

Subject: The First Great Migration, 1910-1930

Using the documents and your knowledge of history, evaluate the validity of the following statement: *“African Americans who took part in the Great Migration from the rural South between 1910 and 1930 experienced better social and economic conditions in the urban North.”*

DOCUMENT A

Dear Sirs: Being desirous of leaving the South for the betterment of my condition generally and seeking a Home Somewhere in Ill' Chicago or some other prosperous Town I am at sea about the best place to locate having a family dependent on me for support. I am informed by the Chicago Defender a very valuable paper which has for its purpose the Uplifting of my race, and of which I am a constant reader and real lover, that you were in position to show some light to one in my condition. Seeking a Northern Home. If this is true Kindly inform me by next mail the next best thing to do Being a poor man with a family to care for, I am not coming to live on flowry Beds of ease for I am a man who works and wish to make the best I can out of life I do not wish to come there hoodwinked not knowing where to go or what to do so I Solicite your help in this matter and thanking you in advance for what advice you may be pleased to Give I am yours for success. [sic]

Source: Letter to the *Chicago Defender* from a subscriber in New Orleans. 4/24/1917.

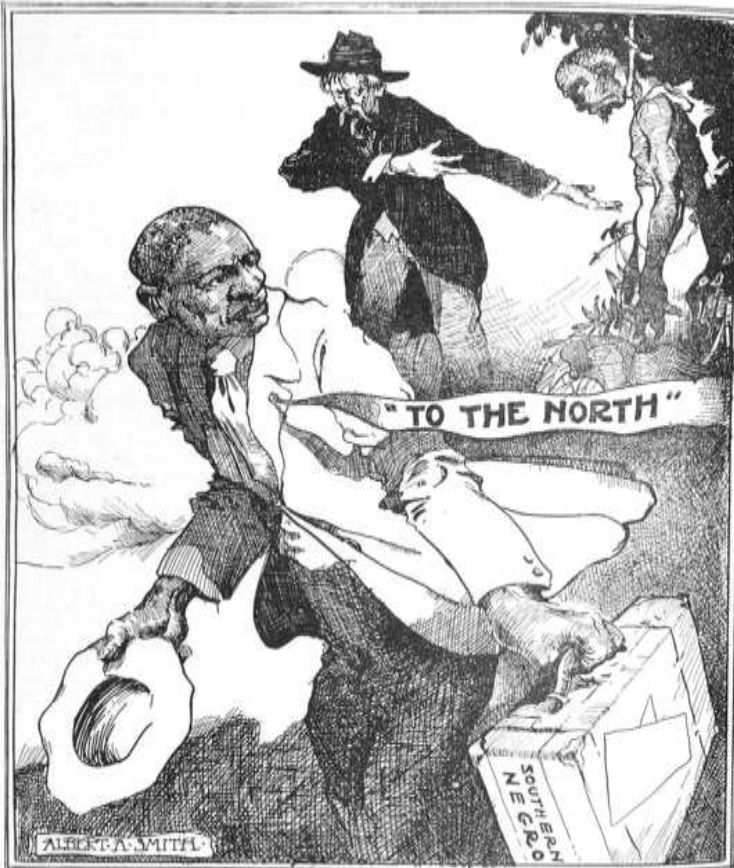
DOCUMENT B

A certain amount of segregation is necessary at time to preserve the peace. This is especially true when negroes are first introduced into a plant. It is a question if it is not always best to have separate wash rooms and the like. In places where different races necessarily come into close contact and in places where inherited characteristics are especially accentuated, it is better to keep their respective folkways from clashing wherever possible.

Source: Dwight Farnham, “Negroes as a Source of Industrial Labor,” *Industrial Management* (trade journal), August, 1918



DOCUMENT C



Source: Albert Smith, "The Reason," *The Crisis* (newspaper), 1920.

DOCUMENT D

'THE DEFENDER' BANNED

PINE BLUFF, Ark., Feb. 24.—Eighteen leaders of the Colored community here, including two ministers, two school principals and professional men, have been named defendants in a suit filed by city officials seeking an injunction to prohibit circulation in the county of a Chicago newspaper on the ground that the paper tended to incite the Colored people. A temporary restraining order was obtained.

