Ohio, 64 percent in Indiana, and 60 percent in Illinois), and because large cities typically showed higher death than birth rates for African Americans, a larger portion of the increase in nonmetropolitan compared to metropolitan communities would have been the result of natural increase rather than migration.

CONCLUSION

1. Welton E. Barnett, interview, Toledo, Ohio, July 7, 1976, OH-TPL.


12. Phoebe Mitchell Day Memoir, March 25, 1974, OHUIS. See also the Leota Harris Memoir, February 5, 1975, 2 vols., OHUIS.


15. This is one theme, though by no means the only one, of the classic by Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (1954; reprint, Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966). The helplessness of small cities in the face of economic centralization is a major theme in Timothy R. Mahoney, “The Small City in American History,” *IMH* 99 (December 2003): 311–30.


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18. I estimated these figures by applying to the 1890 and 1910 African American populations of the cities that reached 100,000 total population by 1930 the African American urban growth rate for their state during 1890–1910 and 1910–1930, respectively, then subtracting the result from the actual 1910 and 1930 African American populations. Cities whose African American populations fell below what would have been expected if the city had grown at the statewide urban rate were considered to have zero growth, rather than a negative figure.

19. These figures were estimated by comparison of tables A.6 and A.7 with tables A.15 and A.16 and by use of table A.17.

20. There is no contradiction between this conclusion and the finding that African Americans generally moved from economically lagging towns to prospering ones. As was noted above, the African American movement to the region’s cities was distinctive. Although both European Americans and African Americans responded to changing conditions, because African Americans were among the most vulnerable, they were more sensitive to economic swings.

21. Loewen, Sundown Towns.


APPENDIX C


2. Carole Marks and others have made this argument about the First Great Migration. Carole Marks, Farewell—We’re Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).

3. I also conducted interviews, but these were with longtime residents of midwestern communities, not migrants.

4. George Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, 41 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972–79). Two collections of oral histories from midwestern communities have been drawn upon for qualitative evidence on migration and community life, but their subjects have not been included in the database for quantitative analysis, either because the source contains little information on the migration experience (the Wallis volume) or because it was published after the database had been completed and analyzed (the Black volume). Don Wallis, All We Had Was Each Other: The Black Community of Madison, Indiana: An Oral History (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), and Timuel D. Black Jr., Bridges of Memory: Chicago’s First Wave of Black Migration: An Oral History (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and DuSable Museum of African American History, 2003).

5. The archives in which migrant interviews were found are listed in appendix B. Interviews were also collected of lifelong residents of midwestern communities, but these will not be discussed here.

6. For a summary of criticisms of the FWP project as oral history, see David Henige, Oral Historiography (London: Longman, 1982), 116–18.

7. Most of the FWP interviews took place in 1937 or 1938. The median year of migration north for the forty-nine ex-slaves who gave this information was 1869; the range was 1859–1929.

8. The range of age at migration was four to eighty-four years; n = 39. Age at migration was calculated by subtracting the year of migration reported in the interview from year of birth.

9. The range of age at migration north was from less than one year to forty-eight years; n = 83.

10. For 214 respondents the median year of migration north was 1917; the range was 1865–1930.
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