Source: *Pine Bluff Commercial*, 1920

DOCUMENT E

White people don't treat them as the *Chicago Defender* promised that they would. It was November, 1916, that her husband first heard from agent of people leaving New Orleans. No interest at first. Finally when some of the men with whom he was working left, he decided to make the venture himself. He wrote back that Chicago was the place for them and they joined him in a few months. They could hardly wait for the money for transportation. The paper was "just stirring things up so we that State Street would be heaven itself." Came in party of 80. Has not had any trouble in the South. Her daughter worked out in service under excellent conditions. When she worked over time was sent home in a carriage. Here she is thrown in bad company at the stockyards. She doesn't like the North. People here, "don't love God." and, "ain't sociable." This accounts for the close association of Mississippi people on Rhodes and in this community

Source: Charles Johnson's interviews of Black residents done for the Chicago Urban League, 1917

DOCUMENT F

It is generally thought by both negroes and whites that Negroes are the chief strikebreakers in the U.S. This is far from the truth. The Negro workers' part in strikes has been dramatized by virtue of the striking contrast of race which invariably provoked race riots. But the fact is that there are many more scabs among the white than black workers, partially because there are numerous industries in which Negroes are not permitted to work, which, too, are by no means one hundred percent organized. Out of twenty or more millions of workers in the U.S., less than five million are organized. Note the potential for scabs!

Source: George Schuyler, journalist for the African American publication *The Messenger*, August, 1925.

DOCUMENT G

Look at me. Look at me.
And you see a gal,
With a heart bogged down with woe.
Because I'm all alone,
Far from my Southern home.
Dixie Dan. That's the man.
Took me from the Land of Cotton
To that cold, cold minded North.
Threw me down. Hit the town.
And I've never seen him henceforth.
Just cause I trusted. I'm broke and disgusted,
I got the Cotton Belt Blues.



Source: Lizzie Miles, New Orleans-born musician, lyrics to her "Cotton Belt Blues," 1923

DOCUMENT H



Source: selected photos of sharecroppers' cabin and field, taken by WPA in Mississippi Delta region in 1930's.

DOCUMENT I

THE NORTHERNER, too, had an awakening when, through necessity he placed the Black man in his shops, factories and industrial plants, he found not the shiftless, lazy tout that had been pictured, but a bright, energetic, apt, useful and reliable workman, so a permanent place was found for him and he was asked to have his brothers come and partake of his good fortune.

THERE IS ALWAYS FRICTION when two bodies try to occupy the same place at the same time. The close of the war threw thousands out of employment. The American white man, believing himself justly entitled to first pick, questioned the right of a Black man to be holding a job he could fill. The Black man, dating his final papers entitling him to a place in the sun from the day he landed from overseas, where he had been offering his life for the honor of his country, pointed to his record as an American citizen and refused longer to be the tool of any man.

Source: Abbott, William, from a *Chicago Defender* article explaining the cause of the Chicago Race Riots, 1919.

DOCUMENT J

HUMAN NATURE



Bees Will Not Stay in Places That Are Not Fit to Live In

Source: *Chicago Defender*, 1921

DOCUMENT K

Crowds of Howling Negroes! Report Two Killed, Fifty Hurt, in Race Riots Bathing Beach Fight Spreads to Black Belt All Police Reserves Called to Guard South Side.

Two colored men are reported to have been killed and approximately fifty whites and negroes injured, a number probably fatally, in race riots that broke out at south side beaches yesterday. The rioting spread through the black belt and by midnight had thrown the entire south side into a state of turmoil.

Among the known wounded are four policemen of the Cottage Grove avenue station, two from west side stations, one fireman of engine company No. 9, and three women.

One Negro was knocked off a raft at the Twenty-ninth street beach after he had been stoned by whites. He drowned because whites are said to have frustrated attempts of colored bathers to rescue him. The body was recovered, but could not be identified.

Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 1919

DOCUMENT L

If You are a Stranger in the City

If you want a job If you want a place to live
If you are having trouble with your employer
If you want information or advice of any kind

CALL UPON

The CHICAGO LEAGUE ON URBAN CONDITIONS AMONG NEGROES

3719 South State Street

Telephone Douglas 9098

T. ARNOLD HILL, Executive Secretary

No charges—no fees. We want to help YOU

Source: *Urban League advertisement, 1917*

DOCUMENT M



Source: *U.S. Army Colored Regiment returns home, 1917*

DOCUMENT N



Source: *Photo of banner hanging outside offices of the NAACP offices in New York, NY, 1920*

DOCUMENT O

NEGRO, 19, LYNCHED BY TENNESSEE MOB

Youth Accused of Attacking
Woman Is Taken From Jail
at Alamo and Hanged.

SHERIFF'S HOME STORMED

Officer Says He Tried to Placate
Men Before They Entered His
House and Found Key to Lock-Up.

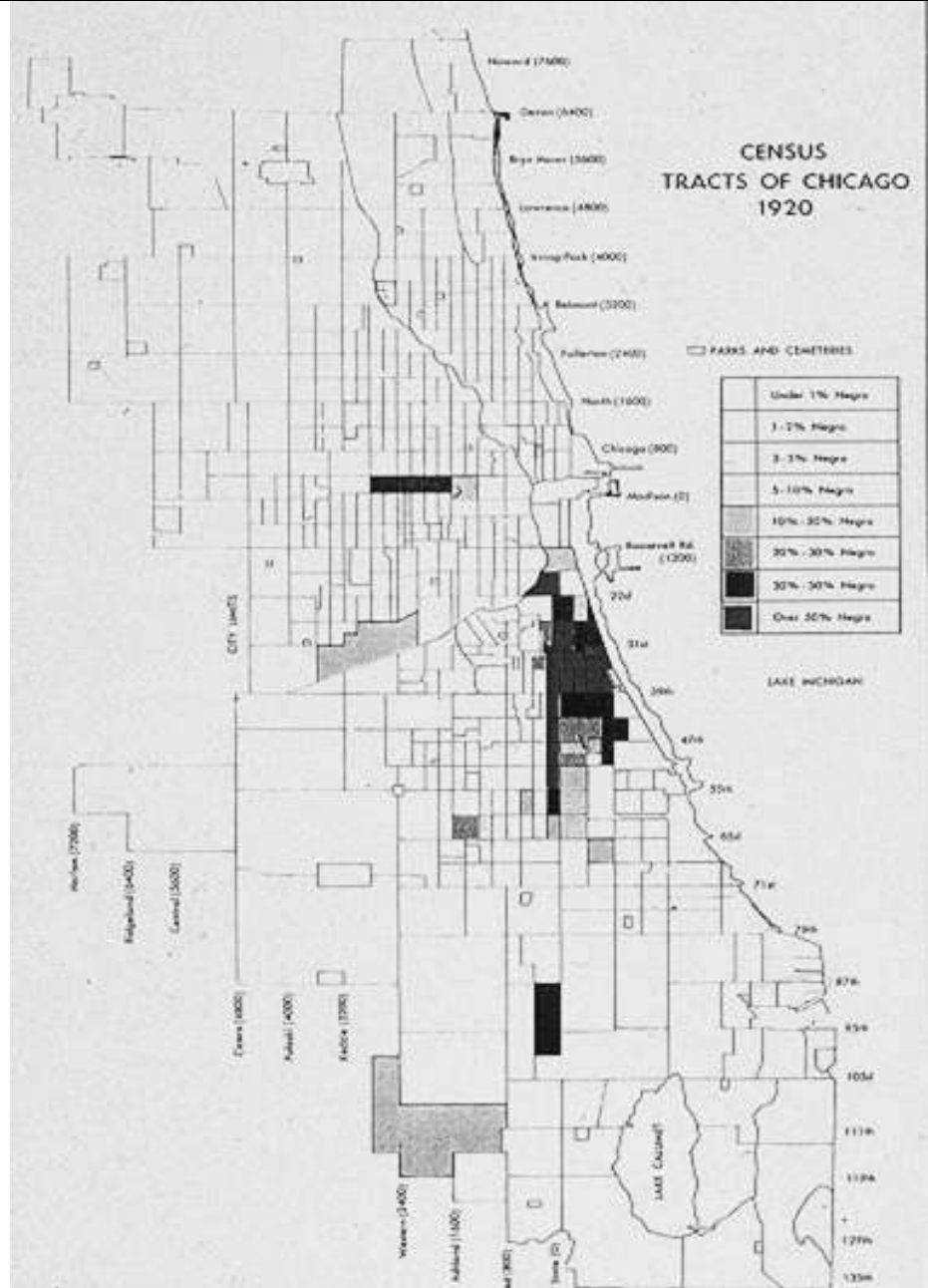
ALAMO, Tenn., May 29 (AP).—Joe Boxley, negro, 19 years old, accused of attacking a white woman, was abducted from jail here early today and lynched four miles from the town.

A mob of 2,000 men had stormed a jail at Trenton, Tenn., in an adjoining county, before it traced the negro to Alamo. There the men almost battered down the door of the home of Carl Emison, Crockett County sheriff. They discovered the keys to the jail under a divan where the sheriff had placed them, and got possession of the negro.

Despite an injunction written on a placard and placed beside the body that the negro was to "hang here until 4 P. M., Thursday," the body was removed from a tree by the county coroner and turned over to Boxley's relatives.

Source: *New York Times, 5/30/1929*

DOCUMENT P



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Tracts, map showing percentage of African American population in Chicago by census tracts, 1920